

Public Document Pack



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY 24TH JULY 2024

AT 6.00 P.M.

PARKSIDE SUITE - PARKSIDE

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

AGENDA

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

To invite Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Disclosable Interests they may have in items on the agenda, and to confirm the nature of those interests.
3. **Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 25th June 2024** (Pages 7 - 16)
 - (a) To receive and note the minutes
 - (b) To consider any recommendations contained within the minutes
4. **Foodbank and Community Shop Provision Task Group - Final Report** (Pages 17 - 32)
5. **Cabinet Appointments to Outside Bodies** (Pages 33 - 38)
6. **Cost of Living Proposal -Update** (Pages 39 - 44)
7. **Combined Financial Outturn and Quarter 4 Financial Monitoring Report (including Update on the Fleet)** (Pages 45 - 64)

8. **Quarter 4 Performance Outturn Report (Pages 65 - 100)**
9. **To consider any urgent business, details of which have been notified to the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting**
10. **To consider, and if considered appropriate, to pass the following resolution to exclude the public from the meeting during the consideration of item(s) of business containing exempt information:-**

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

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

11. **Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 17th July 2024**

Due to the timing of the publication of this agenda the minutes from the Cabinet meeting due to be held on 17th July 2024 will follow in a supplementary pack. There is the possibility, due to the items on the agenda for 17th July 2024 Cabinet meeting, that there may be some exempt minutes arising from that meeting that will also be published in a supplementary papers pack for the Cabinet meeting on 24th July 2024.

Sue Hanley
Chief Executive

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

16th July 2024

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

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

Notes:

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



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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

TUESDAY 25TH JUNE 2024, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors P. M. McDonald, S. T. Nock, A. Bailes, R. Bailes, A. M. Dale, E. M. S. Gray, R. J. Hunter, B. Kumar, S. A. Robinson and H. D. N. Rone-Clarke

Observers:

Councillor K. J. May – Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships and Enabling

Councillor S. R. Colella – Cabinet Member for Finance

Officers: Mrs. C. Felton and Mr. G. Revans, Mr. M. Sliwinski and Mrs. S. Woodfield.

1/24

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

A nomination for the position of Chairman was received in respect of Councillor P. M. McDonald. On being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED that Councillor P. M. McDonald be appointed as Chairman of the Board for the ensuing municipal year.

2/24

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

A nomination for the position of Vice-Chairman was received in respect of Councillor S. T. Nock. On being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED that Councillor S. T. Nock be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Board for the ensuing municipal year.

3/24

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no apologies for absence.

4/24

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS

There were no declarations of interest nor of whipping arrangements.

5/24

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TRAINING - OUTCOMES OF THE TRAINING AND WORK PRIORITISATION SESSION

The Board considered the report that detailed the outcomes of Overview and Scrutiny Training and Work Prioritisation Session. Members were invited to consider whether to add subjects suggested for scrutiny during the session to the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Work Programme for 2024/25.

It was noted that in discussing work prioritisation for the year ahead, Members considered best practice approaches to setting the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme, recognising the need to identify the key items for scrutiny during the municipal year and recognising the need for sufficient time to be allocated to each topic in a way that would add value.

At the training Members also recognised that there were alternative ways to receive information and that doing so, through a "first look" for some topics, would create capacity on the work programme. Subjects suggested, and agreed by Members, as suitable for a "first look" Member Briefing included:

- The District Heat Network
- Biodiversity
- Street Sweeping.

It was noted that at the training session the following key subjects for scrutiny to focus on were suggested. Following discussion, it was agreed that these should form the key subjects for Overview and Scrutiny to consider in 2024-25.

- The Bromsgrove Play Audit – Members suggested the potential to discuss this over a number of meetings with an initial overview and scrutiny report at one meeting followed by a pre-scrutiny of a Cabinet report at another meeting.
- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) – Concerns were raised about ASB in the District. The suggestion was made that this could form the basis of a report to the Board alongside the separate annual update to the Board concerning the work of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership in Bromsgrove. It was highlighted that whilst the legislation in respect of the partnership did not enable the work of individual partner organisations to be scrutinised, the Council's representative on

Agenda Item 3

Overview and Scrutiny Board
25th June 2024

the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel could also be invited to attend the meeting when community safety and ASB was discussed, in order to assist with discussions concerning this subject.

- Changes to Waste Services in response to the Environment Act 2021 – Members noted that proposals detailed in the Environmental Act 2021, especially with regard to food waste collection services, would have implications for the authority and the wider District. As such details scrutiny of this subject would therefore add value.

In discussing the addition of items arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Training and Work Prioritisation Session to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2024/25, Members sought further details on the following areas:

- Levelling Up Projects Update Reports – A Member commented that the greatest risk to the Council was with regard to the delivery of Levelling Up Projects in Bromsgrove and therefore this topic warranted inclusion as one of the key subjects for the Board to consider in 2024-25. The Member explained that the Overview and Scrutiny had not received an update on this topic for a significant period of time and that projects risk registers provided to Members were now out of date. Following discussion, it was suggested that an additional meeting be arranged to scrutinise a Levelling Up report that was due to be reported to Cabinet on 17th July.
- A date of 11th July 2024 was suggested for the additional meeting of Overview and Scrutiny, however, some Members expressed disappointment at the late notification of this additional date. It was thus agreed that Members would be contacted following this meeting with regard to arranging the date for the additional meeting to consider the Levelling Up report.
- It was suggested that updates on Levelling Up projects should be provided at main Overview and Scrutiny meetings at regular intervals as this was a priority issue for Bromsgrove.
- Bromsgrove Play Audit – It was reported that a report on this topic had not yet been completed as consultants were currently in the process of undertaking work on this matter. Some Members reported that they had not been approached by officers and / or

Agenda Item 3

Overview and Scrutiny Board
25th June 2024

consultants for individual discussions about play areas in their wards. It was reported that consultants were due to deliver a presentation to Members at the Cabinet Advisory Group (CAG) meeting on 18th July 2024, with calendar invitation due to be sent following agreement at this meeting. Members expressed disappointment that they had not been provided with calendar invitation for this prior to this meeting. It was agreed that the calendar invitation for 18th July should be sent to Members following this meeting.

- Members asked that they be provided with a list of matters / lines of enquiry to consider prior to CAG meeting on play areas on 18th July, so that Members were able to prepare in advance for this meeting.
- It was requested by Members that notwithstanding the CAG presentation on play audit, Members receive confirmation as to when consultants and/or officers would be available to talk to Members individually about play areas in their wards. There was an expectation that in addition to this Members would be provided with an opportunity to speak to the consultants about issues in their Wards.
- It was stated that decision on play audit was due to be made on this matter by Cabinet in November, and that the final report would be pre-scrutinised by Overview and Scrutiny Board at November meeting prior to decision-making. It was requested that Members of Overview and Scrutiny Board receive a progress report on play audit at the September meeting.
- Some Members expressed concern about costs of consultants' work for the play audits and long timescales with regard to undertaking work on this topic. The Leader of the Council addressed the Board and commented that the report on this had been drafted for consideration of Portfolio Holder prior to District Elections in May 2023, however, it was reported at that time the Leader noted that quality of the report was insufficient and requested that further work had to be undertaken on the play audit.

It was agreed that items arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Training and Work Prioritisation Session be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Work Programme for 2024/25 municipal year with the addition of items and dates as discussed in the pre-amble above.

Agenda Item 3

Overview and Scrutiny Board
25th June 2024

Consideration was also given to adopting the work prioritisation tool included at Appendix 1, which would assist Members in selecting topics for scrutiny. During the discussion, Members suggested that the Draft Work Prioritisation Tool should be modified by removing reference to point number four of the tool and adding a clarification to point number five that the topic should be likely to warrant effective recommendations by Members in order to be suitable for scrutiny in any format. The updated work prioritisation tool would therefore read:

“When considering whether to add suggested items for scrutiny to the Overview and Scrutiny Board’s Work Programme, Members should consider the following:

- 1) *Is the rationale for scrutiny clear?*
- 2) *Is the topic a **high council priority** and of **significant community concern**?*
- 3) *Are there sufficient resources for this scrutiny activity?*
- 4) *If the subject is suitable for scrutiny, and likely to warrant effective recommendations, is the topic best scrutinised:*
 - a) *As an agenda item at a meeting of the Board?*
 - b) *As a Task Group*
 - c) *By the Finance and Budget Working Group?*
 - d) *As a Short Sharp Review?”*

It was agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny Work Prioritisation Tool should be adopted as per the amendments above.

Consideration was given to the Appendix 2, the presentation of the Board’s Work Programme for 2024-25. It was noted that during the Overview and Scrutiny training session, it was suggested that standing administrative items, whilst continuing to form part of meetings agendas, did not need to be listed on the presented work programme. It was suggested that substantive items should be clearly listed on the work programme and that a reference list of reserve items be included, which would list substantive items where no date had or could yet be set for consideration of those subjects.

It was highlighted that whilst the dates of scheduled meetings of the Board had been recorded on the draft work programme, Members could convene additional meetings where necessary. Consideration was also given to the suggestion that when considering the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme at meetings of the Board, Members could

also identify some key lines of enquiry in relation to substantive items due for consideration at the following meeting of the Board. This would help Officers and other potential witnesses to prepare in advance of the attendance at meetings but would not prevent Members from asking additional questions on the subject during the meetings. Members agreed that these suggestions should be adopted.

It was agreed by Members that the suggested presentation of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme should be adopted as per Appendix 2 to the report.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Items arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Training and Work Prioritisation Session, including the items suggested by Members in the course of considering this item (as per preamble above), be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Work Programme for 2024/25 municipal year;
- 2) The Work Prioritisation Tool at Appendix 1 be adopted, subject to amendments in the pre-amble above, to enable the Overview and Scrutiny Board to select appropriate items for scrutiny during the year; and
- 3) The layout of the Overview and Scrutiny work programme be updated as detailed at Appendix 2 to the report.

6/24

FINANCE AND BUDGET WORKING GROUP - MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Members received a report asking for the chairman and members to be appointed to the Finance and Budget Working Group. It was noted that the Chairman of the Group had traditionally been the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board. Members agreed that this arrangement should continue for 2024-25. It was explained that as per the terms of reference, the Working Group would comprise seven members – that is the Chairman of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee and the five Overview and Scrutiny Members, in addition to the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Board.

The Board decided that for the time being the Finance and Budget Working Group would comprise only six members in total and elected members would be approached if it was subsequently felt this arrangement was not working.

Agenda Item 3

Overview and Scrutiny Board
25th June 2024

A Member raised a query with regard to allowing substitutes on the Finance and Budget Working Group. Following discussion, the majority of Members felt that no substitutions should be allowed on the Working Group. It was also felt that Members would first discuss whether the quorum should remain at three before considering changes to the current terms of reference in this regard.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Councillor P. M. McDonald be appointed Chairman of the Finance and Budget Working Group for the ensuing municipal year;
- 2) As per the Working Group's Terms of Reference, Councillor H. D. N. Rone-Clarke be appointed to serve on the Finance and Budget Working Group in his capacity as the Chairman of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee;
- 3) Councillors S. T. Nock, A. Bailes, R. Bailes, and S. A. Robinson be appointed to serve on the Finance and Budget Working Group;
- 4) The Terms of Reference for the Finance and Budget Working be approved, including the provision that substitutes are not allowed at meetings of Finance and Budget Working Group.

7/24

WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVE FOR 2024-25

Councillor B. Kumar was nominated to become the Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) for the municipal year 2024/25. On being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED that Councillor B. Kumar be appointed as the Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2024/25 municipal year.

8/24

TASK GROUP UPDATES

The Chairman explained that Councillor M. Marshall (Chair of the Task Group) was due to present the final report of the Impact of Heatwaves Task Group at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting scheduled for 23rd July 2024.

9/24

CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Cabinet Work Programme was presented for Members' consideration.

A query was raised regarding the Bromsgrove District Plan Consultation item, and it was noted this was due to be presented to Cabinet on 11th September 2024. Members requested that in addition to Group Briefings, individual ward members should be contacted individually about proposed developments in their wards (development plan).

RESOLVED that, subject to the preamble above, the Cabinet Work Programme be noted.

10/24

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

It was agreed by Members that exclusion of the press and public was not necessary in relation to Minute Item 11/24 (To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 22nd April 2024). The meeting remained in public session for its entire duration.

11/24

TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 22ND APRIL 2024

The minutes of the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 22nd April, including the confidential minutes record (for items that were discussed in exempt session), were submitted for Members' consideration.

Clarification was received with respect to page 2 of the minutes record in that Constitution Review Working Group (CRWG) was not a formally constituted group of the Council but included representation from every political group on the Council. The group considered topics in relation to governance changes and it was highlighted that constitutional changes arising out of Governance Systems Task Group report (submitted by Overview and Scrutiny in September 2023) were discussed by CRWG prior to consideration at Overview and Scrutiny and afterward Cabinet and Council meetings.

Agenda Item 3

Overview and Scrutiny Board
25th June 2024

With regard to the main minutes record of the meeting, the following amendments were requested:

- That the typographical error on page 14 (second bullet point) be corrected from 'the Operational Therapists (OT) service used for the DFG provision...' to '...used for the OT provision...'
- That the statement incorrectly recorded on page 19 (second bullet point from the bottom of the page) in relation to the number of car parks currently operated by the Council in the District should be corrected from 'The Member stated that this figure probably included Churchfield Car Park which was closed and one other should not be included' to 'The Member stated that this figure should not include Churchfield Car Park and an unknown car park'

It was requested that an action log be circulated to all Board members prior to meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Board to assist in keeping track of actions and requests for information made by Members at the meetings.

RESOLVED that, subject to the amendments in the preamble above, the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 22nd April 2024, including the confidential record of that meeting, be agreed as a true and correct record.

The meeting closed at 7.29 p.m.

Chairman

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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD

FOODBANK AND COMMUNITY SHOP PROVISION TASK GROUP

FINAL REPORT

April 2024



Bromsgrove
District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

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CONTENTS

	Page No
1. Membership of the Task Group	1
2. Foreword from the Chairman	2
3. Task Group Recommendations	3
4. Background Information	6
5. Aims and Objectives of the Review	6
6. What We Did	6
7. Summary of Work Completed	7
8. Questions that Arose during the Investigation	8
9. Findings	9
10. Appendix 1 – Overview & Scrutiny Resolution	11
11. Appendix 2 – Witnesses	12
12. Appendix 3 – Background Papers	13

MEMBERSHIP OF THE TASK GROUP



Chairman – Cllr Esther Gray



Cllr Alan Bailes



Cllr Bakul Kumar



Cllr Peter McDonald



Cllr David Nicholl



Cllr David G. Stewart

SUPPORTING OFFICER DETAILS

Mat Sliwinski – Democratic Services Officer
Email: democratic@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The task group first met on 20 December 2023 and was set up as a result of concerns arising from the rise in foodbanks and community shops in some areas of the District to combat the poverty and deprivation families find themselves facing. This meant they were unable to meet their families essential need for food and other fundamentals during the cost-of-living crisis.

Following previous task group reports on fuel poverty, we were better informed about the impact of the cost-of-living on families both in terms of those out-of-work and those who are termed as working poor. The foodbank/community shop task group identified the criteria that would form a framework of investigation to establish how the charitable organisations were meeting the needs of the families affected.

We visited six locations over a period from 12 January 2024 – 19 February 2024. This included, Alvechurch Larder, New Starts (Aston Fields), Sidemoor Community Project [CIC], Catshill Baptist Church Foodbank, The Basement Project - in Bromsgrove Hanover Street and Hollywood Life Centre Foodbank. We wholeheartedly thank those organisations for what they do. We also thank them for taking the time to speak to the task team and showing us how they have managed the complex and time-consuming role of supporting people faced with food poverty.

We also thank Officers Judith Willis and Della McCarthy for their time in sharing their engagement with these organisations and their time to speak to the task group. This provided a clear background as to what the Council are doing in support of signposting residents of Bromsgrove District for help in this crisis, and in finding funding streams to support the organisations providing this service. This involves much more than this in real terms as Officers explore any opportunities, in what is a cost-of-living crisis, to continue their support of organisations as effectively as possible and to provide information to communities about what to do if they are suffering from fuel poverty, need access to warm hubs and help in claiming benefits.

The task group looking at Foodbanks/Community Shops represented a cross-party section of the full council at Bromsgrove District Council. I thank each of you for your participation in what entailed visiting all of those organisations across the district to ensure we could gather the information we needed to fulfil the criteria of the task.

We believe the recommendations made will ensure the Council can enhance this support and extend it where we identified gaps in provision. The gaps were found both geographically and in the level of support equally reaching all residents across the whole district. The important note to consider was that the council assist and do not take over and dictate which model must be followed, but that all organisations feel well supported. The organisations have evolved from what are unique communities with diverse needs. We applaud them for their initiative and energy in what they do.

Councillor Esther Gray
Chairman, Foodbank and Community Shop Provision Task Group

TASK GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Recommendation 1
That the Council update its website to include contact details of all foodbanks in the district which wish to be on the list. The Council will ensure that the webpage links to the foodbanks' websites and/or other contact details of the foodbanks, such as telephone and social media, are up-to-date and that information on how to get in touch is easily accessible.
Financial Implications for recommendations: There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation.
Legal Implications for recommendations: There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation. Foodbanks must first be asked whether they give permission for their contact information to be included on the Council's website before the website can be updated with their details.
Resource Implications: Officer time in updating and monitoring the webpages.
Recommendation 2
That all organisations providing foodbanks receive the appropriate and necessary support and resources from Bromsgrove District Council, which is proportionate and equivalent to their size and what they require. In the transition period, if the organisation is growing, appropriate support and funding needs to be allocated.
Financial Implications for recommendations: There are potential financial implications in relation to this recommendation if funding or resources are provided by the Council.
Legal Implications for recommendations: The Council follows a transparent and fair process when deciding to provide support. Also, it is understood that the Council will provide support subject to the resources being available.

When allocating any resources in the form of funds, the Council would need to take into account data such as the number of users, number of potential users within the geographical area covered by the organisation and other factors, in deciding the level of support.

Resource Implications:

Officer time ensuring that the approach compiled with equalities. Resource implications if support is provided.

Recommendation 3

That the Council develop a consistent universal understanding/ guidelines of what level of recording of users' personal information is required for the needs of the community engaged in the foodbank service without breaching the GDPR legislation. That the Council recognise there might be specific recording requirements as conditions attached to accessing specific funding streams.

Financial Implications:

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

Legal Implications:

There are direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation, in particular around making sure the Council is clear on what level of recording of users' data is required as part of any grant process / Government requirements to access the grants.

Resource Implications:

Officer time in establishing a clear set of guidelines/policy.

