

Public Document Pack



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 22ND JANUARY 2025

AT 6.00 P.M.

PARKSIDE SUITE - PARKSIDE

MEMBERS: Councillors S. Ammar (Chairman), B. Kumar (Vice-Chairman), A. Bailes, R. Bailes, S. J. Baxter, J. Clarke, S. R. Colella, A. M. Dale, J. Elledge, S. M. Evans, D. J. A. Forsythe, E. M. S. Gray, C.A. Hotham, D. Hopkins, R. J. Hunter, H. J. Jones, R. E. Lambert, M. Marshall, K.J. May, P. M. McDonald, B. McEldowney, S. T. Nock, D. J. Nicholl, S. R. Peters, J. Robinson, S. A. Robinson, H. D. N. Rone-Clarke, J. D. Stanley, K. Taylor, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

AGENDA

WELCOME

1. **To receive apologies for absence**

2. **Declarations of Interest**

To invite Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Disclosable Interests they may have in items on the agenda, and to confirm the nature of those interests.

3. **To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 9th October and 4th December 2024 (Pages 7 - 48)**

4. **To receive any announcements from the Chairman and/or Head of Paid Service**
5. **To receive any announcements from the Leader**
6. **To receive comments, questions or petitions from members of the public**

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

7. **Urgent Decisions**
8. **To receive and consider a report from the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Regeneration (Report to Follow)**

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

9. **Recommendations from the Joint Appointments Committee (Pages 49 - 56)**
10. **Independent Remuneration Panel Recommendations 2025/26 (Pages 57 - 72)**
11. **Recommendations from the Cabinet meetings held on 10th December 2024 and 7th January 2025 (Pages 73 - 76)**
12. **Background Information on the recommendations from the Cabinet**

- (i) Bromsgrove Local Heritage List (Pages 77 - 86)

Due to the length of the appendices to the Bromsgrove Local Heritage List report, only the covering report has been included in the main agenda pack. The appendices can be accessed in the Appendices Supplementary Agenda Pack.

(ii) Low Cost Housing Capital Receipts (Pages 87 - 94)

Due to the length of the appendices to the Low-Cost Housing Capital Receipts report only the covering report has been included in the main agenda pack. The appendices can be accessed in the Appendices Supplementary Agenda Pack.

(iii) Carbon Reduction Strategy and Implementation Plan (Pages 95 - 100)

Due to the length of the appendices to the Carbon Reduction Strategy and Implementation Plan report only the covering report has been included in the main agenda pack. The appendices can be accessed in the Appendices Supplementary Agenda Pack.

(iv) Bromsgrove Draft Air Quality Action Plan 2025 - 2030 (Pages 101 - 108)

Due to the length of the appendices to the Bromsgrove Draft Air Quality Action Plan 2025 - 2030 report only the covering report has been included in the main agenda pack. The appendices can be accessed in the Appendices Supplementary Agenda Pack.

(v) Q2 Revenue and Performance Monitoring 2024/2025 (Pages 109 - 162)

(vi) Refuse Fleet Replacement And Wheeled Bin Pressures (Pages 163 - 172)

(vii) Introduction of Food Waste Collection (Pages 173 - 182)

(viii) Final Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/2026 (Pages 183 - 188)

(ix) Medium Term Financial Plan - Tranche 1 Budget including Fees and Charges (following consultation) (Pages 189 - 232)

13. **To note the minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 10th December 2024 and 7th January 2025** (Pages 233 - 274)

14. **Questions on Notice** (Pages 275 - 276)

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

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

Each elected member due to ask a question, may ask up to one supplementary question which must be based on the original question or the answer provided to that question.

15. **Motions on Notice** (To Follow)

Please note that the Motions on Notice will be published in a Supplementary Papers Pack to this agenda.

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

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

Sue Hanley
Chief Executive

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

14th January 2025

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

Parkside, Market Street, Bromsgrove, B61 8DA

Tel: (01527) 64252 Ext: 3072 / 3031

Email: jess.bayley-hill@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk /
joanne.gresham@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

GUIDANCE ON FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS

Please note that this is a public meeting and will be live streamed for general access via the Council's YouTube channel.

You are able to see and hear the livestream of the meeting from the Committee Pages of the website, alongside the agenda for the meeting.

[Link to Live Stream for Bromsgrove District Council Meeting 22nd January 2025](#)

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.



INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

Access to Information

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

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

You can access the following documents:

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

at www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

9TH OCTOBER 2024, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors S. Ammar (Chairman), B. Kumar (Vice-Chairman), A. Bailes, R. Bailes, S. J. Baxter, J. Clarke, S. R. Colella, A. M. Dale, S. M. Evans, D. J. A. Forsythe, E. M. S. Gray, C.A. Hotham, R. J. Hunter, H. J. Jones, R. E. Lambert, M. Marshall, K.J. May, B. McEldowney, S. T. Nock, D. J. Nicholl, S. R. Peters, J. Robinson, S. A. Robinson, H. D. N. Rone-Clarke, J. D. Stanley, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

Officers: Mrs. S. Hanley, Mr P. Carpenter, Mr. G. Revans, Mrs. C. Felton, Mrs. J. Bayley-Hill and Mrs J Gresham

36\24 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Elledge, D. Hopkins, P. M. McDonald and K. Taylor.

37\24 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors E. M. S. Gray and S. J. Webb declared pecuniary interests as Trustees of the Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB) Redditch and Bromsgrove. They left the room during consideration of a recommendation from the Cabinet pertaining to funding for the CAB, at Minute Item No. 48/24 and took no part in the debate nor vote thereon.

Councillors A. Bailes, R. A. Bailes, S. J. Baxter, D. J. Forsythe, E. M. S. Gray, B. Kumar, B. M. McEldowney, M. Marshall, S. T. Nock, S. R. Peters and P. J. Whittaker declared an other registerable interest in respect of Minute Item No. 52/24 concerning the first Motion on Notice for consideration at the meeting in that they were in receipt of the State Pension and therefore had previously received or were now eligible for the Winter Fuel Payment.

Councillors S. T. Nock, S. J. Baxter, D. J. Forsythe, M. Marshall, B. Kumar and B. J. McEldowney stated that they would be participating and voting on this item in the interest of the residents of Bromsgrove.

Councillor A. Bailes stated that he would stay to listen to the debate but would not be participating nor did he wish to vote on this matter.

Councillors R. A. Bailes, E.M.S Gray and S. J. Peters all stated that they would leave the meeting room during the consideration of this item.

Agenda Item 3

Council
9th October 2024

Councillor S. Ammar declared a pecuniary interest, as Chairman of the Council, with regards to the two recommendations in respect of the Chairman's expenses, as detailed in the Constitution Review Working Group – Recommendations (minute no. 42/24). Councillor S. Ammar stated that she would leave the meeting room during the consideration of this item and she took no part in the debate in respect of this matter nor vote thereon. In her absence, the Vice-Chairman chaired the meeting during consideration of this item of business.

During consideration of this item, Councillor C. A. Hotham took the opportunity to express his sincere thanks to all Members for their recent well wishes, support and kind messages.

38\24

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

Chairman

The Chairman made the following announcements:-

The Chairman's dinner dance to be held at the Dodford Inn on Friday 18th October 2024, to help raise money for Age UK.

Haunted Halloween Trail, Sanders Park, Saturday 26th October 2024, 4:00pm to 9:00pm.

Christmas Lights Switch on –

- Bromsgrove Centre, Saturday 23rd November 2024, 5:00pm
- Rubery High Street, Saturday 30th November 2024, 5:00pm.

Head of Paid Service

There were no announcements from the Head of Paid Service.

39\24

TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER

The Leader expressed her sincere thanks to the Chairman and Members of the Artrix Holding Trust and Bromsgrove Community Arts (BCA) for all their hard work, and Group Leaders for all their support. A three year business opportunity had been secured for the Artrix, which was a well-received venue by residents.

40\24

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

There were no comments, questions or petitions from members of the public.

41\24

URGENT DECISIONS

The Chairman advised that there had been no urgent decisions since the last meeting of the Council.

42\24

CONSTITUTION REVIEW WORKING GROUP - RECOMMENDATIONS

It was noted that at this stage in the meeting that the Chairman left the meeting room and that the Vice-Chairman took the Chair for this item.

The Council considered a report setting out proposals for changes to the terms of reference for the Licensing Committee, Licensing Sub-Committee and the Licensing (Miscellaneous) Sub-Committee, amendments to the Council Procedure Rules in respect of Members' Questions on Notice; and a proposal for the Chairman's allowance to be increased.

Councillor K. May presented the report and proposed the recommendations. Councillor S. Baxter seconded the recommendations.

The report detailed the background to recommendations agreed at a meeting of the Constitution Review Working Group (CRWG) held on 31st July 2024.

Licensing Committee and Licensing Sub-Committees

Licensing Sub-Committees considered issues relating to the Gambling Act 2005 and the Licensing Act 2003. Licensing Sub-Committee hearings were mainly held in the day, with the membership comprising of four members of the Licensing Committee.

During the 2023/24 municipal year, some difficulties were experienced in terms of organising hearings of the Licensing Sub-Committee and Licensing (Miscellaneous) Sub-Committee. In particular, there were challenges in terms of the availability of Members to participate in these hearings. Group Leaders had been kept informed of the difficulties that had occurred during the 2023/24 municipal year.

The CRWG had noted that Licensing Sub-Committee and Licensing (Miscellaneous) Sub-Committee hearings were held during the day. This arrangement was in place as sometimes applicants and objectors could arrange to have legal representation at the hearings and this would cost them more if the meetings were held outside of standard working hours.

Some options available to the Council that could address challenges experienced in terms of organising Licensing Sub-Committee meetings had been considered at the CRWG meeting, as detailed in the report. The Chairman of the Licensing Committee was also consulted with.

Based on the information provided, the CRWG proposed to update the terms of reference for the Licensing Committee, Licensing Sub-Committee and Licensing (Miscellaneous) Sub-Committee in accordance with the options they had endorsed.

Supplementary Questions at Council

At the meeting of the CRWG held on 31st August 2023, Members agreed to launch a trial arrangement whereby Councillors who had submitted Questions on Notice for consideration at Council meetings could ask up to one supplementary question at the meeting. The supplementary question had to be based on the original question that was asked or the answer that had been provided to that question.

The CRWG reviewed the outcomes of this trial at the meeting of the group held on 31st July 2024. There had been general consensus amongst Members that the trial had worked well and that it would be reasonable for this to become a permanent arrangement at Council meetings.

The Chairman's Allowance

The Chairman of the Council had a civic role at the authority, chairing meetings of full Council and taking part in civic engagements on behalf of the authority.

The allowance paid to the Chairman of the Council had not been increased since 2013. Therefore, group leaders had suggested that a review of this allowance would be timely and that the matter be referred to the CRWG for consideration.

The CRWG concluded that an increase to the Chairman's allowance was due, given the time that had elapsed since the last review, and that the proposed change should be backdated to apply from 1st April 2024.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the changes to the terms of reference for the Licensing Committee, the Licensing Sub-Committee and the Licensing (Miscellaneous) Sub-Committee be approved;
- 2) the Council Procedure Rules in respect of Members' Questions on Notice be amended to enable Councillors to ask up to one supplementary question, which must be based on the original question, or the answer provided to that question;
- 3) the Chairman's allowance be increased to a multiplier of one of the Members' basic allowance, currently at £5,518; and
- 4) the updated allowance for the Chairman to be backdated to apply from 1st April 2024.

(Prior to consideration of this item, the Chairman declared a pecuniary interest in respect of the proposals pertaining to the Chairman's allowance detailed in the recommendations from the Constitution review Working Group. She was not present during the debate in respect of this matter nor did she vote thereon.)

43\24

JOINT APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE UPDATE

At this stage in the meeting the Chairman returned to the meeting room and in doing so expressed her thanks to the Vice-Chairman.

Members received a report on the creation of a Joint Appointments Committee.

Councillor K. May presented the report and proposed the recommendations in the report. Councillor S. Baxter seconded the recommendations.

During the Full Council meeting held on 17th July 2024 Members had approved the creation of a Joint Appointments Committee ("JAC"). This Committee would operate as a joint committee with Redditch Borough Council pursuant to sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 and carry out the functions of appointing the Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service as well as the Deputy Chief Executive / Section 151 Officer. The JAC would also carry out other employment related functions relating to Joint Statutory Officers.

Following on from that meeting, Officers had continued to work on the establishment of the JAC and had considered in more detail how the Committee could be set up to cover the full range of employment issues that were relevant to jointly employed statutory officers.

With responsibilities passing to the JAC, the existing functions in relation to appointment and dismissal of Joint Statutory Officers, namely the Appointment Committee, the Appeals Panel and the Statutory Officers Disciplinary Panel; would cease to exist. With a Shared Management Team, this was seen as a fair arrangement; the creation of a JAC.

Members were also being asked that delegated powers be given to the Monitoring Officer to finalise the wording of the full Committee reference terms for the JAC.

The disciplinary and dismissal functions which currently sat with the Statutory Officers Disciplinary Panel would be carried out by a standing sub-committee of the JAC. So, there would be added areas of responsibilities for a standing sub-committee of the JAC; and this would include Members from both Councils operating as a panel taken from the main Committee membership.

In response to a query in respect of the possible requirement to have interim Council meetings at both RBC and BDC with the final decision on a new Chief Executive; it was clarified that there would be a full appointments procedure to go through, therefore interim Council meetings at both RBC and BDC would not be required.

RESOLVED that

1. the Joint Appointments Committee (JAC) to have a standing sub-committee to deal with disciplinary matters on its behalf, which would replace the current Statutory Officers Disciplinary Panel;
2. responsibility for the functions carried out by the Appeals Panel and the Statutory Officers Disciplinary Committee be transferred to the JAC and its sub-committee(s);
3. the Committee Terms of Reference (Part 5 of the constitution) be updated to reflect the creation of the JAC and the transfer to it of the functions currently carried out by the Appeals Panel, and the Statutory Officers Disciplinary Panel as set out at Appendix A; and
4. the Monitoring Officer be authorised to update the Constitution, including any consequential amendments required as a result of the above.

44\24

SECTION 151 OFFICER REPORT

Members were asked to consider proposals in respect of the extension of the fixed-term appointment of Mr Peter Carpenter to enable him to continue in post as the Council's Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive.

Councillor K. May presented the report and proposed the recommendations in the report. Councillor S. Baxter seconded the recommendations.

Members were reminded that in December 2023, Council agreed to appoint Mr Carpenter as interim Deputy Chief Executive and interim Executive Director of Resources (Section 151) until 30th November 2024.

Whilst the recruitment process for the permanent Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Resources (Section 151) was underway, the Council was still legally required to have a Section 151 officer in place. However, the recruitment process and appointment into this role would not be completed by 30th November 2024.

In order to ensure continued stability, it was being proposed that Mr Carpenter continued as Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Resources (Section 151) until a permanent appointment to the post was made.

Council was therefore being asked to consider continuing the arrangements for Mr Carpenter as Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer) until such time as a permanent appointment was made to this position and commenced employment with the Council, thereby retaining an experienced officer and strongly

mitigating against the risks of loss of knowledge and experience of delivering the statutory section 151 functions.

In response to Councillor H. D. N. Rone-Clarke, Members were reassured that consultants had been appointed to assist with the recruitment and appointment into this senior officer post and that it was not envisaged that a further report would have to be brought back to Council for a further extension of time. It would be a smooth process; and the Council was now in a good financial position to attract the best candidates and to subsequently permanently appoint the best Section 151 officer.

Members commented that, particularly for the Chairman and as the Vice-Chairman of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee, Mr Carpenter's advice and guidance had really helped the Committee with their important work.

RESOLVED that

Mr Peter Carpenter be appointed as the Deputy Chief Executive and Interim Executive Director of Resources (Section 151) until such time as a new permanent Section 151 Officer commenced employment with the Council.

(Prior to consideration of this item, Mr Pete Carpenter left the meeting room. He was not present for the debate nor the vote in respect of this item.)

45\24

POLITICAL BALANCE

At the start of consideration of this item, Mr Carpenter returned to the meeting room.

The Council considered a report setting out proposals for changes to the political balance of the Council following changes in the membership of political groups as a result of the recent By-Election held for Sidemoor Ward.

Councillor K. May presented the report and proposed the recommendations. Councillor S. Baxter seconded the recommendations.

In considering this item, Members expressed their sincere thanks and well wishes to former Councillor D. G. Stewart and extended a warm welcome to Councillor J. Clarke.

Following some queries raised, Officers explained and clarified the political balance figures. It was confirmed that these figures had been discussed with each group leader prior to publication of the report and the figures balanced.

During consideration of this item, questions were raised with regard to the election of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees and Boards

and how these were distributed amongst representatives of the different political groups. The suggestion was made that going forward could this be referred to the Constitution Review Working Group (CRWG) to look into in more detail, to inform the process for appointing Chairmen and Vice Chairmen in the 2025/26 municipal year.

Members debated this matter further and it was highlighted that Members nominated and elected the Chairman and Vice Chairman of all Committees and Boards at the first meetings of those Committees held in a new municipal year. Therefore, it was down to each individual Committee or Board to determine these positions.

It was also highlighted that the Council's Constitution had recently been amended to state that the Chairman of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee and the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board "shall where possible not be a member of the political group represented in Cabinet".

Following a comment made that Members of Councillor Hunter's group had refused a position of Chairman, a request was received for it to be noted that none of his political group had refused a position of Chairman, However, it was noted that the offer of the position of Vice-Chairman of the Electoral Matters Committee had been refused due to the recent removal of Councillor Nicholl as Chairman of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee.

Reference was made to the process for the nomination and appointment of Chairman and Vice Chairmen at other Councils. As part of this, it was noted that some local authorities, including Redditch Borough Council, selected their Chairman and Vice-Chairman for their Boards and Committees at their Annual Council meetings.

RESOLVED that

- 1) for the remainder of the 2024/25 Municipal Year, the Committees set out in the table in Appendix 1 be appointed and that the representation of the different political groups on the Council on those Committees be as set out in that table until the next Annual Meeting of the Council, or until the next review of political representation under Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, whichever is the earlier; and
- 2) Members be appointed to the Committees and as substitute Members in accordance with nominations made by Group Leaders.

AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2023 - 2024

The Chairman of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee for 2023/2024, Councillor D. J. Nicholl, introduced the Committee's Annual Report for 2023-24.

Councillor Nicholl explained that during his tenure as Chairman of the Committee during 2023/2024, the Committee had worked really effectively, and that he would like to take the opportunity to express his sincere thanks to Councillor McEldowney for his work as Risk Champion. Thanks were also extended to Mr. Peter Carpenter for his contribution at a time when the Council was facing financial issues due to the economic climate; which had resulted in the vast bulk of the Committee's work being around financial issues.

Councillor Nicholl highlighted two areas of work, one of which had previously been pointed out by Councillor S. Collella, when he was Chairman of the Committee for 2022/2023, namely the need to have a lay person on the Committee.

Secondly, the Committee's role in the Council's Whistleblowing Policy, which was being worked on.

Councillor Rone-Clarke, current Chairman of the Committee, stated that he echoed Councillor Nicholl's remarks and would also like to extend his thanks to Councillor Nicholl, Committee Members and officers for an excellent report. He was proud of the quality of debate and cross party working.

Members stated that it was a great report and had emphasised that there were robust audit arrangements in place. Further thanks were extended to Mr Carpenter and the finance team as well as Councillor Worrall, the Parish Council's representative on the Committee.

RESOLVED that the Annual Report of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee for 2023-24 be noted.

47\24

TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER A REPORT FROM THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Councillor K. J. May presented the report for part of her portfolio, Strategic Partnerships. Council was advised that governance, which was another issue within the remit of the Leader, had not been addressed in this report as this had been the subject of a Portfolio Holder Annual Report to Council from a former Cabinet Member presented earlier in the calendar year.

In presenting the report, Councillor May clarified that the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), the Bromsgrove Partnership, was a non-statutory and non-executive partnership comprising a membership representing local organisations. The operation of the partnership was based on good will and recognised that many organisations could not deliver on their priorities without the co-operation and support of other bodies based in the District. There was no specific funding attached to the work of the partnership, which comprised both a board and theme groups.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, it had been anticipated that the partnership groups would not need to meet. However, in reality, the partnership had continued to meet throughout the pandemic, in a virtual setting. This had provided partner organisations with an opportunity to discuss how to handle various challenges that arose in that context. In addition, the partnership had been invaluable in collating information required by Worcestershire County Council for the countywide Here to Help service.

In the Corporate Peer Challenge that had been undertaken at Bromsgrove District Council in 2023, Bromsgrove Partnership and partnership working had been highlighted as an outstanding feature of the Council's work.

There were lots of officers and partner organisations that had contributed constructive work in a strategic partnership environment and thanks were extended to all parties who worked with the Council in respect of this matter. Particular thanks were extended to the Bromsgrove and Redditch Partnerships Managers and the Bromsgrove and Redditch Partnerships Officer for their hard work. In addition, the current Chairman of the Bromsgrove Partnership, the Chief Executive of Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) and the Vice Chairman, a representative of Act On Energy, were thanked for their hard work. Council was advised that Councillor May was a member of the Bromsgrove Partnership Board, representing Bromsgrove District Council and Councillor S. Webb was also a member of the Board, representing Worcestershire County Council.

Minutes of meetings of the Bromsgrove Partnership Board were being passed on to group leaders for dissemination amongst Members of their groups for consideration. Discussions were held at Bromsgrove Partnership Board meetings about important matters impacting on the District, with an example highlighted of a recent discussion about the Government's proposals in respect of Winter Fuel Allowance payments and how information could be disseminated to local residents. Digital connectivity had also been discussed at a recent meeting with wifi connectivity challenges, particularly in rural parts of the District, having been highlighted. Members were advised that mobile vans monitoring the wifi in rural areas had subsequently been operating in the District.

Once the report had been presented, the following points were raised during the consideration of questions from Members:

- The approach from Aston University to the partnership in respect of Poverty Alleviation Research and how ward Councillors and Parish Councils could contribute and be consulted on this work. Members were advised that this research was at an early stage, with further work to be undertaken, but Councillor May undertook to feed this request into that preparatory work for consideration as it was

Agenda Item 3

Council
9th October 2024

recognised that ward Councillors and Parish Councils could make a valuable contribution.

- The impact that difficulties with digital connectivity could have on the ability of residents to book appointments with their GP Practices online and the further challenges encountered by residents who were not familiar with ICT. Council was advised that Age UK had picked this up as an issue to address and it was recognised that there were difficulties.
- The issues with take up of pension credit and the opportunity for the Financial Inclusion Team to help promote this to eligible residents who were not currently claiming this support. Members were informed that there was a need for signposting to support eligible residents. Council was also informed that both Age UK and the local Social Prescribers worked hard to raise awareness and elected Members could help further in the context of their roles as community representatives.
- The fact that the Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board recognised the Bromsgrove Partnership's work as a strong example of partnership working.
- The Health Bus that would be travelling around the District in due course and which would be in a position to help signpost residents to appropriate support in the community.
- The source of the funding for the monitoring that was being undertaken in respect of digital connectivity in the District. It was clarified that Worcestershire County Council would be funding the project, using grant funding.
- The areas of deprivation within the District and the action that was being taken to address this. Council was informed that the number of locations classified as areas of deprivation had decreased from three to one and the partnership was focusing on supporting people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) in that area. The suggestion was made that UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF) could help to address this issue, in terms of funding initiatives that would assist with upskilling residents in that area.
- The work that partner organisations could undertake in wards to help residents, including fire risk assessments undertaken by the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue Service and the support NewStarts could provide to families moving into new homes.
- The £750 support received by the Alvechurch Larder.
- The data available in respect of the mental health of young people in the District and the extent to which Worcestershire Public Health was proactive in relation to this matter. Members were advised that Mental Health services were under challenge. The Public Health team monitored data and the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee could review the issue. The Orange Button Scheme and the training available through this scheme was highlighted for Members' consideration as part of this process.

- The work of NHS 111 in respect of accepting mental health related calls. This was recognised as an important step to increase accessibility to mental health services.
- The contribution of Bromsgrove and Redditch CALC, which was represented on the Bromsgrove Partnership, and which found the work of the partnership to be really useful.
- The e-newsletters that were regularly issued by the Bromsgrove and Redditch Partnership Manager to Members and the useful information about initiatives in the District that were highlighted in these communications. Members were urged to take advantage of the opportunities promoted in these publications.

48\24

TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 24TH JULY 2024

The Chairman advised that there were two recommendations from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 24th July 2024, which were presented for the Council's consideration.

Councillor K. J. May drew Members' attention to the Recommendations, and in doing so provided a brief explanation with regards to the reasons for the recommendations; as detailed in the Background Papers.

Cost of Living Proposal - Update

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor May and seconded by Councillor S. Baxter.

In proposing the recommendations, the Leader commented that the proposals had been brought forward after funding had been ring fenced in the budget a few years ago for community use after Members raised concerns about library provision. No libraries had subsequently been closed. Therefore, this money was available and could be used instead to help support residents who were suffering due to cost of living challenges. The funding could be used as seed funding and additional funds would be requested from the National Lottery to help ensure long-term financial support.

Confirmation was provided during consideration of this item that the officer who would be recruited using this funding would be undertaking valuable outreach work. Efforts would be made as soon as possible to recruit to this position as the value of the role to the community was recognised.

RESOLVED that

- 1) from the remaining £150,000 contained within earmarked reserves to support cost of living initiatives, £38,000 be allocated to a Voluntary Sector Money Adviser;

- 2) the £62,000 allocation to Citizen's Advice be amended to fund an Outreach Development Worker through to March 2026.

(Prior to consideration of the recommendations in respect of the Cost of Living, Councillors E. M. S. Gray and S. A. Webb left the room. They were not present during the debate in respect of this matter nor voted thereon.)

Combined Financial Outturn and Quarter 4 Financial Monitoring Report (Including Update on the Fleet)

At this stage in the meeting, Councillors E. M. S. Gray and S. A. Webb returned to the meeting room for the consideration of the Combined Financial Outturn and Quarter 4 Monitoring Report 2023/24.

Councillor S. R. Colella then read out the recommendation with regard to the update on the Council's fleet and provided a brief explanation with regards to the reasons for the recommendation.

During the presentation of the report, Members were advised that in 2021, as part of a review of the Council's finances, a decision was taken to extend the period in which existing vehicles in the fleet would be used by an extra year before their replacement. The decision was also taken at that time to invest in maintenance work on the existing vehicle fleet in order to extend the timeframes in which they could be used and therefore minimise the impact on the Council's capital budget. It had been envisaged that the savings arising from this approach would enable the authority in the long-term to invest in more energy efficient vehicles, in line with the Council's aim to reduce carbon emissions in the District.

However, the potential impact at the operational level, in terms of service delivery when vehicles were unavailable due to ongoing maintenance works, had not been anticipated. The Council had had to hire other vehicles to use at this time to ensure continuing service delivery and this had created an additional unbudgeted financial pressure. In addition, the first vehicles to be subject to these maintenance works had taken 12 months to refurbish, due to issues accessing appropriate parts. Subsequent vehicles had all overrun on planned timescales. Taking into account the ongoing maintenance works, as well as additional vehicular requirements, such as annual MOTs, the Council had had to continue to use hire vehicles alongside the fleet during this period in order to ensure that service delivery continued as normal.

Based on these issues, together with difficulties recruiting staff into the workshop at the depot, it was proposed that the Council should return to a seven-year cycle of replacing the authority's vehicle fleet. As part of this process, Officers would be reviewing the use of vehicles powered by hydrogenated vegetable oil (HVO), which had been favoured in order to reduce carbon emissions associated with the waste fleet.

Agenda Item 3

Council
9th October 2024

Following the presentation of the report, Members questioned whether the Council would be using the remaining Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) funding, to which the Council was entitled as a former member, as mitigating action to reduce the financial impact of the costs associated with the fleet. Clarification was provided that the funding arising from the former GBSLEP pooled budget could only be allocated to regeneration projects at the Council. No decision had been taken yet on how that funding would be used. Any decision concerning use of the funding would be subject to successful submission of a suitable business case, which would need to be debated through the usual democratic process. Confirmation was provided that as part of this process, the Overview and Scrutiny Board would have an opportunity to review the proposals, should members of the Board wish to do so.

Concerns were raised about the extent to which Officers had undertaken a robust review when originally assessing the appropriate options for the replacement of the vehicle fleet and questions were raised about the extent to which Officers should have been able to anticipate the difficulties that had arisen. However, Members commented that there was a need to move forward to ensure continuing service delivery.

Clarification was requested in respect of the table that had been included in the report which covered a three-year period and the reasons why this did not correspond with the seven-year period that was being proposed for the vehicle replacement programme. Members also questioned why savings were anticipated from 2026/27 onwards when the cost of replacement vehicles was anticipated as due to increase from circa £200,000 to £437,000 in that year and then to £450,000 the following year onwards. It was suggested that these figures appeared instead to indicate that costs were likely to increase. In response, Council was advised that parts for vehicles, particularly Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs), were in scarce supply in the country. In addition, the financial costs associated with using HVO had increased since the Council had initially considered investment in HGVs powered by HVO. The figures included in the report reflected the costs anticipated for investment in electric vehicles at a later date, although Members were asked to note that unfortunately the market for electric HGV vehicles had not progressed as far as the authority had hoped by the date of the meeting. In this context, for the time being, the Council would be investing in cleaner diesel vehicles, which were more efficient at present than electric vehicles.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Colella and seconded by Councillor P. Whittaker.

RESOLVED that the reprofiling of the Capital Fleet Replacement budget, relating to the Domestic Waste Collection Service, be approved.

49\24

TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 11TH SEPTEMBER 2024.

The Chairman advised that there were two recommendations from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 11th September 2024, which were presented for the Council's consideration.

Councillor S. R. Collella read out the recommendations and provided a brief explanation with regards to the reasons for the proposals detailed in the report. Council was informed that the purpose of the report was to set out the Council's annual outturn for 2023/24 on the Council's Capital and Treasury Management Strategies, including the prudential indicators. The Council had adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) code on treasury management. As a minimum requirement, under this code, the Council was required to consider annual treasury outturn and biannual treasury management update reports. There was also a requirement under the code to report on the prudential indicators, which were monitored in quarterly finance and performance reports.

The Council had invested funds under the Treasury Management Policy. This did expose the Council to financial risks, including the potential loss of investment funds and the impact on revenue funds of changing interest rates. Ongoing monitoring of risks remained central to the Council's Treasury Management Strategy. Council was advised that the Section 151 Officer had advised that all of the Council's treasury management activities complied fully with requirements in the code, with one exception. This had involved a loan to Redditch Borough Council, in quarter 2 of the financial year, which had not been compliant.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Colella and seconded by Councillor B. McEldowney.

Treasury Management Outturn Report

RESOLVED that Council note:

- 1) The Council's Treasury performance for the financial year 2023/24.
- 2) The position in relation to the Council's Prudential Indicators.

50\24

TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE CABINET HELD ON 17TH JULY, 24TH JULY AND 11TH SEPTEMBER 2024

The minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 17th and 24th July and 11th September 2024 were noted.

At this stage in the meeting the Chairman announced that there would be a ten minute comfort break.

The meeting stood adjourned from 19.30 until 19.43.

51\24

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Having reconvened, the Chairman informed Members that due to personal circumstances that the Monitoring Officer had had to leave the meeting.

The Chairman then advised that four questions on notice had been received for this meeting.

Question submitted by Councillor R. Hunter

“Ahead of the publication of the play audit, will you confirm that Council will continue to invest in maintaining all Council owned playgrounds where there is community support for keeping them, including pocket parks?”

The Leader of the Council responded that “Ahead of the publication of the play audit being considered formally in November, it is confirmed that the council will continue to invest in maintaining all council owned play equipment. The play audit and its investment strategy will be debated in November. In due course it is hoped that there can be an agreed spend on children’s play equipment for the next ten years.”

Question submitted by Councillor D. Nicholl

“On behalf of Council, will you write to the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust to ask what steps they are taking to ensure the reintroduction of parking charges at the Princess of Wales Hospital will not impact on the accessibility of NHS care?”

The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing and Strategic Housing responded that “Thank you for your question. I recognise that access to NHS care is incredibly important for the residents of Bromsgrove. In order to highlight this issue in the most effective way possible, I would suggest that this is an issue that should be raised at a meeting of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (known as HOSC). Unlike Bromsgrove District Council, Worcestershire HOSC has powers in relation to scrutiny of health services. This includes the power to make reports and recommendations to relevant NHS bodies, health service providers and the Secretary of State on health services in the authority’s area.

Bromsgrove District Council has a representative on the Worcestershire HOSC, which is currently Councillor Bakul Kumar. I am aware that Councillor Kumar provides regular updates to our Overview and Scrutiny Board on the work of HOSC and he can also raise issues on our behalf at meetings of HOSC.

In this context, I would suggest that Councillor Kumar, as our representative, should be asked to raise the issue highlighted in your question at a meeting of the HOSC as soon as possible.

It should be noted that meetings of HOSC are open to the public to attend to observe proceedings and you may wish to attend some of these meetings to learn more about the issues that they discuss.”

Councillor D. Nicholl subsequently asked the following supplementary question:

“Thank you for your answer. I’d like to avoid the kind of situation at the Queen Elizabeth where someone may have to pay £10 for parking. So, my question is, how do they set the price? However, I recognise that this might be best raised by Councillor Kumar, as our HOSC representative, so I will speak to him about this.”

Question submitted by Councillor J. Robinson

“When will the Council owned car park by All Saints Church Hall on Shenstone Close be refurbished in line with other Council owned car parks in the district?”

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Regeneration responded that “This is a timely question as a press release is due to be issued next week. Work on resurfacing the All Saints Church Hall car park in Bromsgrove is due to commence on the 28th of October.”

Councillor Robinson subsequently asked the following supplementary question:

“Thank you to the Portfolio Holder for that answer. Can you confirm that the car park will still remain free?”

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Regeneration responded by highlighting that Councillor Robinson had previously asked a very specific question and an answer had been provided to that question.

Question submitted by Councillor S. Robinson

“We do not agree with the Government’s policy to levy Business Rates on private schools. However, now it looks almost certain to be implemented, will Council ringfence any money it receives in extra business rates as a result of this policy to support initiatives for young people?”

The Cabinet Member for Finance responded that “The Council will consider any additional business rates income generated from private schools and the use of this as part of the 2025/26 Medium Term Financial Strategy”.

52\24

MOTIONS ON NOTICE

The Chairman advised that three Motions on Notice had been submitted for this meeting. However, prior to the meeting, Councillor J. Elledge had withdrawn the Motion that she had submitted to provide the Council and other parties with time to review options for future parking provision on the leisure centre car park. Further information on this subject would be shared with Members in due course.

Prior to consideration of the Motion in respect of the Winter Fuel Allowance, Councillors R. Bailes, E. Gray and S. Peters left the room. They did not participate in the debate in respect of this matter nor vote thereon.

Winter Fuel Allowance

The Council considered the following Motion on Notice submitted by Councillor S. Nock.

“BDC recognises the importance of the Winter Fuel Allowances to all our elderly residents.

The Winter Fuel Allowance has historically been a vital lifeline for pensioners, helping them to cope with the increased costs of heating during the cold winter months. The recent reduction or removal of this allowance will leave many elderly members of our community vulnerable to the harsh effects of cold weather, exacerbating health issues and leading to an increased risk of illness and mortality.

Background:

1. Impact of Cold Weather on the Elderly: Cold weather significantly affects the health and wellbeing of elderly individuals. Studies have shown that exposure to cold temperatures can lead to serious health complications such as hypothermia, increased blood pressure, respiratory problems, and exacerbated chronic conditions like arthritis and cardiovascular diseases.

Moreover, the elderly are often on fixed incomes, making it difficult to absorb the rising costs of energy.

2. Importance of the Winter Fuel Allowance: The Winter Fuel Allowance was designed to mitigate these risks by providing financial assistance specifically for heating costs during the winter months. It has been an essential support mechanism, allowing pensioners to maintain a safe and comfortable living environment.
3. Consequences of the Removal/Reduction of the Allowance: The reduction or removal of the Winter Fuel Allowance will force many

elderly individuals to make difficult choices between heating their homes and meeting other essential needs such as food and medication. This will lead to increased cases of cold-related illnesses and a rise in excess winter deaths among the elderly population.

We call upon the Leader of the Council to write a joint letter, signed by all Group Leaders, to the Chancellor of the Exchequer requesting:

- That the Government acknowledges the importance of the Winter Fuel Allowance in protecting the health and wellbeing of pensioners.
- That the Government reinstates the Winter Fuel Allowance to all pensioners as part of the budget statement.
- That the Government commits to maintaining this allowance to prevent future risk to the elderly population during winter months.”

The Motion on Notice was proposed by Councillor Nock and seconded by Councillor B. Kumar.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Nock commented that the Motion had been brought forward in a context in which within Councillor Nock's ward alone at least 1,782 residents aged 65 and over would be impacted by proposed changes to the winter fuel allowance that had been brought forward by the Government. Members were asked to note the impact of the cold weather during the winter months, particularly on elderly people. The winter fuel allowance was important to protecting elderly people, in terms of their ability to continue to heat their homes. There was a need to protect vulnerable elderly residents. Reinstating the Winter Fuel Allowance would enable elderly people to heat their homes without having to compromise on other essentials, such as food. The Winter Fuel Allowance also helped to prevent the development of a health crisis, as elderly people were more vulnerable to illnesses that occurred during the cold weather. This would reduce the potential associated impact on the NHS. Reference was also made to the implications for social equity, with elderly people having contributed over many years to society. Councillor Nock suggested that elderly residents therefore deserved to live in relative comfort and the Winter Fuel Allowance could enable them to achieve this.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Kumar suggested that changes to the Winter Fuel Allowance could be viewed as an attack on the elderly and could result in an increase in illnesses that were more prevalent during periods of bad weather. Fuel poverty effected an estimated 2.5 million households in the UK and Councillor Kumar suggested that this figure would increase as a result of the Government's changes. The suggestion was made that a consequence of the changes would be that many elderly residents would be unable to afford adequate heating during the winter months. Data provided by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) estimated that 1.6 million people living in poverty would lose the Winter Fuel Allowance as they were not receiving any

other benefits that would ensure their eligibility for support. A further 900,000 with incomes just above the poverty line would also lose winter fuel payments. Whilst the Government would continue to provide the Household Support Fund in the country, Councillor Kumar commented that pensioners would only receive £1 for every £10 paid out in this fund, with the remainder paid to other groups. Council was asked to note that health professionals, including representatives of Public Health, had raised concerns about the impact of the changes, including the potential for an increase in preventable deaths among older people.

The suggestion was made that there had been poor communications on this change to the Winter Fuel Allowance, with many residents having only recently learned that they would not be receiving this financial support during the winter months. Many Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations had criticised the Government's changes and had highlighted the need for clearer communications and the introduction of an easier process for eligible elderly people to follow in order to apply for financial support. Many residents who were eligible for pension credits and other support were not currently submitting claims and complex forms, consisting of 220 questions, deterred some from applying. The Government had announced an increase of 38,000 claims for pension credit, following the announcement of changes to Winter Fuel Allowance payments. However, Councillor Kumar suggested that these figures needed to be viewed in context, as there were millions of elderly people in the country who were entitled to pension credit but who were not claiming this support.

In concluding his remarks, Councillor Kumar referred to the Government's Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed changes. This had revealed that 1.6 million people with disabilities who had been in receipt of the Winter Fuel Allowance would no longer be eligible alongside 2.7 million people aged 80 years or older and 7.3 million people aged 66 – 79. At a local level, there would be circa 9,500 elderly people, including people with disabilities, who would be impacted.

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Housing and Health and Well Being responded by highlighting the following sources of support for elderly residents living in the District through the Household Support Fund (HSF).

- Round 6 of the HSF would see the continuation of the cash voucher scheme delivered through Citizens Advice Bromsgrove and Redditch. This scheme was currently being finalised and it was anticipated that it would be open and available for residents to apply later in the month.
- Act on Energy delivered a Worcestershire HSF scheme to assist financially with people's energy bills, debts, broken heating systems and similar issues and this was open to all ages. However, supported by funding from the UKSPF, there was a community worker within Act On Energy that focused on Bromsgrove District only and assisted people to claim for the support they were entitled

to. That community worker had gone along to events and coffee mornings and offered his support.

- Warmth on Prescription – This was funded via HSF across the County, at a District level. Social prescribers were working with GPs to identify those with medical conditions which were exacerbated due to cold weather. Those eligible received support provided by Act on Energy.
- Worcestershire Advice Network (WAN) HSF Scheme – This scheme was funded by HSF to cover the County. WAN (which was made up of local representatives of VCS groups, including Age UK, the CAB and DIAL) were able to provide a £75 post office voucher to pensioners not in receipt of pension credit, people with a disability of any age and carers of any age. Some might qualify for all three forms of support (such as a pensioner, who was disabled and also cared for their partner) so could potentially receive three £75 vouchers.
- At a county level, the DWP were sharing data with Worcestershire County Council in respect of those on pension credit, who were automatically sent a post office voucher that could be cashed. The WAN scheme applied to those not on pension credit.
- The local HSF funds were allocated to the Foodbanks / larders and white goods scheme and BDHT (for their Hardship Scheme).

Council had been promoting the take up of pension credit which gave extra money to help with living costs if a person was over state pension age and on a low income. Nationally, there were many pensioners who might be eligible for this funding, but they were not aware. The Leader therefore urged all Councillors to promote and encourage pensioners to check if they were eligible.

It was noted that Age UK provided guides around pension credit on their website. Age UK also printed copies of many leaflets (for those who could not or did not want to access this information online) at their office on Windsor Street and they are in the process of putting more information and leaflets into all their charity shops.

Members subsequently debated the Motion in detail and in doing so commented on the following points:

- The need to act in the best interests of the people of Bromsgrove.
- The background to the introduction of the Winter Fuel Allowance in the 1990s.
- The original aim of the Winter Fuel Allowance to reduce fuel poverty. At that time 29 per cent of people in the country were reported to be experiencing absolute poverty and this number had fallen to 12 per cent by 2024.
- The Winter Fuel Allowance's introduction in a context, in the 1990s, where the Government had been supporting the war generation.

Agenda Item 3

Council
9th October 2024

- The current elderly population in the country, largely comprising the baby boomer generation, and the many positive developments that had occurred during their lifetimes.
- The problems in the country with energy efficiency.
- The 20 per cent of the baby boomer generation that were classified as millionaires and the extent to which they should be receiving a universal benefit.
- The need to direct support to those most in need.
- The need for the Government to consider the impact of the changes to the Winter Fuel Allowance on the most vulnerable within society.
- The alternative options available to tackle discrepancies, in terms of social mobility and wealth, in society.
- The excess winter deaths experienced in the UK and the extent to which this could be exacerbated by changes to the Winter Fuel Allowance.
- The particular vulnerabilities of elderly people in cold weather, including in respect of cardio-vascular diseases and pneumonia.
- The compelling evidence for the importance of Winter Fuel Allowances arising from academic studies in respect of public health.
- The rising cost of living in the UK and the extent to which it was appropriate to make these changes in this context.
- The impact that the changes could have, in terms of exacerbating the financial burden on health services.
- The conversations that Members were having with elderly residents, who were frequently raising concerns about getting through the winter months.
- The particular difficulties that would be experienced by those on the threshold, who were not eligible for pension credit.
- The stress for elderly people arising from not knowing how they would manage the financial impact of the changes.
- The fact that many elderly people were asset rich but cash poor.
- The need to develop a new, more equitable system for the future.
- The particular challenges in terms of heating older properties and properties in a state of disrepair.
- The process that had been followed by the Government in respect of making changes to the Winter Fuel Allowance.
- The timing of the announcement from the Government.
- The need for the Government to make difficult decisions in respect of managing the budget.
- The difficulty for the leader of the Independent 2024 group in terms of signing the letter, as there was no group whip and it was difficult to establish whether the proposed letter reflected the views of all of the members of the group. Councillor Hotham commented that on this basis, he would not be able to sign the letter as group leader, although individual members of the group could choose to add their signatures.

Agenda Item 3

Council
9th October 2024

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

Members voting FOR the Motion:

Councillors S. Ammar, S. Baxter, J. Clarke, S. Colella, A. Dale, S. Evans, D. Forsythe, C. Hotham, R. Hunter, B. Kumar, R. Lambert, M. Marshall, K. May, D. Nicholl, S. Nock, J. Robinson, S. Robinson, H. Rone-Clarke, J. Stanley, S. Webb and P. Whittaker (21).

Members voting AGAINST the Motion:

No councillors (0).

Members ABSTAINING in the vote:

Councillors B. McEldowney and A. Bailes (2).

(Prior to the vote in respect of this matter Councillor H. Jones had already left the meeting and was therefore not present for the debate nor vote thereon).

The recorded vote on this Motion was therefore carried.

EV Chargers

The Council considered the following Motion on Notice submitted by Councillor H. Rone-Clarke.

“Council notes

- that we must invest in green methods of transportation in order to achieve our targets to reduce carbon emissions.
- that active travel and public transport will be integral in achieving this goal.
- that electric vehicles (EVs) will play an important role in our transition to clean energy.

Therefore, council resolves to ask the Cabinet to explore ways in which EV chargers can be better integrated within our infrastructure, including options for on-street parking, allowing residents who do not have access to a driveway, to purchase an EV of their own.”

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

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Rone-Clarke commented that the purpose behind the Motion related to the need to transition to green energy and to reduce the Council’s carbon footprint. As part of this process, there was a need to encourage active travel, invest in public

transport and to enable greater investment in electric vehicles. There were a variety of homes in the District, including homes without driveways. Householders living in these properties deserved the opportunity to purchase electric vehicles that they could charge at different locations in the District. Various options needed to be provided and these needed to be safe. It was therefore important to provide electric vehicle charging points where possible.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Gray commented that an opportunity had arisen to invest in an electric charging point in her ward in Rubery. However, delays had occurred in terms of the proposed location for the electric charging point. This was having a negative impact on residents in Rubery, in terms of postponing many residents' opportunities to invest in electric vehicles as there were currently limited options available to charge such vehicles in that location.

Members subsequently discussed the Motion and in doing so noted that there were currently two main issues which could discourage people from investing in electric vehicles. The first issue was the cost of purchasing an electric vehicle. The second challenge was the potential to locate adequate numbers of charging points for electric vehicles. It was noted that the cost of purchasing an electric vehicle was falling, creating opportunities for organisations like Bromsgrove District Council to invest in charging points.

Reference was made to the need for work to be undertaken to enable the Council to establish the level of demand for electric charging points in the District. Members also commented on the need for an Electric Charging Policy to be introduced for the District. This would need to be informed by community engagement in order to clarify the proportion of residents who were likely to require access to electric charging points away from their properties. In discussing this matter, it was also suggested that consideration should be given to working in partnership with the private sector.

Members commented that it was important to note the need to take action that mitigated the risks in respect of climate change. This was one such action that could have a positive impact on carbon emissions in the District.

Reference was made to the incidents of on street charging that had been observed in the community, whereby some residents had extended wires and leads across roads, creating trip hazards and placing other residents at risk. In this context, Members commented that the action proposed in the Motion would support public safety.

Consideration was given to the extent to which it was appropriate to make reference to on street parking within the Motion, with Members suggesting that this might be more suitable for Worcestershire County Council to address. A car parking strategy could partly address this, but

there would also be a need for ongoing partnership working with Worcestershire County Council.

During consideration of this item, the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Climate Change responded by commenting that Worcestershire County Council had the primary role for implementing active travel initiatives. Bromsgrove District Council officers regularly meet with officers from the County Council to discuss this role. Worcestershire County Council had had commissioned a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Bromsgrove which was currently being drafted. Full consultation, including a member engagement session, would be undertaken to help inform the content of the LCWIP. The final adopted LCWIP would then be used to bid for funding from Active Travel England and other sources to implement the recommendations of the plan. It would also help inform future policies such as the Bromsgrove District Local Plan and the Worcestershire Local Transport Plan No 5.

Whilst the Council had undertaken a review of the Refuse Fleet and had an agreed replacement programme, the technology for these vehicles was not cost effective nor mature enough to deliver services in Bromsgrove. The Council was, however, finalising the wider fleet replacement programme review and were consciously looking at how to utilise electric powered vehicles as part of this. In the interim, the fleet used Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil as a proportion of their fuelling to reduce emissions.

The Council had a contract with Zest Eco Limited to expand the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) across Council owned land. The project, which covered a 10-year period with an option to extend for a further five years, was assessing each of the car parks that did not currently have EVCI. The Council was finalising leases for various sites in order to set out installation timescales and associated publicity around these.

This project was complimenting the installations previously undertaken through a separate scheme which saw the following car parks receive EVCI:

- Golden Cross Car Park
- Alvechurch Car Park
- Sanders Park Car Park
- Windsor Street
- North Bromsgrove (Bromsgrove Leisure Centre)
- Asda Bromsgrove
- Aston Fields
- Barnt Green Parish – clarification was requested on the location of these parking spaces.
- Princess of Wales (POW) Community Hospital
- Webbs Hagley Garden Centre

To further enhance the ECVI schemes, which concentrated around car parks, there was a Government funded Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) scheme which was being co-ordinated by Worcestershire County Council. An allocation of £3.5 million had been received and was primarily focused on delivering public charging points for residents without dedicated off-street parking at home. The County Council were producing tender documents that would be released in January 2025.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried.

53\24

CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES FROM THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 11TH SEPTEMBER 2024

The exempt minute from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 11th September 2024, concerning the Levelling Up project, was considered. A request was received to ask a question of clarification on the subject of this minute. However, this subsequently transpired to be a request for an update on progress that had occurred since the meeting. Officers advised that Council was not in a position to consider matters arising from meetings, and therefore there was no debate in respect of this matter.

(During consideration of this item, Members 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)). However, there is nothing exempt in this minute.)

The meeting closed at 8.54 p.m.

Chairman

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

4TH DECEMBER 2024, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors S. Ammar (Chairman), B. Kumar (Vice-Chairman), A. Bailes, R. Bailes, J. Clarke, S. R. Colella, A. M. Dale, J. Elledge, S. M. Evans, D. J. A. Forsythe, E. M. S. Gray, C.A. Hotham, D. Hopkins, R. J. Hunter, M. Marshall, K.J. May, P. M. McDonald, B. McEldowney, S. T. Nock, S. R. Peters, J. Robinson, H. D. N. Rone-Clarke, J. D. Stanley, K. Taylor, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

Officers: Mrs. S. Hanley, Mr P. Carpenter, Ms. N Cummings, Mr D. Whitney, Mrs. J. Bayley-Hill and Ms M. Bassett

60\24 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors S. Baxter, H. Jones, R. Lambert, D. Nicholl and S. Robinson.

61\24 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor P. Whittaker declared a pecuniary interest in Minute Item No. 70/24 – the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 21st October 2024 and specifically the discussions around the Woodland Creation Application. This declaration was made on the basis that he could potentially benefit from the proposals that had been discussed at that meeting (although he had not been present at that Cabinet meeting).

62\24 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 23RD SEPTEMBER 2024**

The minutes of the extraordinary meeting of Council held on 23rd of September 2024 were submitted.

The Chairman highlighted a typographical error, whereby Councillor Gray had been listed as having been present at the meeting alongside having given apologies for the meeting and it was noted that she had not been present.

RESOLVED that subject to the amendment detailed in the preamble above, the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 23rd September 2024 be approved as a true and correct record.

63\24 **TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND/OR HEAD OF PAID SERVICE**

On behalf of the Council, the Chairman congratulated Councillors J. and S. Robinson on the birth of their baby daughter, Orla Robinson, since the previous meeting of Council. Councillor J. Robinson confirmed that both mother and baby were doing well.

The Head of Paid Service reminded Members that there was a need to respond to the Council's new external auditors, Ernst and Young, concerning any conflicts of interest. A form had been sent to all Members and completed copies had to be returned directly to the auditors.

64\24 **TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER**

The Leader thanked Members and Officers for their hard work during the year and wished Members a happy Christmas and New Year.

65\24 **TO RECEIVE COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

There were no comments, questions or petitions from the public for consideration on this occasion.

66\24 **URGENT DECISIONS**

The Chairman confirmed that no urgent decisions had been taken since the previous meeting of Council.

67\24 **RECOMMENDATION FROM THE LICENSING COMMITTEE**

The Chairman of the Licensing Committee presented a recommendation that had been agreed at a meeting of the Committee held on 19th November 2024. The recommendation related to the subject of the Gambling Act 2005 Review of Statement of Principles and consideration of consultation responses. Members had endorsed the proposals detailed in this report unanimously at the Committee meeting.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor J. Elledge and seconded by Councillor K. Taylor.

RESOLVED that the draft Statement of Principles be approved and published with effect from 31st January 2025.

68\24 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND BOUNDARY REVIEW FOR BROMSGROVE - WARDING PATTERN PROPOSALS**

At the start of the debate in respect of this item, Members agreed to suspend standing orders to permit the Electoral Services Manager and

Agenda Item 3

Council
4th December 2024

the Senior Electoral Services Officer respectively to speak at the meeting on this item of business.

The Chairman of the Electoral Matters Committee subsequently presented the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's Boundary Review for Bromsgrove – Ward Patterning Proposals. The report had been considered at a meeting of the Electoral Matters Committee held on 22nd November 2024.

Council was advised that the Commission reviewed electoral and boundary arrangements of Councils to make sure as much as possible that they were fair. The first stage of the review was to consider the number of Councillors the District Council should have and the Commission had decided that this should be 31 which agreed with a previous submission from Council. The Commission had praised the Council submission and would be using it as an example of best practice in future reviews.

The review had reached its second stage where the Commission opened a consultation on Ward Patterning for the District. The consultation ran from 24th September to the 2nd December 2024. However, the Commission had kindly allowed the authority the extra time for Council to endorse a submission from Bromsgrove District Council. As part of the agreement, a draft submission had had to be sent to the Commission before the deadline which was received and acknowledged by them on 2nd December 2024.

To create this draft submission, a working group had been formed from the membership of the Electoral Matters Committee in consultation with all ward Members. With the help of officers, the working group had reviewed each ward in turn with ward Members being invited to comment or, if they wished, to attend the relevant working group meetings when their ward was discussed.

The working group had met on four occasions and had in depth discussions on ward changes. The outcomes of these meetings had informed the content of a submission that could be endorsed by Council and sent to the Commission.

The Commission would take into account any submissions made, so it was important the Council provided an official submission. This, with other submissions received, would help the Commission to formulate their draft recommendations in March 2025. The Commission would then run a consultation on their draft recommendations from 6th May to 14th July 2025. Once this concluded, the Commission would publish their final recommendations in November 2025. The legal order would be made in Spring 2026 for implementation in time for the May 2027 elections.

