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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY 12TH FEBRUARY 2025

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. **To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 7th January 2025 (Pages 5 - 18)**
4. **Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 6th January 2025 (Pages 19 - 34)**
 - (a) To receive and note the minutes
 - (b) To consider any recommendations contained within the minutes

5. **Pay Policy 2025/2026 (Pages 35 - 44)**
6. **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>
7	3
8	3

7. **Strategic Parking Review (Pages 45 - 238)**
8. **Medium Term Financial Plan - Tranche 2 Budget including Fees and Charges (following consultation) (Pages 239 - 322)**

Appendix A to this report will be published in a Supplementary Papers pack to this agenda.

9. **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**

Sue Hanley
Chief Executive

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

4th February 2025

**If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact
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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

7TH JANUARY 2025, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors K.J. May (Leader), S. J. Baxter (Deputy Leader), S. R. Colella, B. McEldowney, K. Taylor (from Minute Item No. 58/24), S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

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

Officers: Mrs. S. Hanley, Mr P. Carpenter, Mr. G. Revans, Mr S. Parry, Mr M. Austin, Mr. M. Bough and Mrs. J. Bayley-Hill

54/24 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

Members noted that Councillor K. Taylor would be arriving late for the meeting.

55/24 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

56/24 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON 10TH DECEMBER 2024**

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 10th December 2024 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 10th December 2024 be approved as a true and correct record.

57/24 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 9TH DECEMBER 2024**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 9th December 2024 were considered.

The Leader confirmed that there were no outstanding recommendations from this meeting requiring the Cabinet's consideration.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 9th December 2024 be noted.

58/24

REFUSE FLEET REPLACEMENT AND WHEELED BIN PRESSURES

The Environmental Services Manager presented a report on the subject of the replacement of the Council's refuse vehicle fleet and pressures relating to wheeled bins used by the authority.

Cabinet was reminded that at a previous meeting, Members had received an update on the pressures on the vehicle fleet used for the delivery of the waste service and the Council's capital programme had been reprofiled in response to this. Officers had subsequently identified issues with the bins used by the Council. The authority had a diamond bin system whereby the bins were lifted to dispose of waste. The Council was the only authority to retain this system as all other local authorities had ceased to use this following a tragic accident in Coventry involving the lifting mechanism. Consequently, there were no vehicles available to purchase that were suitable for lifting this type of bin.

The Council could continue to use the existing bins and maintain the existing vehicle fleet. However, the vehicles used by the authority were aging and this created challenges, including financial challenges in the long-term. Therefore, Officers were proposing that the authority's bins needed to be replaced with industry standard comb bins. There were two different sizes of comb bin available to use which Cabinet was invited to consider.

The report was being considered in a context in which the Government was introducing extended producer responsibilities, whereby manufacturers would be taxed on packaging. The funds arising from this tax would be allocated to public services and Bromsgrove District Council was due to receive £1.04 million initially, with annual contributions anticipated. However, Members were asked to note that the level of funding received from this source was likely to decline over time as manufacturers made changes to their packaging in order to reduce their tax liabilities.

During consideration of this item, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Councillor P. McDonald, was invited to address Cabinet on behalf of the Board on this subject. Members were advised that the Board had pre-scrutinised the report at a meeting held on 6th January 2025. The Board had noted that in the report it had been suggested that provision of smaller bins would help to encourage an increase in recycling rates in the District. However, the Board had had concerns about the impact that this might have in the local community and therefore had recommended that the Council should invest in the larger bins.

Members subsequently discussed the proposals detailed in the report and in so doing commented on the following matters:

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- The procurement of new vehicles alongside new bins. It was confirmed that these would be owned by the Council.
- The typographical errors that had been identified in the report, including the figure in the second recommendation which should have been recorded as £2.2 million.
- The hard work of the Waste Collection Service team.
- The historic decision that had been taken by the Council to invest in diamond bins, which had been considered to be cutting edge at the time.
- The length of time that the diamond bins had been used, for over 20 years. Officers expressed hopes that the replacement comb bins could be utilised for a similar amount of time in order to achieve value for money.
- The amount of funding that Redditch Borough Council was due to receive for extended producer responsibilities. Officers confirmed that this figure was likely to be circa £200,000 lower than for Bromsgrove District Council due to the lower number of households.
- The numbers of green, grey and brown bins used by households in the District. Officers advised that there were approximately 43,000 households in the District and roughly this number of green and grey bins per household. In addition, there were approximately 20,000 brown bins, as not all residents opted to receive the garden waste collection service.
- The bins that would be provided to households on request prior to investment in the new bins. Cabinet was advised that there were occasions when residents requested replacement bins and, as diamond bins were no longer available, comb bins had already started to be provided to these households.
- The potential for the availability of smaller bins to be promoted to residents, whilst providing the larger bins as a standard. In particular, Members commented that single person households might prefer to use smaller bins.
- The communications that would be issued alongside replacement of the bins. Officers explained that funding was proposed in the MTFP to allocate to communications in respect of this matter.

RESOLVED

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

RECOMMENDED that

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

59/24

INTRODUCTION OF FOOD WASTE COLLECTION

The Environmental Services Manager presented a report concerning the introduction of a food waste collection service in Bromsgrove District.

Cabinet was advised that the Environment Act 2021 had introduced a new statutory duty for local authorities to provide a weekly food waste collection service. Confirmation had not yet been provided to the Council on the new burdens funding that would be made available by the Government to the authority to help cover the costs of delivering this service. However, it was anticipated that the Council would receive an additional circa £900,000 to cover the costs of new caddies and outdoor bins for household use for the food waste.

At a local level, there were space issues at Bromsgrove depot in relation to accommodating a new vehicle or vehicles for the delivery of a food waste collection service. These vehicles could not be accommodated alongside the existing fleet. Officers had concluded that it would not be viable to purchase more land to accommodate the additional vehicles, so this was not considered to be a suitable option for the Council at this time.

Taking into account existing pressures and uncertainties, Officers were proposing that the Council should procure the food waste collection service through a private sector company. Ideally, the Council would have aimed to deliver the service inhouse, but this was not considered to be feasible at this stage. The proposal was to procure the service for a period of up to eight years.

To maximise interest in this opportunity within the private sector, Bromsgrove District Council would aim to procure this service jointly with Redditch Borough Council and Wyre Forest District Council. There was no guarantee that the procurement exercise would be successful. However, if the procurement process was unsuccessful, the Council could report back to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) highlighting the issues that had been experienced and a request would then be submitted to extend the deadline for the introduction of the service in the District.

Once the report had been presented, Members discussed the following matters in detail:

- The procurement of an external provider for the food waste collection service and the implications for other waste collection

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services. Cabinet was advised that existing services would be unaffected and would continue to be delivered inhouse.

- The potential for the risks to the authority arising from the introduction of a food waste collection service to be reduced through procurement of a third party to deliver the service. Officers explained that these risks would also be shared with Redditch Borough and Wyre Forest District Council by undertaking joint procurement.
- The consultation that had already been undertaken with representatives of the Trades Unions and staff employed in the Waste Collection team to explain the rationale for the proposed way forward in this instance.
- The soft market testing exercise that had been undertaken by five Worcestershire authorities, including Bromsgrove District Council, prior to this date and the extent to which the lack of interest expressed by private sector organisations at this time reflected the potential interest in the proposed contract with the public sector. Officers explained that it was not unusual to not attract interest in soft market testing exercises because they were not guaranteed to result in contract work. Therefore, this could not be regarded as representative of the likely outcome of the procurement exercise.
- The dates when Redditch Borough and Wyre Forest District Councils were due to consider this issue. Officers clarified that the Redditch Executive Committee was due to consider the matter at a meeting on 14th January 2025 and it was anticipated that Wyre Forest District Council would discuss the matter in February 2025.
- The timeframes for undertaking the procurement exercise. Cabinet was advised that the aim was to go out to tender in spring 2025.
- The forthcoming deadline, in spring 2026, for Councils to introduce a food waste collection service and the implications of possible non-compliance. Members were advised that as long as the Council had a clear plan in place the authority would not be failing in terms of compliance.
- The lack of anaerobic digestors in Worcestershire to dispose of the food waste and the implications of this situation. Officers explained that Worcestershire County Council was responsible for disposal of the waste and once the food waste was loaded onto the vehicles, the County Council needed to direct District Councils on where this waste should be disposed.
- The extent to which the Council would be able to meet the Government's deadline to introduce the food waste collection service if this was not outsourced to the private sector. Officers confirmed that the Council was unlikely to meet the deadline if a decision was taken to deliver this service inhouse at this stage.
- The benefits arising from outsourcing this service, which would include the potential to share risks with other authorities, to gather data on service delivery and to use that data to inform decisions taken in eight years' time.
- The forthcoming requirement for an additional circa 9,000 houses to be developed in Bromsgrove District, under the National

Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the extent to which this had been taken into account when planning arrangements for the collection and disposal of food waste.

- The extent to which there were risks associated with food collection, including pests, and how these risks would be addressed.
- Long-haul disposal arrangements for food waste and the arrangements for use of transfer stations.
- The smaller bins that had been suggested by DEFRA. Members commented that this was unlikely to be welcomed by local residents.
- The potential for a similar food waste disposal system to Norway to be introduced in Bromsgrove and the challenges involved in this. Officers clarified that the system in the UK was less advanced than in parts of the continent and unfortunately not set up to be as progressive.
- The extent to which householders were likely to continue to dispose of food waste in their grey bins.
- The concerns that some residents might have about using slop buckets in their homes.
- The potential for food waste to be comingled with other sources of waste and collected at the same time. Cabinet was advised that the Environment Act placed a legal requirement for food waste to be collected separately on a weekly basis.
- The patterns in terms of food waste collection that had emerged in parts of the country where this service had already been introduced. Members were asked to note that some householders would not use the service every week whilst other residents would not use the service at all.
- The likelihood that some residents would continue to dispose of food waste in their compost bins.
- The potentially different food waste patterns that might emerge over time across the various districts in the county.
- The need to encourage residents to reduce the amount of food that they wasted.
- The arrangements that would be in place should the successful company through the procurement process go into administration. Officers advised that there would be appropriate insurance arrangements in place to address this risk. Working with other local authorities would also help to offset this risk.
- The risk that some residents would leave caddies outside their properties creating an unsightly appearance. Officers explained that communications would be issued in relation to this matter.
- The reasons why the Council had opted for an eight-year length for the proposed contract. Cabinet was advised that this would help to affray the financial costs involved. For a shorter contract, a private sector company was likely to require the same financial investment from the authority but over a shorter period of time and this could be difficult for the Council to manage.

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- The vehicles that would be purchased for the delivery of the food waste collection service and whether the Council would own these vehicles. Officers explained that the third-party company would own the vehicles. There would be the option for the organisation to sell or transfer the asset to the Council's ownership at the end of the eight years, however, the general lifespan of a vehicle such as this tended to be eight years.
- The potential for the Council to purchase land to accommodate a food waste collection service. Officers reiterated that this option was not considered to be viable as there was not sufficient time remaining to enable the Council to provide this service inhouse in time to meet the Government's deadline.
- The work that had been undertaken to date to highlight with DEFRA that the Council lacked capacity at the depot to accommodate a food waste collection service. Officers confirmed that this issue had been raised with DEFRA but, like other authorities that had raised this issue, officers had been advised that this was the Council's issue to resolve.

During consideration of this item, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Councillor P. McDonald, was invited to address the Cabinet on behalf of the Board. Members were advised that the report had been pre-scrutinised at a meeting of the Board held on 6th January 2025. Whilst the Committee had not proposed any specific recommendations on this subject, concerns had been raised about the extent to which it was likely that there would be interest within the private sector to deliver this service. Cabinet was therefore asked to take into account the potential need for a "plan B" moving forward, in case initial plans could not be progressed.

Based on these concerns, Members discussed the potential to introduce an additional proposal as part of the decision making on this report. This was worded in the following manner:

"Officers to consider arrangements should procurement of a food waste collection service be unsuccessful."

Members commented that this additional proposal would help to ensure that the Council continued to take action, in light of the tight deadlines, even if the procurement process was unsuccessful.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Subject to the outcome of negotiations, the Council approves the introduction of a joint Food Waste Collection Service, working with Redditch Borough Council and Wyre Forest District Council to deliver the authority's statutory duties under the Environment Act 2021 regarding a Food Waste Collection service;
- 2) Delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director of Environmental and Housing Property Services following consultation with the Section 151 Officer, the Principal Solicitor

(Contracts, Commercial and Procurement) and the Portfolio Holders for Finance and Environmental Services respectively to, subject to the agreement of recommendations 1 and 4:

- a) to negotiate and agree terms with Redditch Borough Council and Wyre Forest District Council to enter into a joint tender for a shared food waste collection service;
 - b) tender and award a dedicated weekly food waste collection service through a third party for a period of 8 years commencing no later than 31 March 2026.
- 3) Officers to consider arrangements should procurement of a food waste collection service be unsuccessful.

RECOMMENDED that

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

60/24

FINAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2025/26

The Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer presented the Final Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/26 for Members' consideration.

Cabinet was advised that the Council Tax Support Scheme had not been amended and remained largely the same as the version that had been approved in 2024. The only difference was that the whole scheme had been uprated by 1.7 per cent in line with the approved increases in national benefits. The Council brought in this banded scheme in 2021 and the full review undertaken in the previous year's budget suggested that most Councils now used this type of matrix.

The Council spent circa £5 million on Council Tax Support through the collection fund, with 70 per cent paid for by Worcestershire County Council, 13 per cent paid for by Bromsgrove District Council, 12 per cent paid for by the West Mercia Police and 5 per cent covered by Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue Service.

There were circa 1,800 pension aged people living in the District who were receiving Council Tax Support (paid for by the Government) and 2,300 working aged residents.

Members welcomed the report and in doing so commented on the importance of the Council Tax Support Scheme in terms of providing support to some of the most vulnerable residents living in the District.

During consideration of this item, Members noted that the name of the lead Portfolio Holder should have been included in the table on the first page of the report.

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

61/24

COUNCIL TAX BASE 2025/26

The Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer presented the Council Tax Base 2025/26 report for Cabinet's consideration.

Members were advised that this was a statutory report which was required to allow precepting authorities to calculate how much Council Tax they would raise in the upcoming financial year.

The figures provided in the report were based on data on the Council Tax system as at the 30th November 2024 adjusted for:

- The latest dwelling numbers.
- Discounts and exemptions such as Council Tax Support.
- An allowance of 1 per cent for non-collection of Council Tax (with Members being advised that the Council's in year collection rate was approximately 98.5 per cent.)
- The new Council Tax base was 38,359.9 Band "D" equivalent properties (Members were informed that the previous financial year this figure had been 37,997.7).

The report had been pre-scrutinised at a recent meeting of the Finance and Budget Working Group. During the meeting, Members had requested a breakdown of the number of properties in each band in the District. The following information had subsequently been confirmed, which was highlighted with Cabinet Members for consideration:

- Band A – 3,952 properties
- Band B – 7,459 properties
- Band C – 9,342 properties
- Band D – 8,056 properties
- Band E – 7,212 properties
- Band F – 3,849 properties
- Band G – 2,924 properties
- Band H – 381 properties

Members were asked to note that whilst these figures added together might seem to differ from the Council Tax Base figure, this was because the Council Tax Base focused on Band D equivalent numbers.

The Finance and Budget Working Group had also questioned which areas of the District were impacted by the Trent River Management Area in terms of flood defences. Officers confirmed that this included parts of Hollywood, Wythall, Frankley and Rubery. Confirmation was provided that flood defence area information was included in the report as these figures were needed by Worcestershire County Council, which was the responsible lead authority for flood defences.

RESOLVED that the amount calculated by Bromsgrove District Council as the Council Tax Base for the whole area for 2025/26 is approved at 38,359.9 as detailed in appendix 1 to include the individual parish elements

62/24

DISABLED FACILITY GRANT OMBUDSMAN'S REPORT

The Strategic Housing Services Manager presented the Disabled Facilities Grant Ombudsman's report for Cabinet's consideration.