Recommendation 4

That the Council endeavour to investigate, under the auspices of existing arrangements available to the Council, such as the Bromsgrove Partnership, whether communities in areas of the district that do not currently have foodbanks require this provision, and that the Council make best effort to create a food bank in Rubery where a need has already been identified.

Financial Implications:

It is noted that any Council-led investigation would need to be funded as the Council does not have dedicated officer capacity to undertake this investigation.

Should it be deemed feasible for the Council to create additional foodbank provision, there would need to be a budget approved to create a food bank in Rubery or anywhere else. This has not been required previously with existing food banks as these have been established by the local communities/groups themselves.

Legal Implications:

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

Resource Implications:

Officer time in investigating the feasibility of establishing food bank provision / in contacting the voluntary sector.

Recommendation 5

That the Council continues to develop opportunities to enable foodbank organisations to come together as part of a network to support each other and to promote the sustainability of the help being provided to the community across the district. That the Council makes clear that joining the network is a pre-requisite if applying for Council funding, should this become available in future.

Financial Implications:

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

Legal Implications:

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

Resource Implications:

Officer time in informing the organisations of this proposal and Council's role in supporting the setting up and facilitating of a network with a view to it being owned and run by the Network of community organisations itself. Network of community groups was already in place in Bromsgrove and foodbank organisations could be encouraged to join these networks.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Task Group met on 20 December 2023 and selected a Chairman. The elected Chairman, Cllr Esther Gray, then obtained the Task Group's agreement regarding the aims and objectives of this review. This followed a discussion at the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Board in October where Members were provided with an overview presentation on foodbank provision in the district. It was also agreed that this Task Group must be completed as quickly as possible but that it was very dependent upon the task team being able to gain appointments with the organisations who run the identified Foodbanks and Community Shops across the district.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE TASK GROUP

- Establish how accessible the foodbanks/community shops are for residents.
- Consider the operating models being used by each organisation to gather information which might help share and promote best practice for success.
- To consider the scope of the project in the deliverables achieved by established organisations and describe the major objectives of those organisations; and their primary aims in meeting community need and compare needs identified in a diverse widespread district.
- To look for gaps in support for those facing food and other essentials poverty in Bromsgrove District and explore how these could be met.

WHAT WE DID:

We met with the main person identified as in charge of the operation on site and spoke with other staff or members of the organisation.

We observed residents making use of the provision and on occasion spoke with them about how accessible they found it. We were also shown around the layout of buildings and storage areas establishing what space and resources were shared with other users of the building or where some also co-existed within areas where the community socialised and used the space as a warm hub.

We were given documents outlining times of opening and how the principles of operation were drafted. We saw leaflets advertising the provision and also, on occasion, had reference to web pages and social media pages for reference in our evidence gathering.

SUMMARY OF WORK COMPLETED:

The Task Group visited six locations over a period from 12 January 2024 – 19 February 2024. This included: Alvechurch Community Larder, New Starts (Aston Fields), Sidemoor Community Project (CIC), Catshill Baptist Church Foodbank, The Basement Project Bromsgrove - Hanover Street and Hollywood Life Centre Foodbank.

The Task Group found three organisations that take no agency referrals before meeting residents and listening to what they needed, then made best efforts to supply what they need from what they have gathered to hand. Those that take no referrals are: Alvechurch Larder, Sidemoor Community Project and Hollywood Life Centre Food Bank.

The Task Group found that three organisations take agency referrals before the residents are able to access the provision. Those organisations that take referrals are: New Starts, (for foodbank but not for Community Shop), Basement Project (as well as self-referrals) and Catshill Baptist Church, (which they described as a left over from being part of Trussell Trust organisation, although the forms completed are considerably reduced in information gathered.)

The organisations that take referrals say that it is to control the operation and to manage food distribution in an equitable fashion. However, after further discussion they reveal that they also use the information to try to help the resident by providing other help; by signposting to that help or encouraging them to take further help and guidance from sources close to the organisation. There were observably advertised occasions to get help with fuel poverty or gain access to organisations that support applications for funds they may be entitled to claim. Some of the foodbanks also provide speakers who help residents with budgeting skills.

In terms of specific focus, the Basement Project caters primarily for under 26-year-olds, which help their families incidentally.

Two of the foodbank organisations visited have contact with local schools. Catshill Baptist Foodbank link to Catshill schools who supply food from, for example, the Harvest Festival. The Basement Project reach out to many but not all schools; they mainly find contact with schools closer to Bromsgrove Town Centre. They have not, for example, had links with Waseley Hills High School, Rubery, for some time and did not identify the primary schools in that area in discussion at all. They have some historical links with Woodrush School in Wythall but did not mention any primary schools in that area. No mention was made of schools in Romsley, Hagley, Barnt Green or Alvechurch.

QUESTIONS THAT AROSE DURING THE INVESTIGATION:

- 1) How equally is the funding in support of children and families shared across the Bromsgrove District? It appears that one or two of the foodbank organisations, which do not cover the whole of the district, are able to receive external funding. Some of this may be because they have bank accounts, which is a prerequisite to receiving such funding and can account for how it is spent in line with the requirements of the funding.

This leads to recommendation 2: That all organisations providing foodbanks receive the appropriate and necessary support and resources from Bromsgrove District Council, which is proportionate and equivalent to their size and what they require. In the transition period, if the organisation is growing, appropriate support and funding needs to be allocated.

- 2) There is a question of mistaken assumption that the destitute and working poor are not found in all areas of the district. There is no evidence that areas such as Belbroughton, Hagley or Rubery in Worcestershire have a foodbank or community shop at all. Some residents may be travelling across the county boundary to find help. This is unknown as we did not survey residents. In effect we know that in Rubery, Worcestershire residents are signposted across the county boundary to Birmingham South area for help.

This leads to recommendation 4: That the Council endeavour to investigate, under the auspices of existing arrangements available to the Council, such as the Partnership, whether communities in areas of the district that do not currently have foodbanks require this provision, and that the Council makes best effort to create a food bank in Rubery where a need has already been identified as there is no known foodbank currently operating in the Bromsgrove District side of Rubery.

- 3) Each area where there is a foodbank or community shop has some enthusiastic people who volunteer to help their community. However, do they reach everyone in need in that area? Some are missed due to where they are located and/or timings of opening hours and/or that the method of operation puts barriers in the way such as gathering referrals. We have testimony from the task group in their surgery in the council district of those that fail to get help on occasion due to the need to obtain an agency referral. Referrers can be Bromsgrove District Council (including Councillors), Doctors, Clergy and other identified bodies such as BDHT.

This leads to recommendation 3: That the Council develop a consistent universal understanding/guidelines of what level of recording of users' personal information is required for the needs of the community engaged in the foodbank service without breaching the GDPR legislation. That the Council recognise there might be specific recording requirements as conditions attached to accessing specific funding streams may require this.

FINDINGS

The Task Group met on 22 and 29 February 2024 to complete the assessment of information and evidence gathered. On 22 February 2024 we also had the support of Officers: Judith Willis and Della McCarthy. We thank both Judith and Della for the patience and support in adding to the enquiry undertaken.

We found a wonderful example of human kindness wherever we went. The atmosphere was welcoming and genuine in their efforts to support the community. They were all unique, which is to be expected, as the widespread communities across the District are also unique.

Area of concern the Task Group wish to Highlight.

During the assessment of the evidence and information gathered some additional concerns arose about the current Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) funding for foodbanks. The Task Group felt this aspect needed further clarification to fully understand the allocation of BDC funding.

It was explained that foodbanks are not funded directly from BDC funds. Instead, BDC distributes funding received from Government grants such as the Government's Household Support Fund when such funding streams become available.

We felt that it remains imperative that we understand what criteria BDC uses when grant funding is distributed, including how foodbanks are assessed for suitability for receiving grant funding. We would like to understand how much funding grants BDC currently distributes to foodbanks and to which organisations.

Are there any criteria for receiving grant funding? How is the effectiveness of financial support measured? Is there any value for money measurement which is used to ensure grant funding is well spent?

In the development of the wording for the recommendations we also discussed these further concerns. We recognised that this aspect of concern came outside and in addition to the remit and primary focus of the task group. (Outlined above).

This additional highlighted concern links to recommendation 2: That all organisations providing foodbanks receive the appropriate and necessary support and resources from Bromsgrove District Council, which is proportionate and equivalent to their size and what they require. In the transition period, if the organisation is growing, appropriate support and funding needs to be allocated.

However, further work is required to establish if appropriate procurement policies are followed, and money is spent wisely in support of an equitable level of support across the whole district. This might be achieved with a further conversation with Officers of the Council in Overview and Scrutiny.

On 29 February 2024 one final meeting concluded the wording of the recommendations to meet the objectives of the task undertaken and that this would allow gaps to be addressed and Officers authorised to pursue these as soon as possible.

In particular, communication to the residents of the whole of the Bromsgrove District on the webpage with links which should ensure all and every location available to them can be signposted. Councillors of the Task Group Team also saw that the organisations would most likely benefit from the development of a network, to be facilitated by Officers, to develop links across the district which help all organisations to share the gathered food and essentials where an emergency occurs to meet the needs of residents as effectively as possible. It also supports organisations because they might find a source of advice as they develop their operations.

This is found in the recommendation 5: That the Council continues to develop opportunities to enable foodbank organisations to come together as part of a network to support each other and to promote the sustainability of the help being provided to the community across the district. That the Council makes clear that joining the network is a pre-requisite if applying for Council funding, should this become available in future.

The issues identified in whether there will or will not be funding will not entirely be within the grip of BDC and therefore some imaginative thought by both the organisations and the Council will be required to help residents and make access to support as simple as possible will be a challenge going forward.

Appendix 1

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY DECISION TO ESTABLISH THE TASK GROUP

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD - 16th OCTOBER 2023

The following was agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Board at its meeting on 16th October 2023 (Minute No. 41/23 – Community Shop Provision in the District):

“RESOLVED that a Task Group be established to investigate the topic of Community Supermarket / Food Bank provision in the District.”

Appendix 2

WITNESSES

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

The Task Group would like to thank all the foodbanks who have hosted the group and allowed the group to find out more about their work. The Task Group would like to offer special thanks the organisers of these food banks for their dedication in helping provide a vital service to the residents of Bromsgrove:

Keith Wiseman, Alvechurch Community Larder
Reverend Simon Gudger, Catshill Baptist Food Bank
Pastor Steve Crosthwaite, Hollywood Christian Life Centre
Marion Kenyon, NewStarts
Caleb Mallard, The Basement Project
Anthony Theophanous, Sidemoor Community Project

The following officers provided support to Members throughout the investigation:

Judith Willis, Head of Community and Housing Services
Della McCarthy, Bromsgrove and Redditch Partnership Manager

Supporting evidence, including the summary of the visits undertaken, can be found under the relevant chapters within the main body of this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Council:

Presentation to Overview and Scrutiny Board, Overview and Effectiveness of Community Supermarkets and Foodbanks in Bromsgrove, 16 October 2023 (Minute No. 41/23 Community Shop Provision in the District – Overview)

<https://moderngovwebpublic.bromsgrove.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=292&MIId=4140&Ver=4>

External:

Pratt, Alison., Food Banks in the UK, *House of Commons Library (Number 8585)*, 22 November 2023

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8585/CBP-8585.pdf>

**Cabinet
2024**

26th June

Outside Body Appointments 2024/25

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor K May
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton
Report Author Claire Felton	Job Title: Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services Contact c.felton@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk email: Contact Tel: 01527 881429
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	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

It is recommended that Cabinet considers nominating to the bodies listed at Appendix 1 as appropriate.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Cabinet makes appointments and nominations to a number of Outside Bodies each year; some of these are for executive functions and these are made by the Cabinet. This report sets out the details of the relevant appointments.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 No specific legislation governs the appointment or nomination of members to outside bodies by the Council. Depending on the nature of the relationship the Council has with the organisation, the legal status of the organisation, its corporate, charity or other status and its constitution, there are differing legal implications for the members sitting on these bodies.

4.2 The Local Authorities (Indemnities for Members and Officers) Order 2004 governs the Council's ability to indemnify members sitting on outside bodies.

5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 5.1 The action proposed in this report supports the strategic purpose “an effective and sustainable Council”.
- 5.2 Cabinet reviews a number of outside body appointments on an annual basis to ensure that those bodies to which the Cabinet puts forward nominations continue to address the needs and aspirations of the District.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.3 There are no specific climate change implications.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.1 There are no specific equalities and diversity implications.

Operational Implications

- 6.2 A number of bodies ask the Council to make appointments to them for terms of office which vary from one year upwards.
- 6.3 The Council has previously agreed that a number of such appointments, usually to national or regional bodies, should be made by office. Where there are specific requirements for appointments these are shown against the organisations in the appendix.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 There would be risks arising if the Council failed to make appointments to the Outside Bodies listed in this report; the nature of the risk would vary depending on the type of body in question. The Council needs to participate in certain Outside Bodies to ensure that existing governance arrangements can be complied with. On other bodies the risk would be less severe but non-participation would detract from the Council’s ability to shape and influence policies and activities which affect the residents of Bromsgrove.

**Cabinet
2024**

26th June

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendices

Appendix 1 - list of appointments to outside bodies

Background Papers:

Terms of reference and governing documents of organisations are held by Democratic Services.

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor C. Hotham	
Lead Director / Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	
Financial Services	Peter Carpenter	
Legal Services	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	

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

Organisation	Number of representatives and length of term	Representatives Appointed 2023/2024	Nominations to be Appointed 2024/2025
Bromsgrove Partnership (Local Strategic Partnership)	Leader Substitute – Deputy Leader	Cllr Karen May Sub: Cllr Sue Baxter	Councillor Karen May Sub: Cllr Sue Baxter
District Councils Network	Leader Substitute – Deputy Leader	Cllr Karen May Sub: Cllr Sue Baxter	Councillor Karen May Sub: Cllr Sue Baxter
Local Government Association General Assembly	Leader Substitute – Deputy Leader	Cllr Karen May Sub: Cllr Sue Baxter	Councillor Karen May Sub: Cllr Sue Baxter
North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership	Cabinet member	Cllr Peter Whittaker	Councillor Peter Whittaker
PATROL (Parking And Traffic Regulations Outside London) Adjudication Joint Committee	Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services Substitute:	Cllr Peter Whittaker Sub: Cllr Shirley Webb	Councillor Sue Baxter Sub: Councillor Peter Whittaker
West Midlands Employers	Portfolio Holder for Human Resources	Cllr Charlie Hotham	Councillor Karen May
West Midlands Employers Shareholder Board (established in 2024)	Leader, hold a cabinet role, or have a specific interest or expertise in the services of WME (2024-2028)	New	Councillor Karen May

Agenda Item 5

Cabinet 26th June 2024

Organisation	Number of representatives and length of term	Representatives Appointed 2023/2024	Nominations to be Appointed 2024/2025
Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board	1 Rep for each council	Cllr Shirley Webb Sub: Cllr Sue Baxter	Councillor Shirley Webb Sub: Councillor Sue Baxter
Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)	One representative on behalf of the 3 North Worcestershire Councils – required by LEP constitution	Cllr Marcus Hart (Wyre Forest District Council) Sub: Cllr Karen May	
Worcestershire Local Transport Body	Two representatives and one substitute from the North Worcestershire authorities	Cllr Matt Dormer (Redditch Borough Council) Sub: Cllr Karen May	

**Cabinet
2024**

24 July

Cost of Living Funding Proposal Update

Relevant Portfolio Holder		Councillor Karen May
Portfolio Holder Consulted		Yes
Relevant Head of Service		
Report Author	Job Title: Judith Willis Contact email: Judith.willis@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 64252	
Wards Affected		All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted		N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)		Work and financial independence Living independent, active & healthy lives
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:

- a) From the remaining £150,000 contained within earmarked reserves to support cost of living initiatives, £38,000 is allocated to a Voluntary Sector Money Adviser;**
- b) The £62,000 allocation to Citizen’s Advice be amended to fund an Outreach Development Worker through to March 2026.**

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Cabinet considered a report on 13 March 2024, and made a recommendation to Council to allocate, as a one-off investment, £150,000 contained within earmarked reserves to support the following cost of living initiatives.

- (a) Citizen’s Advice specialist housing adviser (£62,000)
- (b) Voluntary sector money adviser (£38,000)
- (c) Enhancing the support of the Council’s Financial Inclusion Team (£50,000)

2.2 At the Council meeting on 10 April 2024 clarification was provided that the amounts shown above were to fund the proposal to for 14 months.

**Cabinet
2024**

24 July

It is the intention that the proposal would be a trial for 14 months with a view to it informing a lottery bid by the VCS to further sustain the work. If the lottery bid was successful any monies not spent on the project would be put back in to reserves

- 2.3 It was also reported that since the Cabinet meeting in March, the Government had announced a Household Support Fund Round 5. This provides an allocation of £106,570 for BDC for a 6 month period and £29,500 would be spent on supporting Bromsgrove food banks
- 2.4 The Council meeting resolved that: £150,000 contained within earmarked reserves be allocated as a one-off investment to support the estimated costs of the following cost of living initiatives: a) Citizen's Advice specialist housing adviser - £62k, and b) Enhancing the support of the Council's Financial Inclusion Team - £50k
- 2.5 In respect of the Voluntary Sector Money Advisor element, this was deferred and asked Officers map the work covered by this to avoid potential duplication and to understand gaps in provision.
- 2.5 The view was also expressed that the proposed Citizen's Advice Specialist Housing Adviser should carry out outreach work to reach communities across the District. A member suggested that the proposed funding would act as a lever to achieve outreach work by the Citizens Advice.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 The proposals set out in the March report were rooted in a partnership lottery bid for three extra workers: an income maximisation specialist for the Council's Financial Inclusion Team; extra capacity to lead and develop the volunteer Money Mentors in the voluntary sector; and a full-time debt specialist at Citizens Advice. This would add capacity at all levels of work and in the manner which would best develop each service. The new workers would all operate primarily remotely, so access to all the services would be enhanced. They would also have a collaborative function, so the organisations could achieve greater synergy and effectiveness in guiding clients to the best source of help, maximum the benefits of the public funded services already in existence. The March report sought match/seed funding for the two non-Citizens Advice posts, with a view to the partnership bid securing longer term funding. The report also proposed supporting a Citizens Advice specialist Housing support post.
- 3.2 The Council's discussions around duplication and overlapping services, has since helped shape some further thinking about local priorities. The

**Cabinet
2024**

24 July

first reassurance is that debt work cannot be duplicated. Debt work, unlike income maximisation or benefits work, is regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. As a result once a client is registered with their creditors as being represented by one body, then like a solicitor, no one else can represent them at the same time. In terms of capacity, there are a number of organisations that offer basic income and benefits support, such as BDHT, but there are only three FCA registered organisations based in Bromsgrove, who are licenced to deal with debt. The Basement Project, who do work with 16- 24 year olds; NewStarts who operate under the auspices of the CMA (Community Money Advice) and Bromsgrove & Redditch Citizen's Advice who are licenced in their own right. They all work very cooperatively and are facing far greater demand that they have the capacity to deal with. Overlapping and complimentary services are essential for catching those who 'fall through the cracks'. The voluntary sector in Bromsgrove operates in a very cooperative and collaborative way, referring to each other and supporting each other's activities. They strive for the ideal that wherever a client enters the system, they will then get them to the organisation best placed to help them, something they hope that the Partnership lottery project, if successful, will improve even further.