In concluding her comments on the submission, the Chairman of the Electoral Matters Committee thanked the working group for all of their

hard work together with the support of officers, which had helped when drawing together the Council's submission.

Following presentation of the report, there was a discussion of the process that had been followed by the working group when developing the Council's draft submission. Members noted that there had been many robust conversations on the subject and compromises had had to be reached. In particular, there had been some disagreements over whether two-Member or single Member wards should be proposed for certain locations. However, the final submission presented for Council's consideration reflected the outcomes of the discussions held at the Electoral Matters Committee meeting.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor E. Gray and seconded by Councillor K. May.

RESOLVED that

- 1) standing orders be suspended during consideration of this item to permit the Electoral Services Manager and the Senior electoral Services Officer respectively to speak on the subject of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's Boundary Review for Bromsgrove – Ward Patterning Proposals;
- 2) Council endorse the Council Warding Pattern submission including any amendments made; and
- 3) Council delegate authority to the Chief Executive, following consultation with Group Leaders, to produce and submit the formal submission document to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

(Prior to consideration of this item, the Chairman agreed to withdraw from the meeting on the basis that she had participated in the debate in respect of this item at the Electoral Matters Committee and had expressed her views on the subject at that meeting. The Vice Chairman instead chaired the meeting for this item and the Chairman was not present for either the debate nor vote thereon.)

69\24

POLITICAL BALANCE REPORT

The Leader presented a report focusing on changes to the political balance at the Council. Members were advised that this report had been prepared following changes to political group membership at the authority.

During consideration of this item, reference was made to the changing size of the political groups over the course of the year and the potential for the appointments to chairmanship positions to reflect the political make up of the authority. Members noted that at present, Chairmen of Committees were appointed at the first meeting of a Committee held in a municipal year. The suggestion was made that these appointments could instead be confirmed through Council. However, Members also

Agenda Item 3

Council
4th December 2024

commented that constitutional rules at the Council had recently been changed to enable Members from political groups that did not form part of the administration on the Cabinet to serve as the Chairmen of certain Committees. Furthermore, it was noted that there would be opportunities to consider which Members to appoint to different chairing roles at the start of the 2025/26 municipal year. The suggestion was made that the most suitable candidate, with the appropriate skills for the position of Chairman of a Committee, should be appointed in each case.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor K. May and seconded by Councillor P. Whittaker.

RESOLVED that

- 1) for the remainder of the 2024/25 Municipal Year, the Committees set out in the table in Appendix 1 be appointed and that the representation of the different political groups on the Council on those Committees be as set out in that table until the next Annual Meeting of the Council, or until the next review of political representation under Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, whichever is the earlier; and
- 2) Members be appointed to the Committees and as substitute members in accordance with nominations to be made by Group Leaders.

70\24

TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CABINET HELD ON 21ST OCTOBER 2024

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 21st October 2024 were noted.

During consideration of this item, questions were raised as to the reasons why Councillors K. May and K. Taylor, who had declared other disclosable interests at the Cabinet meeting in respect of the Woodland Creation Application had not done so again at the Council meeting. Members were advised that this declaration had not been made by either Councillor as the matter was not due to be debated at the Council meeting.

(Prior to consideration of this item, Councillor P. Whittaker declared a pecuniary interest in the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 21st October 2024 in relation to the debate on the Woodland Creation Application. However, he did not leave the meeting as there was no debate and no questions raised concerning the subject of the Woodland Creation Application.)

71\24

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The Chairman advised that five Questions on Notice had been received for consideration on this occasion.

Question from Councillor M. Marshall to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services

“Can the Cabinet Member confirm what action is being taken to challenge and reverse Worcs Highways’ unacceptable stance not to attend future Bromsgrove Planning Committee meetings which:

- compromises the professional integrity and independence of our planning officers who will be required to accept and present Worcs Highways evidence at Committee without question
- undermines the legitimate need for members to scrutinise the evidence of a key statutory consultee
- erodes public confidence in the democratic accountability of Highways and the planning process for decisions impacting the District’s residents?”

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services responded by explaining that a formal response had been raised by the Assistant Director for Planning, Leisure and Culture Services with her counterpart at Worcestershire County Council. The following statement had been issued by Worcestershire County Council in response, which was read out at the Council meeting:

“As the statutory consultee for highways, Worcestershire County Council review planning applications submitted to the District Councils (Local Planning Authorities), and provide comments and recommendations for the districts to use as part of their wider assessment of the individual planning applications.

If an application is to be determined by committee, local planning authorities make a recommendation based on all the evidence before them including from the full range of statutory consultees.

There is no requirement of statutory consultees to attend planning committees and the county council have never stated that they will not attend future committees.

The council will continue to attend where this is important or where the Chair of the Planning Committee considers it contentious or of wider public interest, balancing demands with resources and avoiding situations where attendance does not add any value.”

Councillor Marshall subsequently asked the following supplementary question:

“That is progress, as they previously said they would not be attending. How will we control this and make sure it happens?”

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration suggested that when Planning Committee members received the agenda for a meeting of the Committee, they should check the content straight away. Where Members identified an application where they felt it would be appropriate

for a representative of Worcestershire Highways authority to be present, the Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services suggested that they should notify the Chairman of the Planning Committee meeting immediately so that a request could be submitted to Worcestershire County Council. Furthermore, it was suggested that the Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services could be copied into this correspondence.

Question from Councillor J. Clarke to the Leader

“Will you take action to ensure that Bromsgrove retains its Fairtrade Town status?”

The Leader replied by commenting that she was proud that, over ten years ago, when Fairtrade products were quite rare in shops and eateries, the Council had signed up to the Fairtrade Foundation Charity to be granted Fairtrade status.

The authority supported Fairtrade Fortnight events in the town which were run by Churches Together and additionally local businesses took part in Fairtrade Fortnight, adding menu items made with fairtrade products as a part of this.

The Leader also reported that she was proud to find that when she walked around the town, visiting many cafes and restaurants particularly, that Fair Trade, ethical and organic products were commonplace.

The Council’s commitment over a decade ago to becoming a Fairtrade Town, not just in status, but through on the ground action, had paid dividends and provided residents and visitors with the opportunity to make a conscious choice when they purchased a drink, food or produce in the town. Businesses recognised the demand and even those that weren’t at the forefront of the change, had caught up.

However, the Council was not complacent and even though the authority hadn’t renewed its status with the foundation, it continued to show support for Fairtrade products including through the Green Fair (which boasted Fairtrade products for sale).

As a Council, the authority had to show a level playing field and with more conscientious consumers demanding much more from the products they bought, for example vegan friendly, cruelty free and ethically sourced products, the authority could not favour one cause over another. For this reason, the Council would not be renewing the fairtrade status but remained committed to supporting, where possible, the fairtrade concept, along with other consumer choices.

Question from Councillor S. Evans to the Cabinet Member for Finance

“Nationally it has been revealed that not all households eligible for council tax reduction on the grounds of severe mental impairment are receiving it. Do we know what proportion of eligible households in Bromsgrove are actually receiving their entitlement?”

The Cabinet Member for Finance advised that in cases where a person resident within a property in Bromsgrove District was classified as severely mentally impaired, a Council Tax discount or exemption might be available. To be categorised as severely mentally impaired a person had to:

- i) have a *“severe impairment of intelligence or social functioning, however caused, which appears to be permanent”* and
- ii) be eligible for a qualifying benefit
- iii) and needed to be certified by a registered medical practitioner as severely mentally impaired.

Certification was made by a registered medical practitioner during the exemption / discount application process. Without this certification, there was no eligibility for an exemption/reduction and on that basis all eligible persons were receiving a discount. The availability of an exemption/discount was promoted within the Council Tax explanatory notes and on the Council’s website.

The Council would only know a household was eligible if they declared it as part of their claim. It was not, therefore, possible to detail the exact proportion receiving their entitlement.

- In total there were 253 people in the District disregarded from Council Tax based on severe mental impairment.
- There were 128 exempt dwellings due to occupation by a person who was severely mentally impaired.

The authority already publicised information on discounts and exemptions. This was included with every Council Tax demand notice. The information was also advertised prominently on the Council’s website

The Council proactively promoted the discount/exemption when communicating with customers that might be eligible for the discount.

Advice agencies such as the CAB, and support groups for people with, or the families of people with Alzheimer’s, Dementia and other conditions promoted the discount. The high profile campaigner, Mr Martin Lewis, also mentioned it regularly.

Reference was also made in the response to the following table:

Agenda Item 3

Council
4th December 2024

“Level of reduction	Circumstances which lead to reduction
100% Reduction	<p>A full council tax exemption is available where:</p> <p>The home is only occupied by people who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Severely mentally impaired <p>Or by one or more severely mentally impaired persons and one or more</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii) Qualifying students; iii) relevant Ukrainian persons <p>Qualifying students include student, student nurses, apprentices, youth training trainees, and spouses of non-British students.</p> <p>A relevant Ukrainian Person is a person with permission to enter or remain in the UK under the homes for Ukraine scheme.</p> <p>To qualify for exemption the severely mentally impaired person, or students/Ukrainian person must be the person who would be liable for council tax, this prevents institutions established for providing care to people who are SMI from receiving exemption.</p>
50% reduction	<p>A 50% reduction is available where all the residents of a property are disregarded.</p> <p>When a SMI person is resident in a property with another person who is also disregarded 50% discounts will be applied.</p> <p>This will apply where an SMI person is living with someone who is disregarded as a carer. For example, where a single adult is resident with an elderly resident who is SMI and to whom they are providing care.</p> <p>To be classified as a carer a person must be providing care for over 35 hours per week to a person in receipt of a qualifying benefit.</p>
25% reduction	<p>A 25% reduction is available where there is only one resident of a property or all but one of the residents are disregarded.</p> <p>When calculating the number of residents any person who is classified as SMI will be disregarded.</p>

In cases where an SMI person lives with another individual who is not disregarded a 25% discount will be awarded.”
--

Question from Councillor J. Robinson to the Cabinet Member for Strategic housing and Health and Wellbeing

“Are all the new homes on the Council’s Burcot Lane Development now occupied?”

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Housing and Health and Wellbeing advised that the current occupancy for the homes was as follows

- Service Charge Area 2 (22 x houses/maisonettes).
- 6 properties for sale – 3 were occupied and 3 had offers accepted going through the legal process.
- 6 Shared Ownership Properties – Sold to Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT). They were in the process of marketing the properties by the date of the meeting.
- The remaining 10 properties had been leased to Spadesbourne Homes Limited and were occupied.

Service Charge Area 1 (Allen Court) - Whilst none of these units were occupied, work was under way to satisfy the legal requirements of a building owner before BDHT would accept the transfer. This work was expected to be complete and hand over to BDHT and Spadesbourne Homes Limited was anticipated within two weeks. Assurance was given that officers from both Bromsgrove District Council and BDHT were working closely together alongside the agents for the properties to make sure everything was in place to ensure the properties were occupied as soon as possible.

Councillor J. Robinson subsequently asked the following supplementary question:

“Thank you. Could you give an update in two weeks’ time if there is a delay?”

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Housing and Health and Well Being confirmed that she would be happy to provide this update to Members.

Question from Councillor R. Hunter to the Leader

“What are your priorities for ensuring the proposals in the English Devolution White Paper work in the best interests of Bromsgrove?”

The Leader responded by highlighting that the English Devolution White paper had not yet been released. Once received, the Leader would be considering the contents in detail alongside seeking information from officers and central bodies to understand the detail, options, and implications of the proposals and framework(s). There would be early

discussions with counterpart Leaders within Worcestershire the Leader would also be engaging with Bromsgrove Group Leaders, Cabinet and Council at the earliest opportunity when more information was known.

Members would always prioritise that which was in the best interest of the community and the people of Bromsgrove. The Leader endeavoured to ensure that the Council's views and voice was heard clearly within every ongoing consideration and to debate the matter based on local engagement and understanding.

Whilst the Council anticipated the potential for the current County and District arrangements to not remain in its current structure or form, it was critical that the authority took every opportunity within a wider public service reform agenda to consider what was best, rather than focus purely on structural arrangements.

The Leader concluded by noting that she looked forward to speaking with group leaders as well as other elected representatives for Bromsgrove when the detail was clearly understood.

72\24

MOTIONS ON NOTICE

The Chairman confirmed that there were two Motions on Notice for consideration at this Council meeting.

Private School Business Rates

The following Motion on Notice was submitted by Councillor S. Evans for Council's consideration:

“Private school business rates

Council calls on Cabinet as part of the budget setting process for 2025/26 to ring fence any additional income that will result from the move by central Government to impose business rates on private schools (and that is retained by Bromsgrove District). The ring fenced pot will be used to fund development activities for young people as part of the Council's leisure and culture brief and this will include activities aimed at supporting the development of SEND young people.”

The Motion was proposed by Councillor S. Evans and seconded by Councillor J. Clarke.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Evans highlighted that the Motion had been submitted with the aim to ensure that the Council made the most of the current situation to the benefit of the local community. It was suggested that there would be approximately £550,000 additional income in business rates within the District as a result of the Government's rule changes and approximately half of this income would be retained by Bromsgrove District Council. Furthermore, the suggestion was made that this funding should be ringfenced for

investment in initiatives designed to support local young people. Whilst the Motion did not call on Members to determine the exact initiatives that should receive funding under this process, it was noted that this could include such activities as cycling classes and other youth activities. The investment would be justified on the basis that young people represented the future of the District.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Clarke acknowledged that the Council had financial pressures that needed to be addressed over the following years. However, he suggested that the action proposed in the Motion came within the Council's brief and would have a positive impact in the community.

Members subsequently discussed the Motion in detail and in doing so noted that the Council would consider any additional business rates income generated from private schools and the use of this as part of the 2025/26 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to address any pressures that the Council faced and to fund priorities as agreed by Council.

It was noted that ring fencing this funding would run counter to how the Council allocated resources. The Council budgeted for the use of its resources in the following way.

- In Tranche 1 of the budget the Council clarified and documented the various pressures (legislative and Council priorities) on the budget as well as allowable additional funding sources. At this point of the process, there was usually a deficit position.
- By Tranche 2, the Council would understand the total funding available to the authority via the Local Government Finance Settlement and these additional sources of funding were added to the position agreed at Tranche 1 to give an overall position from which additional savings or priorities could be added.

By ringfencing funds before this point, proper prioritisation of resources could not be achieved across the whole Council. However, it was noted that the Motion proposed an alternative approach, whereby funding was requested for development activities for young people as part of the Council's leisure and culture brief. Although using the funding in this way was addressing a Council priority, these services were discretionary in nature and the Council needed to aim to ensure initially that mandatory services could be delivered as part of the prioritisation process, using available resources, before assessing discretionary items of expenditure.

Reference was also made to the responsibilities of the respective Councils in a two-tier authority area. Members noted that in Worcestershire, the County Council, rather than Bromsgrove District Council, was responsible for provision of services to young people, including SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) services. Concerns were raised that allocation of the income from business rates levied to private schools to youth activities provided by the District

Council could be regarded as double taxation in this context. However, in response to this point, Members noted that there were challenges nationally in relation to SEND funding and therefore any additional financial assistance would be welcome. In addition, questions were raised as to the reasons why the Council had chosen to support a Motion on Notice at a recent Council meeting relating to electric vehicle charging points and to ringfence funding for library services in previous years, which were not necessarily within the Council's remit. However, it was noted that the subject of electric charging points was relevant to the Council in relation to use of Council land for the installation and use of this infrastructure. In respect of the library funding, it was noted that this had been routed through the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for use on community centres.

Consideration was also given to the various routes through which Members could suggest items for inclusion in the MTFP. There was the Finance and Budget Working Group, which held meetings throughout the year and at which suggestions could be brought forward by Members for consideration. Any recommendations arising from meetings of the group would be referred for further consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Board and subsequently the Cabinet. Where the group's proposals were endorsed at these various stages, then these could be incorporated into the MTFP that would be approved by the Council in February.

Concerns were raised that there was likely to be a significant gap arising in the Council's budget of circa £500,000 to cover the requirement to introduce a food waste collection service by spring 2026. Members commented that the Council would need to adopt a prudent approach to managing the authority's budget in order to cover the costs of delivering this service. With this in mind, it was suggested that the Council was not necessarily in a position to allocate funding to support youth initiatives in the District.

The timing of the local government settlement and the potential changes to the calculation of this settlement for 2025/26 were also discussed. Members commented that it was not unusual for the Government to delay confirming the local government settlement until late December. However, Members also noted that the formula that would be used to calculate the settlement for 2025/26 was likely to differ from recent years, as the Government had indicated that funding would now be based on levels of deprivation. There was therefore some uncertainty about the level of funding that would be granted to Bromsgrove District.

The Council's projected budget position over the course of the MTFP was also discussed. Whilst there was a small surplus forecast for the first year of the budget, growing deficits were projected for years two and three and therefore the Council had to be careful when making decisions about how to commit expenditure.

In discussing the Motion, a number of Members noted that their opposition to the Motion should not be viewed as indicating that they did not recognise the importance of supporting SEND children. Indeed, many Members, both those in favour of the Motion and opposed, commented on their commitment to supporting young people with special educational needs.

Clarification was provided that the Motion was not seeking to propose that the funding be used to provide alternative SEND services or other educational services to young people, which was recognised as being a responsibility of Worcestershire County Council. Instead, it was noted that Bromsgrove District Council had lead responsibility for Leisure and Cultural Services in the District and could provide additional support to young people in this context.

At the end of a lengthy debate, on being put to the vote the Motion was defeated.

Development of Brownfield Sites

Councillor D. Hopkins presented the following Motion on Notice for Council's consideration. In presenting the Motion, Councillor Hopkins proposed alterations to the wording of the Motion which had been included in the agenda for the meeting:

"With the welcomed £700000 given to this council by the Labour Government to enable brownfield sites to be built upon and recognising that each property built on a brownfield site will ease the pressure on our precious greenbelt, we call upon the Cabinet to immediately concentrate and focus on developing brownfield sites with immediate effect."

The proposed wording of the Motion was subsequently discussed and Members noted that the Cabinet was not in a position to make decisions about developing brownfield sites. Instead, Members commented that the Cabinet would consider and make recommendations to Council on planning policy matters, including the Local Plan, whilst the Planning Committee's role was to consider specific planning applications. Reference was also made to the role of the Strategic Planning Steering Group (SPSG) at the Council which, whilst not a decision-making body, provided all Members with an opportunity to review and suggest amendments to planning policies that would subsequently be reported through Cabinet onto Council. In this context, following a brief adjournment, the following altered wording was proposed to the Motion:

"With the welcomed £700000 given to this council by the Labour Government to enable brownfield sites to be built upon and recognising that each property built on a brownfield site will ease the pressure on our precious greenbelt, we call upon the *Strategic Planning Steering Group to immediately concentrate and focus on considering the development of brownfield sites with immediate effect.*"

Agenda Item 3

Council
4th December 2024

The Motion was proposed by Councillor D. Hopkins and seconded by Councillor K. Taylor.

In subsequently debating the Motion, concerns were raised about the removal of any reference to an audit of brownfield sites, which had been originally incorporated into the Motion that had been published in the agenda for the meeting. The suggestion was made that this audit might still be useful, particularly in a context where the Government would be requiring thousands of homes to be built in the District over the following years. However, it was also noted that the outcomes of the Government's consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework still remained to be confirmed on the date of the meeting. In the meantime, the Council would continue to review the potential to develop on brownfield sites, some although not all of which would be suitable for development.

It was noted that there had already been some work undertaken to review brownfield sites in the District. As part of this process, Members were advised that five or six sites had been identified. Although more such sites might be identified in future, the value of an audit in this context was therefore questioned.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried.

RESOLVED that

With the welcomed £700000 given to this council by the Labour Government to enable brownfield sites to be built upon and recognising that each property built on a brownfield site will ease the pressure on our precious greenbelt, we call upon the Strategic Planning Steering Group to immediately concentrate and focus on considering the development of brownfield sites with immediate effect.

(During consideration of this item there was a brief adjournment from 19.24 – 19.30.)

73\24

TO CONSIDER ANY URGENT BUSINESS, DETAILS OF WHICH HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED TO THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, DEMOCRATIC AND PROCUREMENT 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 for consideration on this occasion.

The meeting closed at 7.43 p.m.

Chairman

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 9

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council
2025

22ND January

Statutory Officer Appointments – nominations to the positions of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service and Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer

Relevant Portfolio Holders	Councillor Karen May, Leader of Bromsgrove District Council
Portfolio Holder Consulted	
Relevant Lead Officer	Becky Talbot Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager
Report Author Becky Talbot	Job Title: Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager Contact email: becky.talbot@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 64252 Ext: 3385
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Council Priorities	Sustainability
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Council is asked to RESOLVE

- 1) **To note the Joint Appointments Committee has completed a rigorous selection process to recruit a new Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service and a new Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer.**
- 2) **Subject to Redditch Borough Council as employer agreeing to the appointment at their Council meeting due to take place on 27th January 2025, and subject to satisfactory reference and eligibility checks, John Leach be appointed as Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service.**
- 3) **To note that the salary agreed for the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service is within the range approved by Redditch Borough Council's Pay Policy as the employing authority.**
- 4) **To approve the appointment of Robert Watson as Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer, to fulfil the purposes of Section 151 of the Local Government 1972, subject to satisfactory reference and eligibility checks.**

Agenda Item 9

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council
2025

22ND January

- 5) **Subject thereto, Robert Watson to be made available under the shared services arrangements with Redditch Borough Council to perform such duties as are required in his capacity as Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer for Redditch Borough Council.**
- 6) **To note that the salary agreed for the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer is within the range approved by Bromsgrove District Council's Pay Policy as the employing authority.**
- 7) **The current Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service and Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer to remain in post until John Leach and Robert Watson have commenced employment with the authorities.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The decision to appoint a new Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service and new Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer is reserved to full Council. This legal requirement is reflected in the Council's Constitution.
- 2.2 Following a tender exercise, Gatenby Sanderson were commissioned as the external recruitment agency to assist with a national search and the recruitment process for both positions.
- 2.3 The introduction of a Joint Appointments Committee was approved by Bromsgrove District Council's Full Council on 17th July 2024 and Redditch Borough Council's Full Council on 29th July 2024.
- 2.4 A meeting of the Joint Appointments Committee took place on Wednesday 13th November 2024. During this meeting, the Committee agreed to appoint Members from both authorities to serve on a joint Appointments Sub-Committee. The role of the Joint appointments Sub-Committee was to act as the recruitment panel for both positions.
- 2.5 The Joint Appointments Sub-Committee undertook the final interviews for the positions of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service and Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer on the 16th and 18th December 2024 respectively. The Joint Appointments Sub-Committee received professional support from the current Chief Executive, the Human

Agenda Item 9

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council
2025

22ND January

Resources and Organisational Development Manager and an external Recruitment Advisor from GatenbySanderson.

2.6 The members of the Joint Appointments Sub-Committee were;-

Bromsgrove District Council Representatives:

Councillor Karen May, Leader, Bromsgrove District Council

Councillor Peter McDonald, Labour Group Leader, Bromsgrove District Council

Councillor Rob Hunter, Liberal Democrat Group Leader, Bromsgrove District Council

Redditch Borough Council Representatives:

Councillor Joe Baker, Leader, Redditch Borough Council

Councillor Bill Hartnett, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Redditch Borough Council

Councillor Matthew Dormer, Conservative Group Leader, Redditch Borough Council

2.7 A further meeting of the Joint Appointments Committee took place on Wednesday 8th January 2025. During this meeting, Members considered recommendations made by the Joint Appointments Sub-Committee concerning their nominations for the positions of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service and Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer respectively.

2.8 Based on the outcomes of the recruitment process, the Joint Appointments Committee recommended that John Leach be recruited to the position of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service subject to satisfactory reference and eligibility checks.

2.9 John Leach is currently employed by East Lindsey District Council on a permanent basis as Deputy Chief Executive for East Lindsey District Council, South Holland District Council and Boston Borough Council (South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership). Subject to Members' agreement at both Councils, he will undertake the role of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service as soon as possible, subject to notice periods.

2.10 Redditch Borough Council is the employing authority for the position of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service. The full Council meeting in Redditch at which the recommendations from the Joint Appointments Committee are due to be considered is scheduled to take place on Monday 27th January 2025.

Agenda Item 9

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council
2025

22ND January

- 2.11 The Joint Appointments Sub-Committee propose the salary to be offered for this role is £145,807 in accordance with the pay range set out in Redditch Borough Council's Pay Policy Statement, as employing authority, subject to approval by both Councils.
- 2.12 Based on the outcomes of the recruitment process, the Joint Appointments Committee is recommending Robert Watson for the role of Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer, subject to satisfactory references and eligibility checks.
- 2.13 Robert Watson is currently employed by Surrey Heath Borough Council on a permanent basis as Strategic Director, Finance, S151 and Customer Services. Subject to Members' approval at both Councils, he will undertake the role of Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer as soon as possible, subject to notice periods.
- 2.14 As the employing authority, Bromsgrove District Council needs to determine whether to agree to share Robert Watson under the shared services arrangements with Redditch Borough Council for the position of Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer.
- 2.15 The Joint Appointments Sub-Committee propose that the salary to be offered for this role is £119,590 in accordance with the pay range set out in Bromsgrove District Council's Pay Policy Statement, as the employing authority for this position, subject to approval by both Councils.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 The positions of Head of Paid Service and Section 151 Officer are statutory officer posts. It is therefore imperative that the Council has Officers who are appointed to these positions.
- 3.2 Redditch Borough Council is the employing authority for the position of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service. Subject to Members' approval at Council of John's appointment, he will be made available by Redditch Borough Council under the shared services arrangements to perform such duties as are required by their post for Bromsgrove District Council.
- 3.3 Bromsgrove District Council is the employing authority for the position of Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer. Subject to Members' approval at Council of Robert Watson's appointment, he will be made available by Bromsgrove District Council under the shared services arrangements to perform such duties as are required by their post for Redditch Borough Council.

Agenda Item 9

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council
2025

22ND January

- 3.4 Subject to Members' approval at both Councils of the appointment of John Leach, the current Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service will remain in post until John Leach has commenced employment with Redditch Borough Council.
- 3.5 Subject to Members' approval at both Councils of the appointment of Robert Watson, the current Deputy Chief Executive and S151 Officer will remain in post until Robert Watson has commenced employment with Bromsgrove District Council. This will ensure service continuity and that both Councils continue to have statutory officers in post.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The salary costs of the new Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service and the new Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer will be met from existing budgets and is within the scope of the relevant authority's Pay Policy.
- 4.2 It should be noted that the salary costs will be shared on a 50:50 ratio between the two authorities.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 It is a legal requirement that the appointment of the Head of Paid Service and the Section 151 Officer, as "statutory officers", is made by full Council. This is set out in the relevant regulations (The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations 2001 (as amended) Schedule I Part II) which are reproduced in the Officer Employment Rules at Part 17 of the Constitution.
- 5.2 The Council is required to nominate an officer under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 to be responsible for the proper administration of its financial affairs. The relevant wording states that: - "Without prejudice to section 111 above, every local authority shall make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and shall secure that one of their officers has responsibility for the administration of those affairs."
- 5.3 Section 6 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, further sets out that " (1) On and after the commencement day the Common Council shall

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council
2025

22ND January

– (a) make arrangements for the proper administration of such of its financial affairs as relate to it in its capacity as a local authority, police authority, or port health authority, and (b) secure that one of its officers has responsibility for the administration of those affairs”.

5.4 Section 113 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 requires that the officer appointed as the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) must be a member of a specified accountancy body.

5.6 The Council is required by the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to appoint an officer as the Councils Head of Paid Service.

5.7 There is a requirement under the Officer Employment Procedure rules, in the Council’s constitution, to ensure that the Leader and any other Cabinet members are notified and have no objections to the offer of appointment, which must occur before an offer of appointment is made. In this instance, cabinet Members were contacted with regard to the proposed appointments of John Leach and Robert Watson respectively on 10th January 2025 and did not raise any objections prior to the Council meeting. The same process has been followed in Redditch for the same reason and so far no objections have been received.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Priorities for the Council

6.1 The appointment of a Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service and a Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer will ensure there is stability and continuity at the Council.

6.2 Effective financial management underpins all the Council’s operations and the achievement of the authority’s priorities.

Climate Change Implications

6.4 There are no specific climate change implications.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.5 There are no direct equalities implications.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

Agenda Item 9

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council
2025

22ND January

- 7.1 Failure to agree appointments to the positions of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service and Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer would mean that the Council would be at risk of failing to comply with the requirement to have officers in these statutory posts should the current officers in these positions give notice.

8. **APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Background Papers

'Establishment of a Joint Appointments Committee' report to Bromsgrove District Council's full Council meeting held on 17th July 2024: [Council agenda - 17th July 2024](#)

'Establishment of a Joint Appointments Committee' report to Redditch Borough Council's full Council meeting held on 29th July 2024: [Council agenda - 29th July 2024](#)

'Joint Appointments Committee' report to Bromsgrove District Council's Council meeting held on 9th October 2024: [Council agenda - 9th October 2024](#)

'Joint Appointments Committee' report to Redditch Borough Council's Council meeting held on 11th November 2024: [Council agenda - 11th November 2024](#)

Overarching Framework Agreement between Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council - 21st March 2011

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNCIL
2025

22 January

Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel – recommendations for members’ allowances for 2025-26 and the members allowances scheme

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr May, Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships and Enabling
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton
Report Author	Job Title: Darren Whitney, Electoral Services Manager Contact email: darren.whitney@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 881650
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	N/A
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council is asked to RESOLVE

1.1 whether or not to accept all, some or none of the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for 2025-26;

1.2 having considered the Panel’s report and recommendations, whether or not changes are required to the Council’s scheme of allowances for Members arising from this.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Each Council is required by law to have an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) which recommends the level of allowances for Councillors. The Panel is made up of suitably skilled members of the public who are completely independent of the District Council. It also makes recommendations to four other District Councils in Worcestershire. The Panel’s report is enclosed for consideration by Council.

2.2 The panel recommends basic allowances, special responsibility allowances (SRA), travel, subsistence and dependent carer allowances.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The IRP recommends a basic allowance of £5,826 which is an 5.58% increase from its recommendation from last year (£308 per councillor on the basic allowance).
- 3.2 If the Council makes changes to the current amounts of allowances there will be additional budgetary costs. If the Council implements all the recommendations of the IRP budgetary costs across the year would be increased in the region of £14,400. This does not include Chairmen of overview and scrutiny task groups as they are paid pro rata for the length of the task group.
- 3.3 There is a current budget shortfall of £34,500 so additional budgetary requirements for would be £49,000.
- 3.4 Although not part of the Independent Remuneration Panel's work Members may also wish to consider increasing the Chairman's allowance in line with the basic allowance, an additional £308.
- 3.5 The upcoming budget will need to reflect any changes made from the recommendations in this report and the future costs will need to be covered in the medium term financial plan.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council is required to "have regard" to the recommendations of the Panel. However, it is not obliged to agree to them. It can choose to implement them in full or in part, or not to accept them.
- 4.2 If the Council decides to review its scheme of allowances for Councillors, it is also required to take into account recommendations from the Panel before doing so.

5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 5.1 None as this report deals with statutory functions.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.2 None in this report.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.1 None in this report.

Operational Implications

6.2 There are no direct service or operational implications arising from this report. Once the Council has agreed the allowances for 2025-26 Officers will update and publish the Members' Allowances Scheme as appropriate.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 Payments to Councillors can be a high profile issue. The main risks are reputational. However, the Council is transparent about the decisions made on allowances. The Allowances scheme and sums paid to Councillors each year are published on the Council's website.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report and recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel for 2025-26.

Background papers:

Members Allowances Scheme – in the Council Constitution at part 19:

[Constitution of Bromsgrove District Council](#)

COUNCIL
2025

22 January

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr May, Leader	7 January 2025
Lead Director / Head of Service		
Financial Services		
Legal Services		

**Independent Remuneration Panel
for Worcestershire District Councils**

Annual Report and Recommendations for 2025/26

Bromsgrove District Council

December 2024

Contents	Page
Recommendations to Council	1
1/ Introduction and Context	2
2/ Background Evidence and Research Undertaken	2
3/ Comparative spend on Allowances across Worcestershire	2
4/ Average Payment per Councillor across Worcestershire	3
5/ Consideration of Allowances for the financial year 2025/26	3
a/ Basic Allowance	3
b/ Special Responsibility Allowances	4
c/ Mileage and Expenses 2025/26	5
d/ Dependant Carers	5
e/ Allowances to Parish Councils	5
6/ The Independent Remuneration Panel	5
7/ Support and Thanks	6
Appendix 1 – Summary of Allowance Recommendations	7
Appendix 2 – Summary of Research	8

Recommendations to the Council

The Independent Remuneration Panel recommends to Bromsgrove District Council the following:

- 1. A Basic Allowance for 2025/26 of £5,826, representing a 5.58% increase.**
- 2. A range of Special Responsibility Allowances as set out in Appendix 1**
- 3. That travel allowances for 2025/26 continue to be paid in accordance with the HMRC mileage allowance**
- 4. That subsistence allowances for 2025/26 remain unchanged**
- 5. That the Dependent Carer's Allowance remains unchanged**
- 6. That travel and subsistence payments made by Parish Councils to councillors (where they are paid) are made in accordance with the provisions set out in this report**

1. Introduction and Context

The Independent Remuneration Panel (the Panel) has been appointed by the Council in accordance with the Members' Allowances Regulations. The role of the Panel is to carry out reviews of the allowances paid to Councillors, as required by the Local Government Act 2000 and subsequent legislation.

The report sets out recommendations for the Basic Allowance (as recommended to be paid for all Councillors), the special responsibility allowances (for those councillors with additional responsibilities) and allowances for mileage, subsistence and for those with dependent carer responsibilities.

The purpose of such allowances is to enable people from all walks of life to become involved in local politics if they choose. This continues to remain an important consideration for the Panel when submitting its recommendations.

The Panel acknowledges, however, that in the current challenging financial climate there are difficult choices for the Council to make. The Council will need to 'have regard' to the recommendations of the Panel, but ultimately, it is for the Council to decide how or whether to adopt them in full or in part.

The Panel's recommendations are based on thorough research and benchmarking taking into account a range of comparative data as set out below.

2. Background Evidence and Research Undertaken

There is a range of market indicators on pay which can be used for comparison purposes. As background for the decisions taken by the Panel this year have:

- Analysed and considered the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) statistics for 2024 which set out a mean hourly wage rate for Worcestershire of £19.88
- Benchmarked the Basic Allowance against those paid within comparable local authorities to Bromsgrove as set out in the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) 'nearest neighbours' list
- Taken account of the 2024/25 National Pay Award for the majority of Local Government employees
- Considered the Consumer Price Index information as of September 2024.

Details about these areas of research are set out in Appendix 2 to this report.

In determining a recommendation for the basic award for 2025/26, consideration has once again been given to the average number of hours spent by councillors on Council business. For 2025/26 this has again been informed by a time-recording exercise carried out by Worcester City Councillors in 2015, as updated by a similar exercise in 2022.

3. Comparative Spend on Allowances across Worcestershire 2023/24

As part of the research, consideration has been given to the Members' allowances budget for Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances in the previous year (2023/24) as a cost per head of population for each Council, and also as a proportion of net revenue budget. This is set out in the table below:

Authority, population ¹ and number of Councillors	Total spend Basic Allowances	Total spend on SRA	SRA as a percentage of total Basic Allowance	Cost of total basic and SRA per head of population	Total of basic and SRA as a percentage of Net General Revenue Fund expenditure
	£	£	%	£	%
Bromsgrove DC (31) 100,569	148,081	71,593	48.35	2.18	Not available yet
Malvern Hills DC (31) 79,445	154,597	72,988	47.1	2.86	2.64
Redditch Borough (29) 85,568	136,335	98,584	72.31	2.75	Not available yet
Worcester City (35) 100,265	166,153	111,124	66.88	2.76	1.68
Wychavon (43) 131,084	216,664	101,993	47.07	2.43	1.51

4. Average Payment per Councillor across Worcestershire 2023/24

In addition to the above, the following table also sets out the average payment per member of each authority of the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances for the previous year (2023/24):

Average allowance per Member of each authority (Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances, 2023/24 figures)

Authority (number of Councillors)	Amount £
Bromsgrove District (31)	7,086.26
Malvern Hills District (31)	7,341.45
Redditch Borough (29)	8,100.66
Worcester City (35)	7,922.20
Wychavon District (43)	7,411

5. Consideration of allowances for the financial year 2025/26

a/ Basic Allowance

The Basic Allowance is paid to all Members of the Council to reflect:

- Their roles and responsibilities as Elected Members of the Council

¹ONS population estimates mid 2020. Totals for Basic and Special Responsibility allowances paid are as published by each authority for the 2023/24 financial year.

- Their time commitments, including the total average number of hours worked per week on Council business
- A public service discount of 40% to reflect that Councillors volunteer their time

Whilst each Council may set out role descriptions for Councillors, the Panel accepts that each Councillor will carry out that role differently, reflecting personal circumstances and local requirements.

In setting out its recommendations, the Panel considers the Basic Allowance to include Councillors' roles in Overview and Scrutiny, as any non-Executive member of the Council can contribute to this aspect of the Council's work. It is for this reason that the Panel does not recommend any Special Responsibility Allowance for members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Panel also considers that the Basic Allowance should cover the need for Councillors to use ICT and social media support and communication systems as part of their role. However, it is accepted that specific local decisions may be made about how ICT support is provided.

As indicated in section 2 of this report, in formulating its recommendations, the Panel has once again reviewed the levels of wage rates for Worcestershire as set out in the ASHE data and the benchmark information available from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) "nearest neighbours" authorities. Consideration has also been given to the nationally agreed pay award for local government employees for the financial year 2024/25 and the latest CPI (consumer price inflation) figure as of September 2024.

Based on all the above considerations, the Panel recommend a Basic Award of £5,826 for the financial year 2025/26. This again aligns with the increase in the average pay levels as reflected in the ASHE data whilst acknowledging the CPI increase, CIPFA data and Local Government Pay Awards. It represents a 5.58% increase on the previous year's recommendation.

The recommendation takes strong account of the ASHE data and is set at an appropriate level in the context of the local government pay award. The Panel is conscious of the current financial challenges but also mindful to avoid increasing any gap in allowances between Redditch Borough Council and its "nearest neighbours."

The research information used in the consideration of the Basic Allowance is set out in appendix 2.

b/ Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA)

Special Responsibility Allowances are paid to a small number of Councillors to reflect responsibilities undertaken by them in addition to their day-to-day roles as Elected Representatives. Such allowances are paid in addition to the Basic Allowance and calculated as a multiplier of the Basic Allowance.

Any recommended changes in such allowances would be based on proposals made to the Panel each year and reflecting, for example changes in committee structures, new responsibilities or increases/decreases in existing responsibilities.

Upon request, the Panel reviewed a SRA to be paid to Licensing Committee members but having compared activity to that of the other councils, it did not feel

a change was required. There were no further requests for changes, so the recommended values for all SRAs remain unchanged for 2025/26.

The full list of recommended SRA multipliers and values is set out in Appendix 1.

c/ Mileage and Expenses

The Panel notes that the Council has used the HMRC flat rate for payment of mileage for all types of vehicles and recommends that this continues.

d/ Dependant Carer Allowance

The Panel notes that the Council's Scheme of Members' Allowances provides that Dependant Carer Allowances are payable to cover reasonable and legitimate costs incurred in attending approved duties and recommends that this provision continues.

e/ Allowances to Parish Councils

The Independent Remuneration Panel for Worcestershire District Councils acts as the Remuneration Panel for the Parish Councils in each District. This year the Panel has not been asked to make recommendations on any matters by any Parishes.

6. The Independent Remuneration Panel

This Council's Independent Remuneration Panel is set up on a joint basis with four of the other five District Councils in Worcestershire. Separate Annual Reports have been prepared for each Council. The members of the Panel are:

Tim Hunt (Chair) – Tim is a qualified journalist with more than 25 years' experience in media and communications. He spent seven years covering community and local authority news in Worcestershire and Warwickshire, including four as editor of two local newspapers, before going on to work in corporate communications and events. Tim now runs his own PR agency.

Susan Moxon (Vice Chair) - Susan has worked in the Education sector for over 20 years, working in schools in Warwickshire and Birmingham and then with the Department for Education, where she worked in the 6th form funding team, analysing data from incoming enquiries, mainly from schools and colleges regarding the calculation of their funding statements. She has acted as an independent observer at Teacher Disciplinary Hearings ensuring that the panel members followed procedures and were unbiased in their decision making. Previously she was an Exams Support Officer providing advice to schools and colleges in Hereford, Worcester and Gloucester about entering students for external exams and assessments, her particular area of expertise. She is currently Clerk to the Governing Bodies at two First Schools in Worcestershire and to two local charities. She organises meetings, manages the accounts and is the main point of contact with applicants, local providers and the Charity Commission.

Reuben Bergman – Reuben is a Fellow of the CIPD with significant senior HR leadership experience across a range of public sector organisations in both England and Wales. He currently runs a HR Consultancy Business in Worcestershire providing advice and support on managing change, employment law, HR policy development, mediation, management coaching and employee relations. Reuben has led successful equal pay reviews in three separate local authorities and is known for his successful work in managing change and developing effective employee relations. He is a qualified coach, mediator and a Shared Service architect.

Xenia Goudefroy – Xenia is a Management Accountant with experience in the financial controlling and forecasting for a range of companies in the private sector. She holds an Advanced Diploma in Management Accounting and has completed a Master's degree in Business Administration at University Vila Velha and in International Management at the Steinbeis University Berlin. As a focus topic of her thesis she has developed the order-to-cash process for new business models. Since she moved to the UK in 2017 in her free time she has been volunteering to help people in need and is also working as a volunteer at the Worcester fish-pass to help preserve the natural habitat of migrating species. She is fluent in three languages and enjoys learning new skills.

Caroline Murphy – Caroline has over 20 years' experience of working in public and voluntary sector organisations, including three West Midlands Local Authorities and the Civil Service. She was a senior Education Manager at Wolverhampton City Council until 2011. She has a wealth of experience at building partnerships. Caroline now works as freelance adviser supporting individuals and organisations with strategic management. Caroline is also an active Governor of a Special School and Vocational College in Wolverhampton and a trained Mediator.

7. Support and Thanks

The Panel has been advised and assisted by:

Claire Chaplin and Margaret Johnson from Worcester City Council
Darren Whitney and Jane Oyenuka from Bromsgrove & Redditch Councils
Mel Harris from Wychavon District Council
Bronwen Tompkins from Malvern Hills District Council

The Panel wishes to acknowledge its gratitude to these officers who have provided advice and guidance in a professional and dedicated manner.

Tim Hunt, Chair of Independent Remuneration Panel

Appendix 1

Independent Remuneration Panel for District Councils in Worcestershire

Summary of Basic Award and SRA recommendations

Role	Rec'd Multiplier 2024/25 (IRP)	Current Multiplier (Council Agreed)	Rec'd Allowance 2024/25 (IRP) £	Current Allowance 2024/25 (Council Agreed) £	Rec'd Multiplier 2025/26 (IRP)	Rec'd Allowance 2025/26 (IRP) £
Basic Allowance:	1	1	5,518	5,518	1	5,826
Special Responsibility Allowances:						
Leader	3	3	16,554	16,554	3	17,478
Deputy Leader	1.75	2	9,656.50	9,656.50	1.75	10,195
Executive Members (Cabinet Portfolio Holders)	1.5	1.3	8,277	8,277	1.5	8,739
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Board	1.5	1.3	8,277	8,277	1.5	8,739
Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Task Groups	0.25	0.25	1,379.50	1,379.50	0.25	1,456.50
Chair of Audit, Standards and Governance Committee	0.25	0.3	1,379.50	1,379.50	0.25	1,456.50
Chair of Planning Committee	1	1.3	5,518	5,518	1	5,826
Chair of Licensing Committee	0.3	0.3	1,655.40	1,655.40	0.3	1,747.80
Political Group Leaders	0.25	0.25	1,379.50	1,379.50 Leaders of other political groups with 3 or more members (not applicable to the Leader of the Council)	0.25	1,456.50
Chairman of Appointments Committee (BDC only)	0.03	0.03	165.54 per meeting	165.54 per meeting	0.03	174.78 per meeting
Chairman of Electoral Matters Committee (BDC only)	0.03	0.03	165.54 per meeting	165.54 per meeting	0.03	174.78 per meeting

Chairman of Appeals Panel (BDC only)	0.03	0.03	165.54 per meeting	165.54 per meeting	0.03	174.78 per meeting
--	------	------	-----------------------	-----------------------	------	-----------------------

Appendix 2

Independent Remuneration Panel for District Councils in Worcestershire

Summary of Research

a/ Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) “Nearest Neighbour” authorities’ tool.

No two Councils or sets of Councillors are the same. Developed to aid local authorities in comparative and benchmarking exercises, the CIPFA Nearest Neighbours Model adopts a scientific approach to measuring the similarity between authorities. Using the data, Bromsgrove’s “nearest neighbours” are:

- Roachford
- Stroud
- Lewes
- Tandridge
- Epping Forest
- Surrey Heath

Information on the level of Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances was obtained to benchmark the levels of allowances recommended to the Council. The average basic award across all the “nearest neighbour” authorities was £6,232 as at December 2024.

b/ Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) Data on Pay

[Earnings and hours worked, place of work by local authority: ASHE Table 7 - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/employment-and-hours-worked)

Published by the Office for National Statistics, the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) shows detailed information at District level about rates of pay. For benchmarking purposes, the Panel uses the levels for hourly rates of pay excluding overtime (£19.88 as at December 2024).

For benchmarking purposes, this is multiplied by 11 hours to give a weekly rate, then multiplied by 44.4 weeks to allow for holidays and then discounted by 40% to reflect the element of volunteering that each Councillor undertakes in the role.

The 11-hour multiplier is felt to reflect the average number of hours spent on Council business by frontline Councillors as reported in a previous survey of Worcester City Councillors in 2015 and updated in 2022. As a benchmark indicator this would produce a figure of £5,826 per annum which amounts to an increase of £308.

c/ CPI (Consumer Price Inflation)

In arriving at its recommendations, the Panel has taken into account the latest reported CPI figure as published by the Office for National Statistics. This was 2.60% in September 2024.

The uprating of the 2025/26 recommended basic award by the CPI figure would give a revised Basic Award of £5,661 which amounts to an increase of £143.

d/ Local Government Pay Award

The Panel was mindful of the current local government pay award offer of £1,290 for employees earning up to £51,515, or the full-time equivalent (FTE), which represented a pay increase of 5.49% for the lowest earning employees. Uprating of the 2025/26 recommended basic award by the same percentage would give a revised Basic Award of £5821, which amounts to an increase of £303.

This page is intentionally left blank

Recommendations from the Cabinet meeting held on 10th December 2024

Bromsgrove Local Heritage List

RECOMMENDED that

- 1.1 the Local Heritage List, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report for the following parishes, be adopted:-
 - Alvechurch
 - Beoley
 - Belbroughton and Fairfield
 - Dodford with Grafton
- 1.2 the wording of the Officer Scheme of Delegations for the Local Heritage List be updated, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report; and
- 1.3 the amended Local Heritage List Strategy as set out at Appendix 3 to the report, be approved.

Low-Cost Housing Capital Receipts

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the low cost housing receipts be used to purchase existing properties, flip shared ownership into social or affordable rented accommodation or invest in new build developments with BDHT to increase the supply of affordable housing and temporary accommodation to meet the growing demand; and
- 2) delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing, to approve individual proposals for new developments or the purchase of existing satisfactory dwellings and flipping Shared Ownership to affordable or social rented properties and the spend relating to these, as and when they were brought forward.

Carbon Reduction Strategy and Implementation Plan

RECOMMENDED that

the Council endorses the findings of the Annual Review of the Carbon Reduction Strategy, as detailed at Appendix 2 to the report.

Bromsgrove Draft Air Quality Action Plan

RECOMMENDED that

- 1.1 the Draft Air Quality Action Plan 2025-2030 be approved;
- 1.2 a Consultation on the Plan be undertaken for 2 months from Mid- December to February 2025: and
- 1.3 authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Community and Housing, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Licencing Worcestershire Regulatory Services, to approve the final Plan following the consultation, and for submission to DEFRA by April 2025.

Quarter 2 Revenue and Performance Monitoring 2024/2025

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) Council approve the £40,000 from the Community Hub earmarked reserves to be allocated to contribute to a Poverty Truth Commission in Bromsgrove;
- 2) The Balance Sheet Monitoring Position for Q2 be noted – which was the Treasury Monitoring Report and required to be reported to Council; and
- 3) the £50,000 be transferred to earmarked Reserves from the General Fund for Planning Appeal costs.

Recommendations from the Cabinet meeting held on 7th January 2025

Refuse Fleet Replacement And Wheeled Bin Pressures

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) The Council allocates £2.2 million Capital funding in the Medium -Term Financial Plan for the 2025/26 financial year for the purchase and distribution of these bins.

Introduction of Food Waste Collection

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) The Council allocate £1,000,000 Revenue Funding in the Medium-Term Financial Plan as an operational budget from 2026/27 to fund the Food Waste Collection Service in the Borough, as accounted for within tranche 1 of the budget.

Final Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/26

RECOMMENDED that the council tax reduction scheme be retained for the 2025-26 tax year, subject to the uprating of income bands by 1.7 per cent in-line with increases to national benefits.

Medium Term Financial Plan - Tranche 1 Budget including Fees and Charges (following consultation)

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) Members endorse the inputs into the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan as at the middle of October 2024, and the associated risks and opportunities.
- 2) An initial Tranche of savings proposals and pressures, as set out in Sections 3.03 to 3.14, including the fees and charges increases (non-commercial), after consideration of feedback from the consultation exercise which closed on the 2nd January 2025, is approved at Council.

This page is intentionally left blank

**Cabinet
2024**

10th December

Bromsgrove Local Heritage List

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Kit Taylor
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Ruth Bamford
Report Author Mary Worsfold	Job Title: Principal Conservation Officer Contact email:m.worsfold@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 881329
Wards Affected	All wards
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	Yes
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	Economic Regeneration and Environment
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet RECOMMEND that: -

- 1.1 The Local Heritage List at Appendix 1 for the following parishes is adopted.
 Alvechurch
 Beoley
 Belbroughton and Fairfield
 Dodford with Grafton
- 1.2 The wording of the Officer Scheme of Delegations for the Local Heritage List be updated as set out in Appendix 2.
- 1.3 The amended Local Heritage List Strategy set out at Appendix 3 be approved.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This report updates Members the task being undertaken by the Conservation Team to prepare the Bromsgrove Local Heritage List (LHL). Work on the lists for the Parishes of Alvechurch, Beoley, Belbroughton and Fairfield and Dodford with Grafton has been completed and Members are being asked to recommend to Council that the final version of the list which covers these areas be approved.

**Cabinet
2024****10th December**

The report also gives an update on progress for other areas of the District.

- 2.2 In preparing this report the governance and decision making background for approval of the LHL has been re-visited. This has resulted in the need for some adjustments as set out in paragraphs 3.16 to 3.20. The changes are around ensuring the final list is approved by the correct decision making arm of the Council, and do not affect the consultation process itself or the day to day work being carried out by the Conservation Team.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 Cabinet approved a revised Local Heritage List Strategy in March 2024. The Strategy can be summarised as follows;
- Local lists identify heritage assets which are valued by local communities and contribute to the character and local distinctiveness of an area.
 - The use of local lists is promoted by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
 - The Bromsgrove District Plan (2017) acknowledges the importance of adopting a local list to formerly identify the locally important heritage assets within the district,
 - Heritage assets on the Local Heritage List will not have the same protection as those on the statutory list, although the Historic Environment policies in the District Plan support the retention of heritage assets on the list. Assets identified on a local list will merit consideration in the planning process.
 - The more robust the process for adding a heritage asset to the local list, particularly in terms of the selection criteria, the greater the weight for protecting the asset.
 - Inclusion of a heritage asset on the list will provide clarity to owners, developers and the local planning authority allowing all parties to consider the significance of the asset at an early stage.
 - Criteria for inclusion on the Local Heritage list have been identified, and include Age, Authenticity and Rarity, Architectural Interest, Historic Interest and Townscape/Villagescape/Landscape interest. Candidates need to satisfy the first criteria and at least one other.
 - The LHL will be prepared on a parish by parish basis. The conservation team will consider all nominations and will also survey the area to identify further properties which meet the criteria. They will then prepare a draft list.
 - Following a period of public consultation, including with the owners of these properties, a final report will be prepared for Cabinet with the

Cabinet 2024

10th December

- proposal that the Parish LHL is adopted and becomes a material consideration in the planning process.
- 3.2 Heritage assets on the local list do not attract additional consent requirements, unlike statutory listed buildings where listed building consent is required for all alterations, over and above those required for planning permission.
- 3.3 Heritage assets identified on a local list, are recognised by the local authority as having heritage significance, and therefore will merit consideration in planning matters. When considering planning applications which impact on heritage assets on the local list, the LPA is required to take a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset, in determining the application.
- 3.4 There is no appeal procedure if an owner believes their property should not be included on the list. The statutory listing process similarly has no appeal process.
- 3.5 The revised Strategy incorporated an amended consultation process to improve public engagement.
- 3.6 Draft lists for Alvechurch, Beoley, Belbroughton and Fairfield, and Dodford with Grafton Parishes, were compiled earlier this year, ready for consultation. These lists add 140 properties to the draft LHL, and cover a diverse range of properties including houses, schools, village halls, places of worship and canal infrastructure.
- 3.7 A six-week consultation period commenced on Monday 27th May. Letters were sent to all owners/occupiers providing information about the consultation, including the listing for their property. This included a description and information on how the building met the LHL criteria. It also detailed the consultation event to be held in each parish as well as other ways of contacting the Conservation Team to discuss. Comments were invited. Parish councils and ward members were also notified. The LHL page on the Conservation Section of the BDC website also provided details of the consultation, links to all relevant documents as well as the draft lists by parish. The BDC Comms team also promoted the consultation using social media.
- 3.8 Conservation officers held conservation events in the village hall in each parish. Information on the LHL was available and conservation officers answered questions. Attendance was as follows;

**Cabinet
2024**

10th December

Alvechurch	12
Beoley	14
Belbroughton and Fairfield	6
Dodford with Grafton	20

Approximately 5 telephone calls were also received, as well as written comments.

- 3.9 The majority of people who contacted officers were happy for their properties to be included on the LHL. Most were seeking clarification on the implications of their property being on the list. Some provided additional information or queried information in the descriptions, which allowed descriptions to be amended.
- 3.10 Seven objections were received. The Conservation Team considered the objections and reconsidered the properties. In all cases it was considered that the properties met the criteria and should be included on the list, although descriptions and reasons for inclusion were amended in light of the comments and the re-examination.
- 3.11 Five further nominations were submitted. Of these, two are supported by the Conservation Team, one had already been considered and rejected, one is listed so cannot be included, and the Wiggins Memorial Park in Alvechurch will be considered when we consider parks and gardens as a separate category within the LHL. The owners of the two supported nominations have been consulted.
- 3.12 Following completion of the Consultation process and having considered all the comments received, the LHL for each parish has now been finalised, and can be found at Appendix 1. We are asking members to approve the LHL list for these parishes which will then become a material consideration in the planning process.