Members were advised that this was a statutory report which needed to be presented for Cabinet's consideration. The Local Government Ombudsman had concluded that there had been maladministration in relation to the provision of Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding support to a local resident. There had been a number of partner organisations involved in this complex case, including Bromsgrove District Council, Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT), Worcestershire Children's First and other bodies. All partners had received criticisms in the report and recommendations had been made by the Ombudsman to address the issues that had been identified.

Since the report had been issued by the Ombudsman, the Council had been working to address the recommendations detailed in the report. This had included taking a lead on communications and the introduction of a form for the DFG process that residents could sign to indicate that they understood and were satisfied with the works that would be undertaken using the funding.

Following the presentation of the report, Members expressed their disappointment that this situation had occurred in this instance. There was general agreement that lessons needed to be learned from the situation to ensure that services improved in future. As part of this process, the suggestion was made that the new form that had been introduced for the DFG scheme should involve tripartite approval; from the Occupational Therapist involved in undertaking an assessment of an applicant; from the applicant; and from the Council. It was suggested that this would be particularly helpful for more vulnerable applicants, who might require additional support, as well as providing an audit trail. Officers agreed to review and update the form accordingly.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the content of the report be noted; and
- 2) the actions implemented in response to the recommendations of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman be endorsed.

63/24

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (MTFP) TRANCHE 1 - (TO FOLLOW)

The Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer presented the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Tranche 1 report (following

consultation) 2025/26 to 2027/28. In presenting this report, an update in respect of consultation feedback was circulated at the meeting (attached at Appendix 1 to the minutes).

Members were reminded that at the Cabinet meeting held on 10th December 2024 the Tranche 1 MTFP was presented. This report had then been considered prior to consultation with the public and other stakeholders. The authority had subsequently consulted on the Tranche 1 budget proposals. This budget consultation opened on 5th December 2024. As part of the consultation process, an email invitation was sent to members of the Bromsgrove Community Panel to take part in the consultation. The survey was also promoted on a variety of social media channels. The survey closed at 12 noon on Thursday 2nd January 2025. The response rate from the community panel members had been 48 per cent. There were a total of 278 valid responses received overall.

In terms of responses to specific questions, Members were referred to Question 2, which provided a breakdown of the consultation responses by location. The highest percentage of returns had been received from Aston Fields, Belbroughton and Romsley, and Bromsgrove Centre. Question 16 provided a breakdown of the age ranges of the people who filled out the questionnaire. Members were asked to note that the vast majority were aged over 50.

The survey had asked respondents to rank the three most important services they felt the Council should invest in. In the feedback received, these had been:

- Local Economic Development and Employment (47.1 per cent of respondents).
- Community Safety (44.6 per cent of respondents).
- Maintenance of the Landscape and Environment (43.8 per cent of respondents)

In questions where respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with particular suggestions, six of those responses entailed well over 50 per cent agreeing or strongly agreeing. Only two had responses lower than 50 per cent - these being:

- Do you agree that the Council should invest more in our front-line services to cover increases in fuel? (At a 49.6% approval rate.)
- Do you support fees and charges (this excludes parking) rising by 4% to keep them in line with inflation and rising staffing costs? (At a 40.2% approval rate.)

The highest approval rating, at 86.2 per cent, was to the question - Do you agree that the Council should invest in economic development in order to support local businesses, start-ups, the town and local centres and to prioritise local skills?

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Two further questions were asked about what level of increase to Bromsgrove District Council's proportion of Council Tax residents supported. The answers to this were:

- 61.5 per cent agreed or strongly agreed with a 1.99 per cent increase.
- This dropped to 45.8 per cent for a 2.99 per cent increase.

The survey had also included two free test questions:

- Please let us know your suggestions for investing in the district to increase prosperity and enhance appeal for residents and businesses alike.
 - There were 178 responses to this question.
 - Responses to this question provided many suggestions and comments regarding the District. The top three themes were Bromsgrove Town Centre, supporting businesses and the importance of infrastructure, from roads to public transport. These themes had many cross overs, from the impact of traffic, encouraging a diverse range of businesses into the town and reducing costs to visitors and businesses alike.
 - Suggestions included:
 - Reducing business rates / relief
 - Reducing parking costs
 - Supporting independent retailers
 - Bringing in key major retailers
 - Understanding the offer on the High Street. Some respondents had suggested that there were too many charity shops, cafes, hair and vaping businesses
 - Utilising empty shops for small businesses, new start-ups, housing and community use
 - Improving the market, in terms of the quality, offer and number of days that it was in operation
 - Making the town vibrant, attractive and distinctive, including by developing attractions and encouraging visitors
 - Improving the appearance and maintenance of the high street
 - Improving public transport
 - Supporting active travel
 - Accessing grants wherever possible
 - Ensuring a District-wide view
- Please let us know any other comments on the budget or ideas for reducing costs or increasing income to ensure Council services remain sustainable.
 - There were 118 responses to this question.
 - Of the responses to this question, the largest category fell into the theme of efficiency and value for money. Other themes included infrastructure, focusing on those in need, ensuring

transparency and accountability, asset utilisation, and the town centre.

○ Suggestions included:

- Reviewing salaries
- Ensuring there were the right skills within the Council
- Outsourcing some functions
- Exploring alternative methods of delivery (e.g. co-operatives, and partnerships)
- Reducing use of consultants
- Reviewing fees and charges
- Commercial opportunities (e.g. logs, compost or specific services)
- Turning off lights / utilising smart sensors
- Reducing events
- Promoting events better to increase revenue
- Community use of buildings
- Energy generation (e.g. solar panels in car parks)
- Converting buildings into housing (e.g. multi-storey by Asda)
- Increasing enforcement fines (e.g. fly tipping and littering)
- Supporting the voluntary sector
- Reducing business rates / relief
- Reviewing Council Tax
- Better coordination around highways and roadworks

In considering the feedback, Members were asked to note that there were some responses that had been received which indicated that some members of the public were not sure which services were provided by Bromsgrove District Council as opposed to Worcestershire County Council.

The consultation feedback had been considered at a recent meeting of the Finance and Budget Working Group. During the meeting, Members had noted that there had been a relatively high response rate from residents living in Alvechurch, compared to other areas. The suggestion was made that this had been due to work undertaken by the local Councillors to raise awareness and it was possible that lessons could be learned from this for other areas in the future.

Once the report had been presented, Members discussed the following points in detail:

- The response rate to the consultation, which compared favourably with previous consultation processes in respect of the Council's budget.
- The value of increasing the response rate in future to ensure that the feedback was more representative of a wider number of residents living in the District.

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- The potential for the data in response to Question 33 to be provided at a Parish Council level. Officers undertook to investigate this matter further.
- The membership of the Bromsgrove Community Panel. Officers confirmed that this comprised approximately 500 local residents who had opted to be consulted on a regular basis by the Council.
- The businesses that were leasing shops in Bromsgrove town centre.
- The changing shopping habits of consumers in the twenty-first century and the need for the local economy to adapt.
- The potential for more pop-up shops to be introduced in the District.
- The advice that the Council's economic development team and the Town Centres Manager provided to local businesses.

Members concluded their discussions by thanking the Financial Services team for their hard work on preparing the MTFP.

RECOMMENDED that

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

The meeting closed at 8.01 p.m.

Chairman

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

6TH JANUARY 2025, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors P. M. McDonald (Chairman), S. T. Nock (Vice-Chairman), A. Bailes, R. Bailes, A. M. Dale, E. M. S. Gray, R. J. Hunter, B. Kumar, D. J. Nicholl, J. Robinson and J. D. Stanley

Observers: Councillor K. J. May - Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships and Enabling
Councillor S. R. Colella - Cabinet Member of Finance
Councillor S. A. Webb - Cabinet Member of Health and Wellbeing and Strategic Housing
Councillor P. J. Whittaker – Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Community Safety
Councillor H.D.N. Rone- Clarke – Chairman of Housing Task Group

Other Attendees: Mr C. Mallard and Ms M. Keegan (The Basement Project)

Officers: Mr. G. Revans, Mr S. Parry, Mr M. Austin, Ms. A. Delahunty, Ms. B. Houghton and Mrs S. Woodfield

72/23

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor S.A. Robinson with Councillor J.W. Robinson in attendance as named substitute.

73/23

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS

No declarations of interest were received nor of any whipping arrangements.

74/23

TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 9TH DECEMBER 2024

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 9th December 2024 were considered.

It was requested by Members that a correction be made in respect of the inaccuracy in the minute record of item 64/24 – To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 9th December 2024:

It was requested that the inaccurate paragraph, which read as follows:

*“The formation of the Cabinet Advisory Group (CAG) provided some useful discussions including the condition of play areas, approaching “end of life”. As **instructed** by CAG, Officers carried out a public consultation, with a useful session being held with the Consultant to discuss Foxgrove Way in more detail”.*

Be corrected to:

*“The formation of the Cabinet Advisory Group (CAG) provided some useful discussions including the condition of play areas, approaching “end of life”. As **recommended** by CAG, Officers carried out a public consultation, with a useful session being held with the Consultant to discuss Foxgrove Way in more detail”.*

It was agreed the inaccuracy would be corrected.

It was also requested that a timescale be provided for the paragraph, which read *“The Leader of the Council expressed the view that an audit for Parish Council play area provision should be carried out and for transparency and scrutiny, be reviewed through the Finance and Budget Working Group”.* The request was subsequently noted and agreed would be actioned accordingly.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 9th December 2024 be agreed as a true and correct record.

75/23

NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP (INCLUDING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR)

The Community Safety Manager delivered an update on the progress of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP) report to the Board.

At its Planning meeting in February 2024, the NWCSP reviewed and agreed its new priorities for the following three-year period. The Partnership Plan set out the priorities that the CSP would focus on for a 3-year period, with an annual refresh to capture any emerging issues and trends. The NWCSP priorities for period April 2024 to March 2027 were:-

- Public Place Violence & the Serious Violence Duty
- ASB, Nuisance and Environmental Issues
- Shoplifting and Neighbourhood Crime:

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Neighbourhood Crime is defined as domestic burglary, robbery (against the individual/household), theft from a person and vehicle crime.

- Protecting Vulnerable Communities including Hate Crime & Targeted Harassment, Domestic Abuse & DHRs and Sexual Violence
- Serious Organised Crime via a Joint Action Group (SOCJAG)

Alongside the local priorities, NWCSF worked closely with South Worcestershire CSP, through the countywide Safer Communities Board (SCB), to identify and address countywide issues. Through Worcestershire SCB, the two statutory CSPs collaborated on key countywide projects and initiatives to ensure District area input and delivery were considered and implemented. These Worcestershire-wide activities and interventions included:-

- Domestic Abuse Partnership Board
- Prevent Strategy Group [Counter Terrorism]
- Protect (& Prepare) Board [Counter Terrorism]
- Safeguarding Children Partnership & GETSAFE [Child Exploitation]
- Adult Safeguarding Partnership & Adult Exploitation Group
- Reducing Reoffending Group & Integrated Offender Management
- Substance Misuse Oversight Group / Combatting Drugs Partnership

In 2023-24 new funding was made available by the Home Office via the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to support Community Safety partners in Implementing the Serious Violence Duty. Home Office funding allocations for SVD interventions in Worcestershire totalled £50k.

Alongside the PCC's force-wide commissioning, NWCSF was allocated an annual ring-fenced amount from the PCC of £139,250k to identify and address local issues at a District level. In addition to the annual ring-fenced grant, the PCC also allocated additional Safer Communities funding to NWCSF. The funding was allocated by the Partnership to complement the ring-fenced grant and address identified issues that were of most concern and/or are having a detrimental effect on local communities.

During consideration of the item, Members raised the following:

- A Member detailed to the Board a legal dispute which had arisen in their local ward area, whereby a resident had been advised that the issue was deemed as a private matter and advised to seek legal advice. The Council's Community Safety Officer offered invaluable assistance and advice, which avoided the cost of seeking legal advice from a Solicitor. It was requested that

Members be provided with the necessary Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) tools, powers and relevant Officer contact details to assist their local community more effectively. – The Community Safety Manager responded that relevant support could be arranged and was subsequently agreed as an action.

- In the report it was suggested that there had been a decrease in shoplifting within the District between the period of 2023-2024. However, after consideration, Members expressed the view that shoplifting remained a concern in their local ward area and suggested that the crimes were not being adequately reported. Members felt it would be helpful if the Council provided support to local businesses to encourage sufficient reporting on matters in the local area and if shoplifting incidences were reported that the crimes be investigated. – It was noted that shoplifting was a significant issue locally and underreported, however, there had been successes with collaborative business partnership working around the Town Centre areas. Members were also advised of the Hotspot Patrols initiative where two areas of Bromsgrove had been identified as suffering from high levels of serious violence and ASB. Since the project went live on 1st June 2024, 595 proactive patrols had been completed at the relevant times to increase visibility within the Town Centre.
- The Board also queried how the Council determined which areas to prioritise in the local area. – Members noted that data was sought following requests for service and responses to calls from community members.
- A Member informed the Board of a shop theft incident which had taken place in the Rubery area. A response was provided by The Bromsgrove Centres Manager and advised that the DISC Scheme could assist further with the incident. It was requested that an update be provided. - It was agreed this would be reported to the relevant team as an action.
- The Redeployable Camera Scheme was discussed, and it was requested that Members be provided with the specific locations of the deployments across the district areas. Also, if successful, Members queried if the Council would consider the scheme on a permanent basis. – It was advised that requests should be raised with the Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT), allowing the Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) Monitoring Centre to have relevant discussions regarding Code of Practice legal requirements for surveillance. It was agreed that contact details would be provided to Members as an action.
- The Annual White Ribbon Domestic Abuse Campaign was discussed by Members. A motion had previously been passed to seek formal accreditation of the scheme; Members requested that details be provided on the progress of the scheme. – It was advised that accreditation was a very time-consuming process at a time when the team was at reduced capacity, however a vacant post within the team would be appointed and this could assist with progressing the matter further in the future.

- A joy riding incident was discussed by a Member which had been raised within their ward area. The SNT was subsequently contacted regarding the incident, and it was disappointing to note that the incident had been considered unsafe and they were unable to assist further. It was queried if the CSP had dealt with similar matters in tackling ways to reduce the issue within other areas of the District? – It was noted that the SNTs had a wealth of knowledge in tackling joy riding and was a somewhat surprising response. It was agreed that the matter would be discussed with the SNT Inspector as an action. The Leader of the Council added that Inspector Richard Field from the West Mercia Police had dealt with a similar incident within the District and had worked proactively to address the issues raised. Members were encouraged to report the relevant crimes to Inspector Richard Field to ensure that the reporting was followed up with an action plan.
- The Chairman of the Board expressed disappointment that a representative from West Mercia Police was not present for the meeting and felt that specific questions raised had been relevant to the Police for their comment and input. The Chairman also advised the Board of continuing issues with Graffiti within his ward and at St Chads Park, which was having a detrimental effect to the reputation of the area. – It was agreed that the matter would be discussed further with the SNT as an action to follow.
- The Leader of the Council asked that issues experienced when reporting a crime in the local area be notified to the PCC and requested further clarity on the specific Force boundary areas and West Mercia's areas of responsibility. – It was advised that it was a specific policing matter and that the query might be better routed through the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel so that the PCC can be tasked to ensure the Police Control Centre are directing calls for service appropriately as part of their call taking role.

RESOLVED that the progress made by North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP) be noted.

76/23

THE BASEMENT PROJECT (AIMS OF GRANT FUNDING)

The Strategic Housing Officer presented The Basement Project Aims of Grant Funding for Member's consideration followed by a brief video which included shared experiences through support offered by the Basement Project.

The report sought to provide an opportunity for Members to familiarise themselves with the aims and outcomes of the Basement which provided housing related support and other support to young people up to the age of 25.

The Council supported the Basement Project with both Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse grant funding. The purpose of

the ringfenced Homelessness Prevention Grant fund was to give Local Authorities control and flexibility in managing homelessness pressures and supporting those who were at risk of homelessness. The Government expected Local Authorities to use it to deliver the following priorities:

- To fully enforce the Homelessness Reduction Act and contribute to ending rough sleeping by increasing activity to prevent single homelessness.
- Reduce family temporary accommodation numbers through maximising family homelessness prevention.
- Eliminate the use of unsuitable bed and breakfast accommodation for families for longer than the statutory six-week limit.