- 3.3 In terms of the request from Cabinet and Council for the proposals to focus on outreach, this has been further discussed with Citizen's Advice. Coming out of lockdown and with new Chief Executive, their three-year business plan was focussed on building capacity, as demand had increased to such an extent that only around a quarter of calls could be answered. This led to an increase in the number of households helped over the last two years of 45%. Their Leadership, however, are also very keen on now pushing its services beyond the door. As part of that they have already launched the Advice First Aider scheme, supported by the UK Shared Prosperity Scheme. This is free training that equips local community figures, from hairdressers to councillors, to guide people into the advice system, often at a far earlier point than if they waited for the full crises to hit. This makes advice more effective as solutions are often quicker and easier at this stage.
- 3.4 Citizens Advice are also now developing their next business plan and at the heart of that is the expansion of outreach services. The current staff team contains significant experience of establishing outreaches and recognises not just their benefits, but also that the process can be challenging and slow. Outreach development is particularly complex when using volunteers, alongside time spent with no clients, a not uncommon occurrence in the early days of an outreach. The CAB recognises that using a high-end housing specialist for outreach would probably be inefficient, and make a "hard to recruit to" post, even

**Cabinet
2024**

24 July

harder to fill. It has also however recognised the synergy between its own plans and the desire of the Council members. To that end it is proposing a change of use for the allocated funding. Moving from funding a 14-month Specialist Housing support post, to a part time outreach development worker operating through to March 2026. They would establish a rolling program of outreach development, breaking ground on new locations and then handing them over to volunteer advisers as each became established, and then moving on to their next development.

The three proposed posts have enormous synergy. All three roles will be involved in establishing outreaches in different ways and locations, and where any one of them succeeds, it opens the possibility for partners from across the sector, to come in alongside them. There is also a realistic prospect of this work gaining longevity through the Partnership Lottery Bid. The vision is for an expanding series of outreach opportunities, varied in both form and location, developing alongside a growing Team of Advice First Aiders, both of which should enable greater and quicker access to all the advice provision available in Bromsgrove.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The budget of £150,000 is within the Council's Earmarked Reserves and is available to support this initiative. Any underspend on the Scheme would be put back in to reserves

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council needs to ensure that it has a transparent and fair scheme, ensuring that we comply with the 2015 Local Government Transparency Code. The Council has the power to incur expenditure which in its opinion is in the interest of and will bring direct benefit to its area or any part of it or all or some of its inhabitants. The direct benefit accruing must also be commensurate with the expenditure to be incurred.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 6.1 This proposal will support the following Strategic Purposes:
- Work and financial independence
 - Living independent, active & healthy lives

Climate Change Implications

- 6.2 The proposals have not direct impact on climate change. However, cost of living support to residents may include advise on energy costs and lead to energy efficiency improvements in residents homes.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.3 The proposed services will be available to all residents but there will be a targeted approach to reach those most adversely affected.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 There is a risk that the proposals for delivering additional services to those affected by the cost-of-living situation will not reach the intended audience and/or provide quality outcomes. This will be mitigated by the establishment of a funding agreement with clear outcome measures that will be monitored half yearly. This will be reported to the Cost-of-Living Group alongside forming part of the Cabinet's Performance Monitoring Report.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Cost of Living Proposals Cabinet report dated 13 March 2024
Council minutes dated 10 April 2024

**Cabinet
2024**

24 July

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Karen May, Portfolio Holder for Partnerships	17 July 2024
Lead Director / Head of Service	Guy Revans, Interim Director	3 July 2024
Financial Services	Pete Carpenter, Director	3 July 2024
Legal Services	Claire Felton, Head of Legal & Property Services	3 July 2024
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	Rebecca Green	25 June 2024
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	N/A	

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

24th July 2024

Combined Financial Outturn and Quarter 4 Revenue Monitoring 2023/24 (Including an update on the fleet)

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
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	All
Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to set out the Council’s draft Revenue Outturn position for the financial year April 2023 – March 2024 (subject to final accounts closedown procedures and audit).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet are asked to RESOLVE to NOTE:

- 1. That the 2023/24 provisional outturn position in relation to revenue budgets is a projected revenue overspend of £453k after applying £351k from the Utilities Reserve as approved at Quarter 1.**
- 2. That the 2023/24 provisional outturn position in relation to capital expenditure is £4.0m against a total of an approved programme of £11.1m (see Appendix A).**
- 3. The provisional outturn position in respect of the General Fund Reserves at paragraph 3.13.**
- 4. The provisional outturn position in respect of Earmarked Reserves at Appendix B.**
- 5. That at the time of writing, the Council is yet to formally close its accounts for the 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial years. This could therefore result in adjustments to actual income and expenditure in those years and could have a consequential impact on the 2023/24 accounts.**

Cabinet

24th July 2024

The Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that (subject to Council approving the overall funding)

6. The revised Fleet Replacement Programme be approved.

The Cabinet are asked to RECOMMEND that:

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

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 This report sets out the draft financial outturn revenue and capital performance of the Council for 2023/24 against budget.
- 3.2 The £11.9m full year revenue budget included in the table below is the budget that was approved by Council in February 2023.
- 3.3 Whilst the Council has been on a finance recovery programme since April 2022, following the implementation of a new financial system in February 2021 which led to a deterioration of the Council's financial position, it is important to note that at the time of writing the Council is yet to formally close its accounts for the 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial years. This could therefore result in adjustments to the actual expenditure and income in those years and could have a consequential impact on the 2023/24 accounts.
- 3.4 The Finance team have undertaken a detailed review of the 2023/24 accounts since year end. There are a number of assumptions and manual adjustments that have been made to arrive at the provisional revenue outturn position, mainly as a result of transactions still being cleared from suspense. Those assumptions and manual adjustments include:
- Anticipated accruals and prepayments,
 - Grants are applied to known expenditure and remaining balances are carried forward,
 - Reserves are applied to known expenditure,
 - Shared service recharges between Redditch Borough and Bromsgrove District Councils where a shared service arrangement exists and
 - Transfers between the Collection Fund and the General Fund.
- 3.5 Work continues to refine the position including addressing the backlog of entries that are in suspense and any miscoding. Therefore, the provisional position detailed in this report is subject to change, and a further update will be presented to Members in due course. Taking this into account, the provisional revenue outturn position is anticipated to be a £453k overspend. This is an increase with the reported Q3 forecasted overspend of £222k due to additional fleet costs incurred, such as fleet repairs and hire costs within the Environmental Services department.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

24th July 2024

	2023/24 Full Year Budget	2023/24 Actual	2023/24 Shared Service and Manual Adjustments	2023/24 Adjusted Provisional Outturn	2023/24 Adjusted Provisional Outturn Variance
Regulatory Client	239,871	314,722	(59,687)	255,035	15,164
Business Transformation & Organisational Development	1,813,586	1,553,272	75,021	1,628,293	(185,293)
Corporate Budgets & Services	1,446,605	1,137,257	486,686	1,623,943	177,338
Community & Housing GF Services	1,102,638	1,264,347	(355,252)	909,095	(193,543)
Environmental Services	3,410,080	4,566,453	(486,685)	4,079,768	669,688
Financial & Customer Services	1,401,755	(17,594,293)	18,931,254	1,336,961	(64,794)
Legal, Democratic & Property Services	1,181,962	1,685,732	(521,521)	1,164,211	(17,751)
Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	1,349,503	2,075,311	(322,544)	1,752,767	403,264
Net Budget	11,946,000	(4,997,199)	17,747,272	12,750,073	804,073
Utilities Reserve	0	(351,000)	0	(351,000)	(351,000)
Overall Total	11,946,000	(5,348,199)	17,747,272	12,399,073	453,073

- 3.6 The following paragraphs set out the variances for each service area against the 2023/24 revenue budget.

Regulatory Client – draft outturn position £15k overspend

Within Regulatory Client there has been a decrease of £38k in anticipated taxi licensing fees offset by various underspends of £23k.

Business Transformation & Organisational Development – draft outturn position £185k underspend

Within Business Transformation & Organisational Development there is a large underspend on ICT purchases of £368k offset by overspends in Business Transformation on salaries and agency costs of £53k, Corporate Staff costs of £26k and Policy service of £67k. There are other various smaller overspends totalling £37k.

Community and Housing General Fund Services - draft outturn position £194k underspend

Within the Community and Housing General Fund Services the underspend is due to a number of factors. There are a number of staff vacancies within the service which accounted for £152k of the underspend, an £8k underspend on CCTV, £7k underspend on Lifeline services together with a number of smaller variances amounting to £27k.

Corporate Services - draft outturn position £177k overspend

Within Corporate Services the 'Corporate' service areas has a projected overspend due to increased audit fees in year.

Environmental Services – draft outturn position £670k overspend

Within Environmental Services there are two key areas that impact on budgets, fleet costs and salaries. Within fleet costs there is a £760k overspend due to maintenance, fuel and Insurance costs. The fleet used across the service area is generally beyond its life cycle, especially within the waste service. A revised fleet replacement programme is designed to ensure we have a more reliable fleet across the service which will result in lower maintenance costs and associated hire costs in order to deliver statutory responsibilities.

Within Bereavement Services there has been an increase of £10k in anticipated burial and cremation fees.

There were a number of smaller underspends amounting to £80k within the service.

Financial & Customer Services – draft outturn position £65k underspend

Within Financial & Customer Services there is an underspend of £55k due to lower than forecast Rent Allowances. There are salary underspends due to vacancies in Finance which are offset by additional agency costs. There are a number of various underspends of £10k within the service.

Legal, Democratic and Property Services – draft outturn position £18k underspend

Within Legal, Democratic and Property Services there was an increase in forecasted income for property rental income offset by an overspend on agency fees. There was also an underspend on the Market.

Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services – draft outturn position £403k overspend

Within Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services there are a number of factors resulting in a £403k overspend. There are additional costs for NWEDR amounting to £123k, an overspend in Development Management of £187k due to Professional Fees including Solicitor Fees and Planning Enforcement and £87k overspend on Town Centre. There were also additional £6k overspends within the service.

3.7 Cash Management

Borrowing

- As of the 31st of March 2024, there was £7.5m short-term borrowings. The Council has no long-term borrowings.

Investments

- On 31st March 2024 there were no short term investments held.

Capital Monitoring

3.8 A capital programme of £11.1m was approved in the Budget for 2023/24 in February 2023. 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 B 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 2023/24 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 2022/23 MTFS Report) to be carried forward into 2024/25. The table also splits amounts by funding source, Council or third party.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

24th July 2024

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

3.10 Included in this funding the Council also have the following Grant Funded Schemes which are being delivered in 2023/24:

- The two Levelling Up schemes – Old Fire Station and Market which are funded via £14.5m of Government Funding, and the Council is funding £1.6m of works. Public Realm works link to both schemes.
 - The Market Street is in the middle of a re-engineering process to bring it closer to the budget level and finalise the design. The original application has passed planning and Kier has been appointed as the Design and Build contractor.
 - Windsor Street demolition tenders are in process. Project managers MDA have been appointed. The winning tender, which is being validated is now back to the budgeted level (a £19k overspend). Work on the demolition is expected to be completed by the end of this calendar year. Given power to the site has now been switched off, more vandalism is taking place which is requiring mitigation.
 - Public Realm though is projected to be underspent by £546k which will be used to part mitigate the Market Hall overspend position.
- To mitigate any further overspending position, we have the following option which needs to be pursued as this funding is due to the Council:
 - There is £1.5m available from the GBLEP to Bromsgrove to apply to the remainder of the overspend although this would need to go through the appropriate Member approvals. In late November, there is now a joint proposal to split the overall sum at £2.45m per Council which the Council is actively pursuing its portion.
- UK Shared Prosperity Schemes totalling £2.8m (although it should be noted that these grants funded schemes are a mix of capital and revenue).
- The Burcot Lane development at £10.275m (£904k spend this year) which has now been completed.

3.11 The outturn spend is £4.0m against a capital budget totalling £11.1m and is detailed in Appendix B. It should be noted that as per the budget decision carry forwards of £2.843m will be rolled forward from 2023/24 into 2024/25 to take account of slippage from 2023/24.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

24th July 2024

Earmarked Reserves

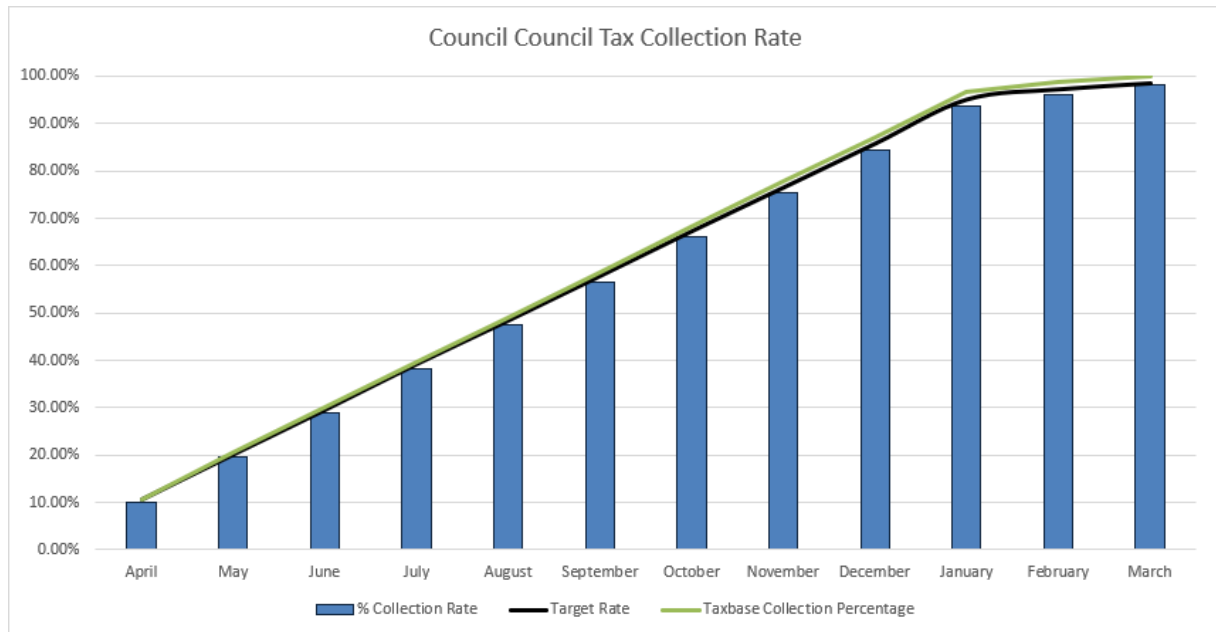
3.12 The position as reported to Council in February 2024 as per the 2024/25 – 2026/27 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) is shown in Appendix C. This has been adjusted for the actual 2023/24 Outturn position, which was only estimated based on Q3 monitoring information at the time of the MTFP. As part of the MTFP all reserves were thoroughly reviewed for their requirement and additional reserves set up for inflationary pressures such as utility increases. At the 31st March 2024 the Council holds £6.379m of Earmarked Reserves.

General Fund Position

3.13 The General Fund Balance as at the 31th March 2024 is £5.197m. With 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 still to be closed and approved by Audit, these figures are subject to change. Progress on the Accounts has been reported to Executive through the Finance Recovery Plan Report and is reviewed at every Audit Committee.

Financial Performance

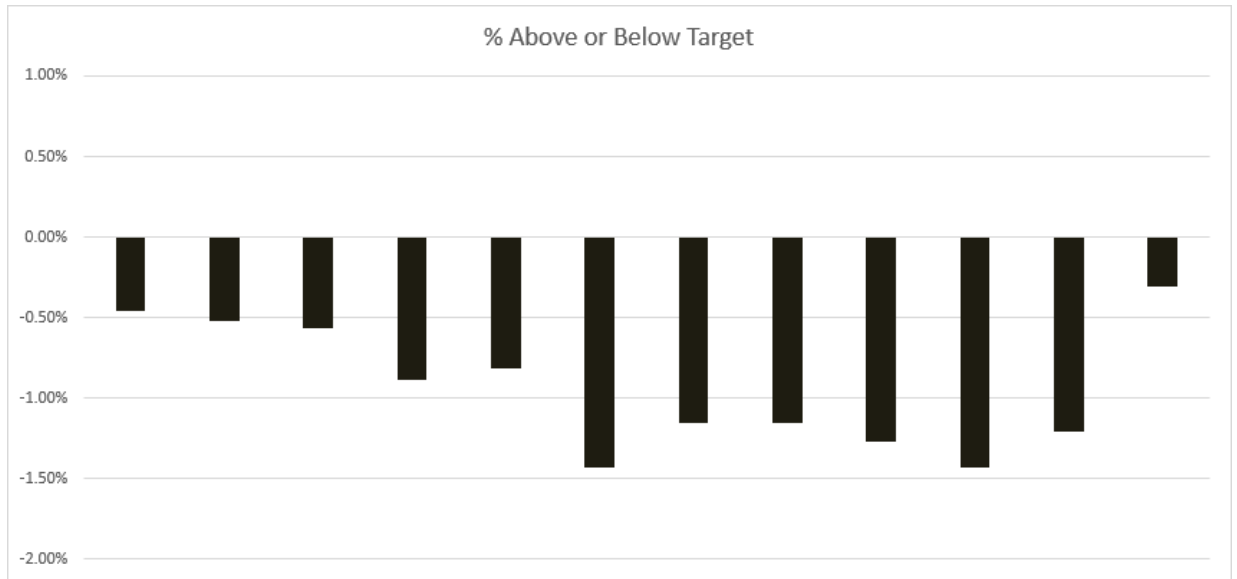
3.14 Council Tax collection rate data as Quarter 4 2023/24 is set out in the following tables. Overall, collection was just under 0.5% below target.



