



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY 13TH SEPTEMBER 2023

AT 6.00 P.M.

PARKSIDE SUITE - PARKSIDE

MEMBERS: Councillors K.J. May (Leader), S. J. Baxter, S. R. Colella, C.A. Hotham, C. B. Taylor, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

AGENDA

1. **To receive apologies for absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest**

To invite Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Disclosable Interests they may have in items on the agenda, and to confirm the nature of those interests.
3. **Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 10th July 2023**
 - (a) To receive and note the minutes of the meeting held on 10th July 2023. Please note that these minutes will be published in a supplementary papers pack.
 - (b) To consider any recommendations contained within the minutes.
4. **Governance Systems Task Group Report** (report to follow)
5. **Equalities Annual Report** (Pages 1 - 18)
6. **Grass Verge Maintenance** (Pages 19 - 28)

7. **Housing Company - Shareholders Committee - Reserved Matters** (Pages 29 - 32)
8. **Draft Outturn Report 2022/23** (Pages 33 - 46)
9. **To consider any urgent business, details of which have been notified to the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting**
10. **To consider, and if considered appropriate, to pass the following resolution to exclude the public from the meeting during the consideration of item(s) of business containing exempt information:-**

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

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Paragraph(s)</u>
11	3
12	3 & 4

11. **To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 12th July 2023** (Pages 47 - 68)
12. **Finance and Performance Quarter 1 Monitoring 2023/24** (Pages 69 - 114)

Sue Hanley
Chief Executive (Interim)

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

5th September 2023

**If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact
Jo Gresham**

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GUIDANCE ON FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS

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

GUIDANCE FOR ELECTED MEMBERS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING MEETINGS IN PERSON

Meeting attendees and members of the public are encouraged not to attend a Committee if they have if they have common cold symptoms or any of the following common symptoms of Covid-19 on the day of the meeting; a high temperature, a new and continuous cough or a loss of smell and / or taste.

Notes:

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



INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

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

at www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

Equality Annual Report 2021

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor C Hotham Cabinet Member for Finance and Enabling
Portfolio Holder Consulted	No
Relevant Head of Service	Deb Poole, Head of Business Transformation and Organisational Development
Report Author	Emily Payne Job Title: Engagement and Equalities Advisor Contact email: emily.payne@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 548284
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	Underpins all Strategic Purposes, due to being General Equality Duty
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is requested to RECOMMEND to COUNCIL that: -

- 1) that the Equality Annual Report 2022 attached at Appendix 1 be endorsed.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Annual Report informs the progress on the Council's equality objectives covering the period January 2022 to December 2022. Building on our last report and work carried out since 2021, this progress report provides a detailed insight into our ongoing commitment to equality.
- 2.2 The Council adopted its new Equality Strategy 2022 to 2026 and this provides a detailed insight into our ongoing commitment to equality,
- 2.3 As we continued to recover from COVID-19, the Cost of Living hit and this impacted greatly the work being undertaken by the council and its partners, generating new activity to help support disadvantaged groups and promote equality during this challenging period.

- 2.4 It should be noted that the examples included in this report are not a complete list of everything the Council has done or will do to achieve our equality objectives.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Equality Act 2010 consists of a General Equality Duty, supported by specific duties, requires public authorities, like Bromsgrove District Council, to consider or think about how their policies or decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act.

- 4.2 The specific duties require the Council to: -

- Publish equality information at least once a year to show how they've complied with the equality duty
- Prepare and publish equality objectives at least every four years

- 4.3 This Annual Report informs the progress on the equality agenda covering the period January 2022 to December 2022.

5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 5.1 The report contributes to all Strategic Purposes, predominantly the support element of the 'High Quality Services' priority, under 'An effective & sustainable Council', as identified in the Council Plan.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.2 There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.1 Our approach to equalities corporately, so we can support all our residents and customers, is set out in the Council's Equalities Strategy.

- 6.2 This report supports our legal requirement to report the progress made during 2022.

Operational Implications

- 6.2 There are no operational implications directly arising from this report; the report details clearly our organisational responsibilities and provides clarity at an operational level.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 There are no risks directly arising from this report.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Appendix 1 Equality Strategy Annual Report 2022

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor C Hotham Cabinet Member for Finance and Enabling	22/08/2023
Lead Director / Head of Service	Deb Poole Head of Business Transformation and Operational Development	26/07/2023
Financial Services		
Legal Services		
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	Emily Payne Engagement and Equalities Advisor	22/08/2023



Bromsgrove District Council Equality Strategy Annual Report 2022

1 Introduction

1.1 This annual report informs the progress on the equality agenda covering the period January 2022 to December 2022. Building on our last report and work carried out since 2021, this progress report provides a detailed insight into our ongoing commitment to equality. It highlights our achievements and sets out the different ways the council is seeking to ensure that our services are fair, inclusive, and accessible to all our residents and support good equalities practice for our employees.

1.2 The Council adopted its new Equality Strategy 2022 to 2026 during this year, this provides a detailed insight into our ongoing commitment to equality, set out in one place our equality objectives and other arrangements for embedding equality into everything we do and, perhaps most importantly, set out where we must improve.

1.3 As we continued to recover from COVID-19, the Cost of Living hit and this impacted greatly the work being undertaken by the council and its partners, generating new activity to help support disadvantaged groups and promote equality during this challenging period.

2 The Council's Vision, Purposes and Priorities

2.1 Bromsgrove District Council's vision is to enrich the lives and aspirations of all our residents, businesses, and visitors through the provision of high-quality services, ensuring that all in need receive appropriate help and support. People are at the heart of everything we do; whether they live in our district, work here, or choose to visit. Everyone deserves to receive the best possible service and support and we aim to put those in need at the forefront.

2.2 The Council is committed to providing residents with effective & efficient services that not only meet their needs but understand them too. Through considering what really matters to our residents the Council's Strategic Plan 2019-2023, sets out eight key priorities, underpinned by five strategic purposes.

Eight Key Priorities for 2019-2023

- Economic development and regeneration
- Skills for the future
- Improving health and well being
- A balanced housing market
- Reducing crime and disorder
- Financial stability
- High quality services
- Sustainability

Five Strategic Purposes, with our communities at the heart:

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

3 Meeting our Equality Duties

3.1 The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. The Act covers nine protected characteristics, and these are the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful. The characteristics are

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

Although it is not stated in legislation as a protected characteristic, we also commit to treating everyone equally regardless of their socio-economic status. Our 2022-2026 Equality Strategy will include it and will work to eliminate discrimination and disadvantage caused by a person's socio-economic status.

3.2 The Equality Act 2010 consists of a General Equality Duty, supported by specific duties, and requires public authorities, like Bromsgrove District Council, to consider or think about how their policies or decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act. The General Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

In addition, public authorities also have specific duties and must do the following:

- Publish equality information at least once a year to show how they've complied with the equality duty
- Prepare and publish equality objectives at least every four years

4 Population Overview

4.1 Between the last two censuses, held in 2011 and 2021, the population of Bromsgrove increased by 5.9%, from just over 93,600 in 2011 to around 99,200 in 2021. This is made up of 48.9% male and 51.1% female.

The age breakdown was:

- 18.2% aged under 15 years.
- 58.9% aged 15-64 years
- 22.9% aged 65 years and over.

The number of people aged 50 to 64 years rose by around 1,800, an increase of 9.4%, while the number of residents between 35 and 49 years fell by just over 2,300, a 11.1% decrease.

4.2 In 2021 people in Bromsgrove identified their ethnic group as

- 93.1% White, compared with 95.8% in 2011.
- 2.4% Mixed or Multiple, compared with 1.5% the previous decade.
- The number of Bromsgrove residents identifying their ethnic group as Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh was 3.2%, up from 2.1% in 2011.
- The percentage of people who identified their ethnic group within the Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African increased from 0.5% in 2011 to 0.8% in 2021.

4.3 In 2021, 53.5% of people in Bromsgrove described themselves as Christian, down from 68.9%, while 5.6% did not state their religion, down from 6.9% the decade before. In 2021, 37.4% of Bromsgrove residents reported having "No religion", up from 22% in 2011.

4.4 In terms of disability, 9.5%, up from 9.1% of the population have a long-term health condition or disability that limits their day-to-day activities a little, and 6.1%, down from 7.6%, stated that their day-to-day activities were limited a lot.

4.5 In 2021 Bromsgrove residents described their health as followed:

- Very good was 52.2%, increasing from 50.0% in 2011.
- Good was 32.9%, decreasing from 33.2%
- Bad was 3.0%, decreasing from 3.5%
- Very bad was 0.9%, like 2011.

The 2021 Census was conducted during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This may have influenced how people perceived and rated their health, and therefore may have affected how people chose to respond.

4.6 Of Bromsgrove residents aged 16 years and over, 30.0% said they had never been married or in a civil partnership in 2021, up from 26.8% in 2011.

4.7 The question about sexual orientation, which has not been asked in previous censuses, was voluntary and only asked of those aged 16 years and over.

- 92.0% identified as Straight or Heterosexual

- 1.1% identified as Gay or Lesbian
- 0.8% as Bisexual
- 0.1% as Pansexual
- 6.0% did not answer the question.

4.8 The question about gender identity, which has not been asked in previous censuses, was voluntary and only asked of those aged 16 years and over.

- 95.1% stated their gender identity as the same as sex registered at birth
- 0.1% stated their gender identity different from sex registered at birth but there was no specific identity given.
- 0.1% identified as Trans Woman
- 4.7% did not answer the question.

4.9 For more information from the 2021 Census including work, travel, housing, education and caring responsibility please go to [2021 Census Profile for Bromsgrove](#)

5 Our Equality Objectives

5.1 During 2022 the new Equality Strategy for 2022 to 2026 was adopted by the council. This report sets out the progress on key areas of equality work, during 2022, that underpin our revised objectives and building on what we have already achieved. Our objectives for the next 4 years are:

- Objective 1: Ensure we deliver inclusive and responsive services.
- Objective 2: Engage and communicate with the community in appropriate and accessible ways.
- Objective 3: Understand our communities and celebrate and respect diversity.
- Objective 4: Develop and support a diverse workforce.

The key achievements and progress in 2022 provide the evidence of how we are delivering against the objectives in our strategy.

6 Key Achievements and Progress in 2022

The following sections evidence some of our achievements and progress against Objective 1: Ensure we deliver inclusive and responsive services.

6.1 Covid-19

6.1.1 Going into 2022, the Redditch and Bromsgrove District Incident Management Team (DIMT), chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive, and supported by Public Health, continued to meet regularly, bringing together a range of local partner agencies focused on ensuring a collective approach to supporting local communities through providing guidance, information, advice and support.

6.1.2 Although in March 2022, DIMT was stood down, elements of the work, such as covid vaccinations clinics for instance, including pop ups and mobile van, continued throughout 2022 and into 2023, supported by partners including our Bromsgrove Social Prescribing team who made themselves available to help reach people in different communities and offer wider support and signposting to various services.

6.2 Cost-of-Living

6.2.1 Through the Government's Household Support Fund (HSF), all District Councils worked together with Worcestershire County Council to try and ensure funding was allocated in such a way that it reached those most in need, including working with Act on Energy to provide financial support with energy bills, whether that be current energy bills, energy debt or financial help to repair or replace heating systems. Originally HSF was only intended to last 6 months up to March 2022 but the Government continued it with a Phase 2 and Phase 3 throughout 2022/23 (and a HSF Phase 4 during 23/24 is planned). At a District level, working with partners such as Citizens Advice Bromsgrove and Redditch, BDHT, local foodbanks and white goods schemes, and our own Financial Inclusion Team, support has been provided such as food parcels, essential while goods, supermarket vouchers, post office cash vouchers and more. Working with other local organisations and groups has helped us to identify eligible households (whether that be families, pensioners, disabled for instance) who were in need and eligible to benefit from this support.

6.2.2 At the suggestion of the Chief Executive, a Bromsgrove and Redditch Cost of Living Partnership Group was set up during 2022 including partners such as Act on Energy, Citizens Advice Bromsgrove and Redditch, Age UK Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest, Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT), Worcestershire County Council, local foodbanks, Primary Care Network (PCN) and more, in addition to District Council officers internally. The purpose was to facilitate partnership working between agencies with a shared commitment to minimise the depth of damage of the cost-of-living crisis and the length of its impact.

6.2.3 Through the Cost-of-Living Partnership Group, to help ensure residents were informed and knew who to contact for help, including those digitally excluded, an 'at a glance' Bromsgrove and Redditch cost of living leaflet containing brief advice and key contacts, was produced and printed copies were distributed by partner agencies during the latter part of 2022. This was alongside a wider digital campaign including dedicated [cost-of living-webpages](#). A draft poverty alleviation plan was also produced.

6.2.4 The Holiday Activities and Food programme (HAF) is a DfE funded programme to support children aged 4-16 years (reception -Year 11) who are in receipt of pupil premium (or benefits related) free school meals (FSM) to access enriching activities and food during Easter, summer, and Christmas school holidays. The Bromsgrove Children and Youth Provider Forum are used to support the project provision with information sharing and updates. During this year, free activities and food have been made available for young people to access across the main school holidays. By working with schools and local organisations we were able to target the young people in need to make this accessible for them. Activities were delivered by various providers under our umbrella who also provided either a breakfast, lunch box or hot meal to those eligible children participating.

6.3 Shopmobility

6.3.1 Bromsgrove Shopmobility remains open on reduced hours as current demand is low. A survey was launched near the end of 2021 to understand the demand and the need for the service. There was a low response to the survey (19 in total) 9 people were aware of the service and 6 people had used it, only 2 regularly. The others had no need. 3 people use a similar service in other areas. There was nothing to suggest, from the responses, that the current provision didn't meet the needs of residents.

6.4 Community Transport

6.4.1 BARN (Bromsgrove and Redditch Network) continue to run the 'BURT' community transport service on behalf of Bromsgrove District Council. BURT, which stands for Bromsgrove Urban and Rural Transport, has been Bromsgrove District's local community transport minibus service since 2009 (they won the latest tender in 2021). They average about 350 registered users.

6.4.2 The service helps residents of the district who are unable to make essential journeys by conventional transport, either because of personal mobility or disability difficulties, or because suitable public transport is not available. The BURT minibus is adapted for wheelchair users and helps people get to fitness classes, life-after-stroke sessions, dementia clubs, social activities, and friendship groups, and more, or sometimes just to the shops. In 2022 BURT provided 3,470 journeys to their customers across the district.

The following sections evidence some of our achievements and progress against Objective 2: Engage and communicate with the community in appropriate and accessible way

6.5 Community Engagement

6.5.1 During 2022 the council continued to deliver a range of community engagement and consultations with the information gathered supporting service delivery and corporate decisions. The council continues to work hard to increase participation with responses encouraged from our diverse population to ensure a cross representation of responses.

6.5.2 The Bromsgrove Community Panel, a list of Bromsgrove District residents who have signed up to be kept informed about engagement and consultations carried out by the council, continues to grow. As of the end of 2022, there were 393 members with new members signing up regularly.

6.5.3 During the year, surveys have gone out to the public covering a range of topics including:

- Annual Community Survey
- Bromsgrove Centres' Business Survey
- BDC Draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy
- Stoke Heath Ward Community Governance Review

- Understanding Residents feelings and Views of the Covid-19 vaccination

6.5.4 The Bromsgrove Youth and Community Hub has coordinated a successful Youth Council since 2018. As part of a process to widen its engagement with young people across the district, the District Council funded an expansion of the youth council to include schools. This started with researching and identifying youth councils already established within the local schools and bringing them into the wider youth council. There were mixed responses from schools but the students of those that took part raised several issues they wanted to address both within school and in the local community. Some of the community issues included litter in the town centre, progress at the Birdbox, the provision of arts in the area and the Artrix building, accessibility and inclusion and crime rates. Work with the Youth Council will continue into 2023 to strengthen engagement with schools and the young people.

6.6 Interpreting and Translation

6.6.1 The Council continues to provide interpreting and translation services and in nearly all cases interpreting has taken place via telephone or video call rather than face to face, which has enabled a cost saving for the council. Languages supported by interpreting and translation in Bromsgrove included Arabic and Polish. The service continues to be promoted internally across all services and managed within the Policy Team.

The following sections evidence some of our achievements and progress against Objective 3: Understand our communities and celebrate and respect diversity

6.7 Partnerships

6.7.1 Partnership working has continued throughout 2022 in different forms, helping to ensure different agencies address local need collectively rather than separately in isolation. This has been shown through Partnership structures such as Bromsgrove Partnership.

6.7.2 The Bromsgrove Partnership Board, chaired by the Chief Executive of Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT), includes several different representatives from the statutory sector and voluntary and community sector, including the Chief Executive and Leader of Bromsgrove District Council. It met virtually on a regular basis during the pandemic but in May 2022, the Board met in person for the first time since January 2020. In person meetings have been the preference ever since, strengthening working relationships and improving understanding between agencies at a strategic level, with representatives keen to work together and collectively challenge systems, as appropriate, when its recognised change is needed.

6.7.3 Due to the strengths of the Bromsgrove Partnership, and the difficulties facing the Bromsgrove Primary Care Network (PCN) in trying to establish an effective Collaborative from scratch, the Bromsgrove Partnership Board was asked and agreed to take on the remit of Bromsgrove Collaborative in the summer of 2022. Following discussion on data presented by Public Health in November 2022, the Board agreed overarching collaborative priorities: Mental Health and Inequalities.

Being Well Funding from Public health was also allocated at the end of 2022 with agreement it be used to appoint a Wellbeing Lead to support the Bromsgrove Collaborative work.

6.7.4 The District of Bromsgrove received £2.8m over 2022-25 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). The UKSPF replaces EU structural funds and allows local communities to invest in local priorities from regenerating high streets, to tackling economic decline, and helps reverse geographical inequalities. Every place receives funding, with areas in greater need receiving more support. The Partnership Board oversee the funding and a separate Task Group, made up of a selection of Board members and business representatives, was set up at the end of 2022 to consider project proposals submitted and make recommendations.

6.7.5 The Bromsgrove Partnership Theme Groups continued to meet virtually, strengthening the links between agencies, and continuously striving towards more joined up local provision. The Community Wellbeing Theme Group and Ageing Well Group have enabled partner agencies to come together to share information updates on services and highlight challenges, which in turn help to identify partnership opportunities.

6.7.6 Through Bromsgrove Partnership Board discussions during 2022, it was decided a separate Cost of Living Partnership Group was required which could feed into the Board. Due to the partners involved and the majority working across Bromsgrove and Redditch, it was agreed between partners it would be a joint Bromsgrove and Redditch partnership group.

6.7.7 The Bromsgrove Partnership Board continues to oversee the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) work, which is where original discussions took place on ABCD back in 2020. The Chief Executive of NewStarts, a local voluntary and community sector organisation that hosts of the community builders, joined the Board permanently in 2022 to provide a strategic link.

6.8 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)

6.8.1 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approaches show that connecting people and creating more resident-to-resident relationships builds interdependence and reliance on each other. Connecting people to their shared interests, and enabling them to exchange skills and resources, helps communities identify and act on the issues that are most important to them. This provides a brief update on the progress of ABCD work across Bromsgrove district and the county during 2022.

6.8.2 Following a successful joint bid for funding by Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council to Public Health, two community builders for Bromsgrove District were appointed at the very end of 2021. Hosted by NewStarts, a voluntary and community sector organisation, the community builders started in their roles at the beginning of 2022, one community builder for Catshill and one for Rubery, as agreed by the Bromsgrove Partnership Board.

6.8.3 Despite recent changes within the Public Health ABCD team during 2022, the community builders were well supported through ABCD training and peer support meetings, specifically for the community builders. A joint Bromsgrove and Redditch

ABCD Learning Network also emerged during 2022, facilitated by Public Health, bringing together the community builders, their hosts, ABCD Guides trained officers from within the District Council, relevant portfolio holders and other relevant District Council officers.

6.8.4 Within 6 months there have been some successes including: Easter egg hunts; Jubilee celebrations; working with Rubery Honey who ran a sunflower challenge with seeds being distributed, growth tracked and reported on a worksheet; enabling mums to set up a market stall to recycle baby clothes (known as 'Octo-mom market'). Also, individual successes such as a widow, unknown to services, being introduced to a community coffee morning and other groups. However, it is recognised that this approach will take time to fully embed and a challenge to all agencies is to ensure they give the space and time needed for the communities to step forward and lead.

6.8.5 Countywide ABCD Workshops continue to be delivered and anyone with an interest in ABCD is encouraged to attend. All community builders, relevant portfolio holder, several District Council officers and the host of community builders have all attended but it's open to all.

6.9 Starting Well Partnership

6.9.1 Our free service supports parents of children and young people 0 to 19 years and facilitates a variety of evidence-based groups for parents. The groups give the opportunity to learn new strategies build their confidence and strengthen their family relationships.

6.9.2 During 2022 our Community Team held several events across the district and reached 5,413 Bromsgrove residents (parents and children). The Parenting Team facilitated 27 parenting programmes with 398 parents completing them. We had 5 volunteers actively working as peer supporters in our parenting groups and breastfeeding support groups as well as recruiting and training new volunteers during 2022.

6.9.3 The Social Prescribing Service, a successful wellbeing service, celebrated one year of helping residents. The service is commissioned by Bromsgrove Primary Care Network (PCN), which is made up of nine GP surgeries across the Bromsgrove District. The contract between the PCN and Bromsgrove District Council is for five years.

The service, which is run in partnership with ONSIDE, connects residents with Social Prescribing Link Workers through a self-referral process. The link worker then provides them with a face-to-face conversation during which they can learn about activities in their communities and design their own personalised solutions to life struggles. In 2022, the service received 332 referrals and supported over 250 Bromsgrove patients to complete a programme of support.