Domestic Abuse New Burdens Grant funding was allocated to ensure that Councils could comply with the requirements to provide safe and supported accommodation for those fleeing domestic abuse.

During consideration of the report, Members discussed the following points:

- Members requested a further explanation of how the scheme differentiated between evaluating success relating to support provided for regular clients and non-clients. – Members were advised that the scheme for non-clients provided a drop-in service where there was a requirement i.e. for food, therefore an induction service was unnecessary. If a client was at crisis point, they would be considered as a regular client, and ad hoc issues were treated as a non-client approach and measured as one case.
- Members also discussed if the Basement Project had a responsibility within fostering and adoption. – Members were advised that there was a corporate parenting and safeguarding body which had a success in delivering and meeting specific requirements. There was also care leaver support in place as part of the Basement Project initiatives.
- Housing outcomes were discussed with the Board and Members queried what support was given to clients being housed in temporary accommodation, especially with the lack of white goods being made available within properties. – The Chief Executive Officer of the Basement Project responded that mediation was provided prior to housing which included sourcing relevant household items necessary. It was felt that the stress of moving into rented accommodation did have a detrimental effect on some client's mental health.
- Members queried how in one way specifically the Local Authority could assist with the project. – In response the Basement Project felt that early preventative intervention in schools would be beneficial to have a more holistic approach.

- The Chairman of the Board raised a query on food bank deliveries being carried out outside the District boundary area and if the Basement Project were aware. – It was explained that a client in the Rubery area had contacted the library to distribute food parcels. The suggestion was reviewed, and the decision was made that the library was not a suitable approach. Members noted that there would be a new drop in scheme rolled out in early 2025 to assist with food parcel distribution.
- The Board also reviewed the Council's statutory duty to combat homelessness, with Members querying the severity of homelessness within the District? – In response Members were advised that providing sufficient temporary accommodation was an issue and that the relevant funding provided was being utilised to tackle the issue.
- The Chairman queried if some residents could be housed in temporary accommodation for up to six months. – In response Members were informed that this occurred only in exceptional circumstances and if a priority requirement. Members were also advised that St. Basils assisted clients with house shares, if peer support was deemed a beneficial approach.
- The Chairman also raised the question of how grant funding requirements were measured. – It was noted that grant funding requirements were measured by reviewing the relevant outcomes. The necessary Internal Audit evaluations had been carried out and noted were content with how grant funding needs were measured.
- Members added their thanks for the comprehensive report and efforts of the Basement Project team in helping to provide the skills and support necessary to assist with job opportunities and aspirations to residents.

RESOLVED that the contents of The Basement Project report be noted.

77/23

INTRODUCTION OF FOOD WASTE COLLECTION (PRE-SCRUTINY)

The Portfolio Holder provided an initial brief overview with Members, followed by the Environmental Services Manager who presented the Introduction of Food Waste Collection to Members.

The Government has set a new statutory duty under the Environment Act 2021 to introduce a dedicated separate weekly collection of food waste from all households by 31st March 2026, alongside expanded requirements on dry recycling.

Working closely with Worcestershire County Council (WCC) as the Waste Disposal Authority, the Council were able to accommodate the changes to dry recycling without any modification to the existing green bin service. The report was focusing primarily on the changes required from the new food waste service. As the Council operated such a service, additional resources were required to operate, and due to the

current size restrictions of the depots, were unable to add them to the existing arrangements without significant investment in additional land as well as an expansion of the Operator's Licence with the Traffic Commissioner and DVSA.

In addition to the challenges regarding space restrictions on providing the service, it would require procurement and delivery of food waste caddies for each property, additional bins for communal properties, and additional dedicated vehicles and staff to collect the waste.

To achieve the Government requirements on time, it was vital that the Council took decisions by the end of January 2026 to allow the procurement of resources to supply the service to residents, either as an in-house service, or through an external provider.

After consideration of the report, Members raised the following:

- Were the proposed bins of a standard size for the food waste collection? – The Board were advised that the proposed food waste bins were proposed to be 40 litre sized bins, paired with a smaller kitchen caddy for household food scraps.
- Were residents aware of the proposed Food Waste Collection Service? – Members were advised that residents had not been informed due to the pressures regarding the uncertainty of timescales and funding allowances from Central Government. Members noted that if proposals were implemented in Spring 2026, part of the EPR funding, would be to engage with residents.
- Were the smaller waste collection vehicles being considered as part of future proposals? – It was explained that the Council did use smaller waste collection vehicles to access narrow residential areas and was looking to purchase a new vehicle for the future comb bin proposals.
- Would the Council consider buying the food waste caddies in-house rather than the outsourcing proposals? – The Board were advised that the option had been debated to be incorporated as part of EPR funding to support the purchase of food waste caddies and would be discussed further for future consideration with the new Section 151 Officer. The group were also advised that the caddies still formed part of the Council's ownership, despite outsourcing considerations. The Executive Director added that the Council was in favour of running services in-house, but depot space would require consideration and with time constraints, it had limited Council decisions. In-house proposals would be considered in the future once the contract agreement had expired. The Leader of the Council also informed the Board that old bins would be recycled as part of the business case.
- Had the space been procured at an anaerobic digester? – It was noted that WCC had outlined that until the Council could provide a specific start date, they were unable to secure a contract with a potential disposal site to take the material. The Executive Director

added that WCC had been in discussions with potential food waste disposal sites to the North and South of the County, with discussions ongoing. The Leader added that there was a finite amount of capacity at anaerobic sites within the District and stated it was advisable that space be procured in the North of the County, in particular. The Leader requested a more comprehensive solution to the points raised was agreed to be reviewed as an action.

RECOMMENDED that:

The Cabinet RECOMMEND that:

- 1) Subject to the outcome of negotiations, the Council approves the introduction of a joint Food Waste Collection Service, working with Redditch Borough Council and Wyre Forest District Council to deliver the authority's statutory duties under the Environment Act 2021 regarding a Food Waste Collection Service;
- 2) The Council allocate £1,000,000 Revenue Funding in the Medium-Term Financial Plan as an operational budget from 2026/27 to fund the Food Waste Collection Service in the Borough, as accounted for within Tranche 1 of the Budget;
- 3) Delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director of Environmental and Housing Property Services following consultation with the Section 151 Officer, the Principal Solicitor (Contracts, Commercial and Procurement) and the Portfolio Holders for Finance and Environmental Services respectively to:
 - a) subject to the agreement of recommendation 1 above, to negotiate and agree terms with Redditch Borough Council and Wyre Forest District Council to enter into a joint tender for a shared Food Waste Collection Service;
 - b) tender and award a dedicated weekly food waste collection service through a third party for a period of 8 years commencing no later than 31 March 2026.

78/23

REFUSE FLEET REPLACEMENT AND WHEELED BIN PRESSURES (PRE-SCRUTINY)

The Portfolio Holder provided an initial contextual briefing to Members.

It was highlighted that there was a typographical error for 1.2 recommendation which read as follows:

"The Council allocates £2,200,00 Capital funding in the Medium-Term Financial Plan for the 2025/26 financial year for the purchase and distribution of these bins".

The Portfolio Holder informed the Board that it should read as follows:

*The Council allocates **£2,200,000** Capital funding in the Medium-Term Financial Plan for the 2025/26 financial year for the purchase and distribution of these bins”.*

Following the initial briefing by the Portfolio Holder, the Environmental Services Manager presented his report for the Refuse Fleet Replacement and Wheeled Bin Pressures to the Board to Members.

Given that the “Diamond” bins were limiting the Council’s ability to meet the statutory duties, as well as increasing operating costs, it was proposed that Bromsgrove District Council replace all the existing “Diamond” wheeled bins with industry standard “Comb” 240ltr wheeled bins (no change in size for any waste streams). Or to replace all the existing green and brown “Diamond” wheeled bins with industry standard “Comb” 240ltr wheeled bins and replace the existing 240ltr wheeled bins for residual waste, with 180ltr “comb” wheeled bins.

The option to reduce the size of the residual waste bin, although would support immediate benefits regarding recycling performance, it might add additional challenges should the Council look to make further changes to expand the service and/or reduce the frequency of residual waste collection to further pressurise the waste stream and reduce operating costs linked to the non-recyclable waste.

Like for like replacement of all existing Diamond Wheeled bins would require Capital investment of approximately £2.2m including delivery and expected credits against the recycled “Diamond” bins.

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

During consideration of the item Members raised the following:

- What the impact could be with increasing the frequency of collection times and capacity of the bins and could it cause infestation issues? – It was advised that the possible introduction of a weekly Food Waste Service should assist with infestation issues. It was further discussed that to encourage the disposal of food waste, there was a suggestion of reducing the size of the bin

capacity or to extend the frequency of collection of residual waste from two to three weeks which would also further reduce infestation issues. The Executive Director also advised the Board that Stratford on Avon District Council had rolled out a three-week residual waste collection service and a garden waste collection service every two weeks with very few issues and an overall good reception from residents.

- What the Council's provision was to ensure the prevention of future deaths in response to the fatality involving one of its vehicles whilst in service with Coventry City Council in 2022? – Members noted that the Health and Safety Executive and Coroner's Office (who dealt with the inquest) were ensuring manufacturers made the adjustments necessary for the specific lift system.
- Had communal areas been considered which had larger bin containers in the specific residential areas? - It was suggested that a lack of ownership was an issue for the larger communal areas. The Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) (legislation that aims to make producers responsible for the cost of the collection, management and recycling of packaging) funding would assist with future engagement to promote the correct recycling habits for residents.
- Would the lifting mechanism for the new fleet be adequate for the different sized litre bins proposed? – It was reported that the size of the bins would not be an issue for the lifting mechanisms with the proposed or existing fleet.
- Members considered the financial implication proposals and raised concerns that costings were only estimates and that the Council should consider fluctuating costs in the future. Members urged for a strong business case model to be established and that the Board be given the opportunity to scrutinise the costings in full detail. It was also requested if Members could be provided with further clarity on the Capital Investment figure of approximately £2.2m. – Members were informed that the funds were based on calculations carried out in November 2024, testing the market for the cost of the wheeled bins, collection and disposal. It was understood by Officers that there might be some variance for future costings.
- Could the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) funding transfer of £1.04m for dry recyclable material through the EPR scheme for the 2025/26 financial year be clarified. – Members noted that the funding was due to a tax on packaging manufacturers under the "producer pays" principle and was intended to support costs of the existing waste collection

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arrangements, supporting communication and education on dry recycling. The Executive Director added that whilst the funding was not ringed fenced, it was expected to be used specifically for waste considerations. From 2028 the funding would be linked to the quality as well as the quantity of recycling collected and may be required to support education and engagement with residents regarding their waste to maintain the level of funding.

Also, during consideration of the item, a recommendation was proposed by Councillor R.J. Hunter. The recommendation was:

“To endorse the proposal 4.1.1 to: Replace all our existing “Diamond” wheeled bins with industry standard “Comb” 240ltr wheeled bins (no change in size for any waste streams)”.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor R.J. Hunter and seconded by Councillor J.W. Robinson.

On being put to the vote the recommendation was carried.

RECOMMENDED that:

The Cabinet RECOMMEND that:

- 1) The Council agrees to replace all “Diamond” lift bins in use across the Residual, Recycling, and Garden Waste services in Bromsgrove District during the 2025/26 financial year with industry standard “Comb” lift bins.
- 2) The Council allocates £2,200,00 Capital funding in the Medium-Term Financial Plan for the 2025/26 financial year for the purchase and distribution of these bins.

79/23

WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - UPDATE

The Council’s Representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC), Councillor B. Kumar, updated the Board on the matters discussed at its recent meeting held on 12th November 2024.

Following the presentation Members discussed several points which included:

- In response to a former query submitted by Councillor Nicholl concerning why the amount of people accessing Substance Misuse Treatment had increased from 1852 to 3060 in the last 12

months. – It was explained that this was due to poor structure within the health provision.

- Members raised a query regarding childhood obesity and if the Council could provide further provision to promote healthy eating within the school setting. – It was advised that there were proposals in place to provide healthier snacks within local areas to be situated nearer to schools. Councillor Kumar agreed to discuss this in further detail with Public Health. The Leader of the Council also advised Members of the Early Help provision which provided pre-natal advice for obesity.
- If the Council could provide additional walking, cycling and running groups. – Members noted that Public Health were very proactive and would be happy to support the provision of available funding to provide awareness through social media in local areas. The Leader of the Council added that contained in a recent WCC report was information regarding the Road Safety Education Team, as the accredited training provider which promoted the delivery of the Bikeability Scheme across Worcestershire. Members were also advised there was grant provision available from the Department of Transport to promote active living. Members also noted that the WCC Road Safety Team visited schools to promote lifelong behaviour and attitudes for safer roads and school crossing patrol safety. “Here to Help” and “Strength in Communities” also promoted a healthy diet and being active in schools.

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

80/23

FINANCE AND BUDGET WORKING GROUP - UPDATE

The Chairman of the Finance and Budget Working Group, Councillor P. McDonald updated the Board of the recent meeting which took place on Thursday 2nd January 2025.

The Medium-Term Financial Plan – Tranche 1 Budget report was being reviewed at Cabinet on 7th January 2025 and then reported to Council on 22nd January 2025 with the following points considered by the Board:

- A one-year settlement was agreed.
- The agreed 3.25 percentage increase in grant funding had been re-evaluated to 0 percent. Consultations were ongoing to review the funding.
- There would be a 2.99 percentage increase in Council Tax.
- There was an agreement of a 3 percent increase in pay awards (an estimated £154k).
- It was agreed that National Insurance contributions would be funded by the Government.
- The Council to allocate £1m revenue funding for the Food Waste Collection Service.

- A dividend of £250k would be provided by Bromsgrove School.

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

81/23

TASK GROUP - UPDATE

The Chairman of the Housing Task Group, Councillor H.D.N. Rone-Clarke updated the Board with the following points:

- The group were progressing well with the initial agreed areas of interest being discussed and scrutinised during various meetings that had taken place.
- The additional allocations policy objective which had been agreed by the Board and added to its Terms of Reference was to be discussed at its next meeting to take place on Monday 13th January 2025.
- The previous meeting held on 16th December 2024 held discussions with residents of the Cofton Estate Development who were invited to share their experiences with fleecing issues with the Group. The Chairman explained that prior to discussions with the residents it was explained the Task Group were a nondecision making body. The Chairman also agreed that the final report and recommendations would be shared with the residents for their perusal.

RESOLVED that the Housing Task Group update be noted.

82/23

CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Cabinet Work Programme was considered by the Board.

The Chairman of the Board requested that the Strategic Parking Review which was to be held at Cabinet on 12th February 2025 be pre-scrutinised by the Board at the next Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 11th February 2025. After consideration the Board agreed to review this item.

A member requested further clarity on the item held in the Cabinet Work Programme for the Local Development Scheme. It was discussed that further information would be sought from the relevant Officers and agreed as an action.

RESOLVED that the content of the Cabinet Work Programme be noted as per the preamble above.

83/23

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme was considered by Members.

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Members queried if specific dates had been confirmed for the Artrix and Bromsgrove District Plan Consultation. It was agreed that the dates would be discussed with the relevant officers and noted as an action.

The Leader of the Council informed Members that the Bromsgrove District Plan Consultation would be available as an item for discussion in the Bromsgrove Planning Steering Group which would be held on 23rd January 2025.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be noted.

84/23

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ACTION SHEET

The Overview and Scrutiny Action Sheet was noted by Members.

It was discussed that whilst an hourly rate range for the consultants who worked on the project were provided, Members had also requested the rate paid for the consultant who attended the Cabinet Advisory Group (CAG). This was agreed would be followed up as an action.

A specified date was requested by Members for when an audit would be carried out for the Parish Council Play Area provision. The request was noted and agreed would be forwarded as an action to the relevant officers.