Further Local List update

- 3.13. As requested by the Overview and Scrutiny Board officers are also in a position to update on overall progress with the LHL as follows. Work continues on the lists for Bromsgrove Town, and the parishes of Lickey and Blackwell and Wythall. In relation to Bromsgrove Town a meeting was held with the History Group of the Bromsgrove Society and copies of our working spreadsheet made available to them in June. They are

**Cabinet
2024****10th December**

going to look at whether they can add to the information that we have already put together and nominate additional properties which they considered meet the criteria. We are still awaiting their feedback.

- 3.14. Since the previous Cabinet Report one member of the Conservation Team left in May, this was reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Board in our July report to them. A replacement has been recruited and started work in late September. The vacancy has impacted on the progress to date. In addition, the admin processes required to set up and carry out the consultation process took longer than expected. We have already begun to redesign this part of the process; we have brought in extra resource from within the team to manage the project leaving the conservation officers to focus on the technical assessment work. Additionally, we have also looked at better use of the GIS and databases to digitise as much of the process as possible again to help not only speed things up but also to pre-empt changes likely to flow from the corporate GIS strategy. We are currently in the process of rationalising the way data from the Historic Environment Record is moved over onto our database to avoid the duplication of backroom processes.
- 3.15 The new conservation officer has made a start on Bournheath Parish. The work on Wythall and Bromsgrove, subject to the input from the Bromsgrove Society is nearer completion. Work on Lickey and Blackwell has been delayed due to the Principal Conservation Officer responding to the consultation on the first four parishes. We should be in a position to go out to consultation on the next four parishes in the early part of next year. We will then move onto preparing another tranche of draft lists.

Governance implications for final approval of the Local Heritage List

- 3.16 Further consideration of the final sign off process has highlighted that the decision maker for approval of the Local Heritage List should be Council. The original report to Members on developing the LHL in November 2013 identified this as the decision making route and introduced delegations from Council to the Head of Planning to achieve this.
- 3.17 By way of further explanation, Members are asked to note that the broad rules about decision making for different arms of the Council on different topics are set out in the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000. In particular Schedule 3 deals with functions that “are not to be the sole responsibility of the

**Cabinet
2024**

10th December

authority's executive". The list of strategies and plans in that section includes development plan documents. As Members are aware, the LHL is closely aligned to Bromsgrove District Plan Policy 20 Managing the Historic Environment and as such advice from officers is that final approval should be from Council.

- 3.18 Having now worked through a complete cycle of drafting local lists, publication, consultation and re-drafting final lists, as can be seen from this report the process in terms of staff input has been quite intensive. The consultation phase seems to have been well received and there has been good engagement with the local communities and property owners. Members have been able to have input through Overview and Scrutiny and progress is now being made to move on to consulting on further areas in the District. It has been identified that there are potential data protection issues associated with publishing the consultation comments in a report that would be publicly available and officers are proposing to amend this part of the process.
- 3.19 Taking all that into account, together with the updated advice on where the decision making sits, officers have suggested amendments to the delegations set out in the Constitution. Attached at Appendix 2 is the current set of delegations for the Local Heritage List taken from the Officer Scheme of Delegations. Some changes to the wording are being suggested for clarity.
- 3.20 Members are therefore asked to approve the amendments to the Scheme of Delegations as set out in Appendix 2 and the consequential updates to the Local Heritage List Strategy as set out at Appendix 3.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising out of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The use of local lists is promoted by the NPPF, which advises local planning authorities in Paragraph 190 to 'set out in their local plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment'. It is emphasised that 'they (LPAs) should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance'. In light of the NPPF, the Bromsgrove District Plan (2017) acknowledges the importance of adopting a local list to formally identify the locally important heritage

**Cabinet
2024**

10th December

assets within the District. (See paras BDP 20.12, BDP 20.13 & BDP20.14)

- 5.2 Schedule 3 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 refers to functions that “are not to be the sole responsibility of the authority’s executive”. The list of strategies and plans in that section includes development plan documents The LHL is closely aligned to Bromsgrove District Plan Policy 20 Managing the Historic Environment and as such final approval of the LHL should be from Council, or alternatively another decision maker to which Council has made a delegation.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 6.1 Economic Development and Environment

The identification and inclusion of local heritage assets on the LHL will help to ensure that the local distinctiveness of Bromsgrove will be maintained and managed further, making the area an attractive place to locate and do business whilst at the same protecting the environment.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.2 It is not considered that the proposed action will have any climate change implications.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.3 There are not considered to be any customer/equality or diversity implications. The consultation will be carried out in line with established consultation processes the planning department frequently use.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The following risks have been identified in relation to this report : -
- Failure to ensure that approval of the LHL is made by the correct decision maker within the Council could lead to future planning decisions made in reliance on the contents of the list being subject to legal challenge.

**Cabinet
2024**

10th December

- Failing to progress efficiently with the overall process of developing the LHL may undermine the identification and preservation of heritage assets.
- The Council is taking steps to update the process to ensure that there is no risk of personal information being released.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Appendix 1 Local Heritage List for Alvechurch, Beoley, Belbroughton and Fairfield and Dodford with Grafton Parishes
- Appendix 2 Extract from Officer Scheme of Delegations
- Appendix 3 Local Heritage List Strategy Document

Cabinet 2024

10th December

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Kit Taylor	
Lead Director / Head of Service	Ruth Bamford – Assistant Director Planning and Leisure Services	
Financial Services	Pete Carpenter - Director of Resources/Deputy Chief Executive	
Legal Services	Claire Felton – Assistant Director Legal Democratic & Property Services	
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	N/A	N/A
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)	N/A	N/A

This page is intentionally left blank

BROMSGROVE LOW COST HOUSING SCHEME CAPITAL RECEIPTS AND INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF ACCOMMODATION

Relevant Portfolio Holder		Councillor Shirley Webb
Portfolio Holder Consulted		Yes
Relevant Assistant Director		Judith Willis Assistant Director Community and Housing Services
Report Author	Job Title: Amanda Delahunty Contact email:a.delahunty@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 881269	
Wards Affected		All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted		Not Applicable
Relevant Council Priority		Economic Development Housing Environment Infrastructure
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 asked to RESOLVE that;

- 1) The Supply and Demand of Temporary Accommodation report is noted; and

Cabinet is asked to RECOMMEND that

- 2) the low cost housing receipts are used to purchase existing properties, flip shared ownership into social or affordable rented accommodation or invest in new build developments with bdht to increase the supply of affordable housing and temporary accommodation to meet the growing demand.
- 3) delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing to approve individual proposals for new developments or the purchase of existing satisfactory dwellings and flipping Shared Ownership to affordable or social rented properties and the spend relating to these, as and when they are brought forward.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Bromsgrove District Council launched a low cost housing scheme approximately 27 years ago. Through this scheme the Council currently holds a 30% share in each of the 111 remaining low cost housing properties.
- 2.2 A report was taken to Cabinet on the 1st February 2017 and Members resolved that:
- “As and when these properties are offered for sale, so far as possible the Council’s share should also be sold and;
- That any Capital receipt be ring-fenced to provide funding to assist the Council in meeting its Strategic Purpose “Help me find somewhere to live in my locality”
- 2.3 The capital receipts received from this decision amount £547,912.26, and to date none of this capital money has been spent. This report asks members to approve a plan to increase the supply of affordable housing to support its homelessness function through the use of these capital receipts in partnership with Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT).
- 2.4 The Council has carried out research into the causes of the upward trend in homeless approaches and the spiralling cost of temporary accommodation. Working in partnership with BDHT, the Modelling the Supply and Demand of Temporary Accommodation document in Appendix 1 was developed. It established that there is an increase in homeless households and there has also been a sustained reduction in affordable housing availability. It is anticipated that by utilising Low Cost Housing Receipts in a variety of ways, a new supply of affordable and temporary accommodation can be made available to mitigate the impact of this, through new build and reconfiguring existing stock. Options include:
- the development of garage sites to replace with new dwellings
 - the purchase of existing satisfactory dwellings from the open market to include Section 106 sites
 - Re-purchasing any of the low cost housing that is determined to provide good value
 - Flipping of new build shared ownership into social housing.
- 2.5 These properties will be utilised as Temporary Accommodation to: avoid the use of B&B; or offered to those in the highest priority on the housing register; or facilitate a move for an existing tenant to a more suitable property, with the resulting void being made available to a homeless

CABINET

10th December 2024

household or the housing register. This will support the council in meeting its duties under the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. It is intended that this will impact positively on temporary accommodation costs as it is anticipated that households will be moved on from temporary accommodation more quickly.

- 2.6 The Council has seen a significant reduction in the number of affordable housing units becoming available since Covid. Some of this is due to households not being able to afford to move. It is also due to a shortage of new build developments in the District.
- 2.7 The cost of B&B has increased significantly over this period. This is not unique to Bromsgrove. According to analysis of the Local Government Association’s (LGA) revenue account data, the total amount spent by councils on temporary accommodation has soared by more than £733m since 2015/16. According to the LGA, temporary accommodation bills present a growing risk to councils.
- 2.8 The increase is in part due to more homeless households being placed into B&B accommodation, which increased from 34 in 22/23 to 46 in 23/24 which is a 35.29% increase. This is forecast to increase again in 2024/25 to 50 (8.7%). In addition, the length of stay is in TA overall is also increasing year on year suggesting that the supply of accommodation is an issue. With the number of households in TA for 6 + weeks being 2021/22 32, 2022/23 48 (50% increase) and 2023/24 53 (10% increase) overall a 66% increase over the whole period.

Year	Budget	Expenditure
2018/19	£12,387	£8,784.95
2019/20	£12,387	£11,837.24
2020/21	£12,387	£24,971.50
2021/22	£12,387	£19,311.49
2022/23	£12,387	£59,903.55
2023/24	£12,387	£87,441.26

- 2.9 The forecast for B&B spend without any increasing the supply of temporary accommodation or permanent accommodation is:
 - 2024/25 £99,917.51
 - 2025/26 £114,323.84
- 2.10 The increase in B&B use is directly related to the decrease in the supply of affordable housing. In the three years prior to the Covid-19 pandemic the Council would have expected around 462 units to become available per annum either through re-lets of social housing or new build stock. This is in part due to the cost of living crisis and the

new affordable housing need target of 92 units per annum not being met.

Previous 3 year average 17/18- 19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
462	352	304	330	321

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 The additional resource required to implement this initiative will be absorbed by the Housing Development Officer posts.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The low cost housing receipts currently stand at £547,912.26. These are utilised to bring forward more affordable housing and temporary accommodation. The consequence of this should help to mitigate the increase in B&B costs anticipated in the Modelling document.
- 4.2 The percentage of any grant based on the open market value of the property will be registered with the Land Registry so that in the event of its sale the Council would recover its funding based on the percentage of the current value of the property. This could be re-invested to provide more affordable housing.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The percentage of any grant based on the open market value of the property will be registered with the land registry so that in the event of its sale the Council would recover its funding based on the percentage of the current value of the property.
- 5.2 The proposals detailed in this report will support the council in meeting its duties under the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. In addition, B&B is not deemed to be suitable accommodation for pregnant women and families with children, and for this reason is unlawful if used beyond 6 weeks as set out in the 2003 Bed and Breakfast Order. Longer term use of B&B puts the local authority at risk of legal challenge, reputational damage and/or a 'maladministration' finding by the Ombudsman.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.1 Economic Development – a greater supply of housing supports economic development by providing work for builders and tradesmen and through occupiers using their purchasing power to furnish their homes.

Housing – the receipts will provide more housing for those in housing need in the District.

Environment – where properties are new build they will be energy efficient and where they are made available through the purchase of existing satisfactory dwellings they will, where required, be brought up to a more energy efficient standard.

Infrastructure – new build housing will be very small sites and impact on infrastructure will be minimal.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.2 This initiative to increase the supply of affordable housing and temporary accommodation aligns with Bromsgrove District Council's commitment to environmental sustainability and climate change mitigation. While the report emphasises energy efficiency in new builds, further consideration of the broader climate change impacts is essential. The increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events and the growing cost-of-living crisis, exacerbated by climate change, contribute to rising homelessness. By providing secure and affordable housing, this initiative will help protect vulnerable households from the direct and indirect impacts of climate change. Furthermore, the emphasis on sustainable building practices, potentially incorporating renewable energy sources and green spaces, will contribute to reducing carbon emissions and enhancing community resilience. This initiative offers a valuable opportunity to integrate climate change considerations into housing development and create a more sustainable and equitable future for all residents of Bromsgrove.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.3 The delivery of more housing will have a positive impact on those who are homeless and registered for housing through Home Choice Plus.

CABINET

10th December 2024

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 Unless the supply of affordable accommodation is increased across the District the council will be unable to meet its obligations in respect of homeless families and costs of extended periods in B&B and temporary accommodation will continue to rise.
- 4.2 Placing families in B&B where facilities are shared with vulnerable adults and with households not known to the placing authority creates additional safeguarding risks.

6. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 - Modelling the Supply and Demand of Temporary Accommodation in Bromsgrove 2024/25

Cabinet Report Dated 1st February 2017

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Shirley Webb	31 st October 2024
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Judith Willis; Assistant Director Community and Housing	1 st November 2024
Financial Services	Pete Carpenter, Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive Officer	1 st November 2024
Legal Services	Claire Felton, Assistant Director Legal, Democratic and Property Services	19/11/2024
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

CABINET

10th December 2024

Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	Matt Eccles	1/11/2024

This page is intentionally left blank

Cabinet

10th December 2024

Carbon Reduction Strategy and Implementation Plan

Relevant Portfolio Holder		Councillor Bernard McEldowney
Portfolio Holder Consulted		Yes
Relevant Head of Service		Judith Wills
Report Author	Job Title: Climate Change Manager Contact email: matthew.eccles@Bromsgrove@Redditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 07816112073	
Wards Affected		All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted		All
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)		All
Non-Key Decision		
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet RECOMMEND that:-

1) Endorse the findings of this annual review of the Carbon Reduction Strategy (Appendix 2)

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In 2022 Bromsgrove District Council issued a Carbon Reduction Plan to assist the district achieve Net Zero by 2040. This report is to provide an update on progress against the identified actions on the Carbon Reduction Plan. (See Appendix 1 for Copy of Carbon Reduction Plan)
- 2.2 Globally, governments have committed to keep within a 1.5°C increase in temperature to avoid catastrophic impacts from climate change. The UK Government has committed to Net Zero by 2050.
- 2.3 Bromsgrove District Council has a significant role to play in taking and influencing action on climate change due to the services it delivers, the regulatory functions, strategic functions, procurement powers and responsibilities as a major employer. Evidence supports that Bromsgrove District Council should make carbon reduction key to what it does as a council to support national, regional & local targets.
- 2.4 Bromsgrove District Council declared a climate emergency at Council on 24th July 2019. On declaration of a climate emergency, an LA is affirming that it will place the Climate Emergency at the centre of its decision-making process. LA's are then expected to develop carbon

Cabinet

10th December 2024

reduction targets and action plans to assist in the reduction of carbon emissions, from their own council functions and, using their sphere of influence.

- 2.5 Each of the council's service areas have contributed to the Carbon Reduction Strategy and Action Plan (attached as Appendix 1) in order to produce 'carbon reduction pathways. Through this approach carbon reduction will become 'business as usual' and truly embedded throughout the organisation.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 The proposals set out in the Action Plan will require changes to or new ways of working and operating by service areas. Any operational changes brought about as a consequence will be considered in the business case for each project and as part of any project planning.
- 3.2 This Strategy and Action Plan will be our route map to 'net zero' for our internal activities. It also highlights where we are trying to influence the reduction of carbon emissions from other places outside the council's activities.
- 3.3 This plan will be refreshed every 3 years and reviewed annually. Progress against targets will be reviewed twice a year and by the Cabinet Surgery Leisure and Climate Change and annually by Cabinet.
- 3.4 The key actions of the strategy and action plan will provide the focus, steer and priority for the Climate change Panel for the next 3 years.
- 3.5 Of the key actions outlined in the strategy and action plan there were 11 key actions identified with 6 actions where work has started or is underway and 4 actions identified to be started in 2024.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The strategic objectives and projects outlined in the strategy and action plan will require financial and resource investment to be made to achieve carbon reduction. In some instances, this may lead to longer term savings e.g., reduction in energy consumption costs.
- 4.2 All projects and proposals detailed in the action plan that are not currently resourced and which have financial implications, will be subject to business plans which including all of the financial requirements (staffing costs and all revenue and capital resources)

Cabinet10th December 2024

which will be considered and require endorsement via the appropriate decision-making processes.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Climate Change Act 2008 sets the legally binding UK-wide target to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.
- 5.2 The Environment Act, 2021, acts as the UK's new framework of environmental protection. The Act provides the Government with powers to set new binding targets, including for air quality, water, biodiversity, and waste reduction.
- 5.3 As a requirement of the Climate Change Act, the government published the Clean Growth Strategy in October 2017. This strategy has two key aims: To meet domestic emissions reduction commitments at the lowest possible net cost to UK taxpayers, consumers and businesses; and to maximise the social and economic benefits for the UK of doing so.
- 5.4 The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995, obliges us to submit biennial reports setting out the practical, cost-effective measures, which are likely to significantly improve the energy efficiency of residential accommodation in our area.
- 5.5 Chapter 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework covers meeting the challenge of climate change.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS**Relevant Strategic Priorities**

- 6.1 The Strategy and Action Plan support the Council's priorities of Environment, Housing and Infrastructure, and carbon reduction measures are contained with the Council Plan In addition, it supports the delivery of achieving carbon reduction across council services.
- 6.2 It is recognised that the Council needs to concentrate on areas of work that will deliver the highest levels of carbon reduction. The strategy and action plan detail these areas but also acknowledges other actions of lower importance from a carbon reduction point of view, but which contribute to the overall greening of the authority.
- 6.3 In addition to the Strategic purposes, the Council's Plan also sets out its organisational priorities, and within a sustainability framework a requirement on any review of services to understand how we can adapt to climate change. The development of this Strategy supports this action.

Cabinet

10th December 2024

Climate Change Implications

- 6.5 This Strategy is specifically to achieve carbon reduction and net zero for our internal activities across all service areas. Further, the Strategy also identifies our influencing role in supporting the reduction of carbon emissions from other organisations e.g., our contractors.
- 6.6 The Section on Measuring and Setting Emissions Targets in the Strategy outlines the targets to be achieved to ensure net zero by 2040. The Strategy is key to addressing Climate Change. The Strategy and action plan seek to deliver a 50% reduction by 2030 and 100% by 2040. As part of our current work to establish a figure for the council's activities we have arrived at an estimated figure of 1,746 tonnes of carbon emissions per year for 2021.
- 6.7 The Council was able to achieve radical change in response to a pandemic by the many actions taken and so there is every opportunity to respond and develop our actions in response to global warming and biodiversity collapse.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.3 Any equality implications of carbon reduction proposals changing will be considered on a project by project basis through the use of Equality Assessments, if required.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The Strategy sets out the Council's plan to achieve net zero by 2040. This target will only be achieved if all services deliver on the actions set out in the Strategy over the next three years and beyond.
- 7.2 To ensure the actions are implemented the Strategy will be co-ordinated and reviewed a by the Climate Change Manager and the Cabinet Surgery Leisure and Climate Change will receive regular reports on progress and at least twice yearly.
- 7.3 Failure to provide adequate resources will mean an increased risk that the strategy and action plan will not be delivered.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 Carbon Reduction Strategy.
- 8.2 Carbon Reduction Strategy Review.

Cabinet

10th December 2024

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Bernard McEldowney, Portfolio Holder Leisure and Climate Change	30 October 2024
Lead Director / Head of Service	Judith Willis, Head of Community & Housing Services	30 October 2024
Financial Services	Debra Goodall of Finance & Customer Services	23 October 2024
Legal Services	Claire Felton, Head of Legal & Property Services	23 October 2024
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	N/A	N/A
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	Matthew Eccles Climate Change Manager	23 October 2023

This page is intentionally left blank

CABINET REPORT

10th December

2024

Draft Air Quality Action Plan 2025-2030

Relevant Portfolio Holder		Councillor Kit Taylor
Portfolio Holder Consulted		Yes
Relevant Assistant Director		Judith Willis, Community & Housing
Report Author	Job Title: Adrian Allman Contact email: adrian.allman@worcsregservices.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01562 738064	
Wards Affected		All wards
Ward Councillor(s) consulted		N/A
Relevant Council Priority		Environment
Key Decision		
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet RECOMMEND that:-

- 1.1 the Draft Air Quality Action Plan 2025-2030 is approved;**
- 1.2 a Consultation on the Plan is undertaken for 2 months from Mid-December to February 2025: and**
- 1.3 authority is delegated to the Assistant Director Community & Housing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Licencing & Worcestershire Regulatory Services, to approve the final Plan following the consultation, and for submission to DEFRA by April 2025.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Under section 83(1) the Environment Act 1995, three Air Quality Management Areas have been declared in the District:
 - 2.1.1 Worcester Road declared 24th October 2011
 - 2.1.2 Redditch Road declared 17th February 2010
 - 2.1.3 Lickey End declared 26th July 2001
- 2.2 The declarations were because of breaches of the nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) annual mean value at several hotspot areas. Details of

CABINET REPORT10th December2024

declaration and plan of the AQMA can be found on the following pages of Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS)

website: <https://www.worcsregservices.gov.uk/all-services/pollution/air-quality/air-quality-management-area-declarations/>.

- 2.3 Section 83A of the Environment Act 1995 requires Local Authorities (in response to declaring an AQMA) to prepare a written Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP). This must set out how the local authority and other stakeholders will take the necessary measures to secure the achievement, and maintenance, of air quality standards and objectives in the area to which the plan relates, and must in relation to each measure specify a date by which it will be carried out and how it will be reviewed
- 2.4 In 2013, WRS produced a countywide Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) for Worcestershire which was adopted by Bromsgrove District Council (WFDC) on 2nd October 2013. WRS have produced two updates to the AQAP, the latest in September 2016. For details of all measures completed, in progress or planned, please refer to the 'Air Quality Action Plan Progress Report for Worcestershire April 2015-2016'. A copy of this, the previous update, and the AQAP, is available to view or download at: <https://www.worcsregservices.gov.uk/all-services/pollution/air-quality/local-air-quality-reporting/bromsgrove-district-council/>
- 2.5 In August 2022, DEFRA published the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) Statutory Policy Guidance 2022 and introduced a new warning process for overdue AQAPs which came into effect on 30 June 2023. If AQAP submission requirements are missed, the enforcement approach sets out an escalation process, ultimately end as a Section 85 Secretary of State direction to the relevant Local Authority Chief Executive specifying action.
- 2.6 In September 2023 officers contacted DEFRA raising concerns regarding the process and requesting an alternative timetable for submission of AQAPs for four Worcestershire districts including Bromsgrove District Council. A revised timetable for submission of an AQMA was agreed and submission of a final AQAP is due to be submitted by April 2025.
- 2.7 LAQM Technical Guidance (LAQM.TG22) advises local authorities should only consider revocation of AQMAs following five years below the Air Quality Objectives and Standards or three consecutive years of annual mean NO₂ concentrations being lower than 36µg/m³ (i.e. within

CABINET REPORT

10th December

2024

10% of the annual mean NO₂ objective) due to the inherent uncertainty associated with diffusion tube monitoring.

- 2.8 The last exceedance of NO₂ in Worcester Road AQMA was recorded in 2018 but measured concentrations were within 10% of the annual objective in 3 of the last 5 years (the other 2 years, 2020-21, being impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic).

- 2.9 The last exceedance of NO₂ or measured concentrations within 10% of the annual objective within the Redditch Road and Lickey End AQMAs were recorded in 2016. Due to the number of years they have not exceeded the annual objective Bromsgrove District Council are required to undertake the work to revoke both of these AQMAs following completion of this AQAP. Following discussions with the Defra LAQM team in May 2024 it was confirmed an AQAP is required for the Worcester Road, Bromsgrove AQMA only.

- 2.10 In May 2024, a Steering Group consisting of officers from the Council, WRS representatives, Worcestershire County Council (Highways) and NHS was established to consider a range of possible measures that could be undertaken to reduce the levels of nitrogen dioxide.

- 2.11 The highest concentration of NO₂ recorded across the monitoring network in 2023 was 36.6µg/m³ at location WR, 14 Hanover Street, Bromsgrove (within the Worcester Road AQMA). As this was within the 10% of the legal level the Council are required to put in place an Air Quality Action Plan. The required level of reduction for the air quality management area is shown below;

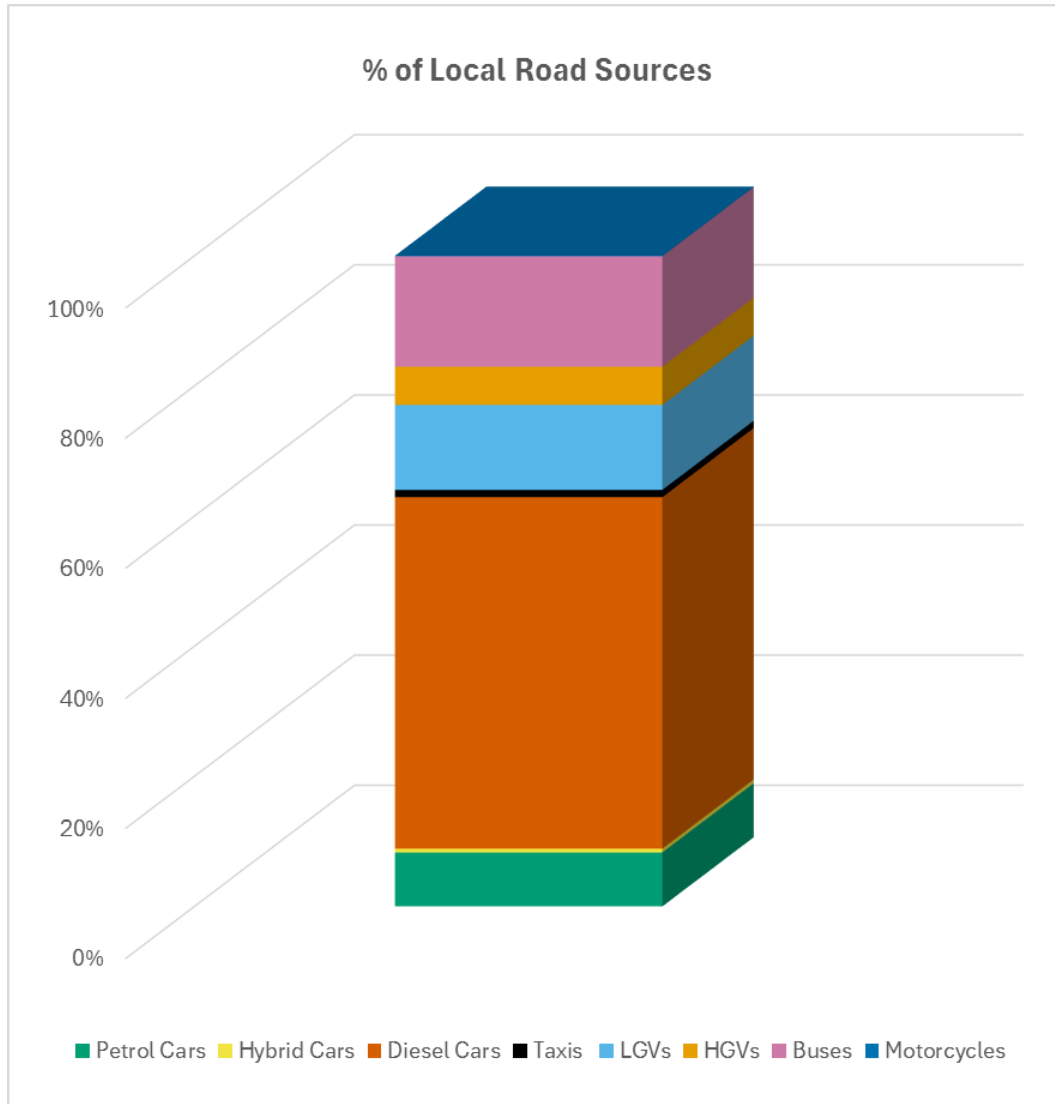
Location	Emission Reductions Required to Meet -10% Objective (NO ₂)	All Vehicle Reduction to Meet - 10% Objective (NO _x)	Highest Roadside Contributor	2nd Roadside Contributor	Single Vehicle Reduction to Achieve Objective
Worcester Road, Bromsgrove	1.58	3.05%	Diesel Cars – 57.08%	LGV – 13.81%	Cars 5% or LGVs/Buses 25%

- 2.12 The data shows the source apportionment for NO₂ and this is shown in the bar chart below:

Local Road NO_x proportions by vehicle type in Worcester Road AQMA

CABINET REPORT
2024

10th December



2.13 The plan outlines significant projects that have already had a positive impact on air quality including implementation of the Ultra-Low Emission Taxi Infrastructure Scheme, the A38 Bromsgrove Route Enhancement Programme (BREP) Major Scheme and Strategic Active Travel Network Investment Programme. These are shown in executive summary.

2.14 The Steering Group met over several months to consider what measures could be brought forward to be included in the action plan. The draft Air Quality Action Plan 2025-2030 is shown at Appendix One. These measures are described in section five of the action plan and shown in full in table 5.1 of the action plan. Actions are focussed around four key priorities;

- Priority 1 - Reducing Emissions from Transport

CABINET REPORT

10th December

2024

- Priority 2 - Public Health and Well-being
- Priority 3 – Sustainable Travel and Transport
- Priority 4 – Planning for Future Development

2.15 The actions coming out of these priorities include the installation of electric vehicle charge points on council owned car parks, the provision of Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) for residential off-street parking and wider improvements to the road network, public and active transport.

2.16 Measures have been considered that have subsequently been discounted and these are shown in full in Appendix A of the action plan. The reasons for discounting measures includes that the measure itself won't have a discernible impact on the air quality management area, that the measure hasn't been supported by the relevant organisation, that the measure can't be delivered in the lifetime of the plan or that funding can't be identified at this stage.

2.17 Once the public and DEFRA consultations have been completed, the final Air Quality Action Plan must be updated accordingly and submitted to DEFRA by 1st April 2025.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

3.1 The proposals set out in the Action Plan does not require any further change to operations in the Council. However, any significant deviation from the plan could result in the expected emission reduction targets identified in the plan to be missed.

3.2 Compliance with the Action Plan will be sufficient for the Council to achieve compliance with the National Air Quality Objective for Nitrogen Dioxide emissions.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The costs of adopting the plan for the Council have already been identified in the AQAP, with the exception of the potential options for the Council Depots which will be subject to the production of separate business case(s). Other measures have minimal costs and mostly relate to staff time. These will be met by existing budgets.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

CABINET REPORT
202410th December

-
- 5.1 Section 83A of the Environment Act 1995 requires Local Authorities (in response to declaring an AQMA) to prepare a written Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP).

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS**Relevant Council Priority**

- 6.1 Improving Air Quality will lead to improved health and wellbeing of the population by breathing cleaner and safer Environment and quality of life for all.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.2 Climate change and air pollution are some of the most pressing global challenges of our time. They are also closely related, and there are substantial benefits to tackling both together. By reducing harmful emissions the Council can not only contribute to global efforts to combat climate change but also deliver more immediate local health benefits that come from improved air quality.

- 6.3 Not every climate change measure has a net positive effect on improving air quality and visa versa. The Royal Society have assessed the interaction of these two policy areas in the Policy Briefing paper "Effects of Net Zero and Climate Change on Air Quality" available at <https://royalsociety.org/news-resources/projects/air-quality-climate-change/>

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.4 The AQAP will help to improve equality amongst Bromsgrove residents particularly by tackling areas of poor air quality in Bromsgrove, for example, that have fuel poverty and/or active travel measures.
- 6.5 Targeted actions to improve air quality in areas of social deprivation will have a disproportionately positive health impact. Improving Air Quality will be positive for all, but some of the more vulnerable groups will see added benefit, for example children and adults with underlying cardiovascular health conditions.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The Air Quality Action Plan sets out how the Council will achieve compliance with the air quality objectives for Nitrogen Dioxide.

CABINET REPORT **2024**

10th December

7.2 The Plan will be reviewed for compliance on an annual basis in line with the Statutory Reporting requirements to DEFRA by Worcestershire Regulatory Services in the period May to July each year.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 A copy of the draft Air Quality Action Plan 2025-2029 is attached as Appendix A.

CABINET REPORT

10th December

2024

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Kit Taylor, Planning, Licencing & Worcestershire Regulatory Services	25 October 2024
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Judith Wills, Assistant Director Community & Housing Services	25 October 2024
Financial Services	Debra Goodall, Assistant Director Financial & Customer Services	30 October 2024
Legal Services	Claire Felton Assistant Director Legal & Democratic Services	30 October 2024
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	Becky Green, Policy Manager	30 October 2024
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	Matthew Eccles, Climate Change Manager	30 October 2024

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

Q2 Financial and Performance Report 2024/25

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Colella – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Debra Goodall
Report Authors	Head of Finance and Customer Services Debra.Goodall@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Business Improvement Manager H.Mole@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	All
Key Decision	

1. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that:

- 1) The current Revenue overspend position of £344k and actions the Council are taking to mitigate this position is noted.
- 2) The current Capital spending of £1.99m against a budget of £7.07m is noted.
- 3) The Ward Budget allocation position to date is 13 approved allocations at £5,759.
- 4) There is an updated procurements position set out in the appendix, with any new items over £200k to be included on the forward plan.
- 5) The Q2 Performance data for the Period July to September 2024 be noted.

The Cabinet is asked to **RECOMMEND** that:

- 6) Council approve the £40,000 from the Community Hub earmarked reserves be allocated to contribute to a Poverty Truth Commission in Bromsgrove.
- 7) That the Balance Sheet Monitoring Position for Q2 is noted – which is the Treasury Monitoring Report and required to be reported to Council.
- 8) The £50,000 is transferred to earmarked Reserves from the General Fund for Planning Appeal costs.

2. **BACKGROUND**

2.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the Council's draft Revenue and Capital Outturn position for the second quarter of the financial year July 2024 – September 2024 and associated performance data. This report presents:

- The Council's forecast outturn revenue monitoring position for 2024/25 based on data to the end of Quarter 2.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

- The position in respect of balance sheet monitoring as requested by the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee.
- The spending as of Q2 of Ward Budget Funds.
- The updated procurement pipeline of Council projects to be delivered over the next 12 months in order to properly plan for the delivery of these projects.
- 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.

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 2, the projected revenue outturn position for the 2024/25 financial year and explains key variances against budget.
- 3.2 The £12.5m full year revenue budget included in the table below is the budget that was approved by Council in April 2024.

Service Description	2024-25 Approved Budget	2024-25 Approved Q2 Budget	Q2 Adjusted Spend	Q2 Budget Variance	Full Year Forecast	Full Year Budget Variance
Business Transformation and Organisational Development	1,792,618	875,308	1,010,785	135,477	1,894,935	102,317
Community and Housing GF Services	1,159,987	579,993	328,431	-251,562	918,164	-241,823
Corporate Services	994,465	497,232	151,678	-345,554	1,112,949	118,484
Environmental Services	3,798,721	1,899,360	3,057,883	1,158,522	4,390,282	591,561
Financial and Customer Services	1,441,300	720,650	-1,823,513	-2,544,163	1,748,555	307,255
Legal, Democratic and Property Services	1,563,913	781,956	1,070,366	288,410	1,505,717	-58,195
Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services	1,365,472	682,736	1,216,209	533,472	1,728,083	362,610
Regulatory Client	397,337	198,669	146,259	-52,410	578,970	181,633
Starting Well	0	0	29,747	29,747	0	0
Grand Total	12,513,813	6,235,906	5,187,844	-1,048,062	13,877,655	1,363,842
Service Description	2024-25 Approved Budget	2024-25 Approved Q2 Budget	Q2 Adjusted Spend	Q2 Budget Variance	Full Year Forecast	Full Year Budget Variance
Corporate Financing	-12,513,813	-6,331,906	-4,143,598	-1,096,526	-13,533,745	-1,019,932
Grand Total	-12,513,813	-6,331,906	-4,143,598	-1,096,526	-13,533,745	-1,019,932
TOTALS	0	-96,001	1,044,246	-2,144,588	343,910	343,910

Budget Variances

- 3.3 The draft position is set out in the above table. As this is expenditure at Q2 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 Q2 actual.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

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 2022/23 and 2023/24 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 full year revenue overspend of £344k at Quarter 2. This is mainly due to the additional fleet costs described below and also the pay award yet to be ratified. 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 2024/25. This includes service projections as follows:

Business Transformation £102k overspend

Within Business Transformation & Organisational Development there is an overspend due to £32k on professional fees on Commercialism, shared service recharges in Business Transformation and Policy amounting to £92k, offset by salary savings within Equalities of £22k.

Community and Housing GF Services £242k underspend

Within Community and Housing GF Services there is a projected underspend due to additional grants received (342k) offset by expenditure on professional fees (£22k) temporary accommodation (£78k).

Corporate Services £118k overspend

There are a number of variances within Corporate Services:

- Overspend in Communications of £21k on salaries
- A saving in Libraries of £50k
- An overspend of £33k on external audit fees within Corporate Expenses
- An underspend of £32k on professional fees and charges in Treasury Management and Bank Fees
- An overspend of £146k due to council pension costs.

Environmental Services £592k overspend

Within Environmental Services there are a number of variances as detailed below:

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

- Bromsgrove Domestic Waste Collection service is forecast to overspend by £447k due to additional staff and agency costs of £190k, vehicle hire of £165k and fleet maintenance of £92k.
- Bromsgrove Place Teams is forecast to overspend by £226k due to additional staff and agency costs of £179k, redundancy fees of £18k, insurance £9k and an income shortfall of £20k on bulky waste.
- Car Parking is forecast to have reduced income of £136k income, electricity and business rates are overspending by £24k plus consultancy fees of £72k.
- There is a significant increase in income in Cesspool Emptying (£116k) linked to new contracted work on behalf of Solihull Council.
- Tree Team is showing savings of £131k on salaries due to vacant posts.
- There is an increase of £66k in shared service recharges.

Financial and Customer Services £307k overspend

Within Finance and Customer Services there are overspends in Finance due to agency staff amounting to £290k together with £17k in unachieved efficiency savings within Customer Services.

Legal, Democratic and Property Services £58k underspend

Legal, Democratic and Property Services are forecast to underspend £58k due to additional elections income of £260k, offset by £191k in general expenditure including postage, printing and photocopying. There is an underspend of £49k in Legal due to vacancies. Offset against this are overspends on Artrix of £47k due maintenance and electricity, salaries with Registration of £13k.

Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services £363k overspend

Within Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services there are a number of variances:

- Building Control income is forecast to exceed budget by £113k
- Development Management is forecast below budget at £20k
- Sports Development is overspending by £59k due to agency costs
- Arts Projects are overspending by £12k due to professional fees
- There are additional UKSPF costs amounting to £385k.

Regulatory Client £182k overspend

Within Regulatory Client, there is an overspend due to Envirocrime and Planning Enforcement (£173k). This overspend will be rectified in Q3 by actioning virements from Planning and Environment Services which will move the overspend to those services as

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

agreed by Council. There is a projected shortfall in taxi licensing income (£29k) while there is additional BDC income recharge for support services to WRS amounting to £19k.

3.6 The above overspends (£1.364m) are offset by additional income (£1.02m) in Corporate Financing from additional grant income together with increased investment interest receivable and lower interest payable.

3.7 Cash Management

Borrowing

- As of the 30th September 2024, there was no short-term borrowings. The Council has no long-term borrowings.

Investments

- On 30th September 2024 there were £4.5m short-term investments held.

Capital Monitoring

3.8 A capital programme of £7.1m was approved in the Budget for 2024/25 in April 2024. This has been fully reviewed as part of the MTFP using actual data as at the end of December 2023. The table below and detail in **Appendix A** set out the Capital Programme schemes that are approved for the MTFP time horizon.

3.9 Many of these schemes are already in partial delivery in the 2024/25 financial year. By approving this list, the Council also agreed sums not spent in 2023/24 (and 2022/23 by default if schemes originated earlier than 2023/24 as sums have been carried forward through to the 2023/24 MTFP Report) to be carried forward into 2024/25. The table also splits amounts by funding source, Council or third party.

Year	Total Programme	Council Funded	Grant Funded
2024/5	7,069,671	4,334,500	2,735,171
2025/6	4,516,377	3,716,377	800,000
2026/7	2,558,000	1,758,000	800,000
2027/8	6,658,000	5,858,000	800,000
2028/9	1,879,000	1,079,000	800,000

3.10 Included in this funding the Council also have the following Grant Funded Schemes which are being delivered in 2024/25:

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

- 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.
 - With Market Hall, the Council agreed the final works contract with Kier in October. A report went to Cabinet in September to approve the overall budget for the works. The Council do have a 6-month extension until the 30th September 2025 to “spend” government funding on this project. After this point it will become the Council’s responsibility for the payment.
 - The Windsor Street demolition tender has been awarded to City Demolition and they are now on site starting the demolition process.
 - Public Realm work is under way and expected to be completed before the end of the calendar year.

The report in September set out that there will be an overspend position on the overall projects of circa £1.1m although there is scope to bring this down by £300-£500k. To mitigate this position the Council can either fund through debt financing or use other potential funding routes. One of these is the former GBSLEP. The Council can claim up to £2.45m although this will require the final costs as a complete application process needs to be followed.

- UK Shared Prosperity Schemes totalling £2.8m (although it should be noted that these grants funded schemes are a mix of capital and revenue) need to be completely spend by the end of the 2024/5 financial year.

- 3.11 The outturn spend is £1.994m against a capital budget totalling £7.069m and is detailed in Appendix A. It should be noted that as per the budget decision carry forwards of £7.166m will be rolled forward from 2023/24 into 2024/25 to take account of slippage from 2023/24.

Earmarked Reserves

- 3.12 The updated position, taking account of the now submitted draft accounts for 2020/21 and 2021/22 as well as the reported outturn positions for 2022/23 and 2023/4 are set out in **Appendix B**. 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 30th June 2024, the Council holds £10.867m of Earmarked Reserves.
- 3.13 The Bromsgrove Partnership has agreed to progress a Poverty Truth Commission (PTC) in Bromsgrove **District**. A PTC works with residents who have experience of poverty, and directly involves them in decision making
- 3.14 The first task is to recruit approximately 15 community **commissioners** willing to share their experience and be part of the commission. This group **will** meet regularly for about 6 months to build relationships, share their experiences and wisdom, and prepare to

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

engage in the commission. Only once they are a strong enough community, do the civic and business commissioners join in. A Poverty Truth Commission focusses on learning together about the causes and symptoms of poverty. It encourages change within the organisations and communities that the commissioners come from.

- 3.15 At the Bromsgrove Partnership, offers of support were given from partners, including offers of financial contribution from Public Health and West Mercia Police. NewStarts are also looking at other funding streams including from the Poverty Truth Network, National Lottery and Joseph Rowntree Fund. It is proposed that the work would be over a 3 year period, with the last 12 months implementing what has been heard that needs to change and embed. The work will require Facilitators and would build on the work of the Asset Based Community Development initiative.
- 3.16 Cabinet are asked to consider allocating £40,000 from the earmarked reserves to support community hubs (following the recent allocation to support Cost of Living initiatives there is £50,000 remaining in this reserve. The Poverty Truth Network, which offers free support to Poverty Truth Commissions, advises the total cost will be around £120,000 to £150,000 over that period – and it is proposed that this is funded approximately a third by the Council, a third from other partners and a third via VCS funding bids. A PTC is operating in Malvern Hills District Council, with a £50k contribution from the Council.
- 3.17 In addition, there have been a number of planning decisions where applicants have successfully appealed against Planning Decisions. IT is proposed that £50,000 is transferred from the General Fund to a specific Earmarked Reserve for this purpose.

Ward Budgets

- 3.18 This report is the first quarterly report to show what has been spent to date on Ward budgets. Each Ward Member has £2,000 to spend on Ward Initiatives subject to the rules of the Scheme which were approved by Council in February. To date, there have been 13 approved applications totalling £5,579. This year's funding allocations must be spent by the 31st March. Full detail is set out in **Appendix C**.

Balance Sheet Monitoring Position

- 3.19 There has been the request from Audit Committee that the Council include Balance Sheet Monitoring as part of this report.
- 3.20 This initial balance sheet reporting is set out as the Q2 Treasury Report which is attached as **Appendix D**. This report sets out the Council's debt and borrowing position for Q2 2024/5. Included in this is how the Council is using its working capital as well as measurement of the Council's Prudential Indicators. It should be noted that one indicator is not compliant. This was a short term loan between Redditch and Bromsgrove undertaken at year end which was repaid at the start of Quarter 2 2024/5. As reporting on

Cabinet

10th December 2024

the half yearly treasury position is a Statutory Requirement, this appendix will need to be noted and approved that Council note the position

Procurement Pipeline

3.21 The Procurement pipeline is shown in **Appendix E**. The Council's Procurement Pipeline includes details of contracts expected to be reprocured and new procurement projects expected to be undertaken in the future. Those happening in the next 12 months will need to be within the next 12 Months and over £200k will need to be put on the forward Plan. The pipeline will be refreshed quarterly.

- There are 16 contracts between the old threshold of £50k and the new threshold of £200k.
- There are 7 contracts that are over the key decision threshold of £200k
- There are no new contracts procured by Redditch Bromsgrove on behalf of Bromsgrove.

Performance

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. This is Quarter 2 of a new financial year, and as this year moves forward these indicators will link to business plans and the requirements of the new Council Plan which was approved at Cabinet and Council in July.

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)

These measures are the same as what was reported in the 2023/4 financial year and are shown in **Appendix F**.

3.24 New performance indicators required by the Council Plan approved in July are set out in **Appendix G** for reference. These will be incorporated into the Q3 Performance Report along with updated performance measures from departmental business plans.

4. Legal Implications

4.1 No Legal implications have been identified.

5. Strategic Purpose Implications

Relevant Strategic Purpose

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

- 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.

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
Appendix C – Ward Budget Position
Appendix D – Treasury Management Position
Appendix E – Procurement Pipeline
Appendix F – Performance Indicators
Appendix G – Performance Indicators linked to the New Corporate Plan.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Debra Goodall – Head of Finance and Customer Services (Deputy S151)
E Mail: Debra.Goodall@bromsgroveandredditchbc.gov.uk

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

Appendix A - Capital Outturn

Cap Proj	Description	2023/24 Total £	23/24 Spend £	diff	2024/25 Total (Original) £	2024/25 Total (incl CIF's) £	24/25 Spend £
Large Schemes							
Levelling Up Fund							
200072	- Market Hall	7,563,360	428,395	7,134,965	0	7,134,965	1,921,799
200073	- Ex-Fire Station/Windrar Street	805,133	15,592	789,541	0	789,541	77,300
UK Shared Prosperity							
200086	- Remainder (to be allocated)	680,988	73,987	607,001	1,784,215	2,391,216	0
Other Schemes							
200006	Burcot Lane	0	927,642	-927,642	0	-927,642	-915,914
200008	Funding for DFGr	913,000	842,776	70,224	913,000	983,224	567,033
200009	Home Repair Assistance	50,000	-19,690	69,690	50,000	119,690	0
200010	Energy Efficiency Installation	0	0	0	110,000	110,000	0
200015	Cemetery Extension infrastructure at North	0	0	0	0	0	0
200016	New Finance Enterprise system	0	0	0	20,000	20,000	0
200017	OLEV ULEV Taxi infrastructure scheme	0	0	0	0	0	0
200019	Fleet Replacement new line	441,000	865,561	-424,561			
200019	Fleet Replacement new line	0	0	9,400	3,090,000	3,099,400	13,860
200022	Replacement Parking Machines	96,000	212,270	-116,270	125,000	8,730	85,003
200026	Rubery Redevelopment works			0			
200026	Rubery Redevelopment Works	0	0	0	0	0	821
200030	Wheellie Bin Purchase	55,000	188,195	-48,195	60,000	11,805	88,772
200033	Bus Shelters	0	0	0	18,000	0	19,180
200044	Salix	0	0	0	0	0	0
200045	Greener Homes	0	197,505	-197,505	0	-197,505	6,125
200069	Circa Network Update	11,574	0	11,574	0	11,574	0
200070	Server Replacement	2,000	93,201	-91,201	177,500	86,299	0
200071	Laptop Refresh	25,000	11,542	13,458	150,000	163,458	18,352
200074	Install Solar panel and Upgrade lighting	0	24,707	-24,707	0	0	0
200075	Sanders Park	0	33,027	-33,027	0	-33,027	8,550
200076	Play Area, POS and Sport improvements at Lickey End	0	8,842	-8,842	37,956	29,114	30,000
200079	Footpaths	75,000	75,408	-408	75,000	74,592	54,926
200082	New Digital Service	33,668	0	33,668	0	33,668	0
200100	Movement of ICT Cyber Capital Works Forward	50,000	0	50,000	-50,000	0	0
200104	Building	100,000	0	100,000	100,000	200,000	780
200105	Initial Play Audit Requirements	87,000	0	87,000	364,000	451,000	0
200106	New ongoing Cybersecurity budget	0	0	0	25,000	25,000	0
200107	Arrix - Landlord Obligations	0	0	0	20,000	20,000	17,587
n/a	Wild Flower Machinery	62,000	0	62,000	0	62,000	0
Total		11,959,723	3,978,969	7,980,754	7,962,671	14,667,192	1,924,174

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

Appendix B - Earmarked Reserves

	Balance at 31/3/20	Transfers In	Transfers Out	Balance at 31/3/21	Transfers In	Transfers out	Balance at 31/3/22	Transfers In	Transfers out	Re-baseline	Balance at 31/3/23	Transfers in	Transfers out	Balance at 31/3/24	Transfers in	Transfers out	Balance at 31/3/25	Transfers in	Transfers out	Balance at 31/3/26	Transfers in	Transfers out	Balance at 31/3/27
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
General Fund Reserve	4,402	50		4,452	297		4,749		(956)	2,682	6,475	351	(854)	5,972	702	(337)	6,337		(8)	6,329		(7)	6,322
General Fund Earmarked Reserves:																							
Building Control Other	7	0	0	7	0	0	7			(7)	0			0			0			0			0
Building Control Partnerships	63	34	(21)	62	0	0	62				62			62			62			62			62
Commercialism	10	0	(15)	0	0	0	0				0			0			0			0			0
Community Services	41	251	(23)	271	0	0	271				271			146		(125)	146			21			21
Economic Regeneration	1,343	157	(152)	1,348	0	0	1,348			(600)	748			50			798			798			798
Election Services	96	5	(50)	51	0	0	51				51			51			51			51			51
Environmental Services	2	47	0	49	0	(22)	27				27			27			27			27			27
Financial Services	3,146	1,298	0	4,444	320	(60)	4,705		(150)	(1,411)	3,144			638			3,782			3,782			3,782
Housing Schemes	476	157	(145)	488	433	(57)	864		75		939			939			939			939			939
Human Resources									75		75			75			75			75			75
IT Systems	204	0	(7)	197	0	0	197				197			197			197			197			197
Leisure/Community Safety	291	160	(12)	330	72	(25)	377				377			377			377			377			377
Local Neighbourhood Partnerships	18	0	0	18	0	0	18				18			18			18			18			18
Other	116	0	(7)	109	0	(4)	105			(64)	3			3			3			3			3
Planning & Regeneration	108	25	0	133	0	0	133				133			133			133			133			133
Regulatory Services (Partner Share)	34	6	0	40	27	0	67				67			67			67			67			67
Shared Services (Sewerage Costs)	311	0	0	311	0	0	311				311			311			311			311			311
Utilities Reserve											1,053			1,053		(35)	1,018			702			702
Regeneration Reserve																	150			150			150
Ward Budget Initiative																	234		(78)	156		(78)	78
Covid-19 (General Covid Grant)	0	756	0	756	0	0	756			(756)	0			0			0			0			0
Covid-19 Sales Fees and Charges											(576)			(576)			(576)			(576)			(576)
Covid-19 (Collection Fund)	0	4,789	0	4,789	0	0	4,789				4,789			4,789			4,789			4,789			4,789
Total General Fund	6,263	7,702	(634)	13,437	852	(431)	13,858	150	(150)	0	11,176	688	(476)	11,388	384	(905)	10,867	0	(78)	10,789	0	(78)	10,636

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

Appendix C - Ward Budget Spending Q2 - Funds Allocated

Councillor	Application	Amount £
Cllr Sam Ammar	BDHT - Activity	350.00
Cllr Alan Bailes	The Feeding Trust - New sign	400.00
Cllr Anita Dale	Books for Lickey Hills Primary School, The Wendy House Day Nursery Blackwell Montessori Nursery	114.00
Cllr Esther Gray	Rubery in Bloom - Flower Boxes	200.00
Cllr Peter McDonald	Rubery in Bloom - Flower Boxes	200.00
Cllr Peter McDonald	Stroke Group - Boat Trip	295.00
Cllr Shirley Webb	Catshill in Bloom - Catshill Community Events	2000.00
Cllr Sam Ammar	Unity Sport Club - Football kits	580.00
Cllr Peter McDonald	Rubery Judo Club - Equipment	300.00
Cllr Esther Gray	Rubery Library - New Carpet for Children area	300.00
Cllr Rob Hunter	North Worcestershire Autism Parents Support Group	420.00
Cllr Peter McDonald	Rubery Swop Shop	300.00
Cllr Esther Gray	Rubery Swop Shop	300.00

Appendix D - Treasury Management Position

1. SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to set out a half yearly update on the Council's Capital and Treasury Management Strategies, including all prudential indicators.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet are asked to:

- **Note the Council's Treasury performance for Q2 of the financial year 24/25.**
- **Note the position in relation to the Council's Prudential indicators.**

3. BACKGROUND

Introduction

- 3.1 The Authority has adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice* (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Authority to approve, as a minimum, treasury management semi-annual and annual outturn reports.
- 3.2 This half yearly report provides an additional update and includes the requirement in the 2021 Code of quarterly reporting of the treasury management prudential indicators. The non-treasury prudential indicators are incorporated in the Authority's normal quarterly revenue report.