Social prescribing can support a wide range of people, including (but not exclusively) people:

- with one or more long term conditions
- who need support with their mental health
- who are lonely or isolated

- who have complex social needs which affect their wellbeing.

6.10 Community Safety

610.1 The North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP) brings together Safer Bromsgrove, Safer Redditch, and Safer Wyre Forest. The NWCSP delivers a range of community safety initiatives and works with agencies and communities to achieve the Partnership's vision of keeping "North Worcestershire a safer place to live, work and visit".

6.10.2 In support of national Hate Crime Awareness Week 2022, North Worcestershire Hate Incident Partnership hosted its annual Hate Crime Awareness Conference, returning to a face-to-face event. This hugely successful event included three high-profile guest speakers who captivated the audience in discussing their own experiences of hate crime:

- Azeem Rafiq, inspiring anti-racism campaigner and former professional cricketer
- Rt. Hon. Stuart Lawrence, coach, motivational speaker, and younger brother of Stephen Lawrence
- Naughty Boy, award-winning music producer, songwriter, and musician Shahid Khan, better known nationally and internationally by his stage name Naughty Boy

6.10.3 The Respect Programme covering Redditch and Bromsgrove, provides crime prevention and community safety awareness workshops as part of schools personal, social, health and economic education (PHSE) lessons. Respect provides sessions on subjects such as recognising and reporting hate crime, understanding healthy relationships/recognising domestic abuse, the dangers of substance misuse and promoting respect and community responsibility. The programme also received 192 referrals for 1 to 1 support through its therapeutic mentoring programme. This academic year, the focus for the programme was to reintroduce face-to-face sessions following the end of Covid restrictions.

6.10.4 Residents learnt more about the work against anti-social behaviour as the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership marked Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Awareness Week, in July. The Council joined West Mercia Police and other agencies, to speak to the public at an awareness raising event in Bromsgrove town centre. There was also a social media campaign throughout the week raising the profile of how ASB is tackled in local communities.

6.11 Community Events and Activities

6.11.1 During 2022, we celebrated the diversity, culture, and heritage in our community and with our workforces. Many events returned, some for the first time since 2019, enabling people to gather. Important dates included Remembrance Sunday, Armed Forces Day, Holocaust Memorial Day, Polish Independence Day, Ukraine Independence Day, World Mental Health Day, LGBT+, Black History Month, International Women's Day and White Ribbon Day.

6.11.2 The Recovery Through Creativity projects were launched in late April to support the creative business sector across Bromsgrove's town centres, as a part of the work of the Northeast Worcestershire Cultural Compact. The purpose was to allow our local creative business sector to access funding to rebuild, to try out new ideas, to take risks and increase the number and diversity of the people engaging with their offer. From Creative Arts Showcase, Brenda Killigrew Sewing Studio, Bromsgrove Indie Club, and the Friends of St John's there were incredible ideas and offers for the town and community to be a part of and enjoy.

6.11.3 The Queen's Platinum Jubilee saw 4 days of great events in Bromsgrove Town, from the 20th Anniversary of the Jubilee Bandstand in Sanders Park and the lighting of the National Beacon, Bromsgrove Festival, and the Indie Club on the Birdbox, and the High Street take over by Bromsgrove's Royal Legion. The Town proudly showed how to celebrate the 70 years of the Queen's reign through diversity and inclusivity.

6.11.4 Bromsgrove hosted its second Pride Event, following the successful one from last year. Run by volunteers, the event received a grant from the BDC Equality Small Grants Scheme to support its delivery. This year it was held in July in the High Street with the family-friendly event featuring stalls, entertainment and promoting awareness of the LGBTQ+ community.

6.11.5 In 2022, we were successful with a Short Breaks funding application in Bromsgrove to support Rigby Hall School to deliver SEN Community football sessions. Three sessions are available for various ages each week where young people with Autism, Down Syndrome, ADHD, SLD and MLD can be supported.

6.11.6 Some other events and activities that supported people in our community included –

- The Green Fun Day, a family fun day with a green, sustainable, eco-friendly theme featuring free, family-friendly stalls, entertainment and displays for everyone to enjoy.
- A range of health and exercise sessions delivered across the district, many of which returned following Covid and are free.
- A range of summer free fun activities were delivered.
- A special ceremony in memory of those who died of Covid-19. Held in Sanders Park a memorial tree was planted, and a plaque unveiled in remembrance of all those who died from Covid-19, their families, and the incredible work carried out by key workers throughout the pandemic.
- The first walking football session was held in Hagley with seventeen attending. In partnership with Hagley Parish Council, the sessions see reduced physical contact and tackling which makes it perfect for people who have been out of the game for a while and want to make a comeback.
- The Council, alongside partners and community organisations commemorated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in Sanders Park to bring together a celebratory event with food, street entertainment, and music. It finished with the ceremonial lighting of the beacons in the park with local choirs performing.

6.12 Equality Small Grants Scheme

6.12.1 Bromsgrove District Council Equality Small Grants Scheme is now in its 8th year of providing grants to small voluntary and community organisations. Following the last two years where we adapted the scheme to support the delivery of grants due to Covid those awarded since 2020 were able to be delivered.

6.12.2 The total budget of £10,000 was awarded to 12 organisations/groups with seven of these being new organisations/groups applying for the first time. Feedback on those who were successful is available on our [website](#).

The following sections evidence some of our achievements and progress against Objective 4: *Develop and support a diverse workforce*

6.13 Employee Support

6.13.1 We have developed and begun implementing our new four-year Workforce Strategy, which “sets out the Council’s vision and aspirations for its workforce, both now and in the future. In doing so it recognises the importance of our staff as a resource central to our success in delivering our strategic purposes. The strategy comprises 3 strands:

- Workforce Planning & Talent Management
- Health, Safety and Wellbeing
- Engagement



6.13.2 The Council provides an employee benefits platform for staff. This includes access to an employee assistance programme (EAP) which is available to all staff and their immediate family members. The employee assistance programme covers everything from health and wellbeing, finances, caring for the elderly, concerns at work, bereavement support etc. Staff can use this to access advice and support on just about anything including counselling sessions. There is also more tailored support available on an individual basis through HR and Occupational Health and Phone a Friend.

The benefits platform provides staff with a range of benefits including access to discounts, our cycle to work scheme, lease car hire and purchased annual leave etc. We try to tailor the benefits platform to the needs of our staff and ensure we provide opportunities to make their salaries go further.

6.13.3 We have a dedicated Wellbeing section on our intranet, signposting staff to wellbeing support and various wellbeing resources. We have implemented a Corporate Learning & Development Programme, which includes specific training to support our wellbeing agenda for staff and managers. This includes menopause awareness sessions, training for managers around how to build their team’s resilience & mental wellbeing, and coaching & mentoring opportunities.

All employees have access to an online training platform that provides various training sessions and resources (including videos podcasts, activity sheets and knowledge checks) which cover a range of soft skills, management, and wellbeing topics.

6.13.4 With the move to agile working we have introduced a mandatory eLearning platform for Display Screen Equipment (DSE) self-assessments (endorsed by the HSE). This takes staff through a DSE assessment process and provides personalised feedback around issues identified which then provides an individual action plan.

6.13.6 Following the success of remote working during the pandemic, we have launched a new Agile working policy. We recognise the positive impact that agile working can have on employee wellbeing. The policy ensures the customer is central to all our activities and service delivery, whilst providing a greater level of flexibility for employees, as deemed appropriate for each service area.

6.13.7 Chief Executive Q and A sessions have continued to be delivered via Teams, every month, providing an opportunity to hear the latest news from the Chief Executive and Heads of Service, and ask questions. The sessions are recorded to enable those to catch up. This continues to have a good attendance from staff across the council and provides a way of sharing information and keeping in contact. In addition we continue with formal staff surveys and short, snapshot surveys, as appropriate.

6.13.8 As an authority we continue to promote the use of one-to-one's and appraisals to support employee wellbeing and to encourage open, two-way communication between managers and employees, within teams and across the wider organisation.

7 Next Steps

7.1 The Council will continue to monitor progress against the Equality Objectives set out in the Equality Strategy (2022-2026) and will report annually on overall progress.

7.2 The Council will explore options for senior officers to undertake Accelerating Inclusion through Allyship training via west Midlands Employers. This training covers allyship, belonging, bias, discrimination etc. Allyship is important because it is:

- A strategic mechanism to promote equity in the workplace
- A way to drive systemic improvements to workplace policies, practices, and culture
- Essential in creating inclusive workplaces that attract the best talent

7.3 The council will explore options for establishing a staff equality, diversity and inclusion group.

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Cabinet Report

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Report title: Grass Verge Maintenance

Relevant Portfolio Holder		Councillor Whittaker
Portfolio Holder Consulted		Yes
Relevant Head of Service		Guy Revans
Report Author: Matthew Austin	Job Title: Contact matthew.austin@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 548206	Environmental Services Manager email:
Wards Affected	Variance to existing maintenance on sites across the District.	
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No	
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	
Key Decision		
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.		
This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph(s) of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 The Cabinet Agree to either accept the proposal, or to maintain the existing maintenance arrangements.

1.2 If Agreed, for the Capital and Revenue Budgets to be adjusted for the identified financial years as set out in section 5 of this report.

2. Context:

2.1 A Motion was proposed at Full Council on 20 July 2022 to manage verges differently during 2022. After discussion this Motion was passed as per the below:

2.2 *"This Council changes its grass verge grass cutting and mowing regime to allow wildflowers to remain in bloom during the height of the season when bees, butterflies and general small wildlife rely on the pollen from wildflowers to flourish. This will not be a one size fits all approach. Council will work with local residents and Councillors to find an approach that works for each community."*

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3. Background:

- 3.1 There are no statutory duties for Bromsgrove District Council to maintain grass areas in a specific way, and arrangements are largely made based on a combination of aesthetics, cost and any corporate policies or priorities, with consideration of what the land is intended to be used for.
- 3.2 Highway Verges are the responsibility of Worcestershire County Council, and they have statutory responsibilities to maintain visibility for road users, which they meet by carrying out 2-3 cuts a year on their verges – typically as a 1mtr cut from the kerb edge outside of settlements.
- 3.3 Bromsgrove District Council carries out this work on behalf of WCC on verges within speed restricted settlements to a higher standard of maintenance than they would for aesthetic purposes.
- 3.4 WCC provide us with the funds they would have used to maintain them for highway safety, and we support this with additional investment from our funds to support a higher standard of maintenance of between 7 and 9 cuts a year (subject to seasonal variation and ground conditions).
- 3.5 The funding received from WCC is currently under review as part of a “Fair Funding” review with Worcestershire County Council and the other Worcestershire LA’s.
- 3.6 The Place Teams identified a number of grass verges across the District in 2020 and 2021 that could be left uncut to support wildlife and pollinators without causing concern for highway safety. The main aim of this exercise was to see if we could encourage wildlife corridors connecting existing habitats within residential areas to encourage wildlife to feel able to travel between existing habitats better and encourage pollinators such as bees to travel further and expand their abilities to help wildflowers and other plants increase thrive.
- 3.7 We managed this by way of regular mowing on the perimeters to ensure growth did not infringe on highway safety or inhibit drivers and pedestrians’ lines of sight on a road. and in some places even cut pathways through to support dog walking and residents’ enjoyment of larger areas.

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- 3.8 We do not have a Biodiversity Action Plan for Bromsgrove District Council to support ecological planning across our assets, but we have used signage as per below to explain what is being done in sites where we have left areas wild.



- 3.9 Many Councils have subscribed to schemes such as “No Mow May”, and “Jungle June” to support natural areas as adjustments to their normal maintenance arrangements, as May is a key month for plants, insects and other wildlife. Warmer soils encourage grass and other plants to start shooting up. Letting wildflowers and weeds bloom provides an important food source for pollinating insects needing nourishment in the early part of the season to expand their populations.
- 3.10 Natural areas arising from delayed grass cutting supports existing local vegetation such as buttercups, yarrow, dandelion, flatweed and cow parsley. These also support local wildlife and with improved habitat to live and move within as green corridors.
- 3.11 Whilst this provides short term benefits to local wildlife and pollinators, the follow up maintenance to cut down the thicker vegetation has a significant impact on mowing equipment, and leaves a considerable amount of vegetation on grass areas after cutting.
- 3.12 This has had mixed responses from the public, with a strong public perception that grass should be maintained for aesthetics in residential areas, and this has resulted in a number of these

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sites reverting to aesthetic maintenance rather than to support local habitat and plant life during 2021 and 2022.

- 3.13 The Worcestershire County Council Highways Team have attempted to make changes to their grass cutting arrangements to support naturalisation of verges where safe to do so, but have no policies in place to support what they are doing at this time, and Officers in the County Highways Team are currently exploring options to support a decision on how this will be managed across their areas of responsibility whilst also meeting their statutory duties.
- 3.14 Our current maintenance arrangements for grass verges equate to a yearly cost of approximately £189,000 in staff time, equipment, and operating costs.
- 3.15 This is based predominantly on the use of rotary mowers, which are able to maintain a good standard of cut on a cutting cycle of 4-5 weeks, supported by a single flail mower that is designed to support a proportion of our grass areas with longer vegetation and/or uneven ground where the rotary mowers would cause damage to the ground.

4. Proposals:

- 4.1 In order to meet the requirements set out by Full Council in 2022, it is estimated that we would need to maintain a cyclical mowing regime on approximately 70% of highway verges and Open Spaces, with up to 30% of our grass areas potentially supporting wildlife that relies on pollen from wildflowers.
- 4.2 These areas would be identified through engagement with Local Members, Parish Councils and residents to identify and agree areas that can be left to grow naturally during May, June, and July in order to benefit local pollinators and wildlife, before then resuming cyclical maintenance from August until the end of the growing season in order to ensure a maintained appearance throughout the Winter.
- 4.3 The longer vegetation on these areas will require Capital investment in new flail mowers in the short term in order to cope with the volume of vegetation to be cut at the end of the flowering season, but this will be partially offset by a reduction in our existing rotary mower fleet over the next 5 years as existing equipment will not need to be replaced.

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- 4.4 In order to support engagement with Members and Communities as required under the Notice of Motion, it is proposed to engage a short-term administrative role to support the Place Team in identifying appropriate locations across the District and consulting with local residents, Parish Councils, and the County Council in order to ensure that identified locations are supported, and don't impact on visibility on the public highway. This is proposed for a four-month period in the first two cutting year's, which will impact on the 2023/24 Financial Year, the 2024/25 financial year, and the 2025/26 Financial Year.
- 4.5 Further to this, it is proposed that an Ecologist be engaged to assess the areas identified for naturalisation in the first and third year of the project in order to document the plant species and wildlife being supported by this initiative in order to support future planning and public communication of the benefits.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The investment required to support this initiative would be as follows:

5.2

Capital Investment Required	
Two flail deck mowers	£60,000
Three Brush Cutter Strimmers	£2,100
These would support a reduction in the existing mowing fleet of two rotary mowers at an estimated saving of £34,000 on the Capital replacement budget over the next three years.	

- 5.3 Additional Capital Investment of £62,100 in 2023/24 financial year to support the purchase of this additional equipment prior to the start of the cutting season in 2024/25.

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5.4

	Revenue Investment Required	
	Administrative Support (Jan - April)	Ecologist Support
2023/24	£6,000	£0
2024/25	£8,000	£6,000
2025/26	£2,000	£0
2026/27	£0	£6,000

5.5 Total Additional Revenue expenditure of £28,000 over the current and next three financial years.

5.6 Once implemented, it is estimated that the on-going yearly cost of grass cutting would reduce to £175,000 in staff time, capital loan repayments on equipment, and operating costs on mowers.

5.7 Although this is nominally a £14,000 saving, this would primarily be in staff time allocated to grass cutting during the early summer period of reduced mowing. This would not support a staff reduction on the Place Team over the course of a full year, and this increased capacity would support the resilience of the grass cutting staffing and wider cleansing maintenance across the District.

6. Environmental/Climate Change Implications

6.1 Allowing plants on our grass areas to flower provides vital nectar (food) sources for insects and increases the pollination of plants in our area.

6.2 Naturalised grass areas provide a variety of habitats and wildlife corridors to support and enhance biodiversity within our settlements, and can also absorb pollution and help improve air quality.

6.3 Naturalised areas with a larger surface area of grass and other plants can help to cool temperatures during periods of hot weather through the process of evapotranspiration, and are also able to capture carbon emissions from the atmosphere and lock up carbon in the soil.

6.4 A reduction in mowing frequencies will reduce the use of petroleum powered mowers, reducing our carbon footprint.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Under the Environment Act of 2021 the Government aims to clean up the country's air, restore natural habitats, increase biodiversity, reduce waste and make better use of our resources. The provisions of the act will "halt the decline in species by 2030 and require new developments to improve or create habitats for nature"

7.1.1 This legislation places a strengthened "Biodiversity Duty"¹ on Public authorities in England to consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England. Local authorities (excluding parish councils) and local planning authorities must publish a biodiversity report to document the policies and actions carried out to comply with our "biodiversity duty".

7.1.2 Measures to support biodiversity in our maintenance arrangements will support compliance with our biodiversity duty.

7.2 If highway verges are not maintained to preserve visibility and safety on the highway, the County Council will be in breach of its responsibilities under the Highways Act 1980, and hold us accountable for any issues that arise from that on areas that we have agreed to maintain on their behalf and for which we receive a financial contribution towards each year.

8. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose - Communities which are safe, well maintained & green

8.1 This will support the local environment for the benefit of local flora and fauna, which by extension will benefit our residents through increased wildlife and habitat within our settlements and support native pollinators at a time when nationally these are under threat due to the loss of habitat.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complying-with-the-biodiversity-duty#actions-you-could-take>

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Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 8.2 By working with Local Members and residents, we will ensure that the review process for proposed naturalised areas will not impede members of the public with or without protected characteristics.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 9.1 There is a risk of negatively impacting on highway safety as a result of vegetation being allowed to grow taller. This will be managed in coordination with the Worcestershire County Council Highways Team to mitigate this risk.

- 9.2 There is a risk of potential complaints from residents regarding the frequency of mowing on areas identified for naturalisation. This will be mitigated by close working with Ward Members and Parish Councils to identify appropriate sites, and support resident engagement.

- 9.3 There is a risk that this project will not deliver measurable benefits for local biodiversity and pollinators. This will be monitored through engagement of an ecologist to assess the sites being maintained in this way.

- 9.4 A reduction in mowing frequency may be perceived as a conflict with the maintenance aspirations of our Strategic Purpose: Communities which are safe, well maintained & green. This will be mitigated by maintaining clearly defined edges to identified areas, and pathways cut through any larger areas to support resident engagement with them as an area maintained for nature.

- 9.5 There is a political and financial risk if significant changes are made to grass maintenance without appropriate education and engagement with residents regarding what is being done. This will be mitigated by working with Local Members and Parish Councils to engage with local residents regarding areas identified for naturalisation.

- 9.6 The scale of the proposal meets the requirement of the motion passed by Full Council, but will produce limited environmental benefits due to the limited scale of this initiative. For this reason, it is recommended that the current proposal be considered an interim measure, with a view to further consideration and development in conjunction with Worcestershire County Council and the Parks Team (who lead on Biodiversity for Bromsgrove

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District Council's green assets). This will support meeting our responsibilities to support our local biodiversity alongside our Climate Emergency aspirations.

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10. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Whittaker – Environmental Services Portfolio Holder	17.08.23
Lead Director / Head of Service	Guy Revans – Head of Environmental Services	17.08.23
Financial Services	Circulated to HoS	17.08.23
Legal Services	Circulated to HoS	17.08.23
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	N/A	N/A
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	Consulted with Climate Change Portfolio Holder	17.08.23

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

13th September 2023

Setting up a Shareholders Committee

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Hotham Councillor Webb
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Green, Deputy Monitoring Officer Claire Felton – Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services
Report Author Peter Carpenter	Job Title: Interim S151 Officer Contact Claire Green email: Claire.Green@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel:
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	Work and financial independence Affordable and sustainable homes
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to set up the Member oversight of the New Housing Company in the form of a Shareholders Committee; through a sub-committee of the Cabinet. The role of the Shareholder Committee (as set out in more detail below), includes commenting on Reserved Matters and reporting frequency.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that:

- 1) a committee of the Cabinet, to be known as the Cabinet Shareholder Committee, which will provide oversight over the Housing Company set up in July 2023 (and other Companies that the Council might set up in due course), be established;**
- 2) the Shareholder Committee meet on a biannual basis or as otherwise necessary;**
- 3) the Shareholder Committee be responsible for the recommendation to the Cabinet of reserved matters; and**
- 4) authority be delegated to the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services to make necessary amendments to the Council’s constitution for the Cabinet Shareholder Committee, including the introduction of terms of reference for Cabinet Shareholder Committee.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Background

3.1 In July, the Council approved the setting up of a Housing Company to manage the Burcot development. The following was approved:

- A housing company limited by shares wholly owned by the Council be established.
- By way of a formal loan agreement between the Council and the housing company and in compliance with the requirements of subsidy control (formerly State aid) the Council provide the housing company initial operating capital to the sum of £50,000.
- Subject to Members' agreement to establish a housing company, a housing company board be established, comprising a membership of 2 Non-Executive Directors and 3 Executive Directors: the Head of Community and Housing Services, the Head of Finance and Customer Services and the Strategic Housing Services Manager.
- Authority be delegated to the Director of Resources to undertake a recruitment process to appoint 2 non-Executive Directors to the Housing Company Board.

3.2 There is the requirement for Member oversight of the Company. The way this is normally undertaken by Councils is through the formation of a Shareholders Committee. The Shareholders Committee is a sub Committee of Cabinet; and as such only members of Cabinet who are members of the Committee can be voting members. It is possible for Cabinet to co-opt other non-voting members as they wish. Such members can fully participate in the discussion and decisions of the Shareholder Committee; bar any voting. It is suggested that the Chairman should be the Cabinet Member for Finance and Enabling; the Chairman will have to be a Cabinet member in case a vote is required (although given the remit of this committee voting is not likely to be frequent).