A Member suggested that actions which had been updated post publication should be included as part of the minutes. The comments were noted and agreed would be added as an appendix to the minutes.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Board Action sheet be noted.

85/23

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

There was no urgent business for consideration.

The meeting closed at 8.48 p.m.

Chairman

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Cabinet

12 February 2025

PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2025 - 26

Relevant Portfolio Holder		Karen May, Leader of Bromsgrove District Council
Portfolio Holder Consulted		
Relevant Assistant Director		Pete Carpenter
Report Author	Job Title: HR & OD Manager	
Becky Talbot	Contact email: becky.talbot@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk	
		Contact Tel: 01527 64252 ext:3385
Wards Affected		
Ward Councillor(s) consulted		
Relevant Council Priority		
Non-Key Decision		
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RECOMMEND to Council that the Pay Policy as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

2. BACKGROUND

The Localism Act requires English and Welsh local authorities to produce a Pay Policy statement ('the statement'). The Act requires the statement to be approved by Full Council and to be adopted by 31st March each year for the subsequent financial year. The Pay Policy Statement for the Council is included at Appendix 1.

The Statement must set out policies relating to-

- (a) The remuneration of its chief officers,
- (b) The remuneration of its lowest-paid employees, and
- (c) The relationship between-
 - (i) The remuneration of its chief officers, and
 - (ii) The remuneration of its employees who are not chief officers.

The provisions within the Localism Act bring together the strands of increasing accountability, transparency and fairness in the setting of local pay.

3. **OPERATIONAL ISSUES**

There are no implications in relation to this report

4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

All financial implications have already been included as part of the budget setting process and posts are fully budgeted for.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The legal implications are contained within the report.

6. **OTHER - IMPLICATIONS**

There are no implications in relation to this report

Climate Change Implications

There are no specific climate change implications.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

There are no implications in relation to this report

7. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

There are no implications in relation to this report

8. **APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix A – Pay Policy 2025 - 26

APPENDIX 1

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL PAY POLICY STATEMENT

Introduction and Purpose

1. Under section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the “power to appoint officers on such reasonable terms and conditions as authority thinks fit”. This pay policy statement sets out the Council’s approach to pay policy in accordance with the requirements of Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011. It shall apply for the financial year 2025 and each subsequent financial year, until amended.
2. The purpose of the statement is to provide transparency with regard to the Council’s approach to setting the pay of its employees by identifying;
 - a. the methods by which salaries of all employees are determined;
 - b. the detail and level of remuneration of its most senior staff i.e. ‘chief officers’, as defined by the relevant legislation;
 - c. the Committee(s) responsible for ensuring the provisions set out in this statement are applied consistently throughout the Council and for recommending any amendments to the full Council
3. Once approved by the full Council, this policy statement will come into immediate effect and will be subject to review on a minimum of an annual basis, in accordance with the relevant legislation prevailing at that time.

Legislative Framework

4. In determining the pay and remuneration of all of its employees, the Council will comply with all relevant employment legislation. This includes the Equality Act 2010, Part Time Employment (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000, The Agency Workers Regulations 2010 and where relevant, the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Earnings) Regulations. With regard to the equal pay requirements contained within the Equality Act, the Council ensures there is no pay discrimination within its pay structures and that all pay differentials can be objectively justified through the use of equality proofed Job Evaluation mechanisms. These directly relate salaries to the requirements, demands and responsibilities of the role.

Pay Structure

5. The Council’s pay and grading structure comprises grades 1 – 11. These are followed by grades for Managers, Assistant Director 1, Assistant Director 2, Director WRS, Executive Director, Deputy Chief Executive and then Chief Executive; all of which arose following the introduction of shared services with Redditch Borough Council.

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6. Within each grade there are a number of salary / pay points. Up to and including grade 11 scale, at spinal column point 43, the Council uses the nationally negotiated pay spine. Salary points above this are locally determined. The Council's Pay structure is set out below.

Grade	Spinal Column Points		Nationally determined rates	
			Minimum £	Maximum £
1	2	2	23,656	23,656
2	2	5	23,656	24,790
3	5	9	24,790	26,409
4	9	14	26,409	28,624
5	14	19	28,624	31,067
6	19	24	31,067	34,314
7	25	30	35,235	39,513
8	30	34	39,513	43,693
9	34	37	43,693	46,731
10	37	40	46,731	49,764
11	40	43	49,764	52,805
Manager Hay	Hay Evaluated	38%	55,407	57,645
Manager Hay Grade 1	Hay evaluated	43%	64,112	66,640
Manager Hay Grade 2	Hay evaluated	45%	66,618	69,293
Assistant Director 1	Hay evaluated	51%	75,679	78,685
Assistant Director 2	Hay evaluated	61%	90,074	93,668
Director of WRS	Hay evaluated	68%	100,622	104,230
Executive Director	Hay evaluated	74%	110,738	115,013
Deputy Chief Executive & 151	Hay evaluated	80%	117,305	121,814

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Chief Executive	Hay evaluated	100%	145,807	153,750
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7. All Council posts are allocated to a grade within this pay structure, based on the application of a Job Evaluation process. Posts at Managers and above are evaluated by an external assessor using the Hay Job Evaluation scheme. Where posts are introduced as part of a shared service, and where these posts are identified as being potentially too 'large' and 'complex' for this majority scheme, they will be double tested under the Hay scheme, and where appropriate, will be taken into the Hay scheme to identify levels of pay. This scheme identifies the salary for these posts based on a percentage of Chief Executive Salary (for ease of presentation these are shown to the nearest whole % in the table above). Posts below this level (which are the majority of employees) are evaluated under the "Gauge" Job Evaluation process.
8. In common with the majority of authorities the Council is committed to the Local Government Employers national pay bargaining framework in respect of the national pay spine and annual cost of living increases negotiated with the trade unions.
9. All other pay related allowances are the subject of either nationally or locally negotiated rates, having been determined from time to time in accordance with collective bargaining machinery and/or as determined by Council policy. In determining its grading structure and setting remuneration levels for all posts, the Council takes account of the need to ensure value for money in respect of the use of public expenditure, balanced against the need to recruit and retain employees who are able to meet the requirements of providing high quality services to the community; delivered effectively and efficiently and at all times those services are required.
10. New appointments will normally be made at the minimum of the relevant grade, although this can be varied where necessary to secure the best candidate. From time to time it may be necessary to take account of the external pay market in order to attract and retain employees with particular experience, skills and capacity. Where necessary, the Council will ensure the requirement for such is objectively justified by reference to clear and transparent evidence of relevant market comparators, using appropriate data sources available from within and outside the local government sector.
11. For staff not on the highest point within the salary scale there is a system of annual progression to the next point on the band.

Senior Management Remuneration

12. For the purposes of this statement, senior management means 'chief officers' as defined within S43 of the Localism Act. The posts falling within the statutory definition are set out below, with details of their basic salary as at 1st April 2025 (assuming no inflationary increase for these posts).

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13. Bromsgrove District Council is managed by a senior management team who manage shared services across both Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils. All of the posts listed below have been job evaluated on this basis, with the salary costs for these posts split equally between both Councils.

Title	% of Chief executive salary	Pay range (minimum) £	Pay range (maximum) £	Incremental points	Cost to Bromsgrove District Council £
Chief Executive	100%	145,807	153,750	3	50%
Deputy Chief Executive & S151	80%	117,305	121,814	3	50%
Executive Director Environment and Communities	74%	110,738	115,013	3	35%
Director Worcestershire Regulatory Services	68%	100,622	104,230	3	<i>This is a shared post across 6 district Authorities. Bromsgrove equates to 14.45%</i>
Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services	61%	90,074	93,668	3	50%
Assistant Director Planning and Leisure Services	61%	90,074	93,668	3	50%
Assistant Director Transformation, Organisational Development	61%	90,074	93,668	3	50%

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and Digital Services					
Assistant Director Legal, Democratic and Election Services	61%	90,074	93,668	3	50%
Assistant Director Environmental and Housing Property Services	61%	90,074	93,668	3	35%
Assistant Director Community and Housing Services	61%	90,074	93,668	3	35%
Assistant Director Regeneration & Property Services	61%	90,074	93,668	3	50%

Recruitment of Chief Officers

14. The Council's policy and procedures with regard to recruitment of chief officers is set out within the Officer Employment Procedure Rules as set out in the Council's Constitution. When recruiting to all posts the Council will take full and proper account of its own equal opportunities, recruitment and redeployment Policies. The determination of the remuneration to be offered to any newly appointed chief officer will be in accordance with the pay structure and relevant policies in place at the time of recruitment. Where the Council is unable to recruit to a post at the designated grade, it will consider the use of temporary market forces supplements in accordance with its relevant policies.
15. Where the Council remains unable to recruit chief officers under a contract of service, or there is a need for interim support to provide cover for a vacant substantive chief officer post, the Council will, where necessary, consider and utilise engaging individuals under 'contracts for service'. These will be sourced through a relevant procurement process ensuring the council is able to demonstrate the maximum value for money benefits from competition in securing

the relevant service. The Council does not currently have any Chief Officers under such arrangements.

Performance-Related Pay and Bonuses – Chief Officers

16. The Council does not apply any bonuses or performance related pay to its chief officers. Any progression through the incremental scale of the relevant grade is subject to satisfactory performance which is assessed on an annual basis.

Additions to Salary of Chief Officers (applicable to all staff)

17. In addition to the basic salary for the post, all staff may be eligible for other payments under the Council's existing policies. Some of these payments are chargeable to UK Income Tax and do not solely constitute reimbursement of expenses incurred in the fulfilment of duties. The list below shows some of the kinds of payments made.
- a. reimbursement of mileage. At the time of preparation of this statement, the Council pays an allowance of 45p per mile for all staff, with additional or alternative payments for carrying passengers or using a bicycle;
 - b. professional fees. The Council pays for or reimburses the cost of one practicing certificate fee or membership of a professional organisation provided it is relevant to the post that an employee occupies within the Council.
 - c. long service awards. The Council pays staff an additional amount if they have completed 25 years of service and having completed 40 years service.
 - d. honoraria, in accordance with the Council's policy on salary and grading. Generally, these may be paid only where a member of staff has performed a role at a higher grade;
 - e. fees for returning officer and other electoral duties, such as acting as a presiding officer of a polling station. These are fees which are identified and paid separately for local government elections, elections to the UK Parliament and EU Parliament and other electoral processes such as referenda;
 - f. pay protection – where a member of staff is placed in a new post and the grade is below that of their previous post, for example as a result of a restructuring, pay protection at the level of their previous post is paid for the first 12 months. In exceptional circumstance pay protection can be applied for greater than 12 months with the prior approval of the Chief Executive.
 - g. market forces supplements in addition to basic salary where identified and paid separately;
 - h. salary supplements or additional payments for undertaking additional responsibilities such as shared service provision with another local authority or in respect of joint bodies, where identified and paid separately;
 - i. attendance allowances.

Payments on Termination

18. The Council's approach to discretionary payments on termination of employment of chief officers prior to reaching normal retirement age is set out within its policy statement in accordance with Regulations 5 and 6 of the Local Government (Early

Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) Regulations 2006 and Regulations 12 and 13 of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Benefits, Membership and Contribution) Regulations 2007.

19. Any other payments falling outside the provisions or the relevant periods of contractual notice shall be subject to a formal decision made by the full Council or relevant elected members, committee or panel of elected members with delegated authority to approve such payments.
20. Redundancy payments are based upon an employee's actual weekly salary and, in accordance with the Employee Relations Act 1996, will be up to 30 weeks, depending upon length of service and age.

Publication

21. Upon approval by the full Council, this statement will be published on the Council's website. In addition, for posts where the full time equivalent salary is at least £50,000, the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts will include a note on Officers Remuneration setting out the total amount of:
 - a. Salary, fees or allowances paid to or receivable by the person in the current and previous year;
 - b. Any bonuses so paid or receivable by the person in the current and previous year;
 - c. Any sums payable by way of expenses allowance that are chargeable to UK income tax;
 - d. Any compensation for loss of employment and any other payments connected with termination;
 - e. Any benefits received that do not fall within the above.

Lowest Paid Employees

22. The Council's definition of lowest paid employees is persons employed under a contract of employment with the Council on full time (37 hours) equivalent salaries in accordance with the minimum spinal column point currently in use within the Council's grading structure. **As at 1st April 2025 this is £23656 per annum.**
23. The Council also employs apprentices (or other such categories of workers) who are not included within the definition of 'lowest paid employees' (as they are employed under a special form of employment contract; which is a contract for training rather than actual employment).
24. The relationship between the rate of pay for the lowest paid and chief officers is determined by the processes used for determining pay and grading structures as set out earlier in this policy statement.
25. The statutory guidance under the Localism Act recommends the use of pay multiples as a means of measuring the relationship between pay rates across the workforce and that of senior managers, as included within the Hutton 'Review of

Fair Pay in the Public Sector' (2010). The Hutton report was asked by Government to explore the case for a fixed limit on dispersion of pay through a requirement that no public sector manager can earn more than 20 times the lowest paid person in the organisation. The report concluded that "it would not be fair or wise for the Government to impose a single maximum pay multiple across the public sector". The Council accepts the view that the relationship to median earnings is a more relevant measure and the Government's Code of Recommended Practice on Data Transparency recommends the publication of the ratio between highest paid salary and the median average salary of the whole of the authority's workforce.

26. As part of its overall and ongoing monitoring of alignment with external pay markets, both within and outside the sector, the Council will use available benchmark information as appropriate.

Accountability and Decision Making

28. In accordance with the Constitution of the Council, the Council is responsible for setting the policy relating to the recruitment, pay, terms and conditions and severance arrangements for employees of the Council. Decisions about individual employees are delegated to the Chief Executive.
29. The Appointments Committee is responsible for recommending to Council matters relating to the appointment of the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive), Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and Chief Officers as defined in the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations 2001 (as amended);
30. For the Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and the Chief Finance Officer, the Statutory Officers Disciplinary Action Panel considers and decides on matters relating to disciplinary action.

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Strategic Parking Review

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Baxter
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Simon Parry
Report Author	Job Title: Assistant Director of Environmental and Housing Property Services Contact email: simon.parry@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 64252 extn. 3201
Wards Affected	All but with specific implications in the resolutions for Bromsgrove Central, Lowes Hill and Sanders Park wards
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Council Priority	Infrastructure
Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	
This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph(s) 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet RESOLVE that:-

- 1) The Business Case and Service review in respect of the delivery of Civil Parking Enforcement Service (CPE), as detailed in the appendices to this report, be noted.
- 2) The Assistant Director for Regeneration and Property Services considers the future use of Churchfields Multi Storey, School Drive and Stourbridge Road car parks within the development of the new Town Centre Strategy.
- 3) Following the review of delivery options for Car Parking Enforcement, and the impending changes arising from Local Government Devolution, and subject to the agreement of resolution 4, the Assistant Director of Environment and Housing Property Services in conjunction with the Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services to agree to extend the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Wychavon District Council for a period of 3 years and 7 months resulting in an end date of 31st March 2030.
- 4) The Assistant Director of Environment and Housing Property Services in conjunction with the Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services amend the SLA with

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Wychavon District Council for Parking Enforcement to include a minimum of 25% of patrol time to be undertaken outside the town centre.

- 5) The Assistant Director of Regeneration and Property Services works with partner organisations including Wychavon District Council and Worcestershire County Council to establish a Parking Working Group in order to work through and consider the range of options contained within the Appendices to enhance the opportunities for better enforcement across the District.
- 6) The Assistant Director of Regeneration and Property Services following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Regeneration develops a detailed implementation plan including all technical surveys and full costs to install, where practicable and affordable, Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) systems to Recreation Road South, St Johns and Windsor Street car parks and to also investigate other car parks under the ownership of the Council.
- 7) One of the following options relating to the Shopmobility service be approved:
 - a) To cease the operation of the Shopmobility serviceOR
 - b) To review the provision of the service following the outcome of the Town Centre Strategy Review and the outcome of where the enforcement team are relocated.