External Context

- 3.3 **Economic background:** UK headline consumer price inflation remained around the Bank of England (BoE) target later in the period, falling from an annual rate of 3.2% in March to 2.0% in May and then rebounding marginally to June to 2.2% in July and August, as was expected, due to base effects from energy prices. Core and services price inflation remained higher at 3.6% and 5.6% respectively in August.
- 3.4 The UK economy continued to expand over the period, albeit slowing from the 0.7% gain in the first calendar quarter to 0.5% (downwardly revised from 0.6%) in the second. Of the monthly figures, the economy was estimated to have registered no growth in July.
- 3.5 Labour market data was slightly better from a policymaker perspective, showing an easing in the tightness of the job market, with inactivity rates and vacancies declining. However, a degree of uncertainty remains given ongoing issues around the data collected for the

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

labour force survey by the Office for National Statistics. Figures for the three months to July showed the unemployment rate fell to 4.1% (3mth/year) from 4.4% in the previous three-month period while the employment rate rose to 74.8% from 74.3%.

- 3.6 Over the same period average regular earnings (excluding bonuses) was 5.1%, down from 5.4% in the earlier period, and total earnings (including bonuses) was 4.0% (this figure was impacted by one-off payments made to NHS staff and civil servants in June and July 2023). Adjusting for inflation, real regular pay rose by 2.2% in May to July and total pay by 1.1%.
- 3.7 With headline inflation lower, the BoE cut Bank Rate from 5.25% to 5.00% at the August Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting. The decision was finely balanced, voted by a 5-4 majority with four members preferring to hold at 5.25%. At the September MPC meeting, committee members voted 8-1 for no change at 5.00%, with the lone dissenter preferring Bank Rate to be cut again to 4.75%. The meeting minutes and vote suggested a reasonably hawkish tilt to rates, with sticky inflation remaining a concern among policymakers.
- 3.8 The latest BoE Monetary Policy Report, published in August, showed policymakers expected GDP growth to continue expanding during 2024 before falling back and moderating from 2025 to 2027. Unemployment was forecast to stay around 4.5% while inflation was shown picking up in the latter part of 2024 as the previous years' energy price declines fell out of the figures before slipping below the 2% target in 2025 and remaining there until early 2027.
- 3.9 Arlingclose, the authority's treasury adviser, maintained its central view that Bank Rate would steadily fall from the 5.25% peak, with the first cut in August being followed by a series of further cuts, with November 2024 the likely next one, taking Bank Rate down to around 3% by the end of 2025.
- 3.10 The US Federal Reserve (the Fed) also cut interest rates during the period, reducing the Federal Funds Rate by 0.50% to a range of 4.75%-5.00% at its policy meeting in September. The forecasts released at the same time by the central bank suggested a further 1.00% of easing is expected by the end of the calendar year, followed by the same amount in 2025 and then a final 0.50% of cuts during 2026.
- 3.11 Having first reduced interest rates in June, the European Central Bank (ECB) held steady in July before cutting again in September, reducing its main refinancing rate to 3.65% and its deposit rate to 3.50%. Unlike the Fed, the ECB has not outlined a likely future path of rates, but inflation projections remain in line with the central bank's previous forecasts where it will remain above its 2% target until 2026 on an annual basis.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

- 3.12 **Financial markets:** Sentiment in financial markets continued to mostly improve over the period, but the ongoing trend of bond yield volatility remained. The general upward trend in yields in the early part of the period was reversed in the later part, and yields ended the half-year not too far from where they started. However, the volatility in response to economic, financial and geopolitical issues meant it was a bumpy ride for bond investors during that time.
- 3.13 Over the period, the 10-year UK benchmark gilt yield started at 3.94% and ended at 4.00% but hit a high of 4.41% in May and a low of 3.76% in mid-September. While the 20-year gilt started at 4.40% and ended at 4.51% but hit a high of 4.82% in May and a low of 4.27% in mid-September. The Sterling Overnight Rate (SONIA) averaged 5.12% over the period to 30th September.
- 3.14 **Credit review:** Arlingclose maintained its advised recommended maximum unsecured duration limit on all banks on its counterparty list at 100 days.
- 3.15 Having had its outlook increased by Fitch and ratings by S&P earlier in the period, Moody's upgraded Transport for London's rating to A2 from A3 in July.
- 3.16 Moody's also placed National Bank of Canada on Rating Watch for a possible upgrade, revising the outlook on Standard Chartered to Positive, the outlook to Negative on Toronto Dominion Bank, and downgrading the rating on Close Brothers to A1 from Aa3.
- 3.17 S&P upgraded the rating on National Bank of Canada to A+ from A, and together with Fitch, the two rating agencies assigned Lancashire County Council with a rating of AA- and A+ respectively.
- 3.18 Credit default swap prices were generally lower at the end of the period compared to the beginning for the vast majority of the names on UK and non-UK lists. Price volatility over the period was also generally more muted compared to previous periods.
- 3.19 Financial market volatility is expected to remain a feature, at least in the near term and, credit default swap levels will be monitored for signs of ongoing credit stress. As ever, the institutions and durations on the Authority's counterparty list recommended by Arlingclose remain under constant review.

Local Context

- 3.20 On 31st March 2024, the Authority had net borrowing of £10.09m arising from its revenue and capital income and expenditure. The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while balance sheet resources are the underlying resources available for investment. These factors are summarised in Table 1 below.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

Table 1: Balance Sheet Summary

	31.3.24	31.3.25
	Actual	Forecast
	£m	£m
General Fund CFR	32.65	33.77
Total CFR	32.65	33.77
Less: *Other debt liabilities <i>(if any)</i>	0	0
Borrowing CFR	32.65	33.77
Less: External borrowing**	-7.5	-10.20
Internal borrowing	25.15	23.57
Less: Usable reserves	-11.96	-11.72
Less: Working capital	-3.1	-3.1
Net borrowing	10.09	8.75

* finance leases, PFI liabilities and transferred debt that form part of the Authority's total debt

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

3.21 The treasury management position at 30th September and the change over the first six months of 24/25 is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Treasury Management Summary

	31.3.24	Movement	30.9.24	30.9.24
	Balance	£m	Balance	Rate
	£m		£m	%
Long-term borrowing				
Short-term borrowing	7.5	-7.5	0	
Total borrowing	7.5	-7.5	0	
Short-term investments				
Cash and cash equivalents	0.0	4.5	4.5	4.94%
Total investments	0.0	4.5	4.5	
Net investments	-7.5	12.0	4.5	

Borrowing Strategy and Activity

- 3.22 As outlined in the treasury strategy, the Authority's chief objective when borrowing has been to strike an appropriately risk balance between securing lower interest costs and achieving cost certainty over the period for which funds are required, with flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Authority's long-term plans change being a secondary objective. The Authority's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio. At the present time short term interest rates are higher than long term interest rates.
- 3.23 After substantial rises in interest rates since 2021 many central banks have now begun to reduce rates, albeit slowly. Gilt yields were volatile over the 6-month period and have reduced slightly between April and September 2024. Much of the downward pressure from lower inflation figures was counteracted by upward pressure from positive economic data. Data from the US continues to impact global bond markets including UK gilt yields.
- 3.24 The PWLB certainty rate for 10-year maturity loans was 4.80% at the beginning of the half year and 4.79% at the end. The lowest available 10-year maturity rate was 4.52% and the highest was 5.18%. Rates for 20-year maturity loans ranged from 5.01% to 5.57% during the half year, and 50-year maturity loans from 4.88% to 5.40%.
- 3.25 Whilst the cost of short-term borrowing from other local authorities spiked to around 7% in late March 2024, primarily due a dearth of LA-LA lending/borrowing activity during the month, as expected shorter-term rates reverted to a more normal range and were generally around 5.00% - 5.25%.
- 3.26 CIPFA's 2021 Prudential Code is clear that local authorities must not borrow to invest primarily for financial return and that it is not prudent for local authorities to make any investment or spending decision that will increase the capital financing requirement and so may lead to new borrowing, unless directly and primarily related to the functions of the Authority. PWLB loans are no longer available to local authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield unless these loans are for refinancing purposes. The Authority has no new plans to borrow to invest primarily for financial return.
- 3.27 **Loans Portfolio:** At 30th September the Authority held no loans.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

Table 3: Borrowing Position

	31.3.24 Balance £m	Net Movement £m	30.9.24 Balance £m
Public Works Loan Board			
Banks (LOBO)			
Banks (fixed-term)			
Local authorities (long-term)			
Local authorities (short-term)	7.5	-7.5	0
Total borrowing	7.5	-7.5	0

Treasury Investment Activity

- 3.28 The CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes (revised in 2021) defines treasury management investments as investments that arise from the organisation's cash flows or treasury risk management activity that ultimately represents balances that need to be invested until the cash is required for use in the course of business.
- 3.29 The Authority does not hold any invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. During the period, the Authority's investment balances ranged between £1.0 and £6.0 million due to timing differences between income and expenditure. The investment position is shown in table 4 below.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

Table 4: Treasury Investment Position

	31.3.24 Balance £m	Net Movement £m	30.9.24 Balance £m	30.9.24 Income Return %	30.9.24 Weighted Average Maturity days
Banks & building societies (unsecured)					
Banks & building societies (secured deposits)					
Covered bonds (secured)					
Government					
Local authorities and other govt entities					
Corporate bonds and loans					
Money Market Funds	0.0	4.5	4.5	4.94%	1
Total investments	0.0	4.5	4.5		

- 3.30 Both the CIPFA Code and government guidance require the Authority to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its treasury investments before seeking the optimum rate of return, or yield. The Authority’s objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income.
- 3.31 As demonstrated by the liability benchmark in this report, the Authority expects to be a long-term investor and treasury investments therefore include both short-term low risk instruments to manage day-to-day cash flows and longer-term instruments where limited additional risk is accepted in return for higher investment income to support local public services.
- 3.32 Bank Rate reduced from 5.25% to 5.00% in August 2024 with short term interest rates largely being around this level. The rates on DMADF deposits also reduced from 5.19% to 4.94%.

Non-Treasury Investments

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

- 3.33 The definition of investments in the Treasury Management Code now covers all the financial assets of the Authority as well as other non-financial assets which the Authority holds primarily for financial return. Investments that do not meet the definition of treasury management investments (i.e. management of surplus cash) are categorised as either for service purposes (made explicitly to further service objectives) and or for commercial purposes (made primarily for financial return).
- 3.34 Investment Guidance issued by the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and Welsh Government also includes within the definition of investments all such assets held partially or wholly for financial return.

Treasury Performance

- 3.35 The Authority measures the financial performance of its treasury management activities both in terms of its impact on the revenue budget and its relationship to benchmark interest rates, as shown in table 5 below.

Table 5: Performance

	Actual £m	Budget £m	Over/ under	Actual %	Benchmark %	Over/ under
Total borrowing	0.0	0.0	0.0			
PFI and Finance leases	0.0	0.0	0.0			
Total debt	0.0	0.0	0.0			
Total treasury investments	4.5	0.0	4.5			
				n/a	n/a	n/a

MRP Regulations

- 3.36 On 10th April 2024 amended legislation and revised statutory guidance were published on Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). The majority of the changes take effect from the 2025/26 financial year, although there is a requirement that for capital loans given on or after 7th May 2024 sufficient MRP must be charged so that the outstanding Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) in respect of the loan is no higher than the principal outstanding less the Expected Credit Loss (ECL) charge for that loan.
- 3.37 The regulations also require that local authorities cannot exclude any amount of their CFR from their MRP calculation unless by an exception set out in law. Capital receipts cannot

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

be used to directly replace, in whole or part, the prudent charge to revenue for MRP (there are specific exceptions for capital loans and leased assets).

Compliance

- 3.38 The Director of Resources and Section 151 officer reports that all treasury management activities undertaken during the period complied fully with the principles in the Treasury Management Code and the Authority’s approved Treasury Management Strategy. Compliance with specific investment limits is demonstrated in table 6 below.

Table 6: Investment Limits

	2024/25 Maximum	30.9.24 Actual	2024/25 Limit	Complied? Yes/No
Any single organisation, except the UK Government	£4m each			
UK Central Government	Unlimited			
Unsecured investments with banks and building societies	£2.5m in total			
Loans to unrated corporates	£1m in total			
Money Market Funds	£20m in total	£4.5m	£20m	Yes
Foreign countries	£5m per country			
Real Estate Investment Trusts	£2.5m in total			

- 3.39 Compliance with the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary for external debt is demonstrated in table 7 below.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

Table 7: Debt and the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary

	Q1 2024/25 Maximum	30.9.24 Actual	2024/25 Operational Boundary	2024/25 Authorised Limit	Complied? Yes/No
Borrowing	Nil	Nil	55,000	60,000	Yes
PFI and Finance Leases	Nil	Nil	1,000	1,000	Yes
Total debt	Nil	Nil	56,000	61,000	

- 3.40 Since the operational boundary is a management tool for in-year monitoring it is not significant if the operational boundary is breached on occasions due to variations in cash flow, and this is not counted as a compliance failure

Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

- 3.41 As required by the 2021 CIPFA Treasury Management Code, the Authority monitors and measures the following treasury management prudential indicators.

Liability Benchmark

- 3.42 This indicator compares the Authority's actual existing borrowing against a liability benchmark that has been calculated to show the lowest risk level of borrowing. The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term investor in the future, and so shape its strategic focus and decision making. It represents an estimate of the cumulative amount of external borrowing the Council must hold to fund its current capital and revenue plans while keeping treasury investments at the minimum level of £2m required to manage day-to-day cash flow

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

	31.3.24	31.3.25	31.3.26	31.3.27
	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
Loans CFR	32.645	33.772	34.543	35.401
Less: Balance sheet resources	-15.55	-14.823	-14.241	-14.16
Net loans requirement	17.59	18.949	20.302	21.241
Plus: Liquidity allowance	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Liability benchmark	17.79	19.149	20.502	21.441
Existing borrowing	7.5	10.20	12.54	14.84

3.43 Following on from the medium-term forecast above, the long-term liability benchmark assumes capital expenditure funded by borrowing of £14.8m, minimum revenue provision on new capital expenditure based on a 40 year asset life and income, expenditure and reserves all increasing by inflation of 2.0% p.a. This is shown in the chart below together with the maturity profile of the Authority’s existing borrowing. Presently borrowing has been delivered through the use of internal resources and the Council has no long term borrowing.

Maturity Structure of Borrowing

3.44 This indicator is set to control the Authority’s exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of all borrowing were:

	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	30.6.24 Actual	Complied?
Under 12 months	50%	0%	0%	Yes
12 months and within 24 months	50%	0%	0%	Yes
24 months and within 5 years	50%	0%	0%	Yes
5 years and within 10 years	50%	0%	0%	Yes
10 years and above	100%	0%	0%	Yes

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

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

Long-term Treasury Management Investments

- 3.46 The purpose of this indicator is to control the Authority’s exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The prudential limits on the long-term treasury management limits are:

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	No fixed date
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£0.5m	£0.5m	£0.5m	£0.5m
Actual principal invested beyond year end	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Complied?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

- 3.47 Long-term investments with no fixed maturity date include strategic pooled funds, real estate investment trusts and directly held equity but exclude money market funds and bank accounts with no fixed maturity date as these are considered short-term.

Additional indicators

Security:

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

	2024/25 Target	30.9.24 Actual	Complied?
Portfolio average credit rating	A	UK Govt	Yes

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

Liquidity:

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

	30.9.24 Actual	2024/25 Target	Complied?
Total cash available within 3 months	£4.5m	Nil	Yes
Total sum borrowed in past 3 months without prior notice	Nil	Nil	Yes

Interest Rate Exposures:

- 3.50 This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to interest rate risk.

Interest rate risk indicator	2024/25 Target	30.9.24 Actual	Complied?
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>rise</u> in interest rates	500,000	0	Yes
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>fall</u> in interest rates	500,000	0	Yes

- 3.51 For context, the changes in interest rates during the quarter were:

	<u>31/3/24</u>	<u>30/9/24</u>
Bank Rate	5.25%	5.00%
1-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	5.36%	4.95%
5-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	4.68%	4.55%
10-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	4.74%	4.79%
20-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	5.18%	5.27%
50-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	5.01%	5.13%

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

Cabinet

10th December 2024

4. IMPLICATIONS

Legal Implications

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

Service / Operational Implications

- 4.2 Monitoring is undertaken to ensure that income targets are achieved, with Treasury Management activities taking place on a daily basis.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 4.3 The only impact of treasury transactions is in respect of ethical investment linked to the Councils investment counterparties. Presently the Council has a limited counterparty list based on financial risk to the Authority.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 There is always significant risk in relation to treasury transactions, this is why Councils appoint Treasury advisors, which in the case of Bromsgrove is Arlingclose. In addition, there is the requirement in this area to provide an Annual Strategy report containing indicators/limits that must be met, a quarterly update and closure report all of which must be reported to full Council.

6. APPENDICES

None

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

MTPF 2024/25 – February 2024 which contains this years Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy and MRP Policy.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Debra Goodall – Head of Finance and Customer Services (Deputy S151)
E Mail: Debra.Goodall@bromsgroveandredditchbc.gov.uk

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

Appendix E - Procurement Pipeline

Between £50k and £200k

	Contract Title	Contract Description	Department	Contract Commencement Date
Bromsgrove				
Bromsgrove	Server/SAN Replacement	Replacement of Key Infrastructure devices to ensure Security and Support	ICT	31/12/2024
Bromsgrove	VMware License & Support	Virtual Server VMware License & Support	ICT	14/01/2025
Bromsgrove	Laptop Refresh	Replacement of Laptops to Support latest security patches and Windows 11	ICT	31/12/2024
Bromsgrove	out of hours dog warden services	framework agreement to provide out of hours dog warden services for Worcestershire Regulatory Services.	WRS	01.01.2025
Bromsgrove	Automation/Robotics	Uipath Licenses via HTE ComIT 2 (Complete IT Solutions) Framework	ICT	26/08/2025
Bromsgrove	Cisco Network Maintenance	Annual Cisco Network Maintenance	ICT	18/01/2025
Bromsgrove	Web security subscription (Ironport)	Cloud-based web security service subscription	ICT	06/07/2026
Bromsgrove	GIS System	Corporate GIS System	ICT	01/04/2025
Bromsgrove	Web Filter	Cisco Web Security XaaS Subscription via CCS	ICT	06/06/2026
BDC	Community Transport	Provision of community transport in the Bromsgrove area	Community Services	01/05/2025
Bromsgrove	Digital Transformers	Bespoke training to businesses and employees to support digital adoption	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	01/09/2024
Bromsgrove	Digital Forms	WRS Automation project for submission of digital forms	WRS	26.11.2024
Bromsgrove	IDOX Software	BDC-Call-off contract to support and maintenance for Idox Uniform and DMS solution	WRS	01.03.2029
Bromsgrove	Logic Monitor	Network and Infrastructure Monitoring	ICT	28/03/2027
Bromsgrove	Street Naming and Numbering	Street Naming and Numbering system VIA CCS RM1557 (StatMap)	ICT	31/05/2025
Bromsgrove	Cloud Storage	Acronis Cloud Storage via HTE Framework	ICT	06/06/2025

Over £200k

	Contract Title	Contract Description	Department	Contract Commencement Date
Bromsgrove				
Bromsgrove	Replacement Parking Machines	Replacement Parking Machines	Engineering & Design	
Bromsgrove	PROVIDE Kennelling of Dogs	FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT TO PROVIDE Kennelling of Dogs FOR WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES.	WRS	30.04.2025
Bromsgrove	Microsoft Licenses	Licenses to use Microsoft Office	ICT	01/07/2025
Bromsgrove	Planning/GIS/Gazetteer	Supply of Idox Uniform via CCS RM3821 Lot 2b	ICT	19/09/2027
Bromsgrove	Pest Control	Framework Agreement for provision of pest control services	WRS	24/10/2024
Bromsgrove	Air Quality Analysers	Provision of Air Quality Analysers and data management	WRS	asap
Bromsgrove	Data Access Services	Data Access Services WAN supply	ICT	01/09/2026

Redditch Relating to Bromsgrove

None

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

Appendix F BROMSGROVE Strategic & Operational Performance Measures

Quarter 2, 2024/25

1. Introduction

We are committed to reviewing performance reporting and key measures; as this is part of continuous improvement to ensure accountability, transparency, and effectiveness in delivering services to the community.

By assessing performance and utilising benchmarking where appropriate, we can identify areas of improvement, make informed decisions, allocate resources efficiently, and ultimately enhance service delivery to meet the evolving needs of our constituents, therefore how we measure performance is essential.

The Council Plan 2024-27 has been adopted, which identifies priorities and key projects, and contains a suite of measures to assess delivery of against these, which be the foundation for performance reporting going forward. These measures and the associated data collection requirements are currently under development; where available, they have been included in this report.

2. Strategic Priorities and Performance Measures

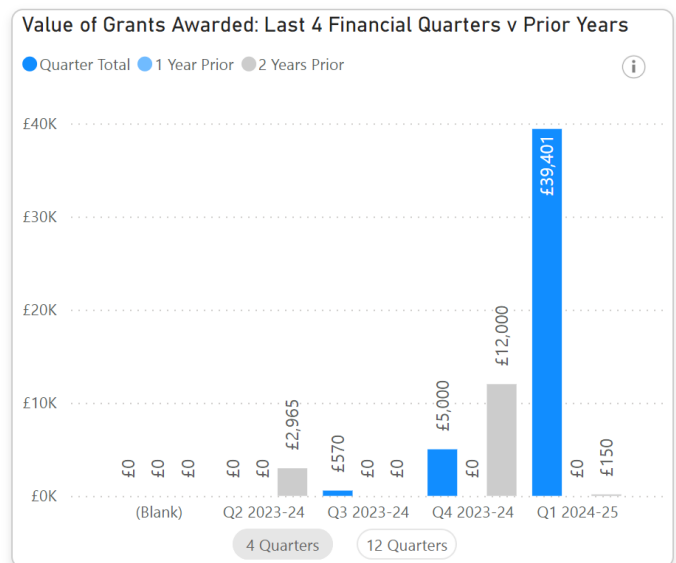
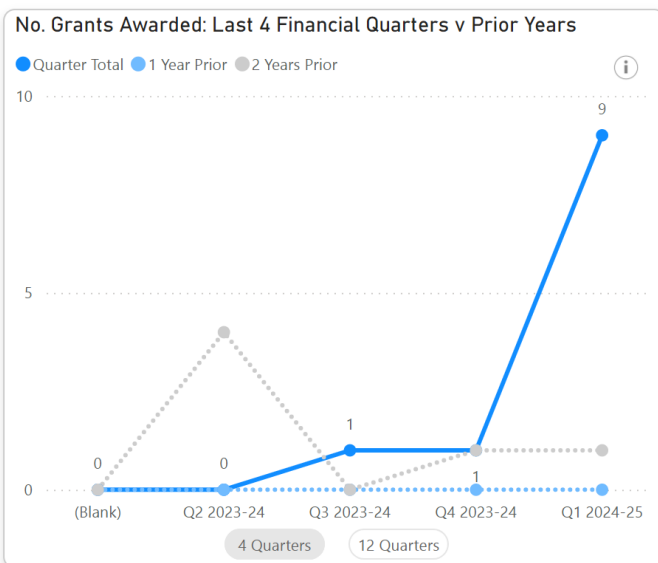
The measures shown in the next section are structured around the Council Plan, but also includes previous data sets as we transition to a new set of comprehensive performance measures.

2.1. Economic Development

Performance measure:

- Take-up of start-up business grants and creativity grants programme (up to 1 period lag)

Start-up Grants



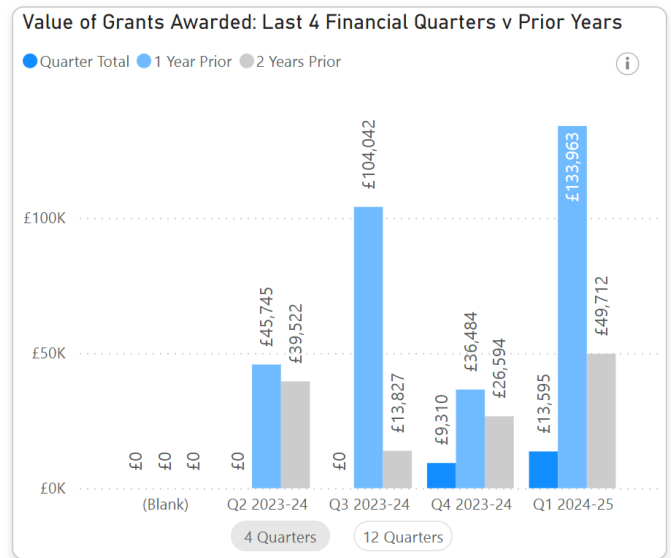
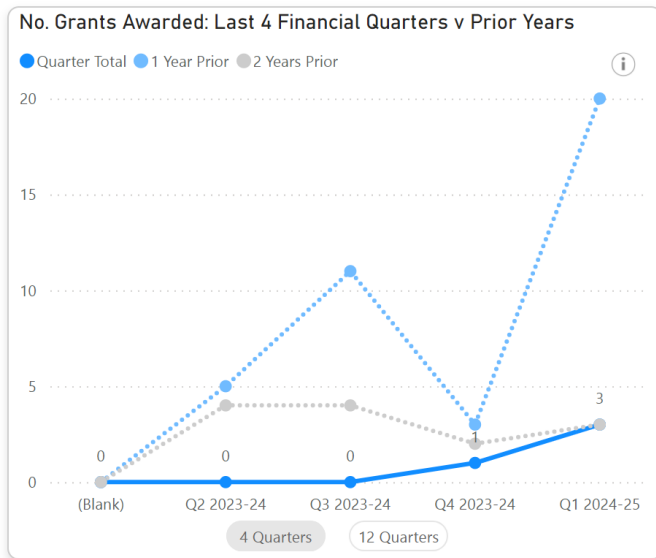
BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

Update: 9 grants were awarded this quarter: 8 from the Enterprising Worcestershire Programme and 1 Centre Enhancements Grant. The recipient businesses include retailers, financial services, professional services, hospitality, manufacturing and software development. All of the businesses supported are in their first 3 years of trading.

Growth Grants



Update: Grants awarded this quarter were from the Bromsgrove Centres Enhancement grant programme and the Elevate Worcestershire programme. Businesses supported include a retailer, personal services and commercial flooring supplier.

Performance Measure:

- Number of jobs created (UKSPF)

These are the jobs created that are reported to us by UKSPF project deliverers; the numbers all relate to full time equivalents which is around 36 hours per week (this can vary by business).

2023/24 Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2024/25 Q1
0	11.5	5	0	5

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

Performance Measure:

- Former Market Hall Project

This measure will now be provided through other reporting routes.

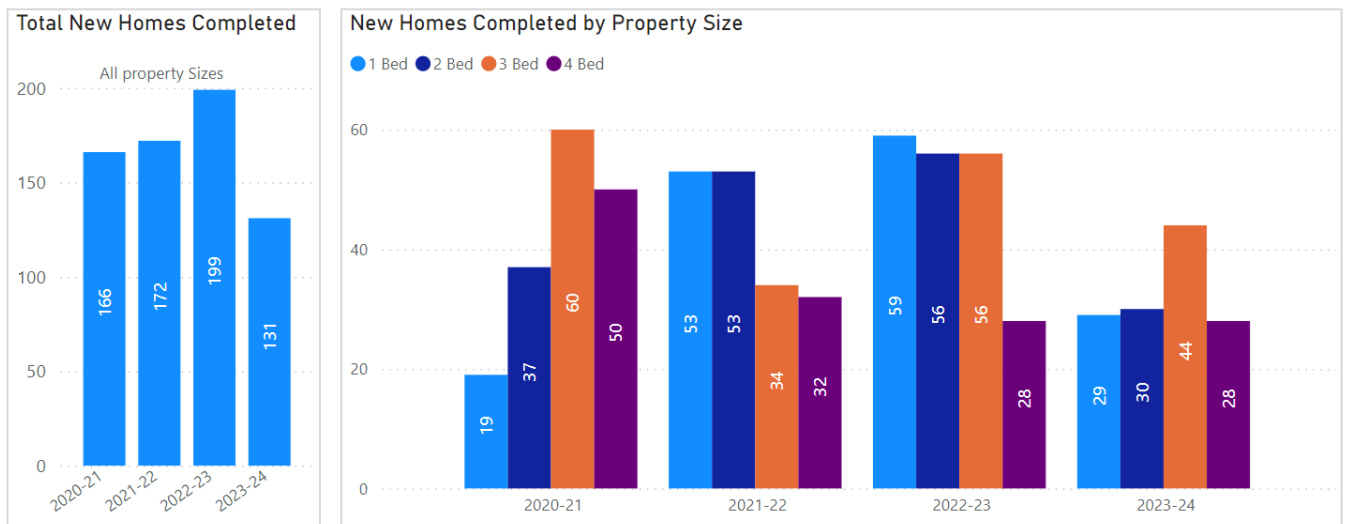
- Windsor Street Project

This measure will now be provided through other reporting routes.

2.2 Housing

Performance measure:

- Number of new homes built - total and affordable (annual measure)



The final data for the 2023/24 is:

- Total Homes Built (including affordable) -131 (net)
- Total affordable homes built - 51 (net)

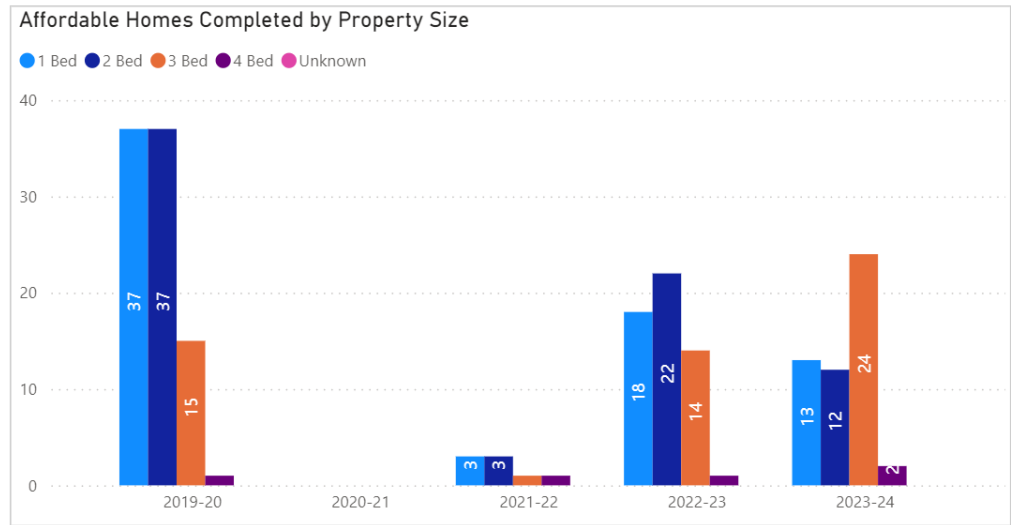
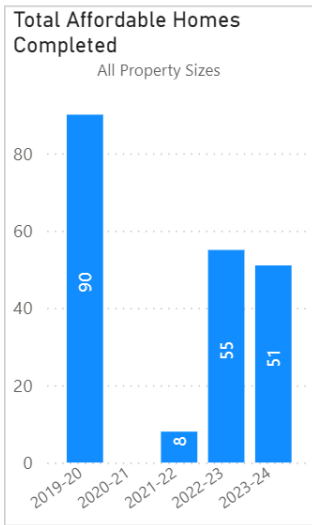
Performance measure:

- Affordable Homes Completed (annual measure)

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024



There are 601 affordable housing commitments as of 1 April 2024, reflecting the number of strategic sites which have gained consent but not started construction or just started construction. A small but not insignificant number of these commitments are from the redevelopment of former garage sites across the District which have yet to be started.

Performance measure:

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



	Rate
Bromsgrove	10.46
Worcestershire	8.63
England	8.26

Update: The affordability ratio relates to workplace-based income which uses the median earnings of those employed in Bromsgrove District, which rose from £29,285 to £32,993, a 12.66% increase. The median house price in the district rose from £327,000 to £345,000, a 5.5% increase. Bromsgrove District has the second highest in the West Midlands, despite the small drop in the ratio.

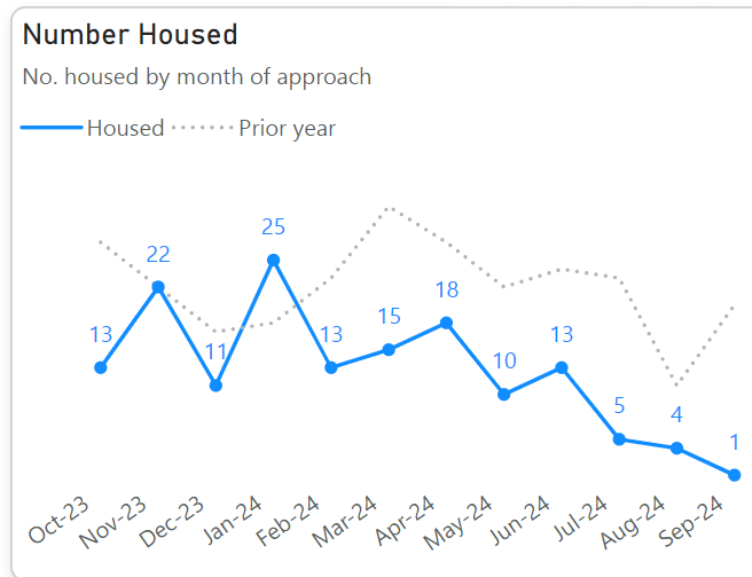
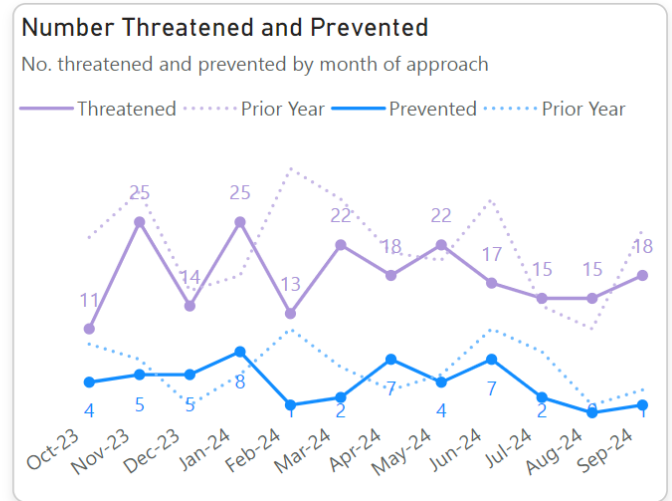
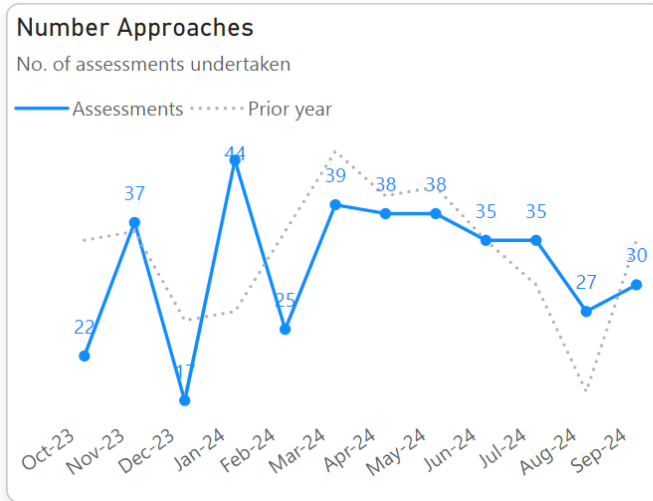
Performance measure:

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

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



Update:

Approaches remain slightly higher than last year but continue to follow the trend meaning fewer approaches over the summer period.

The figures show the difficulty being experienced around the Country in preventing homelessness given the current issues with the Housing Market which in term impacts on the provision of temporary accommodation.

The ability to house homeless applicants remains difficult. There has been a lack of new build affordable housing and the number of void properties within the current stock base has reduced as fewer people

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

are moving on from social housing due to the current market conditions. Officers are undertaking more in depth work into homelessness to formulate an action plan to increase numbers of affordable housing available and reduce temp accommodation needs.

2.3. Environment

Performance Measure:

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

Update: The current Capital Replacement Programme has been approved for 2024/25, but it has been identified that amendments are needed to maintain service provision. The existing capital replacement plan is currently being reviewed for BDC across all services to address this, and ensure services have the right assets to deliver on our duties across the district. Amendments to domestic waste service were approved in Q1 and additional changes to the programme will be submitted for consideration during Q3 of the 2024/25 financial year where required.

Performance Measure:

- Reduce carbon emissions arising from the councils’ vehicles

Update:

Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) has replaced 1/3 of the Diesel used across the Environmental Services Fleet in 2024/25, with no mechanical problems. Every 1,000ltrs will reduce our carbon output by approx. 2.52 tonnes in comparison with Diesel. Proposals to increase the investment in this will be included in the budget setting process for 2025/26.

Performance measure

- Households supported by the Council’s energy advice service



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

Update: Act On Energy’s activity for Q2 highlights the continued impact of the service on residents in Bromsgrove. In July, August and September, AOE received a significant number of calls for help, totaling 291, slightly higher than the same period in the previous year. These calls resulted in numerous residents accessing support and funding help with their energy bills, including those funded by the Household Support Fund, ECO4, and Shared Prosperity Funding. Notably, the Household Support Fund remains the primary source of project funding in Bromsgrove.

Domestic Waste Collection

Performance Measure

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

Update: 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 2022/23 Bromsgrove was ranked 176th, 1 place lower than in 2021/22 (2023/24 results not published yet).

Our performance this year to date is 0.08% less than 2023/24, 0.31 less than 2022/23. This may be a byproduct of less working from home, as it mirrors a downwards trend in residual waste tonnages per household over the last three years.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2019/20	48.67	45.17	46.72	48.41	54.12	50.03	46.64	41.77	32.63	39.05	34.74	45.16
2020/21	29.19	55.98	55.73	59.33	51.32	48.46	44.04	48.03	48.60	42.55	42.03	43.26
2021/22	44.40	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	33.70	37.34	43.16
2023/24	50.74	57.40	54.66	48.13	47.01	48.01	51.06	46.29	37.54	28.15	33.31	43.86
2024/25	53.12	60.42	54.39	45.31	44.82	47.37						

Performance Measure

- Residual Waste per household (kg)

Update: This measures non-recyclable waste thrown away per household and shows a marginal increase in waste per household over the first 6 months of this year, although continues a downward trend in context over the last 5 years.

Residual Waste per Household (Kg)

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

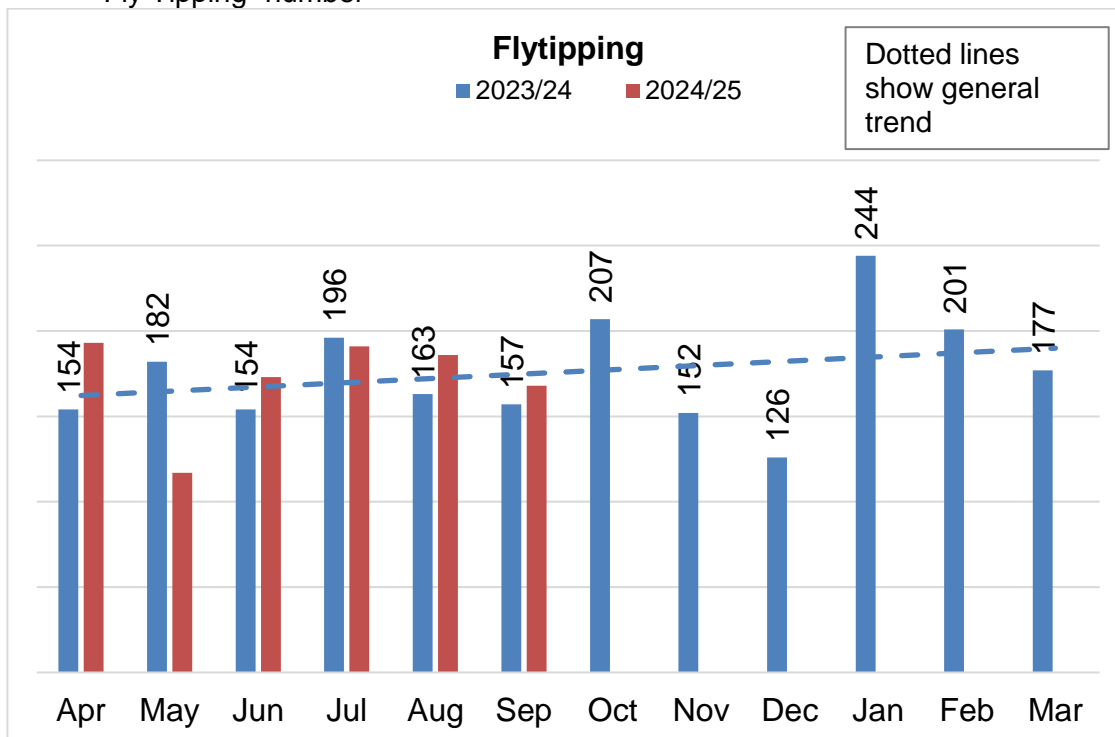
Cabinet

10th December 2024

	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March
2019/20	40.70	47.92	48.80	38.18	38.07	39.47	42.75	48.99	39.38	46.96	38.77	38.89
2020/21	51.01	46.30	40.02	39.05	36.92	46.96	46.74	41.06	40.23	40.36	37.78	50.06
2021/22	50.01	38.81	39.35	38.16	40.89	45.06	41.50	39.36	35.86	39.86	35.58	49.26
2022/23	42.43	37.22	37.28	31.36	41.03	42.83	34.20	39.64	32.76	41.78	32.59	42.08
2023/24	32.75	35.28	34.05	34.15	45.88	36.42	34.48	36.52	32.32	45.00	38.38	37.01
2024/25	35.39	35.01	33.92	43.92	41.87	33.41						

Performance Measure

- Fly Tipping- number



Update: Worcester Regulatory Services (WRS) as of the 1st June 2024 took over the work for Bromsgrove; they are now fully staffed and are conducting enforcement activities across the District. A monthly update on fly tipping is sent to the Leader and Portfolio Holder.

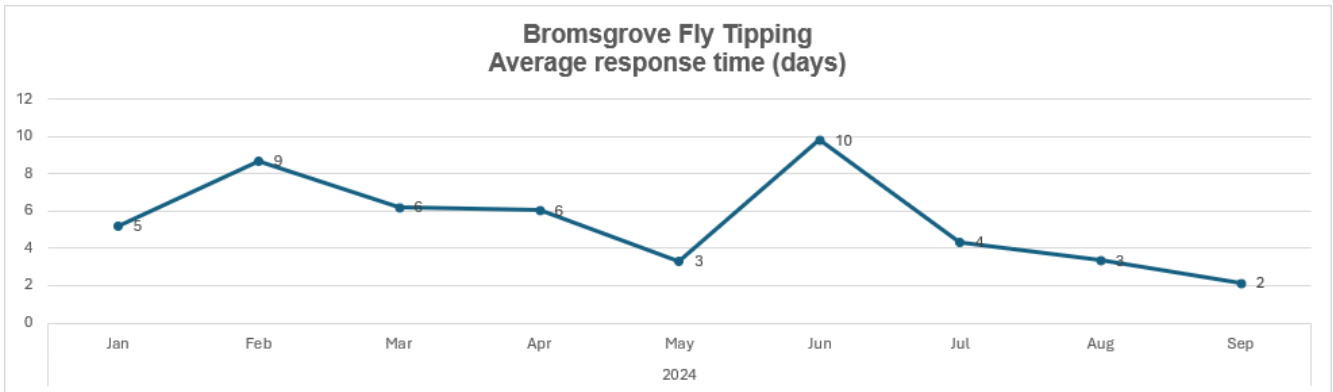
Performance Measure

- Fly Tipping- time taken

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

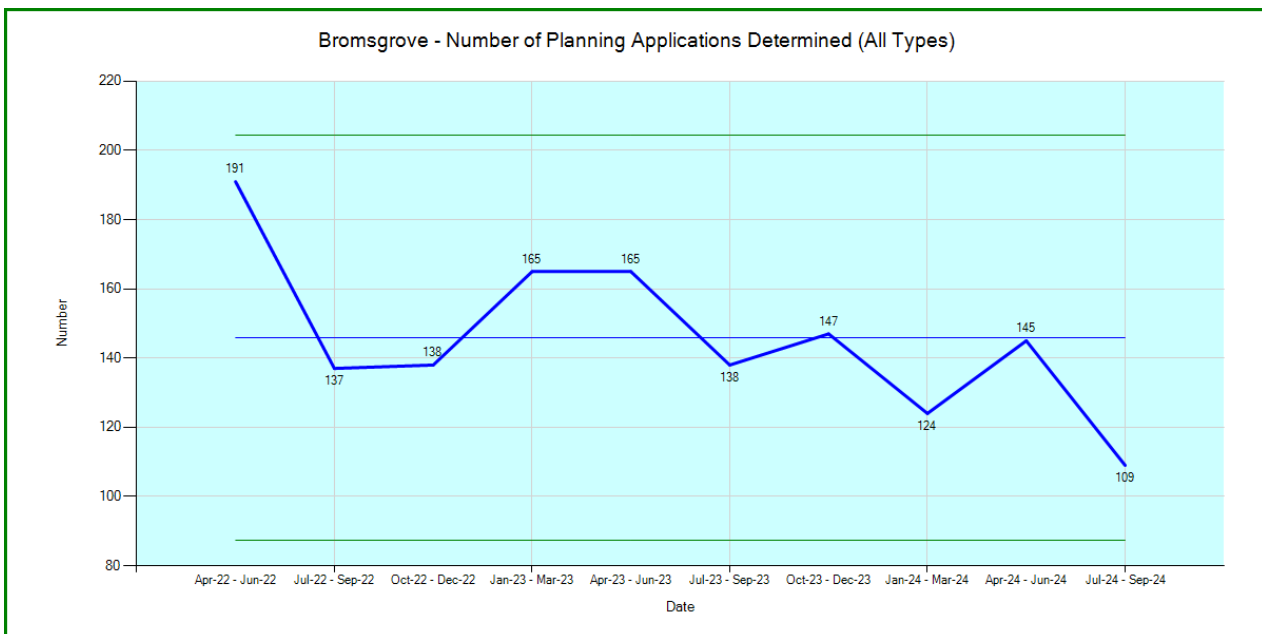


Update: There has been an improvement in response times from the last quarter and during Q2; this reduction has occurred as the new working arrangements with WRS have been embedded.

2.4. Infrastructure

Performance measure

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



Update: Rates have been reducing, but last quarter saw a more significant drop to 109. This period the previous year also saw a drop, but not to this extent. There is no clearly identifiable reason for this reduction.

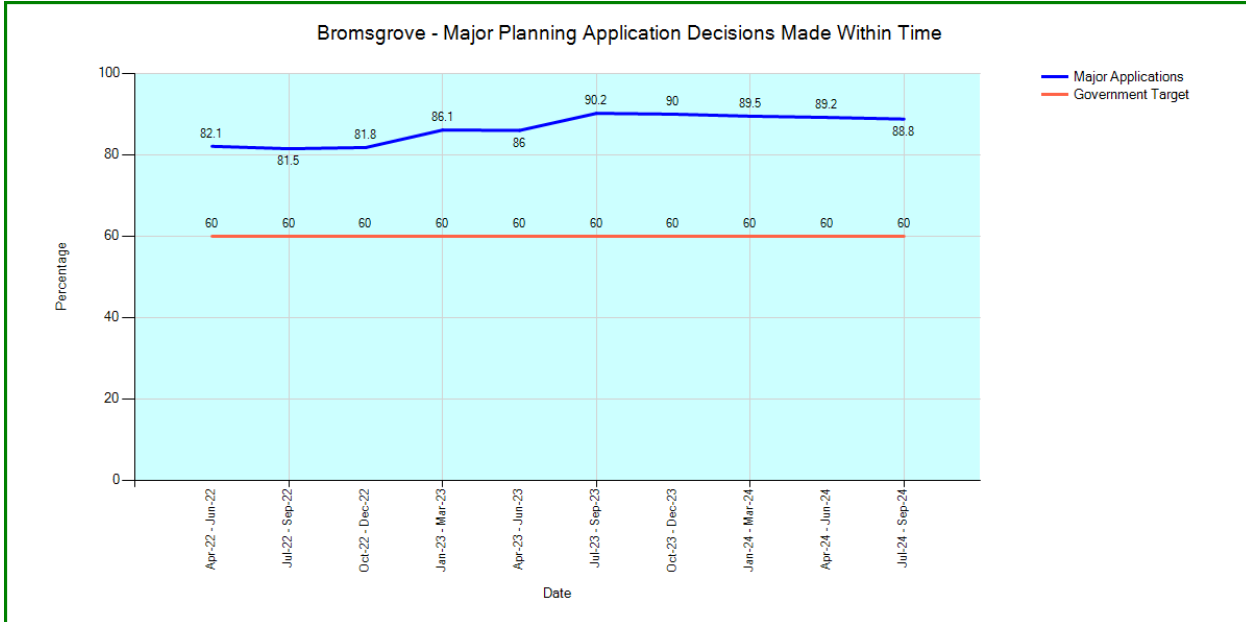
BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

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%)



Update: The speed of determination of major applications remains well in excess of government targets and is stable.

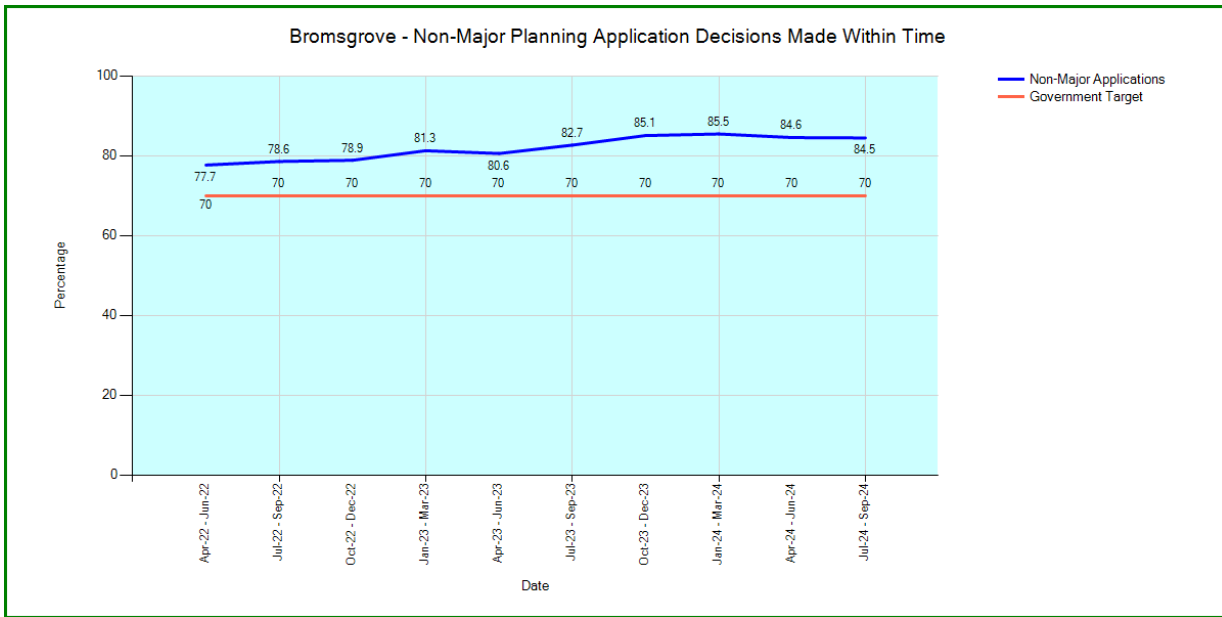
Performance measure

- 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%)

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024



Update: The speed of determination for non-major applications remains well in excess of targets and is stable.

Performance measure

- Quality of Major Planning Decisions

The threshold for designation for the relevant assessment period of 24 months is 10% or more of an authority’s decisions on applications for major development made during the assessment period, including those arising from a 'deemed refusal', being overturned at appeal.

Period of assessment	Result	Gov.uk last updated
April 2020 - March 2022	18.5%	June 2023
July 2020 - June 2022	20%	October 2023
Oct 2020 – Sept 2022	10.7%	Also October 2023
Jan 2021 – Dec 2022	9.1%	March 2024
April 2021 – March 2023	5.7%	Also March 2024
July 2021- June 2023	4.8%	June 2024
Oct 2021 - Sept 2023	Awaiting information	Awaiting information

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

Performance measure

- Quality of Non-Major Planning Decisions

The threshold for designation for the relevant assessment period of 24 months is 10% or more of an authority's decisions on applications for non - major development made during the assessment period, including those arising from a 'deemed refusal', being overturned at appeal.

Period of assessment	Result	Gov.uk last updated
April 2020 - March 2022	1.4%	June 2023
July 2020 - June 2022	1.4%	October 2023
Oct 2020 – Sept 2022	1.5%	Also October 2023
Jan 2021 – Dec 2022	1.8%	March 2024
April 2021 – March 2023	1.8%	Also March 2024
July 2021- June 2023	2.1%	June 2024
Oct 2021 - Sept 2023	Awaiting information	Awaiting information

Performance measure

- Deliver improved outcomes from the actions in the Leisure Strategy

Update:

Recommendation	Update
Develop an environmental management strategy for parks and environmental services.	Project lead identified to progress strategy. Working towards 2025/26 completion.
Develop a volunteer plan and a clear approach to working with Friends groups tied to its aspirations for Green Flag Award across its priority parks.	Green flag award successful for Sanders Park and Lickey End Park for 2024, working on recommendations for 2025 submission and scheduled awards over the next 4 years.
Develop a rolling programme of applications to the Green Flag Award.	Working on annual applications for awards for Sanders Park, Lickey End Park, King Georges Recreation Ground and St Chads Park.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

Engage more regularly with potential partners at a county wide level.	Officers working with partners to maximise potential of offers within parks and open spaces.
Develop a better understanding of the biodiversity value of the district's green assets.	Biodiversity plan established, focus and priorities, developing a Biodiversity Network with Planning, County Council and 3 rd Sector. Commencement 2025/26.
Develop a clear marketing plan for green spaces that includes new web pages, social media, and targeted work with key audiences.	Work started on website development and modernisation. Social media use improved to promote, biodiversity, events, and mental health in respect of Parks and Green Spaces.
Carry out a feasibility study to establish a roadmap for the self-management of allotment sites across the district.	Action plan implemented: new tenancy agreements with legal, service level agreements for new formed associations, website information, management of day-to-day issues, bills

Improved Integrated Transport (Bromsgrove)

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), the inception meeting has now taken place and work is ongoing.

Actions: Will be liaising with WCC appointed consultants. Work is progressing with draft reporting to be discussed as soon as possible.