3.3 As the cabinet does not have single member decision making the decisions will be those of Cabinet; following their consideration of the views of the Shareholder Committee.

3.4 The key responsibilities of the Shareholders Committee are to:

- Make recommendations to Cabinet on those matters reserved to the Council from the Company
- Receive and comment upon a yearly updated business plan
- Receive updates on performance and finances to link into the Council's quarterly finance and reporting timetable.

4. Legal Implications

4.1 The Council is the only Shareholder in the Housing Company.

The powers of the Council as Shareholder are vested in Cabinet assisted by the Shareholders Committee.

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The Council will enter into a Shareholders Agreement with the Housing Company. This Agreement documents the relationship between the Council as Shareholder and the Company and sets out the matters which are specifically reserved to the Shareholders Committee to determine. These are known as Reserved Matters.

5. Strategic Purpose Implications

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 5.1 The Strategic purposes are included in the Council's corporate plan and guides the Council's approach to budget making ensuring we focus on the issues and what are most important for the borough and our communities. This Shareholders Committee can possibly, with the setup of additional companies link to any of our Strategic Priorities. The initial Company links to work and financial independence and Affordable and sustainable homes.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.2 The Houses built at Burcot are high specification energy efficient buildings. The setting up of the Shareholders Committee ensures that the management of those assets are to the Councils requirements as per the "Shareholders" agreement. This will be the case for all other companies set up.

6. Other Implications

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.1 This is linked to the individual "shareholder agreements".

Operational Implications

- 6.2 This is linked to the individual "shareholder agreements".

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 Shareholder Committee Risks as discussed in that Committee will be added to Risk Registers.

8. APPENDICES

None

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

13th September 2023

Provisional Financial Outturn Report 2022/23

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Hotham – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Michelle Howell
Report Authors	Head of Finance and Customer Services michelle.howell@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	All
Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to set out the Council's draft Revenue Outturn position for the financial year April 2022 – March 2023 (subject to final accounts closedown procedures and audit).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet are asked to resolve to note that:

- The 2022/23 provisional outturn position in relation to revenue budgets is a projected revenue overspend in the region of £956k.
- The 2022/23 provisional outturn position in relation to Capital expenditure is £10.856m against a total approved programme of £13.1m.
- The provisional outturn position in respect of the General Fund Reserves, noting that any overspend funded from General Fund Reserves is the use of one-off funding. It is therefore imperative to identify medium-term budget efficiencies to accommodate increasing costs and replenish reserves.
- The provisional outturn position in respect of Earmarked Reserves.
- Financial performance in respect of Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates Collection.
- At the time of writing the Council is yet to formally close its accounts for the 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial years. This could therefore result in adjustments to actual expenditure and income in those years and could have a consequential impact on the 2022/23 accounts.
- Work continues to refine the position including addressing the backlog of entries that are in suspense and any miscoding, therefore the provisional position detailed

in this report is subject to change, and a further update will be presented to Members in due course.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 This report sets out the Council's provisional revenue and capital outturn positions for 2022/23 against budget.
- 3.2 The £12.068m full year revenue budget included in the table overleaf is the budget that was approved by Council in March 2022.
- 3.3 At Quarter 1 of 2022/23, it was noted that the budget included £478k of organisational cross-cutting efficiency targets which had not been allocated to services. This target was offset in the main by forecast underspends across other service areas predominantly due to vacancies. The 2022/23 budget has therefore been revised to reflect the allocation of £424k operational efficiency target to those areas.
- 3.4 Whilst the Council has been on a finance recovery programme since April 2022, following the implementation of a new financial system in February 2021 which led to a deterioration of the Council's financial position, it is important to note that at the time of writing the Council is yet to formally close its accounts for the 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial years. This could therefore result in adjustments to the actual expenditure and income in those years and could have a consequential impact on the 2022/23 accounts.
- 3.5 The Finance team have undertaken a detailed review of the 2022/23 accounts since year end. There are a number of assumptions and manual adjustments that have been made to arrive at the provisional revenue outturn position, mainly as a result of transactions still being cleared from suspense. Those assumptions and manual adjustments include:
- Anticipated accruals and prepayments,
 - Grants are applied to known expenditure and remaining balances are carried forward,
 - Reserves are applied to known expenditure,
 - Shared service recharges between Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough councils where a shared service arrangement exists, and
 - Transfers between the Collection Fund and the General Fund.
- 3.6 Work continues to refine the position including addressing the backlog of entries that are in suspense and any miscoding. Therefore, the provisional position detailed in this report is subject to change, and a further update will be presented to Members in due course. Taking this into account, the provisional revenue outturn position is anticipated to be a £956k overspend; a £54k increase over the forecast Q3 £902k overspend position. These figures are after the "absorption" of the £424k of non-allocated savings and efficiency targets.

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	2022/23 Full Year Budget	2022/23 Cross- cutting saving allocation	2022/23 Revised Budget	2022/23 Actual	2022/23 Shared Service and Manual Adjustments	2022/23 Adjusted Provisional Outturn	2022/23 Adjusted Provisional Outturn Variance
Regulatory Client	228,063	0	228,063	234,222	0	234,222	6,158
Business Transformation & Organisational Development	1,857,867	(156,971)	1,700,896	1,426,730	85,198	1,511,928	(188,968)
Chief Executive	1,797,361	(3,293)	1,794,068	1,747,793	(44,682)	1,703,112	(90,956)
Community & Housing GF Services	1,093,315	(80,173)	1,013,142	82,546	909,945	992,492	(20,651)
Environmental Services	3,438,085	(42,175)	3,395,910	3,241,239	425,342	3,666,581	270,671
Financial & Customer Services	1,406,322	(87,038)	1,319,284	2,587,750	(629,908)	1,957,842	638,559
Legal, Democratic & Property Services	1,146,850	(4,235)	1,142,615	1,422,207	(30,784)	1,391,423	248,808
Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	1,578,027	(50,182)	1,527,845	1,630,093	(63,281)	1,566,812	38,967
Cross cutting savings and efficiency targets	(477,890)	424,067	(53,823)	0	0	0	53,823
Net Expenditure before Corporate Financing	12,068,000	0	12,068,000	12,372,581	651,830	13,024,411	956,412

- 3.7 The following paragraphs set out the variances for each service area against the 2022/23 revenue budget. As noted in the Q3 financial monitoring report, a significant variance across all budgets is the allocation of the £1,925 pay award across all pay scales. This budget pressure was however reflected in the 2023/24 budget.

Business Transformation & Organisational Development – draft outturn position £189k underspend (Q3 £78k underspend)

Within Business Transformation & Organisational Development, the draft underspend position is predominantly due to budget underspends within the ICT service.

The overall draft underspend for the service is after the absorption of £157k cross cutting efficiency savings targets based upon forecast underspends at quarter 1 within ICT due to anticipated budget efficiencies and Human Resources due to vacancies within the

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service. Following the installation of a new HR software package, recruitment is underway to recruit to vacant posts within the service.

Chief Executive – draft outturn position £91k underspend (Q3 £33k underspend)

Within the Chief Executive area, the draft underspend position is due to budget efficiencies against corporate expenditure budgets.

Community and Housing General Fund Services - draft outturn position £21k underspend (Q3 £66k overspend)

Within Community and Housing General Fund Services the draft underspend position is as a result of an anticipated underspend within Community Safety.

This draft position is after the absorption of £80k cross cutting efficiency savings targets based upon forecast underspends at quarter 1.

Environmental Services – draft outturn position £271k overspend (Q3 £316k overspend)

Within Environmental Services there are a number of services that have provisional overspends against budget. This is largely as a result of the implications of the pay award, temporary staffing and fleet costs within Waste Management, Place Teams and Management and Support.

This overall overspend position is after the absorption of £42k cross cutting efficiency savings targets based upon forecast underspends at quarter 1 within Engineering & Design and Place Teams due to vacancies and budget efficiencies respectively.

Financial & Customer Services – draft outturn position £639k overspend (Q3 £128k overspend)

Within Financial & Customer Services there is a draft overspend in the region of £639k. Within this overspend there are £195k insurance recharges which need to be reallocated across other departments. In addition to this, the draft overspend is as a result of the implications of the pay award, temporary staffing requirements within Financial Services and reduced court costs/housing benefits overpayments recovered, however this could change pending income reallocation.

This draft overspend position is after the absorption of £87k cross cutting efficiency savings targets based upon forecast underspends at quarter 1.

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Legal, Democratic and Property Services – draft outturn position £249k overspend (Q3 £412k overspend)

Within Legal, Democratic and Property Services the draft overspend position is predominantly due to a budget pressure within Facilities Management linked to SLM. The Council has a contract with SLM to deliver Leisure Management Services on its behalf at Bromsgrove Sports and Leisure Centre (BSLC). During the Covid-19 pandemic, the BSLC had to temporarily close and received financial support from the Council via the General Covid-19 grant. The Leisure sector continues to recover from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, and therefore a cost pressure has been seen in this area. This budget pressure has been offset in part due to staffing underspends as a result of vacancies across Legal and Democratic Services during the financial year.

Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services – draft outturn position £39k overspend (Q3 £34k overspend)

Within Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services a draft overspend of £39k is currently anticipated. This is mainly due to the impact of the increased pay award.

Regulatory Client – draft outturn position £6k overspend (Q3 £2k overspend)

A small overspend position on the Regulatory Client is currently anticipated for the year. This takes into account the budgetary increases approved at the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board Meeting in November 2022.

Cross cutting savings and efficiency targets

Organisational efficiency targets totalling £424k were allocated to service areas based upon forecast underspends as at quarter 1; predominantly linked to vacancies. The allocation of the pay award for 2022/23, which was in excess of budgeted provision, in addition to increased costs linked to fuel and utilities has resulted in overspends across a number of areas that contributed towards the cross-cutting savings target at the start of the year.

- 3.8 Overall, the Council is currently anticipating a provisional revenue outturn in the region of a £956k overspend for the 2022/23 financial year, after reflecting the absorption of cross-cutting savings targets. This provisional revenue outturn position reflects the best information available at the present time, however the position will continue to be reviewed and refined in light of the backlog of entries that are in suspense and any miscoding. Therefore, the provisional position is subject to change, and a further update will be presented to Members in due course.

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3.9 Cash Management

Borrowing

- As at the 31st March 2023, there was £3.7m short-term borrowings. The Council has no long-term borrowing.

Investments

- On 31st March 2023 there were £1.2m of short-term investments held.

Capital Monitoring

- 3.10 A capital programme of £2.410m was approved in the Budget for 2022/23 in February 2022. This has been fully reviewed as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) using actual data as at the end of December 2022. The table below and detail in Appendix A set out the Capital Programme schemes that are approved for the MTFP time horizon.
- 3.11 A updated capital programme of £8.126m was approved in the Budget for 2022/23 in February 2023. Many of these schemes are already in partial delivery in the 2022/23 financial year. By approving this list, the Council also agreed sums not spent in 2022/23 (and 2021/22 by default if schemes originated earlier than 2022/23 as sums have been carried forward through to the 2021/22 MTFFS Report) to be carried forward into 2023/24. The table also splits amounts by funding source; Council or third party.

Financial Year	Total Budget £000	Council Funded £000	External Funded £000
2021/22	16,511	12,146	4,366
2022/23	8,126	1,485	6,641
2023/24	10,852	1,694	9,158
2024/25	4,921	2,224	2,697
2025/26	3,156	1,558	1,598

- 3.12 Included in this funding the Council also have the following Grant Funded Schemes which are being delivered in 2023/24:
- The two Levelling Up schemes – Old Fire Station and Market which are funded via £14.5m of Government Funding, and the Council is funding £1.6m of works.
 - UK Shared Prosperity Schemes totalling £2.8m.
 - The Burcot Lane development at £10.275m.
- 3.13 The outturn spend is £10.256m against a revised 2022/23 capital budget totalling £13.099m is detailed in Appendix A. It should be noted that as per the budget decision carry forwards of £2.843m will be rolled forward from 2022/23 into 2023/24 to take account of slippage from 2022/23.

Earmarked Reserves

- 3.14 The position as reported to Council in February 2023 as per the 2022/23 – 2024/25 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) is Shown in Appendix B. This has been adjusted for the draft 2022/23 Outturn position, which was previously estimated based on Q3 monitoring information at the time of the MTFP. As part of the MTFP all reserves were thoroughly reviewed for their requirement and additional reserves set up for inflationary pressures such as utility increases. At the 31st March 2023 the Council holds £7.9m of Earmarked Reserves.

General Fund Position

- 3.15 The General Fund Balance at 31st March 2022 was £4.485m. The anticipated in-year draft overspend of £956k in addition to the budgeted drawdown from reserves totalling £411k could result in the application of £1.367m from the General Fund Balance in 2022/23. Re-baselining of earmarked reserves during the 2023/24 budget setting process added £2.682m to the General Fund, therefore as at the 31st March 2023 it is projected that the General Fund Balance would be £5.8m. With 2020/21 and 2021/22 still to be closed and approved by Audit, these figures are subject to change. Progress on the Accounts has been reported to Cabinet through the Finance Recovery Plan Report and is reviewed at every Audit Committee.
- 3.16 It is important to note that, any overspend funded from the General Fund Balance is the use of one-off funding. It is therefore imperative to identify medium-term budget efficiencies to accommodate increasing costs and replenish reserves.

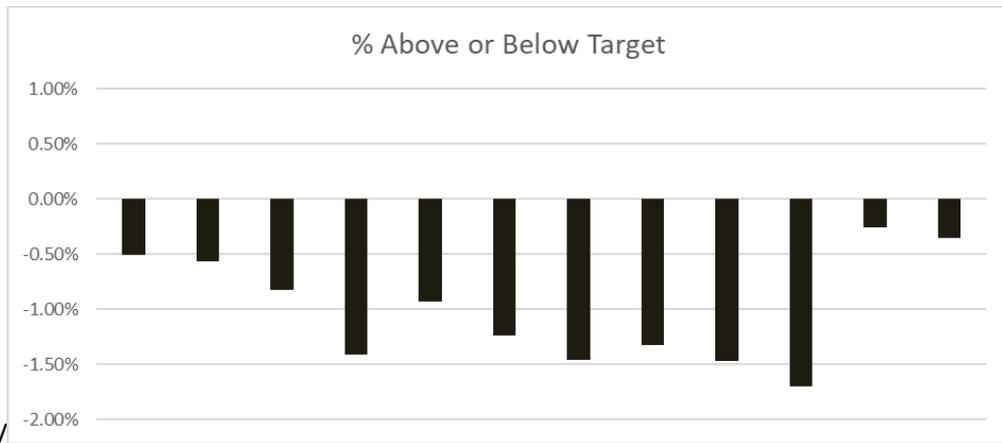
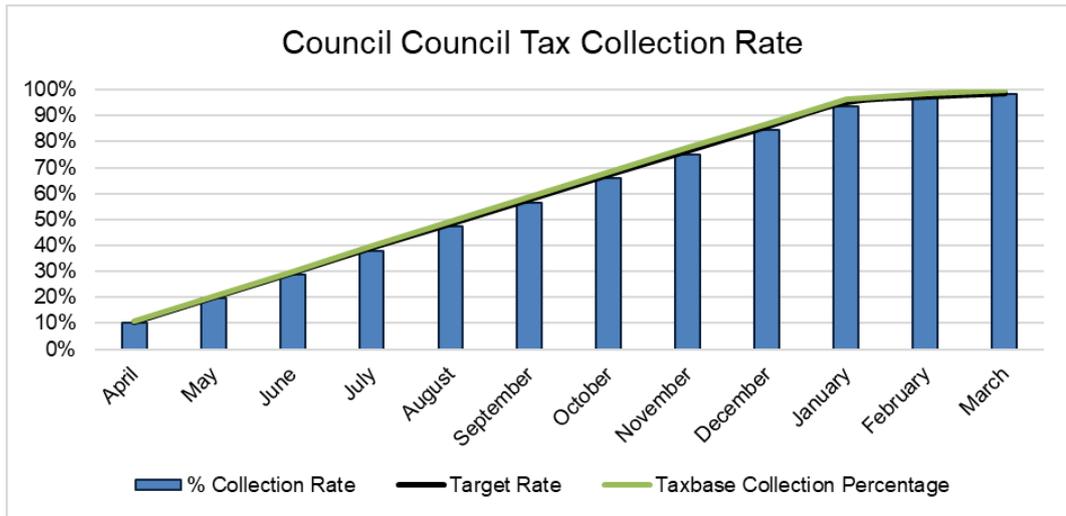
Financial Performance

- 3.17 Council Tax collection rate data as Quarter 4 2022/23 is set out in the following tables. Overall, collection was just under 0.5% below target.

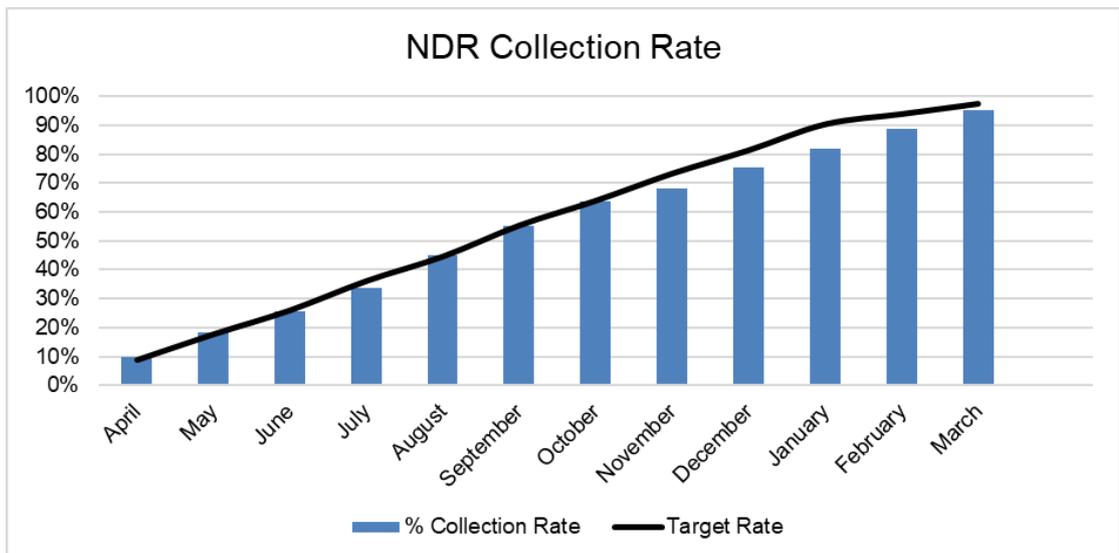
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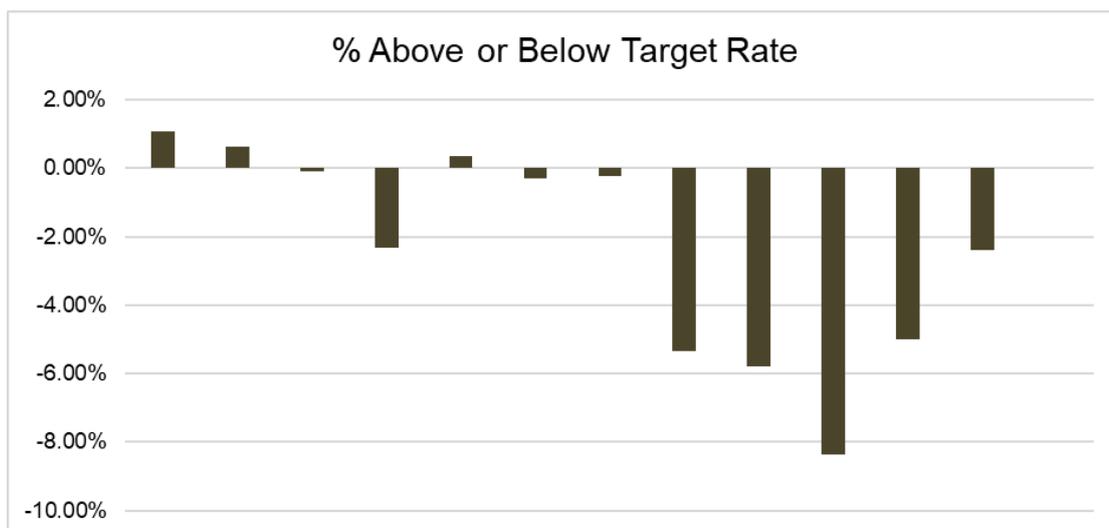
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3.18 The National Non Domestic Rates collection rate data as Quarter 4 2022/23 is set out in the following tables. Overall, collection was just over 2.0% below target, and saw a significant improvement in the final quarter of the year.





4. Legal Implications

4.1 No Legal implications have been identified.

5. Strategic Purpose Implications

Relevant Strategic Purpose

5.1 The Strategic purposes are included in the Council’s corporate plan and guides the Council’s approach to budget making ensuring we focus on the issues and what are most important for the borough and our communities. Our Financial monitoring and strategies are integrated within all of our Strategic Purposes.

Climate Change Implications

5.2 The green thread runs through the Council plan. The Financial monitoring report has implications on climate change and these will be addressed and reviewed when relevant by climate change officers to ensure the correct procedures have been followed to ensure any impacts on climate change are fully understood.

6. Other Implications

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.1 None as a direct result of this report.

Operational Implications

6.2 Managers meet with finance officers to consider the current financial position and to ensure actions are in place to mitigate any overspends.