The Cabinet RECOMMEND that:-

- 8) The Director of Resources includes in the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2025/26 a capital budget of £100k for ANPR systems to Recreation Road South, St Johns and Windsor Street car parks.
- 9) A revenue budget of £15k per annum be included in the Medium-Term Financial Plan from April 2026 for the maintenance contracts for the ANPR installations.
- 10) A revenue budget of £335,160 for Car Parking Enforcement be included in the Medium-Term Financial Plan from April 2025, which is to include an annual inflationary uplift, determined by the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

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2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 14th February 2024 Cabinet resolved to seek a Strategic Review for Parking Services including on and off-street enforcement. The review would also provide a Business Case, based on options that would consider agreement of a longer-term SLA with WDC, tendering the service and in house delivery of the service.
- 2.2 Waterman Infrastructure and Environment were commissioned by Bromsgrove District Council to undertake the Strategic Review. This proposal was based on a brief that was discussed and agreed, in consultation with, the Cabinet Advisory Group on 8th May 2024 and included three key deliverables.
- **Strategic Review** - A review of existing parking requirements including supply and demand for now and in the future. This needed to review all sites on a site-by-site basis with options to address existing parking issues. It also needed to be linked to the wider Worcestershire Transport Strategy because of regeneration objectives to increase town centre living and footfall to support retention of the existing traders. The review was also to include Leisure Centre users and a review of the Shopmobility service.
 - **Car Park Management** - A review of car park management arrangements with solutions identified to reduce the need for off street parking enforcement including an outline of costs, together with operational and enforcement issues. Also to be included were recommendations for time and day of restrictions to address existing parking issues and assess enforcement requirements for identified parking management design options.
 - **On-Street Enforcement** - Review of On-Street Enforcement to be carried out to address member and resident concerns around coverage of activities. A review of concentration of enforcement and hotspots for law breaking/nuisance was to be undertaken, focusing on repeat offences. A variety of thematic options were to be recommended, emphasising the comprehensive approach the study had taken to reviewing car parking supply, usage, location and the land use planning and transport agendas that were shaping it.
- 2.3 The three reports covering these deliverables are contained within **Appendices 1, 2 & 3** respectively.
- 2.4 Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) operates a number of fee charging car parks and also a number of free car parks and has also taken responsibility for the enforcement of On-Street Traffic Regulation

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Orders (TROs) since Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) was introduced within BDC on 30 May 2013. This has allowed a more consistent approach to traffic enforcement, as staff are able to enforce both On-Street TROs and Off-Street Parking Orders for car parks owned by the District Council.

- 2.5 Wychavon District Council (WDC) have been contracted under an SLA to manage the Parking Service on behalf of BDC for the last 11 years. At the Cabinet meeting on 14th February 2024, it was agreed to maintain the services of WDC for a shorter period of 18 months whilst the options of alternative delivery models were considered and reported back to Cabinet as part of this report.
- 2.6 In the interim period officers from BDC and WDC have worked together to review the concerns of members, including, primarily, the out-of-town patrol time, whilst also ensuring that a full quota of CEOs are maintained in order to deliver the service effectively. Data on patrol time, and PCNs issued is collated monthly and has generally shown two key trends, increased levels of PCN activity, as well as more, proportionally, patrol time spent in the Parishes.
- 2.7 WDC's responsibilities include Overall Management of the Parking Service for both On and Off-Street enforcement and liaison with County Council Highways together with the following non-exhaustive list:
- Recruitment, management and training of the Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) (5.5 posts)
 - Full administration service including general enquiries, challenges, appeals and adjudication (2.5 posts)
 - Recovery of the outstanding Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) (including warrant instructions)
 - The management of Residents' Parking Schemes (RPSs)
 - Monitoring equipment used to include parking machines to ensure continued usage including restocking machines with ticket rolls
 - The day-to-day operation of the Shopmobility service including servicing of scooters and liaising with customers
 - Issuing Parking Dispensations
 - School Patrols following liaison with school staff
 - Disabled Blue Badge inspections
 - DVLA Audits
 - Various reporting including car park usage and PCNs issued.
- 2.8 **Shopmobility** – As part of the Strategic Review, Members requested that the Shopmobility service be incorporated into the business case as it is based in Churchfields Multi-Storey Car Park, next to Asda. Shopmobility is currently open Mon-Sat (9.30am to 1.30pm) (bookings

only). The service used to be open Mon-Sat (9am to 5pm), however since COVID and the closure of the Multi-Storey Car Park demand has been low.

- 2.9 The SLA in place between Wychavon District Council Parking section and Bromsgrove District Council forms part of a contract with Environmental Services, for facilitation of the car parks and civil enforcement service. When originally set up, there was a charge for disabled car parking, and it was seen as a service that supported these customers. Since June 2024, car parking has been free for disabled drivers.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

Strategic Review

- 3.1 Car parks were assessed across a number of factors including capacity, condition, usage, proportions of blue badge parking bays and Electric Vehicle (EV) charging bays, safety and security, accessibility, and convenience and usability. The results of these are contained in Appendix 1 and are collated in Table 10: Summary of Recommendations.
- 3.2 In general terms the condition of car parks is good which is borne out of the investment in resurfacing, new lining and new machines that have been installed over recent years. The recommendations vary across the Car Parks but include improved signage, potential opportunities for fee charging on free car parks and introducing ANPR across a number of the car parks.
- 3.3 The car parks at School Drive and Stourbridge Road were identified as satisfactory with both being underutilised. These sites occupy potentially valuable land and therefore these underutilised car parks may be better used for other needs. Consideration of the future use of these car parks will be included within the forthcoming Town Centre Strategy review which is designed to provide a clear vision for the town centre in terms of what it should look and feel like for residents, businesses and visitors and guide decisions in relation to the use of Council owned land, including car parks.
- 3.4 Churchfields Multi Storey Car Park, at the time of the survey, was decommissioned. However, the projected demand for car parks appears to be met by current capacity, not including Churchfields. Therefore, the recommendation is to consider demolition of the Churchfields car park and / or to repurpose the structure/land. It is envisaged that proposals regarding this car park will be addressed within the Town Centre Strategy review.

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- 3.5 These three sites were also included in the Bromsgrove Town Centre 2040 Vision which set out to support the future development of the area and provide the right level of services to meet the needs of both residents and business population. The document was founded on the need to regenerate and the opportunity to redevelop major unused or underused sites which will attract people and investment to the town centre.
- 3.6 It is acknowledged that whilst the review has centred on those car parks maintained and managed by the Council it has not taken an overarching review of all parking demand across the District. Instead, the review has concentrated on the car parks that BDC owns and operates, in order to understand the condition and future viability based on demand requirements on those car parks and the town centre. As identified across the 3 reports, there is a clear need for partnership working with all relevant stakeholders in order to identify potential solutions across the whole of the District.
- 3.7 One of the recommendations is to increase Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI). The Council have previously invested in EVCI ensuring some of the authority's car parks have these facilities. This project delivered the installations to the following car parks, Golden Cross Car Park, Alvechurch Car Park, Sanders Park Car Park, Windsor Street, North Bromsgrove (Bromsgrove Leisure Centre), Asda Bromsgrove, Aston Fields, Barnt Green Parish, Princess of Wales (POW) Community Hospital, and Webbs Hagley Garden Centre.
- 3.8 The Council has a current contract with Zest Eco Limited to expand EVCI across Council owned land primarily in the authority's remaining car parks and also office car parks. The project which covers a 15 year period, with an option to extend for a further 5 years, is assessing each of the car parks that do not currently have EVCI.
- 3.9 The supplier is required to provide fully funded EVCI at no cost to the Council. The contract allows for the supply, installation, maintenance and ongoing operational management of the EVCI across the various agreed sites. The first installations are currently being programmed for an early 2025 commencement.
- 3.10 To further enhance the ECVI schemes above, which concentrate around car parks, there is a government funded Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) scheme which is being co-ordinated by Worcestershire County Council. An allocation of £3.5m has been received and is primarily focused on delivering public charge points (predominantly low powered chargers) for residents without dedicated off-street parking at home.

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- 3.11 The County Council are producing tender documents that will be released in early 2025. There is a long list of sites across the County that are being developed based on the criteria set within the funding terms. It is anticipated that once a provider has been identified the County and associated Districts will liaise with the provider to identify the most appropriate charger points across Worcestershire.

Car Park Management

- 3.12 As part of the discussions through Cabinet Advisory Group on 8th May 2024 and discussions at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 12th February 2024, there was a clear desire expressed by Members to ensure a more equitable balance in patrols across the whole District. The SLA with WDC included a 10% provision for out-of-town centre patrol time. In order to assist with on street enforcement, the review of off-street enforcement was included.
- 3.13 As part of the recommendations for providing more patrol time for on street enforcement, ANPR has been considered within the report at Appendix 2. This system would provide monitoring of vehicles entering and exiting the car park at all times of the day, the length of stay and subsequent payment.
- 3.14 The installation of ANPR was recommended across most sites within Appendices 1 and 2. However, the preferred option is to install across the high volume and income value sites at Recreation Road South, St Johns and Windsor Street where local conditions allow.
- 3.15 Subject to Members' agreement to resolution 6, it is proposed that the outcomes of the detailed Implementation Plan should be reported for Cabinet's consideration at a later date and inform further discussions regarding possible use of ANPR.
- 3.16 As part of the Strategic Review, analysis of enforcement for on street parking in the District was undertaken. Through engagement with Members, on a local basis, as well as some residents, issues of on street parking both within centres on residential streets and outside schools, at peak times, have been raised.

On Street Enforcement

- 3.17 On Street parking enforcement, together with Off Street enforcement, is currently contracted to WDC to administer. This service is delivered with 5.5 CEOs spread across the mainly rural District which in turn brings coverage issues based on the geographical nature of the District.

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- 3.18 Through the course of the last 12 months, Officers have been working closely with WDC Officers to review patrols based on the feedback given by members, regarding the volume of time spent within the parishes versus the town centre. In the initial version of the SLA, there was an indication that 10% of patrol time should be spent outside of the town centre. As a consequence of the reviews of patrols, the proportion of time spent outside Bromsgrove town centre has increased. A quarterly summary of PCN information including patrol time in and outside of the town centre is also included as well as a comparison with the corresponding quarter from the previous year and is contained within Appendix 4 .
- 3.19 Across most of the ward-based engagement with Members, issues around parking outside schools at peak times was frequently raised. There is currently no uniform approach to addressing these concerns based on the different stakeholders that have a role to play in achieving more considerate and compliant parking. The Police, Schools, Local Authority and CEOs all have a role to play in promoting and enforcing considerate parking.
- 3.20 Examples of both ‘softer’ and ‘harder’ measures highlighted in the report are a social media and community engagement campaign to be rolled out, targeted at drivers, to encourage considerate parking outside of shops and schools, as a “softer measure” behavioural change campaign. Further investigation and action is needed to review and amend “harder measure” parking restrictions and increase coverage of signing and lining options (i.e. double yellow lines, designated parking areas).
- 3.21 A key element of enforcement is to have a clear line of communication and therefore one of the recommendations is for BDC and WCC to investigate the potential of developing an online tool to enable BDC residents to log parking violations and persistent offences. This would be linked to the current WCC system to report environmental concerns and problems with street furniture (i.e. street lighting, pavements). The system could be used by WDC as a measure to target resources from local intelligence.
- 3.22 There are a range of options that are listed in the Executive Summary of Appendix 3 - Review of On-Street Enforcement.
- 3.23 A key element of delivery in this context, is to ensure there is clear partnership working amongst the various stakeholders. It is therefore recommended that a Parking Task Group be established including representatives from BDC, WDC and WCC to work through the various options pertinent to each organisation.

Options Appraisal

- 3.24 In order to assess how car parking enforcement may be delivered in the medium and long term, an options appraisal identifying the positives and negatives of the three key options has been undertaken. These options are; 1. maintain the SLA with WDC, 2. tender out to external contractors and 3. delivery with internal resources. The outcomes of this options appraisal are detailed in Appendix 5.
- 3.25 The publication of the English Devolution White Paper on 16th December 2024 has provided uncertainty on the impact that this will have on BDC over the forthcoming 2 to 4 years. As such, continuity of service for parking enforcement is recommended by an extension to the period of the services delivered by WDC. This continuity will ensure compliance of service delivery during the period of the extended SLA. This will also allow officers the time and capacity to deliver the ANPR solutions for the 3 car parks identified. The strategy therefore to further enhance service delivery will include the introduction of ANPR, providing more opportunity for on street enforcement, an ongoing review and amendments to patrols. This is based on feedback given with the reports and further analysis of patrol information including both coverage and frequency across the District, analysis of data to identify existing and potentially emerging hotspots for poor and illegal parking practices, together with the key recommendations to be considered by the Parking Working Group.
- 3.26 Whilst the review of patrols is ongoing, as part of this review and working with the Parish Councils, an investigation into whether it would be viable to purchase additional time for patrols within their locations could be undertaken.

Shopmobility

- 3.27 The service currently has five customers with one customer being a regular user (once a week). The other customers use the service on an ad-hoc basis typically once every few months and then there are other ad-hoc customers who may use the service a few times per year. Pre COVID, there were more customers using the service; approximately 12-15 customers per week. Since COVID the demand has been low. This is possibly due to several factors, including the closure of the multi-storey car park and more people owning their own mobility equipment.
- 3.28 In order to assess usage, a survey was undertaken in 2021 for residents to have their say about the service. 19 people responded – 2 were current users; 4 were previous users; and 13 had never used the

service. Those who used the service either travelled by car or taxi. When asked what enables them to get out and about more easily the majority had access to a car; friends or family to rely on; or their own mobility scooter which has become much more affordable in recent years.

- 3.29 Attempts have been made to look to relocate the service. This has included approaching Asda, however they have two shopping mobility scooters for customers use and do not have the room to accommodate any more equipment. Age UK have a charity shop on the High Street however, they did not feel they would be able to hire equipment from there. Another option was the customer service section at Parkside however, they did not have the room to accommodate the scooters and it would have been difficult for customers to access.
- 3.30 The current budget for Bromsgrove Shopmobility is £5,000 to cover the costs of the equipment, maintenance and business rates. The cost of servicing the equipment continues to increase, particularly as the equipment is older and needs replacing.
- 3.31 The demand for this type of service in Bromsgrove seems low. With the potential plan to permanently close the multi-story car park and to relocate the staff based there, the recommendation would be to either close the Shopmobility service or to provide the service from a new location. An option may be to lease the equipment in the future as if the service was to continue the equipment would need updating.
- 3.32 In respect of the option to close the service, an Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken. It proposes that Officers would consult directly with the users who are potentially impacted.
- 3.33 There is £1,375 available in reserves which was donated to the service by a disability organisation at the point of closure. This money could be included within the Bromsgrove Equality Grants Scheme for VCS organisations to apply via the annual grants process.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 A budget of £50k was identified and agreed at Council on 21st February 2024 for the strategic review to be undertaken. The completed works have been undertaken in line with the proposal submitted by Watermans.
- 4.2 The annual cost for parking enforcement undertaken by WDC for 2025/6 is £335,160.