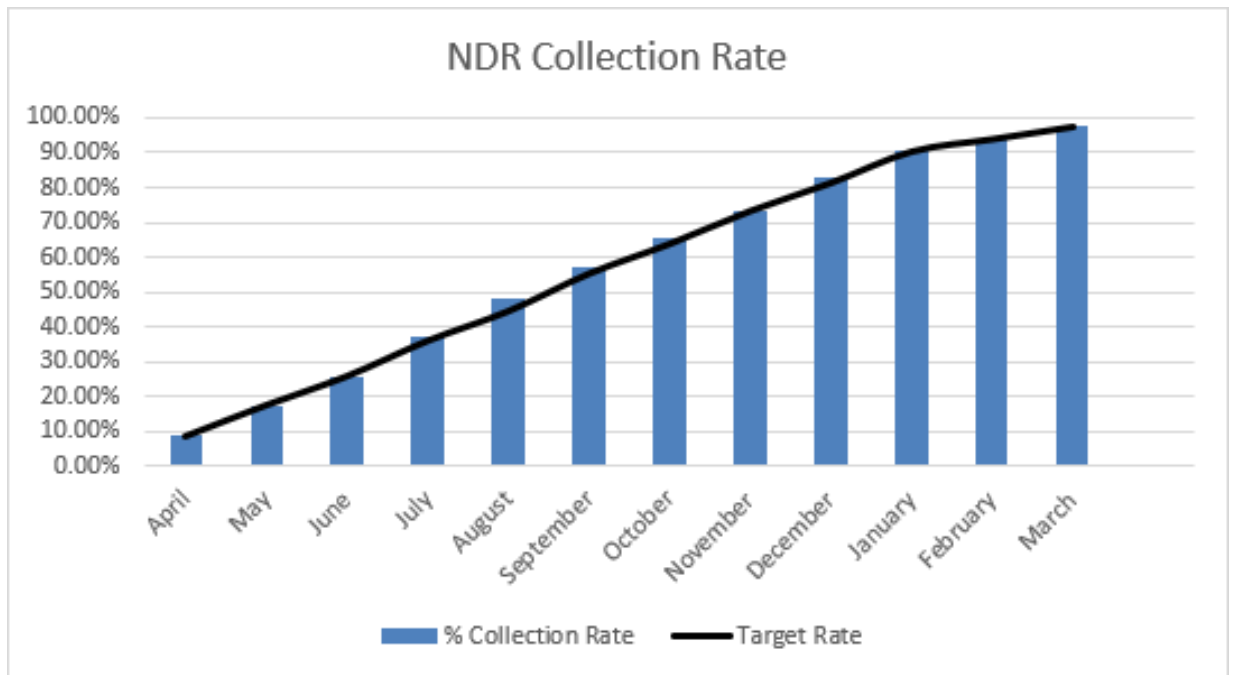
BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

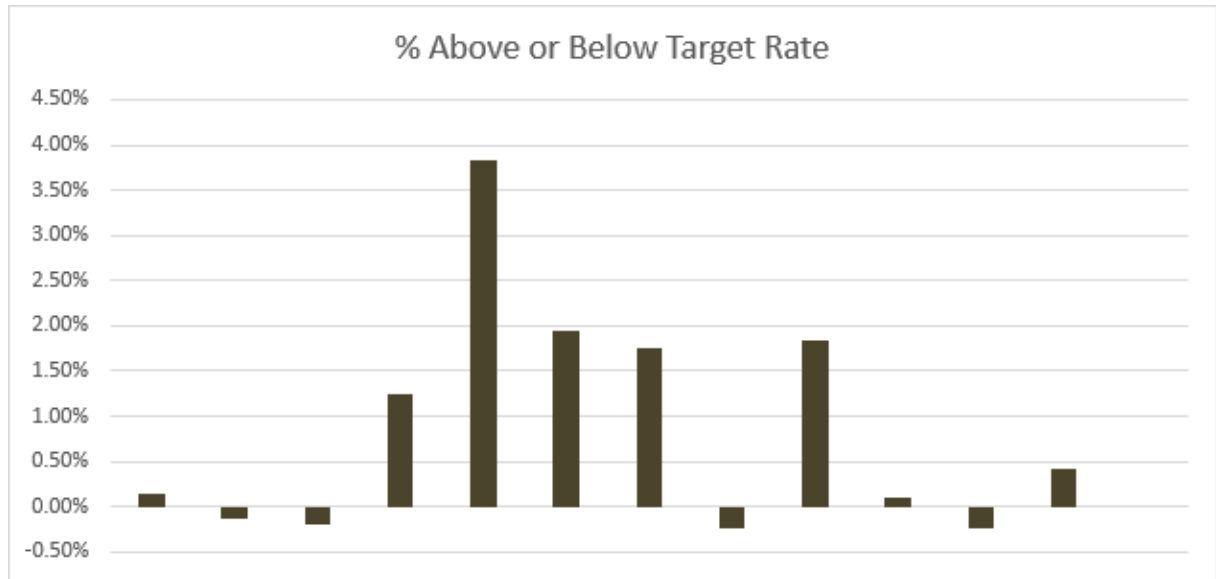
Cabinet

24th July 2024



3.13 The National Non Domestic Rates collection rate data as Quarter 4 2023/24 is set out in the following tables. Overall, collection was just under 0.5% above target.





Reprofiling of the fleet

- 3.14 The first of these is the reprofiling of the Capital Fleet Replacement budget relating to the Domestic Waste Collection Service.

- 3.15 In 2021, as part of a review of Council finances, the decision was taken to extend the life of operational vehicles by an extra year before replacement, and also to start refurbishing Waste Collection Vehicles to extend their life by a further period in order to reduce the capital expenditure on new vehicles, and make savings that could be put towards the increased costs of more expensive energy efficient vehicles as part of our Climate Change ambitions in the future.

- 3.16 When this adjustment was made, no allowance was given for the operational impact of refurbishment, which removed multiple vehicles from the operational services for extended periods, requiring the use of hire vehicles to support service delivery, and introducing an additional unbudgeted revenue pressure.

- 3.17 In addition to this, the first few vehicles took nearly 12 months to be refurbished as a result of parts and supply issues that were confirmed as affecting the sector during 2022/23, and subsequent vehicles have all over run on planned timescales.

- 3.18 Due to significant mechanical failures with these older vehicles on our existing fleet, in addition to the normal operational requirements for vehicles to be in for servicing, MOT's, and day to day repairs, we are currently reliant on a number of hire vehicles to maintain our minimum service at additional un-planned cost. In light of the increased costs and operational challenges arising from the extended vehicle operational lifespans, refurbishment experience, and staffing issues within our workshop, it is proposed to revert to a seven-year replacement cycle on our Waste fleet, and re-profile the Capital Fleet Replacement budgets to support the purchase of replacement vehicles that will

Cabinet

24th July 2024

reduce the maintenance pressure on our workshop and support our operational service delivery.

- 3.19 In light of the proposed continuance of using ICE vehicles for the Waste Collection Service, we will also be exploring the options for further investment in HVO as part of the medium term financial plan to ensure that we maximise our Carbon benefits by reducing our usage of fossil fuels in the operation of our Fleet. Full detail is set out in Appendix C.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 No Legal implications have been identified.

5. Strategic Purpose Implications

Relevant Strategic Purpose

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

Climate Change Implications

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

6. Other Implications

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.1 None as a direct result of this report.

Operational Implications

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

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

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

Cabinet

24th July 2024

8. APPENDENCES

Appendix A – Capital Outturn

Appendix B – Reserves Position

Appendix C – Fleet Requirement

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

24th July 2024

Appendix A - Capital Outturn

Description	Approved budget date	Original approved Budget £	duration (years)	Department	22/23 Spend £	cf	2023/24 Total £	23/24 Spend £
Large Schemes								
Levelling Up Fund Fund								
- Government Funded		14,492,401		Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	126,902	5,202,139	7,563,360	428,395
Market Hall (LUF)	22/23			Planning, Regeneration & Leisure				
EF - Fire Station	22/23			Planning, Regeneration & Leisure				
- Council Funded		1,610,266			0	420,133	805,133	15,592
UK Shared Prosperity Fund		2,825,702						
- Capital Element				Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	0	50,000	0	0
- Revenue Element				Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	0	290,499	0	0
- Remainder (to be allocated)				Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	0	20,000	680,988	73,987
Schemes Agreed to Continue								
Burcot Lane	2019/20	10,275,000		Financial & Customer Services	7,914,009	-2,940,157	0	927,642
Funding for DFGs	2020/21	750,000		Community & Housing GF Services	969,792	-56,792	913,000	842,776
Home Repairs Assistance	2018/19	50,000		Community & Housing GF Services	4,088	45,912	50,000	-19,690
Energy Efficiency Installation	2018/19	110,000	2	Community & Housing GF Services	7,810	102,190	0	0
Cemetery Extension infrastructure at at North Bromsgrove Cemetery Phase	2017/18			Environmental Services	15,576	-9,076	0	0
New Finance Enterprise	2019/20	455,000		Financial & Customer Services	13,680	-13,680	0	0
OLEV ULEV Taxi infrastructure scheme	2019/20	300,000	1	Community & Housing GF Services	700	-700	0	0
Fleet Replacemnet new line	New				75,292	280,708	441,000	865,561
Replacement Parking machines and Upkeep of Sites	2020/21	120,000		Environmental Services	123,985	129,015	96,000	212,270
Wheelie Bin Purchase	2018/19	ongoing		Environmental Services	169,034	-25,034	55,000	188,195
Footpaths		ongoing		Environmental Services	0	0	75,000	75,408
Buildings		ongoing		Legal and Property	0	0	100,000	

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

24th July 2024

Description	Approved budget date	Original approved Budget £	duration (years)	Department	22/23 Spend £	diff	2023/24 Total £	23/24 Spend £
Greener Homes	2020/21	180,000	1	Community & Housing GF Services	192,053	-192,053	0	197,505
New Digital Service	2020/21	57,400	1	Community & Housing GF Services	0	33,668	33,668	0
Bus Shelters	2020/21	18,000		Environmental Services	0	18,000	0	0
Cisco Network Update	22/23		3	Business transformation & Organisational Development	18,573	-12,856	11,574	0
Server Replacement Est(Exact known Q2 2022)	22/23		4	Business transformation & Organisational Development	0	83,250	2,000	93,201
Laptop Refresh	22/23		4	Business transformation & Organisational Development	4,961	39	25,000	11,542
Install Solar panel and Upgrade lighting Sanders Park	22/23	150,000	1	Legal, Democratic and property services	0	0	0	24,707
	22/23			Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	24,511	-24,511	0	33,027
Fleet Replacement Costs					0	0	9,400	0
Wheely Bin Increases					0	0	85,000	0
Wild Flower Machinery					0	0	62,000	0
Initial Play Audit Requirements					0	0	87,000	0
Movement of ICT Cyber Capital Works Forward					0	0	50,000	0
New ongoing Cyber security budget								
Play Area, PDS and Sport improvements at Lickey End Recreation Ground in accordance with the S106 Agreement	22/23	37,956	1	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	6,488	31,468	0	8,842
Total		32,730,005			10,256,330	2,843,286	11,145,123	3,978,960

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

24th July 2024

Appendix B - Earmarked Reserves

	Balance at 31/3/23	Transfers in 2023/24	Transfers out 2023/24	Balance at 31/3/24	Transfers in 2024/25	Transfers out 2024/25	Balance at 31/3/25	Transfers in 2025/26	Transfers out 2025/26	Balance at 31/3/26	Transfers in 2026/27	Transfers out 2026/27	Balance at 31/3/27
General Fund Reserve	5,800	100	(703)	5,197	744	(234)	5,707		(8)	5,699		(7)	5,692
General Fund Earmarked Reserves:													
Building Control Other	0			0			0			0			0
Building Control Partnerships	82			82			82			82			82
Business Transformation	0			0			0			0			0
Commercialism	0			0			0			0			0
Community Safety	0			0			0			0			0
Community Services	271		(125)	146		(125)	21			21			21
Economic Regeneration	398	50		448			448			448			448
Election Services	51			51			51			51			51
Environmental Services	49			49			49			49			49
Financial Services	3,195	638		3,833			3,833			3,833			3,833
Housing Schemes	346			346			346			346			346
ICT/Systems	197			197			197			197			197
Leisure/Community Safety	330			330			330			330			330
Litigation Reserve	0			0			0			0			0
Local Development Framework	0			0			0			0			0
Local Neighbourhood Partnerships	16			16			16			16			16
Other	0			0			0			0			0
Planning & Regeneration	133			133			133			133			133
Regulatory Services (Partner Share)	46			46			46			46			46
Replacement Reserve (Inc. Recycling)	0			0			0			0			0
Shared Services (Severance Costs)	0			0			0			0			0
Utilities Reserve	1,053		(351)	702		(702)	0			0			0
Regeneration Reserve					150		150			150			150
Ward Budget Initiative					234	(78)	156		(78)	78		(78)	0
Covid-19 (General Covid Grant)	0			0			0			0			0
Covid-19 Sales Fees and Charges	0			0			0			0			0
Covid-19 (Collection Fund)	1,547		(1,547)	0			0			0			0
Total General Fund	7,714	688	(2,023)	6,379	384	(905)	5,858	0	(78)	5,780	0	(78)	5,702

Appendix C - Reprofiting of Capital Fleet Replacement Budget – Domestic Waste Fleet

1. Context:

In 2021, as part of a review of Council finances, the decision was taken to extend the life of operational vehicles by an extra year before replacement, and also to start refurbishing Waste Collection Vehicles to extend their life by a further period in order to reduce the capital expenditure on new vehicles, and make savings that could be put towards the increased costs of more expensive energy efficient vehicles as part of our Climate Change ambitions in the future.

This was mirroring an approach taken by other Local Authorities, such as neighbouring Wyre Forest, who have refurbished their vehicles previously with positive results to extend the life of their assets.

This would also have given more time for the HGV Electric Vehicle market to develop, as current options are limited in performance and cost more than twice as much as existing internal combustion vehicles.

This saw a reduction on Capital investment from circa £200,000 per vehicle to an intended £70,000, with an expectation of a further five-year operational life before replacement.

When this adjustment was made, no allowance was given for the operational impact of refurbishment, which removed multiple vehicles from the operational services for extended periods, requiring the use of hire vehicles to support service delivery, and introducing an additional unbudgeted revenue pressure.

In addition to this, the first few vehicles took nearly 12 months to be refurbished as a result of parts and supply issues that were confirmed as affecting the sector during 2022/23, and subsequent vehicles have all over run on planned timescales, resulting in significant unbudgeted costs on Hire Vehicles.

Actual Revenue Costs - Truck Hire against a zero budget.

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
BDC	59,869	103,700	260,874

This has resulted in a backlog of vehicles that have exceeded their operational life, and we currently have six vehicles that should have been refurbished/replaced by the end of the 2023/24 financial year, that haven't.

Due to significant mechanical failures with these older vehicles on our existing fleet, in addition to the normal operational requirements for vehicles to be in for servicing, MOT's, and day to day repairs, we are currently reliant on a number of hire vehicles to maintain our minimum service at additional un-planned cost.

It has also been identified in conjunction with our corporate procurement team that the refurbishment and vehicle hire done to date has not been arranged through a compliant procurement route, and so further work has been paused whilst reviewing our options regarding the capital replacement schedule.

Having extended the operational life of our Waste Collection vehicles from seven years to eight, it has become apparent that the level of failure and breakdowns associated with these vehicles has increased considerably as a result of the volume of work and mechanical wear and tear experienced.

In parallel with these pressures, the workshop providing maintenance for all of the Environmental Services vehicles has been understaffed for over five years now as result of high demand for HGV mechanics in the private sector on higher salaries, and the recent retirement of one of our HGV mechanics has now left us with 50% of the mechanics built into our staffing structure.

This is a similar picture at our Redditch workshop as well, which also supports our shared fleet across the two authorities, and is also running at 50% of planned staffing levels.

We currently have four mechanic vacancies that we are attempting to recruit to across the two sites, and this has necessitated increased use of third parties to support the maintenance of our fleet and avoid service failure, as well as associated delays as a result of capacity pressures on the private sector as well.

In conjunction with the reduced staffing currently in place at our Workshops, the extended life of Refuse vehicles and associated increased mechanical failure has put considerable pressure on our already reduced workshop teams to maintain an operational fleet each day, and those vehicles that have been refurbished have continued to see mechanical failure arising from the age of the chassis and elements that were not included in the refurbishment specification, which was primarily targeted at the body of the vehicle and waste compaction systems.

This need to prioritise work on the Waste Collection fleet (Domestic & Commercial) has impacted on the availability of other vehicles required for statutory services such as road sweepers, Place Team vans for litter picking and fly tip removal. It has also impacted on discretionary and chargeable services such as the District Public Toilet cleaner's vehicle, and WRS's dog warden van, which has impacted on their income generation as well.

Background:

The combined collection fleet for Domestic Waste in Environmental Services consists of sixteen 26ton vehicles, one 18ton vehicle, and three smaller trucks operating from the Bromsgrove Depot; and eight 26ton vehicles and one 18ton vehicle operating from the Redditch Depot. Services require a minimum of twenty 26ton vehicles, one 18ton vehicle, and one small RCV daily to operate the service across the two Authority areas.

Due to the legal requirement for regular inspections and servicing to maintain a safe and compliant fleet, as well as routine maintenance and repairs on an operational fleet that collects waste from 40,000 households each week, it is best practice to operate a number of spare vehicles, and the rural nature of Bromsgrove puts additional pressure on the fleet as a result of high mileages and narrow lanes requiring specific vehicles to support consistent collections in certain areas where standard RCV's cannot gain access.

The Redditch information is included for reference, as the shared service operates jointly across the two Local Authorities areas.

Proposals:

Agenda Item 7

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

24th July 2024

In light of the increased costs and operational challenges arising from the extended vehicle operational lifespans, refurbishment experience, and staffing issues within our workshop, it is proposed to revert to a seven-year replacement cycle on our Waste fleet, and re-profile the Capital Fleet Replacement budgets to support the purchase of replacement vehicles that will reduce the maintenance pressure on our workshop and support our operational service delivery.

It is proposed to increase revenue funding to support the ongoing use of hire vehicles to safeguard operational service delivery of the waste service during 2024/25 to recognise the pressures on the existing fleet and maintenance arrangements.

In light of the proposed continuance of using ICE vehicles for the Waste Collection Service, it may be appropriate to consider a planned timescale for investing in HVO to ensure that we maximise our Carbon benefits by reducing our usage of fossil fuels in the operation of our Fleet.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is proposed to re-profile the existing Capital replacement budget apportioned to the Waste Fleet as shown below, which illustrates the timeframe consistent with the 7 year life span of the vehicles currently on our fleet:

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	Total Spend
Current Capital Prog	280,000	350,000	350,000	0	3,500,000	2,250,000	2,250,000	0	8,980,000
No. of Vehicles	4 (Refurb)	5 (Refurb)	5 (Refurb)		8 (Buy)	5 (Buy)	5 (Buy)	0	
Proposed Reprofiling	0	2,180,000	1,265,000	820,000	0	0	0	0	4,265,000
No. of Vehicles	0	10 (Buy)	6 (Buy)	4 (Buy)	0	0	0	0	0
Impact on Revenue Repayments (MRP) and Interest Payments	-15,960	88,350	342,654	371,536	289,179	-339,071	-660,499	644,539	-568,350

The current timescales on the purchase of new refuse collection vehicles is approximately 40 weeks. During that time, it is expected that there will be an ongoing need for Hire Vehicles to support the delivery of Operational Services, for which there is currently no revenue budget.