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7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 The financial monitoring is included in the corporate risk register for the authority

8. APPENDENCES

Appendix A – Capital Outturn

Appendix B – Reserves Position

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Appendix A - 2022/23 Reprofiled Capital Outturn

Description	Approved budget date	Original approved Budget £	duration (years)	Department	Funding detail	21/22 Spend £	2022/23 Total £	22/23 Spend £	c/f
Large Schemes									
Levelling Up Fund Fund									
- Government Funded		14,492,401		Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Grant Funding	1,600,000	5,329,041	126,902	5,202,139
- Council Funded		1,610,266			Borrowing	281,000	420,133		420,133
									0
UK Shared Prosperity Fund									
- Capital Element		2,825,702		Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Grant Funding		50,000		50,000
- Revenue Element				Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Grant Funding		290,499		290,499
- Remainder (to be allocated)				Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Grant Funding		20,000		20,000
									0
									0
Schemes Agreed to Continue									
Burcot Lane	2019/20	10,275,000		Financial & Customer Services	Public works loan board and grant homes england	1,125,000	4,973,852	7,914,009	-2,940,157
	2019/20	120,000		Community & Housing GF Services	Capital Receipts/Borrowing	28,000	0		0
CCTV									
Funding for DFGs	2020/21	750,000		Community & Housing GF Services	Grant income WCC	620,000	913,000	969,792	-56,792
Home Repairs Assistance	2018/19	50,000		Community & Housing GF Services	Long Term Debtors	-5,000	50,000	4,088	45,912
Energy Efficiency Installation	2018/19	110,000	2	Community & Housing GF Services	Capital Receipts/Borrowing	12,000	110,000	7,810	102,190
Energy Efficiency	2017/18			Community & Housing GF Services	Grant finance	3,000	0		0
Cemetery Extension infrastructure at at North Bromsgrove Cemetery Phase Two	2017/18			Environmental Services	Capital Receipts/Borrowing	0	6,500	15,576	-9,076
New Finance Enterprise system	2019/20	455,000		Financial & Customer Services	Capital Receipts	1,000	0	13,680	-13,680
OLEV ULEV Taxi infrastructure scheme	2019/20	300,000	1	Community & Housing GF Services	Grants & Contributions	296,000	0	700	-700
Fleet Replacemnet new line	New				Borrowing	380,000	356,000	75,292	280,708
Replacement Parking machines	2020/21	120,000		Environmental Services	Capital Receipts/Borrowing	196,000	253,000	123,985	129,015
Wheelie Bin Purchase	2018/19	ongoing		Environmental Services	Capital Receipts/Borrowing	102,000	144,000	169,034	-25,034

Description	Approved budget date	Original approved Budget £	duration (years)	Department	Funding detail	21/22 Spend £	2022/23 Total £	22/23 Spend £	c/f
Footpaths		ongoing		Environmental Services	Borrowing				0
Buildings		Ongoing		Legal and Property	Borrowing				0
Bittell road recreation ground	2020/21	62,000		Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	S106 B/2011/0741- Land at Fiery Hill, Barnt Green / 18k balances	17,000	0		0
Salix	2020/21	615,000		Legal, Democratic and property services	Grants & Contributions	65,000	0	533,193	-533,193
Greener Homes	2020/21	180,000	1	Community & Housing GF Services	Grants & Contributions	-227,000	0	192,053	-192,053
Hagley Scouts				Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Capital Receipts/Borrowing	35,000	0		0
Bromsgrove Sporting					Loan	4,000		46,133	-46,133
Car Park Improvements - Oakalls						8,000			0
Woodrush High Schools refurb						134,000			0
Rubery Redevelopment Works				Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Capital Receipts/Borrowing	0	0	9,550	-9,550
Sanders Park dda play provision	2017/18	56,080		Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	S106 14/0755 Kidderminster Road and S106 13/0422 Meadows first school	0	0		0
New Digital Service	2020/21	57,400	1	Community & Housing GF Services	Borrowing	0	33,668		33,668
Bus Shelters	2020/21	18,000		Environmental Services	Borrowing	0	18,000		18,000
Fleet Management Computer System	2020/21	17,000		Environmental Services	Borrowing	0	0		0
Environmental Services Computer System	2020/21	38,200		Environmental Services	Borrowing	0	0		0
Cisco Network Update	22/23		3	Business transformation & Organisational Development	Borrowing	0	5,717	18,573	-12,856

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Description	Approved budget date	Original approved Budget £	duration (years)	Department	Funding detail	21/22 Spend £	2022/23 Total £	22/23 Spend £	c/f
Server Replacement Est(Exact known Q2 2022)	22/23		4	Business transformation & Organisational Development	Borrowing	0	83,250	0	83,250
Laptop Refresh	22/23		4	Business transformation & Organisational Development	Borrowing	0	5,000	4,961	39
Town Deal - Innovation Centre	22/23			Business transformation & Organisational Development	Town Deal	0			0
Town Deal - Public Realm	22/23			Business transformation & Organisational Development	Town Deal	0			0
Town Deal - Library	22/23			Business transformation & Organisational Development	Town Deal	0			0
Market Hall (LUF)	22/23			Business transformation & Organisational Development	Levelling Up Fund	0			0
Sanders Park	22/23			Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	S106	0		24,511	-24,511
Play Area, POS and Sport improvements at Lickey End Recreation Ground in accordance with the S106 Agreement	22/23	37,956	1	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	S106 19/0137/FUL	0	37,956	6,488	31,468
BDC Combined F/Path & Cycle	2018/19	390,000		Environmental Services	Grants & Contributions	0	0		0
Barnt Green Millenium Park - Toilet				Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	S106 B/2011/0741 - Land at Fiery Hill, Barnt Green / 18k balances	0	0		0
Total		424,000				4,675,000	13,099,616	10,256,330	2,843,286

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Appendix B - Reserves Position

	Balance at 31/3/22	Transf In 2022/23	Transf out 2022/23	Re-baseline 2022/23	Balance at 31/3/23	Transf in 2023/24	Transf out 2023/24	Balance at 31/3/24	Transf in 2024/25	Transf out 2024/25	Balance at 31/3/25	Transf in 2025/26	Transf out 2025/26	Balance at 31/3/26
General Fund Reserve	4,485		(1,367)	2,682	5,800	100	(250)	5,650	244	0	5,894	200	(431)	5,663
General Fund Earmarked														
Building Control Other	7			(7)	0			0			0			0
Building Control Partnerships	82				82			82			82			82
Business Transformation	0				0			0			0			0
Commercialism	0				0			0			0			0
Community Safety	0				0			0			0			0
Community Services	271				271		(125)	146		(125)	21			21
Economic Regeneration	998			(600)	398			398			398			398
Election Services	51				51			51			51			51
Environmental Services	49				49			49			49			49
Financial Services	4,345		0	(1,000)	3,345	638	(150)	3,833			3,833			3,833
Housing Schemes	346				346			346			346			346
ICT/Systems	197				197			197			197			197
Leisure/Community Safety	330				330			330			330			330
Litigation Reserve	0				0			0			0			0
Local Development Framework	0				0			0			0			0
Local Neighbourhood Partnerships	16				16			16			16			16
Other	64			(64)	0			0			0			0
Planning & Regeneration	133				133			133			133			133
Regulatory Services (Partner Share)	46				46			46			46			46
Replacement Reserve (Inc. Recycling)	0				0			0			0			0
Shared Services (Severance Costs)	311			(311)	0			0			0			0
Utilities Reserve	0			1,053	1,053		(351)	702		(351)	351		(351)	0
Covid-19 (General Covid Grant)	1,177			(1,177)	0			0			0			0
Covid-19 Sales Fees and Charges	576			(576)	0			0			0			0
Covid-19 (Collection Fund)	3,094		(1,547)		1,547		(1,547)	0			0			0
Total General Fund	12,093	0	(1,547)	0	7,864	638	(2,173)	6,329	0	(476)	5,853	0	(351)	5,502

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY 12TH JULY 2023, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors K.J. May (Leader), S. J. Baxter, S. R. Colella,
C.A. Hotham, C. B. Taylor and S. A. Webb

Observers: Councillor P. M. McDonald and Councillor S.T. Nock

Officers: Mrs. S. Hanley, Mr P. Carpenter, Ms M. Howell,
Mr O. Paparega, Mr. M. Bough and Mrs J. Gresham

10/23 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P. Whittaker.

11/23 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

12/23 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE CABINET HELD ON 21ST JUNE 2023**

The minutes from the Cabinet meeting that took place on 21st June were submitted for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED that the minutes from the Cabinet meeting held on 21st June be approved as a true and accurate record.

13/23 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
BOARD HELD ON 6TH JUNE 2023**

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board provided Members with a verbal update in respect of the previous Board meeting.

In doing so, it was highlighted that there had been a presentation provided by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) regarding the Governance Systems Task Group, which had been established as a result of a Motion considered at the Annual Council meeting held on 24th May 2023. The presentation included information on the options for potential models of future governance and timelines for implementation.

Members were informed that the dates of the first meeting for the Task Group had been agreed and the first meeting was due to take place on 21st July 2023. The Chairman of the Board explained that the Group would look at the implications of implementing a new governance system within the Council and whether a move to a Committee system or hybrid version would result in a good governance system that would deliver for Members and residents in the future. Costs and capacity within the Council would be considered carefully as part of the review and the final report would be considered at an extraordinary meeting of the Council in September 2023. It was noted that the date for this meeting was still to be determined.

Members asked several questions during consideration of this item. These were as follows:

- Involvement of the Local Government Association (LGA) in the Governance Systems Task Group – it was confirmed that the LGA had requested that the CfGS provide support for the review and informed Members that Ms C. Buckley, a Senior Governance Consultant from CfGS, had presented at the Board meeting. It was confirmed that this support would be available throughout the investigation, and it was planned that Ms. Buckley would be in attendance for some if not all of the meetings.
- Culture within the Council – It was noted that a change in governance structures would not necessarily cease any underlying tensions experienced at the Council and that it was important to recognise that work needed to be undertaken in order to improve this area. Members stated that historically there had been issues in this area and this had been one of the catalysts for looking at potential changes. It was noted that any new governance structure would need to work locally and be agreed by all parties.
- Implementation of a new governance system – Some Members felt that due to the scale of the change, it was important to start the process of implementing a new governance system that ran parallel to the review. This could include looking at resourcing and the impact on the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). Members felt that this would be pre-emptive and could not be initiated until the recommendations had been made by the Task Group undertaking the review. Cabinet was informed that the process of the review once it had been completed would be that the report be considered at the Overview and Scrutiny Board, then at Cabinet, then by Full Council before the recommendations be

considered at future meetings of the Constitution Review Working Group (CRWG). It was anticipated that the implementation of any changes would take at least six months and that the CRWG had already looked at some areas of the Council's Constitution which may require changes in the future.

Members queried whether the six weeks' timeline for such a large review would be adequate. However, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board explained that it was important Members kept focussed during the meetings and adhered to the Terms of Reference. Although Cabinet Members recognised that they were not able to be involved in the Task Group, they requested whether it would be possible to review the Terms of Reference of the Group. Councillor McDonald confirmed that this would be possible.

The Leader thanked the Board, Members of the Task Group and Officers for undertaking this investigation.

RESOLVED that the minutes from the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 6th June be noted.

14/23

BROMSGROVE 2040 VISION

The Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) presented the report in respect of the Bromsgrove 2040 Vision. In doing so the following was highlighted for Members' attention:

- This was a Town Development Strategy in order to strengthen vitality within the Town.
- Five major unused or underused sites had been identified to attract people to the Town Centre.
- The strategy sought to identify how people moved in and out of the Town Centre, including the use of the railway station. Members were informed that a review of planned public realm interventions would be undertaken to improve connections across the town centre, with the intention to create an improved sense of continuity and cohesion.
- It was hoped that the strategy would encourage different uses of the Town Centre, other than retail, to increase vibrancy and footfall.

Following consideration of the report, Members felt that the wording of the recommendation was appropriate and that to 'endorse' this vision 'in principle' reflected that the strategy was one part of a bigger picture.

Some Members raised that historically there had been issues experienced within connectivity from the railway station and that there was not adequate parking within the Town Centre. It was suggested that if the car parks identified within the report were to be used for other activities as suggested this would further impact on the availability of car parking spaces. It was confirmed that work would be undertaken in order to look at schemes, such as the bus request scheme already in place within the Town. It was important that these kind of schemes were increased in order to provide better connectivity.

There was a brief discussion regarding the future of the Stourbridge Road carpark however due to the ongoing Planning Application on this site it was not appropriate to comment on this further during this meeting.

Members were informed that this was an aspirational high level document with regards to the future of the Town Centre and that work would continue to secure future funding, including from the now disbanded Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) in order to build on the vision in the future.

At this point in the meeting, a typographical error was identified within the report, regarding the possibility of accessing funding from the GBSLEP. Members noted that within the report it stated that there was £78m worth of funding available, however it was confirmed that this should state as follows:

‘The Council must also assess how it will access over £1.5m of funding available through the now disbanded GBSLEP and possibly a further **£7.8m** of funding.’

Members were keen to understand whether the responses to the public consultation on the Market Hall site had been geographically spread across the whole of the District. Officers explained that there had been a variety of responses to the consultation and that the stakeholder and resident events had been very well attended. However, the detail of the number of responses from each Ward within the District was not available.

Cabinet felt it was important to keep residents engaged in this process and it was important to demonstrate successful projects when they were completed. In response to this Members queried the timescale of the vision, stating that it spanned across a long period of time. Some

Members felt that it would not be ideal to identify a site for redevelopment which would then be unused until later in the timeline of the vision. In addition to this it was raised that detail on whether the sites highlighted within the report had been identified for long, medium or short term development. Once again, it was reiterated that the vision was high level strategy, with the catalyst for the vision being the receipt of the £14.6 Levelling Up Funding and redevelopment of the Market Hall site.

RESOLVED that the Bromsgrove 2040 Strategy be endorsed in principle and that officers bring forward proposals for key development sites.

15/23

WORCESTERSHIRE HOUSING STRATEGY 2040

The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing and Strategic Housing presented the Worcestershire Housing Strategy 2040 for Members' consideration. The strategy set out a 20-year vision for the County and the significant decisions it would play in decisions for housing in the future.

Cabinet was informed that the strategy would be delivered through four priority areas. These were as follows:

- Economic Growth and Jobs
- Quality and Standards
- Health and Wellbeing
- Net Zero Carbon and Climate Change

The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing and Strategic Housing thanked Mr. K. Dicks, Chief Executive Officer of Bromsgrove District Council, in his role as Chair of the Worcestershire Housing Strategy Board and for his hard work in producing such an important strategy for the future.

Following presentation of the report, Members expressed that this Housing Strategy was very much required and welcomed its implementation.

Some Members felt that there had been a missed opportunity in that there seemed to be no linkage to the Bromsgrove Strategic Transport Plan contained within the strategy. Members were informed that this was a County-wide document rather than specific to Bromsgrove and therefore that kind of detail was not included. It was further explained that there would be an opportunity to look further into a more specific

areas of Housing and Transport within the District during the preparation of the Council's Local Plan. In addition to this it was noted that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic within the strategy had not been mentioned in a significant way.

Members queried whether the strategy covered both Social and Private Sector Housing. Officers confirmed that this was the case. Some Members raised queries in respect of the cost of retro fitting rental properties for elderly residents and those living in more rural areas of the District. It was confirmed that these issues would be more of a focus within the Bromsgrove District Plan and not in the Worcestershire wide strategy. Officers also stated that Central Government funding was available for retrofitting properties e.g. PUGS 2.

Further discussions regarding the Bromsgrove District Plan included the importance of bringing Members and residents along the journey when it was being pulled together later in the year.

The Burcot Lane Development was discussed, and Members commented on the high quality specification of the project. Some Members queried whether this would be the standard of any future Housing projects. It was reported that it was hoped that future projects would be of an equally high specification.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) The Worcestershire Housing Strategy 2021 – 2040 be adopted.
- 2) Officers be asked to develop a District Level Action Plan with consideration given to the proposals in this Strategy.

16/23

CABINET APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Enabling presented the Cabinet Appointments to Outside Bodies reports. In doing so, it was explained that it was a straightforward report and that the appointments and nominations for this municipal year had been awarded to the equivalent Cabinet Member who had held the role in the previous municipal year.

Two changes of note were that Councillor K. May had been appointed as substitute Member for the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership and Worcestershire Local Transport Body for the forthcoming year. This role had previously been undertaken by Councillor H. Dyke from Wyre Forest.

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

17/23

CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE ACTION PLAN

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the report in respect of the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan and took the opportunity to thank all Members and Officers involved in the process. The following was also highlighted for Members' attention:

- The LGA carried out a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) as a result of a recommendation at the Full Council meeting held on 7th December 2022. The CPC had been undertaken in March 2023 and was considered a good opportunity to make any necessary improvements, following the issuing of the Section 24 Notice by the Council's auditors in October 2022. It was noted that this was not an inspection and any recommendations provided as a result of the CPC were given in the capacity as a critical friend to the Council.
- Although the CPC was initiated as a result of the recommendation agreed at the Council meeting held in December 2022, a separate Task Group had also been established to carry out a root and branch investigation, looking into the issuing of the Section 24 Notice. Therefore, the CPC had focussed specifically on the Corporate Governance within the Council.
- Five high-level themes were adopted for all LGA CPCs, and these provided the initial framework. The themes were as follows:
 - Local priorities and Outcomes.
 - Organisational and Place Leadership.
 - Governance and Culture.
 - Financial Planning and Management.
 - Capacity for Improvement.
- The composition of the CPC team comprised of colleagues from other District Councils and Advisors from the LGA.
- There had been 55 meetings across both Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils during the four day review and both Members and Officers had been involved in the meetings. At the end of the initial on-site activity there was a feedback session which took place on 10th March 2023 where Members of the Executive (Redditch), Cabinet (Bromsgrove), Group Leaders,

Corporate Management Team were invited to attend and presented with the findings of the CPC.

- There were six recommendations as a result of the CPC, and the Corporate Management Team (CMT) had provided a response in the form of a Council Action Plan for each Recommendation. Members were asked to look particularly at Recommendation 2 - The organisation should consider a governance review to improve decision-making and Recommendation 6 - Use engagement, shared values, and improved processes to create a positive democratic culture. These were considered significant in light of the current review being undertaken looking at the future governance model for the Council. The remaining recommendations were highlighted as follows:
 - Recommendation 1 - The Council needed to review its strategic priorities and realign resources accordingly.
 - Recommendation 3 – Embed the 2022-2026 Workforce Strategy and develop an action plan which needed to be implemented at pace.
 - Recommendation 4 – Agile working principles and policies needed to be implemented consistently.
 - Recommendation 5 - Ensure the Section 24 Notice and Interim Annual Audit Report recommendations were fully implemented.

Following the presentation of the report, the Leader invited the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board to comment on the report, having considered it at the Board meeting held on 6th June 2023. It was raised that some comments had been made during the Board's consideration of the report which included the slippages experienced within the Capital Programme and the lack of capacity at a Senior Officer level.

Some Members noted that Bromsgrove District Council was in a different position since the report was published as a result of the Local Elections held in May 2023 and that much of the requirements included had already been met.

One area that was still to be addressed was the role of Cross Party Champions and it was agreed that this would be considered at the next Group Leaders Meeting.

RESOLVED that

1) the Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) Feedback report which took place in March 2023 be noted.

2) the Council's response and supporting action plans be endorsed.

18/23

APPROVALS TO SPEND REPORT

The Interim Director of Finance presented the Approval to Spend report which set out the key implications of the new Procurement Bill, which needed to be enacted by 1st April 2024. It was reported that the Bill would ensure greater transparency to how Councils across the Country undertook their business.

Cabinet was informed that included within the report were the following areas:

- Key parts of the new Bill
- Transparency arrangements already in place at the Council
- Council procurement governance requirements
- An analysis of present procurements and comparison of limits against local Councils
- The proposed way forward.

The Interim Director of Finance explained that the Bill would reform the UK's public procurement regime, making it quicker, simpler, more transparent and better able to meet the UK's needs while remaining compliant with international obligations. It was noted that the majority of Council's across the Country were currently not compliant in this regard.

In addition to this, it was noted that it would introduce a new regime based on value for money, competition and objective criteria in decision-making. Furthermore, it would result in a simpler and more flexible, commercial system that better met the Country's needs. And would more effectively open up public procurement to new entrants such as small businesses and social enterprises so that they could compete for and win more public contracts.

Cabinet was informed that this was a large piece of work, however the Council had already begun to put measures in place which had resulted in the majority of the requirements under the new Bill already being met with only a few changes required for transparency purposes.

It was noted that the measures already in place included:

- No Compliance No Order which was implemented on the TechOne system on 1st April 2023. It was clarified that this would ensure that an order could not be raised unless linked to a contract or an identifiable procurement route.
- All new suppliers had to be approved by the procurement and payments teams.
- Monthly spending of over £500 was placed on the Councils Website.
- That the Council had an Electronic Purchasing Card (EPC) system for small expenditure.
- The contracts register was available to Officers, Members and the Public.
- The Procurement Team was available for monthly meetings with Heads of Service, which ensured they had visibility of what service departments were procuring to confirm contracts were set up to guarantee compliance to the 'No Compliance No Order' regime, as outlined above.
- Procurement training be provided to the teams on request.
- Monthly Accounts payable training delivered.
- A dedicated Procurement Teams page on the Bromsgrove District website.

The Interim Director of Finance reported that Part 6 of the Constitution set out the Scheme of Delegations, which, it was clarified set out what decisions could be delegated to Cabinet and individual Officers. The Council Constitution set out that from a financial basis a "Key Decision" was any item that had a combined financial spend (either as a single item or for the length of the contract) of £50,000. This, it was stated, included Revenue, Capital and S106 allocations.

