

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY 19TH FEBRUARY 2025, AT 1.00 P.M.

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

Observers: Councillor P. M. McDonald – Chairman of the
Overview and Scrutiny Board

Officers: Mrs. S. Hanley, Mr P. Carpenter, Mr. G. Revans,
Mrs. R. Bamford, Mr. M. Dunphy and Mrs J. Gresham

72/24 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S. Colella.

73/24 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

74/24 **TO CONSIDER A VERBAL UPDATE ON THE MEETINGS OF THE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD DUE TO TAKE PLACE ON 17TH
FEBRUARY 2025 AND FINANCE AND BUDGET WORKING GROUP
DUE TO TAKE PLACE ON 18TH FEBRUARY 2025.**

The Leader invited Councillor P. McDonald in his capacity as Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board to provide a verbal update following the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 17th February 2025 and Finance and Budget Working Group held on 18th February 2025.

In doing so, Cabinet was informed the Board had pre-scrutinised the Local Development Scheme report due to be considered at this meeting, however there had been no recommendations made as a result of this pre-scrutiny.

It was confirmed however, that following detailed scrutiny of the Poverty Truth Commission (PTC) at several Finance and Budget Working Group meetings, Members felt that funding for the PTC should not be allocated as part of the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2025 – 2026 to 2027 – 2028. It was discussed that some of the areas which the PTC covered such as

working with young people, were also dealt with by other organisations, that provided a similar service. Therefore, to allocate £40,000 to the project would not provide value for money for the residents of Bromsgrove. It was also stated that as a new Local Government structure was currently in the process of being decided upon, providing funding at this time would not be appropriate.

Cabinet were in agreement with this opinion and a recommendation to Council would be included in the Medium-Term Financial Plan when the report was considered later at this meeting at Minute No 77/24. Members noted that Officers and The Bromsgrove Partnership, who were to provide non-financial support for this project, would be notified of this decision by the relevant Cabinet Members.

The Leader thanked Councillor McDonald and the Board for the robust pre-scrutiny carried out in this area over the previous meetings of both the Board and the Finance and Budget Working Group.

75/24

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Licensing and Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) presented the Local Development Scheme report for Members' consideration.

Members were informed that this report dealt with the new timetable for the development of the Local Plan as a result of the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in December 2024. It was noted that it had been necessary to implement the timetable within a specific deadline as communications had been received from Central Government which stated, *'areas must commit to timetables for new plans within 12 weeks of the updated NPPF or ministers will not hesitate to use their existing suite of intervention powers to ensure plans are put in place'*.

The timetable included the consultation process which, it was noted, was due to take place in Summer 2025. Members would also be consulted on this process during Strategic Planning Steering Group meetings scheduled to take place throughout the year.

It was explained the overall process would take thirty months in total and result in the adoption of the Local Plan in 2028.

Members queried what the land supply currently was in Bromsgrove. Officers stated that it was 1.92 years, however, they would confirm this figure for Members following the meeting.

In proposing the recommendations, it was noted that there had been a slight amendment to those published in the main agenda. These updated recommendations appeared in the supplementary papers one pack and reflected that '*authority be delegated to the Assistant Director of Planning and Leisure Services, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, Licensing and WRS, to approve updates to the Local Development Scheme as required*'. It was explained that this was in line with Bromsgrove District Council's Constitution in that decisions were made as a collective rather than by individual Members. These updated recommendations would be considered at the Council meeting due to take place later that day.

Therefore, it was

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) Bromsgrove District Council Local Development Scheme 2025 be approved as the Council's programme for plan-making, effective as of 19th February 2025;
- 2) Delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director for Planning and Leisure Services, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, Licensing and WRS, to approve updates to the Local Development Scheme as required.