Cabinet

12th February 2025

- 4.3 Parking fee charges generate approximately £1 million per year of revenue for the Council.
- 4.4 The estimated capital costs for the installation of ANPR at the 3 Car Parks is £100K with an anticipated annual revenue cost of £15k for maintenance.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The legal framework for enforcement authorities in England comprises Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004.
- 5.2 In 2012, BDC applied for decriminalised parking in the District. This process included an application form submission to the Department for Transport (DfT) which was completed by WCC and BDC. WCC led on this application as it mainly focusses on On Street enforcement (public highway) although Off Street (car parks) were also included as the whole enforcement operation was decriminalised.
- 5.3 BDC operates a system of providing Off-Street parking for residents and visitors under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The legislation allows the Council to designate Off-Street car parks (Section 32) and regulate their operation, including the levying of charges through a Local Parking Order.
- 5.4 The contract for the service provider to undertake these works will be signed in due course, on final agreement of the terms and conditions. It is proposed that the new SLA is set up as a 4-year agreement with an annual review of outputs and outcomes.
- 5.5 Any decision regarding amendments to the SLA and / or termination will be undertaken in conjunction with Legal Services.
- 5.6 The Police are responsible for dangerous parking, obstruction and vehicles parked on white zig zags. Section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 makes it an offence to wilfully obstruct the highway. Regulation 103 of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 creates the offence of unnecessary obstruction.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.1 Infrastructure – By enabling car parking provision that is good quality, affordable and can accommodate demand it helps residents and visitors to access services within our local communities. The contents of this report therefore support the Council's priority of infrastructure.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.2 There are no Climate Change implications in renewing the SLA. However, by introducing the MiPermit, the virtual permit system has resulted in the reduced amount of paper required for parking tickets and permits, together with Residents' Parking Permits. In addition, the report details implications in relation to the ECVI system and opportunities in this context could have a beneficial impact on carbon emissions in the district.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.3 In respect of the option to close the Shopmobility Service an Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken. It proposes that Officers would consult directly with the users who are potentially impacted.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 Risks associated with the delivery of Car Parking Enforcement are identified in Appendix 5 depending on the option taken by Cabinet on future provision of this services.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

**Appendix 1
Strategic Review (Waterman Infrastructure and Environment)**

**Appendix 2
Car Park Management (Waterman Infrastructure and Environment)**

**Appendix 3
On Street Enforcement – (Waterman Infrastructure and Environment)**

**Appendix 4
Bromsgrove PCN Information – Quarterly Summary**

**Appendix 5
Options Appraisal for Car Park Enforcement (Exempt Information).**

**Appendix 6
Consultancy Fees (Exempt Information)**



Bromsgrove Strategic Parking Review

Part One: Strategic Review

September 2024

Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Ltd

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Client Name: Bromsgrove District Council
Document Reference: 20771100-WAT-XX-XX-RP-H90001
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Quality Assurance – Approval Status

This document has been prepared and checked in accordance with Waterman Group's IMS (BS EN ISO 9001: 2015, BS EN ISO 14001: 2015 and BS EN ISO 45001:2018)

Revision	Status	Date	Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by
P01	S3	02/08/2024	Connor Webb Undergraduate Transport Planner	Jack Wellings Transport Consultant	David Whalley Associate Director
C01	S4	07/10/2024	Connor Webb Undergraduate Transport Planner	Jack Wellings Transport Consultant	Richard White Associate Director
C02	S5	13/01/2025	Connor Webb Undergraduate Transport Planner	Jack Wellings Transport Consultant	Richard White Associate Director

Comments

Final Issue following client comments.

Revision	Status
Pnn Preliminary (shared; non-contractual)	S1 Coordination
Cnn Contractual	S2 Information
	S3 Review & Comment
	S4 Review & Authorise
	S5 Review & Acceptance
A0, A1, An	Authorised & Accepted (n=work stage if applicable)

Disclaimer

This report has been prepared by Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Ltd, with all reasonable skill, care, and diligence within the terms of the Contract with the client, incorporation of our General Terms and Condition of Business and taking account of the resources devoted to us by agreement with the client.

We disclaim any responsibility to the client and others in respect of any matters outside the scope of the above.

This report is confidential to the client, and we accept no responsibility of whatsoever nature to third parties to whom this report, or any part thereof, is made known. Any such party relies on the report at its own risk.

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1. Executive Summary

Overview

As part of a Strategic Review of Car Parking for Bromsgrove District Council (BDC), Waterman have reviewed the supply and demand for parking in Bromsgrove town centre and the surrounding areas both now and in the future.

BDC has employed Wychavon District Council (WDC) to undertake Civil Parking Enforcement for over 10 years. The services covered by this include the delivery of on and off-street parking enforcement and the associated full administration including appeals and adjudication. With the Service Level Agreement (SLA) having expired, a Strategic Review of requirements for parking services including enforcement has been undertaken. Our Strategic Review of Car Parking is made up of three standalone reports:

- **Part One – Strategic Review**
- **Part Two – Car Parking Management**
- **Part Three – On-Street Parking Enforcement**

The Strategic Review of Car Parking has reviewed existing parking requirements including supply and demand for now and in the future. We have reviewed all sites on a site-by-site basis, providing options to address existing parking issues. We have linked our recommendations to the wider Worcestershire Transport Strategy, to align with regeneration objectives, to increase town centre living and footfall, to support retention of existing traders. We have also considered leisure centre users and a review of the Shopmobility service.

As part of this report, which is a Strategic Review, and also covered in the Car Parking Management report, we have reviewed car park management arrangements with solutions identified to reduce the need for off-street parking enforcement, including an outline of costs, together with the legislative framework to follow to implement it. We have also recommended time of day restrictions to address existing parking issues and assess enforcement requirements for identified parking management design options.

Finally, mainly covered in the On-Street Parking Enforcement report, we have reviewed of on-street parking enforcement to address member and resident concerns around coverage of activities. A review of concentration of enforcement and hotspots for law breaking/nuisance was undertaken, focusing on hotspots and repeat offences. In the On-Street Parking Enforcement Report, a variety of thematic options are recommended, emphasising the comprehensive approach the study has taken to reviewing car parking supply, usage, location and the land use planning and transport agendas that are shaping it.

Strategic Review

The first part of our review, the Strategic Review, has found that there is a significant amount of parking in Bromsgrove town centre, of a similar scale to comparator towns of similar populations. Committed developments in the pipeline, within the vicinity of Bromsgrove town centre, could affect demand for parking spaces in Bromsgrove town centre. There is a need to achieve the best balance between the sometimes-conflicting requirements of a parking strategy, i.e. its role in supporting the town centre economy, the public realm, income to BDC and other operators, traffic congestion and the objective to encourage sustainable transport and development. In developing the principles of a future parking strategy for Bromsgrove town centre, we were mindful throughout our review of the need to avoid causing unintended consequences.

Public transport plays a limited role in the movement of people to and from the town centre, in comparison with many other towns that have better bus services. Therefore, Bromsgrove is relatively car-dominated. We have found that the charging tariff utilised in Bromsgrove town centre is well balanced with short stay parking available in all public car parks and long stay in all but one. The parking charges are consistent with similar towns and the condition of the public car parks is good, but some potential improvements have been identified.

As part of our review, we analysed parking utilisation and ticket sale data, as shared by BDC. This showed that Saturdays are significantly busier than weekdays, except in a few car parks that are popular with commuters and season ticket holders during the week (i.e. Parkside). We have considered the results of our analysis and have highlighted six crucial recommendations of our review that BDC should progress further. These aspects are detailed below:

- **Improve car park directional signage to town centre car parks and associated way-finding signage to direct visitors to nearby facilities in the town centre.**
- **Investigate a nighttime car parking tariff that can be used as a basis to advertise the nighttime offer in Bromsgrove and encourage the evening economy.**
- **Consider improvements to town centre car parks, which could be generated by increasing parking tariffs as the benchmarking exercise suggests there is scope for an increase. This would support improvements to the town centre overall and an increase in the town centre offering.**
- **Invest in redeveloping School Drive car park to make it more attractive to people wishing to use the car park.**
- **Place yellow lining on the on-street parking outside of the leisure Centre to encourage people to use the paid parking there instead of parking for free.**
- **Aim to get more people to pay for parking charges by using card payments or by the app, with the long-term aim to go cashless, to reduce costs for BDC as well as making sure that all transactions are secure.**

Further, detailed recommendations for each car park have been provided in the Conclusions and Recommendations section.

One of the key aspects of this Strategic Review is to determine the need to reopen Churchfields car park. Since 2022, this car park in Bromsgrove town centre has been closed due to anti-social behaviour and has been decommissioned. However, from analysis of existing parking demand through the utilisation figures shared by BDC, we have ascertained that Bromsgrove town centre has more than adequate car parking provision both now, and in the future, without the need to reopen Churchfields car park. This is because in Bromsgrove town centre, only two short stay car parks (Windsor Street and St John Street) have utilisation consistently of above 60%, and this is only in the afternoons and the evening.

Furthermore, findings from traffic growth analysis using the TEMPRO tool show that levels of parking provision are adequate to even meet a future growth year of 2039, with only St John Street and Windsor Street car parks predicted to operate at full capacity in 2039 across both weekdays and weekends, if traffic growth continues unabated. Although Parkside and New Road car parks are expected to be at a high utilisation level in 2039, should the demand be managed across the car parks which have spare capacity, by using tools such as wayfinding or Variable Message Signs, then the demand on these car parks can be managed.

Therefore, on this basis it can be safely determined that Churchfields car park is no longer required. Existing Bromsgrove town centre car parks can comfortably meet demand, both now and in 2039. It is recommended that BDC explore disposal of the site so that the land can be used for regeneration purposes.

2. Introduction

The Brief

- 2.1 Waterman Infrastructure & Environment ('Waterman') have been commissioned by Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) ("The Client") to undertake a Strategic Parking Review within the district.
- 2.2 BDC has employed Wychavon District Council to undertake Civil Parking Enforcement for over 10 years. The services covered by this include the delivery of on and off-street parking enforcement and the associated full administration including appeals and adjudication. With the Service Level Agreement (SLA) having expired, a Strategic Review of requirements for parking services including enforcement has been undertaken.
- 2.3 The Strategic Review of Car Parking has reviewed existing parking requirements including supply and demand for now and in the future. We have reviewed all sites on a site-by-site basis, providing options to address existing parking issues. We have linked our recommendations to the wider Worcestershire Transport Strategy, to align with regeneration objectives, to increase town centre living and footfall, to support retention of existing traders. We have also considered leisure centre users and a review of the Shopmobility service.
- 2.4 This Strategic Parking Review provides an understanding of the current supply and demand for parking in Bromsgrove, and forecasts how parking is expected to change in the future (with consideration given to committed and allocated future development sites). This includes potential options for future parking provision.
- 2.5 Through analysis of parking occupancy and utilisation, the report seeks to ascertain the future of the Churchfields multi-storey car park. Since 2022, this car park in Bromsgrove town centre has been closed due to anti-social behaviour. Through analysis of parking demand in the town centre, the study seeks to determine whether the car park is still required, or if the car park / land can be disposed of for regeneration purposes. The future need of other, underutilised car parks is also discussed. The recommendations also call into question the future operation of the Shopmobility service, which notionally operates from premises at the car park. This is also discussed in the On-Street Parking Enforcement Review report, with recommendations made on the future operation and location of the service.

Report Format

- 2.6 The structure of this report is as follows:
 - **Section 2** reviews relevant policy documents;
 - **Section 3** describes existing parking facilities and charges;
 - **Section 4** compares Bromsgrove to other towns of a similar scale;
 - **Section 5** presents the scoring for each individual car park;
 - **Section 6** presents the results of the usage surveys and ticket sales analysis;
 - **Section 7** features a review of the pricing across Bromsgrove;
 - **Section 8** is an assessment of future parking demand and its impact on existing facilities;
 - **Section 9** considers alternative parking measures and presents the recommended strategy;
 - **Section 10** summarises the future trends;
 - **Section 11** provides a summary of the report findings.

3. Planning and Transport Policy

Introduction

- 3.1 A comprehensive review of national, regional, and local policies and strategies related to parking have been undertaken. The following sections provide a summary of the findings of the review and key points for consideration.

National Policy

- 3.2 The review considers national legislation such as the Parking (Code of Practice) Act 2019 and the Traffic Management Act 2004. These documents outline the statutory requirements with regards to parking and enforcement, and therefore the duties placed on the local authorities when implementing parking policy. The key findings from the review are as follows:
- The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) 2016 and Department for Transport (DfT) Circular 01/2016 provide detailed information on parking bay dimensions and related signage location, layout, text, and use of symbols. These should be read in conjunction and shall be referred to when designing parking facilities.
 - The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and (Parking) Act 1986 provided powers to local authorities and remain relevant in terms of developing chargeable and enforceable parking schemes.
 - Local authorities must also adhere to the rules set out in the Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions (England) General Regulations 2007 relating to enforcing parking restrictions and the issue of penalty charge notices. The Representations and Appeals Regulations follow on from this and allow for penalty charges to be appealed by motorists under certain conditions.
 - In terms of Blue Badge parking provision, the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) Regulations 2000 provides information for local authorities in terms of provision of Blue badges to manage eligibility. The regulations also include enforcement regulations. Guidance on the number and design of Blue Badge parking spaces to be provided is set out in the Manual for Streets and the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB).
 - If a local authority wishes to implement a workplace parking levy as part of its strategy, the relevant sections of the Transport Act 2000 would need to be adhered to.
 - The Removal and Disposal of Vehicles Regulations 2007 sets out the circumstances in which a local authority or the police have the power to remove, store and dispose of illegally, obstructively, or dangerously parked, abandoned, or broken-down vehicles.
 - The Traffic Management Act 2004 provides the core legal framework for parking, and regulates many civil enforcement powers, providing greater consistency across the country in conjunction with the provisions above. This legislation was introduced to tackle disruption and congestion on the road network, placing a clear network management duty on local authorities to make sure that traffic can move freely and smoothly.
- 3.3 The implications of not adhering to legislative requirements when exercising powers related to the development of policy and the design and operation of car parking are clear; a local authority would be unable to effectively manage and enforce in accordance with its network management duty and is at risk of acting unlawfully.

- 3.4 In addition to legislation, the review has also included national policy and guidance documents which may be considered when implementing a parking strategy. This is important as not every aspect of a policy may be subject to law and there is scope to go beyond the minimum requirement. Key points are as follows:
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides a single framework for preparing plans. It offers the opportunity to inform the key principles of the approach to parking that support any proposed regeneration proposals and future development whilst deterring unnecessary car use, preventing commuter parking pressure and reducing congestion.
 - The NPPF also discusses parking standards for developments and the setting of maximum parking standards as appropriate, as well as the importance of providing overnight HGV parking facilities. This, supported by relevant Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), provides up-to-date and relevant advice on what is required in plan-making and subsequent planning applications.
 - The Right to Challenge Parking Policies: Traffic Management Act 2004: Network Management Duty Guidance ensures that local businesses, the residential community, and other road users have a recognised voice in relation to network management and parking policies. It allows people the ability to challenge parking schemes or policies that are already implemented or proposed and is therefore relevant with regards to development of the Plan.
 - The Guidance for Local Authorities on Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions provides information to ensure that parking arrangements meet mandatory requirements (set out in the Traffic Management Act 2004) but also offers suggestions for good practice, in areas such as training and professionalism in civil parking enforcement, and from institutions including the British Parking Association, the Local Government Technical Advisory Group (TAG), and the London Technical Advisors Group (LoTAG), as well as from other authorities.
 - The CIHT Guidance Note on Residential Parking also provides a source for good practice approaches to parking provision and design in this context.

Regional Policy

- 3.5 Worcestershire's third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) was adopted in February 2011; this LTP sets out the strategy to deliver 'an efficient, affordable and multimodal transport network'.
- 3.6 The five main priorities of the LTP3 are taken from the DfT - Delivering a Sustainable Transport System (DaSTS) report:
- To support national economic competitiveness and growth, by delivering reliable and efficient transport networks;
 - To reduce transport's emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, with the desired outcome of tackling climate change;
 - To contribute to better safety, security and health and longer life-expectancy by reducing the risk of death, injury or illness arising from transport and by promoting travel modes that are beneficial to health;
 - To promote greater equality of opportunity for all citizens; with the desired outcome of achieving a fairer society; and
 - To improve quality of life for transport users and non-transport users, and to promote a healthy natural environment.

- 3.7 The Local Objectives are set out by the Worcestershire Partnership in the form of the Worcestershire Community Strategy (WSCS), these are:
- Communities that are safe and feel safe,
 - A better environment for today and tomorrow,
 - Economic success that is shared by all,
 - Improving health and wellbeing,
 - Meeting the needs of children and young people, and
 - Stronger communities.
- 3.8 The core objectives of the LTP3 Strategy are:
- To support national economic competitiveness and growth, by delivering reliable and efficient transport networks,
 - To reduce transport's emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, with the desired outcome of tackling climate change,
 - To contribute to better safety security and health and longer life-expectancy by reducing the risk of death, injury and illness arising from transport and by promoting travel modes that are beneficial to health,
 - To promote greater equality of opportunity for all citizens, with the desired outcome of achieving a fairer society, and
 - To improve quality of life for transport users and non-transport users, and to promote a healthy natural environment.