3. Wider performance

3.1 Community Safety

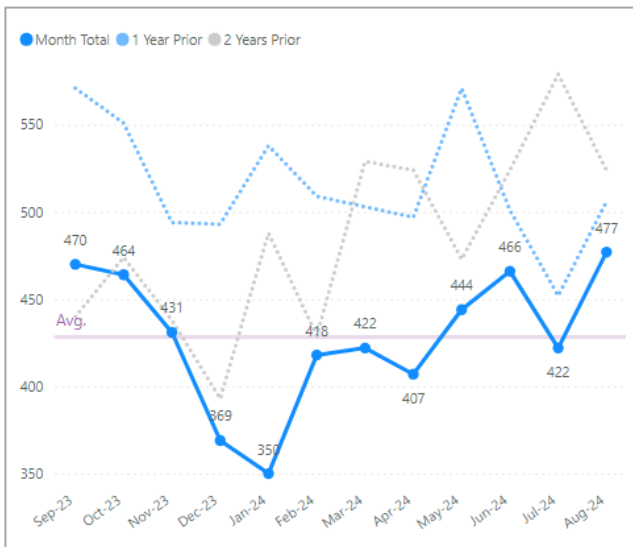
Performance measure

- Levels of crime. (Data extracted from 'data.police.uk' below – there is a lag in data reporting)

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024



Crime Type	Total	% of Total	v 1 Mth Prior	v 1 Yr Prior	12 Mth. Avg.
Violence and sexual off...	2,073	40.3%	5 ↑	-363 ↓	172.8
Shoplifting	532	10.4%	26 ↑	-104 ↓	44.3
Vehicle crime	496	9.6%	1 ↑	-22 ↓	41.3
Criminal damage and a...	467	9.1%	5 ↑	-113 ↓	38.9
Other theft	444	8.6%	16 ↑	-183 ↓	37.0
Public order	391	7.6%	-1 ↓	-107 ↓	32.6
Burglary	359	7.0%	2 ↑	-60 ↓	29.9
Other crime	138	2.7%	-9 ↓	-3 ↓	11.5
Drugs	118	2.3%	5 ↑	-18 ↓	9.8
Possession of weapons	44	0.9%	-4 ↓	-30 ↓	3.7
Robbery	43	0.8%	7 ↑	-22 ↓	3.6
Bicycle theft	21	0.4%	3 ↑	-12 ↓	1.8
Theft from the person	14	0.3%	-1 ↓	-9 ↓	1.2
Total	5,140	100.0%	55	-1,046	428.3

Update:

Across North Worcestershire there was an +8% (n=352) increase in reported crime during Q1 2024/25 compared to the previous quarter of the year. However, there was a 13% decrease (n=714) when compared to the same quarter of the previous year. Overall, each of the districts in NW showed a decrease during Q1 2024/2025 when compared to the same quarter of the previous year. The largest decrease of recorded offences when compared to Q1 of previous year 23/24 was in Bromsgrove District (-20%, n=293). When compared to the previous quarter (Q4 23/24), the largest increase was in Wyre Forest (+12%, n=201). Bromsgrove showed a +5% increase (n=60) on the previous quarter and Redditch showed a +7% increase (n=91). The offence category showing the largest change when compared to the same quarter in the previous year was Burglary of a Business and Community property (+45%, n=41), this was the highest recorded percentage increase and had also increased by +58% (n=6) compared to the previous quarter (Q4 23/24).

Locally, Sanders Park Ward recorded the largest volume of offences in the most recent quarter Q4 2023/24 (n=152) and is consistently the ward that records the largest volume of offences. There has been no change in the number of recorded offences compared to the same quarter in the previous year. Charford Ward recorded the biggest decrease in offences compared to the previous year (-51%, n=64). Two wards recorded a joint second largest percentage decrease in offences compared to the same quarter last year Lowes Hill Ward (-57%, n=37), Catshill North Ward (-57%, n=36). Rubery South Ward recorded the largest percentage increase compared to the previous year (+40%, n=23).

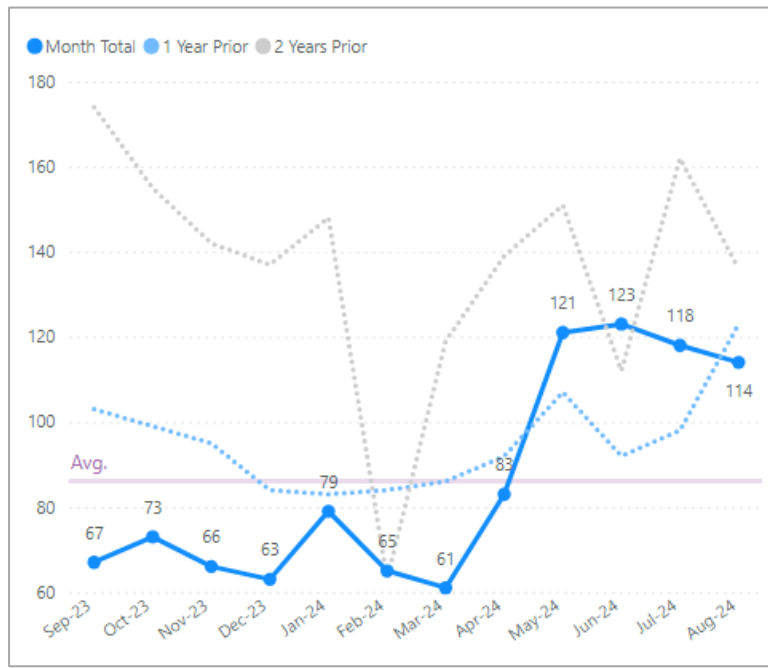
Performance measure

- **ASB** (Data extracted from 'data.police.uk' below – there is a lag in data reporting)

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

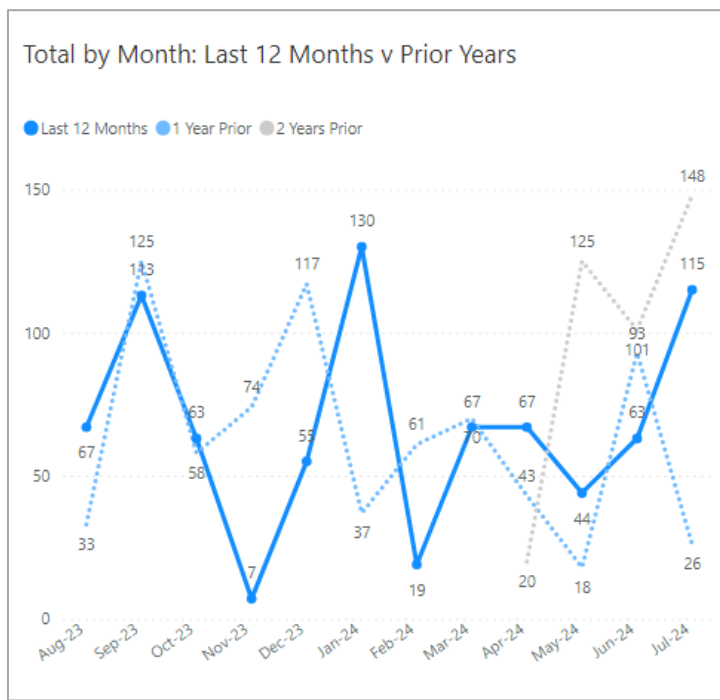
10th December 2024



Update: Unfortunately, due to changes in Partnership Analysis support ASB data analysis continues to be unavailable for reporting.

Performance measure

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



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

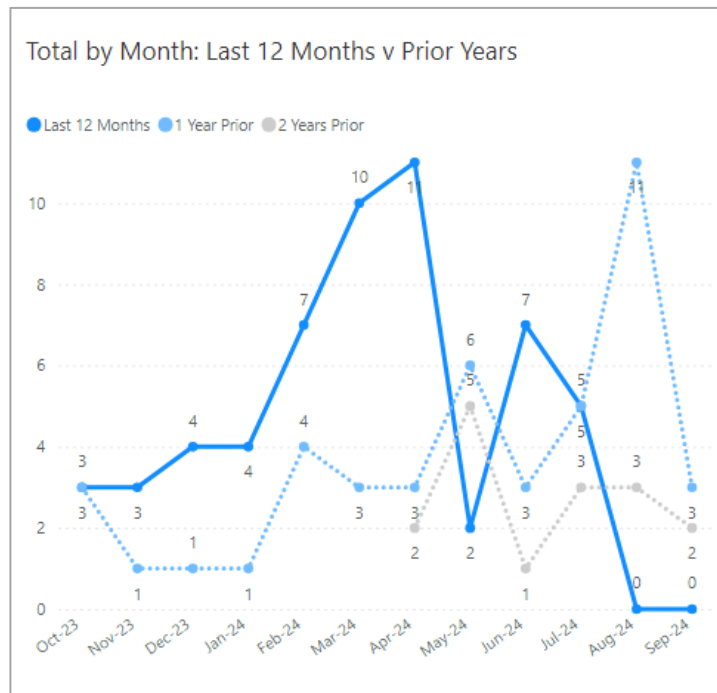
Cabinet

10th December 2024

Update: Routine outreach patrols were carried out in Bromsgrove Town Centre and Sanders Park. Youth workers spoke to YP in the Bus Station and also engaged with groups who were from out of area. Some YP spoke about rumours of an altercation planned in the Bus Station later in the evening, so youth workers provided safety advice and encouraged the young people to leave the area and access existing youth provision. Youth workers also engaged with group of young people on scooters who were causing a disturbance in the Town Centre. The YP were engaged and a diverted to Sanders Park. Youth Workers also engaged with YP playing in the Brook. They were provided with Water Safety advice and diverted to existing youth provision.

Performance measure

- Number of crime risk surveys carried out



Update: In July, detailed crime prevention recommendations provided for a planning application for a 437-dwelling development in Perryfields and also for an application for a new apartment block of 28 dwellings in Rubery North. A crime risk site visit was conducted following issues of unauthorised access to an allotment in Sanders Park Ward. A home security assessment was carried out for an elderly resident receiving multiple visits from a potential rogue trader. This was also in Sanders Park War; door-step crime prevention advice was provided, and the resident also signed up to the Nominated Neighbour Scheme.

For August and September, information is not available due to staff absence.

3.2 SLM Leisure (Everyone Active)

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

Update: For SLM Leisure there is a lag in the data; Q1 data and comments can be found below; Q2 information will be available for the Q3 report.

The number of visits for the 1st quarter of 2024/25 were down -5% compared to the same quarter of 2023/24. With Easter being earlier this year, this will have impacted the amount of casual footfall throughout April 2024, whilst the decrease in swim lesson heads on scheme will also impact total attendance. Our gym membership base has remained stable with only a slight change, down -124 on Q1 2023/24. We have maintained a strong yield on our fitness memberships, which shows that the members we have are happy with the facilities available. Swimming lessons remain an area of concern with numbers having decreased, and we currently sit -228 children down compared to last year, which will also account for the drop in footfall across the quarter. The expected recovery on swimming has not been as expected, however, Phoebe has made a positive start to influencing the growth of the scheme and we expect to begin growing throughout the end of Q2 and into the beginning of Q3 for 2024/25. Throughout the first quarter we have held strategic meetings with the wider EA team to support the growth of swimming lessons at Bromsgrove Sport and Leisure Centre. Through these meetings we have increased awareness of lessons within Bromsgrove by using site specific artwork, by sending a digital swim lesson update to our scheme members and a royal mail leaflet drop across 15,000 addresses in the Bromsgrove area. We have also invested heavily in new equipment for our scheme to help our wonderful teachers provide the best lessons possible.

Category	Quarter Total	Same Quarter Previous Year	Difference
Total no. of visits including EA cards and non-card holders	102572	107496	-4,924
EA Cards added in this period	1489	1398	91
Total EA Cards to date	74691	68441	6,250
No. of Gym members	2747	2871	-124
Swimming Lessons – children enrolled on scheme	1269	1497	-228
Swim Lesson Occupancy	78%	88%	-10%
RIDDOR Reportable Events	0	0	0

3.3. Council Tax & NDR

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

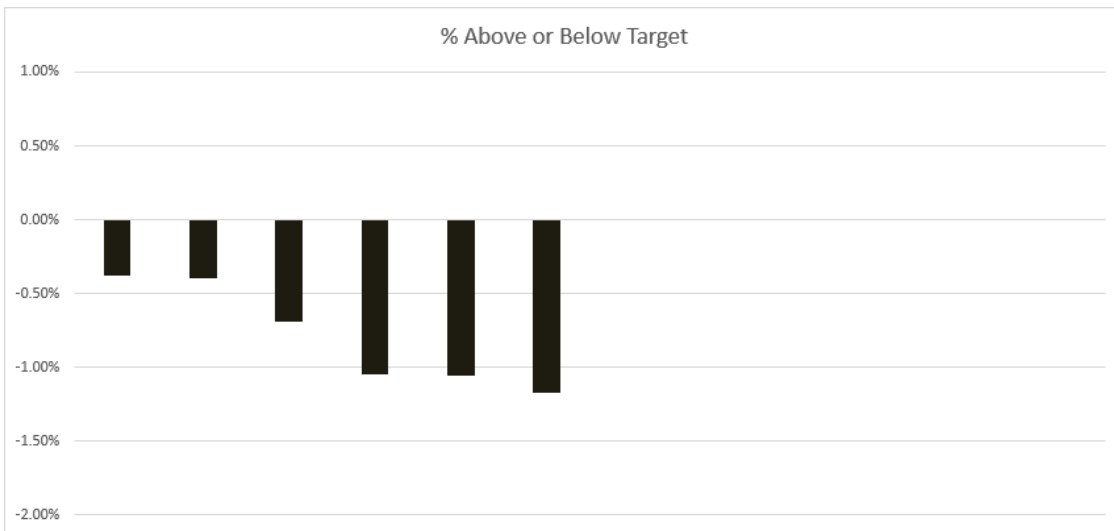
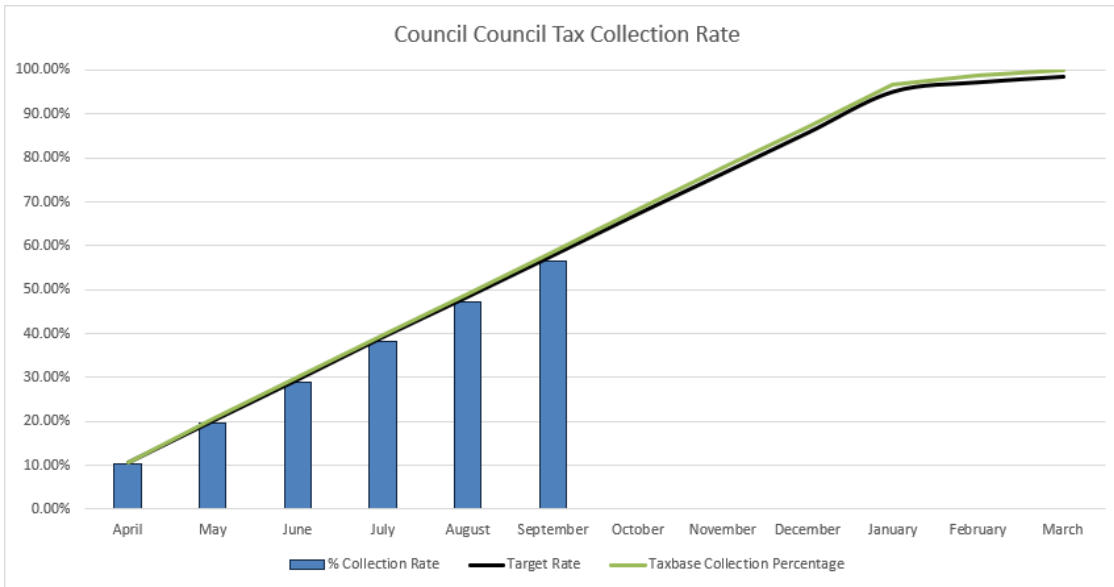
Cabinet

10th December 2024

Performance measure

- Council Tax Collection Rate

The collection rate percentage has been very close to the target rate this quarter.



Performance measure

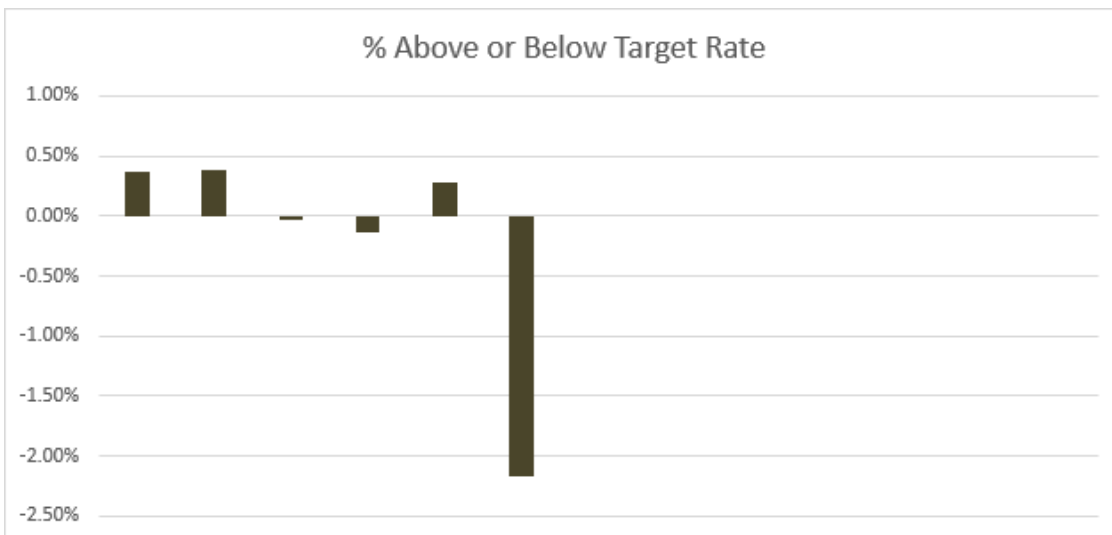
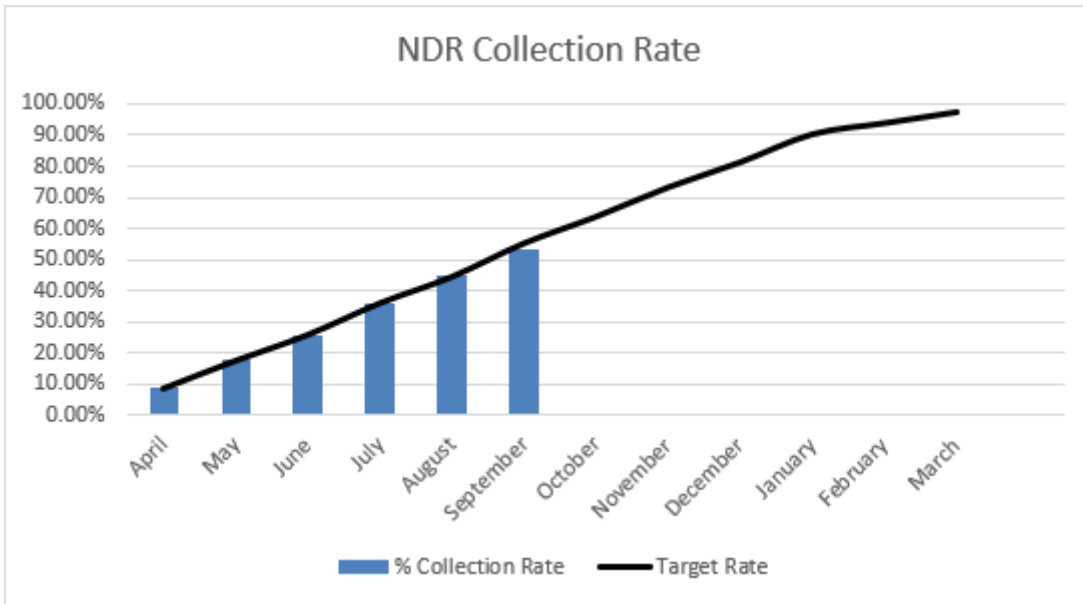
- NDR Collection Rate

The collection rate percentage dropped slightly below fin September.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024



3.4. Financial Inclusion

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:

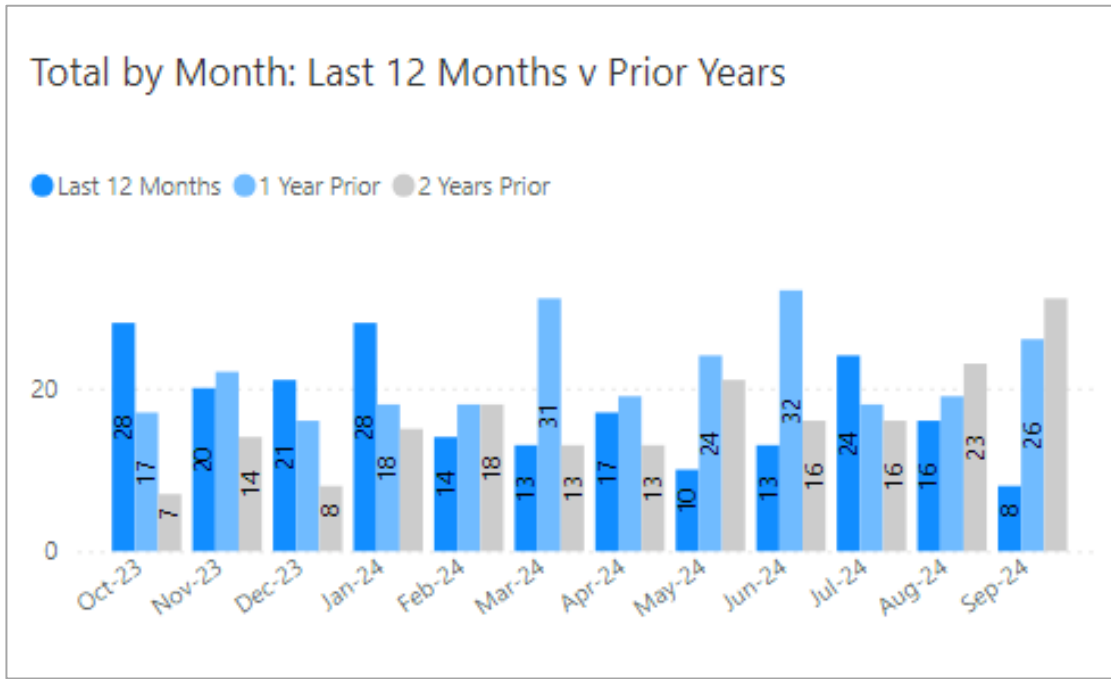
- 'Under occupancy charge' (42)
- 'Rent advance/deposit' (34)
- 'Debt' (25)

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

- 'Budgeting issues' (19)
- 'Other' (16)



For Q2, 2024/25, the top 4 referral reasons were:

- 'Under occupancy charge' (9)
- 'Rent advance/deposit' (7)
- 'Budgeting issues' (7)
- 'Other' (7)

The Financial Inclusion Team continue to assist residents in the current cost of living crisis. We are always looking for the best way to support residents, be this through internal work or signposting to partners to help maximise income and budgets. We are also working alongside Citizens Advice to distribute the Household Support Fund payments.

4. Organisational priorities

4.1. 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.

4.2. Wider organisational measures

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

Performance measure

- Number of corporate measures accessible through the dashboard.

Update: The organisation continues to move from the legacy dashboard to a new Power BI dashboard. Power BI is an interactive data visualisation software product with a primary focus on business intelligence. We have undertaken a review of all the data currently held on the two dashboards and are working on a programme for moving all relevant measures over to PBI, in line with the priorities and measures identified in the new Council Plan. There are currently 43 measures and associated measures available on PBI (including complaints and accidents) but planning measures are being built during October and the number will increase during Q3 as wider reviews of data and performance continue.

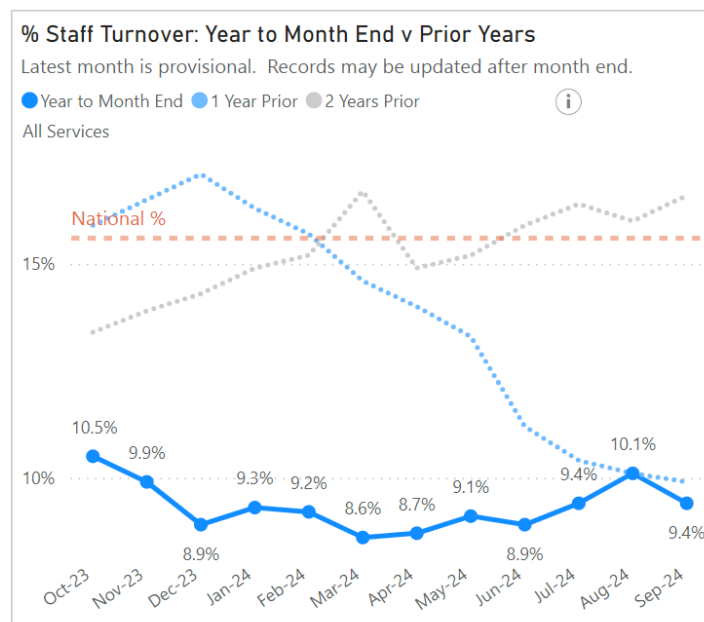
Performance measure

- % of staff able to work in an agile way (annual measure – first reported Q3, 2023/24)

Update: The current overall percentage of staff able to work in an agile way is 56%. This measure is aligned with the ongoing agile project.

Performance measure

- Staff turnover rates in relation to national rates



Update: Since July 2023, it can be seen there has been a downward trend, showing an improvement in turnover rates, with the authority remaining under the national average. The exit interview process continues which we are continuing to monitor and promote.

Performance measure

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

The percentage of respondents who say they are satisfied with service delivery is:

Year	Satisfied
2021	47.4%
2022	38.6%
2023	35.5%

Update: Data is extracted from the annual community survey. National satisfaction with LA's, according to the Local Government Chronicle is currently at 40%. The 2023 survey was carried out in Oct/Nov 23; the satisfaction rate has dropped slightly. The reason for this is unclear but corporately there is a new quarterly approach to corporate surveys to try to increase the response rate and get a broader understanding of the customer experience.

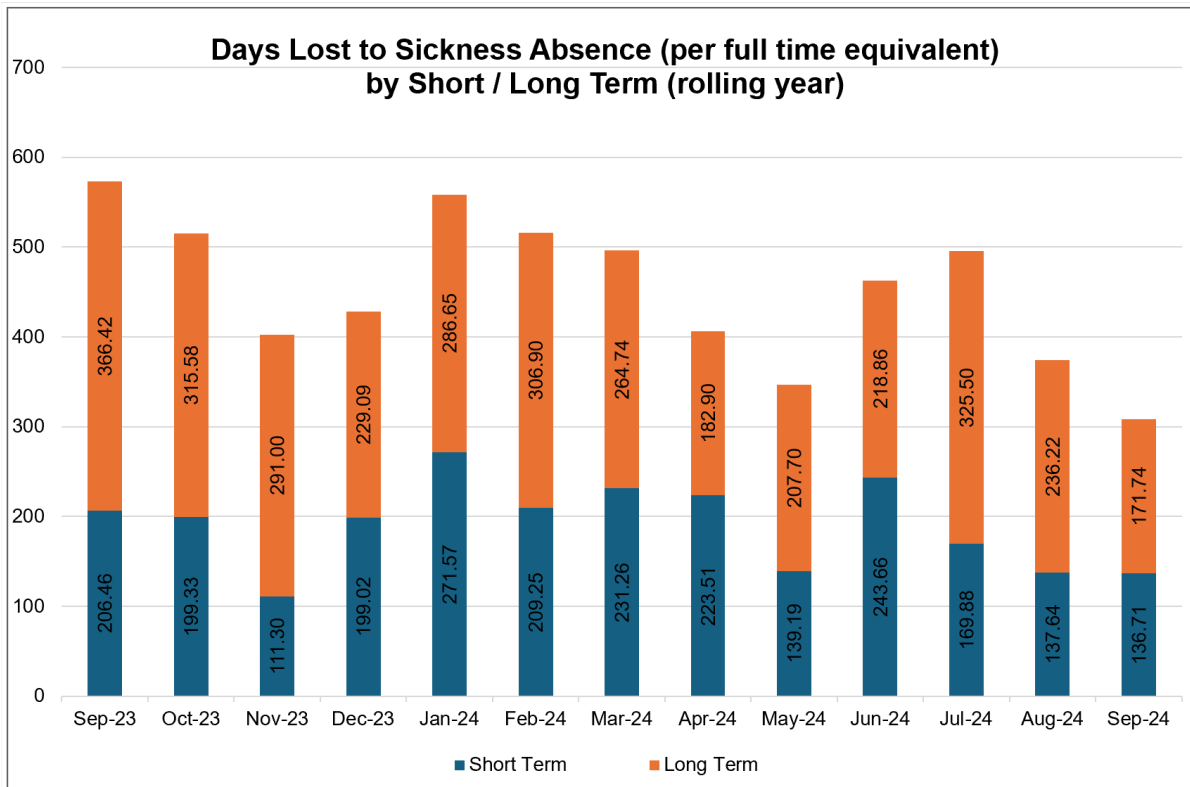
Performance measure

- Sickness absence

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024



Update: From 1st September a new service area for Regeneration & Property Services was created. Regeneration staff started 1 September 2024. This area will include from 1st October 2024 Property Services and Business Development staff which have moved from Legal & Democratic Services (formerly Legal, Democratic & Property Services).

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)
Jul 2024	2417	0.34	04:43	6.05	07:18
Aug 2024	2497	0.39	04:48	6.43	07:51
Sep 2024	2524	0.26	03:35	6.66	08:09

Update

The service met expectations with regards to answering calls during the quarter with an average queue fewer than 1 person and an average call answering time between 4-6 minutes. Jul-Sep is a busy time

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

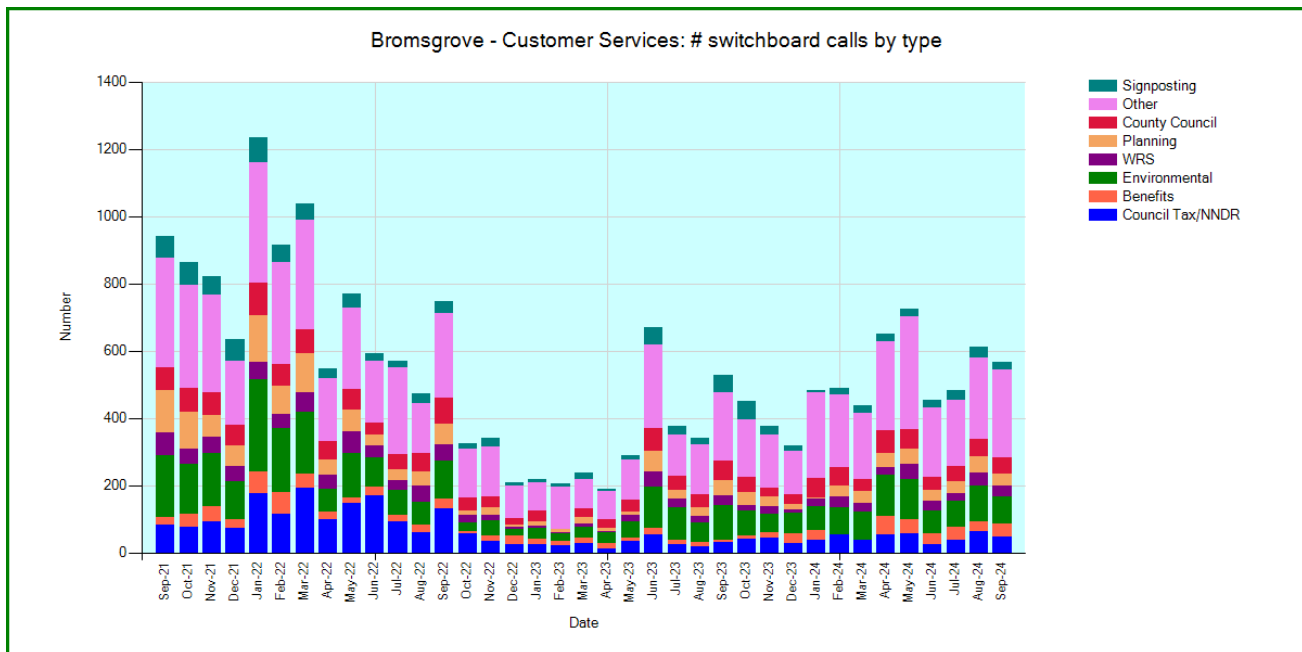
for calls as residents receive reminders and are making special payment arrangements, hence the increase in time taken per call.

Performance measure

- Customer Service calls (Switchboard)

Date	Calls Answered	Avg in Queue	Avg Wait (mm:ss)	Avg Logged in	Avg call length (mm:ss)
Jul 2024	1143	0.02	00:34	1.97	00:57
Aug 2024	1031	0.02	00:42	1.82	01:00
Sep 2024	1057	0.02	00:39	1.94	01:07

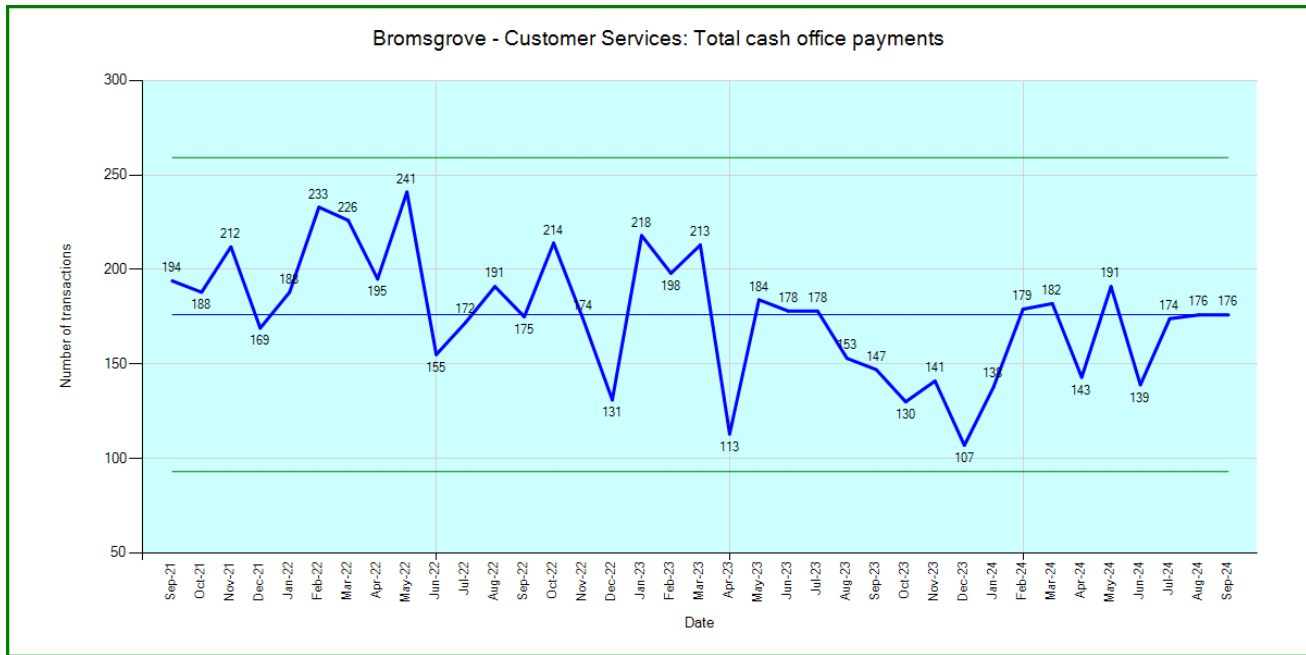
Switchboard - The service met expectations with regards to answering calls during the quarter. 2 FTE officers that provide switchboard service across both Bromsgrove and Redditch Switchboard.



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024



Update: Cash and card transactions at Bromsgrove Cashiers remain low with an average of 8 transactions per working day. 38% cash, 62% pay by card. Data excludes postal cheque payments. All of these payments could be made at paypoint, payzones, post offices, online or via the automated telephone payment line.

Corporate Project Oversight & Monitoring

The table below provides a summary of the fifteen corporate projects, as of 23rd October 2024. The majority of projects are shown as amber relating to overall status.

Projects	Overall Status	
	RAG	
	No	%
Red	3	20 %
Amber	8	53 %
Green	4	27 %

The projects identified as red all relate to Redditch:

Cabinet

10th December 2024

- New cemetery, Redditch
- Digital Manufacturing and Innovation Centre (Redditch) as projected to exceed original £10m budget
- Redditch Train Station Site as on hold due to sewer issue.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th December 2024

Appendix G - New Corporate Plan Measures

Measure	Owner	Comments
Monitor the number of jobs created by supported businesses		Quarterly
Business births, deaths & survival rates		Annual
Earnings (by residence & place of work)		Annual
Track the delivery of the Centres Strategy action plan		Quarterly
Community and business engagement		Annual survey
Tracking affordability index - house prices, rental costs		Quarterly
Monitor Housing supply		Annual
Number of private, affordable, and social houses delivered each year		Annual
Number in temporary accommodation		Quarterly
Number of homeless preventions		Quarterly
Number of empty homes		Quarterly
Grant funding for energy improvements of Private Housing		Quarterly
Number of enforcement cases, planning and environment (number opened, number closed, number open for investigation)		Quarterly
Time taken to remove Fly-tipping		Quarterly
Track delivery of the actions in the Environment Act 2021 project		Quarterly
Reduction in the amount of waste generated by households		Quarterly
Percentage of household waste recycled or composted		Quarterly
Track the delivery of the Carbon Reduction Strategy action plan		Annual
Energy efficiency improvements in municipal buildings, facilities, and public infrastructure		Biannual
Increase Community Engagement and Awareness around the environment		Quarterly & Quarters 2 & 4 Corporate Surveys
Report on the stages of the new Local Plan development & adoption		Biannual
Monitor the rate of planning approvals and appeals in alignment with the agreed policies and proposals (domestic & business)		Quarterly Inc By Type
Track investment in infrastructure projects identified in the local plan (including section 106 monies spent)		Annual
Track the delivery of the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy action plan		Quarterly
To Achieve the Green Flag Award for the following parks: Sanders Park, Lickey End LNR, St Chads Park, Rubery and King George Vth Park over the next 10 years		Annual
Engagement with WCC on the implementation of the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and the development of the Local Transport Plan 5		Biannual

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

7 January 2025

Report title: Refuse Fleet Replacement & Wheeled Bin Pressures

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Whittaker
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Simon Parry
Report Author: Matthew Austin	Job Title: Environmental Services Manager Contact email: matthew.austin@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 548206
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	Environment - supporting recycling to reducing waste production
Key Decision: YES	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet **RESOLVE** that:

1. **The Council agrees to replace all “Diamond” lift bins in use across the Residual, Recycling, and Garden Waste services in Bromsgrove District during the 2025/26 financial year with industry standard “Comb” lift bins.**
2. **To endorse the proposal to replace all the Council’s existing “Diamond” wheeled bins with industry standard “Comb” 240ltr wheeled bins.**

The Cabinet **RECOMMEND** that

3. **The Council allocates £2.2 million Capital funding in the Medium-Term Financial Plan for the 2025/26 financial year for the purchase and distribution of these bins.**

2. Context:

- 2.1. Bromsgrove District Council previously received significant government funding from DEFRA to support waste collection improvements with the introduction of a wheeled bin service in 2004.
- 2.2. As part of this funding, a decision was made to invest in highly specialised vehicles that used a mechanical arm to pick up wheeled bins and empty them with far less human involvement.

Cabinet

7 January 2025

- 2.3. To support this system, the wheeled bins that were purchased for the new service were required to be compatible with the “Diamond” lift system, which is common on the continent, but was only invested in by three LA’s in the UK, with every other LA investing in the standard “comb” lift mechanism, which is cheaper to manufacture than the diamond bins.
- 2.4. The benefits of the Diamond system are that it supports bins to self-centre on the lifting mechanism as part of being clamped for lifting, reducing the need for manual intervention.
- 2.5. Unfortunately, the new technology failed to provide the efficiency gains expected, and as a result of prolonged mechanical issues, the decision was taken to revert to a more conventional lifting mechanism and emptying process on our vehicles, although the bins remained.
- 2.6. We have operated this system for 20 years now, and in that time, the other Local Authorities who operated Diamond bins have invested to migrate across to Comb lift bins, due to the increased cost of the wheeled bins, lengthy delays in the provision of diamond bins by manufacturers, and the risk to service provision of operating a non-standard collection fleet.
- 2.7. The last authority to move to Comb Bins was Aberdeenshire Council, with the decision made in 2021/22, leaving Bromsgrove District as the only Local Authority in the UK utilising diamond Bins.

3. Background:

- 3.1. The hire sector does not offer “diamond lift” equipment, due to its rarity in the waste sector, which means that the only vehicles available to support domestic waste collection in Bromsgrove when there is a vehicle failure are the six refuse vehicles operating from the Redditch Depot, as they have been fitted with a reversible lifting system that allows them to empty Bromsgrove Bins as well as the standard Comb Bins, as part of the shared services arrangement.
- 3.2. In the event of a significant event affecting the Bromsgrove Depot, such as a fire or other large-scale accident affecting our fleet, there is currently no way to source sufficient vehicles with the necessary lifting mechanisms to continue the provision of waste collection services for Bromsgrove residents.
- 3.3. As has previously been identified in reports to Council, the Waste Collection Service has had significant challenges in maintaining services over the last two years as a result of an aging fleet and a failed refurbishment programme, that was intended to extend the life of existing vehicles.
- 3.4. To address this, Capital Budgets have been reprofiled to support the replacement of the fleet to stabilise services, but since then we have had

Cabinet

7 January 2025

difficulty procuring the necessary lifting mechanism on new vehicles, as a result of increased safety requirements by the vehicle manufacturer in response to a fatality involving one of its vehicles whilst in service with Coventry City Council in 2022.

- 3.5. In response to the “Future Prevention of Deaths” report by the coroner who reviewed this accidental death, the vehicle manufacturer has made changes to how it constructs and certifies its equipment and variations to it by third parties, which means they are unable to provide the combination we would need to continue with our current collection arrangements.
- 3.6. Having also spoken with the Chief Executive responsible for manufacture of our current bin lifts, there is no route to procure vehicles that can meet our needs at the current time, although they are continuing to work with us to maintain our existing mechanisms, which are experiencing a high failure rate due to their age, and wear commensurate with the 17.5 million bins they have emptied to date.
- 3.7. This is not a long-term resolution, and is costing us considerably more on maintenance than is currently budgeted, as well as vehicle hire costs.
- 3.8. To maintain waste collection services across Bromsgrove District, this will require the replacement of approximately 87,000 wheeled bins, which will allow the fleet to transition to the industry standard lifting mechanism, safeguarding future service resilience.
- 3.9. Whilst costly, this will re-set the condition of our wheeled bins, many of which are over 15 years old now, which is expected to reduce our Capital outlay on replacement bins lost either due to damage to the bin, or issues with our current worn out vehicles and lifter mechanisms.
- 3.10. In addition, this will allow for consideration of how we provide our service to residents, and the potential to mirror the arrangements already in place across the South of Worcestershire.
- 3.11. As part of the Environment Act 2021, the Council has a legal duty to provide a weekly food waste collection service from 2026, and is currently looking at the options for implementing such a service.
- 3.12. As part of this work, it has been identified that food waste makes up to 35% of the residual waste collected in Bromsgrove, with a further 11% made up of items that could be recycled in our existing recycling services.
- 3.13. Although we provide a good quality service to residents, our current recycling rates have plateaued in recent years, and experience in other Local Authorities has shown that pressuring the residual waste stream by reducing the frequency, or reducing capacity, is the means to improve recycling performance, which is what South Worcestershire Local Authorities have done by providing a 180ltr grey bin for their residual

Cabinet

7 January 2025

waste, which encourages residents to ensure they are recycling everything they can.

- 3.14. On 29 November the Government set out a new policy statement regarding “Simpler Recycling¹”, which set out a “maximum default requirement” for councils to collect card and paper separately from April 2026, which would require an additional recycling bin to be provided to our residents.
- 3.15. No reference is made to new burdens funding for this activity, and it is recognised alongside this requirement, that councils and other waste collectors will “still have the flexibility to make the best choices to suit local need”.
- 3.16. It is believed that as with previous legislation regarding waste collection, there is scope to maintain our existing comingled approach for now, using a TEEP (Technical, Economic and Environmentally Practicable) assessment², although this will require us to set out how we will attain the required quality of recycling, and so will need to be considered alongside the ERP funding to ensure we can demonstrate the necessary outcomes and benefits to justify this.
- 3.17. Replacing our wheeled bins gives us an opportunity to reduce the size of our grey wheeled bins in order to achieve similar gains to South Worcestershire in the short term, which will also help increase engagement with the new food waste service when it starts in 2026.
- 3.18. Whilst also having a financial benefit in reducing the cost of replacing our existing residual bins, this would potentially limit future variation of the collection frequency on residual waste, such as a three weekly collection interval, which would have the potential to significantly reduce the operating costs of our waste collection arrangements whilst also boosting the use of our recycling collections, which would include the odour elements linked to food waste which are typically the main concern regarding reduced frequencies of residual waste collection.
- 3.19. Bromsgrove has signed up to the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy with all of the other Worcestershire Authorities, committing to work towards the reduction of waste, and a reduction in the size of our residual waste bins, or the reduction of our residual waste collection frequency, would have a significant impact to reduce the volume of recyclable waste disposed of through incineration for energy creation rather than reuse.

¹ This is the umbrella term for the rationalisation of waste collection arrangements nationally to ensure that all residents can dispose of the same core recyclable items wherever in the country they live.

² Officers already reviewing this with the other Worcestershire Authorities as a joint initiative.

Cabinet

7 January 2025

4. Proposals:

4.1. Given that our current “Diamond” bins are limiting our ability to meet our statutory duties, as well as increasing our operating costs, it is proposed that Bromsgrove District Council takes the following steps:

4.1.1. Replace all of our existing “Diamond” wheeled bins with industry standard “Comb” 240ltr wheeled bins (no change in size for any waste streams)

Or

4.1.2. Replace all of our existing green and brown “Diamond” wheeled bins with industry standard “Comb” 240ltr wheeled bins, and replace the existing 240ltr wheeled bins for residual waste, with 180ltr “comb” wheeled bins³.

4.2. In regards to the option to reduce the size of our residual waste bin, although this will support immediate benefits regarding our recycling performance, it may add additional challenges should we look to make further changes to expand our service and/or reduce the frequency of residual waste collection to further pressurise the waste stream and reduce operating costs linked to the non-recyclable waste.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Like for like replacement of all our existing Diamond Wheeled bins would require Capital investment of approximately **£2,200,000**⁴ including delivery and expected credits against the recycled “Diamond” bins.

5.2. A decision to reduce the size of the 240ltr residual waste bins to 180ltrs will reduce that cost by **£60,000**, and would also support increased recycling quantities and take up of the food waste service expected to start in 2026 based on our current fortnightly collection service.

5.3. The cost breakdown of these two options are shown below, and would place an average yearly pressure of **£365,000** per year on Capital repayment budgets from 2025/26 until 2031/32.

³ Reduced capacity offset by the new food waste collection service, which provide a 23ltr food caddy giving 46ltrs capacity per fortnight to residents to offset the reduction in capacity and ensure residents make full and efficient use of our services to manage their waste.

⁴ Estimated cost based on current prices. A tender exercise for the provision, delivery, and recycling will be needed to confirm the final cost and ensure best value.

Cabinet

7 January 2025

	Like for Like bin swaps across all waste streams	Residual Reduced to 180ltr wheeled bins
Purchasing Costs	£1,810,337	£1,747,490
Delivery Costs	£185,961	£185,961
Collection Costs	£164,084	£164,084
Total Costs (estimated)	£2,160,382	£2,097,535

Option 1 - 240's Residual, Recycling, & Garden								
	25/6	26/7	27/8	28/9	29/30	30/1	31/2	32/3
MRP	£108,019	£416,645	£416,645	£416,645	£416,645	£416,645	£416,645	£308,626
Repayment		£308,626	£308,626	£308,626	£308,626	£308,626	£308,626	£308,626
Interest	£108,019	£108,019	£108,019	£108,019	£108,019	£108,019	£108,019	

Option 2 - 180's Residual, 240's Recycling/Garden								
	25/6	26/7	27/8	28/9	29/30	30/1	31/2	32/3
MRP	£104,877	£404,525	£404,525	£404,525	£404,525	£404,525	£404,525	£299,648
Repayment		£299,648	£299,648	£299,648	£299,648	£299,648	£299,648	£299,648
Interest	£104,877	£104,877	£104,877	£104,877	£104,877	£104,877	£104,877	

5.4. It is expected that replacing these bins would reduce costs on vehicle purchase by approximately 2% (£80,000 across the replacement cycle of our fleet), and vehicle maintenance on our waste fleet by up to 8% (£30,000 per year⁵ as a result of the move to the comb lifting mechanism and reduced wear and tear of not having a reversible system with so many moving parts to accommodate the two styles of bin).

5.5. This will also be supported by the financial benefits previously identified as part of reprofiling the Capital Replacement plan for the Domestic Waste Fleet, which will address current overspends on maintenance and hire vehicles, alongside a reliance on Redditch Borough Council vehicles to maintain services.

5.6. In addition to these benefits, the Council has also now had confirmation that DEFRA will be transferring funding of **£1,004,000** to Bromsgrove District Council linked to dry recyclable material through the Extended Producer Responsibilities (EPR) scheme for the 2025/26 financial year, with further funding from this scheme each year thereafter.

⁵ In Chargeable Mechanic's time as well as parts – so some of this benefit will be linked to increased capacity within the workshop to support the entire fleet and further reduce the use of third parties for maintenance support.

Cabinet

7 January 2025

- 5.7. This is effectively a tax on packaging manufacturers under the “producer pays” principle and not direct government funding per se.
- 5.8. EPR funding is intended to support costs of our existing waste collection arrangements and support communication and education on dry recycling to further improve this to divert waste from landfill/incineration; and although there are currently no limits on how this money is spent, this is not guaranteed income.
- 5.9. From 2028 this funding will be linked to the quality as well as quantity of recycling we collect, and may be required to support education and engagement with residents regarding their waste in order to maintain this level of funding.
- 5.10. The government have emphasised repeatedly the need to demonstrate “efficient” collections ensuring a high quality of collected recycling, and it may be appropriate to link this on-going revenue funding with the replacement of our existing wheeled bins, and consideration of whether a split stream recycling service may be appropriate in the future as well.
- 5.11. The additional costs of moving to a twin stream recycling service would be significant as an addition to our existing service, but such a system would support a transition to a three weekly residual collection cycle alongside the weekly food waste service and alternating fortnightly collections of the two dry recycling streams and our existing fortnightly garden waste service, and this would likely generate the highest quality of recycling as well as influence recycling behaviour and engagement to a greater degree with residents to realise the reductions in residual non-recyclable waste identified from previous waste sampling across the District.

6. Environmental/Climate Change Implications

- 6.1. As part of replacing the “Diamond” wheeled bins, arrangements would be made for the old bins to be recycled as part of the arrangements, with the raw material fed back into the recycling stream.
- 6.2. Given the likely timescale of this project, it is expected that wheeled bins produced for delivery to our residents will be made with plastic recycled from our existing diamond bins, and further illustrating the circular economy principle of waste reduction.
- 6.3. The value of this recyclable material from our old bins is part of the quoted price for collection and processing of our old bins, which keeps the costs lower for the Council.

Cabinet

7 January 2025

6.4. We do not have the storage capacity or arrangements in place to realise a greater value for this material ourselves.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1. Wheeled bins are provided to each property to support engagement with our waste collection arrangements, as per Section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

7.2. As such, bins remain the property of Bromsgrove District Council, and we can support the change by reissuing the section 46 notice to all residents, with details of the new wheeled bin requirements for residents to access our collection service.

7.3. Procurement is viable through either a competitive tender process, or direct award under a framework, and this will be managed to ensure compliance and quality regarding new wheeled bins.

8. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

8.1. Equalities and Diversity Implications

8.2. Replacement of wheeled bins may impact on residents with medical needs/disabilities.

8.3. This will be managed through direct engagement with those residents currently receiving support under our assisted waste collection arrangements, and included in our communications plan to ensure that any concerns are identified and addressed.

Cabinet

7 January 2025

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Whittaker – Environmental Services Portfolio Holder	
Lead Director / Head of Service	Simon Parry - Head of Environmental Services	
Financial Services	Peter Carpenter – Section 151 Officer	
Legal Services	Claire Green – Principal Solicitor	
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	N/A	
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	Matt Eccles – Climate Change Manager	

This page is intentionally left blank

Strategic Update - Introduction of Food Waste Collection

Relevant Portfolio Holder		Councillor Peter Whittaker	
Portfolio Holder Consulted		Yes	
Relevant Head of Service		Simon Parry	
Report Author: Matthew Austin	Job Title: Environmental Services Manager Contact matthew.austin@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk email: Contact Tel: 01527 548206		
Wards Affected		All	
Ward Councillor(s) consulted		No	
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)		Environment - supporting recycling to reducing waste production	
Key Decision			
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.			

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet **RESOLVE** that:

- 1) Subject to the outcome of negotiations, the Council approves the introduction of a joint Food Waste Collection Service, working with Redditch Borough Council and Wyre Forest District Council to deliver the authority's statutory duties under the Environment Act 2021 regarding a Food Waste Collection service;
- 2) Delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director of Environmental and Housing Property Services following consultation with the Section 151 Officer, the Principal Solicitor (Contracts, Commercial and Procurement) and the Portfolio Holders for Finance and Environmental Services respectively to:
 - a) subject to the agreement of recommendation 1 above, to negotiate and agree terms with Redditch Borough Council and Wyre Forest District Council to enter into a joint tender for a shared food waste collection service;
 - b) tender and award a dedicated weekly food waste collection service through a third party for a period of 8 years commencing no later than 31 March 2026.

The Cabinet **RECOMMEND** that

- 3) The Council allocate £1,000,000 Revenue Funding in the Medium-Term Financial Plan as an operational budget from 2026/27 to fund the Food Waste Collection Service in the Borough, as accounted for within tranche 1 of the budget.

Cabinet7th January 2025

2. Context

- 2.1. The Government has set a new statutory duty under the Environment Act 2021 to introduce a dedicated separate weekly collection of food waste from all households by 31st March 2026, alongside expanded requirements on dry recycling.
- 2.2. Working closely with Worcestershire County Council as the Waste Disposal Authority, we are able to accommodate the changes to dry recycling without any changes to our existing green bin service, so this report is focusing primarily on the changes required from the new food waste service.
- 2.3. As we do not currently operate such a service, this will require additional resources to operate, and due to the current size restrictions of our depots, we are unable to add these to our existing arrangements without significant investment in additional land as well as an expansion of our Operators Licence with the Traffic Commissioner and DVSA.
- 2.4. In addition to the challenges regarding space restrictions on providing this service, it will require procurement and delivery of food waste caddies for each property, additional bins for communal properties, and additional dedicated vehicles and staff to collect the waste.
- 2.5. To achieve the Government requirements on time, it is vital that the Council takes decisions by the end of January 2026 to allow the procurement of resources to supply the service to our residents, either as an in-house service, or through an external provider.