Members were informed that Key Decisions needed to be on the Council's forward plan. Once this had happened Cabinet decisions were actioned via a Cabinet Report and decisions delegated to Officers actioned via an Officer Decision notice.

The Council's Procurement Pipeline, which was presently based on the Contracts Register, had been included in the report along with the initial "pipeline document". It was reported that the Procurement Pipeline provided a forward look of potential contracting opportunities and when existing contracts were due to expire. Officers clarified that the key task of the pipeline was to allow for proper planning of procurements to ensure the Council maximised its contracting opportunities.

It was clear from the data provided from the existing contracts register that the present £50k threshold for Key Decisions covered far too many projects as many contracts last for multiple years. In addition to this, the majority of Councils had traditionally set the key decision limit at the European Union Threshold level of £179k.

Further information on Key Decision limits in respect of other Councils in Worcestershire and the wider local area was provided as follows:

- Wyre Valley - £50k
- Worcester City – £164,176 in 2017, suggests not required in present structure.
- Birmingham – Capital £1m, Revenue £500k, Chief Officers £200k
- Solihull - £500k
- Wolverhampton - £250k

The national Contracts finder level was also reported as being set at £200k.

The Interim Director of Finance reported that this report was pre-scrutinised by the Finance and Budget Working Group on 7th July 2023.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Enabling thanked the Interim Director of Finance for his detailed report and stated that it was a positive step in terms of transparency and would tighten the procurement process for the future.

Some Members queried whether this report would be considered at the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee and it was agreed that this could be arranged for the future.

The question of using a framework to procure a contract was queried, and concerns were raised that this could prevent the Council getting the best deal for services and goods procured. The Senior Solicitor clarified that this was not the case, and the use of a framework was a route to market that meant all suppliers had been evaluated by the framework provider, such as GCloud or ESPO and completed all necessary checks and balances prior to their services being procured by the Council.

The Leader invited the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board to comment on the report and he stated that it was disappointing that the Constitution of the Council had been breached by Officers. However, he

was satisfied that this was now being taken seriously and would be resolved.

Finally, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Enabling commented that although he agreed with the recommendations the use of the term 'rogue expenditure' could perhaps be modified for future reports as there was no evidence of impropriety in this area. He also thanked Mr. P. Carpenter and Ms. M. Howell for all their hard work in this area and for making progress to ensure that the Council's compliance was effective.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) The Key Decision threshold be raised to £200k. The logic being that revenue expenditure using GCloud, contract lengths could be up to 4 years. As such this was the existing £50k limit expanded to the full term of revenue contracts. This new threshold would apply to all classes of delegated decision.
- 2) On a quarterly basis a report "the Approval to Spend report" be provided to Cabinet which set out from the Procurement Pipeline those procurements that should be taking place over the next year. This report would be refreshed every quarter and could be converted once approved by Cabinet into the ongoing forward plan.
- 3) That as part of this report an analysis of spending be made of the past 3 years to identify spends with suppliers over the £200k limit to ensure this spending is converted to properly contracted expenditure and rogue expenditure be dealt with.

19/23

FINANCE RECOVERY PLAN - UPDATE

The Interim Director of Finance presented the Finance Recovery Plan – Update for Members' consideration. The report set out the processes the Council had been following to rectify a deterioration in its financial position and processes due to the impact of the implementation of a new financial system in February 2021 during the Covid-19 pandemic period.

A Finance Recovery Programme was put in place from April 2022 to start to rectify the situation. This was reported at the Cabinet meeting that took place on 12th October 2022.

These issues built on comments from the External Auditors relating to 2019/20 accounts, which were only approved in the Autumn of 2021 and

the subsequent issuing of the Section 24 Recommendation on 31st October 2022 due to non-delivery of the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts. It was particularly noted at that time that significant issues within the working papers submitted to the External Auditors relating to the 2019/20 accounts had been highlighted.

Cabinet was informed that the Council continued to move forward with the rectification procedures and the following processes had already taken place or been implemented:

- As discussed earlier at this meeting, the CPC took place in March 2023 and was a joint review with Redditch Borough Council. The associated Action Plans included a Finance Action Plan which met the CPC's recommendations.
- The commissioning of a root and branch review by the Audit Task Group on how the Council arrived at the Section 24 Notice. The Task Group met a number of times in February and its findings were initially presented to Audit, Standards and Governance Committee on 9th March 2023. The outcome of this Task Group had been a number of recommendations which had been approved and implementation had commenced.
- The inclusion of a standing agenda item at each Audit, Standards and Governance Committee meeting which reviewed progress against these recommendations and national and local deadlines. Any exceptions or issues highlighted by Audit, Standards and Governance Committee would then be reported to Cabinet.

The Interim Director of Finance explained that the timeline for next steps was as follows:

1. Closure of the Accounts for 2020/21 - the agreement of treatment of take on balances would now take place in early July 2023 as a significant amount of testing was still required by the External Auditors.
2. Provision of Draft 2020/21 Accounts to External Audit – This would take place in July 2023. This, however, was dependent on confirmation from the External Auditors that they had approved the Council's take-on balances work, as highlighted above. Members were informed that the External Auditors were having issues in how they need to test the transactional data due to their "normal" models not working on our data.
3. The commencement of the 2020/21 External Audit – July to September 2023 – this, it was explained, was an estimated date.
4. Sign Off of 20/21 Accounts - November 2023

5. Closure of Accounts for 2021/22 –planned to be signed off by May 2024
6. Closure of Accounts for 2022/23 - planned to be signed off by November 2024

It should be noted that at the recent LGA Conference it was highlighted that over 500 Council Audits relating to 2021/22 and before were still to be completed by the Auditors. This remained a significant issue for the sector.

In terms of the key financial returns, Members were informed that within the previous week the Capital Outturn Reports for 2020/21 and 2021/22 had been submitted. However, the key returns that had still not been delivered were the Revenue Outturn forms for 2020/21 and 2021/22 and the VAT returns. Although, it was confirmed that the Government now allowed these returns to be completed based on estimates, the level of uncertainty due to the Cash Receipting issues previously experienced meant these could not be completed until the External Auditors had signed off the Council's take on balances and the Council had provided the draft accounts to External Audit.

It was also noted that during the weekend of 8th – 9th July 2023, the Council had moved to the latest version of the TechOne System (23A) which would give improved functionality. As a result of this new version, a series of updated finance training would be rolled out to Officers.

In terms of Procurement, the following was highlighted:

- The new 'No Compliance No Order' process had been live for one month. Although some issues had been experienced with TechOne it was hoped that these would be resolved with the upgrade on the system.
- Many departments were now proactively getting quotations for lower value works. Currently, the predominant issue was concerned with training which, it was reported, was being resolved.
- The number of contracts in place was growing regularly and the Council was confident that this process was having a positive effect. Eventually, it was hoped that the Council would find itself in a position where the number of orders being processed was minimal.
- A spreadsheet was being collated for requests with no contracts and discussed with teams going forward.

During consideration of this report, Members queried why there seemed to be so many delays in the auditing of accounts nationally. It was confirmed that there were capacity issues being experienced in this sector. Particularly as there was not as much money available in the public sector as the private sector.

The potential increase of Audit fees was raised, and it was confirmed that this was likely in the future, potentially from £70k to £110k. However, it was confirmed that would be a possibility to challenge any increase in Audit fees as these had to be agreed by the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA).

Members questioned what the outcome would be if the Statement of Accounts were not agreed by the External Auditors. It was reported that there could be a disclaimer provided on the accounts, however this was not ideal.

Reference was made in respect of Appendix 1, which contained the recommendations from the Audit Task Group. It was queried whether in future these could be presented in such a way that it would be easier to identify what recommendations had been implemented and those that were outstanding. Officers agreed to look in this for future reports.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Progress made on the financial recovery be noted including:
 - Delivery of the Statutory Accounts
 - Delivery of Statutory Financial Returns
 - Improvements in the Control Environment

- 2) The work still under way to move back to a best practice operation and the associated timetable for completion of this work, as contained in this report, be noted.

20/23

TREASURY OUTTURN REPORT 22/23

The Interim Director of Finance presented the report in respect of the Council's draft outturn position on the Council's Capital and Treasury Management Strategies including all prudential indicators for 2022/23. Members were informed that there was a requirement for progress to be reported to Cabinet and then to Council.

The 2021 Prudential Code included a requirement for Local Authorities to provide a Capital Strategy, a summary document approved by full Council which covered capital expenditure and financing, treasury management and non-treasury investments. The Authority's Capital Strategy was approved by full Council on 27th June 2022 and was compliant with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) requirements.

Further information included in the report was a summary of the fluctuating economic position for the year from the Council's Treasury Advisors ArlingClose.

Cabinet was informed that on 31st March 2023, the Authority had net borrowing of £2.5m arising from its revenue and capital income and expenditure. The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes was measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital were the underlying resources available for investment.

It was further reported that the Council was now making returns in the region of 4% for the balances it was investing in the short term (working capital) and that the Council presently did not have any long term debt and that the Capital Programme had been financed using working balances.

The remainder of the paper set out how the Council was complying with its prudential indicators.

RECOMMENDED that the Treasury Outturn position for 2022/23 be noted.

21/23

TO CONSIDER, AND IF CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE, TO PASS THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING DURING THE CONSIDERATION OF ITEM(S) OF BUSINESS CONTAINING EXEMPT INFORMATION:-

RESOLVED that:

Under S100 A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matters on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 of the said act, as amended.

Minute Item No. 22 – Establishment of a Housing Company

22/23

ESTABLISHMENT OF A HOUSING COMPANY

The Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing and Strategic Housing presented the report and in doing so highlighted the following:

- The report followed a number of reports presented to Cabinet on the Burcot Lane Housing Development Scheme at the Council's former offices. It was agreed that the Council would undertake the development of 61 dwellings at the site with the sale of 6 units on the open market and the sale of 18 units of affordable housing to Bromsgrove District Housing Trust. It was proposed that the remaining 37 units be provided as private rented accommodation. The details in respect of the options of the management of the remaining properties had been included within the report.
- The overarching aim of the development was for the Council to assist in balancing the housing market by providing high quality private rented housing which would also result in the Council having a long-term capital asset. The private rented sector in Bromsgrove was only 10.7% with the West Midlands having 21.4%. This provided further evidence that this form of tenure which played an important role in the housing market is lacking in Bromsgrove.
- This development was an important step for the Council to work to not only to increase numbers of privately rented properties but also worked towards improving standards within the sector. The creation of a Housing Company provided the framework to meet this ambition of the Council and to provide services that were appropriate to the management of private rented stock.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) That the progress of the matter to date be noted and affirmed
- 2) That the 37 private rented units of the Burcot Lane development be long-leased from the Council to the housing company
- 3) To note that officers continue to work on provisions for the internal and external common areas of the 37 private rent properties and in respect of the wider Burcot Lane development. A managing agent would be required to undertake this role.

RECOMMENDED that

- 4) a housing company limited by shares wholly owned by the Council be established.
- 5) by way of a formal loan agreement between the Council and the housing company and in compliance with the requirements of subsidy control (formerly State aid) the Council provide the housing company initial operating capital to the sum of £50,000.

(During the consideration of this item, Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to move to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed which related to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

23/23

TO CONSIDER ANY URGENT BUSINESS, DETAILS OF WHICH HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED TO THE HEAD OF LEGAL, DEMOCRATIC AND PROPERTY SERVICES PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE MEETING AND WHICH THE CHAIRMAN, BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, CONSIDERS TO BE OF SO URGENT A NATURE THAT IT CANNOT WAIT UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING

There was no urgent business on this occasion.

The meeting closed at 8.20 p.m.

Chairman

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Quarter 1 2023-24 – Financial and Performance Report

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Hotham – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance	
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes	
Relevant Head of Service	Michelle Howell Deborah Poole	
Report Authors	Head of Finance and Customer Services michelle.howell@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Head of Business Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Strategy d.poole@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk	
Wards Affected	All Wards	
Ward consulted	Councillor(s)	No
Relevant Purpose(s)	Strategic	All
Non-Key Decision		
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.		
This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that:

- 1) **The current financial position in relation to Revenue and Capital Budgets for the period April to June and the full year overspend position following the application of reserves of £437k be noted;**
- 2) **Those procurements over £50k due to be delivered during 2023/24 be added to the forward plan;**
- 3) **The Q1 Performance data for the Period April to June 2023 be noted.**

That Cabinet is asked to RECOMMEND to Council

- 4) **Allocating £351k from the Utilities Reserve to part mitigate the overspend position in 2023/4.**
- 5) **Changes to the Capital Programme as set out in para 3.13 with an ongoing revenue cost of £40k, £17k fleet replacement, £13k Wheely Bins and £10k wild flowers equipment.**
- 6) **Approving the £11.0k increase to the Engineering Services base budget in 2023/4 from reserves and including this change in the 2024/25 Medium Term Financial Plan.**

- 7) That the Key Decision Threshold is raised to £200k with the additional controls for expenditure between £50k and £200k as set out in Paragraph 3.21.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This report presents at Quarter 1 (April – June) 2023/24
- the Council's forecast outturn revenue monitoring position for 2023/24 based on data to the end of Quarter 1
 - An update on progress on the 2023/24 budget process
 - Procurement pipeline projects (over £50k)
 - The organisations performance against the strategic priorities outlined in the Council Plan Addendum, including operational measures to demonstrate how the council is delivering its services to customers.
- 2.2 The 2022/23 Financial Outturn position is also being presented to Cabinet in September. Both reports will need to be read to give an overall view of the financial position as the 2022/23 Outturn Report
- Will directly affect reserve levels.
 - Will set out the final Capital budgets coming forward into 2023/24 by project.

3. DETAILED PERFORMANCE

Financial Performance

- 3.1 As part of the monitoring process a detailed review has been undertaken to ensure that issues are considered, and significant savings and cost pressures are addressed. This report sets out, based on the position at the end of Quarter 1, the projected revenue outturn position for the 2022/23 financial year and explains key variances against budget.
- 3.2 The £11.9m full year revenue budget included in the table below is the budget that was approved by Council in March 2023.

Service Description	2023-24 Approved Budget	2023-24 Approved Budget Q1	Payroll Assumptions	Utilities & Vehicle Hire Assumption	Q1 Adjusted Spend	Q1 Variance to Budget	Full Year Variance to Budget
Business Transformation and Organisational Development	1,813,586	453,397	12,800		466,197	12,801	51,202
Community and Housing GF Services	1,102,638	275,660	2,900		278,560	2,901	11,602
Corporate Services	1,446,605	361,651	3,300		364,951	3,300	13,199
Environmental Services	3,410,080	852,520	108,800	43,750	1,005,070	152,550	610,200
Finance and Customer Services	1,401,756	350,439	21,000		371,439	21,000	84,000
Legal, Democratic and Property Services	1,181,962	295,491	17,400	-26,250	286,640	-8,851	-35,402
Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services	1,349,503	337,376	13,300		350,676	13,300	53,201
Regulatory Client	239,870	59,968	0		59,968	0	0
Starting Well	0	0	0		0	0	0
	11,946,000	2,986,500	179,500	17,500	3,123,533	197,001	788,002
Corporate Financing	-11,946,000	-2,986,500	0	0	-2,986,500	0	0
Overall Total	0	0	179,500	17,500	137,033	197,001	788,002

Budget Variances

- 3.3 The draft position is set out in the above table. As this is expenditure at Q1 it is important to note that, at this stage in the financial year there are a number of instances where annual expenditure or accruals may distort the profiling as reflected in the Q1 actual. The above profiles have assumed support services and grant are adjusted to budgetary levels and accruals are netted out of the figures.
- 3.4 In addition to this, it is also important to note that the Council is yet to close its accounts for the 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial years. This could therefore result in adjustments to the actual expenditure/income and forecast outturn positions as reported in the table above. Further updates will be provided to Members throughout the financial year (this work is being led by the Audit Standards and Governance Committee).
- 3.5 Overall, the Council is currently forecasting a revenue Overspend at Quarter 1 of £197k. This is due to the pay award yet to be ratified and additional fleet hire costs and projects to a full year overspend of £788k. This position will continue to be reviewed particularly given the impact of the increasing costs linked to inflation and further updates will be provided to Councillors throughout 2023/24.
- 3.6 Vehicle Hire is definitely going to put a pressure on the revenue budgets this year, as the refurbishment project on our Refuse fleet is requiring vehicles on hire to continue the work. There have also been issues with the fleet unrelated to the refurbishment project that has resulted in higher rental costs as well overall this has a £175k full year impact on the budget.
- 3.7 This in-year budget forecast reflects the best information available at the present time, however it is important to note that there are a

number of key factors that may impact upon the financial position which are not yet reflected fully within the forecast, including:

- The present cost of living crisis and the impact that this may have upon demand for council services, including the impact of homelessness and the cost of bed and breakfast temporary accommodation costs.
- Inflationary increases – general inflation is coming down but is still running at over 8% and will impact upon transport costs, utilities and contracts in particular.
- Pay negotiations – a 2023/24 pay award similar to the 2022/23 £1,925 level per pay point plus on costs has been offered by the Employers. This is yet to be accepted by the Unions. The table at 3.2 gives the estimated impact of these changes.
- It is estimated that utilities increases are running at 70%. In the 2023/24 budget we assumed a 100% increase in budget and also set up a reserve for the same amount. The table at 3.2 gives the estimated impact of these changes.

- 3.8 The full year effect of a £788k overspend will need to be mitigated. In our original MTFP assumptions for 2023-26 we set up a Utilities Reserve of £1,053k which we assume reduces by £351k a year to mitigate increased costs. Given that this increase has not happened to this magnitude it is proposed that the assumed yearly drawdown of £351k of this reserve is used to mitigate the overspend position. **This leaves a £437k overspend position.** The ongoing 2023/24 pay increases position, once it is finalised and ratified later this year would then need to be resolved as part of the 2024/25 MTFP process.

Additional Funding Requirements

- 3.9 There is a paper attached at **Appendix D** which sets out making permanent the temporary restructuring of the Environmental Services, Engineering and Design Team (EDT).

Capital Monitoring

- 3.10 A capital programme of £10.9m was approved in the Budget for 2023/24 in March 2023. Many of these schemes are already in partial delivery in the 2022/23 financial year. By approving this list, the Council also agreed sums not spent in 2022/23 (and 2021/22 by default if schemes originated earlier than 2022/23 as sums have been carried forward through to the 2021/22 MTFP Report) to be carried forward into 2023/4. The table also splits amounts by funding source; Council or third party.

Financial Year	Total Budget £000	Council Funded £000	External Funded £000
2021/22	16,511	12,146	4,366
2022/23	8,126	1,485	6,641
2023/24	10,852	1,694	9,158
2024/25	4,921	2,224	2,697
2025/26	3,156	1,558	1,598

- 3.11 Included in this funding the Council also have the following Grant Funded Schemes which are being delivered in 2023/24:
- The two Levelling Up schemes – Old Fire Station and Market which are funded via £14.5m of Government Funding, and the Council is funding £1.6m of works.
 - UK Shared Prosperity Schemes totalling £2.8m (although it should be noted that these grant funded schemes are a mix of capital and revenue).
 - The Burcot Lane development at £10.275m.
- 3.12 The spend at quarter 1 is £0.720m against the overall 2023/24 capital budget totalling £10.851m is detailed in Appendix A. It should be noted that as per the budget decision carry forwards of £2.843m will be added to this figure to take account of slippage from 2022/23.
- 3.13 The following changes are requested for approval (allowing for slippage as set out in 3.10 above):
- The update of Fleet Replacement costs. This is an increase of 94k in 22/23 and £15k in 25/26. Over a 10 year period the cost of this is £10.9k MRP plus interest at 5.63% of £6.1k is an additional cost of £17.0k per year.
 - Increase in wheely bin budget. The estimated spend on wheeled bins is likely to be closer to £150k based on previous expenditure. We have recently changed to Plastic bins for commercial which should bring that down a bit, but the overspend is likely to be in the region of £85k. Over a 10 year period the cost of this is £8.5k MRP plus interest at 5.63% of £4.8k is an additional cost of £13.3k per year.
 - New Capital budget for wildflowers equipment is added - £62,100 in 23/24. If this capital cost is reduced over a 10 year period the additional MRP is £6.2k per year and interest costs are £3.5k giving a total additional cost of £9.7k per year.
- 3.14 The detailed Capital Programmes (2021/22 to 2025/26) are set out in **Appendix A**.

Earmarked Reserves and their application

- 3.15 The position as reported to Council in February 2023 as per the 2023/24 – 2025/26 Medium Term Financial Plan is shown in **Appendix B**. This is linked to the Outturn Report which is also coming to this Cabinet.
- 3.16 As was noted in paragraph 3.7 above, £351k of the utilities reserve was planned to be utilised in 2023/24 for increased costs. At the moment the increased costs are around 70% - not the 200% expected. However, the proposed pay award is significantly more than expected. Therefore it is requested that £351k of the utilities reserve is repurposed for this requirement in 2023/24. This still leaves £437k to be funded from the general fund to bring the overall position back to break even.

Procurement

- 3.17 A report came to Cabinet in June, which was debated at the Finance and Budget working Group on the 7th July requesting that:
- The Key Decision threshold is raised to £200k.
 - On a quarterly basis a report “the Approval to Spend Report” will be provided to Cabinet which sets out the Council’s Procurement Pipeline for approval to be included on the forward plan and an analysis of spending over the past 4 years to identify spending with suppliers over the £200k limit to ensure this spending is converted to properly contracted expenditure and rogue expenditure is dealt with.
 - That items from the initial pipeline report at the appropriate Key Decision level, as set out in **Appendix E**, are added to the forward plan.
- 3.18 Following debate at Council on the 19th July it was decided that more justification was required to increase Key Decision Limits from £50k to £200k and this will be presented to Cabinet and the next cycle of Council meetings in September.
- 3.19 The table in **Appendix E** sets out those procurements (Capital and Revenue) over £50k which are delegated for approval to Cabinet or Officers over the next year. It is proposed that these are added to the forward plan. There are 8 contracts over £50k in value that will be entered onto the forward plan. For full transparency, 4 contracts under the £50k value are also shown as are 6 contracts where the full value is still being evaluated.