Local Policy

- 3.9 Regional policy and strategy documents have also been reviewed. Relevant policy from the Bromsgrove District Plan 2011 – 2030 has been reviewed and can be seen below.
- BDP5A.4 A local centre should also be provided that provides a mix of retail and other A class uses. The local centre should be located adjacent to Sidemoor First School, include sufficient parking to cater for its own needs and the school at busy times and amenity green space should also be provided.
 - BDP5A.5 The community facilities should consist of a community hall, large, equipped play areas, sports pitches, and an allotment site. There is a specific requirement for adult football pitches adjacent to the King George V playing fields and associated infrastructure including access, parking, and changing facilities should also be provided.
 - BDP16.1 Development should comply with the Worcestershire County Council's Transport policies, design guide and car parking standards, incorporate safe and convenient access and be well related to the wider transport network.
 - BDP16.3 The Council will support the use of low emission vehicles including electric cars through encouraging the provision of charging points in new developments.
 - BDP16.5 The improvement of car parking and cycling provision at stations will be supported where appropriate and in accordance with other policies contained within this Plan.
 - BDP17.3 Town Centre Car parking will be restructured to offer a network of fewer, more efficient car parks at key locations, opportunities for developing smaller more evenly distributed car parks will be considered.

4. Parking Provision

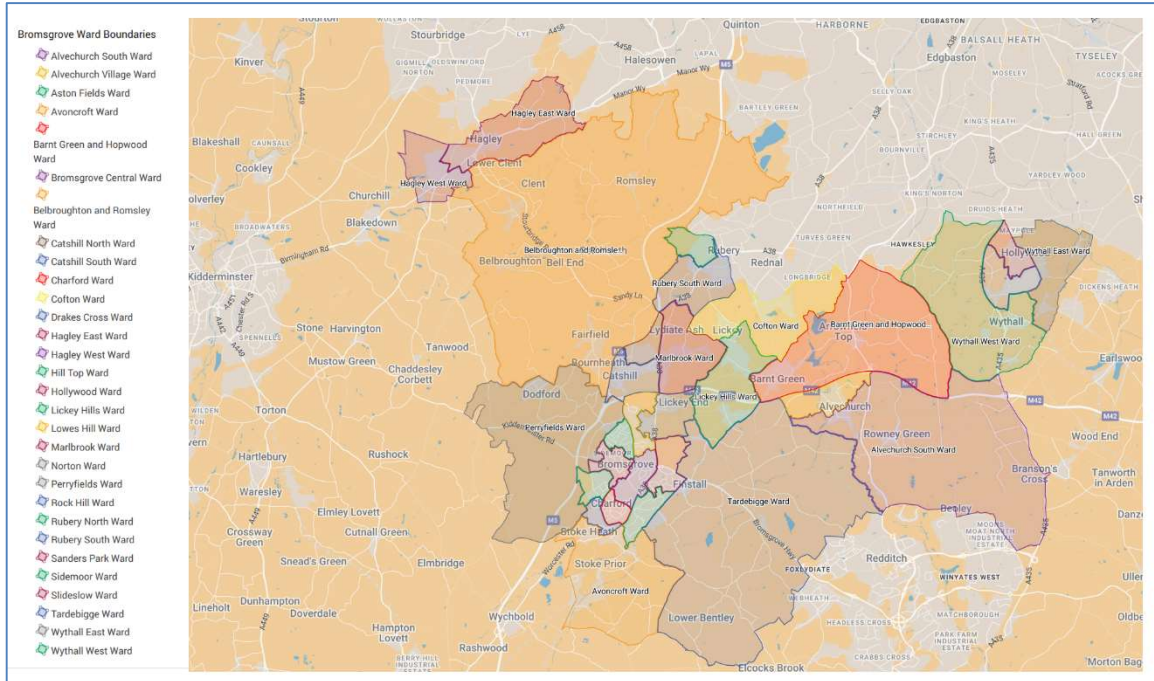
Context

- 4.1 Bromsgrove is a traditional market town located in North Worcestershire, with a population of approximately 99,200 (Census, 2021). Bromsgrove borders the built-up area of Birmingham to the north. Other towns and villages in the district include Alvechurch, Aston Fields, Belbroughton, Catshill, Clent, Hagley, Rubery, Stoke Prior and Wythall.

Methodology

- 4.2 Existing parking provision within the district has been assessed, with a high-level review carried out to determine the location of Council owned car parks, their position within the town centre and relationship with other local parking facilities.
- 4.3 Where information has been provided by BDC, a high-level review of the type and management regime of the car parks (publicly run, use of permits, average length of stay) has been undertaken. This has included examination of the number of car parking bays, the percentage provision of bays for people with a disability (blue badge bays), as well as parking charges, charging and enforcement regimes.
- 4.4 Analysis of current utilisation for existing council operated available parking stock has been undertaken. The review captures key quantitative information associated with each car park. Data captured across the district in terms of quality (real vs. estimated), depth and coverage of sites (numbers of sites with parking occupancy data), and how occupancy is broken down, which indicates that a common approach to collecting car parking data is currently not utilised.
- 4.5 There are several wards across the district. A map showing the wards can be seen overleaf in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Bromsgrove Ward Boundaries Map



Public Off Street Parking across Bromsgrove

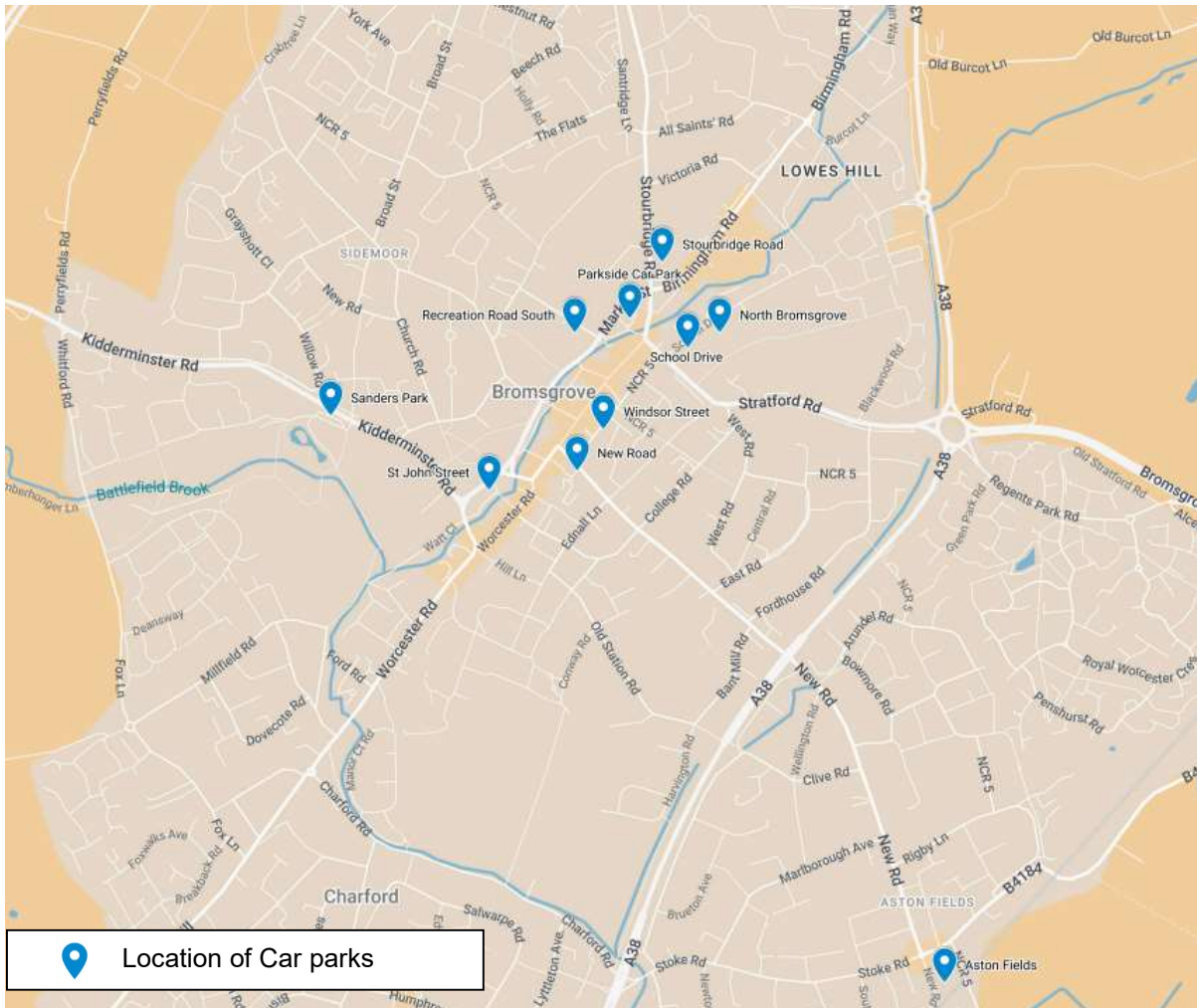
4.6 The existing public car parks in Bromsgrove are shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Car parks in Bromsgrove Area

Car park	No. of Spaces	Charged
New Road Car Park	58	Yes
North Bromsgrove Car Park	195	Yes
Parkside Car Park	94	Yes
Recreation Road South Car park	292	Yes
School Drive Car park	128	Yes
St John Streetcar park	80	Yes
Stourbridge Road Car park	88	Yes
Windsor Streetcar park	65	Yes
Aston Fields Car park	40	No
Sanders Park	93	No
Catshill Car park	15	No
Alvechurch Car park	45	No

4.7 The publicly owned and operated car parks in Bromsgrove town centre are illustrated in **Figure 2**.

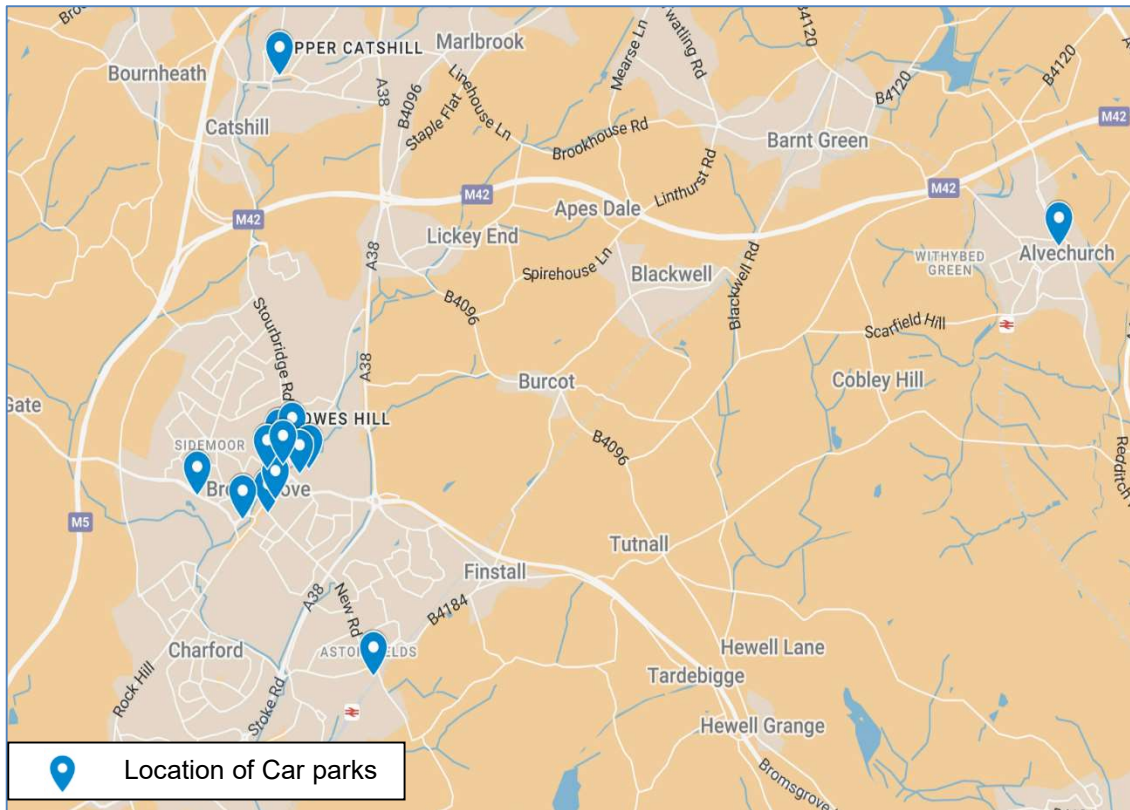
Figure 2: Bromsgrove Town Centre Public Off Street Parking Location Plan



Source: <https://www.google.com/maps>

4.8 All the publicly owned car parks within the district are illustrated in **Figure 3**.

Figure 3: Bromsgrove District Council operated Car parks



Source: <https://www.google.com/maps>

4.9 Across the car parks operated by BDC, there are approximately 1,133 parking spaces. This includes 16 (1%) electric vehicle (EV) charging spaces and 62 blue badge bays (6%). Of the 1,133 total number of spaces available, 185 (16%) are 'Short Stay' (less than 3 hours). This is shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Off Street Parking Capacity

Car park	Car parks	No. of Spaces	EV Charging Spaces	Blue Badge Spaces
Short Stay	3	185	4	12
Long Stay	9	973	12	59
Total	15	1133	16	62

4.10 Currently, only six of the car parks have EV charging facilities.

Parking Enforcement

4.11 The enforcement of on-street parking restrictions is managed by BDC under an agency agreement with Worcestershire County Council. The Civil Enforcement of parking is undertaken by Wychavon District Council on behalf of BDC. They have carried out Civil Parking Enforcement for over 10 years.

4.12 The services covered by this include the delivery of On and Off street parking enforcement and the associated full administration including appeals and adjudication, general administration of queries from a range of stakeholders, reporting issues related to Worcestershire County

Council's responsibilities around signage and markings, DVLA Audits, Issuing Parking Dispensations, administration of a Permit system, Shopmobility Management, Regular checks and stocking of tickets to Pay and Display Machines and Disabled Blue Badge Inspections. There are no Pay & Display parking locations on-street in Bromsgrove town centre.

- 4.13 The locations and the enforcement of On Street Parking is considered in the On Street Enforcement Review report.

5. Benchmarking

Parking Capacity Comparison

- 5.1 An analysis of similar towns to Bromsgrove both nearby and across the UK has been undertaken to understand parking need. The towns reviewed are detailed in **Table 3**.

Table 3: Parking Provision Comparison

Town	Population	All Car parks				
		Number of Car parks	Number of Spaces	Parking Ratio Per Resident	Blue Badge Spaces	Percentage of Blue Badge Spaces
Bromsgrove	35,000	10	1,133	0.03	62	5%
Lichfield	33,000	16	1,379	0.04	77	6%
Warwick	37,000	11	1,659	0.05	42	3%
Kidderminster	57,000	8	777	0.01	32	4%
Tipton	47,000	3	152	0.003	8	5%
Dudley	79,000	13	1,031	0.01	48	5%
Droitwich Spa	26,000	8	850	0.03	37	4%
Worcester	103,000	16	2,358	0.02	48	2%

- 5.2 As can be seen in **Table 3** the overall number of spaces in Bromsgrove is similar in comparison to the other towns, with a parking ratio per resident of 0.03. This compares to Warwick which is the highest with an average of 0.5 spaces per resident, which has a similar population to Bromsgrove at 37,000. Tipton has the lowest parking ratio per resident with an average of 0.003 spaces per resident.
- 5.3 Overall, the provision of Blue Badge spaces across Bromsgrove is 5% of all spaces available. Across the comparator towns, this is comparable with Tipton and Dudley, each having 5% of all spaces as Blue Badge Spaces.
- 5.4 The towns which have a slightly higher percentage of Blue Badge spaces are Droitwich Spa and Kidderminster at 4%. The towns with the lowest Percentage were Worcester with 2% and Warwick with 3%. DFT Guidance (Inclusive Mobility Guide 2021) suggests that where a car park has more than 50 spaces, a 4% provision should be made for Blue Badge parking. Applying this guidance to Bromsgrove indicates that sufficient space is provided for Blue Badge holders.