3. Background

- 3.1. Over the last five years, considerable work has been carried out in partnership with the other Worcestershire Authorities to consider how to meet the new requirements, and model the resources required to operate such a service, as well as what the associated environmental benefits will be as a result of implementing this service.
- 3.2. This has given us a good understanding of what will be required, and the benefits arising from such a service, as well as potential other changes to offset some of the potential costs arising from the new burden.
- 3.3. Due to persistent delays in the communication of funding and precise requirements for local authorities, we are currently only able to give assurance on some of the costs and associated income relating to Capital costs, without any detail or confidence in additional revenue income to offset on-going costs, despite assurances that the cost of this new burden will be supported by Central Government.
- 3.4. For this reason, many Local Authorities operating in-house services have been waiting for more detail on the financial support for implementing the new service, although a number of LA's with externally contracted services (such as Stratford on Avon District Council) have had to implement the new duties as part of contract renewals in advance of the deadline, and as a consequence have not received any funding from central government.
- 3.5. If we are to meet the deadline for implementing this new service though, there is now a need for a decision regarding how we will implement the new service, as procurement timescales and lead in times for the manufacture of food collection vehicles are currently estimated at up to 12 months, with the purchase and delivery of sufficient food caddies also requiring up to 6 months in order to ensure that the service is able to commence for all our residents.

Cabinet7th January 2025

- 3.6. These timescales will likely increase as councils nationwide are now starting to place orders to support their needs in time for the deadline, and funding announcements are expected in November that will support the remaining authorities to commit to spending.
- 3.7. It is important to note that management of waste in Worcestershire is split between ourselves as the Waste Collection Authority (WCA), and the County Council as the Waste Disposal Authority (WDA), who arrange for waste to be processed/treated once collected.
- 3.8. There is currently nowhere within Worcestershire that can support the disposal of food waste, and the nearest facility that can meet our needs is to the west of Stourbridge, but the County Council are not able to secure that as the destination for our food waste until there is clarity regarding our future collection service, and this presents a risk that the available capacity may be committed elsewhere, and require us to transport food waste further for disposal – increasing costs and reducing the efficiency of a collection service.
- 3.9. To support discussions and secure a disposal route, the WDA will need clarity around the parameters of the future service.
- 3.10. Key parameters include:
- assumption of food waste yield based on 1.25kg/hh/week
 - if caddy liners are to be provided;
 - Any changes to current residual services (which will influence yield);
 - planned service start date;
 - property coverage – if all premises will be covered from service start date or if the service will be phased in.
- 3.11. Options for the future management of collected food waste, including the provision of new transfer stations and/or combined transfer stations and collection depots, are being explored by WCC currently to support the longer-term efficiency of managing food waste.
- 3.12. A report to Worcestershire Leaders Board in July examined the implications of direct delivery versus the use of transfer stations. Transfer stations are generally beneficial for the WCA as they reduce mileage and impact on collection rounds. Additionally, transfer manages risk – for example if a facility is offline for any reason, bulked up waste can easily be diverted elsewhere.

4. Current Options:

- 4.1. There are currently three core options open to the Council regarding the new Statutory requirement, each with variant elements and different risks:
- 4.2. **Option 1:** Expand our current services to operate a Food Waste Collection ourselves.
- 4.3. **Option 2:** Outsource the Food Waste Collection service through the private sector.
- 4.4. **Option 3:** Consider the legal options to not meet the new statutory duty.

Cabinet7th January 2025

4.5. Option 1 Outline Information: In House Provision

- 4.6. Approximately 40% of local authorities fulfil waste collections via an in-house workforce, and this would give opportunity to share local knowledge from our existing workforce, but also require us to take on the responsibilities associated with all aspects of the service.
- 4.7. This would consist of recruiting and training approximately 26 additional staff, and procuring/operating 11 vehicles.
- 4.8. This would also involve maintenance of the additional vehicles, which is a current concern for our existing fleet, and taking responsibility for all operational risks – which as a brand-new service are higher than normal.
- 4.9. In order to operate these additional resources, we would also need to acquire a new site to operate from, as our existing depots do not have capacity, or the relevant certification to operate the size of fleet that this would produce.
- 4.10. Our current O Licenses (that regulate the maximum number of Heavy Goods Vehicles we can legally operate) are already at capacity across the two existing sites, and cannot be extended without increasing the space and maintenance facilities to support such a fleet.

4.11. Option 2 Outline Information: Outsource a Food Waste Collection Contract

- 4.12. Option 2 under this requirement would be to commission the food waste collection service by procuring a new contract for waste collections.
- 4.13. The Council will be able to use the contract to allocate much of the uncertainty around participation and necessary logistics to the Contractor in return for a set cost that would allow the Council to budget more effectively, but potentially reduce the ability to make savings during the life of such a contract.
- 4.14. If the Council opted to outsource this service, then it will need to consider the procurement strategy which it adopts, but there are procurement frameworks that will support an open process with minimal risk – subject to sufficient interested parties looking to engage with this process.
- 4.15. The Council should be aware that undertaking a procurement exercise would not guarantee a satisfactory outcome. The waste collection market has contracted due to consolidation and companies exiting the market.
- 4.16. Contractors do not have sufficient capacity to bid for all projects, and so they are selective about which projects they pursue. It can therefore be difficult to generate sufficient competition to drive value for money through such a procurement exercise.
- 4.17. In addition, a dedicated waste collections contract for the District may not be an attractive proposition for private sector waste contractors not already operating in this area, unless they seek to use this as an entry-point to expand operations in the Worcestershire area.
- 4.18. To address this, opportunities to let a joint tender with Redditch Borough Council under our shared service would help to increase the attraction of our contract, although further partnership with other Worcestershire LA's would further increase this and support increased resilience and best value if such an agreement could be reached, and transparency of costs between the individual authorities be built into the pricing.

Cabinet7th January 2025

4.19. Option 3 Outline Information: Alternatives to full implementation of a Food Waste Collection Service

4.20. This option may breach our statutory duty under the Environment Act 2021, and is not one presented lightly.

4.21. It is currently unknown what the funding from Central Government will support regarding the new burden of implementing a food waste collection service, and it is expected that there will likely be some initial shortfall against our costs, with further financial pressure over time in the form of future capital investment and uncertainties regarding the period for which central government will support revenue funding of the new service.

4.22. Current estimated costs of implementing the service are presented in section 4 below, but place an exceptional additional pressure on Council Finances.

4.23. If the funding from Central Government does not meet our expected costs, we may require legal advice to consider our options, and any relevant interpretation of the new requirements that may allow us to either defer, partially implement, or simply not meet the new statutory duty.

4.24. Summary of Options:

4.25. Whichever mechanism is chosen, the logistical challenges will remain, and due to the number of Local Authorities that are also planning to implement additional services to meet this requirement, there are now significant concerns that further delay in making arrangements will result in us failing to meet this new Statutory Duty.

4.26. Due to the costs and capacity concerns outlined in the main body of this report associated with operating a new in-house food waste collection service, Officer recommendations at this point will be to outsource this element of our services, as per option 2 above, and will be reviewed to support a final report paper in January to present additional detail and appraisal of options to meet this duty.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Working with external consultants "Circulogic", who have supported modelling for the new requirements, the modelled indicative cost of operating a food waste collection service across Bromsgrove is just under £1 million per year, not including any additional expenditure on infrastructure.

5.2. Government is providing three funding streams to support Councils implement food waste collections:

- Capital transitional funding (to buy vehicles and containers)
- Transitional resource funding (one off start-up costs)
- Ongoing resource (revenue) funding

5.3. The details of this revenue funding were expected to be provided in November 2024, but have still not been shared.

5.4. Waste Collection Authorities (WCA) have been given a one-off capital fund for the purchase of vehicles and containers to commence the service, although future Capital costs to replace vehicles

and bins are expected to be funded by Collection Authorities thereafter, which is an additional financial pressure for the Council.

5.4.1. **BDC - £902,511**

Waste Collection Authority	Allocated DEFRA capital funding for containers	Actual capital funding needed for containers	Shortfall
Bromsgrove DC	£288,711	£317,060	£28,349

- 5.5. An appeal regarding the allocated Capital funding was submitted to Defra in early March 2024.
- 5.6. In our appeal to Defra, for illustrative purposes, we also highlighted the current market rate of land with an estimate of the additional land area required to support the operation of a food waste fleet and meet the criteria to support potential expansion of our Operators Licence.
- 5.7. For BDC this added a further **£309,000** to the total funding shortfall (without any other investment in facilities/infrastructure on that land).
- 5.8. Food waste collection vehicles are generally smaller than those used for the main residual and recycling collections. 7.5 tonne vehicles have been used in our modelling and by Government to calculate funding. The funding does not cover the cost of procuring alternative fuel vehicles and equates to just over £100,000 per 7.5 tonne vehicle. Electric versions of these vehicles are quoted at more than £300,000.

Waste Collection Authority	Allocated DEFRA capital funding for Vehicles	Actual capital funding needed for vehicles	Shortfall
Bromsgrove DC	£613,800	£1,125,300	£511,500

- 5.9. Ongoing revenue funding will be paid from 2026/27 when the New Burden payments commence, but the estimated figures have not yet been provided for consideration.
- 5.10. Transitional resource funding will be provided in late 2024/25 and again in early 2025/26 with a caveat from Defra that this will be 'subject to agreement and our spending review allocation, we plan to fund procurement, project management, communications and container delivery'.
- 5.11. Based on the modelling carried out for Bromsgrove, we will need up to 11 vehicles, with a minimum of 2 staff per vehicle, not including cover for annual leave/sickness.

Cabinet7th January 2025

- 5.12. The Revenue costs associated with operating this service are estimated at nearly £1 million per year for Bromsgrove, although updated modelling is currently being prepared by *Circulogic*¹ to more clearly define this to support inclusion in the MTFP.
- 5.13. It is worth noting that the figures above are solely for Bromsgrove, and there may be financial benefits arising from our shared service arrangements with Redditch Borough Council that would support a reduction on these figures, although this cannot be verified until planning has commenced in earnest to deliver the service operationally – either inhouse, or through an external supplier.
- 5.14. In addition to the funding and resource requirements linked to Food Waste, the Council has now had confirmation that DEFRA will be transferring funding of **£1,004,000** to Bromsgrove District Council linked to dry recyclable material through the Extended Producer Responsibilities (EPR) scheme for the 2025/26 financial year.
- 5.15. This is effectively a tax on packaging manufacturers under the “producer pays” principle and not direct government funding per se.
- 5.16. EPR funding is intended to support costs of our existing waste collection arrangements and support service changes, communication and education on dry recycling to further improve this to divert waste from landfill/incineration; and although there are currently no limits on how this money is spent, this is not guaranteed income and we expect further guidance on this in 2025.
- 5.17. From 2028 this funding will be linked to the quality as well as quantity of recycling we collect, and may be required to support education and engagement with residents regarding their waste in order to secure and maintain this level of funding.
- 5.18. On 29 November the Government set out a new policy statement regarding “Simpler Recycling²”, which set out a “maximum default requirement” for councils to collect card and paper separately from April 2026. No reference is made to new burdens funding for this activity which – at a minimum – would require provision of separate containers and either separate containers in vehicles for holding the material (with slower collection times as crews have to empty two containers rather than one) or even separate vehicles and crews to undertake the collections.
- 5.19. The additional costs of moving to a twin stream recycling service would be significant as an addition to our existing service, but such a system would support a transition to a three weekly residual collection cycle alongside the weekly food waste service and alternating fortnightly collections of the two dry recycling streams and our existing fortnightly garden waste service.
- 5.20. This would likely generate the highest quality of recycling as well as influence recycling behaviour and engagement to a greater degree with residents to realise the reductions in residual non-recyclable waste identified from previous waste sampling across the Borough, whilst also reducing our operating costs to offset the costs associated with the additional arrangements for recycling.
- 5.21. It is recognised within this that councils and other waste collectors will “still have the flexibility to make the best choices to suit local need” though, and it is believed that as with previous legislation regarding waste collection, there is scope to maintain our existing comingled approach using a TEEP (Technical, Economic and Environmentally Practicable) assessment.

¹ Results expected early November 2024

² This is the umbrella term for the rationalisation of waste collection arrangements nationally to ensure that all residents can dispose of the same core recyclable items wherever in the country they live.

- 5.22. We are already discussing this with the other Worcestershire Authorities as a joint initiative to support our current service arrangements, as this will require us to set out how we will attain the required quality of recycling, and so will need to be considered alongside the ERP funding to ensure we can demonstrate the necessary outcomes and benefits to justify this.
- 5.23. Whilst this funding may be used to offset potential shortfalls in funding for food waste, the government have emphasised repeatedly the need to demonstrate “efficient” collections ensuring a high quality of collected recycling, and it should not be seen as a windfall that can be relied on without careful consideration of the potential impact of not being able to demonstrate how this funding has been used to support this.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The Environment Act 2021 sets out the legislative framework for Simpler Recycling which was launched in October 2023. The Council already meets many of the requirements, but it will need to provide new services to provide a separate weekly collection of food waste from homes from 31 March 2026.

7. OTHER – IMPLICATIONS

7.1. Climate Change Implications

- 7.2. The introduction of food waste will give the potential to divert nearly a third of the residual waste (by weight) we currently collect based on sampling of what Redditch residents are throwing away.

Residual Waste – Composition Analysis 2022 (Percentage by weight)			BDC
ORGANIC CATERING	UNAVOIDABLE FOOD WASTE		7.98%
	POTENTIALLY AVOIDABLE FOOD WASTE		2.58%
	AVOIDABLE FOOD WASTE - LOOSE		3.08%
	AVOIDABLE FOOD WASTE - PACKAGED		17.76%
	CONSUMABLE LIQUIDS, FATS AND OILS.		0.88%
			32.27%

- 7.3. For Bromsgrove, it is estimated that the food waste service has the potential to reduce the Carbon impact of managing our residents waste by up to 1,800 tons per year subject to how well our residents engage with the service.
- 7.4. Subject to the success of the new service, the diversion of this waste out of the residual waste stream may also support improved efficiency in our wider waste collection rounds, giving further reductions to our carbon impact.

Cabinet7th January 2025

8. Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 8.1. People with disabilities may require assistance in presenting their food waste caddy for collection, which will be provided as part of our existing assisted collection scheme, and will be publicised alongside the introduction of a new collection scheme as part of the information provided directly to every household when the caddies are delivered.
- 8.2. There could potentially be a negative impact on people from particular ethnic groups whose first language is not English and any subsequent misunderstandings about the correct food waste disposal instructions. Imagery will be used to help simplify the message as much as possible, and further assessment will be needed to identify the scale of this, and consider how to address these concerns.
- 8.3. A detailed Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out as part of final selection and implementation of the new service alongside the creation of a final specification and implementation plan.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 9.1. There are several risks to meeting the domestic requirement to collect food waste by April 2026, which include:
- Capital and revenue financial uncertainty (New Burdens)
 - Capacity of supply chain to meet unprecedented nationwide demand for specialist vehicles, caddies, and bins
 - Capacity and suitability of existing depot(s) to accommodate increased number of trucks (impacts on O Licence)
 - Capacity and availability of local AD facilities to reduce travel time and impact on collection rounds
 - Availability of supporting infrastructure (waste transfer stations) which will increase the cost of providing service in short-medium term
 - Lack of suppliers for provision of food waste collection contract.
 - On-Going ERP funding not guaranteed, and still uncertainty over how this will be calculated and linked to service provision, efficiency of collections, and quality of recycling material collected in the future, which will be needed to support appropriate use of this funding.
- 9.2. Five of the Worcestershire councils collaborated on a Soft Market Testing exercise in June this year to identify factors relevant to outsourcing food waste with potential suppliers, but did not receive any responses to the questions posed to the private sector.
- 9.3. A further market engagement exercise is being developed alongside this report to address the uncertainty regarding interest from the private sector in providing the service as a dedicated food waste contract only, using a simpler premise to gauge interest specifically to support a decision on whether the private sector will engage with a tender process should we start one.

Cabinet

7th January 2025

10. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Whittaker – Environmental Services Portfolio Holder	5/12/24
Lead Director / Head of Service	Guy Revans - Director Simon Parry – Asst. Director Environmental Services	5/12/24
Financial Services	Peter Carpenter – Section 151 Officer	5/12/24
Legal Services	Nicola Cummings – Principal Solicitor	5/12/24
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	N/A	
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	Matt Eccles – Climate Change Manager	

Cabinet

7th January 2025

FINAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2025/2026

Relevant Portfolio Holder		
Portfolio Holder Consulted		
Relevant Assistant Director		Debra Goodall
Report Author David Riley	Job Title: Financial Support Manager Contact email: david.riley@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 548 418	
Wards Affected		All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted		N/A
Relevant Council Priority		An effective and sustainable Council
Non-Key Decision		
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet **RECOMMEND** that:-

- 1) **The council tax reduction scheme is retained for 2025-26 tax year, subject to uprating of income bands by 1.7% in-line with increases to national benefits as set out in the table at appendix a.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The council is required by section 13A(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (LGFA '92) to make a council tax reduction (CTR) scheme specifying the reductions in council tax that will be provided to people who are in financial need, or to classes of people who are in general in financial need.
- 2.2 When a scheme has been made the council must, for each tax year, consider whether to revise or replace its scheme. If the council intends to revise or replace the scheme, then there is a requirement to undertake a formal consultation before making a new scheme.
- 2.3 The council introduced a new income banded scheme for working age applicants with effect from 1st April 2021. The rationale for the new scheme was to ensure that it was future proofed, and it reduced the administrative burden placed on the council and more closely integrated with universal credit.

Cabinet

7th January 2025

- 2.4 In the years from 2022 onwards the council has amended the scheme to adjust the level of support in-line with available funding available; to amend income bands and tapers to adjust for the impact of inflation; and to aid administration by simplifying elements of the scheme.
- 2.5 The existing scheme includes a provision for the uprating of income bands by an inflation factor decided by the council. The scheme will usually be uprated by an inflation factor in-line with the increases to national welfare benefits.
- 2.6 The benefit and pension rates for 2026 are increasing 1.7% and it is recommended that the income bands within the council's scheme are adjusted by this amount.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 Retaining the existing scheme and uprating the income bands will have no additional operational implications.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Changes to the income bands will impact the amount of council tax reduction provided to claimants. The change may result in an increase in the total cost of council tax reduction.
- 4.2 The intention of uprating to income bands is to protect claimants from the impact of inflation and to ensure that inflationary increases to universal credit or wages do not remove their eligibility for CTR.
- 4.3 Uprating is essential to ensure that support is provided to residents in financial need, and that ordinary increases in national benefits and wages do not remove eligibility for support.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The council is required by paragraph 5 of Schedule 1A to the LGFA '92 to consider whether to revise or replace its CTR scheme. Where a council makes a revision or replacement there is a requirement to carry out a formal consultation which consists of three steps:
- a) consultation with major precepting authorities; and
 - b) publication of a draft scheme; and
 - c) consultation with persons who are likely to have an interest in the operation of the scheme.
- 5.2 Where a revised scheme reduces or removes a reduction the new scheme must include such transitional provision as the council sees fit.

Cabinet

7th January 2025

5.3 The existing scheme includes a provision to uprate income bands by the appropriate level of inflation in each tax year; therefore, changes that increase the income bands in each tax year can be carried out without consultation.

5.4 Changes to the scheme which reduce the income bands are not provided for within the existing scheme. Any changes that reduce the % discount provided under the scheme would constitute a revision to the scheme and would require full consultation and approval of full council.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Council Priority

6.1 The council tax reduction scheme supports residents in financial need and it is a requirement that the design of the scheme incentivises work.

6.2 The scheme supports the strategic purpose of Aspiration, Work and Financial Independence through the provision of a council tax reduction to people on low income and people transitioning to work.

6.3 Uprating of income bands will ensure that low-income residents do not lose support through general inflationary increases to their income and will ensure that the scheme continues to incentivise employment.

Climate Change Implications

6.4 There are no specific climate change implications.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.5 When the existing income band based CTR scheme was introduced a full equalities impact assessment was completed. The uprating of income bands has no further equalities and diversity implications.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 The relevant risk management considerations are summarised in the tabulation – “Risk Management CTS Scheme”.

Risk	Mitigations
Loss of support for residents in financial need.	Revision of income bands as provided for within the council’s scheme will ensure that lowincome residents are not phased out of the existing scheme

Cabinet

7th January 2025

	through general inflationary increases in their income.
Increased financial costs of CTR scheme	The scheme reduces the council tax collected by the authority. Increases in the level of incomebands can increase the amount of support provided to residents and the costs of the CTR scheme. Options for revision of the scheme will be modelled so that the costs of the scheme can be considered when increases to the income bands are agreed.

Risk Management CTS Scheme

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix A – Income Band Table

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder		
Lead Director / Assistant Director		
Financial Services		
Legal Services		
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)		
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)		

Discount Band	Discount	Single Person	Single Person with one Child	Single Person with two or more children	Couple	Couple with one child	Couple with two or more children
Income Band 1	100%	£0.00 to £125	£0.00 to £195	£0.00 to £266	£0.00 to £179	£0.00 to £250	£0.00 to £320
Income Band 2	80%	£125.01 to £153	£195.01 to £234	£266.01 to £304	£179.01 to £206	£250.01 to £288	£320.01 to £358
Income Band 3	55%	£153.01 to £179	£234.01 to £272	£304.01 to £342	£206.01 to £234	£288.01 to £325	£358.01 to £397
Income Band 4	30%	£179.01 to £206	£272.01 to £309	£342.01 to £380	£234.01 to £260	£325.01 to £364	£397.01 to £434
Nil Award	0%	Over £206	Over £309	Over £380	Over £260	Over £364	Over £434

This page is intentionally left blank

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

7th January 2025

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2025/6 TO 2027/8 – Tranche 1

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr. Steve Colella, Finance Portfolio Holder
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Debra Goodall
Report Author	Job Title: Head of Finance & Customer Services email:debra.goodall@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel:
Wards Affected	N/A
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	All
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The Council will set its budget in two Tranches this year as it did in the 2023/4 and 2024/5 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) processes. The initial Tranche will be published in the Autumn with approval of options sought at Council in January, with a second Tranche to be considered in January once final settlement figures are known with final budget approval sought in February.
- 1.2 Cabinet received the Tranche 1 budget proposals at its meeting on the 10th December to go out to consultation.
- 1.3 Consultation has now taken place, with the results contained within this report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet are asked to Recommend to Council that following consultation:

- 1 Members endorse the inputs into the Council’s Medium Term Financial Plan as at the middle of October, and the associated risks and opportunities.**
- 2 An initial Tranche of savings proposals and pressures, as set out in Section 3.03 to 3.14, including the fees and charges increases (non commercial), after consideration of feedback from the consultation exercise which closed on the 2nd January, is approved at Council.**

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

7th January 2025

3. Background

Introduction

3.1 The Council sets a 3-year Medium Term Financial Plan every year, with the final Council Tax Resolution being approved by Council in February. Having a second Tranche after the Christmas break, for which approval will be sought in February, that takes account of the Local Government Settlement whose final detail will not be known until early January.

3.2 On the 10th December 2024 the Tranche 1 budget was presented for consultation. That budget proposed the following:

The Council's Base Assumptions including Inflation and Grants

3.3 Tax Base and Corporate Financing underlying assumptions are as follows:

- Council Tax – Figures assume the full 1.99% allowable increase over all years of the 3 year MTFP. The Local plan has housing increases of 457 and 338 in the first two years of the MTFP. For prudence, at the moment it is assumed that increases of 200 and 150 over these years.
- Business Rates Increases – business rates assume growth based on Pooling with the other Districts and the County Council.
- New Homes Bonus – It is assumed to be none in 25/6 onwards.
- Services Grant - It is assumed that Central Government Grants are at similar levels to previous years (as was the case in 2023/4 and 2024/5)

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

- The main Revenue Grants are:
 - S31 Grant - £1.126m
 - Housing Benefit Administration Grant - £0.148m
 - Housing Benefit Grant - £11.0m
 - Revenue Cost of Collection Grant - £0.119m
- The Council has £14.492m of Levelling Up Grant to be spent by April 2025, with Market Hall spending extended to September 2025, which is match funded by £1.610m of Council funding.

3.5 There are significant pressures mounting on the Council. At Q2 the overall revenue financial position is a £344k overspend position. This position is set out in detail in an additional report to this Committee today. The significant area of overspend is the maintenance costs of the fleet and clarity on its purchase date, and how far it impacts 2025/26, is required before it is added to this analysis. The remainder of salary based issues are part of the Corporate Adjustment section.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

7th January 2025

3.6 Corporate Changes include for Tranche 1 2025/26 are:

- The Pay Award is increased from 2% to 3% for 25/6. This would be an additional £154k cost. In her Statement on the 30th July, the Chancellor did say that Government would accept acceptance the recommendations of the independent Pay Review Bodies for public sector workers' pay. If a 3% pay award is agreed then it would follow that the Council should receive £450k of funding for that award. However, until this is agreed, nothing will be assumed for associated funding. The Chancellors Statement on the 30th October spoke of a 3.2% increase of core spending power, but we need to see the detail to be sure.
- Pension Fund Actuarial Triennial Revaluation. The Council did very well in the revaluation which came into effect for the 2023/4 financial year and which finishes in the 2025/6 financial year. Overall the Council had circa £1m of savings on the payments for each year. Although the fund continues to perform well we are concerned on the reducing numbers of live members in the scheme and so have included an amount from 2026/7 of £200k as a potential risk.
- Fees and Charges assumed an increase of 2%. However, given 50% of fees and charges costs link to staff costs and these possibly will increase at 5% for the 2024/5 financial year. Therefore, to keep pace this this increase of costs it is proposed that 3%, 4% and 5% increases are looked at. These amounts to additional income of the following for each scenario:
 - 3% Increase - £100k
 - 4% Increase - £200k
 - 5% Increase - £300k

It should be noted that at the recent WRS Board, other Board Members were looking to increase Fees and Charges tariffs by at least 3%. WRS numbers are not included pending discussions across members of the level of increases.

- Until more information is understood in the detailed Local Government Settlement in December, it is assumed that Grant levels will remain at present levels.
- The largest change however will link to upcoming Waste Requirements. The Council is required to implement these proposals from April 2026, which the Council challenging present Government Funding allocations. The impact on Council budgets is significant in terms of both Revenue and Capital:
 - There is the requirement for additional Capital Investment, over and above any Grant, of £540k. It assumes that this is required to be spent in 2025/6 and costs apportioned accordingly.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

7th January 2025

- At present PWLB rates of 5.00% for 8 years debt this would be a yearly interest charge of £27k a year from 2025/6.
 - For MRP purposes this would be an additional cost of £68k a year from 2026/7.
 - At the present time, additional revenue costs are estimated to be circa £950k a year.
 - There is also programme implementation costs of circa £200k which is expected to be split across both Councils at £100k each.
- Bromsgrove School loses its Business Rates reliefs as part of the Budget. Presently, circa £600k of business rates are charged against the school to which it receives 80% relief. This relief of circa £500k would become part of the collection fund calculation with for planning purposes circa 50% coming to the Council and 50% going back to the Government.
- Additional Artrix Costs. The Council are responsible for the Health and Safety of the buildings and there is funding of £20k capital a year. If the Artrix was to be empty, the Council would be responsible for the buildings including the Empty Business rates which amount to £31k (Therefore it is proposed that this would be the limit of any Council funding which is included in the proposals).
- Additional inflation of 5% on contract is included at 5% which is £90k. It should be noted that 5% has also been included in the 24/5 year and this will be allocated in this financial year as and when it is required.
- A review has been undertaken of Corporate Budgets (Council Tax/Business Rate, Investment Income and Debt) against expected numbers and due to a number of factors there is a positive position.
- The Council had 4% in to cover staff inflation in 2024/5. This pay award is now circa 5% and so this adjustment has also been made in the corporate budgets.
- As set out in the Chancellor's Statement on the 30th September there will be significant additional grant funding. The allocation of these grants will not be known until December and the Provisional Local Government Finance settlement.
- The Capital Programme at the moment has limited change but does include the changes that have been made to the Fleet as per the 24/5 Monitoring Reports.
- Adjustments, following the establishment review will need to be made across both Councils to account for the £1m in-balance between pay budgets and recharges across both Councils.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

7th January 2025

- Accounts have been closed up to the 22/23 financial year with disclaimer opinions.
- Analysis will be undertaken on Benchmarking data as well – as this will inform areas where further savings, if required, will be initially looked at.

3.7 Corporate pressures are summarised in the following table and amount to a surplus of £329k in 2025/6 changing to an ongoing deficit of £851k in 2026/7 and £637k from 2027/8.

Year	2025/6 £000	2026/7 £000	2027/8 £000
Opening Position	8	7	7
Changes			
Increase Pay Award to 3%	154	154	154
Pension Revaluation (addn costs)		200	200
Increase Fees and Charges to 4%	-200	-200	-200
Increased Waste Interest costs	27	27	27
Increased Waste MRP costs		68	68
Waste Project costs (capitalised)		20	20
Increased Waste Revenue costs		950	950
School Business Rates	-250	-250	-250
Artrix Maximum Costs	31	31	31
Contract Inflation	90	90	90
Improvements in Corporate Budgets	-343	-393	-607
1% Additional 24/5 Payoll cost over Budget	154	154	154
Net additional Costs	-337	851	637
Updated Position	-329	858	644

3.8 Departmental pressures were requested to be returned by the 24th October. These were part of the December Cabinet papers. These departmental changes result in an overall £1.387m revenue pressure in the 2025/6 financial year and then £938k by 2027/8. This is summarised in the following table:

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

7th January 2025

Year	2025/6 £000	2026/7 £000	2027/8 £000
Position after Corporate Items	-329	858	644
Departmental Items	1,387	976	938
Position after Departmental Items	1,058	1,834	1,582

- 3.9 This results in an ongoing pressure of circa £1m rising to £1.5m. It should be noted that if the Council gets the full 3.2% Core Spending Power increase set out in the 2024 Chancellors budget, then this will result in circa £490k of additional funding, reducing the gap to circa £500k in 2025/26 and £1m by 2027/8. It should be noted that there will also be political pressures as well.

Fees and Charges update

- 3.10 The section, looks at the impact of proposed Fees and Charges increases for the 2025/26 Financial year. These increases are shown in detail by service in the Fees and Charges Report which is shown as **Appendix A**. The table below highlights the possible increase of income if a 3% to a 5% increase was applied across the board. The 4% has been applied to Contributions and Fees and Charges (not parking) budgets and not on SLA Income or lifeline, where charges are set statutorily, and charges across more than one area. WRS increases will be agreed at the WRS Board Meeting in early November.

	2025/26	2026/27
Existing Budget	-3,791,000	-3,791,000
3% Increase 25/6	-100,000	-100,000
4% Increase 25/6	-200,000	-200,000
5% Increase 26/7	-300,000	-300,000

- 3.11 As has been noted in previous budgets, almost 50% of costs relate to staffing costs at the Council. Staffing budgets went up in 23/4 by on average by 5% and the settlement for this year 2024/5 is over 4%. The increases in fees and charges link to the previous year pay award and so just to keep pace with the increases in costs a level of 4% would be a minimum requirement.
- 3.12 The Transformation Team have looked at Income and fees/charges levels for:
- Its deliverability in 2023/4 and 24/5
 - Views on if additional % increases will be deliverable
 - Bereavement costs have been updated to ensure they are rounded to pounds as per legislation.
- 3.13 The outcome of that high level analysis was that:

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

7th January 2025

- A blanket % increase on all controllable fees and charges and budgets would not be advisable, as this will just increase the rolling year variances in specific areas. Those budgets need adjusting to the correct base (both up and down).
- Car parking, given the changes in 2024/5 should not be increased and allowed to stabilize at the new rates and take account of the full VAT implications.
- Knowledge of the full extent of what is or is not Vatable in income lines also needs to be clarified – so the right budgets are set.
- Garden and trade waste and cesspools are all areas where above inflation increases could be variable with previous years and current forecasting showing promise.

3.14 Fees and Charges now include both Planning and Parking at higher levels than in the past although in 2025/6 parking fees will not be increased (due to the changes in rates delivered in 2024/5).

Budget Consultation

3.15 Tranche 1 of the Medium Term Financial Plan was put out for consultation at the meeting of Cabinet on the 10th December 2024.

3.16 In the intermediate period however, there has been a consultation running on Tranche 1 of the budget. This supplemental paper updates Cabinet on the results of that consultation.

Tranche 1 Consultation

3.17 The Council has consulted on its Tranche 1 budget. This budget consultation opened on Thu 5 December 2024. An email invite was sent to the Bromsgrove Community Panel. The survey was also promoted on a variety of social media channels.

3.18 The survey closed at 12noon on Thursday 2 January 2025. The response rate for the community panel was 48%. There were a total of 278 valid responses received.

3.19 Question 2 gives a split of the consultation responses by location with the highest percentage of returns coming from Aston Fields, Belbroughton and Romsley, and Bromsgrove Centre.

3.20 Question 16 gives the splits of Age Ranges of the people who filled out the questionnaire. The vast majority were over 50.

3.21 The survey asked respondents to rank the three most important services they felt the Council should invest in. These were:

- Local Economic Development and Employment (47.1% of respondents).
- Community Safety (44.6.% of respondents).

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

7th January 2025

- Maintenance of the Landscape and Environment (43.8.% of respondents)
- 3.22 Each question had the following Questions asked had the following possible responses.
- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree or Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
- 3.23 In those questions, 6 had responses well over 50% agreeing or strongly agreeing, and only two had responses lower than 50% - these being
- Do you agree that the Council should invest more in our front-line services to cover increases in fuel at a 49.6% approval rate.
 - Do you support fees and charges (this excludes parking) rising by 4% to keep them in line with inflation and rising staffing costs at a 40.2% approval rate.
- 3.24 The highest approval rating, at 86.2% was the question - Do you agree that the Council should invest in economic development in order to support local businesses, start-ups, the town and local centres and to prioritise local skills.
- 3.25 Two further questions were asked on what level of increase to Bromsgrove District Council's proportion of Council Tax do you support?
- 61.5% agreed of strongly agreed with a 1.99% increase.
 - This dropped to 45.8% at 2.99%.
- 3.26 There were 2 free test questions:
- Please let us know your suggestions for investing in the district to increase prosperity and enhance appeal for residents and businesses alike?
 - There were 178 responses to this question.
 - Responses to this question provided many suggestions and comments regarding the district. The top three themes were Bromsgrove Town Centre, supporting businesses and the importance of infrastructure, from roads to public transport. These themes had many cross overs, from the impact of traffic, encouraging a diverse range of businesses into the town and reducing costs to visitors and businesses alike.
 - Suggestions included:
 - Reducing business rates / relief
 - Reducing parking costs
 - Supporting independent retailers
 - Bringing in key major retailers
 - Understanding offer on High Street- too may charity shops, cafes, hair & vaping businesses

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

7th January 2025

- Utilise empty shops- for small businesses, new start-ups, housing, community use
- Improve the market- quality, offer, number of days
- Make the town vibrant, attractive & distinctive- develop attractions, encourage visitors
- Improve the appearance & maintenance of the high street
- Improved public transport
- Support active travel
- Access grants wherever possible
- Ensure a district-wide view
-
- Please let us know any other comments on the budget or ideas for reducing costs or increasing income to ensure Council services remain sustainable?
 - There were 118 responses to this questions.
 - Of the responses to this question, the largest category fell into the theme of efficiency and value for money. Other themes included infrastructure, focusing on those in need, ensuring transparency and accountability asset utilisation, and the town centre.
 - Suggestions included:
 - Reviewing salaries
 - Ensuring right skills within the council
 - Outsource some functions
 - Explore alternative methods of delivery e.g. co-operatives, partnerships
 - Reduce use of consultants
 - Review fees & charges
 - Commercial opportunities e.g. logs, compost or specific services
 - Turn off lights / utilise smart sensors
 - Reduce events
 - Promote events better to increase revenue
 - Community use of buildings
 - Energy generation e.g. solar panels in car parks
 - Convert buildings into housing e.g. multi-storey by Asda
 - Increase enforcement fines e.g. fly tipping & littering
 - Support the voluntary sector
 - Reducing business rates / relief
 - Review council tax
 - Better coordination around highways and roadworks

The consultation spreadsheet sets out the overall summary and a breakdown by question is shown as **Appendix B**.

4. IMPLICATIONS

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

7th January 2025

Financial Implications

- 4.1 Financial implications are set out in section 3.

Legal Implications

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

Service / Operational Implications

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

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 4.4 The implementation of the revised fees and charges will be notified in advance to the customer to ensure that all users are aware of the new charges and any concessions available to them.
- 4.5 Initial Equalities Impact Assessments will be taken where required.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT

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

6. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Fees and Charges Increases
Appendix B – Consultation Responses

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

2025/26 MTFP Tranche 1 Papers - Cabinet 10th December 2024

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

2025/6 Increases

Increases 24/5

7%

WRS Increase

7%

Parking Increases 24/5

0%

General Increase **4%**

Planning Increase **4%**

Parking Income **0%**

WRS Increases **3%**

Business Transformation and Organisational Development

Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.

Service Category	Charge 1st April 2021 £	% Change	Charge from April 2022 £	Charge Increase 23/24	Charge 1st April 2023 £	Charge Increase 24/25	Proposed Charge 24/5 £	Charge Increase 25/6	Proposed Charge 25/6 £
<u>New & Existing Properties</u>									
Naming a Street	554.10	5.00%	581.80	10%	639.98	7%	684.80	4%	712.20
Additional charge for each new premise on a street	130.00	5.00%	136.50	10%	150.15	7%	160.70	4%	167.10
Naming and numbering of an individual premise	274.00	5.00%	287.70	10%	316.47	7%	338.60	4%	352.10
Additional charge for each adjoining premise (eg Blocks of flats)	77.00	5.06%	80.90	10%	88.99	7%	95.20	4%	99.00
Confirmation of address to solicitor/conveyancer/ occupier or owner	53.60	5.04%	56.30	10%	61.93	7%	66.30	4%	69.00
Additional charge including naming of building	138.00	5.00%	144.90	10%	159.39	7%	170.50	4%	177.30

This page is intentionally left blank

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Chief Executive

Roundings to the nearest 10p.

Service Category	Charge 1st April 2021 £	Charge from April 2022 £	Charge Increase 23/24	Charge 1st April 2023 £	Charge Increase 24/25	Proposed Charge 24/5 £	Charge Increase 25/26	Proposed Charge 25/6 £
<u>Venue hire additional services</u>								
Feature on official social media & website	Please contact us £30-£100	Request a quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
Place your promotional material in reception	10.00	Request a quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
Print your materials	Request a quote	Request a quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
Full design & print services:								
Luxury roll-up banner - Flat rate	102.50	Request a quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
- any additional	51.30	Request a quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
Vinyl banner	51.30	Request a quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
- any additional	25.60	Request a quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
Posters (10)	25.60	Request a quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
- any additional	Request a quote	Request a quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
Leaflets (500)	51.30	Request a quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
- any additional	Request a quote	Request a quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
Printing up to A0 size, with a range of finishing options on papers and cards. Tiny labels to large banners, binding and laminating, booklets, copies, reports, posters, duplicate pads, brochures, leaflets, flyers, & more. Integrated in-house Design team services also available.	Request a quote	Request a quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
Your bespoke requirements	Request a quote	Request a quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
PLUS								
Boost your event with our simple options:-								
• Promotional services -								
o Reach the local community with our official social media								
o Show up on Google with our special website options								
o Promote your event in our busy public spaces								
• Design services -								
o Stand out								
o Bespoke for you, from our professional design team								
• Printing services-								
o All your printing needs in one place								
o Signs, flyers, agendas, welcome banners, and more								
Packages available from as little as £30.								
To find out more contact 01527 881296 or venues@bromsgrove.gov.uk.								
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/venues								

Beautiful wedding stationery to suit your budget
The personal touch for all your guests, with bespoke packages from £25

- Choose beautiful invitations
- Add table plans, place settings, & more
- Photo displays & banners
- Signs
- Use your own designs, or our designers

To find out more just contact 01527 881296 or weddings@bromsgrove.gov.uk.
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/weddings

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Community & Housing Services

Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.

Service Category	Charge 1st April 2020 £	Charge from April 2021 £	Charge Increase 23/24	Charge 1st April 2023 £	Charge Increase 24/25	Proposed Charge 24/5 £	Charge Increase 25/26	Proposed Charge 25/6 £
STRATEGIC HOUSING								
Bed and breakfast								
- Single room	16.10	16.10	10%	17.71	7%	18.90	4%	19.70
- Two single rooms	32.50	32.50	10%	35.75	7%	38.30	4%	39.80
- Double room	16.10	16.10	10%	17.71	7%	18.90	4%	19.70
- More than one double room per room	21.00	21.00	10%	23.10	7%	24.70	4%	25.70
- Breakfast								
- adult	2.50	2.60	10%	2.86	7%	3.10	4%	3.20
- child	2.10	2.20	10%	2.42	7%	2.60	4%	2.70
- Storage of effects (per night)	2.60	2.70	10%	2.97	7%	3.20	4%	3.30
- Right to Buy (RTB) Plan Preparation for BDHT	119.70	125.70	10%	138.27	7%	147.90	4%	153.80
- Late Consents to transfer (shared ownership and low cost properties)	250.00	262.50	10%	288.75	7%	309.00	4%	321.40
Private Sector Housing								
Housing Fitness Inspections	150.00	150.00	10%	165.00	7%	176.60	4%	183.70
First Homes Application	0.00	0.00	New	150.00	7%	160.50	4%	166.90
Registration of housing in multiple occupation:								
per occupant	122.00	128.10	10%	140.91	7%	150.80	4%	156.80
Service and Administration of Improvement Promotion, Hazard Awareness or Emergency Measures Notices * under Housing Act 2004, per hour	34.00	35.70	10%	39.27	7%	42.00	4%	43.70
Enforcement of Statutory Notices, Supervision of Work in Default etc.	Actual + 10% Admin fee	Actual + 10% Admin fee	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
Mobile Home Park Licencing - New Licence Application Fee		326.67	10%	359.34	7%	384.50	4%	399.90
- Licence Amendment Application Fee		256.67	10%	282.34	7%	302.10	4%	314.20
- Licence Transfer Application Fee		186.67	10%	205.34	7%	219.70	4%	228.50
Mobile Home Park - Annual Site Inspection Charge -Band A (2-10 units)		256.67	10%	282.34	7%	302.10	4%	314.20
-Band B (11-30 units)		274.17	10%	301.59	7%	322.70	4%	335.60
- Band C (31-70 units)		385.00	10%	423.50	7%	453.10	4%	471.20
- Band D (71 + units)		420.00	10%	462.00	7%	494.30	4%	514.10
Mobile Home Park Statutory Registration or amendment of Park Home Rules		99.17	10%	109.09	7%	116.70	4%	121.40
- Valuation Fee (relating to properties of 30% ownership)	225.00	300.00	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
*Based on salary of employee								
LIFELINE								
- Installation Fee	52.00	52.00	0%	52.00	7%	55.60	4%	56.00
- Lifeline (per week)	4.25	4.50	5%	4.70	0%	0.00	4%	0.00
- Replacement Pendant	Cost of product + 17% admin fee	Cost of product + 17% admin fee	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
- Key Safe	Manufacturers cost + 17% admin fee	Manufacturers cost + 17% admin fee	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery

- GSM Alarm Hire	5.50	5.50	0%	5.50	0%	5.50	4%	5.70
- GPS Tracker Hire	7.00	7.40	-25%	5.50	0%	5.50	4%	5.70
- Daily Living Activity Equipment	7.00	7.40	0%	7.40	7%	7.90	4%	8.00
HIRE PRODUCTS								
Hire of smoke alarm per week (hard wired, serviced smoke alarm)	1.40	1.50	0%	1.50	4%	1.55	4%	1.60
CO2 Detector per week	1.40	1.50	0%	1.50	4%	1.55	4%	1.60
Bogus Caller Panic Button	1.40	1.50	0%	1.50	4%	1.55	4%	1.60
Flood Detector	1.40	1.50	0%	1.50	4%	1.55	4%	1.60
Falls Detector	1.40	1.50	0%	1.50	4%	1.55	4%	1.60
Additional pendant	1.40	1.50	0%	1.50	4%	1.55	4%	1.60
Temperature extreme sensor	1.40	1.50	10%	1.65	4%	1.55	4%	1.60

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Environmental Services

Service Category	Charge 1st April 2021 £	Charge from April 2022 £	Charge Increase 23/24	Charge 1st April 2023 £	Charge Increase 24/25	Proposed Charge 24/5 £	Charge Increase 25/26	Proposed Charge 25/6 £
CEMETERY								
The following charges would be subject to 25% plus or minus in year adjustment facility delegated to Bereavement Services Manager or Head of Service to allow for supplier increases such as utilities or memorial suppliers etc								
Interments in a grave								
- children aged under 1 year	No Charge	No Charge						
- children aged under 1 year (non resident)	114.00	119.70	10%	131.67	7%	140.90	4%	147.00
- children aged 1 year - 17 years	No Charge	No Charge						
- children aged 1 year - 17 years (non resident)	166.00	174.30	10%	191.73	7%	205.20	4%	213.00
- persons aged 18 and over	636.00	667.80	10%	734.58	7%	786.00	4%	817.00
Interment in a bricked grave								
Interment of cremated remains	211.00	221.55	10%	243.71	7%	260.80	4%	271.00
Interment of Cremated Remains (under 17 years non residents only)	78.00	81.90	10%	90.09	7%	96.40	4%	100.00
Scattering cremated remains in grave	89.00	93.45	10%	102.80	7%	110.00	4%	114.00
Exclusive rights of burial (75-year grants)								
- adult grave space	1,603.00	1,683.15	10%	1,851.47	7%	1,981.10	4%	2,060.00
- child grave space	292.00	306.60	10%	337.26	7%	360.90	4%	375.00
- cremated remains plot	612.00	642.60	10%	706.86	7%	756.30	4%	787.00
Renewal of expired deed (single fee charged in all cases)								
Burial	457.00	479.85	10%	527.84	7%	564.80	4%	587.00
Cremated remains	179.00	187.95	10%	206.75	7%	221.20	4%	230.00
ashes grave purchased in reserve	733.00	769.65	10%	846.62	7%	905.90	4%	942.00
- Full grave purchased in reserve	1,969.00	2,067.45	10%	2,274.20	7%	2,433.40	4%	2,531.00
- Disinterment of Remains - Cremated Remains	557.00	584.85	10%	643.34	7%	688.40	4%	716.00
- Wooden cremated remains casket	97.00	101.85	10%	112.04	7%	119.90	4%	125.00
Memorials	104.00	109.20	10%	120.12	7%	128.50	4%	134.00
Bench with 10 year lease & top rail engraving (max 40 letters) - £800.00	863.00	1,188.00	10%	1,306.80	7%	1,398.30	4%	1,454.00
Bench with 10 year lease & standard silver plaque (max 60 letters) - £760.00	820.00	1,130.00	10%	1,243.00	7%	1,330.00	4%	1,383.00
Bench replacement plaque - £110.00	118.00	163.40	10%	179.74	7%	192.30	4%	200.00
-Assignment / Transfer of Exclusive Right of Burial	104.00	109.20	10%	120.12	7%	128.50	4%	134.00
Exhumation Ground works	211.00	221.55	10%	243.71	7%	260.80	4%	271.00
New Container	97.00	125.00	10%	137.50	7%	147.10	4%	153.00
Officer time	216.00	226.80	10%	249.48	7%	266.90	4%	278.00
Cremator usage	33.00	34.65	10%	38.12	7%	40.80	4%	42.00
Certified copy of entry	23.00	24.15	10%	26.57	7%	28.40	4%	30.00
Bird bath memorial								
5 Year Lease								
- size 1 (small)	210.00	222.60	10%	244.86	7%	262.00	4%	273.00
- size 2	234.00	247.80	10%	272.58	7%	291.70	4%	303.00
- size 3	258.00	273.00	10%	300.30	7%	321.30	4%	334.00
- size 4	280.00	297.20	10%	326.92	7%	349.80	4%	363.00
- size 5 (large)	304.00	322.40	10%	354.64	7%	379.50	4%	395.00
10 Year Lease								
- size 1 (small)	327.00	346.50	10%	381.15	7%	407.80	4%	424.00
- size 2	351.00	371.70	10%	408.87	7%	437.50	4%	455.00
- size 3	373.00	396.90	10%	436.59	7%	467.20	4%	486.00
- size 4	397.00	421.10	10%	463.21	7%	495.60	4%	515.00

- size 5 (large)	421.00	444.20	10%	488.62	7%	522.80	4%	544.00
20 Year Lease								
- size 1 (small)	444.00	470.40	10%	517.44	7%	553.70	4%	576.00
- size 2	467.00	495.60	10%	545.16	7%	583.30	4%	607.00
- size 3	490.00	520.80	10%	572.88	7%	613.00	4%	638.00
- size 4	514.00	545.00	10%	599.50	7%	641.50	4%	667.00
- size 5 (large)	538.00	570.20	10%	627.22	7%	671.10	4%	698.00
Motif	117.00	124.00	10%	136.40	7%	145.90	4%	152.00
Memorial Vaults								
Double unit - 20 year lease in first interment and casket	1,310.00	1,390.20	10%	1,529.22	7%	1,636.30	4%	1,702.00
2nd interment of remains including casket	181.00	191.10	10%	210.21	7%	224.90	4%	234.00
Inscribed tablet of upto 80 letters	147.00	155.40	10%	170.94	7%	182.90	4%	190.00
Additional letters (per letter)	4.20	4.50	10%	4.95	7%	5.30	4%	6.00
Standard Motif	105.00	111.30	10%	122.43	7%	131.00	4%	136.00
Photo of 1 person	126.00	133.40	10%	146.74	7%	157.00	4%	163.00
Photo of 2 people	199.00	211.10	10%	232.21	7%	248.50	4%	258.00
Photo of 3 people	257.00	272.00	10%	299.20	7%	320.10	4%	333.00
Other items are available but quoted individually	QUOTED INDIVIDUALLY	QUOTED INDIVIDUALLY	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
Memorial Posts								
Memorial plaque - 3 year lease	251.00	266.70	10%	293.37	7%	313.90	4%	327.00
Motif	47.00	50.40	10%	55.44	7%	59.30	4%	62.00
Replacement Plaque	126.00	133.40	10%	146.74	7%	157.00	4%	163.00
Private Memorial Garden								
Including memorial - 20 year lease	1,678.00	1,778.70	10%	1,956.57	7%	2,093.50	4%	2,177.00
Additional Inscription on Plaque	147.00	154.35	10%	169.79	7%	181.70	4%	189.00
REFUSE COLLECTION								
Bulky Household Waste								
Proposed Charges								
The Bulky Service operates based on a standard unit price based on size and weight, with collection from the								
	9.00	9.50						
Bulky collection - single unit*			Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
*Depending on size items maybe charged for as a multiple of units								
Items that are classed by WCC as non domestic waste	Quotation	Quotation	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
Items not on the boundary of the property	Quotation	Quotation	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
Litter and Dog Bins (Yearly Charge)								
High Usage Site First Bin	850.00	850.00	10%	935.00	7%	1,000.50	4%	1,040.50
High Usage Site Additional Bins (each)	350.00	350.00	10%	385.00	7%	412.00	4%	428.50
Medium Usage Site First Bin	425.00	425.00	10%	467.50	7%	500.20	4%	520.20
Medium Usage Site Additional Bins (each)	175.00	175.00	10%	192.50	7%	206.00	4%	214.20
Low Usage Site First Bin	210.00	210.00	10%	231.00	7%	247.20	4%	257.10
Low Usage Site Additional Bins (each)	90.00	90.00	10%	99.00	7%	105.90	4%	110.10
Parish Lengthsman Work								
Hourly Rate	15.75	15.75	10%	17.33	7%	18.50	4%	19.20
High Hedge Complaints								
High Hedge Complaints - reduced for people on benefits	595.10	624.90	10%	687.39	7%	735.50	4%	764.90
	237.60	249.50	10%	274.45	7%	293.70	4%	305.40

Page 206

Investigation of Abandoned Vehicles on Private Land								
Per Vehicle	60.00	60.00	10%	66.00	7%	70.60	4%	73.40
Mechanically Sweep Private Road / Car Park - Sweeper per Hour + disposal costs	50.00	50.00	10%	55.00	7%	58.90	4%	61.30
Garden Waste Collection Service (2021/23)	46.00	46.00	10%	50.60	7%	54.10	4%	56.30
Re-issue of service	40.00	40.00	10%	44.00	7%	47.10	4%	49.00
Road Closures								
New Charge - £80 per Road closure plus VAT				80.00	7%	85.60	4%	89.00

This page is intentionally left blank

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Environmental Services

Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.