- 3.20 As the Council runs a shared service, a number of procurements that impact on Bromsgrove will be procured through Redditch. For reference these are also included in **Appendix F**.
- 3.21 In order to mitigate the issues set out in 3.18 above it is proposed that the following process is adopted in that the Key Decision Threshold is raised to £200k:
- The logic of this is for revenue expenditure using GCloud, contract lengths can be up to 4 years. As such this is the existing £50k limit expanded to the full term of revenue contracts. This new threshold will apply to all classes of delegated decision.
 - On a quarterly basis a report “the approval to spend report” will be provided to Executive which sets out from the Procurement Pipeline those procurements that should be taking place over the next year. This report will be refreshed every quarter and can be included once approved by Cabinet onto the ongoing forward plan.
 - That as part of this report an analysis of spending will be made of the past 3 years to identify spends with suppliers over the £200k limit to ensure this spending is converted to properly contracted expenditure.
 - The “Approval to Spend” report includes a list of all procurement between £50k-£200k. Members then have a listing of all procurements above the existing £50k limit up to the new limit of £200k coming up over the next year and are able to scrutinise any of those contracts if required.

Performance Report

- 3.22 The first section of this report shows the organisations performance against the strategic priorities outlined in the Council Plan Addendum. Additional comments and updates have been provided for the success measures to explain progress/activity. The final section of the report includes some operational measures to demonstrate how the council is delivering its services to customers.
- 3.23 The process of performance reporting will develop iteratively, however this document is a snapshot in time and very much a temperature check of the organisation, the layout comprises:
- Strategic Priorities – success measures
 - Operational Measures – by service area

- Financial Data (separate report on this occasion)
- Corporate Projects (by exception)

3.24 The Council has an approved Council Plan in place that was completed before the Covid-19 outbreak, the Council then developed the Council Plan Addendum to take the potential shift in priorities brought about by the pandemic into consideration. The current key priorities are:

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

3.25 **Appendix C** sets out the Strategic Priorities and Performance Measures in detail. For the 9 priorities there is data contained in the Appendix on:

- The Performance Measure being used.
- An update on how it is being used.
- Where relevant, contextual information.

3.26 In addition, Appendix C also sets out Operational Service Measures.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The financial implications are set out within this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising as a result of this report.

6. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

6.1 The Strategic purposes are included in the Council's corporate plan and guides the Council's approach to budget making ensuring we focus on the issues and what are most important for the district and our communities. Our Financial monitoring and strategies are integrated within all of our Strategic Purposes

Climate Change Implications

6.2 The green thread runs through the Council plan. The Financial monitoring report has implications on climate change and these will be addressed and reviewed when relevant by climate change officers to ensure the correct procedures have been followed to ensure any impacts on climate change are fully understood.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Equalities and Diversity Implications

7.1 There are no direct equalities implications arising as a result of this report.

Operational Implications

7.2 Managers meet with finance officers to consider the current financial position and to ensure actions are in place to mitigate any overspends.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1 The financial monitoring is included in the corporate risk register for the authority.

9. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Appendix A – Capital Programme
- Appendix B – Reserves Position
- Appendix C - Strategic and Operational Performance Measures
- Appendix D – Engineering Services Restructure Report
- Appendix E – Procurement Pipeline (over £50K)
- Appendix F – Procurement Pipeline (procured in Redditch for Shared Services with Bromsgrove)

10. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Charlie Hotham,	
Lead Director / Head of Service	Peter Carpenter, Interim Director of Finance	

Financial Services	Michelle Howell, Head of Finance and Customer Services	
Legal Services		
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)		
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)		

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

13 September 2023

CABINET

Description	Approved budget date	Original approved Budget £	duration (years)	Department	Funding detail	21/22 Spend £	2022/23 Total £	22/23 Spend £	c/f	2023/24 Total £	22/23 Spend Q1 £	2024/25 Total £	2025/26 Total £
Replacement Parking machines	2020/21	120,000		Environmental Services	Capital Receipts/Borrowing	196,000	253,000	123,985	129,015	96,000	9,287	421,000	0
Wheelie Bin Purchase	2018/19	ongoing		Environmental Services	Capital Receipts/Borrowing	102,000	144,000	169,034	-25,034	55,000	105,103	60,000	60,000
Footpaths		ongoing		Environmental Services	Borrowing				0	75,000		75,000	75,000
Buildings		Ongoing		Legal and Property	Borrowing				0	100,000		100,000	100,000
Bittell road recreation ground	2020/21	62,000		Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	S106 B/2011/0741 Land at Fiery Hill, Barnt Green / 18k balances	17,000	0		0	0		0	0
Salix	2020/21	615,000		Legal, Democratic and property services	Grants & Contributions	65,000	0	533,193	-533,193	0		0	0
Greener Homes	2020/21	180,000	1	Community & Housing GF Services	Grants & Contributions	-227,000	0	192,053	-192,053	0	0	0	0
Hagley Scouts				Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Capital Receipts/Borrowing	35,000	0		0	0		0	0
Bromsgrove Sporting					Loan	4,000		46,133	-46,133				
Car Park Improvements - Oakalls						8,000			0				
Woodrush High Schools						134,000			0				
Rubery Redevelopment Works				Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Capital Receipts/Borrowing	0	0	9,550	-9,550	0	1,900	0	0
Sanders Park dda play provision	2017/18	56,080		Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	S106 14/0755 Kidderminster Road and S106 13/0422 Meadows first school	0	0		0	0		0	0
New Digital Service	2020/21	57,400	1	Community & Housing GF Services	Borrowing	0	33,668		33,668	33,668		0	0
Bus Shelters	2020/21	18,000		Environmental Services	Borrowing	0	18,000		18,000	0		0	0

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

13 September 2023

CABINET

Description	Approved budget date	Original approved Budget £	duration (years)	Department	Funding detail	21/22 Spend £	2022/23 Total £	22/23 Spend £	c/f	2023/24 Total £	22/23 Spend Q1 £	2024/25 Total £	2025/26 Total £
Fleet Management Computer System	2020/21	17,000		Environmental Services	Borrowing	0	0		0	0		0	0
Environmental Services Computer System	2020/21	38,200		Environmental Services	Borrowing	0	0		0	0		0	0
Cisco Network Update	22/23		3	Business transformation & Organisational Development	Borrowing	0	5,717	18,573	-12,856	11,574		0	34,877
Server Replacement Est(Exact known Q2 2022)	22/23		4	Business transformation & Organisational Development	Borrowing	0	83,250	0	83,250	2,000	78,451	177,500	18,500
Laptop Refresh	22/23		4	Business transformation & Organisational Development	Borrowing	0	5,000	4,961	39	25,000	3,693	150,000	5,000
Town Deal - Innovation Centre	22/23			Business transformation & Organisational Development	Town Deal	0			0				
Town Deal - Public Realm	22/23			Business transformation & Organisational Development	Town Deal	0			0				
Town Deal - Library	22/23			Business transformation & Organisational Development	Town Deal	0			0				
Market Hall (LUF)	22/23			Business transformation & Organisational Development	Levelling Up Fund	0			0				
Sanders Park	22/23			Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	S106	0		24,511	-24,511				
Play Area, POS and Sport improvements at Lickey End Recreation Ground in accordance with the S106 Agreement	22/23	37,956	1	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	S106 19/0137/FUL	0	37,956	6,488	31,468	0		0	0
BDC Combined F/Path & Cycle	2018/19	390,000		Environmental Services	Grants & Contributions	0	0		0	0		0	0
Barnt Green Millenium Park - Toilet				Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	S106 B/2011/0741 - Land at Fiery Hill, Barnt Green / 18k balances	0	0		0	0		0	1,597,377
Total		424,000				4,675,000	13,099,616	10,256,330	2,843,286	10,851,723	720,218	4,920,715	3,155,755

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

13 September 2023

CABINET

Appendix B – Reserves Position

	Balance at 31/3/22	Transf In 2022/23	Transf out 2022/23	Re-baseline 2022/23	Balance at 31/3/23	Transf in 2023/24	Transf out 2023/24	Balance at 31/3/24	Transf in 2024/25	Transf out 2024/25	Balance at 31/3/25	Transf in 2025/26	Transf out 2025/26	Balance at 31/3/26
General Fund Reserve	4,485		(1,367)	2,682	5,800	100	(250)	5,650	244	0	5,894	200	(431)	5,663
General Fund Earmarked														
Building Control Other	7			(7)	0			0			0			0
Building Control Partnerships	82				82			82			82			82
Business Transformation	0				0			0			0			0
Commercialism	0				0			0			0			0
Community Safety	0				0			0			0			0
Community Services	271				271		(125)	146		(125)	21			21
Economic Regeneration	998			(600)	398			398			398			398
Election Services	51				51			51			51			51
Environmental Services	49				49			49			49			49
Financial Services	4,345		0	(1,000)	3,345	638	(150)	3,833			3,833			3,833
Housing Schemes	346				346			346			346			346
ICT/Systems	197				197			197			197			197
Leisure/Community Safety	330				330			330			330			330
Litigation Reserve	0				0			0			0			0
Local Development Framework	0				0			0			0			0
Local Neighbourhood Partnerships	16				16			16			16			16
Other	64			(64)	0			0			0			0
Planning & Regeneration	133				133			133			133			133
Regulatory Services (Partner Share)	46				46			46			46			46
Replacement Reserve (Inc. Recycling)	0				0			0			0			0
Shared Services (Severance Costs)	311			(311)	0			0			0			0
Utilities Reserve	0			1,053	1,053		(351)	702		(351)	351		(351)	0
Covid-19 (General Covid Grant)	1,177			(1,177)	0			0			0			0
Covid-19 Sales Fees and Charges	576			(576)	0			0			0			0
Covid-19 (Collection Fund)	3,094		(1,547)		1,547		(1,547)	0			0			0
Total General Fund	12,093	0	(1,547)	0	7,864	638	(2,173)	6,329	0	(476)	5,853	0	(351)	5,502

Appendix C - Strategic and Operational Performance Measures

1. Introduction

The process of performance reporting will develop iteratively, however this document is a snapshot in time and very much a temperature check of the organisation.

2. Background

The performance measures for the current key priorities are shown in the next section.

3. Strategic Priorities and Performance Measures

3.1. Economic Development and Regeneration

3.1.1 Supporting Businesses to Start and Grow

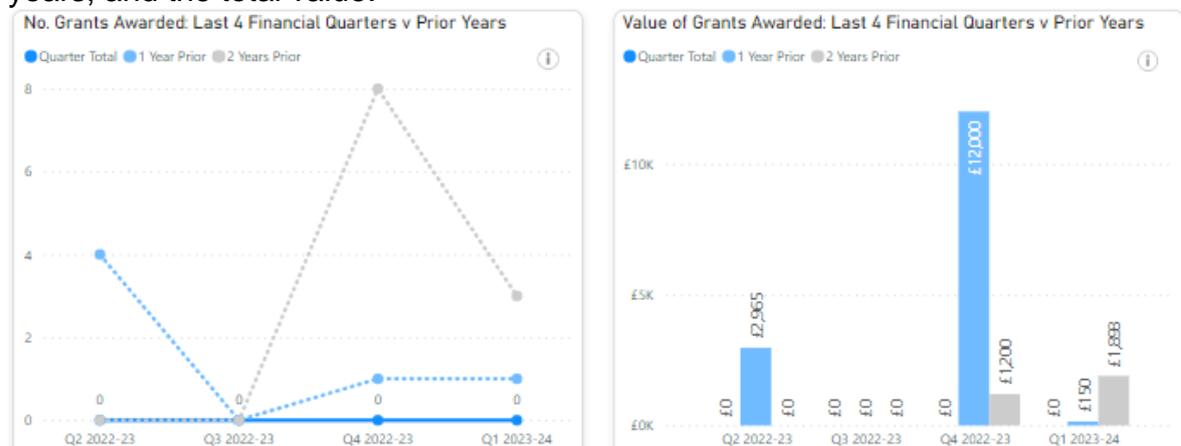
Opportunities in the digital technology sector and green industries are key to the future of Bromsgrove. Local businesses demonstrated their resilience and flexibility during the Covid-19 pandemic. The council supported businesses started during the pandemic as well as existing businesses, that identified growth opportunities. This was achieved via existing business support packages, including sectoral support, as well as helping businesses access new business grants where available.

Performance measure:

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

Update

Detailed below are the grants which have been awarded including two prior years, and the total value.



Update

No start-up grants were awarded this quarter as the ERDF programmes have closed and the Council is moving to UKSPF funded programmes. The new start-up programme is scheduled to open in Q2 (soft launch August, formal launch September) so it is unlikely that there will be any grants paid until Q3.

Growth Grants



Update

This quarter, grants were awarded for investment in technology, growth projects and product / process development. The businesses receiving grants were a training company, a manufacturer, and a digital marketing company.

3.1.2 Regenerating our Town and Local Centres

The pandemic has emphasised both the economic and wellbeing importance of local centres to our residents. Funding has been secured to support the development of sites in Bromsgrove town centre and a strategy has been prepared to ensure all of the centres in Bromsgrove District will be as vibrant and viable as possible.

Performance Measure:

Former Market Hall Project

- o Design reviewed following FRA recommendations.
- o RIBA Stage 3 due to complete July 2023.
- o Planning application - Target date is August 2023

Update

Worcester based architects One Creative Ltd were appointed as the multi-disciplinary design team, bringing with them the disciplines of Lead/Principal designer, Landscape Architecture, Structural Engineering, Civil Engineering, MEP Design, Principal Designer, Fire Engineering and Sustainability.

Performance measure:

Windsor Street Project

Project consists of the acquisition, demolition, decontamination and remediation of this key abandoned/ brownfield site, which has been vacant for 5 years.

- o Key risk is cost being higher than previous estimates and budget allocation – due to presence of asbestos, and extent of PFAS contamination.
- o Existing building surveys are now complete.
- o Survey results are due early August.

Update

Currently pending the appointment of a consultant Project Management team to take forward the delivery of the project, from August 2023

3.1.3 Improved Integrated Transport (Bromsgrove)

New innovations can help provide new and more sustainable methods of getting around. Improved transport can help to increase user satisfaction and increase efficiency whilst also helping to reduce the impact on the environment. Working with Worcestershire County Council (WCC) and other partners will enable new, better integrated and more sustainable modes of transport across the district.

Performance measure:

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

Update

Officers are working with Worcestershire County Council to establish a full pipeline of sustainable schemes. To better inform the list of schemes funding has been secured by WCC for a Local Cycling and Walking infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), planning officers have reviewed the brief for this work and discussed with WCC.

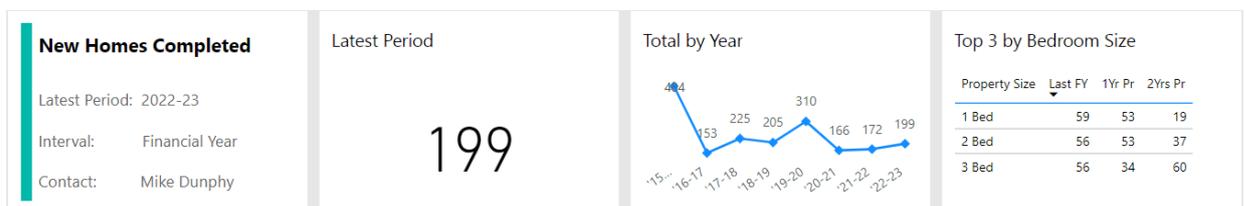
Actions: Will be liaising with WCC appointed consultants.

3.2 Housing Growth

During 2023/24 we will accelerate the pace of affordable housing development, wherever possible. We will work to enable the building of market value housing and the creation of additional income for the Council.

Performance measure:

- Number of new homes built - total and affordable.



The final data for the 2022/23 is:

- Total Homes Built (including affordable) -199 (net)
- Total affordable homes built - 55 (net)

Performance measure:

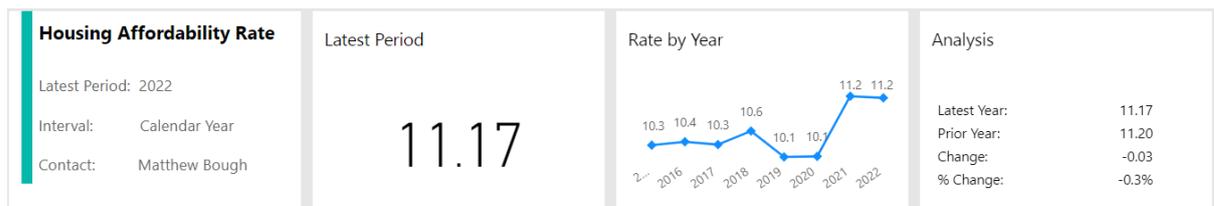
- Affordable Homes Completed



There are 498 affordable housing commitments as of 1 April 2023, reflecting the number of strategic sites which have gained consent but not started construction.

Performance measure:

- Local housing affordability rate (annual, calendar year, 1 year lag)



Update

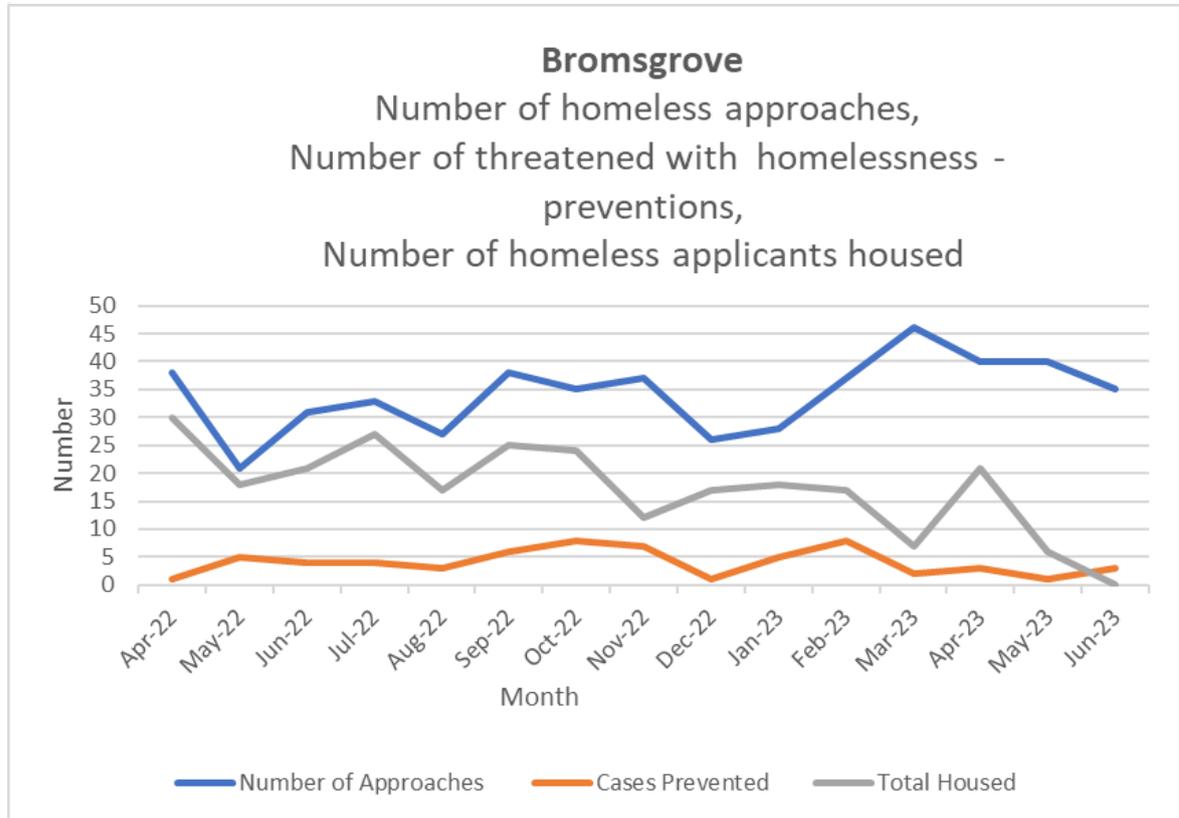
The data in the table below has been extracted from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) house price statistics for small areas, annual survey of hours, and earnings.

The affordability measure, using this data, indicated that the ratio in England is currently 9.05. The affordability ratio relates to workplace-based income which uses the median earnings of those employed in Bromsgrove. When looking at the data (year ending Sept 2022) Bromsgrove has a work based median at £29,285. The median house price in Bromsgrove is relatively high at £327,000. This causes a significant difference in the affordability ratio in Bromsgrove.

House prices over the last year have also risen well above the normal expected rate. This will push more households into needing affordable housing. The council is working with developers to secure the maximum provision of affordable housing on developments and RPs to bring forward affordable housing. A “First Homes” policy with a local connection criteria was approved by Council in October 2022 to ensure these discounted homes are provided for local applicants in the first instance.

Performance measure

- Number of homeless approaches
- Number of threatened with homelessness preventions.
- Number of homeless applicants housed.



Update

Homelessness pressures have remained similar to the last quarter of 22/23. The ability to prevent homelessness and obtain housing in the PRS still remains an area that is impacting on homelessness in line with the national picture due to the cost of living and mortgage costs causing landlords to increase rents or evict tenants.

3.3. Work and Financial Independence

In 2023/24, we will continue to find ways to further support, engage, and empower our residents to maintain / achieve financial independence.