76/24

COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTIONS (REPORT TO FOLLOW)

The Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 officer presented the Council Tax Resolutions 2025 – 2026 for the consideration of Cabinet. It was explained that the report authorised the collection of Council Tax from Bromsgrove residents at the correct amount. Prior to the consideration of the report, it was noted that updated version of Schedules One and Two contained within the report had been re-issued for Members consideration. This was due to a rounding error which had been identified in the previous version.

It was stated that Council Tax included elements from the following:

- Worcestershire County Council
- Bromsgrove District Council

- Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia
- Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority
- Precepts from nineteen Parish Councils

Members were informed that Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority had met earlier on that day to agree their precept for 2025 – 2026 and it was confirmed that this had been agreed as detailed within the report.

Therefore, it was stated that the precepts for 2025 2026 were as follows:

	£
Worcestershire County Council	61,978,474.00
Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia	11,181,910.85
Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority	3,921,149.04
Bromsgrove District Council	9,876,907.05
Parish Precepts	1,373,801.44
Total	88,332,242.38

It was highlighted that all precepting authorities had increased their charges by the maximum amount for the year 2025 – 2026 as follows:

- Worcestershire County Council – an increase of 4.99 per cent
- Bromsgrove District Council – an increase of 2.99 per cent
- Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia – an increase of 5.05 per cent
- Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority – an increase of 5.14 per cent
- Parish Councils - an average increase of 11.18 per cent.

It was noted that the Parish Council precepts were determined at a local level and were dependent on the services provided and numbers of residents within that Parish. Members noted that Parish Councils were subject to scrutiny of their accounts and annual Statement of Accounts were published on the website or independently audited depending on income and turnover.

The total amount generated from the collection of Council Tax was £11,250,708.49 which was the combined total of Bromsgrove District Council's amount of precept of £9,876,907.05 and parish precepts of £1,373,801.44.

Members attention was drawn to the following areas contained within the report:

- 1) For the year 2025 - 2026, Worcestershire County Council, Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia, and Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority had issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act for each category of dwelling in the Council's area as indicated below:

	Valuation Bands							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Worcestershire County Council	1,077.14	1,256.66	1,436.19	1,615.71	1,974.76	2,333.80	2,692.85	3,231.42
Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia	194.33	226.72	259.11	291.50	356.28	421.06	485.83	583.00
Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority	68.15	79.50	90.86	102.22	124.94	147.65	170.37	204.44

- 2) That the Director of Resources was authorised to make payments under section 90(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 from the collection fund by ten equal instalments between April 2025 to March 2026 as detailed below:

	Precept (£)	Surplus/Deficit on Collection Fund (£)	Total to Pay (£)
Worcestershire County Council	61,978,747.00	417,276.00	62,395,750.00
Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia	11,181,910.85	75,243.70	11,257,154.55
Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority	3,921,149.04	26,361.05	3,947,510.09

- 3) That the Director of Resources was authorised to make transfers under section 97 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 from the collection fund to the general fund the sum of £11,250,708.49 being the Council's own demand on the collection fund (£9,876,907.05) and parish precepts (£1,373,801.44) and the distribution of the surplus/deficit on the collection fund (£76,521.40).
- 4) That the Director of Resources was authorised to make payments from the general fund to parish councils the sums listed on **Schedule 3** by two equal instalments on 1st April 2025 and 1st October 2025 in respect of the precept levied on the Council.

- 5) That the above resolutions to be signed by the Chief Executive for use in legal proceedings in the Magistrates' Court for the recovery of unpaid council taxes.

Members were informed that due to the legislation connected to this report, it would be necessary for the Cabinet Member for Finance to read out all recommendations contained within the report at the Council meeting due to be held later that day.

On being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED that

at its meeting on 25th January 2025 Cabinet approved the calculated Council Tax base 2025/26 as:

- (a) for the whole council area as 38,359.9 [item T in the formula in section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")]; and
- (b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a parish precept relate the amount as shown in column 5 of the attached schedule 1.