To address this, it is recommended that a one-off revenue budget of £150,000 be approved for 2024/25 to reflect the current reliance on hire vehicles until such time as new vehicles become available, or staffing in the workshop be improved to reduce the down time of existing assets.

This additional revenue funding would be linked to the proposed re-profiling and purchase of new vehicles, and would need to be increased significantly beyond this as an on-going pressure beyond the 2024/25 financial year if the replacement programme is not adjusted.

Environmental/Climate Change Implications

Previous discussions had been looking at the possible transition to alternative energy efficient vehicles from 2026/27, but it has been identified that until parallel discussions around the future of the existing depots have been resolved and implemented, it is unknown what infrastructure will be achievable to support a transition to such vehicles.

With no current timescale for a rationalisation/relocation of our current space limited Depot Spaces, it is unlikely that we will be in a position to invest in alternative vehicles before 2030.

A decision has already been made to make greater use of HVO¹ as a Diesel alternative that provides sustainable carbon savings over fossil fuels at an approximate cost increase of 20% at current prices.

Current plans have been built into the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 30% of our Diesel usage to be replaced with HVO from the 2024/25 financial year on, and this will support a Carbon benefit to the authority alongside on-going use of ICE vehicles when compared with our previous arrangements.

The use of HVO in 2024/25 will reduce the Carbon impact from our Domestic Refuse service by an estimated 162 Tons of CO₂ per year in comparison with the use of Diesel alone.

Although HVO is more expensive than Diesel, and so places a pressure on revenue budgets, this will defer the higher financial pressure associated with converting the fleet to Electric or other alternative energy sources until such a time as technology and funding allows for a further review of the fleet and investment in appropriate vehicle technology to support delivery of improvements in line with the Climate Emergency declaration that the Council made in 2019.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The current refurbishment programme has not been compliant with procurement rules, and a return to purchase of vehicles through a compliant framework agreement will prevent further non-compliance.

As there is no legal agreement or contract linked to the refurbishment programme, there are no legal implications associated with not continuing with this approach.

OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

¹ Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil

Cabinet

24th July 2024

Equalities and Diversity Implications

There are no implications arising from the reprofiling of the fleet.

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Quarter 4 2023-24 – Performance Monitoring Report

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Colella – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Debra Goodall Deborah Poole
Report Authors	Head of Finance and Customer Services debra.goodall@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Head of Business Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Strategy d.poole@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	All
Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that:

- The Quarter 4 Performance data for the period January to March 2024 be noted.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This report presents at Quarter 4 (January - March) 2023/24:
- The organisations performance against the strategic priorities outlined in the Council Plan Addendum, including operational measures to demonstrate how the council is delivering its services to customers.
- 2.2 The 2023/24 Q4 financial Outturn position would usually also accompany this report. This will come to Cabinet in July to give the team more time to reduce the volume of items in Suspense and then also enable the Council to complete the Revenue Outturn (RO) and Capital Outturn (CO) suite of reports which are due on the 31st July.
- 2.3 It should be noted that the 2020/21 Accounts are now submitted for Audit following the Audit, Standards and Governance meeting on the 23rd May meaning that the 20/21 RO/CO suite of reports can now also be completed. It is expected that draft 2021/22 Accounts will be ready (no Audit adjustments) at the end of June meaning that associated

2021/22 RO/CO Reports can also be completed. The Council has delivered its 2022/23 RO/CO Reports.

3. DETAILED PERFORMANCE

Performance Report

- 3.1 The performance report sets out to provide data and information that links all activity back to the Council's strategic priorities as set out in the Council Plan and Council Plan Addendum. Whilst the report focuses primarily on corporate, strategic measures there is a section that provides some operational measures data to provide a general overview of service delivery.
- 3.2 Whilst the Council has an approved Council Plan in place. Currently the Council's key strategic priorities are:
- Economic Development and Regeneration
 - Housing Growth
 - Work and Financial Independence
 - Improved Health and Wellbeing
 - Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour
 - Green Thread
 - Financial Stability
 - Organisational Sustainability
 - High Quality Services
- 3.3 It is recognised that effective performance management will enable the Council to use its limited resources in a more targeted manner, maximising the value of Council services and allowing the Council to be even more responsive to customers' needs.
- 3.4 Appendix A sets out the Strategic Priorities and Performance Measures in detail. For the 9 priorities there is data contained in the Appendix on:
- The Performance Measure being used.
 - An update on how it is being used.
 - Where relevant, contextual information.
- 3.5 This will be the last time Members will see this report in this format. The Cabinet are in the process of approving a new Council Plan and 2024/5 Performance Indicators will be linked to that new plan and its associated priorities. The new Performance Indicators will also take on board comments made at Council on the 15th April in terms of them showing if services are delivering (or not) and comparisons to other Councils.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The financial implications, which are usually detailed in the body of the report will be reported to Cabinet in July.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

6. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

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

Climate Change Implications

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

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Equalities and Diversity Implications

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

Operational Implications

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

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

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

9. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix A - Strategic and Operational Performance Measures

10. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Steve Colella,	
Lead Director / Head of Service	Peter Carpenter, Interim Director of Finance	
Financial Services	Debra Goodall, Head of Finance and Customer Services	
Legal Services		
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)		
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)		

APPENDIX A

BROMSGROVE Strategic & Operational Performance Measures Quarter 4, 2023/24

1. Introduction

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

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 review is underway, and a proposal will be forthcoming to tie in with Council Plan 2024-27 which is currently in progress. The plan will identify priorities and key deliverables, and these will be the foundation for the performance reporting.

2. Background

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

3. Strategic Priorities and Performance Measures

3.1. Economic Development and Regeneration

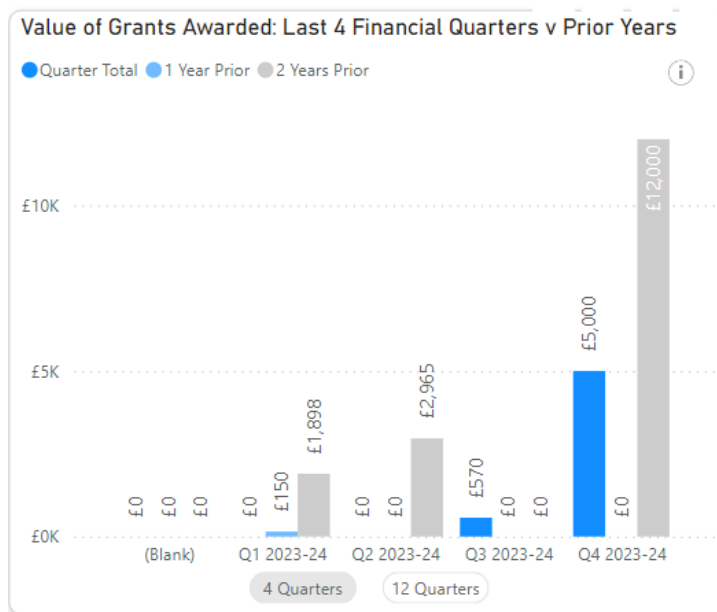
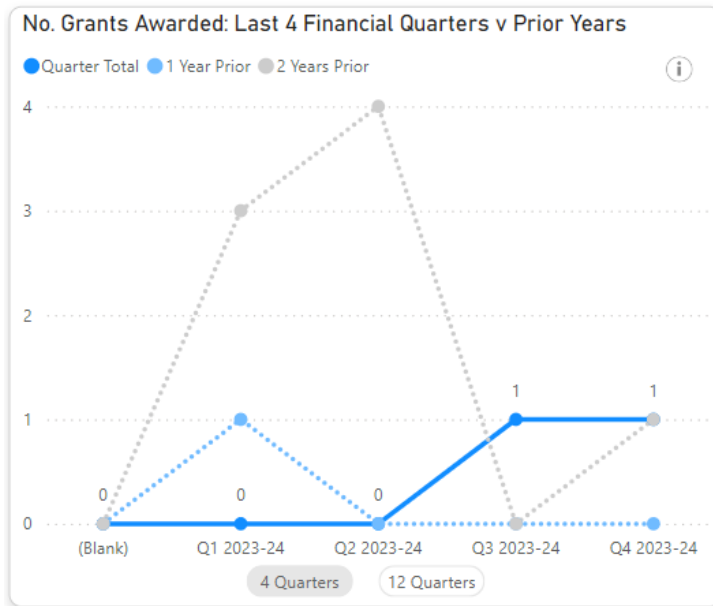
3.1.1 Supporting Businesses to Start and Grow

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

Performance measure:

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

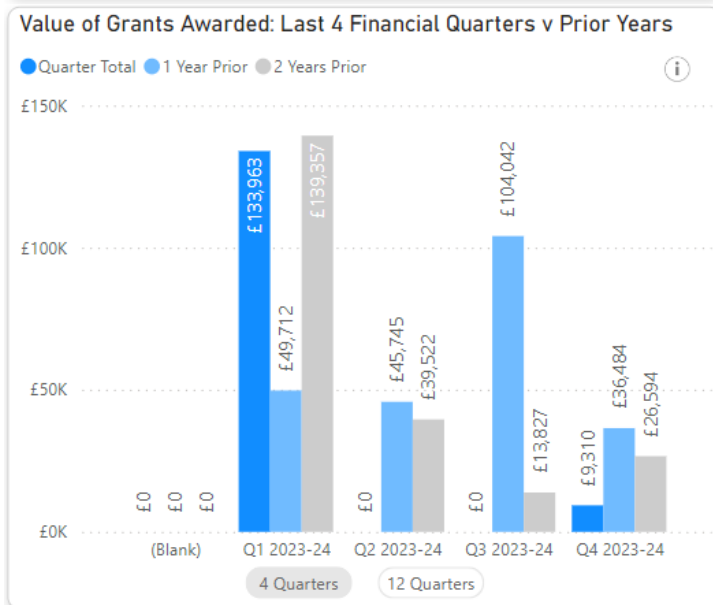
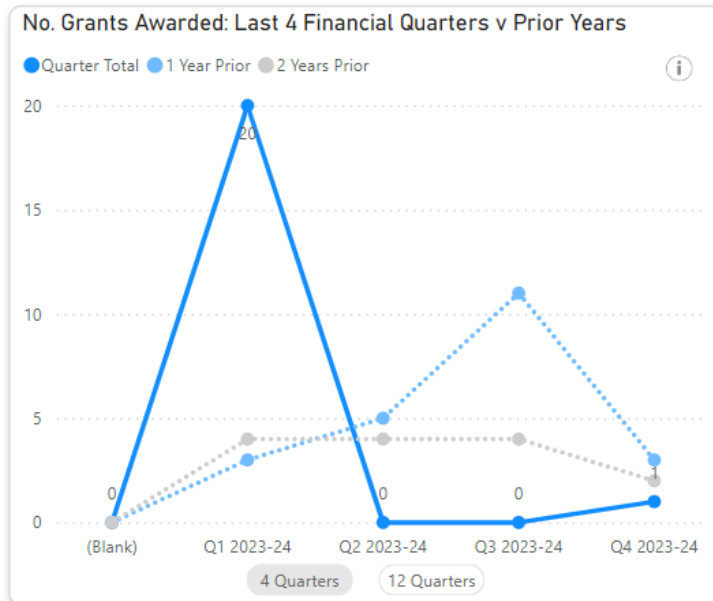
Start-up Grants



Update

One grant was awarded this quarter via the Enterprising Worcestershire programme. The recipient businesses is a commercial cleaning company in the first 3 years of trading. A further 10 grants have been approved and are waiting to be claimed by the businesses.

Growth Grants



Update

One grant was awarded this quarter through the Betaden programme. The grant recipient is a manufacturer and the grant was used for the development of a new, innovative product. A further 2 grants have been approved and are expected to be claimed by the businesses in Q1 of 2024/25.

3.1.2 Regenerating our Town and Local Centres

The pandemic has emphasised both the economic and wellbeing importance of local centres to our residents. Funding has been secured to support the development of

sites in Bromsgrove town centre and a strategy has been prepared to ensure all of the centres in Bromsgrove District will be as vibrant and viable as possible.

Performance Measure:

Former Market Hall Project

Update

- Target Start onsite date June 2024.

Performance measure:

- Windsor Street Project – No further updates on this project
- Regulatory Bodies signed off of updated remediation strategy November 2023.
- Planning Application to be submitted by end of January 2024
- Expression of Interest exercise to determine market interest is underway
- Target for Planning Determination and appointment of Contractor – April 2024. Start of Works onsite May 2024.

3.1.3 Improved Integrated Transport (Bromsgrove)

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

Performance measure:

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

Update

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

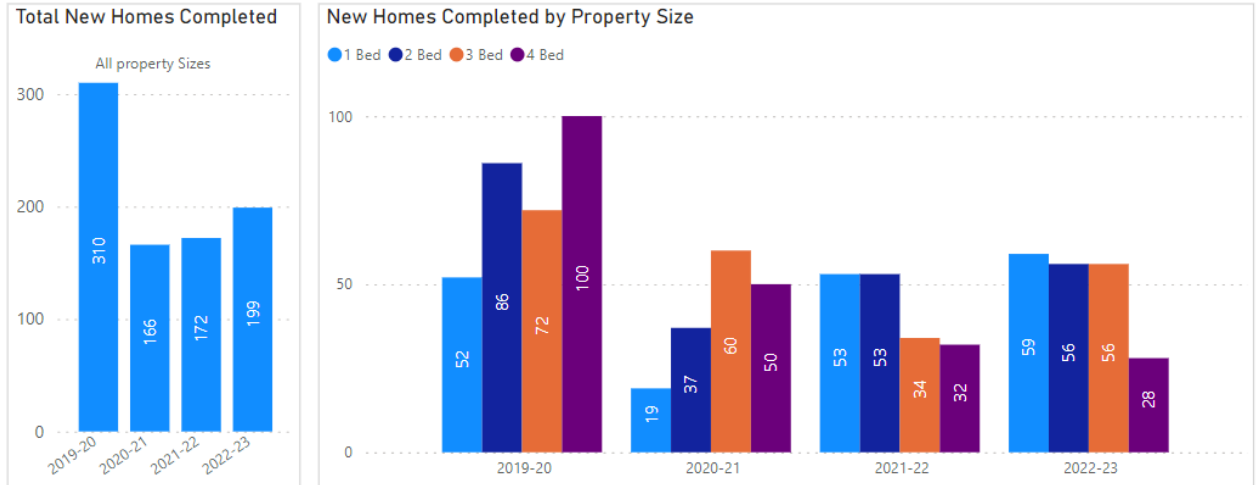
Actions: Will be liaising with WCC appointed consultants. Inception meeting has taken place and follow up discussions regard how best to align LCWIP progress with the proposed Bromsgrove District Plan consultation.

3.2 Housing Growth

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

Performance measure:

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



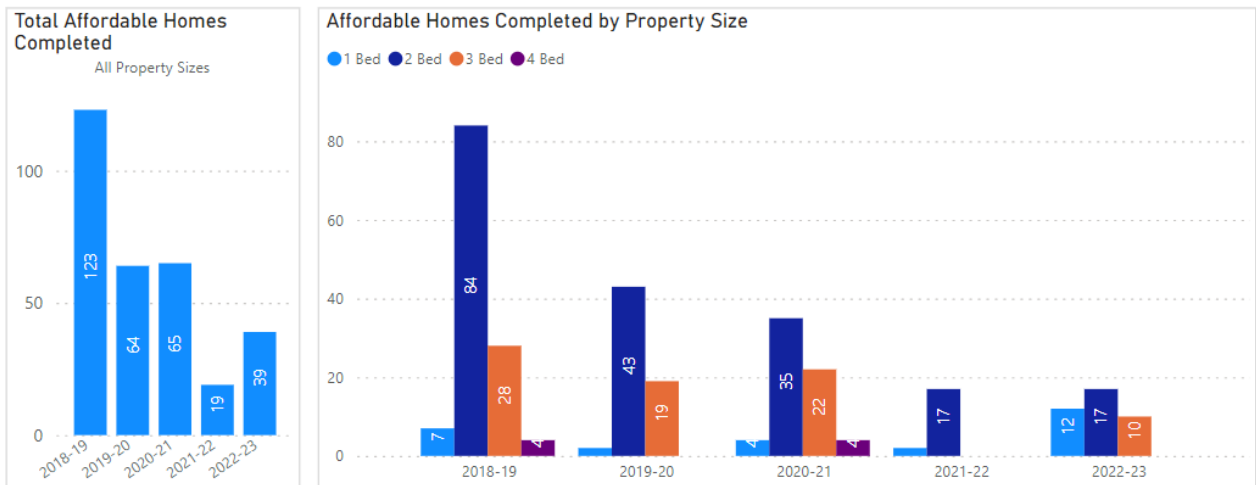
The final data for the 2022/23 is:

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

The data for 2023/24 is expected to be collected during May 2024.

Performance measure:

- Affordable Homes Completed (annual measure)

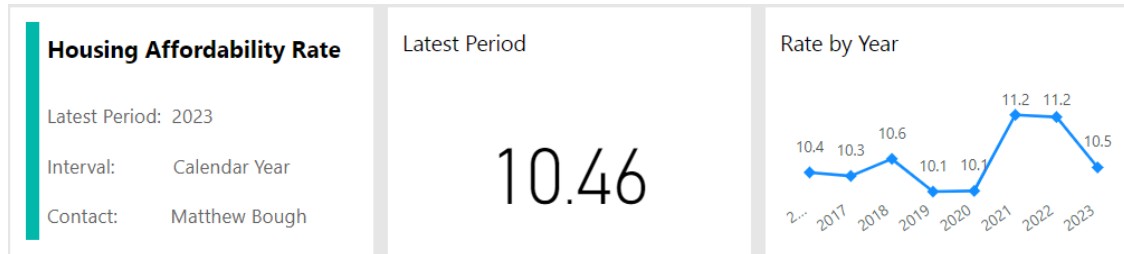


There are 498 affordable housing commitments as of 1 April 2023, reflecting the number of strategic sites which have gained consent but not started construction.

The data for 2023/24 is expected to be collected during May 2024.

Performance measure:

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



Update

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

The affordability measure, using this data, indicated that the ratio in England is currently 8.26 and 8.63 for Worcestershire. The affordability ratio relates to workplace-based income which uses the median earnings of those employed in Bromsgrove District. When looking at the data for 2023 the work-based median earnings has increased from £29,285 to £32,993 a 12.66% increase. The median house price in Bromsgrove District has increased from £327,000 to £345,000 a 5.5% increase. This has resulted in a small drop in the affordability ratio however there is still a significant affordability ratio in Bromsgrove District with the second highest ratio in the West Midlands.