Service Category	Charge 1st April 2021 £	Charge from April 2022 £	Charge Increase 23/24	Charge 1st April 2023 £	Charge Increase 24/25	Proposed Charge 24/5 £
CAR PARKS						
Churchfields Multi-storey						
Not exceeding 30 minutes	0.40	0.40	0%	0.40	0%	0.40
Not exceeding one hour	0.80	0.80	0%	0.80	0%	0.80
Not exceeding two hours	1.60	1.60	0%	1.60	0%	1.60
Not exceeding three hours	2.40	2.40	0%	2.40	0%	2.40
All day	3.00	3.00	0%	3.00	0%	3.00
New Road						
Not exceeding 30 minutes	0.40	0.40	0%	0.40	0%	0.40
Not exceeding one hour	0.80	0.80	0%	0.80	0%	0.80
Not exceeding two hours	1.60	1.60	0%	1.60	0%	1.60
Not exceeding three hours	2.40	2.40	0%	2.40	0%	2.40
All day	5.00	5.00	0%	5.00	0%	5.00
North Bromsgrove						
Not exceeding 30 minutes	0.40	0.40	0%	0.40	0%	0.40
Not exceeding one hour	0.80	0.80	0%	0.80	0%	0.80
Not exceeding two hours	1.60	1.60	0%	1.60	0%	1.60
Not exceeding three hours	2.40	2.40	0%	2.40	0%	2.40
All day	5.00	5.00	0%	5.00	0%	5.00
Walsley						
Not exceeding 30 minutes	0.40	0.40	0%	0.40	0%	0.40
Not exceeding one hour	0.80	0.80	0%	0.80	0%	0.80
Not exceeding two hours	1.60	1.60	0%	1.60	0%	1.60
Not exceeding three hours	2.40	2.40	0%	2.40	0%	2.40
All day	5.00	5.00	0%	5.00	0%	5.00
School Drive						
Not exceeding 30 minutes	0.40	0.40	0%	0.40	0%	0.40
Not exceeding one hour	0.80	0.80	0%	0.80	0%	0.80
Not exceeding two hours	1.60	1.60	0%	1.60	0%	1.60
Not exceeding three hours	2.40	2.40	0%	2.40	0%	2.40
All day	5.00	5.00	0%	5.00	0%	5.00
Stourbridge Road						
Not exceeding 30 minutes	0.40	0.40	0%	0.40	0%	0.40
Not exceeding one hour	0.80	0.80	0%	0.80	0%	0.80
Not exceeding two hours	1.60	1.60	0%	1.60	0%	1.60
Not exceeding three hours	2.40	2.40	0%	2.40	0%	2.40
All day	5.00	5.00	0%	5.00	0%	5.00

Service Category	charge 1st April 2021	Proposed charge from 2022				
	£	£				
Recreation Road South						
Not exceeding 30 minutes	0.40	0.40	0%	0.40	0%	0.40
Not exceeding one hour	0.80	0.80	0%	0.80	0%	0.80
Not exceeding two hours	1.60	1.60	0%	1.60	0%	1.60
Not exceeding three hours	2.40	2.40	0%	2.40	0%	2.40
Not exceeding four hours	3.20	3.20	0%	3.20	0%	3.20
Not exceeding five hours	4.00	4.00	0%	4.00	0%	4.00
Not exceeding Six hours	6.40	6.40	0%	6.40	0%	6.40
Not exceeding Seven hours	8.80	8.80	0%	8.80	0%	8.80
Not exceeding Eight hours	11.20	11.20	0%	11.20	0%	11.20
Windsor Street						
Not exceeding 30 minutes	0.50	0.50	0%	0.50	0%	0.50
Not exceeding one hour	1.00	1.00	0%	1.00	0%	1.00
Not exceeding two hours	2.00	2.00	0%	2.00	0%	2.00
St John Street						
Not exceeding 30 minutes	0.50	0.50	0%	0.50	0%	0.50
Not exceeding one hour	1.00	1.00	0%	1.00	0%	1.00
Not exceeding two hours	2.00	2.00	0%	2.00	0%	2.00
Not exceeding three hours	3.00	3.00	0%	3.00	0%	3.00
Season Tickets (valid at long stay car parks only)						
Annual	320.00	320.00	0%	320.00	0%	320.00
Quarterly	80.00	80.00	0%	80.00	0%	80.00
Season Tickets (valid at Churchfields Road car park only)						
Annual	215.00	215.00	0%	215.00	0%	215.00
Quarterly	53.75	53.75	0%	53.75	0%	53.80
Season Tickets (valid at Alvechurch Sports and Social club car park only)						
Annual	250.00	250.00	0%	250.00	0%	250.00
Quarterly	62.50	62.50	0%	62.50	0%	62.50
Parking Fines PCN's On Street						
Certain Contraventions	70.00	70.00	Stat	70.00	Stat	70.00
If paid within fourteen days	35.00	35.00	Stat	35.00	Stat	35.00
Other contraventions	50.00	50.00	Stat	50.00	Stat	50.00
If paid within fourteen days	25.00	25.00	Stat	25.00	Stat	25.00
<i>These charges will increase if the charge remains unpaid after the 28 days given on the NTO (Notice to Owner)</i>						
Parking Fines PCN's Off Street						
Certain Contraventions	70.00	70.00	Stat	70.00	Stat	70.00
If paid within fourteen days	35.00	35.00	Stat	35.00	Stat	35.00
Other contraventions	50.00	50.00	Stat	50.00	Stat	50.00
If paid within fourteen days	25.00	25.00	Stat	25.00	Stat	25.00
<i>These charges will increase if the charge remains unpaid after the 28 days given on the NTO (Notice to Owner)</i>						

Car Park charges apply everyday

Charge Increase 25/26	Proposed Charge 25/6 £
0%	0.40
0%	0.80
0%	1.60
0%	2.40
0%	3.00
0%	0.40
0%	0.80
0%	1.60
0%	2.40
0%	5.00
0%	0.40
0%	0.80
0%	1.60
0%	2.40
0%	5.00
0%	0.40
0%	0.80
0%	1.60
0%	2.40
0%	5.00
0%	0.40
0%	0.80
0%	1.60
0%	2.40
0%	5.00

Agenda Item 12i

0%	0.40
0%	0.80
0%	1.60
0%	2.40
0%	3.20
0%	4.00
0%	6.40
0%	8.80
0%	11.20
0%	0.50
0%	1.00
0%	2.00
0%	0.50
0%	1.00
0%	2.00
0%	3.00
0%	320.00
0%	80.00
0%	215.00
0%	53.80
0%	250.00
0%	62.50
Stat	70.00
Stat	35.00
Stat	50.00
Stat	25.00
Stat	70.00
Stat	35.00
Stat	50.00
Stat	25.00

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**Financial and Customer Service**

Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.

SERVICE CATEGORY	Charge 1st April 2021	Charge from April 2022	Charge Increase 23/24	Charge 1st April 2023	Charge Increase 24/25	Proposed Charge 24/5	Charge Increase 25/26	Proposed Charge 25/6
	£	£		£		£		£
LOCAL TAX COLLECTION								
	67.50	67.50	10%	74.25	7%	79.40	4%	82.60
- Council Tax Court Costs (includes Magistrates Court fee of 50p)	97.50	97.50	10%	107.25	7%	114.80	4%	119.40
- NNDR Court Costs (includes Magistrates Court fee of 50p)	0.50	0.50	10%	0.55	7%	0.60	4%	0.60
- Magistrates' court fee (added to both council tax and NNDR Summons)								

This page is intentionally left blank

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Legal, Democratic and Property Services

Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.

Service Category	Charge 1st April 2021 £	Charge from April 2022 £	Charge Increase 23/24	Charge 1st April 2023 £	Charge Increase 24/25	Proposed Charge 24/5 £	Charge Increase 25/26	Proposed Charge 25/6 £
ELECTORAL REGISTRATION								
Register Sales*								
In data form								
- basic fee	20.00	20.00	Stat	20.00	Stat	20.00	Stat	20.00
- for each 1,000 names or part thereof	1.50	20.00	Stat	20.00	Stat	20.00	Stat	20.00
In printed form								
- basic fee	10.00	10.00	Stat	10.00	Stat	10.00	Stat	10.00
- for each 1,000 names or part thereof	5.00	5.00	Stat	5.00	Stat	5.00	Stat	5.00
Marked Election Register Sales*								
In data form								
- basic fee	10.00	10.00	Stat	10.00	Stat	10.00	Stat	10.00
- for each 1,000 names or part thereof	1.00	1.00	Stat	1.00	Stat	1.00	Stat	1.00
In printed form								
- basic fee	10.00	10.00	Stat	10.00	Stat	10.00	Stat	10.00
- for each 1,000 names or part thereof	2.00	2.00	Stat	2.00	Stat	2.00	Stat	2.00
Copy of return of Election expenses plus 20p per sheet, per side.	5.00	5.00	Stat	5.00	Stat	5.00	Stat	5.00
Miscellaneous Charges								
* Address labels printed	13.50	13.50	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
* - for each 1,000 properties or part thereof	6.80	6.80	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
- street list	13.50	13.50	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
* - Data Property Addresses	24.50	13.50	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
* - For each 1,000 properties or part thereof	1.90	1.90	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
LEGAL								
- Legal work (per hour)	146.80	155.60	10%	171.16	7%	183.10	4%	190.40
- Legal Consent - Admin Fee	26.10	27.70	10%	30.47	7%	32.60	4%	33.90
- RTB	205.10	217.40	10%	239.14	7%	255.90	4%	266.10
- Consent for proposed works	161.20	170.90	10%	187.99	7%	201.10	4%	209.10
- Retrospective Consent	169.60	179.80	10%	197.78	7%	211.60	4%	220.10
Garden License	249.80	264.80	10%	291.28	7%	311.70	4%	324.20
Wayleave Agreement	374.70	397.20	10%	436.92	7%	467.50	4%	486.20
Deed of Grant or Easement	392.70	416.30	10%	457.93	7%	490.00	4%	509.60
License to Assign	392.70	416.30	10%	457.93	7%	490.00	4%	509.60
Rent Deposit Deed	392.70	416.30	10%	457.93	7%	490.00	4%	509.60
Authorised Guarantee Agreement	392.70	416.30	10%	457.93	7%	490.00	4%	509.60
License for Alterations	392.70	416.30	10%	457.93	7%	490.00	4%	509.60
License to Sublet	392.70	416.30	10%	457.93	7%	490.00	4%	509.60
Deed of Variation	392.70	416.30	10%	457.93	7%	490.00	4%	509.60
Grant of Lease	531.10	563.00	10%	619.30	7%	662.70	4%	689.20
Extended Lease	531.10	563.00	10%	619.30	7%	662.70	4%	689.20
Deed of Surrender	392.70	416.30	10%	457.93	7%	490.00	4%	509.60
Tenancy at Will	392.70	416.30	10%	457.93	7%	490.00	4%	509.60
Renewal of Lease	392.70	416.30	10%	457.93	7%	490.00	4%	509.60
Section 106:								
- Private Owner	548.70	581.60	10%	639.76	7%	684.50	4%	711.90
- Each additional unit added (up to a maximum of £1,650)	73.50	77.90	10%	85.69	7%	91.70	4%	95.40
- Affordable housing schemes	1,030.10	1,091.90	10%	1,201.09	7%	1,285.20	4%	1,336.60

Page 215

Agenda Item 12i

- Deed of Variation	391.50	415.00	10%	456.50	7%	488.50	4%	508.00
- Fee for agreeing a unilateral undertaking	391.50	415.00	10%	456.50	7%	488.50	4%	508.00
Other Fees								
- Fees for sale of property under Low Cost Housing Scheme	269.90	286.10	10%	314.71	7%	336.70	4%	350.20
- Fees for purchase of additional 30% Share	176.10	186.70	10%	205.37	7%	219.70	4%	228.50
- Fees for preparation of Deed of postponement	115.00	121.90	10%	134.09	7%	143.50	4%	149.20
- Administration fee for the grant of licences for more than 12 months	64.60	68.50	10%	75.35	7%	80.60	4%	83.80
- Issuing of consents (transfer of mortgage)	76.20	80.80	10%	88.88	7%	95.10	4%	98.90
Minor land sales up to £10,000	515.70	546.60	10%	601.26	7%	643.30	4%	669.00
Major Land sales £10,000+ 2.75% of purchase price with a minimum charge of £500	Fixed Fee	Fixed Fee	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
Major Land sales £50,000+ 2.75% of purchase price with a minimum charge of £750	Fixed Fee	Fixed Fee	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
Deed of Release of Covenant	392.70	416.30	10%	457.93	7%	490.00	4%	509.60
- Footpath Diversion Orders	2,189.60	2,299.10	10%	2,529.01	7%	2,706.00	4%	2,814.20
LAND SEARCHES								
Single Con29 Question								
Official Certificate of Search (LLC1) only	29.20	N/A						
CON29R Enquiries of Local Authority (2016)								
- Residential	111.60	111.60	10%	122.76	7%	131.40	4%	136.70
- Commercial	156.30	156.30	10%	171.93	7%	184.00	4%	191.40
Standard Search Fee: LLC1 and CON 29R combined								
- Residential	142.90	N/A						
- Commercial	188.90	N/A						
CON 290 Optional enquiries of Local Authority (2007)								
(Questions 5,6,8,9,11,15) per question	13.50	14.20	10%	15.62	7%	16.70	4%	17.40
(Questions 7,10,12,13,14,16-21) per question	6.80	7.10	10%	7.81	7%	8.40	4%	8.70
(Question 22)	30.00	30.00	10%	33.00	7%	35.30	4%	36.70
Extra written enquiries (Refer to Worcestershire County Council for Highways enquiries)	52.70	55.30	10%	60.83	7%	65.10	4%	67.70
Question 4	15.80	15.80	10%	17.38	7%	18.60	4%	19.30
Each additional parcel of land (LLC1 and CON29R)	24.70	N/A						
Expedited (within 48 hrs)	33.70	35.40	10%	38.94	7%	41.70	4%	43.40
PARKSIDE SUITE								
Per Hour (Suggest min Hire of 2hrs)								
Main Room								
Community Group	23.00	24.00	10%	26.40	7%	28.20	4%	29.30
Regular Hire	35.00	36.50	10%	40.15	7%	43.00	4%	44.70
Commercial Hire	46.00	48.00	10%	52.80	7%	56.50	4%	58.80
Committee Room								
Community Group	13.00	13.60	10%	14.96	7%	16.00	4%	16.60
Regular Hire	19.00	19.80	10%	21.78	7%	23.30	4%	24.20
Commercial Hire	25.50	26.60	10%	29.26	7%	31.30	4%	32.60
Committee Room 2 – Full Day								
Community Group	75.00	0.00						
Regular Hire	88.00	0.00						
Commercial Hire	106.00	0.00						
Committee Room 2 – Half Day								
Community Group	45.00	0.00						
Regular Hire	60.00	0.00						
Commercial Hire	72.00	0.00						
Committee Room 2 – per hour (min 2Hours)								
Community Group	17.00	17.00	10%	18.70	7%	20.00	4%	20.80
Regular Hire	22.00	22.00	10%	24.20	7%	25.90	4%	26.90
Commercial Hire	30.00	30.00	10%	33.00	7%	35.30	4%	36.70
Combined								
Community Group	31.00	32.50	10%	35.75	7%	38.30	4%	39.80

Regular Hire	49.00	51.00	10%	56.10	7%	60.00	4%	62.40
Commercial Hire	67.50	70.50	10%	77.55	7%	83.00	4%	86.30
Half Day up to 5pm (max 4hrs)								
Main Room								
Community Group	86.00	90.00	10%	99.00	7%	105.90	4%	110.10
Regular Hire	105.00	110.00	10%	121.00	7%	129.50	4%	134.70
Commercial Hire	172.50	180.00	10%	198.00	7%	211.90	4%	220.40
Committee Room								
Community Group	38.00	39.60	10%	43.56	7%	46.60	4%	48.50
Regular Hire	52.00	54.30	10%	59.73	7%	63.90	4%	66.50
	65.00	68.00						
Commercial Hire			10%	74.80	7%	80.00	4%	83.20
Combined								
Community Group	105.00	109.50	10%	120.45	7%	128.90	4%	134.10
Regular Hire	150.00	156.50	10%	172.15	7%	184.20	4%	191.60
	215.00	224.00						
Commercial Hire			10%	246.40	7%	263.60	4%	274.10
Full Day Up to 5pm								
Main Room								
Community Group	160.00	167.00	10%	183.70	7%	196.60	4%	204.50
Regular Hire	200.00	208.70	10%	229.57	7%	245.60	4%	255.40
	280.00	292.00						
Commercial Hire			10%	321.20	7%	343.70	4%	357.40
Committee Room								
Community Group	65.00	67.80	10%	74.58	7%	79.80	4%	83.00
Regular Hire	78.00	81.50	10%	89.65	7%	95.90	4%	99.70
Commercial Hire	96.00	100.00	10%	110.00	7%	117.70	4%	122.40
Combined								
Community Group	205.00	214.00	10%	235.40	7%	251.90	4%	262.00
Regular Hire	260.00	271.00	10%	298.10	7%	319.00	4%	331.80
	345.00	360.00						
Commercial Hire			10%	396.00	7%	423.70	4%	440.60
	345.00	360.00	10%	396.00	7%	423.70	4%	440.60
Combined Evening Commercial Hire, Fridays and Saturday's, 5pm - Midnight								
Only half day and full day rates allowed for weekends. No hourly rates.								
All day rate for weddings £720** (day and evening to include kitchen and set up) 9am – 12 midnight								
Sunday hire rates by negotiation.								
Room 54(Training Room) - Any internal county organisations whom wish to use this room will be charged £25.00 per hour.								
Customer Services								
Interview rooms (based at the service centre)								
- Per Full day (9am - 5pm)	44.40	46.30	10%	50.93	7%	54.50	4%	56.70
- Per Half day (9am-1pm/1pm-5pm)	27.80	29.00	10%	31.90	7%	34.10	4%	35.50
	9.50	9.90						
- Per hour (1Full hour only)			10%	10.89	7%	11.70	4%	12.20
Bromsgrove Markets								
3 x 3 Market Stall (per day)								
Tuesday Regular Trader	26.50	27.30	10%	30.03	7%	32.10	4%	33.40

Tuesday Casual Trader	28.50	29.40	10%	32.34	7%	34.60	4%	36.00
Each additional stall requested	11.50	11.85	10%	13.04	7%	13.90	4%	14.50
Friday Regular Trader	30.50	31.40	10%	34.54	7%	37.00	4%	38.50
Friday Casual Trader	32.50	33.50	10%	36.85	7%	39.40	4%	41.00
Each additional stall requested	11.50	11.85	10%	13.04	7%	13.90	4%	14.50
Saturday Regular Trader	32.50	33.50	10%	36.85	7%	39.40	4%	41.00
Saturday Casual Trader	34.50	35.50	10%	39.05	7%	41.80	4%	43.50
Each additional stall requested	12.00	12.35	10%	13.59	7%	14.50	4%	15.10
Catering Van								
Tuesday Regular Trader	25.50	26.25	10%	28.88	7%	30.90	4%	32.10
Tuesday Casual Trader	30.00	30.90	10%	33.99	7%	36.40	4%	37.90
Friday Regular Trader	29.50	30.40	10%	33.44	7%	35.80	4%	37.20
Friday Casual Trader	34.00	35.00	10%	38.50	7%	41.20	4%	42.80
Saturday Regular Trader	31.50	32.45	10%	35.70	7%	38.20	4%	39.70
Saturday Casual Trader	36.00	37.10	10%	40.81	7%	43.70	4%	45.40
All 3 days (Annual booking per week) - Charge to be deleted	78.00	0.00	10%	0.00	7%	0.00	4%	0.00
All 3 days (Casual booking per week) - Charge to be deleted	83.60	0.00	10%	0.00	7%	0.00	4%	0.00
Table only booking for Craft Markets (only available in good weather)								
First two 5ft tables	15.00	15.45	10%	17.00	7%	18.20	4%	18.90
each additional table	5.00	5.15	10%	5.67	7%	6.10	4%	6.30
Electric								
Regular 3 day traders	9.20	9.50	10%	10.45	7%	11.20	4%	11.60
Casual/Single day traders per day	5.00	5.15	10%	5.67	7%	6.10	4%	6.30
Trade Waste Collection								
Regular 3 day traders	2.60	2.70	10%	2.97	7%	3.20	4%	3.30
Casual/Single day traders	5.00	5.15	10%	5.67	7%	6.10	4%	6.30
Other Market Charges - New Charges								
Vintage, Craft and Food Markets								
Single Stall	20.00	20.60	10%	22.66	7%	24.20	4%	25.20
Additional stalls	10.00	10.30	10%	11.33	7%	12.10	4%	12.60
Catering units/pitch	15.00	15.45	10%	17.00	7%	18.20	4%	18.90
Sunday Food Festival Markets								
Price by negotiation to include staff on cost and overtime	price on negotiation	price on negotiation	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
Seasonal Traders								
Seasonal supplement per stall for seasonal adhoc traders in December	5.00	5.20	10%	5.72	7%	6.10	4%	6.30
Market Hire								
Hiring cost of providing a market to Parish Councils or other organisations	700.00	721.00	10%	793.10	7%	848.60	4%	882.50
Trader Incentive Scheme								
New traders attending the market on a Tuesday will be charged 50% rent fee for 4 weeks continuous weeks only (based on a 3m x 3m stall)	14.25	14.70	10%	16.17	7%	17.30	4%	18.00
New traders attending the market on a Friday will be charged 50% rent fee for 4 weeks continuous weeks only (based on a 3m x 3m stall)	15.25	15.70	10%	17.27	7%	18.50	4%	19.20
New traders attending the market on a Saturday will be charged 50% rent fee for 4 weeks continuous weeks only (based on a 3m x 3m stall)	17.25	17.80	10%	19.58	7%	21.00	4%	21.80
Property Services - New Charges								
Minor Land Sales Request for Information	52.90	72.00	10%	79.20	7%	84.70	4%	88.10
Minor Land Sales Full Application	387.35	492.00	10%	541.20	7%	579.10	4%	602.30
Advertising - Estimated Fee	657.30	NIL						
Advertising - Estimated Fee per Advert (new charge based on cost per advert	0.00	360.00	10%	396.00	7%	423.70	4%	440.60
Surveyors Fees - Estimated Fee	528.25	NIL						

Page 28

Agenda Item 12i

Surveyors Fees - Estimated Fee (new charge based on an hourly cost)	0.00	90.00	10%	99.00	7%	105.90	4%	110.10
---	------	-------	-----	-------	----	--------	----	--------

This page is intentionally left blank

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services

Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.

Service Category	Charge 1st April 2021 £	Charge from April 2022 £	Charge Increase 23/24	Charge 1st April 2023 £	Charge Increase 24/25	Proposed Charge 24/5 £	Charge Increase 25/26
Development Management							
Pre Application Fee							
Residential Development/ Development Site Area/Proposed Gross Floor Area							
Householder Development	103.00	109.00					
1* Dwelling	222.00	234.00	10%	119.90	7%	128.29	4%
2-4 Dwellings	333.00	350.00	10%	257.40	7%	275.42	4%
5-9 Dwellings	666.00	700.00	10%	385.00	7%	411.95	4%
10 - 49 Dwellings	1,333.00	1,400.00	10%	770.00	7%	823.90	4%
50 - 99 Dwellings	2,443.00	2,566.00	10%	1,540.00	7%	1,647.80	4%
100 - 199 Dwellings	3,333.00	3,500.00	10%	2,822.60	7%	3,020.18	4%
200+ Dwellings	4,443.00	4,665.00	10%	3,850.00	7%	4,119.50	4%
* includes one-for-one replacements				5,131.50	7%	5,490.71	4%
Non-residential development (floor space)							
For area is measured externally							
Less than 500sqm	308.00	324.00	10%	356.40	7%	381.35	4%
500 - 999sqm	556.00	584.00	10%	642.40	7%	687.37	4%
1000 - 1999sqm	1,111.00	1,167.00	10%	1,283.70	7%	1,373.56	4%
2000 - 4999sqm	2,221.00	2,332.00	10%	2,565.20	7%	2,744.76	4%
5000 - 9999sqm	2,777.00	2,916.00	10%	3,207.60	7%	3,432.13	4%
10,000sqm or greater	3,333.00	3,500.00	10%	3,850.00	7%	4,119.50	4%
Non-residential development (site area) where no building operations are proposed							
Less than 0.5ha	334.00	351.00	10%	386.10	7%	413.13	4%
0.5 - 0.99ha	666.00	700.00	10%	770.00	7%	823.90	4%
1 - 1.25ha	1,111.00	1,167.00	10%	1,283.70	7%	1,373.56	4%
1.26 - 2ha	2,221.00	2,332.00	10%	2,565.20	7%	2,744.76	4%
2ha or greater	3,333.00	3,500.00	10%	3,850.00	7%	4,119.50	4%
Variation/removal of conditions and engineering operations (flat fee)	205.00	216.00	10%	0.00	7%	0.00	4%
Recovering Costs for seeking specialist advice in connection with Planning proposals	Full recovery cost	Full recovery cost	10%	237.60	7%	254.23	4%
			Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
Monitoring Fees to be applied to Planning Obligations.							
Obligations where the Council is the recipient							
All contributions (financial or non-monetary) - PER OBLIGATION	298.00	313.00	10%	344.30	7%	368.40	4%
Pre-commencement trigger - PER OBLIGATION	103.00	109.00	10%	119.90	7%	128.29	4%
Other Triggers (Phased Payments/Provision of Infrastructure) - PER TRIGGER POINT	154.00	162.00	10%	178.20	7%	190.67	4%
Other obligations (eg. Occupation restrictions or removal of Permitted Development rights) - PER CLAUSE	123.00	130.00	10%	143.00	7%	153.01	4%
Obligations for another signatory (eg. Worcestershire County Council)							
All contributions (financial or non-monetary) - PER OBLIGATION	180.00	189.00	10%	207.90	7%	222.45	4%
Pre-commencement trigger - PER OBLIGATION	62.00	66.00	10%	72.60	7%	77.68	4%
Other Triggers (Phased Payments/Provision of Infrastructure) - PER TRIGGER POINT	92.00	97.00	10%	106.70	7%	114.17	4%
Ongoing Monitoring of large sites	410.00	431.00	10%	474.10	7%	507.29	4%

Fee Concessions

Some pre-application advice will still be provided free of charge. For example where the development is for the direct benefit of a disabled person (and as such there would be no fee incurred to make the planning application) or where works relate to a listed building.

Some advice is provided at a reduced or concessionary rate. If the proposal is being submitted by or is for the benefit of a Parish Council or other Local Authority, then the appropriate fee is reduced by 50%. In addition if the scheme relates to a solely affordable housing scheme, the Applicant is a Registered Social Landlord or Housing Association the fee for pre application advice would also be reduced by 50%.

BUILDING CONTROL -2021 - VAT AT 20%

Explanatory notes

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

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

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

3 Exemptions and reductions in charges.

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

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

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

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

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

Other information

- 1 These notes are for guidance only and do not replace Statutory Instrument 2010 number 0404 which contains the full statement of the law, and the Scheme of Recovery of Fees dated April 2014.
 2 These guidance notes refer to the charges that you have to pay for building control services within North Worcestershire.

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

Bromsgrove 01527 881402

Page 222

Service Category	charge 1st April 2020 £	Proposed charge from 2021 £					
TABLE A: Standard Charges for the Creation or Conversion to New Housing							
Application Charge	Please Ring for Quote	Please Ring for Quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
Regularisation Charge	Please Ring for Quote	Please Ring for Quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
Additional Charge	Please Ring for Quote	Please Ring for Quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
TABLE B: Domestic Extensions and alterations to a Single Building (please contact us)							
Application Charge - New	Please Ring for Quote	Please Ring for Quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
Regularisation Charge - New	Please Ring for Quote	Please Ring for Quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
Additional Charge - New	Please Ring for Quote	Please Ring for Quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
Garage Conversion to habitable room							
Application Charge	375.00	375.00	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
	450.00	450.00	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
Regularisation Charge			Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
Additional Charge	Please contact us	Please contact us	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
Electrical works by non-qualified electrician							

Application Charge	Please contact us	Please contact us	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
Regularisation Charge Additional Charge	Please contact us N/A	Please contact us N/A	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
Renovation of thermal element							
Application Charge	231.00	231.00	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
	275.00	275.00					
Regularisation Charge Additional Charge	N/A	N/A	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
Installing steel beam(s) within an existing house							
Application Charge	225.00	225.00	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
Regularisation Charge Additional Charge	270.00 N/A	270.00 N/A	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
Window replacement							
Application Charge	225.00	225.00	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
	270.00	270.00	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
Regularisation Charge Additional Charge	N/A	N/A					
Installing a new boiler or wood burner etc.							
Application Charge	440.00	440.00	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
	530.00	530.00	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
Regularisation Charge Additional Charge	N/A	N/A					
TABLE C: All Other works - Alterations and new build							
Application Charge	Please Contact Us	Please Contact Us	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
Regularisation Charge	Please Contact Us	Please Contact Us	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost

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

These charges have been set on the following basis:

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

Building Control – Supplementary Charges

If you are selling a property that has been extended or altered, you need to provide evidence to prospective purchasers that any relevant building work has been inspected and approved by a Building Control Body. That evidence is in the form of a Building Regulations Completion / Final Certificate and / or an Approval or Initial Notice (called the 'authorised documents' in the Home Information Pack Regulations). Legal entitlement to a Completion Certificate is subject to conditions. In cases where the Council is not told that building work is completed, or the building is occupied without addressing outstanding Building Regulation matters, a certificate is not issued. Despite the best efforts of the Council's Building Control Surveyors, many home owners who undertake building works fail to obtain a Completion Certificate and their application is archived. A fee is payable to re-open archived building regulations applications for the purposes of issuing a completion certificate.

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

ARCHIVED APPLICATIONS						
Process request to re-open archived building control file, resolve case and issue completion certificate (Administration Fee)	55.40	55.40	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
Each visit to site in connection with resolving archived building control cases (Per Site Visit)	72.30	72.30	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS						
Process request	55.40	55.40	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
<u>With additional fees of:</u>						
Withdraw Building Notice application where no inspections have taken place	refund submitted fee less admin fee	refund submitted fee less admin fee	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery

Withdraw Building Notice application where inspections have taken place	refund submitted fee less admin fee, less £72.30 per site visit made	refund submitted fee less admin fee, less £72.30 per site visit made	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
Withdrawn Full Plans application without plans being checked or any site inspections being made	refund submitted fee less admin fee	refund submitted fee less admin fee	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
Withdraw Full Plans application after plan check but before any inspections on site	refund inspection fee (where paid up-front) less admin fee	refund inspection fee (where paid up-front) less admin fee	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
Withdraw Full Plans application after plan check and after site inspections made	refund any paid inspection fee less admin fee, less £72.30 per site inspection made	refund any paid inspection fee less admin fee, less £72.30 per site inspection made	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
RE-DIRECT INSPECTION FEES / ISSUE COPY DOCUMENTS							
Process request to re-invoice inspection fee to new addressee or issue copies of previously issued Completion Certificates, Plans Approval Notices or Building Notice acceptances.	55.40	55.40	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
Optional Consultancy Services	Please Contact Us	Please Contact Us	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
Charges Note							

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

SPORTS DEVELOPMENT							
Community exercise class	3.50	3.70	10%	4.07	7%	4.35	4%
Specialised health class	3.50	3.70	10%	4.07	7%	4.35	4%
Primary Sports Project (Standard Curriculum)	30.00	NIL					
Primary Sports Project (Specialist Curriculum)	35.00	NIL					
Inclusive activities (hourly rate)	3.30	3.50	10%	3.85	7%	4.12	4%
Inclusive activities (90 minute rate)	3.80	4.00	10%	4.40	7%	4.71	4%
Inclusive activities (2 hour rate)	4.40	NIL					
Multi Skills clubs	4.00	NIL					
Community Gymnastics	4.00	4.20	10%	4.62	7%	4.94	4%
Couch 2 5k	1.00	1.00	10%	1.10	7%	1.18	4%
PSI Falls Prevention	3.50	3.70	10%	4.07	7%	4.35	4%
SANDERS PARK							
Tennis Courts (per court per Hour)							
- Adult	7.55	7.95	10%	8.75	7%	9.36	4%
- Adult & Junior	6.60	6.95	10%	7.65	7%	8.18	4%
- Junior/Senior Citizen	5.05	5.30	10%	5.83	7%	6.24	4%
Tennis Courts (per court per 1 and 1/2 Hour)							
- Adult	11.00	11.50	10%	12.65	7%	13.54	4%
- Adult & Junior	9.50	10.00	10%	11.00	7%	11.77	4%
- Junior/Senior Citizen	8.50	8.80	10%	9.68	7%	10.36	4%
Bowls							
- Adult (per hour)	8.00	8.40	10%	9.24	7%	9.89	4%
- Junior (per hour)	4.20	4.40	10%	4.84	7%	5.18	4%
- Senior Citizen (per hour)	5.50	5.80	10%	6.38	7%	6.83	4%
- Adult (season ticket)	53.50	55.00	10%	60.50	7%	64.74	4%

- Junior (season ticket)	29.00	30.00	10%	33.00	7%	35.31	4%
- Senior Citizen (season ticket)	39.00	40.00	10%	44.00	7%	47.08	4%
Hire of Bowls Green Pavillion - half day (4 hours) - new charge	NEW	60.00	10%	66.00	7%	70.62	4%
Hire of Bowls Green Pavillion - full day - new charge	NEW	90.00	10%	99.00	7%	105.93	4%
OTHER RECREATION GROUNDS AND OPEN SPACES							
Football							
SENIOR 11 a side with changing							
Match games	55.00	58.00	10%	63.80	7%	68.27	4%
SENIOR 11 a side without changing							
Match games	40.00	42.50	10%	46.75	7%	50.02	4%
JUNIOR 9 or 11 a side with changing							
Match games	30.00	32.00	10%	35.20	7%	37.66	4%
per season (x 12 games)	360.00	384.00	10%	422.40	7%	451.97	4%
JUNIOR 9 or 11 a side without changing							
Match games	22.50	24.00	10%	26.40	7%	28.25	4%
per season (x 12 games)	270.00	288.00	10%	316.80	7%	338.98	4%
MINI FOOTBALL 5 or 7 a side							
Match games	16.50	17.50	10%	19.25	7%	20.60	4%
per season (x 12 games)	198.00	210.00	10%	231.00	7%	247.17	4%
ALLOTMENTS							
- Rent per acre equivalent to 0.404685 hectares	1,173.10	NA					
- Rent per 3/4 acre equivalent to 0.303514 hectares	787.80	NA					
- Rent per 1/2 acre equivalent to 0.202342 hectares	467.50	NA					
- Rent per 1/4 acre equivalent to 0.101171 hectares	214.80	NA					
- Rent per 1/16 acre equivalent to 0.25529 hectares	49.40	68.60	10%	75.46	7%	80.74	4%
- Rent per 1/32 acre equivalent to 0.01264 hectares	34.60	45.80	10%	50.38	7%	53.91	4%
Events, Open Spaces and Civic Spaces Hire							
£250 - £1500 Bond Payable							
Events							
Commercial Rates							
Small Attendance = 0 to 99							
Per half day	155.00	160.00	10%	176.00	7%	188.32	4%
Per Day	282.00	290.00	10%	319.00	7%	341.33	4%
Medium Attendance = 100 to 499							
Per half day	220.00	225.00	10%	247.50	7%	264.83	4%
Per Day	378.00	385.00	10%	423.50	7%	453.15	4%
Large Attendance = 500 to 1999							
Per half day	280.00	290.00	10%	319.00	7%	341.33	4%
Per Day	472.00	485.00	10%	533.50	7%	570.85	4%
Community Rates							
Small Attendance = 0 to 99							
Per half day	65.00	66.00	10%	72.60	7%	77.68	4%
Per Day	106.00	107.50	10%	118.25	7%	126.53	4%
Medium Attendance = 100 to 499							
Per half day	80.00	81.00	10%	89.10	7%	95.34	4%
Per Day	134.50	136.00	10%	149.60	7%	160.07	4%
Large Attendance = 500 to 1999							
Per half day	95.00	96.00	10%	105.60	7%	112.99	4%
Per Day	166.00	167.00	10%	183.70	7%	196.56	4%
Charities / Not For Profit Organisations							
Small Attendance = 0 to 99							
Per half day	45.00	45.00	10%	49.50	7%	52.97	4%
Per Day	74.00	74.00	10%	81.40	7%	87.10	4%
Medium Attendance = 100 to 499							
Per half day	54.00	54.00	10%	59.40	7%	63.56	4%

Per Day	89.50	89.50	10%	98.45	7%	105.34	4%
Large Attendance = 500 to 1999							
Per half day	65.00	65.00	10%	71.50	7%	76.51	4%
Per Day	118.30	118.30	10%	130.13	7%	139.24	4%
Fairs & Circuses Min of 3 day Hire							
Small Attendance = 0 to 99 Per Day	440.20	450.00	10%	495.00	7%	529.65	4%
Medium and large attendance more than 99 per day (new Charge)	NEW	480.00	10%	528.00	7%	564.96	4%
Boleyn Road, Frankley							
- fairs (per day)	473.80	473.80	10%	0.00	7%	0.00	4%
- deposit	2,166.70	2,166.70	10%	521.18	7%	557.66	4%
			10%	2,383.37	7%	2,550.21	4%
Market Street Recreation Ground							
- fairs (per day)	477.35	477.35	10%	525.09	7%	561.84	4%
- deposit	2,187.75	2,187.75	10%	2,406.53	7%	2,574.98	4%
<p>One free day is allowed for each of the above bookings by fairs/circuses. Other hiring's – charge to be decided at the time of application. Football pitches and parks are not available for any organised football activity during the period June 1st to July 15th. This is to allow the pitches a rest period and for maintenance work to take place. After this date any organised football training must be paid for at a cost of £10 per session for one team and a negotiated price for more than one team. Please contact the Parks Team to book this, pitches will be allocated at our discretion.</p>							
Ø Set up and Clearance charged @ 50% of applicable rate							
Ø Any event in excess of 1999 attendees is STN							
Event - Officer Support for event (per hour)	NEW	£50.00 per hour	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
Power and Water Supply Additional Charges	NEW	Negotiation	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost
Additional Costs for Outdoor Fitness Space:							
Ø Set up and Clearance charged @ 50% of applicable rate							
Outdoor Fitness Session							
Commercial Rates (Per Day)							
Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) One day maximum usage per week	400.45	415.00	10%	456.50	7%	488.46	4%
Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) Two days maximum usage per week	650.00	670.00	10%	737.00	7%	788.59	4%
Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) Three days maximum usage per week	700.00	725.00	10%	797.50	7%	853.33	4%
Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) One day maximum usage per week	200.00	207.00	10%	227.70	7%	243.64	4%
Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) Two days maximum usage per week	400.00	415.00	10%	456.50	7%	488.46	4%
Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) Three days maximum usage per week	600.00	620.00	10%	682.00	7%	729.74	4%
Annual Fee One day maximum usage per week	520.00	540.00	10%	594.00	7%	635.58	4%
Annual Fee Two days maximum usage per week	850.00	880.00	10%	968.00	7%	1,035.76	4%
Annual Fee Three days maximum usage per week	1,000.00	1,050.00	10%	1,155.00	7%	1,235.85	4%
Community Rates (Per Day)							
Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) One day maximum usage per week	200.00	205.00	10%	225.50	7%	241.29	4%
Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) Two days maximum usage per week	300.00	307.00	10%	337.70	7%	361.34	4%
Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) Three days maximum usage per week	350.00	360.00	10%	396.00	7%	423.72	4%
Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) One day maximum usage per week	80.00	82.00	10%	90.20	7%	96.51	4%
Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) Two days maximum usage per week	200.00	205.00	10%	225.50	7%	241.29	4%
Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) Three days maximum usage per week	300.00	307.00	10%	337.70	7%	361.34	4%
Annual Fee One day maximum usage per week	250.00	255.00	10%	280.50	7%	300.14	4%
Annual Fee Two days maximum usage per week	450.00	460.00	10%	506.00	7%	541.42	4%
Annual Fee Three days maximum usage per week	500.00	512.00	10%	563.20	7%	602.62	4%
Trial fee (1 day per week - MAX 4 week trial)	100.00	105.00	10%	115.50	7%	123.59	4%
The Bird Box - NEW CHARGE							
Use of Power connection	1.60	1.70	10%	1.87	7%	2.00	4%

Page 226

Proposed Charge
25/6
£

133.40
286.40
428.40
856.90
1,713.70
3,141.00
4,284.30
5,710.30

Page 227

396.60
714.90
1,428.50
2,854.60
3,569.40
4,284.30

429.70
856.90
1,428.50
2,854.60
4,284.30
0.00
264.40

Full Cost Recovery

383.10
133.40
198.30
159.10

231.40
80.80
118.70

527.60

Full Cost Recovery
Full Cost Recovery
Full Cost Recovery
Full Cost Recovery
Full Cost Recovery
Full Cost Recovery
Full Cost Recovery
Full Cost Recovery
Full Cost Recovery

Full Cost Recovery
Full Cost Recovery
Full Cost Recovery
Full Cost Recovery
Full Cost Recovery
Full Cost Recovery
Full Cost Recovery
Full Cost Recovery
Full Cost Recovery
Full Cost Recovery

Full Cost Recovery
Full Cost Recovery
Full Cost Recovery
Full Cost Recovery

Full Cost Recovery
Full Cost Recovery
Full Cost Recovery
Full Cost Recovery
Full Cost Recovery
Full Cost Recovery
Full Cost Recovery
Full Cost Recovery

Page 230

4.50
4.50
4.30
4.90
5.10
1.20
4.50
9.70
8.50
6.50
14.10
12.20
10.80
10.30
5.40
7.10
67.30

109.60
79.60
144.80
550.80
587.60
0.00
580.00
2,652.20
584.30
2,678.00
Full Cost Recovery
Full Cost Recovery
508.00
820.10
887.50
253.40
508.00
758.90
661.00
1,077.20
1,285.30
250.90
375.80
440.70
100.40
250.90
375.80
312.10
563.10
626.70
128.50
2.10

Page 232

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

TUESDAY 10TH DECEMBER 2024, AT 2.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors K.J. May (Leader, in the Chair during Minute No's 46/24 to 53/24), S. J. Baxter (Deputy Leader, in the Chair during Minute No's 38/24 to 45/24), B. McEldowney, K. Taylor (during Minute No's 38/24 and part of 47/24), S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

In attendance: Councillor P. M. McDonald, Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Board

Officers: Mrs. S. Hanley, Mr P. Carpenter, Mrs. R. Bamford, Ms J. Willis, Mr. G. Revans, Ms. N Cummings, Ms. M. Worsfold, Mr. M. Dunphy, Ms. A. Delahunty, Mr. M. Eccles, Mr. M. Cox and Mr. C. Poole, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (both via Microsoft Teams), Ms. Karimi Fini, Mrs. C. Green (both via Microsoft Teams), and Mrs. P. Ross

38/24 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor S. R. Colella.

It was noted that the Leader had been called to an emergency Cabinet meeting at Worcestershire County Council, and would therefore be late joining the meeting.

39/24 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor S. J. Baxter declared an Other Disclosable Interest as the Chair of Trustees for Wythall Community Association and Park, in relation to Agenda Item Number 9, Minute Number 46/24 – Bromsgrove Play Audit and Investment Strategy.

Councillor Baxter remained in the meeting for the consideration of this item and took part in the vote thereon.

There were no further Declarations of Interest.

40/24 **BROMSGROVE LOCAL HERITAGE LIST**

Members received a report on the Bromsgrove Local Heritage List (LHL).

The Principal Conservation Officer presented the report and in doing so informed Members that the Local Heritage List, as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report, was for the following parishes to be adopted:-

- Alvechurch
- Beoley
- Belbroughton and Fairfield
- Dodford with Grafton

In preparing this report the governance and decision making background for approval of the LHL was re-visited. This had resulted in the need for some adjustments as set out in paragraphs 3.16 to 3.20 in the report. The changes were around ensuring that the final list was approved by the correct decision making arm of the Council, and did not affect the consultation process itself or the day to day work being carried out by the Conservation Team.

Cabinet approved a revised LHL Strategy in March 2024, a summary of the Strategy was detailed on page 8 of the main agenda pack.

Draft lists for Alvechurch, Beoley, Belbroughton and Fairfield, and Dodford with Grafton Parishes, were compiled earlier this year, ready for consultation. These lists add 140 properties to the draft LHL, and covered a diverse range of properties including houses, schools, village halls, places of worship and canal infrastructure.

A six-week consultation period commenced on Monday 27th May. Letters were sent to all owners/occupiers providing information about the consultation, including the listing for their property. This included a description and information on how the building met the LHL criteria. It also detailed the consultation event to be held in each parish as well as other ways of contacting the Conservation Team. Parish councils and Ward Members were also notified. The LHL page on the Conservation Section on the Council's website also provided details of the consultation, with links to all relevant documents as well as the draft lists by parish. The Council's Communications Team also promoted the consultation using social media.

Conservation officers also held conservation events in the village hall in each parish.

Seven objections were received. The Conservation Team considered these objections and reconsidered the properties. In all cases it was considered that the properties met the criteria and therefore should be included on the list, although descriptions and reasons for inclusion were amended in light of the comments and the re-examination.

Five further nominations were submitted. Of these, two were supported by the Conservation Team, one had already been considered and rejected, one was listed so could not be included, and the Wiggins Memorial Park in Alvechurch would be considered when officers

considered parks and gardens as a separate category within the LHL. The owners of the two supported nominations were consulted with.

The LHL was pre-scrutinised by the Overview and Scrutiny Board, and a further update on the LHL was presented at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting on 23rd July 2024.

RECOMMENDED that

1.1 the Local Heritage List, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report for the following parishes, be adopted:-

- Alvechurch
- Beoley
- Belbroughton and Fairfield
- Dodford with Grafton;

1.2 the wording of the Officer Scheme of Delegations for the Local Heritage List be updated, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report; and

1.3 the amended Local Heritage List Strategy as set out at Appendix 3 to the report, be approved.

41/24

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION GRANT AND DOMESTIC ABUSE GRANT

The Housing Development & Enabling Manager presented a report on the Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant Allocation for 2025/26, and in doing so informed Members that, the report sought Members approval to award the MHCLG Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse New Burdens Grant and the Council's own Homelessness Grant to specific schemes as recommended.

Additionally, it further sought to delegate authority to the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing, to allocate any underspend of the grant during 225/26 on schemes to prevent homelessness and to assist those who became homeless.

Members' attention was also drawn to the financial implications, as detailed in the report, in that in addition to the annual Homelessness Grant £112,000, the Council was expecting to be awarded by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHCLG), Homelessness Prevention Grant £260,432 and £35,298 Domestic Abuse New Burdens funding. The report sets out how the Council intended to utilise this funding to create a package of support and services to prevent homelessness and support those who became homeless.

Paragraph 3.5 in the report highlighted how the monies would be allocated, however, Members were informed that CCP service had been

funded across Bromsgrove and Redditch since 2017/18 and had provided a good service. However, this service was no longer providing value for money. Therefore, as detailed in paragraph 3.8 in the report, MAGGS service would now be providing this service, as they were more cost effective.

The Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant supported the Council's strategic priority of Housing.

Furthermore, the Homelessness Grant and Homelessness Prevention Grant would benefit customers by offering household's more options to prevent their homelessness, support them to remain in their own homes or help the Council to manage and support households in Temporary Accommodation.

Members' attention was drawn to risk management and that if the recommended schemes were not approved there was a risk that more households who were threatened with homelessness, or who were in housing need, would have limited alternative options. There was also the risk that they might have to make a homeless approach, and this could consequently lead to the following negative outcomes:-

- Increased B&B costs with 80% having to be picked up by the local authority.
- Increased rough sleeping in the District.
- Impacts on physical and mental health, educational achievement, ability to work and similar through increased homelessness.

Councillor S. A. Webb took the opportunity to express her sincere thanks to the Housing Development & Enabling Manager and team for all their hard work, in dividing the funds to worthy agencies and support workers, and the funds for St. Basil's, which was a vital service for Bromsgrove.

The Housing Development & Enabling Manager responded to a number of questions from Members with regards to the following:-

- The location of St. Basils and St. Basils Crash pad.
- The revenue funding for an additional 4 static temporary accommodation units, which were used to help eliminate the use of unsuitable bed and breakfast accommodation for families.
- Spend to Save Top Up.

RESOLVED that

1.1 the following initiatives be approved to receive an allocation of funding 2025/26;

Agenda Item 13

Cabinet
10th December 2024

Homelessness Grant Allocation	2025/26 £ (up to £396,328)
BDHT Housing Agency Agreement Top Up	52,475
St Basils Young Persons Pathway Worker – support to prevent homelessness for under 25's and Crash Pad to provide a unit of emergency accommodation for young people.	40,316
Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership Co-ordinator – contribution towards county-wide development and delivery of housing initiatives in partnership with other agencies	7,500
CCP Single Person and Childless Couples Homelessness Prevention Service	18,347
NewStarts - Provide Furniture and Volunteering Opportunities for Ex-Offenders – supports tenancy sustainment and provides future employment opportunities/reduces risk of reoffending	10,000
GreenSquare Accord Housing Related Support – helping ex-offenders remain housed/seek employment	26,227
St Basils Foyer – provides stable accommodation/support for young people - 14 units – fully occupied during last financial year	48,616
St Basils Crash pad – provides emergency temporary accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds	16,596
Maggs Rough Sleeper outreach and prevention service targeting rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping.	34,302
North Worcestershire Basement Project - Support for young people at risk of homelessness	24,541
Step Up – Private Tenancy Scheme	23,000
BDHT - Sunrise Project intensive support	45,300
Revenue Funding for an Additional 4 Static Temporary Accommodation units	30,688
Mental Health Link Worker (part funded)	6,800

CAB – Affordability Assessments	5,490
Spend to Save Top Up	6,130
Total committed expenditure	£396.328
Underspend	£0

Domestic Abuse Grant Allocation	2025/26 Up to £35,298
County Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator	4,813
County Domestic Abuse Research and Intelligence Officer	4,426
Top up to DA Housing Options Officer	5,600
NewStarts Furniture Project	5,000
Basement Project	15,459
Total committed expenditure	£35,298
Underspend	£ 0

and

- 1.2 delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing, to use any unallocated Grant during the year or make further adjustments as necessary, to ensure full utilisation of the Grants for 2025/26 in support of existing or new schemes.

42/24

LOW COST HOUSING CAPITAL RECEIPTS

The Housing Development & Enabling Manager presented a report on Bromsgrove Low Cost Housing Scheme capital receipts and increasing the supply of accommodation, and in doing so referred to the Recommendations, as detailed on page 27 of the main agenda report.

Members were informed that a report was taken to Cabinet at the meeting held on 1st February 2017, whereby Members resolved that:

“As and when these properties are offered for sale, so far as possible the Council’s share should also be sold and;

That any Capital receipt be ring-fenced to provide funding to assist the Council in meeting its Strategic Purpose “Help me find somewhere to live in my locality”

The capital receipts received from this decision amounted to £547,912.26, and to date none of this capital money had been spent. This report was asking Members to approve a plan to increase the supply of affordable housing to support its homelessness function through the use of these capital receipts in partnership with Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT).

The Council had seen a significant reduction in the number of affordable housing units becoming available since Covid. Some of this was due to households not being able to afford to move. It was also due to a shortage of new build developments in the District.

The cost of B&B had increased significantly over this period. This was not unique to Bromsgrove. According to analysis of the Local Government Association's (LGA) revenue account data, the total amount spent by councils on temporary accommodation had soared by more than £733m since 2015/16. According to the LGA, temporary accommodation bills presented a growing risk to councils. Other authorities were under the same pressure.

Some Members referred to paragraph 2.2 in the report, which detailed that Bromsgrove District Council had launched a low cost housing scheme approximately 27 years ago. Through this scheme the Council currently held a 30% share in each of the 111 remaining low cost housing properties.

Members questioned if this would make it more difficult to purchase under the shared ownership scheme.

The Housing Development & Enabling Manager stated that yes it would.

Councillor S. A. Webb took the opportunity to thank the Housing Development & Enabling Manager and the team.

RESOLVED that the Supply and Demand of Temporary Accommodation report, be noted; and

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the low cost housing receipts be used to purchase existing properties, flip shared ownership into social or affordable rented accommodation or invest in new build developments with BDHT to increase the supply of affordable housing and temporary accommodation to meet the growing demand; and
- 2) delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing, to approve individual proposals for new developments or the purchase of existing satisfactory dwellings and flipping Shared Ownership to

affordable or social rented properties and the spend relating to these, as and when they were brought forward.

43/24

CARBON REDUCTION STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Climate Change Manager presented the Carbon Reduction Strategy Annual Review.

The UK Government had committed to Net Zero by 2050.

Members were informed that the Strategy and Action Plan supported the Council's priorities of Environment, Housing and Infrastructure, and carbon reduction measures were contained with the Council Plan. In addition, it supported the delivery of achieving carbon reduction across council services.

This Strategy was specifically to achieve carbon reduction and net zero for our internal activities across all service areas. Furthermore, the Strategy also identified our influencing role in supporting the reduction of carbon emissions from other organisations e.g., our contractors.

The Section on Measuring and Setting Emissions Targets in the Strategy outlined the targets to be achieved to ensure net zero by 2040. The Strategy was key to addressing Climate Change. The Strategy and action plan sought to deliver a 50% reduction by 2030 and 100% by 2040. As part of our current work to establish a figure for the council's activities we arrived at an estimated figure of 1,746 tonnes of carbon emissions per year for 2021.

As highlighted in the report the Council's fleet would be fuelled by HVO until alternative vehicles were sourced.

As detailed in the Strategy, currently the carbon emission figure for the district of Bromsgrove was 669,200 tonnes per year (2019). The latest carbon emission for BDC was 818 tonnes (2019). In order to reach an interim target of 50% by 2030 we needed to reduce our emissions by approximately 41 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year. To achieve net zero in the remaining 10 years to 2040 we would need a target of approximately 51 tonnes of savings per year.

Carbon savings had been made at Parkside and the Leisure Centre. Staff mileage claims were being looked at. Claims were reducing but this did not take into account officers driving from Parkside to the Depot.

Other initiatives including in the Strategy were:-

- Support BDHT to apply for funding to improve efficiency of housing stock.
- Reduce staff travel and make further use of video conferencing.

- Assess the viability of Council car parks and other sites for EV charges and Solar Canopies. Continue to work with Worcestershire County Council on a standardised approach to EV charger facilities.

The Strategy and Action Plan would be reviewed annually and refreshed every three years.

Members raised a number of questions with regards to video conferencing and meetings that brought people together face to face.

The Chief Executive informed Members that there was currently a Government consultation on Local Authority Remote Meetings – Call for Evidence, which related to formal council meeting. Senior officers would respond to the consultation, once their responses had been shared with Group Leaders.

Should Members require face to face meetings, officers would try and accommodate this. Officers did join meetings remotely, but meetings were not routinely hybrid meetings. Senior officers did promote face to face meetings for team engagement.

RECOMMENDED that the Council endorses the findings of the Annual Review of the Carbon Reduction Strategy, as detailed at Appendix 2 to the report.

44/24

DISTRICT HEAT NETWORK REVISIONS

The Deputy Leader announced that prior to the commencement of the meeting, it was agreed that the running order of the agenda would, if necessary, be changed in order to accommodate the officers from Worcestershire Regulatory Services who had a prior commitment until 14:45pm.

The Climate Change Manager therefore continued and presented the District Heat Network Revisions.

Members were informed that Bromsgrove District Council was developing a zero-carbon heat network project to supply clean heat to homes, businesses, and public buildings in Bromsgrove Town Centre, with potential for future expansion to Bromsgrove Town. A feasibility study conducted in 2019 identified a low-carbon district heating network based on an open loop aquifer ground source heat pump as the preferred technology. However, the project's original approach, which included a natural gas-fired combined heat and powerplant, was no longer aligned with current government decarbonisation targets.

The Council had already secured £247,500 in funding for the project in 2020. This included £227,500 from the Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Heat Network Delivery Unit (HNDU) and contributions from Bromsgrove School £10,000 and Worcestershire

Health and Care NHS Trust £10,000. In addition, the Council had matched the funding with a contribution of £112,500.

The government's approach to heat network development had evolved since the feasibility study, with a focus on:

- **Phased out of Combined Heat and Power.**
- **Heat Network Zoning.**
- **Green Heat Network Fund (GNHF).**

Recognising the importance of maximizing the initial impact of the project, the Council proposed to explore alternative locations for Phase 1 of the heat network within the Bromsgrove Town Centre area.