RECOMMENDED that

1.2.1 The calculation for the council tax requirement for the council's own purposes for 2025/26 (excluding parish precepts) as **£9,876,907.05**

1.2.2 That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2025/26 in accordance with sections 31 to 36 of the Act:

- a) £48,010,187.83 being the aggregate of the amounts which the council estimates for the items set out in section 31A(2) of the Act (taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils) (i.e., gross expenditure)
- b) £36,759,479.34 being the aggregate of the amounts which the council estimates for the items set out in section 31A(3) of the Act. (i.e gross income).
- c) £11,250,708.49 being the amount by which the aggregate of 1.2.2(a) above exceeds the aggregate of 1.2.2(b) above, calculated by the council, in accordance with section 31A(4) of

the Act, as its council tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in section 31B of the Act).

- d) £293.29 being the amount at 1.2.2(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1.1(a) above), calculated by the council, in accordance with section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year (including parish precepts).
- e) £1,373,801.44 being the aggregate amount of all special items (parish precepts) referred to in section 34(1) of the Act (as per the attached **schedule 3**)
- f) £257.48 being the amount at 1.2.2(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 1.2.2(e) above by Item T (1.1(a) above), calculated by the council, in accordance with section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no parish precept relates.
- g) The amounts shown in column 4 of **schedule 1**. These are the basic amount of council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of the council's area shown in column 1 of the schedule respectively to which special items relate, calculated by the council in accordance with section 34(3) of the Act. (District and parish combined at band D).
- h) The amounts shown in columns 7 to 14 of **schedule 1** being the amount given by multiplying the amount at 1.2.2(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number of dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the council, in accordance with section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

1.2.3 It is to be noted that for the year 2025/26, Worcestershire County Council, Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia, and Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority have issued precepts to the council in accordance with section 40 of the Act for each category of dwelling in the council's area as indicated below:

	Valuation Bands							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Worcestershire County Council	1,077.14	1,256.66	1,436.19	1,615.71	1,974.76	2,333.80	2,692.85	3,231.42
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Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority	68.15	79.50	90.86	102.22	124.94	147.65	170.37	204.44

1.2.4 That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 1.2.2(h) and 1.2.3 above, that Bromsgrove District Council in accordance with sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 hereby sets the amounts shown in **schedule 2** as the amounts of council tax for 2025/26 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.

1.2.5 The Director of Resources be authorised to make payments under section 90(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 from the collection fund by ten equal instalments between April 2025 to March 2026 as detailed below

	Precept (£)	Surplus/Deficit on Collection Fund (£)	Total to Pay (£)
Worcestershire County Council	61,978,747.00	417,276.00	62,395,750.00
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Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority	3,921,149.04	26,361.05	3,947,510.09

1.2.6 The Director of Resources be authorised to make transfers under section 97 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 from the collection fund to the general fund the sum of £11,250,708.49 being the council's own demand on the collection fund (£9,876,907.05) and parish precepts (£1,373,801.44) and the distribution of the surplus/deficit on the collection fund (£76,521.40).

1.2.7 That the Director of Resources be authorised to make payments from the general fund to parish councils the sums listed on

Schedule 3 by two equal instalments on 1st April 2025 and 1st October 2025 in respect of the precept levied on the council.

1.2.8 That the above resolutions to be signed by the Chief Executive for use in legal proceedings in the Magistrates' Court for the recovery of unpaid council taxes.

1.2.9 Notices of the making of the said council taxes signed by the Chief Executive are given by advertisement in the local press under section 38(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

77/24

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN - TRANCHE 2 BUDGET INCLUDING FEES AND CHARGES (FOLLOWING CONSULTATION)

The Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer presented the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) - Tranche 2 Budget including Fees and Charges (following consultation) report for the consideration of Cabinet.