Performance measure:

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

Q4 Total	BDC
Number of Applications/Assessments	107
Successful Preventions	8
Number Housed	10

Update

There has been a slight increase in number of approaches following the Christmas period, but within expected levels.

The ability to prevent homelessness and obtain housing in the PRS still remains an area that is impacting on homelessness in line with the national picture due to the cost of living and mortgage costs causing landlords to increase rents or evict tenants.

3.3. Work and Financial Independence

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

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

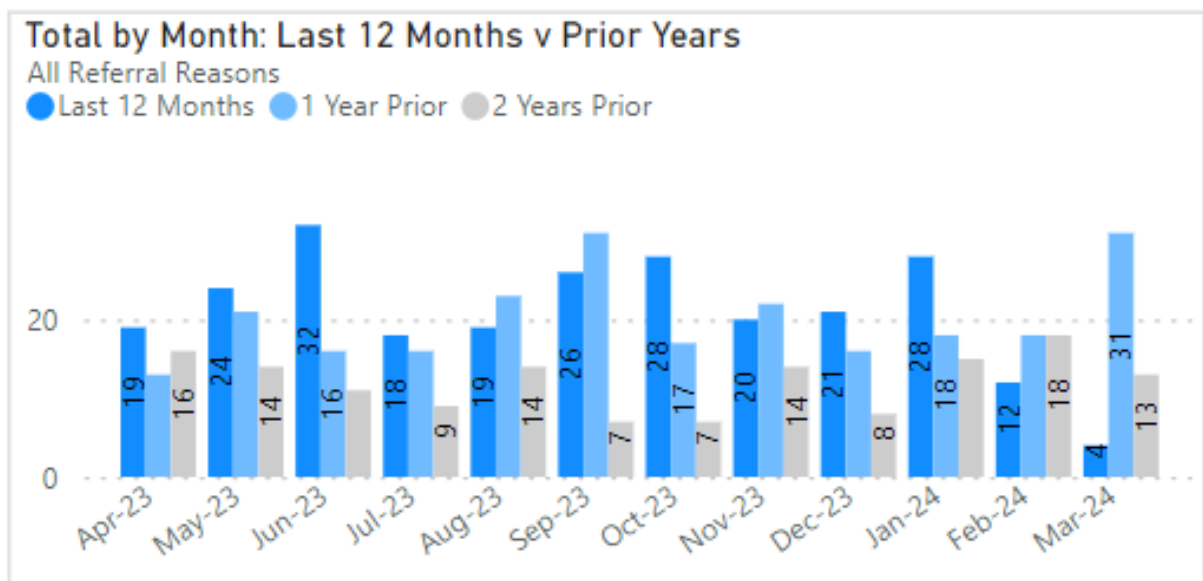
Performance measure

- Number of Financial Independence Team client contacts. This measure records the number of FI Team cases opened.

Update

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

- 'Under occupancy charge' (49)
- 'Rent advance/deposit' (40)
- 'Debt' (34)
- 'Other' (21)
- 'No value selected' (17) (excluded from top 5)
- 'Budgeting issues' (14)



For Q4, 2023/24, the top 3 referral reasons were:

- 'Under occupancy charge' (17)
- 'Rent advance/deposit' (7)
- 'Debt' (3)

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.

Performance measure

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

Update

Although data is shared termly (with a lag) from Worcestershire County Council, this has been inconsistent. We have received no data from WCC for reporting in quarter 4, 2023/24. Work had been ongoing to improve the regularity of the supply of data.

Term	% 2-year-olds accessing funding
Summer 2019/20	76%
Summer 2020/21	71%
Summer 2021/22	74%
Spring 2022/23	61.9%
Summer 2022/23	61.4%
Autumn 2023/24	80.7%

There was a large increase in the take up of funding between the end of the 2022/23 academic year and the start of the 2023/24 academic year.

We receive a list from WCF to contact families who had applied for 2-year-old funding but had not processed their application – due to the delay in receiving this list by the time we contacted families they had already accessed the funding or there were not nursery places available. We used to receive a list from DWP of all eligible children, but due to a change in an information sharing agreement we no longer receive this list to enable us to proactively contact all eligible families. We continue to promote the Childcare Choices on our social media pages and respond to families who contact the service regarding childcare funding. We promote nursery funding at all events and are recently supporting DWP at their childcare events to promote the funding for eligible parents looking to return to work.

This measure will cease to be reported from Q1, 24/25.

3.4. Improved Health and Wellbeing

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

Performance measure

- Deliver improved outcomes from the actions in the Leisure Strategy

Update

The health outcomes programme in line with Leisure and Culture strategy recommendations is ongoing. The service is currently focusing on key priorities and to build and develop its resources within the team. This will start to take more shape as we move into 2024 and increase our delivery outcomes. Continued

Recommendation: Develop an environmental management strategy for parks and environmental services.

- o Project lead identified to progress strategy. Working towards April 2025 completion. Same as above

Recommendation: 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. Same as above

- o Green flag award unsuccessful for Sanders Park, working on recommendations for improvement for 2024 submission and scheduled awards over the next 4 years. Plan will be created when officers in post. First Draft April 2024.

Recommendation: Develop a rolling programme of applications to the Green Flag Award. Same as above

- o Working on applications for awards for Sanders Park, Lickey End Park, King Georges Recreation Ground and St Chads Park.

Recommendation: Engage more regularly with potential partners at a county wide level. Same as above

- o Officers working with partners to maximise potential of offers within parks and open spaces.

Recommendation: Develop a better understanding of the biodiversity value of the district's green assets. Same as above

- o Biodiversity plan established, focus and priorities, developing a Biodiversity network with Planning, County Council and 3rd Sector. Commencement February 2024.

Recommendation: Develop a clear marketing plan for green spaces that includes new web pages, social media, and targeted work with key audiences.

- o 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. Same as above

Recommendation: Carry out a feasibility study to establish a roadmap for the self-management of allotment sites across the district.

- o Action plan implemented, work carried out in the background to move this forward, new tenancy agreements with legal, service level

agreements for new formed associations, website information, management of day-to-day issues, bills. Same as above

Performance measure

- Number of Community Builders in post.

Update:

Two community builders remain in post:

- Sidemoor
- Rubery

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

The Bromsgrove and Redditch Shared Learning Network continues to meet, supported by Public Health at Worcestershire County Council, which includes community builders, the voluntary and community sector hosts, relevant BDC and RBC officers. The purpose of the Network is to provide a forum to support and encourage the development of ABCD good practice locally. The community builders are working in partnership not only with local residents but organisations and community groups such as Starting Well Partnership, Social Prescribers, libraries, Act on Energy, Age UK, BDHT and local businesses.

Community Builders are on fixed term contracts, but funding has been confirmed to extend the posts until end of March 2025, although the funding is less. Expectations for 2024/2025 within the service specification is flexible with a focus on embedding asset based principles as well as a contribution towards the current community builders. The longer-term aim remains for the voluntary sector services to source other funding by evidencing impact through community stories and Ripple Effect Mapping.

Action: As above and identifying opportunities to embed ABA principles into wider working practices to enhance community connectedness and develop local solutions. The outputs expected in 24/25 are:

- People are connected around their passions and interests (including digital connections) to support positive wellbeing.
- Reciprocal relationships with communities are established.
- Community assets are recognised and considered by local people, service providers and wider partners.
 - Communities are enabled to influence decisions made by the council and other public bodies.

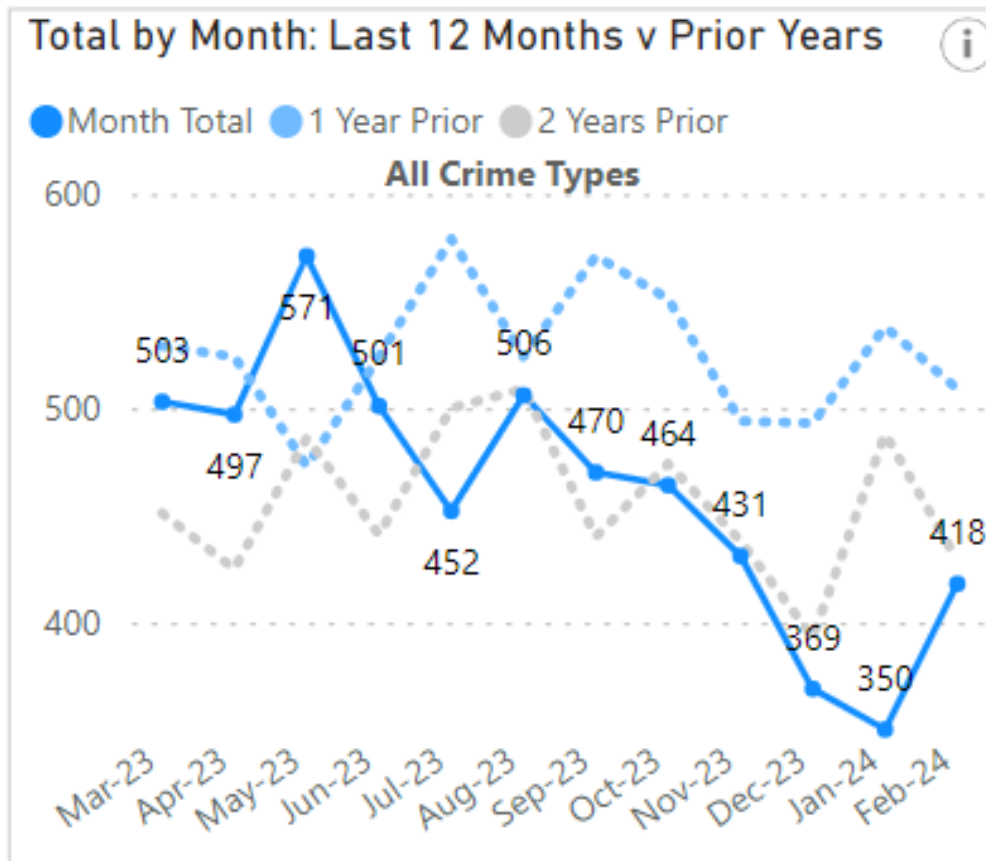
3.5. Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour

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

Performance measure

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

Update



Crime Type	Total	% of Total	v 1 Mth Prior	v 1 Yr Prior	12 Mth. Avg.
Violence and sexual off...	2,190	39.6%	22 ↑	-333 ↓	182.5
Shoplifting	604	10.9%	4 ↑	74 ↑	50.3
Vehicle crime	516	9.3%	10 ↑	28 ↑	43.0
Criminal damage and a...	515	9.3%	21 ↑	-69 ↓	42.9
Other theft	489	8.8%	7 ↑	-209 ↓	40.8
Public order	407	7.4%	12 ↑	-219 ↓	33.9
Burglary	397	7.2%	-7 ↓	-7 ↓	33.1
Other crime	137	2.5%	4 ↑	9 ↑	11.4
Drugs	121	2.2%	1 ↑	-10 ↓	10.1
Possession of weapons	66	1.2%	-5 ↓	-6 ↓	5.5
Robbery	51	0.9%	-3 ↓	-16 ↓	4.3
Bicycle theft	20	0.4%	1 ↑	-17 ↓	1.7
Total	5,532	100.0%	68	-777	461.0

At the time of report creation, the Police.UK website included data up to and including February 2024, as shown in the chart above.

Consideration is being given to including additional data relating to other areas within the District, In the interim, here is a link to the [Police.UK website](#) from where the data is extracted.

N.B. Due to changes in Partnership Analysis support, crime data is currently provided quarterly in arrears. An update for Quarter 3 is below.

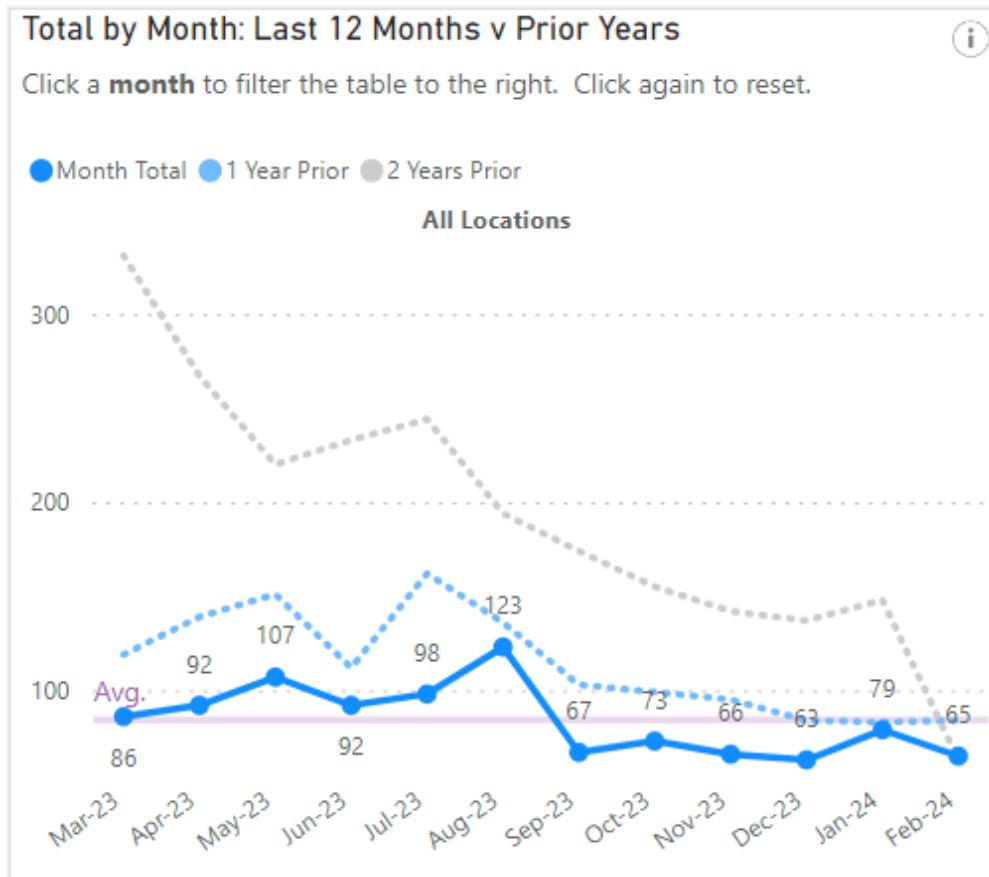
Across North Worcestershire there was a 7% (n=341) decrease in crime during Q3 2023/24 compared to the previous quarter and there was a 14% decrease (n=715) compared to the same quarter in the previous year. Overall, each of the 3 NW districts showed a decrease during the quarter (Oct-Dec 2023) compared to the same quarter in the previous year.

The largest decrease in the quarter was in Bromsgrove District (18%, n=261). Sanders Park Ward recorded the largest volume of offences in the quarter Q3 2023/24 (n=121) and is consistently the ward that records the largest volumes of offences as it contains Bromsgrove Town Centre. However, offences in this area also saw a decrease of 23% (n=36) compared to the same period last year.

Performance measure

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

Update



ASB across North Worcestershire is decreasing, with reports being consistently below the three-year average since August 2022. However, part of this decrease is attributed to changes in recording practice which took place in February 2022, which reclassified some ASB as public order offences. Over the 3 year period of Jan 2021 to Dec 2023 there were on average 521 reports per month. This reduced to a 335 average for the 12 months of 2023.

The most recent quarter, Q3 2023/24 (n=336) showed a decrease of 19% (n=198) compared to the same quarter in the previous year. The past three quarters of 2023 have been relatively stable. However, recent changes to the Home Office notification policy for public order offences which took place in May 2023 may result in increases in ASB reports in the future.

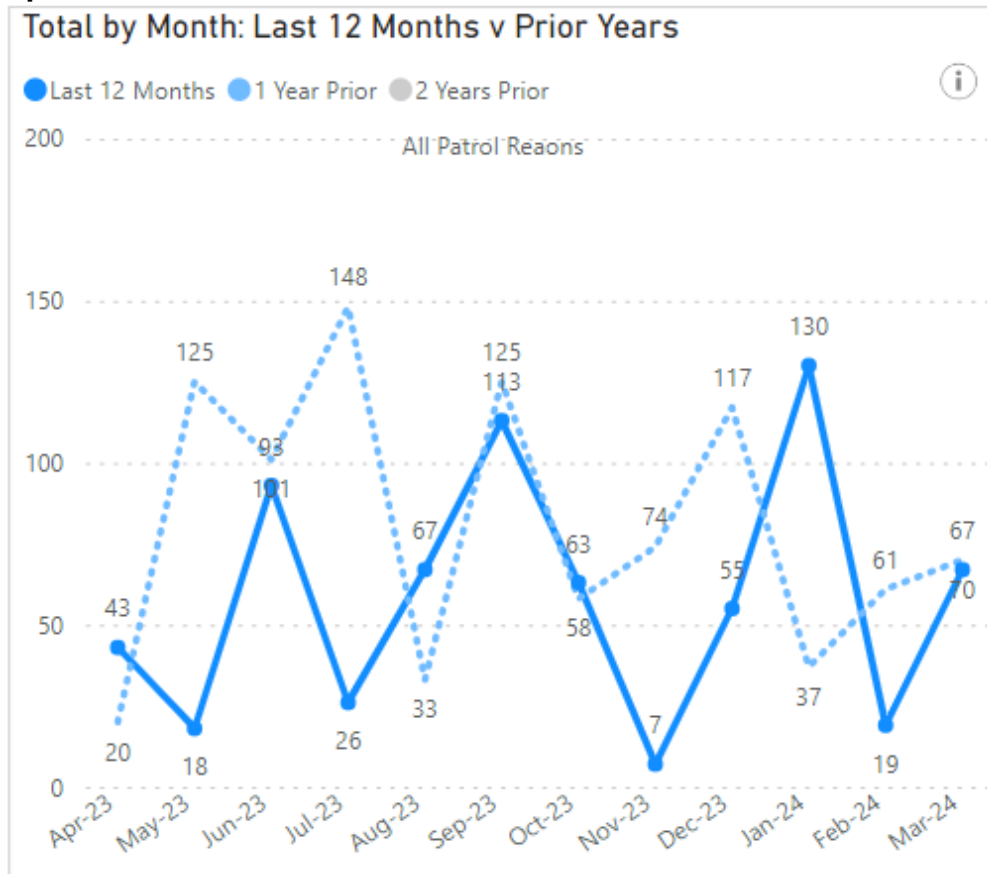
In Bromsgrove, the most recent quarter Q3 2023/24 (n=208) shows a decrease of 27% (n=77) compared to the same quarter in the previous year. Over the 3 year period (Jan 2021 – Dec 2023) ASB reports in Bromsgrove concerned problems such as intoxicated people being aggressive and intimidating in public, arguments between neighbours, youths drinking in

public, fighting and aggressive behaviour, drug use, fly tipping and youths threatening and harassing in public

Performance measure

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

Update



Jan 2024 – DA Sanctuary recommendations were provided for properties in Charford, Stoke Prior and Bromsgrove Central. Home security recommendations were also provided to vulnerable residents and various security measures installed.