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

Performance measure

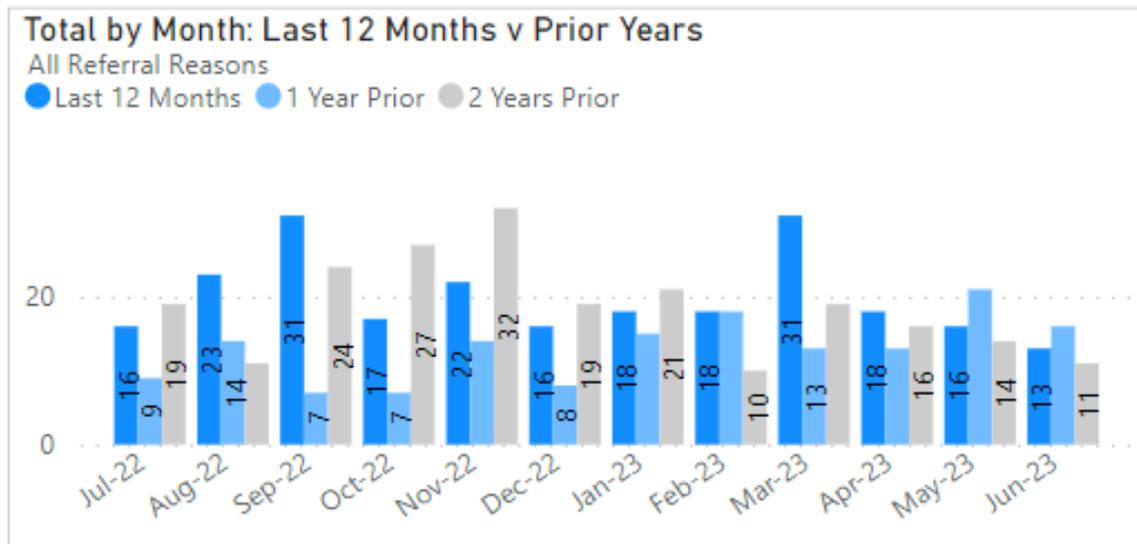
- Number of Financial Independence Team client contacts.

This measure records the number of FI Team cases opened.

Update

The top five referral reasons (where a value has been provided) for the last 12 months are:

- 'Under occupancy charge' (38)
- 'Ukraine Sponsor' (26)
- 'Other' (25)
- 'Debt' (23)
- 'No value' (22) - excluded from top 5 reasons.
- 'Budgeting issues' (17)



For Q1 2023/24, the top referral reasons were:

- 'Debt' (8)
- 'No value' (8) - excluded from top 3 reasons.
- 'Other' (6)
- 'Under occupancy charge' (6)

The Assistant Financial Support Manager is currently consulting with the communications team to promote the Financial Inclusion Team where possible, so those in need are aware of the service.

Performance measure

- Number of eligible children accessing nursery funding across the district.

Update

Although data is shared termly (with a lag) from Worcestershire County Council, this has been inconsistent. Work is ongoing to improve the regularity of the supply of data. There is no additional data for the current quarter.

Term	% 2-year-olds accessing funding
Summer 2019/20	76%
Summer 2020/21	71%
Summer 2021/22	74%
Spring 2022/23	62%

The take up of nursery places supports parents in taking up work and the two-year-old funding considers vulnerable families to try and support reducing the early years attainment gap. In respect of the above, Bromsgrove performance has decreased. The County average was 77.3% for Spring Term 2023. The overall national average for 2022 was 72%.

Previously we received a list from Worcestershire Children First so we could contact families who had applied for 2-year-old funding but had not processed their application. Unfortunately, there is an ongoing issue between our commissioners (WCC Public Health/ H&W Health and Care Trust) and Worcestershire Children's First WCF) Early Years. The DWP created an information sharing agreement which currently prevents WCF sharing the DWP list with us, this is yet to be resolved.

We continue to promote childcare funding at all our community events with a particular focus on 2-year-old funding and school readiness to encourage those eligible to take up the funding. We promote on our website and social media pages and with any families we encounter who may be eligible.

3.4. Improved Health and Wellbeing

In 2023/24 we will continue to work with communities to help them identify and develop their strengths. We will look at ways to encourage physical movement into part of people's normal routines. We will look to catalyse an integrated approach to care.

Performance measure

- Deliver improved outcomes by implementing the Leisure Strategy

Update

The short-term recommendations in the Leisure Strategy run to October 2026. Most are underway. Further Leisure Reports will be presented to members this municipal year.

Performance measure

- Number of Community Builders in post.

Update

- There are currently two in post:
 - Catshill
 - Rubery

Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) is an approach built on tried and tested methods from sustainable community development practice. The aim of ABCD approaches is to create the conditions that will enable both place and people to flourish, reduce inequalities, improve quality of life that supports communities to thrive and to reduce or delay the need for long term care and support.

The Bromsgrove and Redditch Shared Learning Network continues to meet, supported by Public Health at Worcestershire County Council, which includes community builders, the voluntary and community sector hosts, relevant BDC and RBC officers and the relevant portfolio holders. The purpose of the Network is to provide a forum to support and encourage the development of ABCD good practice locally. The most recent meeting fed back on very successful Christmas events, which included community meals and targeted work at the cemeteries in Catshill.

Community Builders are on fixed term contracts, but funding has been confirmed to extend the posts until end of March 2025. The longer-term aim remains that other areas will be covered if funding becomes available for additional Community Builders.

3.5. Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour

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

Performance measure

- Number of young people engaged through Detached/Outreach youth work.



Update

During Q1 2023/24 (Apr-Jun) a total of 131 young people were engaged via the Outreach Youth Work.

Apr - Routine patrols carried out in known areas of concern in Bromsgrove Central, Sanders Park, Sidemoor and Charford. Young people were engaged, and informal social education was provided on-street around issues such as school attendance, drugs and alcohol. Young people were signposted to local youth provision and support services.

May - Routine patrols were carried out in Sanders Park with advice and signposting to local support services provided.

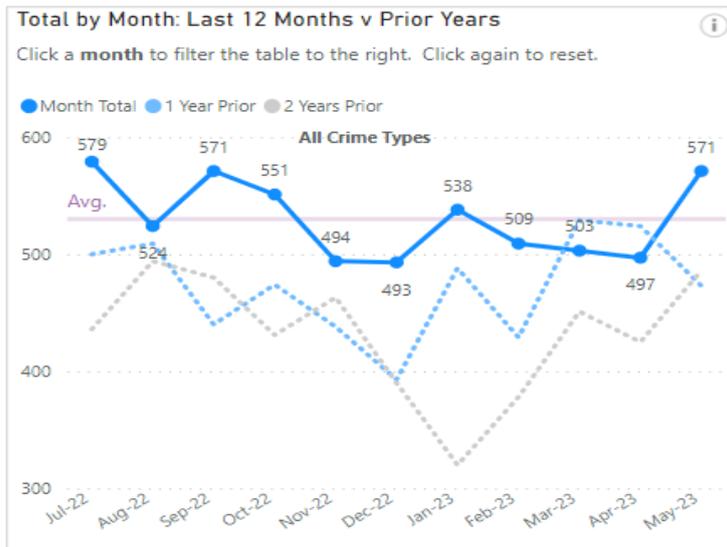
Jun - Young people were engaged during routine patrols in Bromsgrove Central and Sanders Park. Youth workers provided on-street informal social education on various subjects raised by the young people. Youth workers continued to provide support to the Street Pastors night-time economy patrols on Friday nights/early Saturday mornings. All patrols in June were very quiet with reduced numbers of all age groups in the Town Centre and surrounding areas.

Performance measure

- Levels of crime. (Up to and including May 2023)

Update

Data extracted from 'data.police.uk' below – there is a lag in data reporting.



Crime Type	Total	% of Total	v 1 Mth Prior	v 1 Yr Prior	12 Mth. Avg.
Violence and sexual off...	2,484	39.1%	35 ↑	17 ↑	207.0
Other theft	680	10.7%	0 =	127 ↑	56.7
Shoplifting	625	9.8%	18 ↑	269 ↑	52.1
Criminal damage and a...	602	9.5%	2 ↑	105 ↑	50.2
Public order	581	9.1%	-3 ↓	81 ↑	48.4
Vehicle crime	499	7.9%	-3 ↓	19 ↑	41.6
Burglary	431	6.8%	21 ↑	38 ↑	35.9
Drugs	126	2.0%	-4 ↓	-2 ↓	10.5
Other crime	123	1.9%	-2 ↓	17 ↑	10.3
Possession of weapons	80	1.3%	0 =	12 ↑	6.7
Robbery	70	1.1%	3 ↑	28 ↑	5.8
Bicycle theft	32	0.5%	4 ↑	9 ↑	2.7
Theft from the person	21	0.3%	3 ↑	-4 ↓	1.8
Total	6,354	100.0%	74	716	529.5

On average there has been a predicted increase in crime trends in 2022/23 compared to 2021/22 where multiple months had varied stages of COVID lockdowns in place. North Worcestershire saw increases (8%) across all crime types up to April 2023. This quarter (April – June 2023) has seen slight increases in ‘violence with injury’, ‘shoplifting’ and ‘criminal damage’ when compared to Qtr4 (Jan – March 2023). Increases were also seen in public order offences although this was a predicted rise following recording changes to ASB reporting. In Bromsgrove the Ward with the highest number of offences in 2023 was Sanders Park which contains Bromsgrove Town Centre. Other areas with increases were Belbroughton, Romsley and Catshill North.

ASB (up to and including May 2023)



Update

Data extracted from 'data.police.uk' below – there is a lag in data reporting ASB reports have been decreasing, almost certainly due to a recording change in Feb 2022 which reclassified some ASB incidents to Public Order offences. Since the change there has been little impact on ASB trends with predicted seasonal increases in the summer months. In Bromsgrove in 2023 increased numbers of reports were seen in Sanders Park Ward, Bromsgrove Central, Sidemoor and Charford.

Performance measure

- Number of crime risk surveys carried out.
(New measure from April 2022)

	No. Surveys 2022/23	No. Surveys 2023/24
Q1	8	12
Q2	8	
Q3	5	
Q4	8	

Update

A total of 12 surveys were undertaken in the first quarter of 2023/24:
Apr - Detailed written crime prevention recommendations were provided for a planning application in Alvechurch. Crime risk advice and recommendations were provided to a multi-agency meeting regarding defending against illegal land incursions following an incursion in Bromsgrove Central. Crime prevention advice was also provided for the specific incident.

May - Detailed written crime prevention recommendations were provided for planning applications in Belbroughton and Romsley and Bromsgrove Central. Crime prevention advice was provided following ASB reports in Rock Hill, Rubery North, Catshill North and Sidemoor. Issues included cannabis smells, inconsiderate parking and youth ASB and relevant signposting and security advice was provided.

Jun - Detailed written crime prevention recommendations were provided for planning applications in Sanders Park and Rubery South. Crime Risk advice was provided to a multi-agency meeting regarding an insecure location in Wythall West. Further liaison was carried out with relevant service areas and the resident affected, who advised that they were satisfied with the information provided.

3.6 SLM Leisure (Everyone Active)

Update

For SLM Leisure there is a lag in the data; as a result, quarter 4 data and comments can be found below; Q1 information will be available for the Q2 report.

Q4 saw another gain in gym memberships and the brand continues to grow. There was the expected influx of members from the Christmas and new year period which help increase the overall gains in memberships. The emphasis now is to maintain our membership base and reduce attrition. New Gym Introduction sessions have been introduced in an attempt to engage more with customers.

The Swim Scheme as expected took the major impact of the pool closure. The numbers show a slight decrease this quarter but do not show the freezes and cancellations that took place.

Category	Quarter Total	Same quarter previous year	+/-
Total no. of visits including EA cards and non-card holders	114,271	113,610	661
EA Cards added in this period	1,738	2,092	-354
Total EA Cards to date	67,043	60,284	6,759
No. of Gym members	2,859	2,729	130
Swimming Lessons – children enrolled on scheme	1,572	1,602	-30
Swim Lesson Occupancy	85%	88%	-3%
RIDDOR Reportable Events			0

Bromsgrove LC	2021/22		+/- %		2022/23	
	Fitness	Swim	Fitness	Swim	Fitness	Swim
1st Quarter April- June	2,172	1,454	1%	44%	2,536	1,625
2nd Quarter July-September	2,339	1,752	14%	46%	2,762	1,749
3rd Quarter October - December	2,294	1,587	16%	34%	2,669	1,523
4th Quarter January - March	2,729	1,602	0%	0%	2,859	1,572
Yearly Average	2,384	1,599	54%	89%	2,707	1,617

3.7. Green Thread

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

Performance Measure:

- Have an agreed and funded plan and capital replacement programme for the Council's fleet subject to any budget constraints.

Update

Nottingham City Council, through their government funding grant to undertake a review of its fleet, is providing an external consultancy service to the council. Officers have been working with Nottingham City Council and have now received a copy of their report which will be used to create the basis of the fleet replacement programme report that will go to CMT in readiness for Cabinet in the Autumn.

Performance Measure:

- Introduce vegetable derived diesel into the councils' vehicles to reduce carbon emissions subject to any budget constraints.

Update

Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil (HVO) has seen a severe increase in cost due to external influences such as the war in Ukraine. Due to this large increase in costs, and the wider financial pressures on the Council, Environmental Services have reverted back to using diesel for the vehicle fleet and will continue to monitor costs until they stabilise and settle down. Prices for HVO fuel remain high until prices reduce we will continue to use standard diesel.

Performance measure

- Households supported by the Council's energy advice service

Period	Households
2019/20 (09/19-03/20 only)	31
2020/21	41
2021/22	90
2022/23 (part year)	385

Period	Households
Q1 2023/24	137

Update

Due to issues with data gathering, the data for 2022/23 only covers part of the year. In the first quarter of 2023/24 a total of 137 households received energy advice and guidance from Act on Energy. Of these, 4 received home visits due to vulnerability and 6 were provided with support through Warm Home Discount and Severn Trent Big Difference Scheme.

3.8. Financial Stability

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

Performance measure (included as an earlier section of this Report)

- Financial performance – actuals consistent with budget (overspend mitigated)
- Levelling Up Fund Project delivered within budget.

3.9. Organisational Sustainability

The Council will work to maximise the use of digital infrastructures, including cloud technologies, to enhance its support for customers. Ensuring the Councils infrastructure can securely process the increased demand placed on it by the expanding use of Internet of Things devices will be key to its digital success.

Performance measure

- Number of corporate measures accessible through the dashboard.

Update

The organisation is moving from the current legacy dashboard to a new Power BI dashboard. Power BI is an interactive data visualisation software product with a primary focus on business intelligence. There are currently 33 strategic measures available via the dashboards. Work is also being undertaken on a number of operational measures.

Performance measure

- % of staff able to work in an agile way.

Update

This new measure is aligned with the ongoing agile project; we are continuing to work to devise an effective method of data capture. The Agile Policy has now been launched across the organisation.

3.10. High Quality Services

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

Performance measure

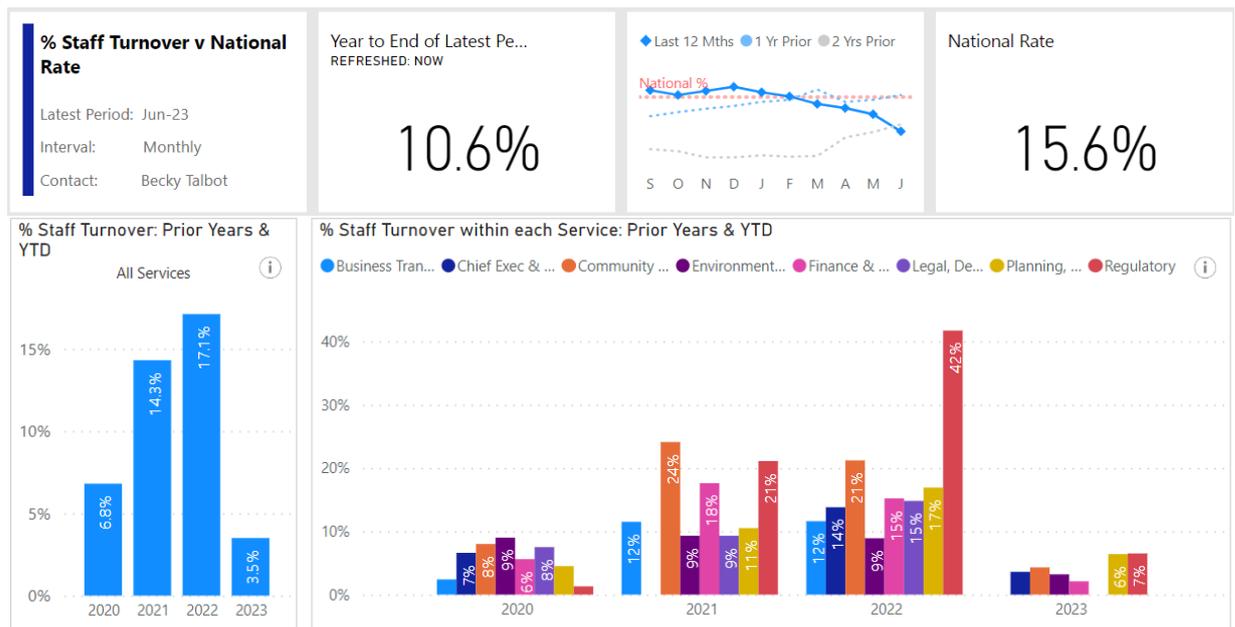
- % Of employees who undertake management training.

Update

The management training was launched for the first time in Summer 2022. It is an annual measure; the first data will be reported in late 2023.

Performance measure

- **Staff turnover rates in relation to national rates**



Update

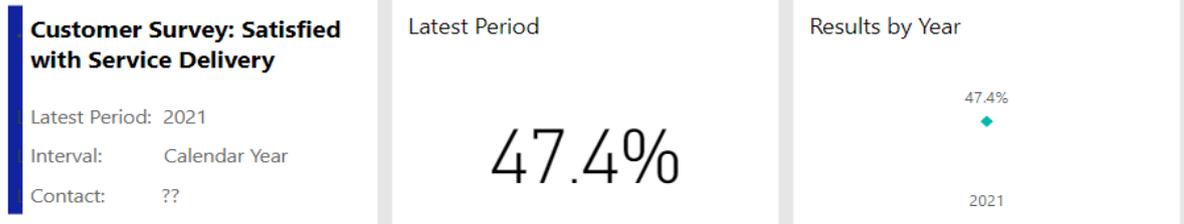
Since January 2023, it can be seen there has been a continued improvement in turnover rates which brings the authority under the national average. We will be launching a process for exit interviews before the next quarterly report cycle. We will utilise this data to further understand context and undertake necessary actions.

Performance measure

- Customer satisfaction with service delivery, measured through the Community Survey.

Update

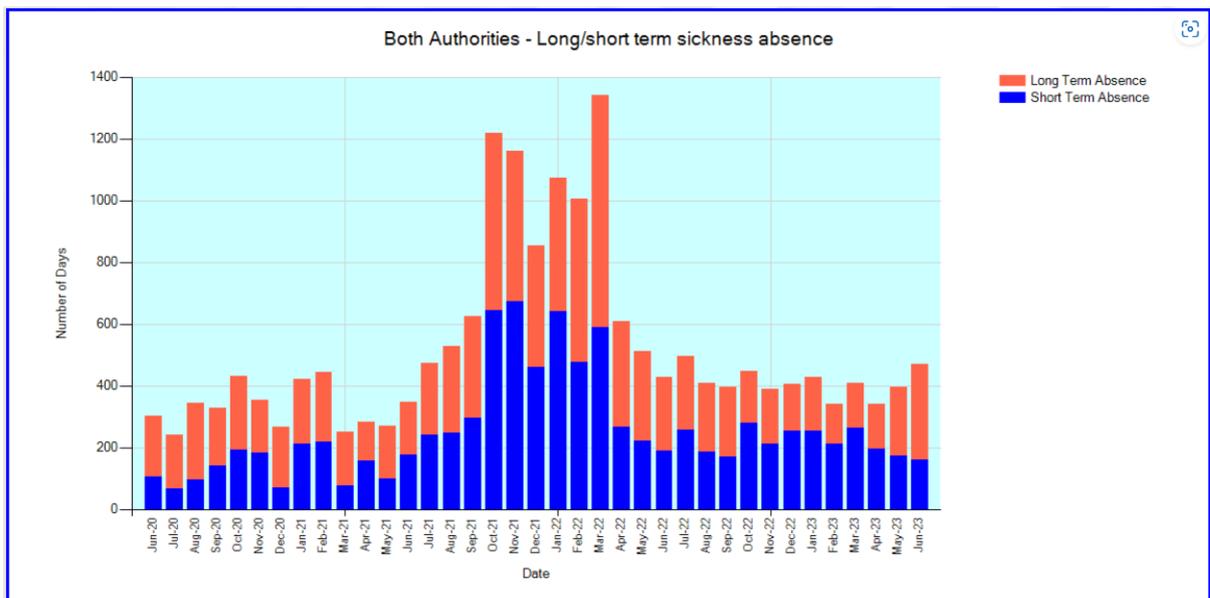
This is an annual measure. Data is extracted from the annual community survey. 2021 was the first year the public were asked about their level of satisfaction with the way the council delivers its services. National satisfaction with LA's, according to the Local Government Chronicle is currently at 40%. The 2022 survey was carried out in October/November 2022. The top lines have been reported to CMT and will be reported to members in due course; they will also be published on the Council's webpages.



4. Operational Measures

4.1 Corporate Performance measure

- Sickness absence



Update

The year end (2022-23) days lost per FTE is 7.04, lower than the previous year of 12.02 (national average in 2022 was 5.7 days per FTE); the national average date for year-end 2023 is not yet available. We are currently undertaking a fundamental review of the data source, data capture and data calculation, in order to utilise the increased functionality of PowerBI which will enhance both the overview and more in-depth analysis for this measure and in turn enable actions from the understanding gained.