In doing so, Members were reminded that an updated MTFP had been issued for this meeting as a result of discussions that had taken place at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 11th February 2025 and Cabinet meeting held on 12th February 2025. There had been some amendments made to the recommendations contained within the Strategic Parking Review report which had resulted in the following:

- a) An additional £85,000 be added to parking budgets, allocated as follows:
 - i) Additional funding of £70,000 for increased numbers of Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs)
 - ii) £15,000 for maintenance of an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system

- b) £100,000 added to the Capital Budget in 2025/26 for ANPR systems to Recreation Road South, St Johns and Windsor Street car parks

Further amendments to the previous report also reported to members included:

- 1) Paragraph 3.19 of the MTFP report was discussed in detail and the wording amended to ensure:

- District infrastructure schemes were prioritised
 - That General Fund balances did not reduce below £5million.
- 2) A risk added to the Risk Section within the report following correspondence from Birmingham City Council regarding access to Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) funding during the 2025/26 financial year.
 - 3) Inclusion of Appendix A to the report which contained draft Departmental Budgets.
 - 4) Revenue bottom line changed from a £167k deficit to a £252k deficit for 2025 - 2026.
 - 5) Revenue bottom line changed from a £1,030k deficit to a £1,115k deficit for 2026 – 2027.
 - 6) Revenue bottom line changed from a £399k deficit to a £484k deficit for 2027 – 2028.
 - 7) Support from Reserves rose from £1,596k to £1,851k.
 - 8) General fund balances reduced from £12,781m to £12.526m.
 - 9) Capital spending in 2025/26 increased from £8.017m to £8.117m.

This updated MTFP report had also been considered at the Finance and Budget Working Group (FBWG) meeting held on 18th February 2025. The Leader invited Councillor P. McDonald, in his role as Chairman of the FBWG, to inform Members what discussions had taken place during consideration of this report. It was noted that the FBWG Members felt that £1000,000 for an ANPR system was a significant cost. It was also noted that legal work needed to be carried out in respect of installation of ANPR in order to comply with any regulations involved in implementing such a system.

The Chairman of the FBWG also reported that there had been some discussion regarding Electric Vehicle (EV) chargers within the District at this meeting. It was noted that the current contract provider and the Council were in a profit share agreement and that profits would not be likely for approximately eight to ten years. Councillor McDonald expressed that after some research he had discovered that there were more beneficial models available when working with EV contractors and that this be looked at by the Council. Members queried the amount of time left on the contract with the current provider and Officers undertook to provide this information and to ascertain whether there were any 'break' clauses contained within the current contract.

As this seemed to be an area of interest for Members it was suggested that the Overview and Scrutiny Board scrutinise EV chargers in further

detail. The Chairman of the Board agreed and undertook to make the necessary arrangements in order for the Board to consider this at a future meeting.

As discussed earlier at this meeting, Members recommended that the £40,000 funding allocated to the Poverty Truth Commission be removed from the MTFP.

Therefore, it was

RESOLVED that

- 1) Members understand and accept the implications set out in the Section 151 Officer's Robustness (Section 25) Statement of this 2025/26 to 2027/28 Medium Term Financial Plan in moving the Council to financial sustainability.
- 2) The need for accelerated business cases to be worked up to enable upgrades of infrastructure to the District for consideration in line with work set out in paragraph 3.19 of the Appendix for completion prior to vesting day.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) The updated MTFP following discussions at Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11th February and amendments agreed at Cabinet on 12th February, as detailed in the Cabinet minute 69/24, is approved.
- 2) Subject to incorporating the changes detailed in recommendation 1 above, the MTFP Recommendations made in the report to Cabinet on 12th February are approved.
- 3) The funding of £40,000 from Reserves allocated to the Poverty Truth Commission project be removed from the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

78/24

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

There was no Urgent Business on this occasion.

79/24

**TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE CABINET HELD ON 12TH FEBRUARY 2025**

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 12th February 2025 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 12th February 2025 be approved as a true and correct record.

The meeting closed at 1.39 p.m.

Chairman