Feb 2024 – Routine youth outreach patrols were carried out in Bromsgrove Central, Sanders Park, Sidemoor and Charford. Groups of young people said they were pleased to be out and about after the Christmas break. Youth workers promoted local clubs and activities and held conversations with the young people about their thoughts about crime and ASB in the local area and the town and also discussed young people’s concerns around employment opportunities. The youth workers resumed patrols with the Street Pastor Team and engaged with young people aged 15-25. During these late-night patrols, youth workers noted that some young people were cycling

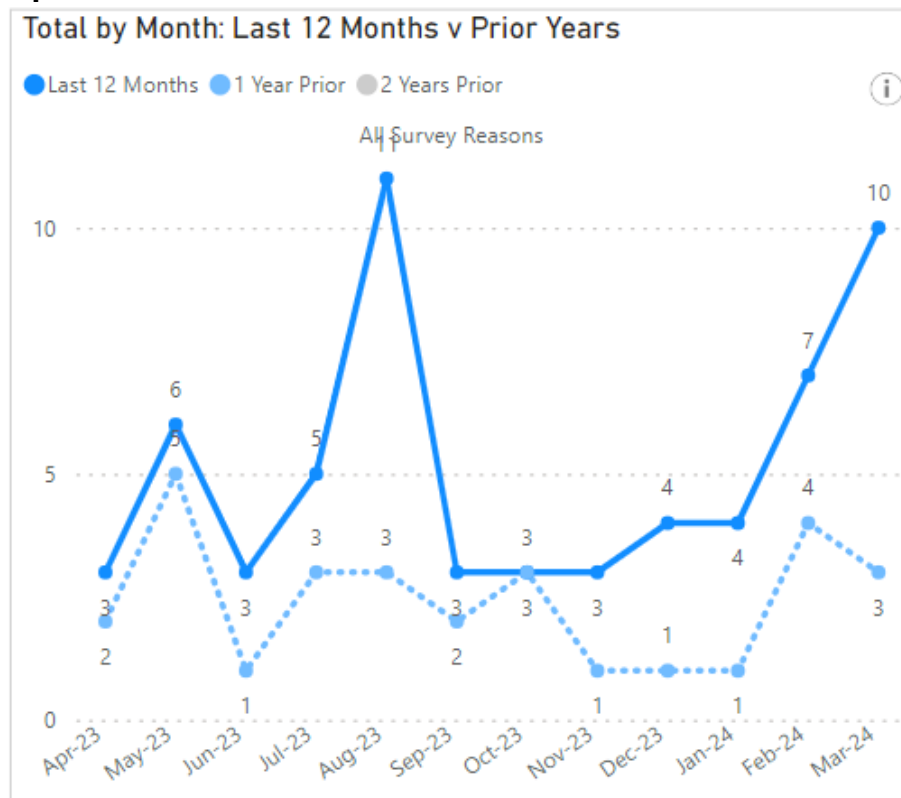
dangerously on the roads and in pedestrian areas. After talking to the young people to try and deter them, reports were made to the local SNT.

Mar 2024 – Routine youth outreach patrols were carried out in Bromsgrove Central, Sanders Park and Charford. Different groups of young people were engaged, many of these young people were already know to the workers, this enabled deeper conversations to be had. Youth workers promoted local youth clubs and activities and held conversations with the young people about their interests and their thoughts about the local area and the town.

Performance measure

- Number of crime risk surveys carried out

Update



Jan 2024 – DA Sanctuary recommendations were provided for properties in Charford, Stoke Prior and Bromsgrove Central. Home security recommendations were also provided to vulnerable residents and various security measures installed.

Feb 2024 – Crime prevention surveys were conducted in Barnt Green & Hopwood, Norton, Aston Fields and Charford. Requests for surveys related to Sanctuary recommendations for survivors of DA, reports of ASB and neighbour disputes.

Mar 2024 – Crime prevention surveys were conducted in Hagley East, Bromsgrove Central, Sidemoore, Stoke Prior, Belbroughton, Barnt Green and Hopwood. Requests for surveys related to Sanctuary recommendations for survivors of DA, reports of ASB and neighbour disputes.

Planning application response have been submitted for applications in Sanders Ward, Barnt Green and Hopwood.

3.6 SLM Leisure (Everyone Active)

Update

For SLM Leisure there is a lag in the data; as a result, quarter 3 data and comments can be found below; Q4 information will be available for the Q1, 2024/25 report.

The number of visits were slightly down on this time last year. The membership base has grown which has meant that casual usage has proportionally reduced.

The overall numbers of casual users have dropped which is something we need to concentrate on in the final quarter.

The cost-of-living crisis is still influencing peoples out goings and Leisure to some is still a luxury they cannot afford. Casual users are more discerning in what they spend and where they spend it.

There are some areas where we need to concentrate on going forward. Climbing, casual swimming and Spa are the main areas we want to concentrate on during quarter 4.

Category	Quarter Total	Same Quarter Previous Year	Difference
Total no. of visits including EA cards and non-card holders	97764	98881	-1,117
EA Cards added in this period	930	1155	-225
Total EA Cards to date	71340	65305	6,035
No. of Gym members	2818	2669	149
Swimming Lessons – children enrolled on scheme	1447	1523	-76
Swim Lesson Occupancy	84%	81%	3%
RIDDOR Reportable Events	0	0	0

3.7. Green Thread

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

Performance Measure:

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

Update

The current Capital Replacement Programme has been approved for 2024/25, but it has been identified that amendments are needed to maintain service provision, as previous decisions to extend the life of vehicles on the Waste Fleet, and engage in a refurbishment program to then extend them further, have not given the expected results, and resulted in increased costs on hire vehicles to maintain services, as well as additional unsustainable pressure on our maintenance arrangements.

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 borough. Proposed amendments to the Capital replacement programme for the Waste Fleet are being presented in Qtr 1 of the 2024/25 financial year. Any additional changes to the programme will be submitted for consideration during Qtr 2 of the 2024/25 financial year if required.

Performance Measure:

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

Update

Funding has been built into the Medium-Term Financial Plan to support a partial transition for all Diesel vehicles and equipment operated from the Depot to be run on HVO (Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil) from April 2024, with an approved increase to fuel budgets to reflect an expected 30% HVO/70% Diesel across the Housing & Environmental Services fleet.

Due to the increased cost of HVO in comparison with Diesel, Officers will review the affordability of increasing this further as a phased transition beyond 2024/25 in order to further reduce our carbon emissions. This will be presented for consideration as part of the budget process for future years.

Performance measure

- Households supported by the Council's energy advice service

Period	Households	Period	Households
2019/20 (09/19-03/20 only)	31	Q1 2023/24	137
2020/21	41	Q2 2023/24	145
2021/22	90	Q3 2023/24	202
2022/23 (part year)	385	Q4 2023/24	162

Update

The energy advice service is provided by Act on Energy on behalf of the council. In the final quarter of 2023/24 a total of 162 households received energy advice and guidance from Act on Energy. A range of advice and support has been provided to residents across Bromsgrove including 50 households receiving home visits and support from outreach workers. In addition, a number of households needing more complex support over the telephone in the last quarter has increased.

3.8. Financial Stability

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

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

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

3.9. Organisational Sustainability

The Council will work to maximise the use of digital infrastructures, including cloud technologies, to enhance its support for customers. Ensuring the 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 current legacy dashboard to a new Power BI dashboard. Power BI is an interactive data visualisation

software product with a primary focus on business intelligence. There are currently 36 strategic measures available. Work is also being undertaken on operational measures. The accident report has been finalised and has been used by staff in meetings and in the creation of formal reports.

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%.

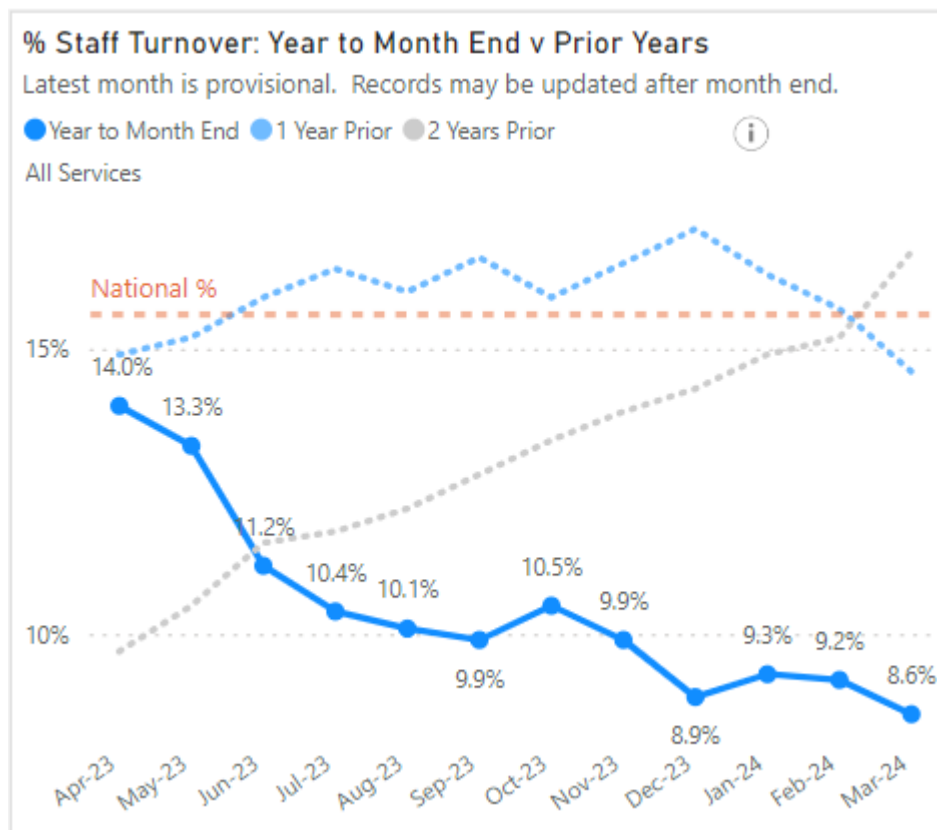
This measure is aligned with the ongoing agile project.

3.10. High Quality Services

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

Performance measure

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



Update

Since January 2023, it can be seen there has been a continued improvement in turnover rates which brings the authority under the national average. We have launched a process for exit interviews which we are continuing to monitor.

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%

Update

This is an annual measure. Data is extracted from the annual community survey. 2021 was the first year the public were asked about their level of satisfaction with the way the council delivers its services. National satisfaction with LA's, according to the Local Government Chronicle is currently at 40%.

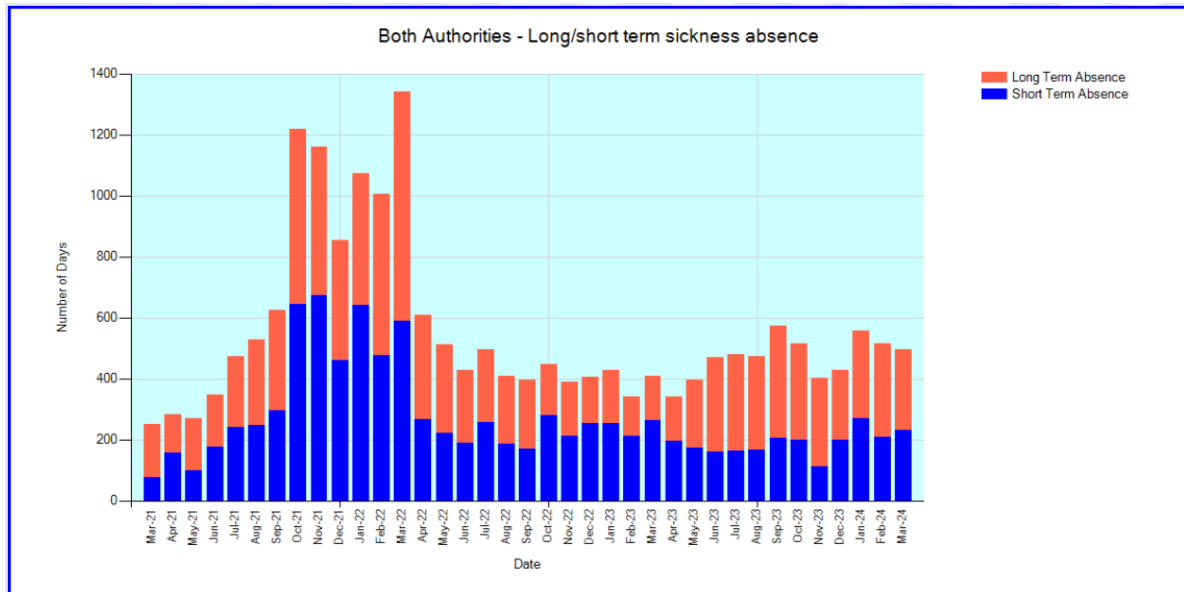
The 2023 survey was carried out in October/November 2023; the results for this survey are currently going through the reporting process and will be included in the performance report as soon as they are available.

4. Operational Measures

4.1 Business Transformation, Organisational Development & Digital Services

Performance measure

- Sickness absence



Update

We are continuing to undertake a fundamental review of the data source, data capture and data calculation, to utilise the increased functionality of PowerBI which will enhance both the overview and more in-depth analysis for this measure and in turn enable actions from the understanding gained. System issues have hindered the speed of progress; however, progress is being made.

Actions:

- Review data source, to include training where needed.
- Review of the absence reasons reported under in comparison to national data.
- Review of how the data is analysed and presented to managers.

4.2 Environmental Services

Domestic Waste Collection

Performance Measure

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

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

2023/24 saw a noticeable drop in recycling performance during the latter part of Qtr 3 and Qtr 4 as a result of increased residual waste, and lower than

average garden waste material. This brought our average recycling rate down to 45.51%, a 1.84% drop on the previous year.

Dry Recycling rates have remained relatively consistent during the year, and garden waste was actually higher than usual over the summer due to high growth rates that boosted our performance. Qtr 3 has seen a significant drop in the percentage of waste being recycled/composted, as the Garden Waste Season ended in November, and wet weather in March has resulted in lower garden waste tonnages as residents have been unable to carry out some of their normal planned maintenance weather given the excessive rainfall.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
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

*23/24 figures have been updated to reflect current property numbers.

Actions:

Discussions have been had with our neighbouring Worcestershire Authorities about how we can increase our resources collectively to support more proactive engagement with residents to educate on waste reduction and effective use of our services, as we still have regular contamination of our recycling with non-recyclable items. Although this is not progressing as a partnership project across all the Worcestershire Authorities, Bromsgrove and Redditch (with support from the Waste Partnership Strategy Officer) are still looking at how existing resources could be used differently to support more proactive engagement and education with residents.

Work is also on-going to consider the future of waste collection services alongside new legislative requirements that will see the introduction of a weekly food waste collection and potential changes to how we manage both residual waste and dry recycling. New banners were affixed to the side of our refuse collection fleet to highlight the issue of food waste as part of a joint campaign with Worcestershire County Council earlier this financial year, and we also have resources available via our website to support households in using our services and reducing waste:

<https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/lets-waste-less> .

Performance Measure

- Residual Waste per household (kg)

This measures non-recyclable waste thrown away per household and shows a continued reduction per household in 2023/24 when compared with the previous two years. With an average weight of 442kg per household in 2023/24, down from 455kg in 22/23, and 493kg in 21/22. This is likely reflecting the gradual return to work for some residents who were working from home, as well as the increasing cost of living pressure on households.

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

Residual Waste per Household (Kg)

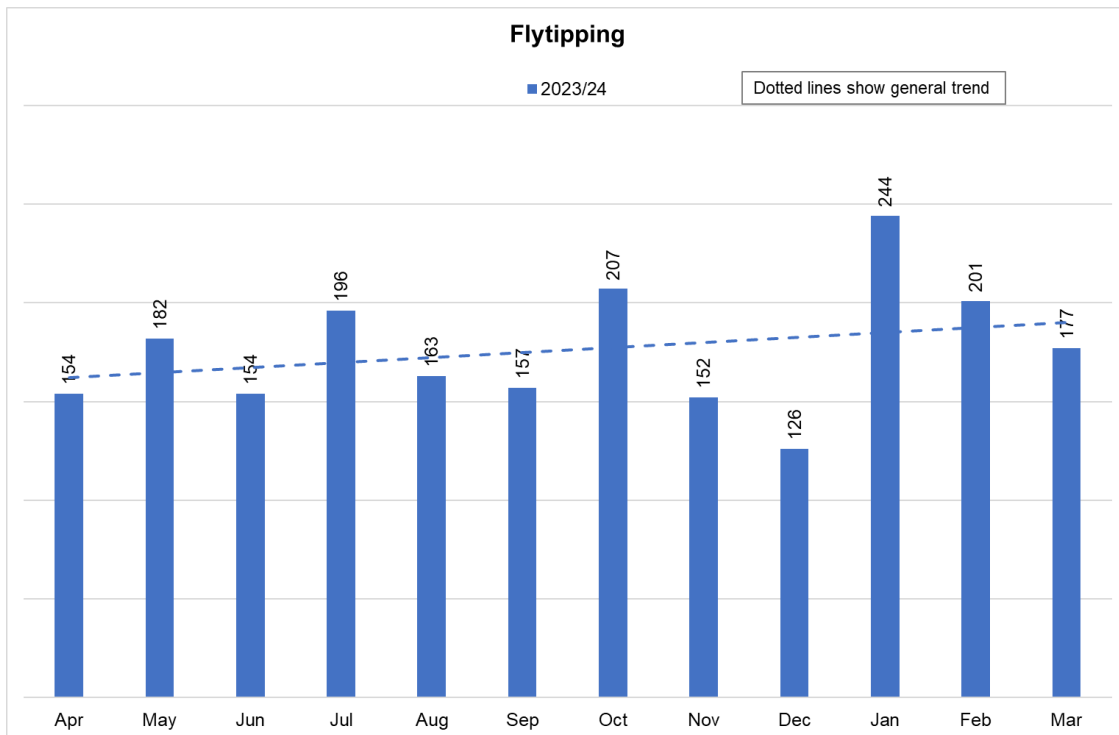
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2021/22	50.01	38.81	39.35	38.16	40.89	45.06	41.50	39.36	35.86	39.86	35.58	49.26
2022/23	42.43	37.22	37.28	31.36	41.03	42.83	34.20	39.64	32.76	41.78	32.59	42.08
2023/24	32.75	35.28	34.05	34.15	45.88	36.42	34.48	36.52	32.32	45.00	38.38	37.01

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

Performance Measure

- Fly Tipping

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



Actions:

We have seen a change of behaviour in fly tipping in areas where we have used signage to raise the profile of our enforcement actions, and our Enforcement Officer is currently updating this signage to keep the messaging relevant and highlight that this is an on-going issue to further deter this across the District. Cameras are still being deployed in hotspot areas to identify those responsible, and additional training was carried out during September on how to effectively use covert cameras and maintain legal compliance for the use of CCTV.