Actions:

- Review of the data source, to include training where needed.

- Review of the absence reasons reported under in comparison to national data.
- Review of how the data is analysed and presented to managers.

4.2 Environmental Services

Domestic Waste Collection

Performance Measure:

- Percentage of Household Waste sent for re-use, recycling & composting.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2021/22	44.4	49.24	59.99	57.58	49.75	48.45	36.71	50.72	50.87	39.59	33.89	42.89
2022/23	46.69	55.59	57.51	55.97	45.18	46.41	49.69	50.63	46.41	33.7	37.34	43.16
2023/24	50.74	57.4	54.66									

This is a National Indicator measuring the percentage of household waste arisings which have been sent by the Authority for reuse, recycling, and composting, and is used in the national league tables ranking Local Authority performance. In 2021/22 Bromsgrove was ranked 173rd, increasing from 175th in 2020/21 (2022/23 rankings not yet published).

Dry recycling tonnages actually dropped slightly, but there was a noticeable drop in Residual Waste Tonnages during the first quarter of 2023/24 as well, and this is believed to be related to the cost of living on households which has changed spending habits as households try to avoid unnecessary waste due to the cost of food and goods.

Garden waste also saw higher tonnages as the start of the growing season saw higher volumes collected.

Actions:

Discussions are being had with our neighbouring Worcestershire Authorities about how we can increase our resources collectively to support more proactive engagement with residents to educate on waste reduction and effective use of our services, as we still have regular contamination of our recycling with non-recyclable items. Work is also on-going to consider the future of waste collection services alongside new legislative requirements that will see the introduction of a weekly food waste collection and potential changes to how we manage both residual waste and dry recycling. We are also fitting new banners to the side of our refuse collection fleet during July/August to highlight the issue of food waste as part of a joint campaign with Worcestershire County Council, and have resources available via our website to support households in using our services and reducing waste: <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/lets-waste-less> .

Performance Measure:

- **Residual Waste per household (kg)**

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2021/22	50.01	38.81	39.35	38.16	40.89	45.06	41.5	39.36	35.86	39.86	35.58	49.26
2022/23	42.43	37.22	37.28	31.36	41.03	42.83	34.2	39.64	32.76	41.78	32.59	42.08
2023/24	33.19	35.75	34.51									

This measures non-recyclable waste thrown away per household and shows a marked reduction per household when compared with the previous two years, which is a positive trend for sustainability but may be due to financial pressures on households as much as greater awareness of the environmental benefits of reducing our waste.

Waste Composition Analysis was carried out across the district to sample waste during 2022 and identify what is being thrown away in our residual waste to support discussions on the future of our services, and any communication/education campaigns we may need to implement to support further recycling. In the samples taken, up to 18% of the residual waste put out for collection could have been collected as recycling, and up to 35% of the residual waste was food waste (45% of that was still in its packaging unused). This information is being considered as part of the wider Task and Finish project to consider future options for how we collect our residents waste in the future.

Actions:

As per comment on percentage of household waste sent for recycling and reuse.

Performance Measure:

- Fly Tipping

This overview reflects the number of fly tips identified across the district requiring resources to remove and indicates the scale of the problem and any trends resulting from enforcement and education actions. The detailed data is used to identify patterns of behaviour and geographic locations that can be targeted with signage and cameras to identify those responsible and deter behaviour or support further enforcement action against those who continue to illegally dump their waste.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
2021/22	182	113	131	104	147	103	56	76	84	75	85	125	1281
2022/23	102	85	119	96	98	109	94	89	66	105	111	119	1193
2023/24	110	124	131										365

Actions:

Our Enforcement Officer is currently updating our signage to support the work to deter this across the district, and cameras are still being deployed in hotspot areas to identify those responsible. We are currently unable to issue additional FPN's as we are unable to confirm if payment has been received, which is limiting our ability to escalate issues where appropriate. This is being resolved with the Finance team currently and we are expecting to issue them again where appropriate from August, using an invoice reference linked to the FPN to support payments.

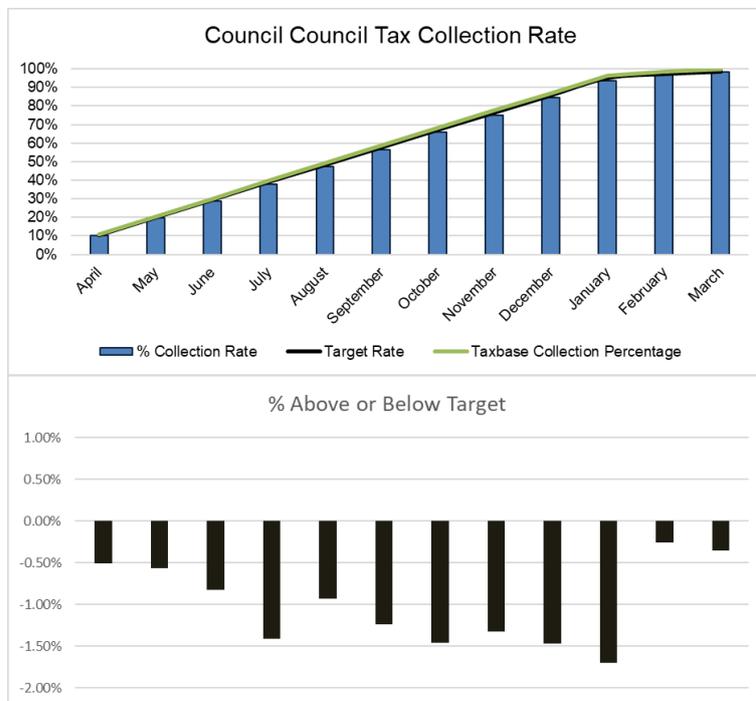
4.3 Finance and Customer Services (inc Revenues & Benefits)

Performance measure

- Council Tax Collection Rate

The data remains as Quarter 4 2022/23 data. Revenues cannot accurately produce the updated information due to batch scheduling having stopped working within Civica-OpenRevenues; this issue is waiting to be addressed and is currently within the escalation process.

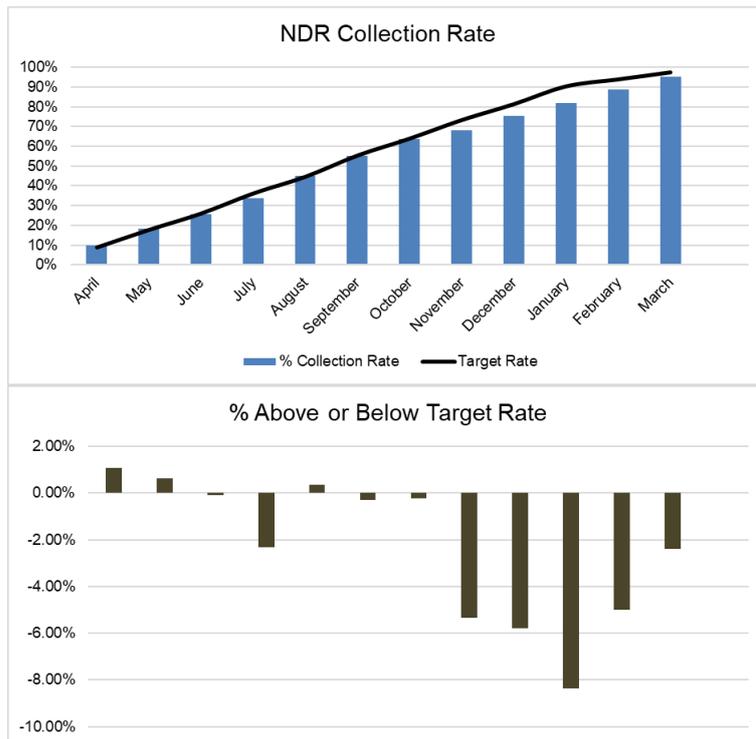
The OpenRevenue system includes software titled "Civica Automation" - which is batch scheduling tool that is able to automate linear tasks. There was an issue with one of the process maps in April and the process maps have been switched off.



Performance measure

- NDR Collection Rate

The data remains as Quarter 4 2022/23 data. Revenues cannot accurately produce the updated information due to batch scheduling having stopped working within Civica-OpenRevenues; this issue is waiting to be addressed and is currently within the escalation process.



Performance measure

- Revenues Processing

Month	Completed Items	Completed < 7 Days	Completed < 14 Days	Completed < 21 days	Completed < 28 Days	Completed > 28 days	Outstanding Documents
Apr-22	2082	588	301	308	517	368	1869
May-22	1659	409	230	138	75	807	2044
Jun-22	2115	442	239	152	201	1081	2031
Jul-22	2107	393	253	202	293	966	1605
Aug-22	1340	325	182	148	429	256	1421
Sep-22	2408	692	402	222	445	647	1430
Oct-22	3324	1070	675	338	537	704	1402
Nov-22	2778	1052	546	232	192	756	1399
Dec-22	2150	879	350	135	114	672	1270
Jan-23	3231	1391	361	234	215	1030	928
Feb-23	3376	1848	289	202	273	764	895
Mar-23	4357	2611	635	435	209	467	862
Apr-23	2764	1346	459	284	359	316	651
May-23	2368	1451	254	133	175	355	769
Jun-23	2321	1393	190	120	86	532	891

Update

The Covid-19 Business Support Grants, Council Tax Energy Rebates, and Energy Bill Support Scheme – Alternative Funding schemes is no longer impacting on the workload for the Revenue Service. Some reconciliation work remains to be completed for these schemes, but there is no longer any day-to-day processing impact. This has enabled a reduction to the outstanding work items.

It is anticipated that the impact of inflation and rising interest rates will cause an increase in customer contact with regards to the payment of their council tax.

Actions

Available resources will be reviewed to ensure that they are sufficient to meet the ongoing demand on the service.

Performance measure

- Online Customer Interactions

On-Line Service				
Month	Requests	Auto Processed	Referenced	Rejected
Apr-22	1097	270	350	477
May-22	1602	559	474	569
Jun-22	4297	3462	331	504
Jul-22	2233	1277	450	506
Aug-22	1341	341	466	534
Sep-22	2263	1271	446	546
Oct-22	1370	422	431	517
Nov-22	1100	220	379	501
Dec-22	977	140	326	511
Jan-23	1013	162	283	568
Feb-23	759	93	230	436
Mar-23	1220	343	316	561
Apr-23	1021	258	316	447
May-23	956	243	268	445
Jun-23	1011	189	336	486

Update

Customers are continuing to utilise the on-line portal to carry out service requests and transactional enquiries for Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rates and Welfare Benefits. The on-line forms include an element of automatic processing, at present, approximately 20% of enquires are processed automatically.

Actions

Lay-out of forms and systems parameters will be reviewed during quarters 2 and 3 to ensure that the full benefits of automation are being utilised.

Customer Services

Performance measure

- Revenues Calls (shared service)

Date	Calls Answered	Avg in Queue	Avg Wait (mm:ss)	Avg Logged in	Avg call length (mm:ss)
Apr 2023	2712	1.06	05:19	5.22	08:27
May 2023	2601	0.98	05:47	4.51	08:32
Jun 2023	2708	0.56	05:04	5.72	08:49

Update

The service met expectations with regards to answering calls during the quarter. The spike in calls is due to the annual council tax billing which occurs in March and April. Where demand exceeds supply, particularly during March and April, then officers from the revenues team are requested to assist. Following the annual billing, then reminder letters are sent which explains the longer times resolving customer queries (e.g. payment arrangements / explanation of outstanding balances)

Performance measure

- Number of Web Payments

Update

Date	Number of payments
Apr 2023	1222
May 2023	1771
Jun 2023	1310

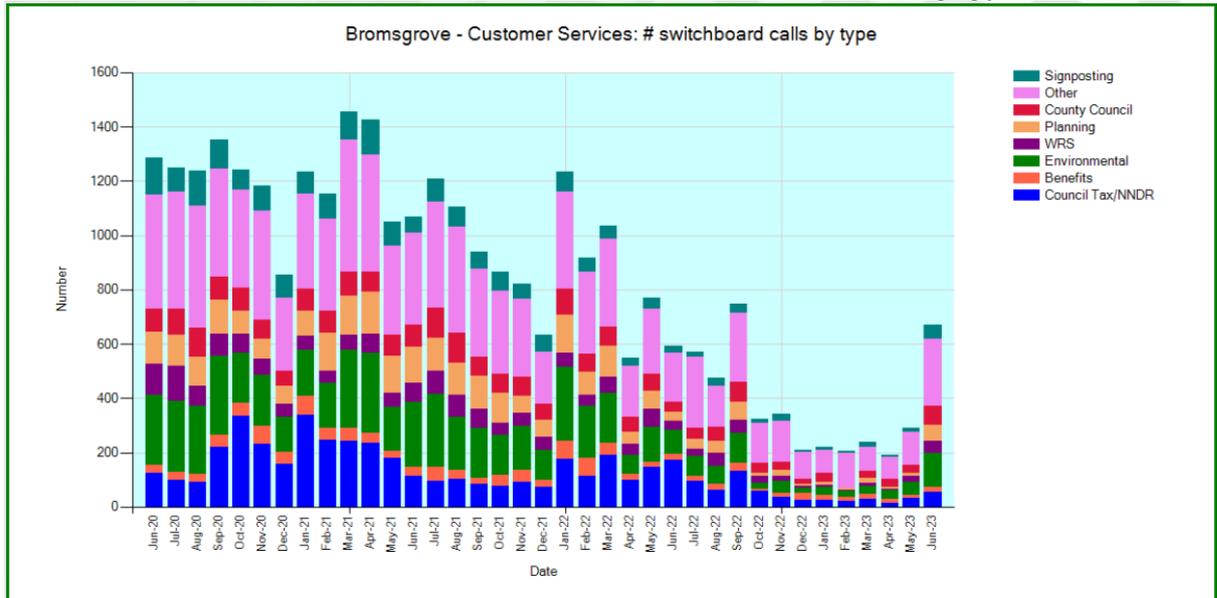
Performance measure

- Customer Service calls (Switchboard)

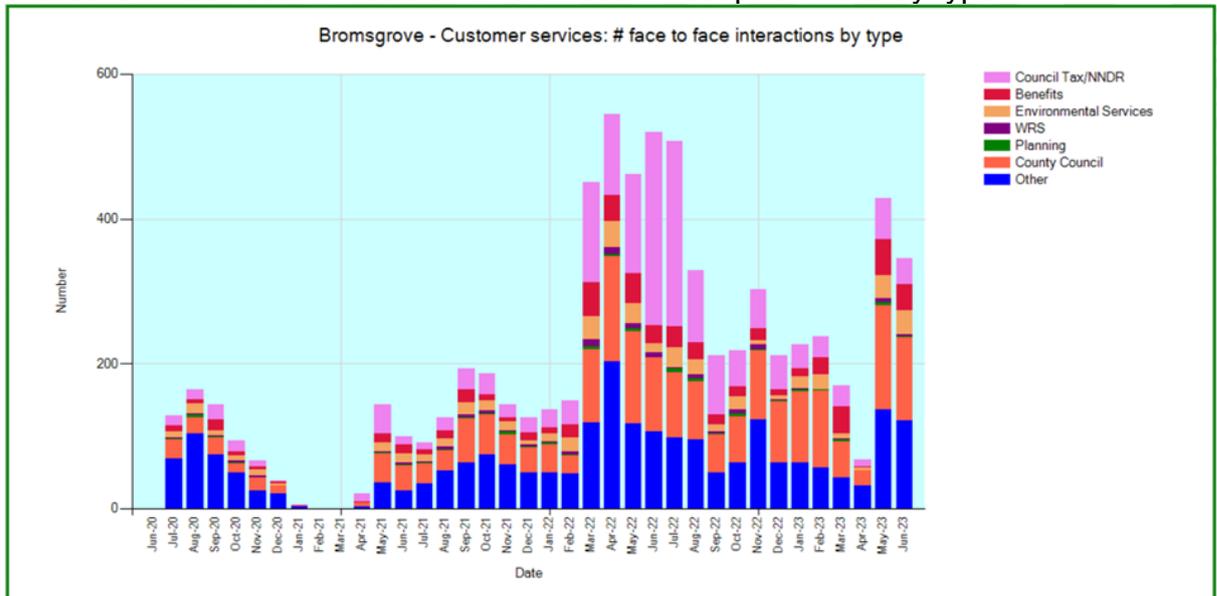
Date	Calls Answered	Avg in Queue	Avg Wait (mm:ss)	Avg Logged in	Avg call length (mm:ss)
Apr 23	786	0.02	00:44	1.92	00:57
May 23	889	0.02	00:41	1.90	00:54
Jun 23	850	0.02	00:48	1.56	00:58

Switchboard - The service met expectations with regards to answering calls during the quarter, despite an increase in calls across all areas, particularly the 'other' category which a highlighted area of enquiry was customers telephoning regarding road closures for the Coronation. There are 2 FTE officers that provide switchboard service across both Bromsgrove and Redditch Switchboard.

Measures Dashboard - Customer Services - Switchboard calls by type



Measures Dashboard - Customer Services - Reception visits by type

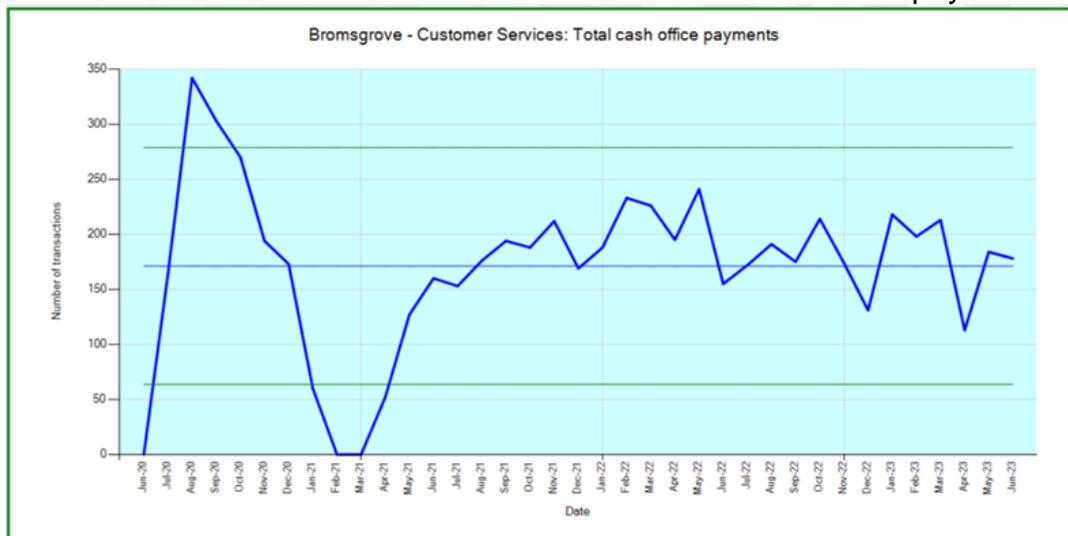


Visitor numbers remain low with an average of 350 enquiries per month (88/week, 18/day) at Parkside. The highest demand is for 'other' which is for non-BDC services (signposting) followed by county council run services (registrar, library, social care). The highest demand at the Parkside for council-run services is split between benefits, council tax and environmental

services. BDC-run services only account for 30% of customer enquiries to Parkside.

There was an ICT database error in April so these figures should be disregarded.

Measures Dashboard - Customer Services – Total cash office payments



Cash and card transactions at Bromsgrove Cashiers remain low with an average of between 8 and 10 transactions per working day. 38% cash, 62% pay by card.

4.4 Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services

The Leisure and Cultural Strategy has been formally endorsed. Its recommendations have been prioritised for delivery and delivery has commenced.

Performance measure

- Total number of planning applications determined in quarter (all types)

Update

Period	Number Determined
Quarter 1, 2022/23	191
Quarter 2, 2022/23	137
Quarter 3, 2022/23	138
Quarter 4, 2022/23	165
Quarter 1, 2023/24	See comment

Due to an issue with Uniform (system holding the data) we have been unable to extract any information for quarter 1, 2023/24

Performance measure

- Speed of decision making for ‘major applications’ (over a rolling 2-year period) (Governmental targets for determining applications in time (or within an agreed extension of time) on major applications is 60%)

Period	% Determined ‘on time’
Quarter 1, 2022/23	82.1%
Quarter 2, 2022/23	81.5%
Quarter 3, 2022/23	81.8%
Quarter 4, 2022/23	86.1
Quarter 1, 2023/24	See comment

Update

Due to an issue with Uniform (system holding the data) we have been unable to extract any information for quarter 1, 2023/24

Performance measure

- Speed of decision making for ‘non-major applications’ (over a rolling 2-year period) (Governmental targets for determining applications in time (or within an agreed extension of time) on non-major applications is 70%)

Period	% Determined ‘on time’
Quarter 1, 2022/23	77.7%
Quarter 2, 2022/23	78.6%
Quarter 3, 2022/23	78.9%
Quarter 4, 2022/23	81.3%
Quarter 1, 2023/24	See comment

Update

Due to an issue with Uniform (system holding the data) we have been unable to extract any information for quarter 1, 2023/24

5. Corporate Project Oversight & Monitoring

Currently twenty projects are being monitored. The table below provide a summary as of 19th July 2023. As can be seen over 50% (54.5%) have been rated as green for overall status.

All Projects (Number)	Overall Status RAG		Time Status RAG		Scope Status RAG		Budget Status RAG	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Red	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Amber	8	36.4%	9	40.9%	7	31.8%	8	36.4%
Green	12	54.5%	11	50.0%	13	59.1%	9	40.9%

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