Bromsgrove District Council recognised that it did not currently have the internal expertise and knowledge to fully deliver a district heat network project. Therefore, the Council was actively seeking a strong and experienced partner organisation to collaborate with.

The key criteria for partner selection included:

- **Proven track record.**
- **Financial strength and stability.**
- **Commitment to sustainability.**
- **Community engagement.**

Members thanked the officer for a very interesting report, which was in theory fantastic. However Members questioned the practicality for new developments, and it being expensive to retro fit. The Government was looking to phase out combined heating power, which then left air / water heat pumps or small plant that burnt waste.

Members further commented that moving forward the Council needed to know where houses were going to be built in order to agree what would be put in place.

In response the Deputy Chief Executive stated that it was about putting an infrastructure in place prior to a major development.

The Chief Executive reassured Members that mitigation strategies were included in the report.

A brief debate followed on the English Devolution White Paper.

The Assistant Director Assistant for Planning, Leisure and Culture Services briefly stated that in terms of the Local Plan review, it was in our gift to concur what the Council wanted, and that developers could be asked to look at new developments.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the revised approach to deliver the Bromsgrove District Heat Network, be approved; and
- 2) the exploration of alternative locations for phase one of the Bromsgrove District Heat Network, be approved.

45/24

BROMSGROVE DRAFT AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN

The Assistant Director Community and Housing Services briefly presented the report, and in doing so referred to paragraph 2.3 in the report.

“Section 83A of the Environment Act 1995 requires Local Authorities (in response to declaring an AQMA) to prepare a written Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP). This must set out how the local authority and other stakeholders will take the necessary measures to secure the achievement, and maintenance, of air quality standards and objectives in the area to which the plan relates and must in relation to each measure specify a date by which it will be carried out and how it will be reviewed.”

The report further highlighted that in September 2023 officers contacted DEFRA raising concerns regarding the process and requested an alternative timetable for submission of AQAPs for four Worcestershire districts including Bromsgrove District Council. A revised timetable for submission of an AQMA was agreed and submission of a final AQAP was due to be submitted by April 2025.

The Assistant Director Community and Housing Services then took the opportunity to introduce the officers from Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS), the Technical Services Manager and the Specialist Lead Officer (Air Quality).

The Technical Services Manager informed Members that a piece of work was carried out with colleagues from Public Health and BDC to look at nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels and the legal requirements.

The highest concentration of NO₂ was 36.6µ/m³ (microgrammes per meter cubed) recorded across the monitoring network in 2023 within the Worcester Road AQMA. As this was within the 10% of the national Air Quality objective for annual NO₂ the Council were required to put in place an Air Quality Action Plan.

The last exceedance of NO₂ or measured concentrations within 10% of the annual objective within the Redditch Road and Lickey End AQMAs were recorded in 2016. Due to the number of years, they had not exceeded the annual objective, Bromsgrove District Council were now required to undertake the work to revoke both of these AQMAs.

Therefore, following discussions with the Defra LAQM team in May 2024 it was confirmed that an AQAP was required for the Worcester Road, Bromsgrove AQMA only.

In response to questions from Members with regards to levels declining due to cleaner running engines, the WRS officers commented that there was a national trend with figures declining. This could possibly be due to cleaner running engines from vehicle manufacturers. However, modern vehicles would decline their efficiencies over time.

Recent data from Worcestershire County Council. Highways indicated that travel had gone up but NO₂ levels were down.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1.1 the Draft Air Quality Action Plan 2025-2030 be approved;
- 1.2 a Consultation on the Plan be undertaken for 2 months from Mid-December to February 2025: and
- 1.3 authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Community and Housing, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Licencing Worcestershire Regulatory Services, to approve the final Plan following the consultation, and for submission to DEFRA by April 2025.

46/24

BROMSGROVE PLAY AUDIT AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The Assistant Director Planning and Leisure Services presented the Bromsgrove Play Audit and Investment Strategy, and in doing so informed Members that the Bromsgrove Play Audit and Investment Strategy was presented at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting on 9th December 2024.

Appendix 1 to the report detailed all of the play areas locations and their condition.

Appendix 2 to the report detailed the order of investment needed for play areas that would be within 10/15 minutes walking time for nearby residents.

The report detailed that currently there were 85 play areas across the district. A total of 40 of these were owned and managed by Bromsgrove District Council, the other 45 were owned / managed by other organisations including parish councils, community associations, and private management companies.

Bromsgrove Play Investment Strategy was focused on the 40 play spaces that Bromsgrove District Council were responsible for.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor P. M. McDonald, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board stated that the Board had raised a few minor questions, with regards to some minor detail anomalies in the cfp document.

Councillor McDonald drew Members attention to the Boards suggested amendment to Recommendation 2 in the report, as follows:-

2. That the approach to capital investment as presented in The Bromsgrove Play Audit and Investment Strategy (Appendix 2) is accepted and that officers are requested to prepare bids for capital funding, as applicable, to be considered in due course and in the context of other funding bids in consultation with Ward Members.

The Leader thanked Councillor McDonald.

The Leader further referred to the English Devolution White Paper and sought reassurance from the Deputy Chief Executive (and s151 officer) in securing funding for Bromsgrove ensuring that the Council had enough reserves. We needed to ensure sustainable provision.

The Deputy Chief Executive (and s151 officer) that the capital programme funding and capital spend, along with earmarked reserves would be looked at.

The Deputy Leader commented that funding could not be secured for broken play equipment only for the replacement of play equipment. Should this be referred to in the Risk Management, as this could impact on the delivery of the Strategy.

In response the Assistant Director Planning and Leisure Services agreed this was correct and that Parish Council mapping needed to be carried out and included in the next MTFP. The Deputy Chief Executive further agreed that this would be included in Tranche 2 of the MTFP.

Further discussions followed on the play areas that were managed by management companies and their maintenance.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the approach to improve the accessibility of equipped children's play as presented in the Bromsgrove Play Assessment, as detailed at Appendix1 to the report, be adopted; and

the amended Recommendation, from the Overview and Scrutiny Board, as referred to in the preamble above, as follows:-

- 2) the approach to capital investment as presented in, The Bromsgrove Play Audit and Investment Strategy, as detailed

at Appendix 2 to the report, be accepted and that officers be requested to prepare bids for capital funding, as applicable, to be considered in due course and in the context of other funding bids in consultation with Ward Members.

47/24

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN - TRANCHE 1 BUDGET INCLUDING FEES AND CHARGES (PRIOR TO CONSULTATION)

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) – Tranche 1 Budget including Fees and Charges.

MTFP 2025/6 Tranche 1

The Council sets a 3-year Medium Term Financial Plan every year, with the final Council Tax Resolution being approved by Council in February. This year's process takes account of the following factors:

- The starting point from the 2024/5 MTFP being neutral starting balances.
- This was the first budget of a new National Government and would be for only 1 year in duration. Future budgets would be multi year.
- The present cost of living crisis which continued to impact our most vulnerable residents.
- Three years accounts (2020/21 to 2022/23) where the Council had/would receive a disclaimer opinion (like many other Councils).
- The continued uncertainty of the existing movement of the Government to funding projects as per the Chancellors Statement on the 30th October and not knowing yet those allocations.
- Uncertainty over what would be required by the new Government, and other stakeholders.
- Loss of key personnel, present vacancies rates, and staff retention
- Business Rates and Council Tax Income – and associated collection rates and reliefs linked to the “cost of living” crisis and C-19 grants working their way through our system.
- Inflation now moving back to the Government target of 2%.

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

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

The emerging national picture was in many ways quite similar to last year

- The War in Ukraine had still not been resolved impacting inflation rates that impacted everyone.
- Councils having declared “Climate Emergencies” and having challenging carbon reduction targets to deliver by 2030, 2040 and 2050. These needed to move into implementation.
- We had the Office for Local Government in 2023 looking at Council data to assess performance and trying to predict if Councils were getting into difficulty.
- The data provided was important as the Government now worked on an allocation’s method using data to inform its decisions.
- In the Local Government area
 - There were a number of Local Authorities who had now issued S114 Statements.
 - Bromsgrove would have 3 years of accounts that would have a Disclaimer Opinion issued by the External Auditor.
 - That in the Local Government sector, there were still circa 700 Audits up to 2022/23 that were still not Audited at this time across Councils in England.

The Chancellors Autumn Statement made on the 30th October had the following impacts on Council budgets:

- A 3.2% real-terms increase in Core Spending Power (CSP) for the whole sector in 2025-26. This would include £1.3b additional grant funding, of which at least £600m would be directed to social care.
- The Budget was silent on council tax referendum limits, but the DCN expectation was that referendum principles would stay at 2.99% for districts.
- £233m new funding for homelessness prevention. This would be in addition to the £1.3b grant funding mentioned above.
- £1b to extend the Household Support Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments into 2025-26.
- £1.1b new funding through implementation of the Extended Producer Responsibility scheme for recycling.
- Right to Buy: councils would be permanently allowed to retain 100% of receipts locally and discount levels would revert to pre-2012 levels from 21st November.
- Business Rates support to the retail, hospitality and Leisure sector, although it was not known the route of compensation yet for Councils.
- A £500m increase to the Affordable Homes Programme in 2025-26.
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund had been extended for 2025-26 at a reduced level of £900m, a 40% decrease on the current year. It was not yet clear whether this funding would continue.
- to be allocated directly to district councils in two-tier areas.

It was good news that the sector would get a real-terms funding increase, but it was not yet clear how this increase would be distributed.

The Government signalled it would reform the local government funding system after 2025-26. It had also signalled its intention to embark on local government reorganisation to deliver “efficiency savings”. It would set out more detail in the English Devolution White Paper, likely to be published in late 2024.

It was expected to publish a finance policy statement in mid/late November to set out the key decisions and principles for the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement.

On the cost side, as an employer there were the following additional costs:-

- Employer national insurance (NI) contributions would increase by 1.2% to 15% from April 2025 but the public sector would be covered. Our rates if not funded would have been £144k.
- The National Living Wage would increase by 6.7% to £12.21. Minimum wage for 18- to 20-year-olds would increase by 16% to £10 per hour. Officers were assessing the impact of this.

The report takes account of the Council’s new Strategic Plan which was set out in Sections 3.15 thought to 3.19. The Council’s strategic approach continued to be to set a balanced budget over the next three year period having over the past 2 years moved to a fair level of financial sustainability.

In building the 2025/6 budget, our base assumptions were set out in paragraphs 3.25 to 3.30.

Tax Base and Corporate Financing underlying assumptions were as follows:

- Council Tax – Figures assumed the full 1.99% allowable increase over all years of the 3 year MTFP, with growth of 200 and 150 over these years.
- Business Rates increases assumed growth based on Pooling with the other Districts and the County Council.
- There would be no New Homes Bonus .
- Central Government Grants were at similar levels to previous years.

Other Corporate Pressures:-

- At Q2 the overall revenue financial position was a £344k overspend position. This position was set out in detail in an additional report to the Cabinet today.
- The Pay Award was increased from 2% to 3% for 25/6. This would be an additional £154k cost. In her Statement on the 30th July, the Chancellor did say that Government would accept acceptance of the recommendations of the independent Pay Review Bodies for public sector workers’ pay. It was not clear if this was included in the 3.2% Spending uplift.

Agenda Item 13

Cabinet
10th December 2024

- Pension Fund Actuarial Triennial Revaluation. Although the fund continued to perform well we were concerned on the reducing numbers of live members in the scheme and so had included an amount from 2026/7 of £200k as a potential risk.
- Fees and Charges had assumed an increase of 2%. However, given 50% of fees and charges costs were linked to staff costs and these possibly would increase at 5% for the 2024/5 financial year. Therefore, to keep pace on this increase of costs it was proposed that 3%, 4% and 5% increases were looked at. These amounted to additional income of the following for each scenario:
 - 3% Increase - £100k
 - 4% Increase - £200k
 - 5% Increase - £300k
- Until more information was understood in the detailed Local Government Settlement in December, it was assumed that Grant levels would remain at present levels.
- The largest change however would link to upcoming Waste Requirements. The Council was required to implement these proposals from April 2026, which the Council challenged present Government Funding allocations. The impact on Council budgets was significant in terms of both Revenue and Capital:
 - There was the requirement for additional Capital Investment, over and above any Grant, of £540k. It assumed that this was required to be spent in 2025/6 and costs apportioned accordingly.
 - At the present time, additional revenue costs were estimated to be circa £950k a year.
- Bromsgrove School loses its Business Rates reliefs as part of the Budget. Presently, circa £600k of business rates were charged against the school to which it received 80% relief. This relief of circa £500k would become part of the collection fund calculation, with planning purposes circa 50% coming to the Council and 50% going back to the Government.
- Additional Artrix Costs were limited at the Empty Business rates which amounted to £31k.
- Additional inflation of 5% on contract was included at 5% which was £90k.
- A review had been undertaken of Corporate Budgets (Council Tax/Business Rate, Investment Income and Debt) against expected numbers and due to a number of factors there was a positive position.
- The Council had 4% in to cover staff inflation in 2024/5. This pay award was now circa 5% and a 1% adjustment had also been made in the corporate budgets. To be adjusted for actual in Tranche 2.
- As set out in section 3.9 the Chancellors Statement on the 30th September set out significant additional grant funding. The allocation

of these grants would not be known until December and the Provisional Local Government Finance settlement.

- Adjustments, following the establishment review would need to be made across both Councils to account for the £1m in-balance between pay budgets and recharges across both Councils.
- Analysis would be undertaken on Benchmarking data as well – as this would inform areas where further savings, if required, would be initially looked at.

Corporate pressures were summarised in the table at 3.30 and amounted to a surplus of £329k in 2025/6 changing to an ongoing deficit of £858k in 2026/7 and £644k from 2027/8.

Departmental pressures were requested to be returned by the 24th October. These were attached in Appendix A and covered both revenue and capital pressures. These departmental changes resulted in an overall £1.387m revenue pressure in the 2025/6 financial year and then £938k by 2027/8. This was summarised in the table at 3.31. This table was reviewed during the meeting.

This resulted in an ongoing pressure of circa £1m rising to £1.5m. It should be noted that if the Council received the full 3.2% Core Spending Power increase set out in the 2024 Chancellors budget, then this would result in circa £490k of additional funding, reducing the gap to circa £500k in 2025/26 and £1m by 2027/8. It should be noted that there would also be political pressures as well.

Another key factor in balancing the budget would be the allocation methods for Grants set out in para 3.9 as they impacted a number of the “pressure areas. This would not be known until the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement.

To meet strategic priorities, the Council required more funding. For Tranche 2 it needed to review a number of areas including:

- Ensuring Grants were maximised.
- Ensuring Agency work reflected the income provided for its delivery.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the Council’s largest Contracts.
- Reviewing the location and effectiveness of our Depot
- Assessing the Council’s leisure and cultural strategy in terms of affordability
- Reviewing recharging mechanisms between the Councils for appropriateness.
- Rationalisation of Back Office services as we embrace technology.

The Transformation Team had looked at Income and fees/charges levels for:

- Its deliverability in 2023/4 and 24/5

- Views on if additional % increases would be deliverable

The outcome of that high level analysis was that:

- A blanket % increase on all controllable fees and charges and budgets would not be advisable, as this would just increase the rolling year variances in specific areas. Those budgets needed adjusting to the correct base (both up and down).
- Car parking, given the changes in 2024/5 should not be increased and allowed to stabilize at the new rates and take account of the full VAT implications.
- Knowledge of the full extent of what was or was not Vatable in income lines also needs to be clarified – so the right budgets were set.
- Garden and trade waste and cesspools were all areas where above inflation increases could be variable with previous years and current forecasting showing promise.

Detailed Fees and Charges, at a 4% increase were set out in Appendix B.

The existing 24/25 MTFP saw general fund balances increase by £27k over the three year period as the original plan moved the Council towards sustainability. Now that the 2020/21 and 2021/22 accounts had been closed and we had far clearer positions on the 2022/23 and 2023/4 outturn positions a stronger reserves position was reflected in Appendix C.

Appendix D sets out the present capital programme as agreed at Council in February. Spend to date at Q2 is £1.993m. The table at 3.44 highlights the present Capital programme position to 2029/30 rolling forward the “Rolling Budgets” for an additional year. To date only two new capital items had been added.

Initial Risk Assessments and Robust Statement implications were set out in paragraphs 3.46 to 3.52. It should be noted that the MTFP highlights that the current financial position was potentially untenable without some form of intervention or further substantial savings, and that this would become clearer with the Provisional Local Government Settlement in December.

Tranche One was the first Phase of the 2025/26 budget process. There would be consultation via the quarterly “Customer Survey” to see if more stakeholders could be reached. This would happen over November and December.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor P.M. McDonald commented that the Finance and Budget Working Group had raised some questions with regards to the Parking Report and Parking Machine Replacements.

The Executive Director - Environment and Communities agreed to check on the progress of this.

Members referred to the upcoming waste requirements and the impact on the Councils budgets in meeting these proposals. Officers provided brief information on local authorities that had moved to three weekly collections, a reduction in grey bin collections and paper and card specific collections. Officers also referred briefly to the green bag scheme in Norway.

The Leader commented that a number of local authorities had been running such services for a number of years and had therefore made service savings.

RESOLVED that Cabinet notes

1. the inputs into the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan as at the start of October, and the associated risks and opportunities;
2. these inputs had been used, along with the 2024/25-26/27 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) agreed by Council in February 2024, to project an initial "gap" to be closed;
3. an initial Tranche of savings proposals, as set out in Section 3.25 and the associated Savings Proposal Document in Appendix A, published on the 2nd December and any feedback would be considered by Cabinet in January 2025 prior to seeking approval at Council in January 2025; and
4. Tranche 2 of this process would add further information such as the Provisional Local Government Settlement to give a final financial position for the Council.

48/24

QUARTER 2 REVENUE AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING 2024/2025

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the Quarter 2 Finance and Performance Monitoring report.

Members were informed that the purpose of this report was to set out the Council's draft Revenue and Capital Outturn position for the second quarter of the financial year July 2024 – September 2024 and associated performance data. This report presented:-

- The Council's forecast outturn revenue monitoring position for 2024/25 based on data to the end of Quarter 2.
- The position in respect of balance sheet monitoring as requested by the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee.
- The spending as of Q2 of Ward Budget Funds.
- The updated procurement pipeline of Council projects to be delivered over the next 12 months in order to properly plan for the delivery of these projects.
- The organisations performance against the strategic priorities outlined in the Council Plan Addendum, including operational

measures to demonstrate how the council was delivering its services to customers.

Financial Performance

The draft position was a £343k overspend position, up from the £103k position set out in the Q1 report. As this was expenditure at Q2 it was important to note that, at this stage in the financial year there were a number of instances where annual expenditure or accruals may distort the profiling as reflected in the Q2 actual. The above profiles had assumed support services and grant were adjusted to budgetary levels and accruals were netted out of the figures.

Detail of the overspends were set out in paragraph 3.5. The overspends (£1.364m) were offset by additional income (£1.02m) in Corporate Financing from additional grant income together with increased investment interest receivable and lower interest payable. It should be noted that in the Planning, Regeneration and Leisure area there were £385k of additional UKSPF costs. These needed to be assessed at this should be grant funded. This would bring the overspend position back to parity.

As set out in the MTFP report, additional funding had been added for the level of the Pay Award made recently, which was above the 4% allowed for in the 2024/5 budget.

Cash Management

Borrowing - As of the 30th September 2024, there was no short-term borrowings. The Council had no long-term borrowings.

Investments - On 30th September 2024 there were £4.5m short-term investments held.

Capital Monitoring

A capital programme of £7.1m was approved in the Budget for 2024/25 in April 2024. The table in 3.9 and the detail in Appendix A set out the Capital Programme schemes that were approved for the MTFP time horizon.

The outturn spend was £1.994m against a capital budget totalling £7.069m and was detailed in Appendix A. It should be noted that as per the budget decision carry forwards of £7.166m would be rolled forward from 2023/24 into 2024/25 to take account of slippage from 2023/24.

Included in this funding the Council also had the following Grant Funded Schemes which were being delivered in 2024/25:

- The two Levelling Up schemes – Old Fire Station and Market which were funded via £14.5m of Government Funding, and the Council was funding £1.6m of works.
 - With the Market Hall, the Council had agreed the final works contract with Kier in October. A report went to Cabinet in September to approve the overall budget for the works. The Council did have a 6-month extension until the 30th September 2025 to “spend” government funding on this project. After this point it would become the Council’s responsibility for the payment.
 - The Windsor Street demolition tender had been awarded to City Demolition and they were now on site starting the demolition process.
 - Public Realm work was under way and expected to be completed before the end of the calendar year.
 - The report in September set out that there would be an overspend position on the overall projects of circa £1.1m although there was scope to bring this down by £300-£500k. To mitigate this position the Council could either fund through debt financing or use other potential funding routes. One of these was the former GBSLEP. The Council could claim up to £2.45m although this would require the final costs as a complete application process needed to be followed.

UK Shared Prosperity Schemes totalling £2.8m (although it should be noted that these grants funded schemes were a mix of capital and revenue) needed to be completely spend by the end of the 2024/5 financial year.

Earmarked Reserves

The updated position, taking account of the now submitted draft accounts for 2020/21 and 2021/22 as well as the reported outturn positions for 2022/23 and 2023/4 were set out in Appendix B. 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 30th June 2024, the Council held £10.867m of Earmarked Reserves.

Cabinet were asked to consider allocating £40,000 from the earmarked reserves to support community hubs (following the recent allocation to support Cost of Living initiatives there was £50,000 remaining in this reserve. The cost would be around £120,000 – and it was proposed that this was funded a third by the Council , a third from other partners and a third via VCS funding bids. A PTC was operating in Malvern District Council, with a £50k contribution from the Council.

Ward Budgets

This report was the first quarterly report to show what had been spent to date on Ward budgets. Each Ward Member had £2,000 to spend on Ward Initiatives subject to the rules of the Scheme which were approved by Council in February. To date, there had been 13 approved applications totalling £5,579. This year's funding allocations must be spent by the 31st March. The full detail was set out in Appendix C.

Balance Sheet Monitoring Position

This initial balance sheet reporting was set out as the Q2 Treasury Report which was attached as Appendix D. This report sets out the Council's debt and borrowing position for Q2 2024/5. Included in this was how the Council was using its working capital as well as measurement of the Council's Prudential Indicators. It should be noted that one indicator was not compliant. This was a short term loan between Redditch and Bromsgrove undertaken at year end which was repaid at the start of Quarter 2 2024/5. As reporting on the half yearly treasury position was a Statutory Requirement, this appendix would need to be noted and approved that Council note the position.

Procurement Pipeline

The Procurement pipeline was shown in Appendix E. The Council's Procurement Pipeline included details of contracts expected to be reprocured and new procurement projects expected to be undertaken in the future. Those happening in the next 12 months would need to be within the next 12 Months and over £200k would need to be put on the forward Plan. The pipeline would be refreshed quarterly.

- There were 16 contracts between the old threshold of £50k and the new threshold of £200k.
- There were 7 contracts that were over the key decision threshold of £200k.
- There were no new contracts procured by Redditch Bromsgrove on behalf of Bromsgrove.

Performance

The first section of this report showed the organisations performance against the strategic priorities outlined in the Council Plan Addendum. Additional comments and updates had been provided for the success measures to explain progress/activity. The final section of the report included some operational measures to demonstrate how the council was delivering its services to customers. This was Quarter 2 of a new financial year, and as this year moved forward these indicators would link to business plans and the requirements of the new Council Plan which was approved at Cabinet and Council in July.

The process of performance reporting would develop iteratively; however, this document was a snapshot in time and very much a temperature check of the organisation, the layout comprised:-

- Strategic Priorities – success measures
- Operational Measures – by service area
- Financial Data
- Corporate Projects (by exception)

These measures were the same as what was reported in the 2023/4 financial year and were shown in Appendix F.

New performance indicators required by the Council Plan approved in July were set out in Appendix G for reference. These would be incorporated into the Q3 Performance Report along with updated performance measures from departmental business plans.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor P. M. McDonald stated that with regards to Community Hubs, that this had been brought to the attention of the Overview and Scrutiny Board. A number of organisations did their best and the Overview and Scrutiny Board Members would be scrutinising projects and their funding, as some funding was being spent on projects in Evesham.

Councillor McDonald further referred to the Poverty Truth Commission in Bromsgrove, as he had never heard of this.

In response the Leader and Chief Executive suggested that it would prove useful if the Bromsgrove and Redditch Partnership Manager be asked to provide an all Member Briefing on the Poverty Truth Commission in Bromsgrove.

Following a query from the Overview and Scrutiny Board with regards to one of the performance measures, as follows:-

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

The Deputy Chief Executive agreed to look into this. The Chief Executive commented that this performance measure may have originally come from the Corporate Plan.

In response to Councillor McDonald, in respect of the Planning Appeal costs, the Assistant Director Planning and Leisure Services confirmed that information on Planning Appeal costs was reported to the Planning Committee.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the current Revenue overspend position of £344k and actions the Council were taking to mitigate this position be noted;
- 2) the current Capital spending of £1.99m against a budget of £7.07m be noted;

- 3) the Ward Budget allocation position to date was 13 approved allocations at £5,759;
- 4) there was an updated procurements position set out in the appendix, with any new items over £200k to be included on the forward plan; and
- 5) the Q2 Performance data for the Period July to September 2024 be noted.

RECOMMENDED that

- 6) Council approve the £40,000 from the Community Hub earmarked reserves to be allocated to contribute to a Poverty Truth Commission in Bromsgrove;
- 7) The Balance Sheet Monitoring Position for Q2 be noted – which was the Treasury Monitoring Report and required to be reported to Council; and
- 8) the £50,000 be transferred to earmarked Reserves from the General Fund for Planning Appeal costs.

49/24

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

It was agreed by Members that exclusion of the press and public was not necessary in relation to Minute Numbers 50/24 and 51/24 (To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Cabinet held on 21st October 2024 and the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 17th October and 19th November 2024). The meeting remained in public session for its entire duration.

50/24

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CABINET HELD ON 21ST OCTOBER 2024

The minutes from the Cabinet meeting held on 21st October 2024 were submitted for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED that the minutes from the Cabinet meeting held on 21st October 2024 be approved as a true and accurate record.

51/24

MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 17TH OCTOBER AND 19TH NOVEMBER 2024

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was present for consideration of this item. It was noted that there were no outstanding recommendations from the meetings of the Board held on 17th October and 19th November 2024.

This included the Recommendation from the Foodbank and Community Shop Provision Task Group – Proposed Amendment to Recommendation, as detailed in the Minutes from the meeting held on

19th November 2024, Minute Number 54/23. The suggested Recommendation to Council had now been approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

RESOLVED that the minutes from the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 17th October and 19th November 2024 be noted.

52/24

SHAREHOLDERS COMMITTEE REPORT

In the brief absence of the Council's Principal Solicitor and with the agreement of the Leader, the Deputy Chief Executive presented the Shareholders Committee Report.

The report detailed the arrangements for the operation of the Shareholders Committee for the Council company, Spadesbourne Homes Limited.

The draft Terms of Reference for the Cabinet Shareholders Committee were detailed at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Table of Reserved Matters for the Shareholders Committee were detailed at Appendix 2 to the report.

Members were now being asked to nominate five Members of the Cabinet to sit on the Shareholders Committee, with one of those Members also being nominated as Chairman of the Committee.

Having joined the meeting, the Council's Principal Solicitor commented that the report was quite self-explanatory.

At a meeting of Cabinet held on 12th July 2023, Members had agreed to establish a housing company limited by shares and wholly owned by the Council to manage retained housing stock initially at Burcot Lane in Bromsgrove. This company was named Spadesbourne Homes Limited.

A further report on this subject, detailing proposed arrangements for the governance structure for the company, specifically the introduction of a Shareholders Committee as a sub-committee of the Cabinet, was considered at a meeting of the Cabinet subsequently held on 13th September 2023.

As the Shareholders Committee was a sub-committee of Cabinet, only Cabinet Members could be appointed to serve on the Committee.

A brief discussion took place with Members agreeing the nominations and Chairman of the Shareholders Committee, as follows:-

1. Councillor K. J. May – Committee Member and Chairman
2. Councillor S. R. Colella
3. Councillor S. J. Baxter
4. Councillor P. J. Whittaker

5. Councillor B. McEldowney

RESOLVED that

- 3) the proposed terms of reference for the Shareholders Committee be noted;
- 4) Members agree five Members of the Cabinet to be appointed to sit on the Shareholders Committee for the remainder of the 2024/25 municipal year. (Members nominated as detailed in the preamble above);
- 5) Members agree one of these five Members of the Cabinet to be the Chairman of the Shareholders Committee. (Chairman nominated as detailed in the preamble above); and
- 6) the matters reserved to the Shareholders Committee for determination under the terms of the Council's agreement with Spadesbourne Homes Limited, be noted.

53/24

TO CONSIDER ANY URGENT BUSINESS, DETAILS OF WHICH HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED TO THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR 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 4.15 p.m.

Chairman

This page is intentionally left blank

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

7TH JANUARY 2025, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors K.J. May (Leader), S. J. Baxter (Deputy Leader), S. R. Colella, B. McEldowney, K. Taylor (from Minute Item No. 58/24), S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

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

Officers: Mrs. S. Hanley, Mr P. Carpenter, Mr. G. Revans, Mr S. Parry, Mr M. Austin, Mr. M. Bough and Mrs. J. Bayley-Hill

54/24 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

Members noted that Councillor K. Taylor would be arriving late for the meeting.

55/24 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

56/24 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON 10TH DECEMBER 2024**

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 10th December 2024 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 10th December 2024 be approved as a true and correct record.

57/24 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 9TH DECEMBER 2024**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 9th December 2024 were considered.

The Leader confirmed that there were no outstanding recommendations from this meeting requiring the Cabinet's consideration.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 9th December 2024 be noted.

58/24

REFUSE FLEET REPLACEMENT AND WHEELED BIN PRESSURES

The Environmental Services Manager presented a report on the subject of the replacement of the Council's refuse vehicle fleet and pressures relating to wheeled bins used by the authority.

Cabinet was reminded that at a previous meeting, Members had received an update on the pressures on the vehicle fleet used for the delivery of the waste service and the Council's capital programme had been reprofiled in response to this. Officers had subsequently identified issues with the bins used by the Council. The authority had a diamond bin system whereby the bins were lifted to dispose of waste. The Council was the only authority to retain this system as all other local authorities had ceased to use this following a tragic accident in Coventry involving the lifting mechanism. Consequently, there were no vehicles available to purchase that were suitable for lifting this type of bin.

The Council could continue to use the existing bins and maintain the existing vehicle fleet. However, the vehicles used by the authority were aging and this created challenges, including financial challenges in the long-term. Therefore, Officers were proposing that the authority's bins needed to be replaced with industry standard comb bins. There were two different sizes of comb bin available to use which Cabinet was invited to consider.

The report was being considered in a context in which the Government was introducing extended producer responsibilities, whereby manufacturers would be taxed on packaging. The funds arising from this tax would be allocated to public services and Bromsgrove District Council was due to receive £1.04 million initially, with annual contributions anticipated. However, Members were asked to note that the level of funding received from this source was likely to decline over time as manufacturers made changes to their packaging in order to reduce their tax liabilities.

During consideration of this item, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Councillor P. McDonald, was invited to address Cabinet on behalf of the Board on this subject. Members were advised that the Board had pre-scrutinised the report at a meeting held on 6th January 2025. The Board had noted that in the report it had been suggested that provision of smaller bins would help to encourage an increase in recycling rates in the District. However, the Board had had concerns about the impact that this might have in the local community and therefore had recommended that the Council should invest in the larger bins.

Members subsequently discussed the proposals detailed in the report and in so doing commented on the following matters:

- The procurement of new vehicles alongside new bins. It was confirmed that these would be owned by the Council.
- The typographical errors that had been identified in the report, including the figure in the second recommendation which should have been recorded as £2.2 million.
- The hard work of the Waste Collection Service team.
- The historic decision that had been taken by the Council to invest in diamond bins, which had been considered to be cutting edge at the time.
- The length of time that the diamond bins had been used, for over 20 years. Officers expressed hopes that the replacement comb bins could be utilised for a similar amount of time in order to achieve value for money.
- The amount of funding that Redditch Borough Council was due to receive for extended producer responsibilities. Officers confirmed that this figure was likely to be circa £200,000 lower than for Bromsgrove District Council due to the lower number of households.
- The numbers of green, grey and brown bins used by households in the District. Officers advised that there were approximately 43,000 households in the District and roughly this number of green and grey bins per household. In addition, there were approximately 20,000 brown bins, as not all residents opted to receive the garden waste collection service.
- The bins that would be provided to households on request prior to investment in the new bins. Cabinet was advised that there were occasions when residents requested replacement bins and, as diamond bins were no longer available, comb bins had already started to be provided to these households.
- The potential for the availability of smaller bins to be promoted to residents, whilst providing the larger bins as a standard. In particular, Members commented that single person households might prefer to use smaller bins.
- The communications that would be issued alongside replacement of the bins. Officers explained that funding was proposed in the MTFP to allocate to communications in respect of this matter.

RESOLVED

- 1) The Council agrees to replace all “Diamond” lift bins in use across the Residual, Recycling, and Garden Waste services in Bromsgrove District during the 2025/26 financial year with industry standard “Comb” lift bins.
- 2) To endorse the proposal to replace all the Council’s existing “Diamond” wheeled bins with industry standard “Comb” 240ltr wheeled bins.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) The Council allocates £2.2 million Capital funding in the Medium-Term Financial Plan for the 2025/26 financial year for the purchase and distribution of these bins.

59/24

INTRODUCTION OF FOOD WASTE COLLECTION

The Environmental Services Manager presented a report concerning the introduction of a food waste collection service in Bromsgrove District.

Cabinet was advised that the Environment Act 2021 had introduced a new statutory duty for local authorities to provide a weekly food waste collection service. Confirmation had not yet been provided to the Council on the new burdens funding that would be made available by the Government to the authority to help cover the costs of delivering this service. However, it was anticipated that the Council would receive an additional circa £900,000 to cover the costs of new caddies and outdoor bins for household use for the food waste.

At a local level, there were space issues at Bromsgrove depot in relation to accommodating a new vehicle or vehicles for the delivery of a food waste collection service. These vehicles could not be accommodated alongside the existing fleet. Officers had concluded that it would not be viable to purchase more land to accommodate the additional vehicles, so this was not considered to be a suitable option for the Council at this time.

Taking into account existing pressures and uncertainties, Officers were proposing that the Council should procure the food waste collection service through a private sector company. Ideally, the Council would have aimed to deliver the service inhouse, but this was not considered to be feasible at this stage. The proposal was to procure the service for a period of up to eight years.

To maximise interest in this opportunity within the private sector, Bromsgrove District Council would aim to procure this service jointly with Redditch Borough Council and Wyre Forest District Council. There was no guarantee that the procurement exercise would be successful. However, if the procurement process was unsuccessful, the Council could report back to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) highlighting the issues that had been experienced and a request would then be submitted to extend the deadline for the introduction of the service in the District.

Once the report had been presented, Members discussed the following matters in detail:

- The procurement of an external provider for the food waste collection service and the implications for other waste collection

services. Cabinet was advised that existing services would be unaffected and would continue to be delivered inhouse.

- The potential for the risks to the authority arising from the introduction of a food waste collection service to be reduced through procurement of a third party to deliver the service. Officers explained that these risks would also be shared with Redditch Borough and Wyre Forest District Council by undertaking joint procurement.
- The consultation that had already been undertaken with representatives of the Trades Unions and staff employed in the Waste Collection team to explain the rationale for the proposed way forward in this instance.
- The soft market testing exercise that had been undertaken by five Worcestershire authorities, including Bromsgrove District Council, prior to this date and the extent to which the lack of interest expressed by private sector organisations at this time reflected the potential interest in the proposed contract with the public sector. Officers explained that it was not unusual to not attract interest in soft market testing exercises because they were not guaranteed to result in contract work. Therefore, this could not be regarded as representative of the likely outcome of the procurement exercise.
- The dates when Redditch Borough and Wyre Forest District Councils were due to consider this issue. Officers clarified that the Redditch Executive Committee was due to consider the matter at a meeting on 14th January 2025 and it was anticipated that Wyre Forest District Council would discuss the matter in February 2025.
- The timeframes for undertaking the procurement exercise. Cabinet was advised that the aim was to go out to tender in spring 2025.
- The forthcoming deadline, in spring 2026, for Councils to introduce a food waste collection service and the implications of possible non-compliance. Members were advised that as long as the Council had a clear plan in place the authority would not be failing in terms of compliance.
- The lack of anaerobic digestors in Worcestershire to dispose of the food waste and the implications of this situation. Officers explained that Worcestershire County Council was responsible for disposal of the waste and once the food waste was loaded onto the vehicles, the County Council needed to direct District Councils on where this waste should be disposed.
- The extent to which the Council would be able to meet the Government's deadline to introduce the food waste collection service if this was not outsourced to the private sector. Officers confirmed that the Council was unlikely to meet the deadline if a decision was taken to deliver this service inhouse at this stage.
- The benefits arising from outsourcing this service, which would include the potential to share risks with other authorities, to gather data on service delivery and to use that data to inform decisions taken in eight years' time.
- The forthcoming requirement for an additional circa 9,000 houses to be developed in Bromsgrove District, under the National

Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the extent to which this had been taken into account when planning arrangements for the collection and disposal of food waste.

- The extent to which there were risks associated with food collection, including pests, and how these risks would be addressed.
- Long-haul disposal arrangements for food waste and the arrangements for use of transfer stations.
- The smaller bins that had been suggested by DEFRA. Members commented that this was unlikely to be welcomed by local residents.
- The potential for a similar food waste disposal system to Norway to be introduced in Bromsgrove and the challenges involved in this. Officers clarified that the system in the UK was less advanced than in parts of the continent and unfortunately not set up to be as progressive.
- The extent to which householders were likely to continue to dispose of food waste in their grey bins.
- The concerns that some residents might have about using slop buckets in their homes.
- The potential for food waste to be comingled with other sources of waste and collected at the same time. Cabinet was advised that the Environment Act placed a legal requirement for food waste to be collected separately on a weekly basis.
- The patterns in terms of food waste collection that had emerged in parts of the country where this service had already been introduced. Members were asked to note that some householders would not use the service every week whilst other residents would not use the service at all.
- The likelihood that some residents would continue to dispose of food waste in their compost bins.
- The potentially different food waste patterns that might emerge over time across the various districts in the county.
- The need to encourage residents to reduce the amount of food that they wasted.
- The arrangements that would be in place should the successful company through the procurement process go into administration. Officers advised that there would be appropriate insurance arrangements in place to address this risk. Working with other local authorities would also help to offset this risk.
- The risk that some residents would leave caddies outside their properties creating an unsightly appearance. Officers explained that communications would be issued in relation to this matter.
- The reasons why the Council had opted for an eight-year length for the proposed contract. Cabinet was advised that this would help to affray the financial costs involved. For a shorter contract, a private sector company was likely to require the same financial investment from the authority but over a shorter period of time and this could be difficult for the Council to manage.

- The vehicles that would be purchased for the delivery of the food waste collection service and whether the Council would own these vehicles. Officers explained that the third-party company would own the vehicles. There would be the option for the organisation to sell or transfer the asset to the Council's ownership at the end of the eight years, however, the general lifespan of a vehicle such as this tended to be eight years.
- The potential for the Council to purchase land to accommodate a food waste collection service. Officers reiterated that this option was not considered to be viable as there was not sufficient time remaining to enable the Council to provide this service inhouse in time to meet the Government's deadline.
- The work that had been undertaken to date to highlight with DEFRA that the Council lacked capacity at the depot to accommodate a food waste collection service. Officers confirmed that this issue had been raised with DEFRA but, like other authorities that had raised this issue, officers had been advised that this was the Council's issue to resolve.

During consideration of this item, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Councillor P. McDonald, was invited to address the Cabinet on behalf of the Board. Members were advised that the report had been pre-scrutinised at a meeting of the Board held on 6th January 2025. Whilst the Committee had not proposed any specific recommendations on this subject, concerns had been raised about the extent to which it was likely that there would be interest within the private sector to deliver this service. Cabinet was therefore asked to take into account the potential need for a "plan B" moving forward, in case initial plans could not be progressed.

Based on these concerns, Members discussed the potential to introduce an additional proposal as part of the decision making on this report. This was worded in the following manner:

"Officers to consider arrangements should procurement of a food waste collection service be unsuccessful."

Members commented that this additional proposal would help to ensure that the Council continued to take action, in light of the tight deadlines, even if the procurement process was unsuccessful.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Subject to the outcome of negotiations, the Council approves the introduction of a joint Food Waste Collection Service, working with Redditch Borough Council and Wyre Forest District Council to deliver the authority's statutory duties under the Environment Act 2021 regarding a Food Waste Collection service;
- 2) Delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director of Environmental and Housing Property Services following consultation with the Section 151 Officer, the Principal Solicitor

(Contracts, Commercial and Procurement) and the Portfolio Holders for Finance and Environmental Services respectively to, subject to the agreement of recommendations 1 and 4:

- a) to negotiate and agree terms with Redditch Borough Council and Wyre Forest District Council to enter into a joint tender for a shared food waste collection service;
 - b) tender and award a dedicated weekly food waste collection service through a third party for a period of 8 years commencing no later than 31 March 2026.
- 3) Officers to consider arrangements should procurement of a food waste collection service be unsuccessful.

RECOMMENDED that

- 4) The Council allocate £1,000,000 Revenue Funding in the Medium-Term Financial Plan as an operational budget from 2026/27 to fund the Food Waste Collection Service in the Borough, as accounted for within tranche 1 of the budget.

60/24

FINAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2025/26

The Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer presented the Final Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/26 for Members' consideration.

Cabinet was advised that the Council Tax Support Scheme had not been amended and remained largely the same as the version that had been approved in 2024. The only difference was that the whole scheme had been uprated by 1.7 per cent in line with the approved increases in national benefits. The Council brought in this banded scheme in 2021 and the full review undertaken in the previous year's budget suggested that most Councils now used this type of matrix.

The Council spent circa £5 million on Council Tax Support through the collection fund, with 70 per cent paid for by Worcestershire County Council, 13 per cent paid for by Bromsgrove District Council, 12 per cent paid for by the West Mercia Police and 5 per cent covered by Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue Service.

There were circa 1,800 pension aged people living in the District who were receiving Council Tax Support (paid for by the Government) and 2,300 working aged residents.

Members welcomed the report and in doing so commented on the importance of the Council Tax Support Scheme in terms of providing support to some of the most vulnerable residents living in the District.

During consideration of this item, Members noted that the name of the lead Portfolio Holder should have been included in the table on the first page of the report.

RECOMMENDED that the council tax reduction scheme be retained for the 2025-26 tax year, subject to the uprating of income bands by 1.7 per cent in-line with increases to national benefits.

61/24

COUNCIL TAX BASE 2025/26

The Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer presented the Council Tax Base 2025/26 report for Cabinet's consideration.

Members were advised that this was a statutory report which was required to allow precepting authorities to calculate how much Council Tax they would raise in the upcoming financial year.

The figures provided in the report were based on data on the Council Tax system as at the 30th November 2024 adjusted for:

- The latest dwelling numbers.
- Discounts and exemptions such as Council Tax Support.
- An allowance of 1 per cent for non-collection of Council Tax (with Members being advised that the Council's in year collection rate was approximately 98.5 per cent.)
- The new Council Tax base was 38,359.9 Band "D" equivalent properties (Members were informed that the previous financial year this figure had been 37,997.7).

The report had been pre-scrutinised at a recent meeting of the Finance and Budget Working Group. During the meeting, Members had requested a breakdown of the number of properties in each band in the District. The following information had subsequently been confirmed, which was highlighted with Cabinet Members for consideration:

- Band A – 3,952 properties
- Band B – 7,459 properties
- Band C – 9,342 properties
- Band D – 8,056 properties
- Band E – 7,212 properties
- Band F – 3,849 properties
- Band G – 2,924 properties
- Band H – 381 properties

Members were asked to note that whilst these figures added together might seem to differ from the Council Tax Base figure, this was because the Council Tax Base focused on Band D equivalent numbers.

The Finance and Budget Working Group had also questioned which areas of the District were impacted by the Trent River Management Area in terms of flood defences. Officers confirmed that this included parts of Hollywood, Wythall, Frankley and Rubery. Confirmation was provided that flood defence area information was included in the report as these figures were needed by Worcestershire County Council, which was the responsible lead authority for flood defences.

RESOLVED that the amount calculated by Bromsgrove District Council as the Council Tax Base for the whole area for 2025/26 is approved at 38,359.9 as detailed in appendix 1 to include the individual parish elements

62/24

DISABLED FACILITY GRANT OMBUDSMAN'S REPORT

The Strategic Housing Services Manager presented the Disabled Facilities Grant Ombudsman's report for Cabinet's consideration.

Members were advised that this was a statutory report which needed to be presented for Cabinet's consideration. The Local Government Ombudsman had concluded that there had been maladministration in relation to the provision of Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding support to a local resident. There had been a number of partner organisations involved in this complex case, including Bromsgrove District Council, Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT), Worcestershire Children's First and other bodies. All partners had received criticisms in the report and recommendations had been made by the Ombudsman to address the issues that had been identified.

Since the report had been issued by the Ombudsman, the Council had been working to address the recommendations detailed in the report. This had included taking a lead on communications and the introduction of a form for the DFG process that residents could sign to indicate that they understood and were satisfied with the works that would be undertaken using the funding.

Following the presentation of the report, Members expressed their disappointment that this situation had occurred in this instance. There was general agreement that lessons needed to be learned from the situation to ensure that services improved in future. As part of this process, the suggestion was made that the new form that had been introduced for the DFG scheme should involve tripartite approval; from the Occupational Therapist involved in undertaking an assessment of an applicant; from the applicant; and from the Council. It was suggested that this would be particularly helpful for more vulnerable applicants, who might require additional support, as well as providing an audit trail. Officers agreed to review and update the form accordingly.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the content of the report be noted; and
- 2) the actions implemented in response to the recommendations of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman be endorsed.

63/24

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (MTFP) TRANCHE 1 - (TO FOLLOW)

The Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer presented the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Tranche 1 report (following

consultation) 2025/26 to 2027/28. In presenting this report, an update in respect of consultation feedback was circulated at the meeting (attached at Appendix 1 to the minutes).

Members were reminded that at the Cabinet meeting held on 10th December 2024 the Tranche 1 MTFP was presented. This report had then been considered prior to consultation with the public and other stakeholders. The authority had subsequently consulted on the Tranche 1 budget proposals. This budget consultation opened on 5th December 2024. As part of the consultation process, an email invitation was sent to members of the Bromsgrove Community Panel to take part in the consultation. The survey was also promoted on a variety of social media channels. The survey closed at 12 noon on Thursday 2nd January 2025. The response rate from the community panel members had been 48 per cent. There were a total of 278 valid responses received overall.

In terms of responses to specific questions, Members were referred to Question 2, which provided a breakdown of the consultation responses by location. The highest percentage of returns had been received from Aston Fields, Belbroughton and Romsley, and Bromsgrove Centre. Question 16 provided a breakdown of the age ranges of the people who filled out the questionnaire. Members were asked to note that the vast majority were aged over 50.

The survey had asked respondents to rank the three most important services they felt the Council should invest in. In the feedback received, these had been:

- Local Economic Development and Employment (47.1 per cent of respondents).
- Community Safety (44.6 per cent of respondents).
- Maintenance of the Landscape and Environment (43.8 per cent of respondents)

In questions where respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with particular suggestions, six of those responses entailed well over 50 per cent agreeing or strongly agreeing. Only two had responses lower than 50 per cent - these being:

- Do you agree that the Council should invest more in our front-line services to cover increases in fuel? (At a 49.6% approval rate.)
- Do you support fees and charges (this excludes parking) rising by 4% to keep them in line with inflation and rising staffing costs? (At a 40.2% approval rate.)

The highest approval rating, at 86.2 per cent, was to the question - Do you agree that the Council should invest in economic development in order to support local businesses, start-ups, the town and local centres and to prioritise local skills?

Two further questions were asked about what level of increase to Bromsgrove District Council's proportion of Council Tax residents supported. The answers to this were:

- 61.5 per cent agreed or strongly agreed with a 1.99 per cent increase.
- This dropped to 45.8 per cent for a 2.99 per cent increase.

The survey had also included two free test questions:

- Please let us know your suggestions for investing in the district to increase prosperity and enhance appeal for residents and businesses alike.
 - There were 178 responses to this question.
 - Responses to this question provided many suggestions and comments regarding the District. The top three themes were Bromsgrove Town Centre, supporting businesses and the importance of infrastructure, from roads to public transport. These themes had many cross overs, from the impact of traffic, encouraging a diverse range of businesses into the town and reducing costs to visitors and businesses alike.
 - Suggestions included:
 - Reducing business rates / relief
 - Reducing parking costs
 - Supporting independent retailers
 - Bringing in key major retailers
 - Understanding the offer on the High Street. Some respondents had suggested that there were too many charity shops, cafes, hair and vaping businesses
 - Utilising empty shops for small businesses, new start-ups, housing and community use
 - Improving the market, in terms of the quality, offer and number of days that it was in operation
 - Making the town vibrant, attractive and distinctive, including by developing attractions and encouraging visitors
 - Improving the appearance and maintenance of the high street
 - Improving public transport
 - Supporting active travel
 - Accessing grants wherever possible
 - Ensuring a District-wide view
- Please let us know any other comments on the budget or ideas for reducing costs or increasing income to ensure Council services remain sustainable.
 - There were 118 responses to this question.
 - Of the responses to this question, the largest category fell into the theme of efficiency and value for money. Other themes included infrastructure, focusing on those in need, ensuring

transparency and accountability, asset utilisation, and the town centre.

○ Suggestions included:

- Reviewing salaries
- Ensuring there were the right skills within the Council
- Outsourcing some functions
- Exploring alternative methods of delivery (e.g. co-operatives, and partnerships)
- Reducing use of consultants
- Reviewing fees and charges
- Commercial opportunities (e.g. logs, compost or specific services)
- Turning off lights / utilising smart sensors
- Reducing events
- Promoting events better to increase revenue
- Community use of buildings
- Energy generation (e.g. solar panels in car parks)
- Converting buildings into housing (e.g. multi-storey by Asda)
- Increasing enforcement fines (e.g. fly tipping and littering)
- Supporting the voluntary sector
- Reducing business rates / relief
- Reviewing Council Tax
- Better coordination around highways and roadworks

In considering the feedback, Members were asked to note that there were some responses that had been received which indicated that some members of the public were not sure which services were provided by Bromsgrove District Council as opposed to Worcestershire County Council.

The consultation feedback had been considered at a recent meeting of the Finance and Budget Working Group. During the meeting, Members had noted that there had been a relatively high response rate from residents living in Alvechurch, compared to other areas. The suggestion was made that this had been due to work undertaken by the local Councillors to raise awareness and it was possible that lessons could be learned from this for other areas in the future.

Once the report had been presented, Members discussed the following points in detail:

- The response rate to the consultation, which compared favourably with previous consultation processes in respect of the Council's budget.
- The value of increasing the response rate in future to ensure that the feedback was more representative of a wider number of residents living in the District.

Agenda Item 13

Cabinet
7th January 2025

- The potential for the data in response to Question 33 to be provided at a Parish Council level. Officers undertook to investigate this matter further.
- The membership of the Bromsgrove Community Panel. Officers confirmed that this comprised approximately 500 local residents who had opted to be consulted on a regular basis by the Council.
- The businesses that were leasing shops in Bromsgrove town centre.
- The changing shopping habits of consumers in the twenty-first century and the need for the local economy to adapt.
- The potential for more pop-up shops to be introduced in the District.
- The advice that the Council's economic development team and the Town Centres Manager provided to local businesses.

Members concluded their discussions by thanking the Financial Services team for their hard work on preparing the MTFP.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) Members endorse the inputs into the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan as at the middle of October 2024, and the associated risks and opportunities.
- 2) An initial Tranche of savings proposals and pressures, as set out in Sections 3.03 to 3.14, including the fees and charges increases (non-commercial), after consideration of feedback from the consultation exercise which closed on the 2nd January 2025, is approved at Council.

The meeting closed at 8.01 p.m.

Chairman

Bromsgrove District Council – 22nd January 2025 Member Questions

**1. From Councillor H. Rone-Clarke
Question for the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and
Community Safety**

“We have previously passed a motion at Full-Council encouraging multi-agency meetings to resolve land disputes, how can we also ensure that residents get resolutions to local issues when County Council functions fail? - A key example being the shocking state that the trees at Shepherds Walk have been left in and the problems this is causing residents on Avon Close and Fair oak Drive.”

**2. From Councillor McDonald
Question to the Leader**

“The Overview and Scrutiny Board are concerned about the extensive use of consultants in recent months to support the work of the Cabinet and the services of external professionals in the day-to-day delivery of Council business. We would ask the Leader to ensure that the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny is advised in circumstances where the use of a consultant is being proposed to formulate strategic items so that consideration can be given to the value for money in these circumstances.

Whilst we understand that there is a need to procure the services of external professionals in the day to day delivery of Council business and services, a quarterly report of these services are presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.”

**3. From Councillor D Nicholl
Question for the Leader**

“Given the recent problems where the 145a bus service was to be cut and the 145 bus was due to have significant route changes in Stoke Prior. This only became apparent via residents Facebook posts. Can the Leader please contact Worcestershire County Council to get assurance that Bromsgrove District Council is informed of the consultation process on route changes through their wards in the future by notifying Assistant Director Community & Housing Services?”

**4. From Councillor C Hotham
Question for the Leader**

“This council has been facing almost unprecedented pressures: The redevelopment projects, the play audit, the car parking audit, the letting agency start up, a new strategic district plan, a new chief exec and 151 officer, a projected financial deficit of millions of pounds. We Bromsgrove District Council

are now faced with our extermination. Whether we agree or disagree with the government's policy, the one thing we must realise is that it will happen and it must be managed by us elected representatives for the benefit of the people of Bromsgrove. It is vital that all of us are involved as none of us want to feel that any part of Bromsgrove district is disadvantaged by the change.

Currently, the cabinet consists of the Leader and 6 members, they already have their work cut out managing and overseeing our existing challenges. My question for the Leader is:

Is it now time to appoint a further cabinet member with primary responsibility for the change to a unitary authority who would hold regular working groups for all members to attend?"

5. From Councillor J. Robinson
Question for the Leader

"The Labour Government promised the end of austerity and to fund local Government fairly. It is with dismay that this council notes the financial settlement provided to Bromsgrove District Council for the financial year 25/26 resulting in a real terms cut in the money available to our council. We therefore call on the Leader to write to the secretary of state to urge the Government to urgently provide further funding."