2023/24 has seen increasing numbers of fly-tips, across a wider range of locations than has been seen previously, which is hindering our ability to monitor locations effectively to identify those responsible.

We have had targeted monitoring of hot spot locations with cameras throughout the year and issued fixed penalty notices for smaller offences caught on camera that have all been paid.

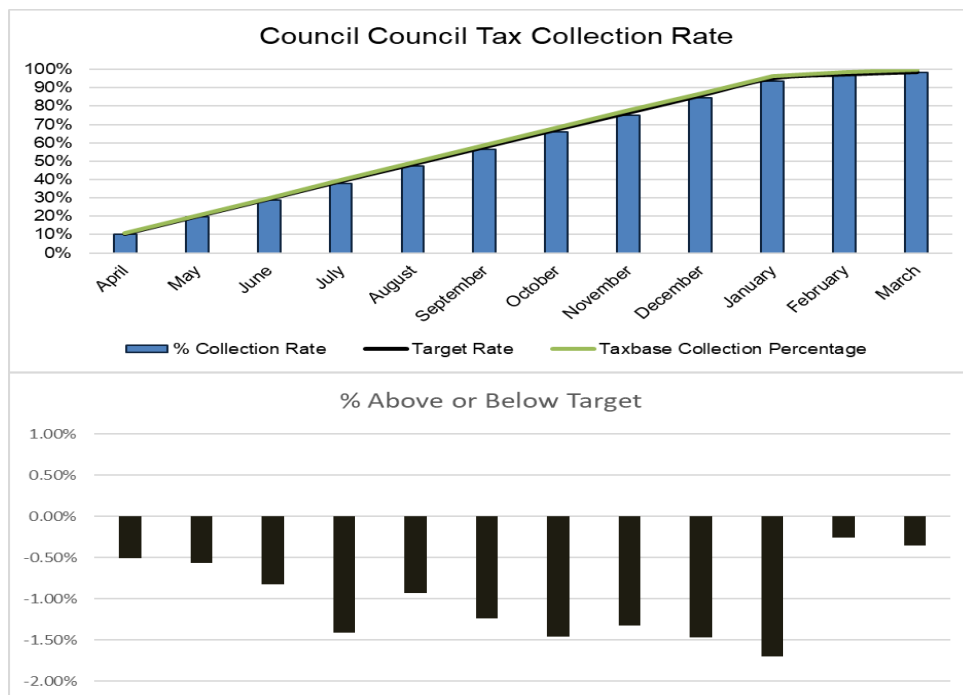
We also have two cases currently being taken to court for fly tipping that we are confident of achieving a successful conviction on, and have a number of other cases currently being investigated where we have partial video footage, or evidence from within the fly tip that is being used to identify the origin and who was responsible for it.

4.3 Finance and Customer Services (inc Revenues & Benefits)

Performance measure

- Council Tax Collection Rate

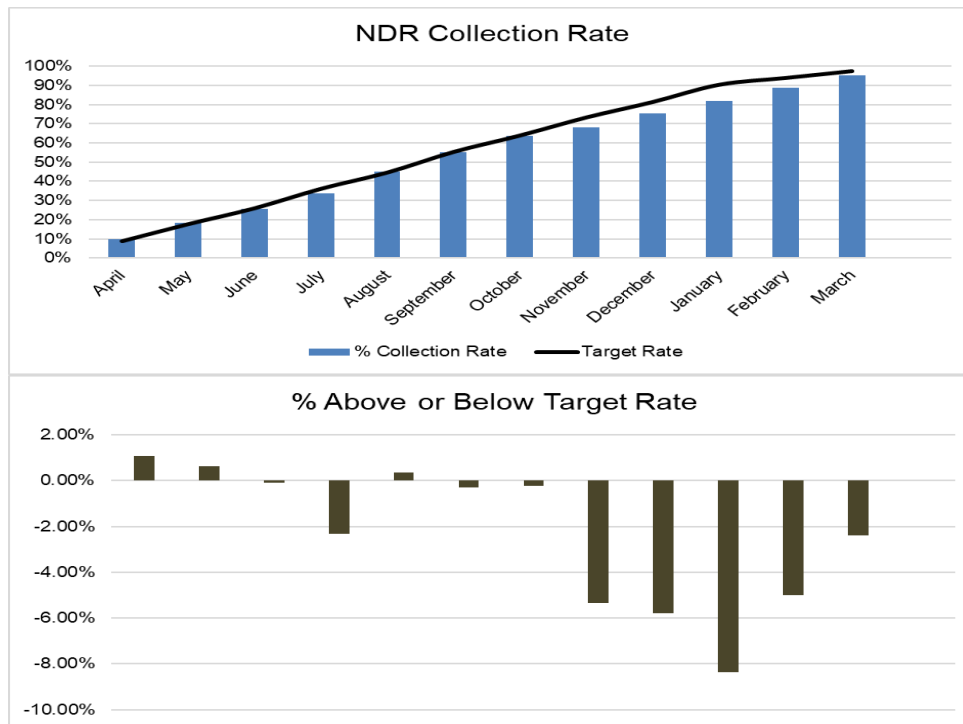
The data remains as Quarter 4 2022/23 data. Revenues cannot accurately produce the updated information due to batch scheduling having stopped working within Civica-OpenRevenues; this issue is being progressed and updated data will be provided in Q1 2024/25.



Performance measure

- NDR Collection Rate

The data remains as Quarter 4 2022/23 data. Revenues cannot accurately produce the updated information due to batch scheduling having stopped working within Civica-OpenRevenues; this issue is being progressed and updated data will be provided in Q1 2024/25.



Performance measure

- Revenues Processing

Month	Completed Items	Comp. < 7 Days	Comp. < 14 Days	Comp. < 21 days	Comp. < 28 Days	Comp. > 28 days	Outstanding
Apr-22	2550	527	313	280	718	712	1869
May-22	2337	464	192	172	92	1417	2044
Jun-22	2773	509	268	157	137	1702	2031
Jul-22	2906	552	240	190	362	1562	1605
Aug-22	2345	529	215	208	804	589	1421
Sep-22	5143	1080	483	481	1458	1641	1424
Oct-22	2716	954	297	239	511	715	1798
Nov-22	2807	818	299	249	264	1177	1639
Dec-22	2284	853	292	182	106	851	1536
Jan-23	3121	1185	333	310	198	1095	1228
Feb-23	3271	1652	249	187	327	856	941
Mar-23	4059	2277	748	377	359	298	912
Apr-23	2608	1166	426	238	416	362	740
May-23	2273	1223	227	117	304	402	846
Jun-23	2417	1392	182	163	90	590	1080
Jul-23	2922	1378	290	292	272	690	1005
Aug-23	2969	1517	366	611	190	285	637
Sep-23	2648	1443	594	325	76	210	677

Update

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

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

Actions

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

Performance measure

- Online Customer Interactions

Due to a server migration in early October, the report is not able to be produced due to the settings having to be re-established.

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)
Jan 2024	2969	0.3	03:47	6.39	08:25
Feb 2024	2658	0.12	03:19	6.84	07:22
Mar 2024	3669	0.9	04:49	6.65	08:16

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. March is a busy time for calls as residents receive their annual council tax bills.

Performance measure

- Number of Web Payments

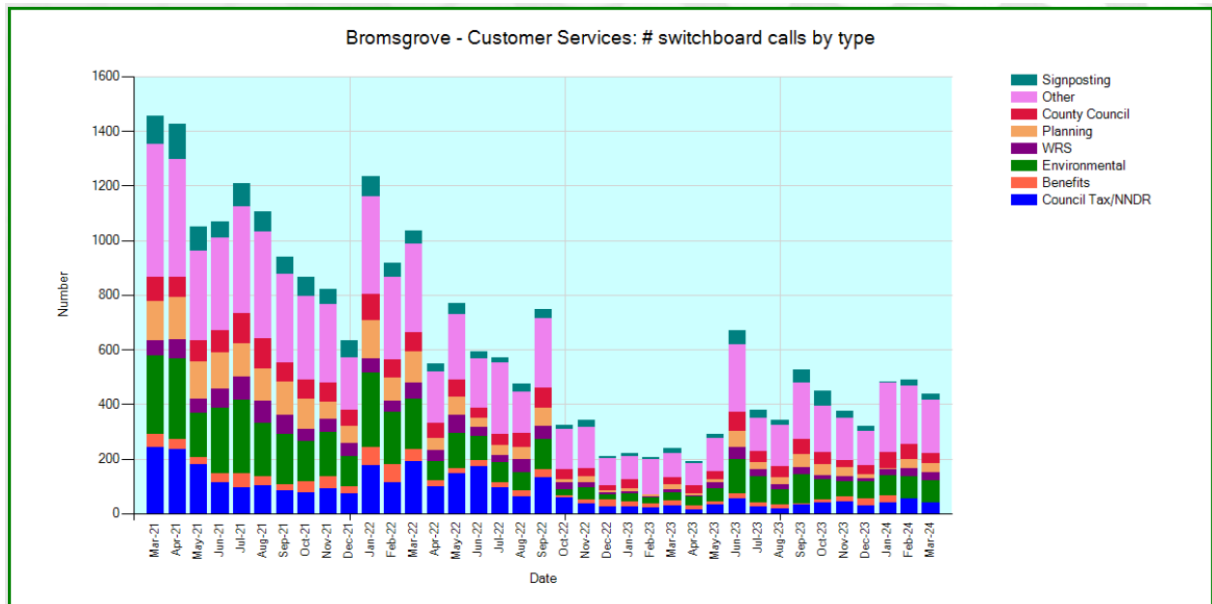
Date	Number of Payments
Jan 2024	1458
Feb 2024	2335
Mar 2024	1745

Performance measure

- Customer Service calls (Switchboard)

Date	Calls Answered	Avg in Queue	Avg Wait (mm:ss)	Avg Logged in	Avg call length (mm:ss)
Jan 2024	856	0.01	00:38	1.95	00:55
Feb 2024	798	0.01	00:37	1.99	01:01
Mar 2024	773	0.01	00:35	1.98	01:03

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.

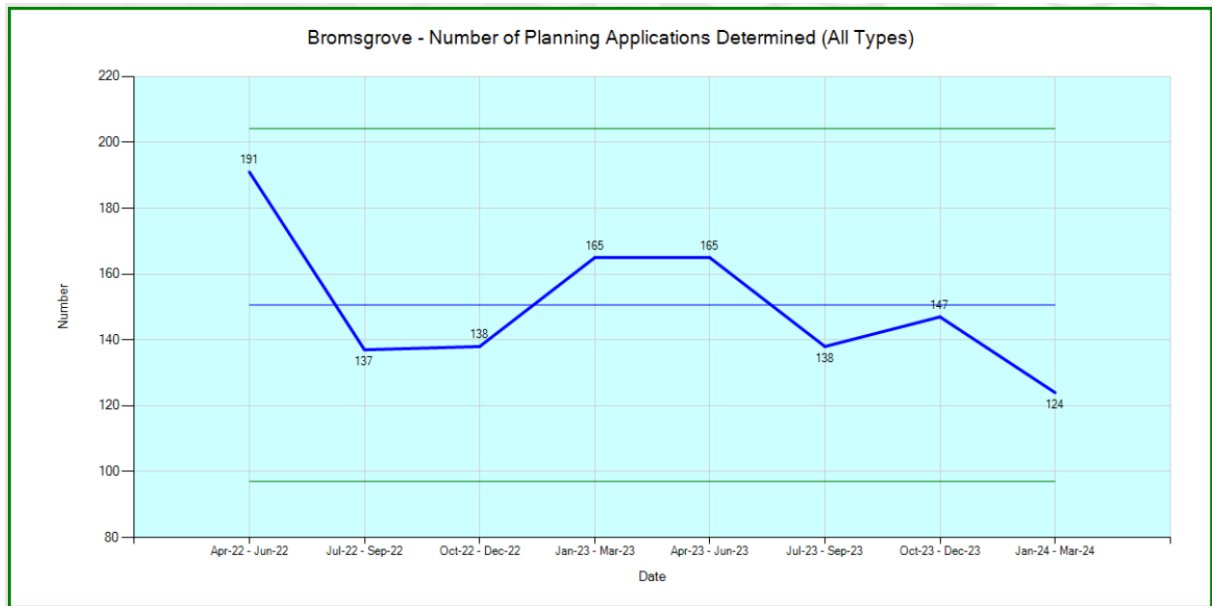


4.4 Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services

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

Performance measure

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

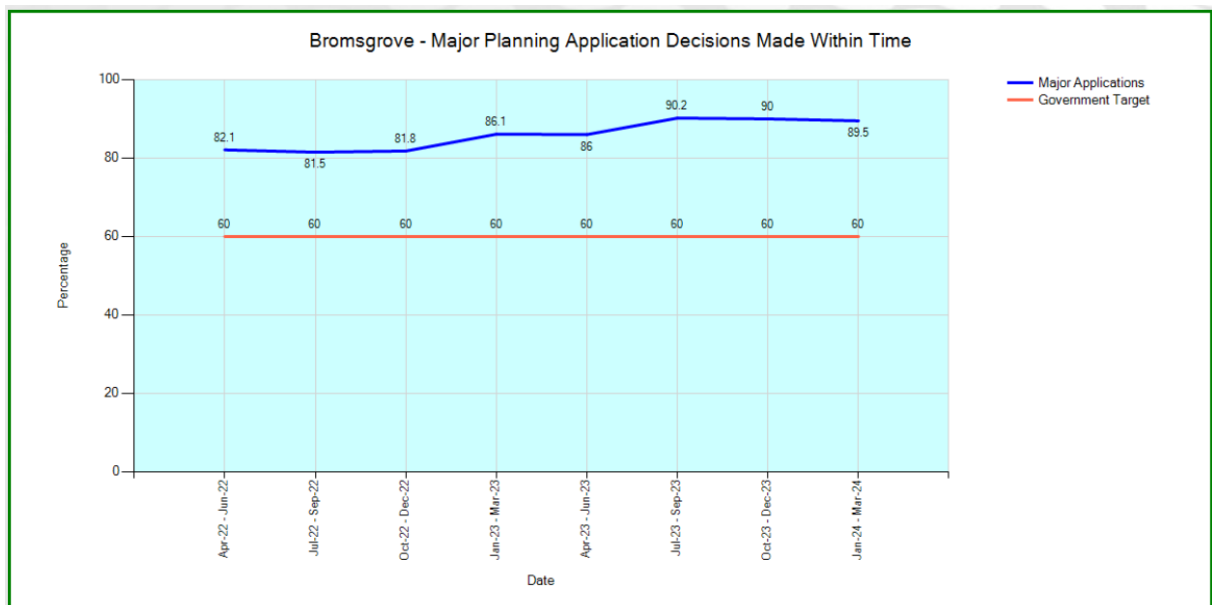


Update

Determination rates remain below average and have dropped relative to the previous quarter.

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%)

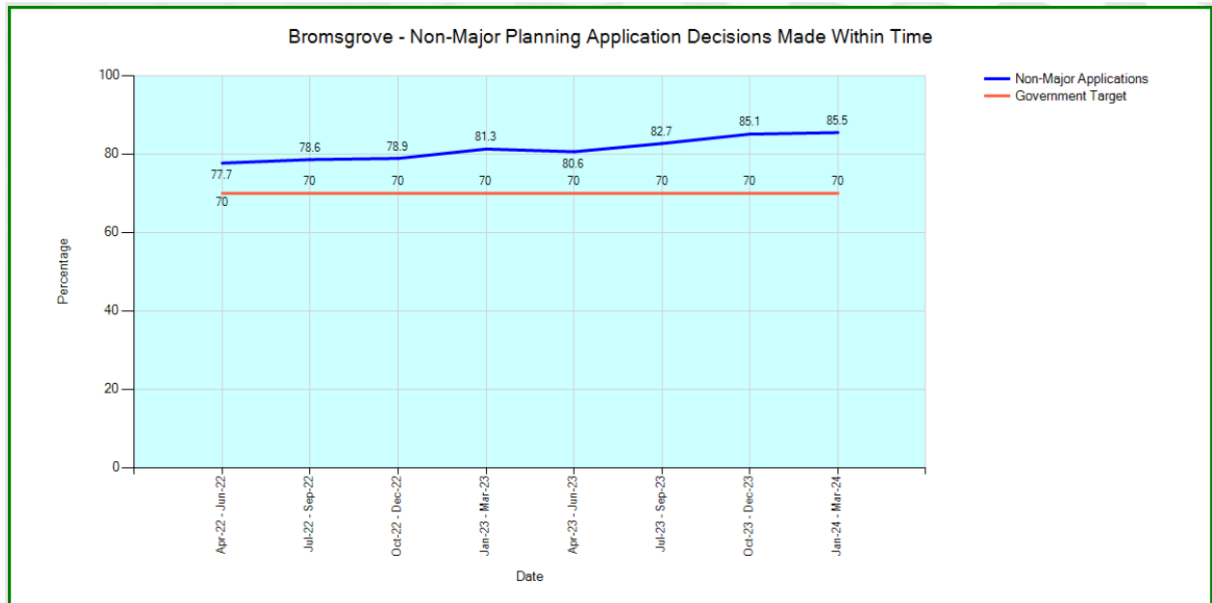


Update

The assessment of 2 year rolling period for speed is 89.5%. This remains well in excess of government targets which is 60%.

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%)



The 2 year rolling period for speed is 85.5% remains well in excess of government requirements which is 70%

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 21 – March 23	5.7%	Also March 2024

Source; Live tables on planning application statistics Gov.uk. Table 152a. [Live tables on planning application statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/live-tables-on-planning-application-statistics)

Update

The threat of designation exists when more that 10% of decisions are over turned at Appeal. The Councils quality of decision making against this measure has been steadily improving for the last 3 quarters and now sits at 5.7%.

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 21 – March 23	1.8%	Also March 2024

Source; Live tables on planning application statistics Gov.uk. Table 154. [Live tables on planning application statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/live-tables-on-planning-application-statistics)

Update:

The threat of designation exists when more that 10% of decisions are over turned at Appeal. The Councils quality of decision making against this measure remains fairly static and sits comfortably below at 1.8%.

5. Corporate Project Oversight & Monitoring

The table below provides a summary of the fifteen projects, as at 12th April 2024. The majority of projects are shown as amber relating to their overall status.

All Projects (Number)	Overall Status RAG		Time Status RAG		Scope Status RAG		Budget Status RAG	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Red	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Amber	10	66.6%	9	60.0%	6	40.0%	7	46.6%
Green	5	33.3%	5	33.3%	8	53.3%	5	33.3%

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