Cost of Parking

- 5.5 A comparison exercise was undertaken on parking charges to determine the difference in the cost of parking in other UK towns. The charges across Bromsgrove and similar towns can be seen in **Table 4**.

Table 4: Car park Charges

Town	Up to 30 mins	Up to 1 hour	Up to 2 hours	Up to 3 hours	Up to 4 hours	All Day	Night-Time tariff
Bromsgrove	£1	£1	£2	£3	£6	£6	N/A
Lichfield	£1.50	£1.50	£1.50	£1.50	£1.50	£4	£1
Warwick	£1.40	£1.40	£2.60	£3.90	£5.10	£8	£2.20
Kidderminster	70p	£1.20	£2.30	£3.50	£5.70	£5.70	£2
Tipton	30p	60p	£1.10	£1.60	£2.10	£4.50	£4.50
Dudley	Free	Free	Free	£2	£5	£5	Free
Droitwich Spa	£1	£1	£2	£3	£4	£4	N/A
Worcester	£1.10	£1.10	£2.10	£3.20	£4.20	£6.40	N/A

- 5.6 The comparison with neighbouring towns demonstrates that short stay parking is of a lower cost in Bromsgrove compared to towns of a similar nature. Long stay parking in Bromsgrove is broadly similar to towns used in the benchmarking exercise. All day parking in Bromsgrove is also broadly like towns used in the benchmarking exercise.
- 5.7 Some neighbouring towns have a nighttime tariff while some offer free parking or no nighttime parking. Those that offer a nighttime tariff offer different times (see notes below). Most towns like Bromsgrove do not offer a nighttime tariff and that parking after 6pm is free.
- 5.8 As of June 2024, Bromsgrove increased their car parking charges by 20p an hour up to 3 hours and the all-day tariff increased from £5 to £6. This moves it more in line with the comparator towns, making it the 3rd most expensive for an all-day tariff compared to the towns summarised above.

6. Bromsgrove Town Centre off-street car park Overview and Conditions

6.1 As part of this study, 12 car parks were reviewed in Bromsgrove town centre. This review was undertaken in June 2024.

6.2 These car parks have been analysed using numerous metrics to establish the existing condition and to identify where improvements are necessary. The scoring is from 1 to 4 as shown below:

- **0 Very Poor**
- **1 Poor**
- **2 Satisfactory**
- **3 Good**
- **4 Very Good**
- **N/A Not Applicable to Site**
- **U Unclear at time of Assessment**

6.3 This review has allowed for a spider diagram to be created showing the areas where individual car parks perform well and poorly.

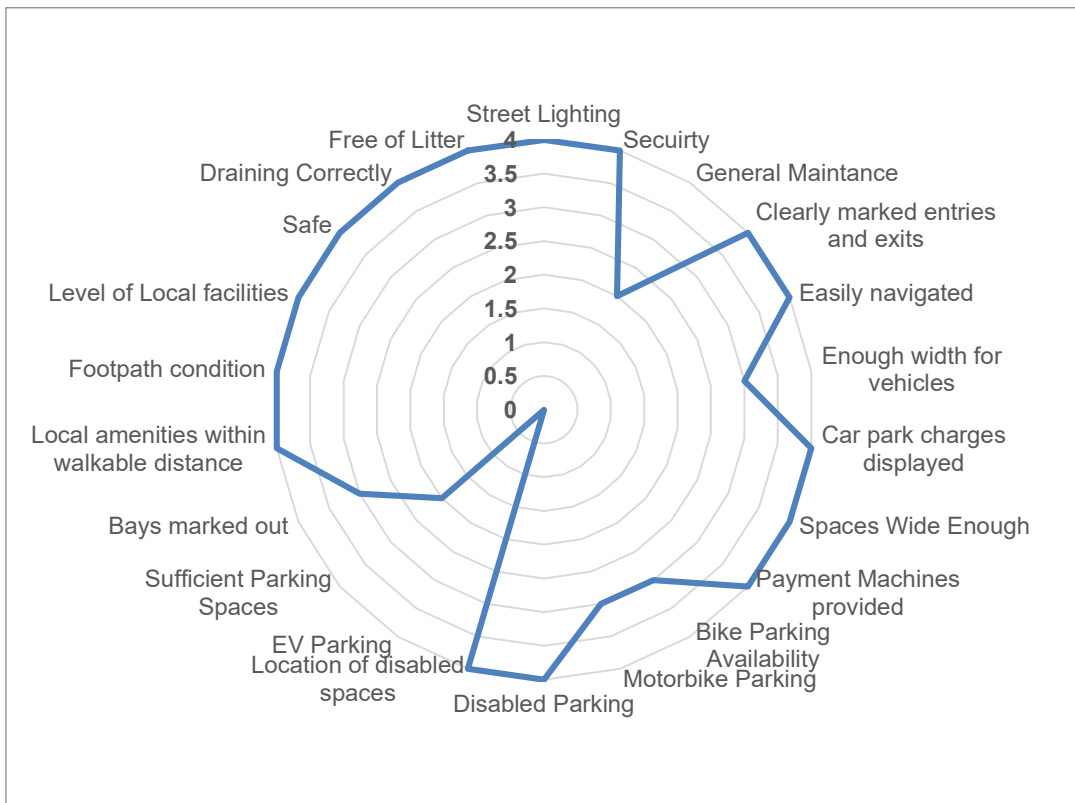
- **Safety and Security**
 - **Is the car park well-lit during day and night?**
 - **Are there security cameras installed, are they covering the whole car park?**
 - **Are there emergency call stations?**
 - **Are there any structural issues such as cracks, potholes, or broken barriers?**
- **Accessibility**
 - **Are the entries and exits clearly marked?**
 - **Is the car park easy to navigate?**
 - **Is the car park design wide enough for all desired vehicle types manoeuvring the car park?**
 - **If applicable, are pathways and ramps provided for wheelchair access?**
 - **Are there clear markings for one-way and two-way traffic?**
 - **Are there any congestion points that could cause delays?**
 - **Are the parking rules and regulations clearly displayed?**
- **Convenience and usability of Car park**
 - **Are the spaces adequately sized for modern vehicles?**
 - **What payment methods are available (cash, card, mobile payment)?**
 - **Are payment machines functional and conveniently located?**
 - **Is there a designated area for bike parking and how many?**
 - **Is there a designated area for motor bike parking?**
 - **Is there a designated area for Blue Badge parking and how many?**
 - **Are the Blue Badge spaces close to exits/entrances and facilities?**
 - **Is there designated area for electric vehicles and how many?**
 - **Is there sufficient parking for peak times?**
 - **Are there indicators or systems in place to show capacity or available spaces?**
 - **Are the parking bays, lanes and pedestrian walkways clearly marked?**

- Are there signs indicating speed limits and pedestrian crossings?
- **Assessment of Location**
 - Is the car park within reasonable walking distance (400m) to the relevant amenities it's there for?
 - If it's required to cross highway to amenities is there a suitable crossing?
 - Are nearby footpaths in appropriate condition?
 - How many shops are nearby and how many are vacant?
- **Additional Considerations**
 - Does the car park feel safe and inviting?
 - Is there adequate drainage to prevent flooding, or large puddles that could cause inconvenience?
 - Is the car park clean and free from litter and debris?

New Road car park

- 6.4 New Road car park has 59 spaces, three of which are Blue Badge and is located towards the south of the town centre. It is likely to be popular with people visiting food and entertainment venues across the town. Access and egress to New Road car park is via a single entrance from New Road. Pedestrians can access the car park from New Road.
- 6.5 New Road car park is a pay and display car park accepting both machine payments as well as app payments.
- 6.6 As shown in **Figure 4**, New Road car park scores well on most areas with an average score of 2.75 so this car park is satisfactory.

Figure 4: New Road Car Park Scoring



6.7 On the day of the site visit both Pay and Display machines were out of action. The key points where New Road car park scored poorly are detailed below:

- 'EV Parking,'
- 'Bike & Motorbike Parking,' and
- 'Wheelchair Accessible.'

6.8 This car park could be improved by providing EV charging on the car park. Guidance indicates that 10-20% of all spaces should be an EV charging space. For New Road this would result in between 6 and 11 EV spaces being required.

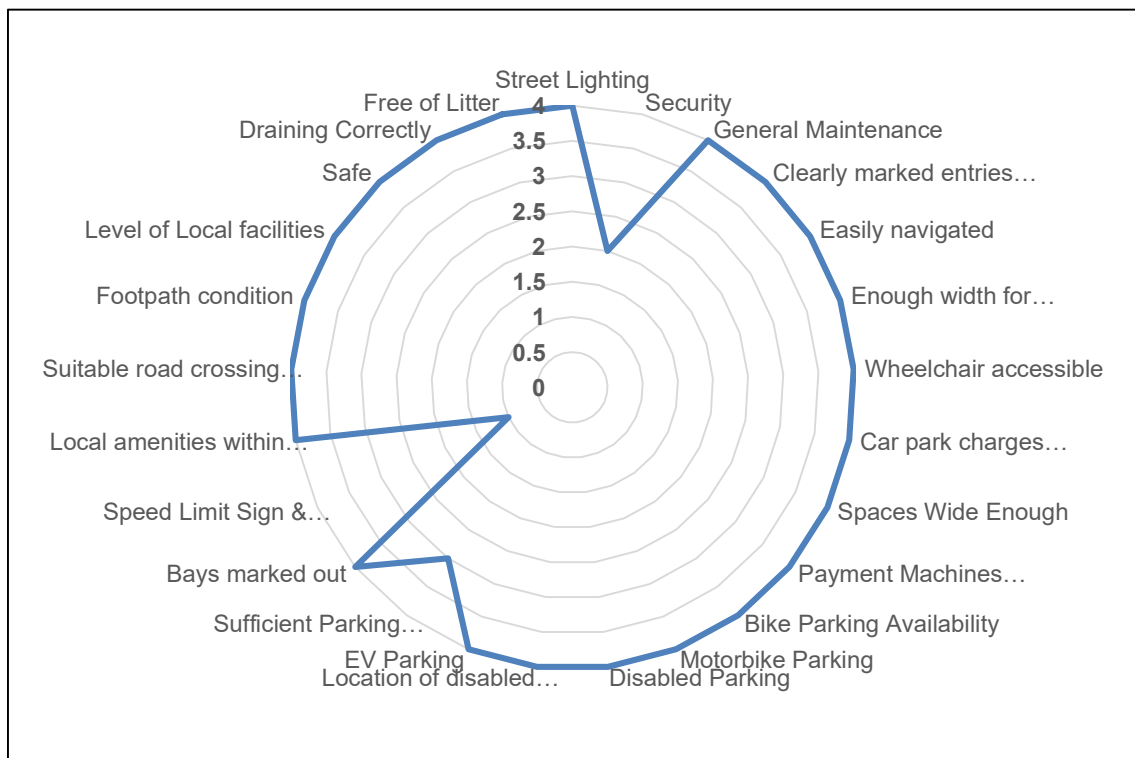
6.9 The Car park also scores lower for 'Wheelchair Accessibility.' This is due to a narrow footway which has a steep gradient for a wheelchair user from the town centre.

North Bromsgrove car park

6.10 North Bromsgrove car park has 195 spaces, 9 of which are Blue Badge and is located towards the northeast of the town centre. It is likely to be popular with people visiting food and entertainment venues across the town, as well as accessing the leisure centre. Access and egress are via a single entrance from School Drive. Pedestrians can access the car park from School Drive.

6.11 North Bromsgrove car park is a pay and display car park accepting both machine payments as well as app payments. As shown in **Figure 5**, North Bromsgrove car park scores well on most areas. Overall, this car park has an average score of 3.6 so is classified as being good.

Figure 5: North Bromsgrove Car park Scoring



6.12 The key points where New Road car park scored poorly are detailed below:

- 'Security,'
- 'Speed Limit Signing.'

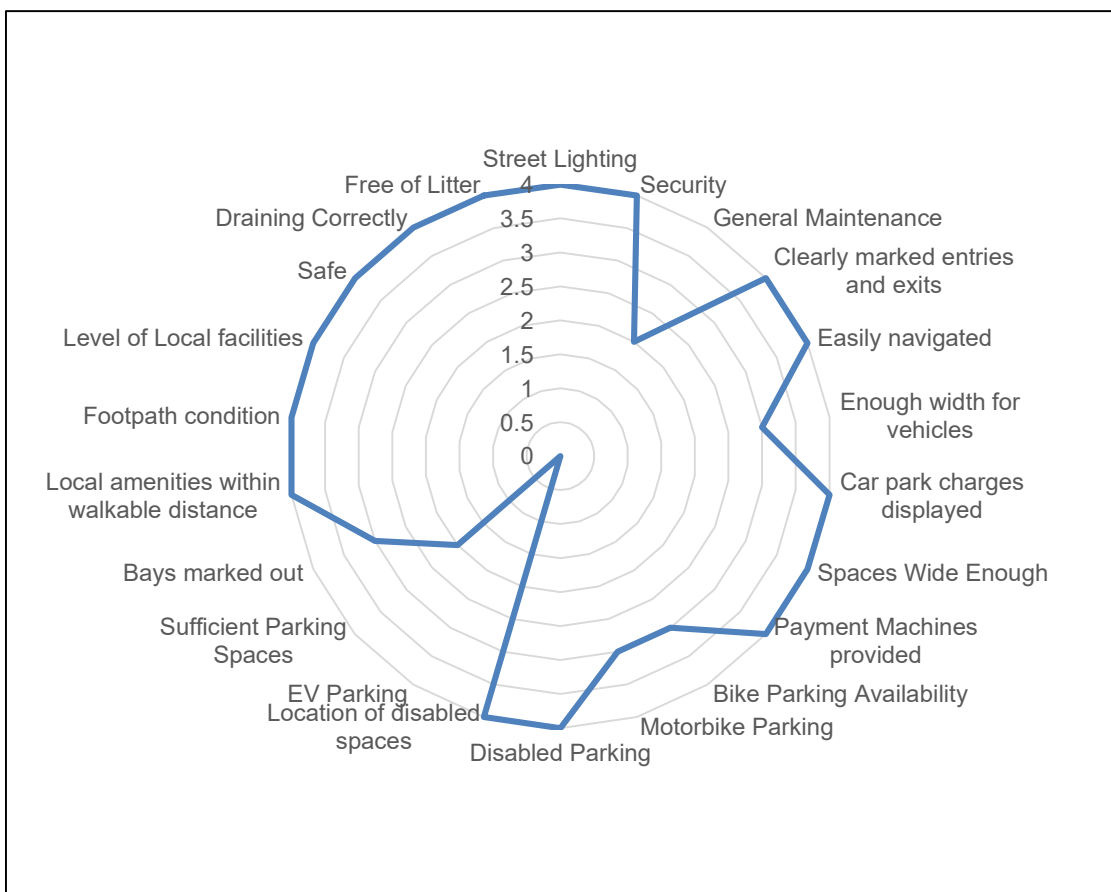
6.13 The car park would benefit from the installation of security cameras to make people feel like their vehicles are safe when being left in the car park. As well as this 5mph speed limit signing would help improve traffic speeds and make people aware to go slow in the car park due to pedestrians crossing.

Parkside Car Park

6.14 Parkside Car Park has a total of 92 spaces, with 6 of these being Blue Badge Spaces and is located near the Library and District Council offices at the north end of the town centre. There is a car park entrance and a separate exit onto Market Street. The entrance to the car park is close to the junction which could potentially cause a road safety risk with vehicles queuing back onto the A road while waiting to gain access to the car park.

6.15 Parkside car park is a pay and display car park accepting both machine payments as well as app payments. As shown below in **Figure 6**, Parkside Car Park scores well on most areas with an average score of 3 so is deemed to be good.

Figure 6: Parkside Car Park Scoring



6.16 The key points of which Parkside Car Park scored poorly are detailed below:

- 'EV Parking,' and
- 'Surfacing'

- 6.17 Guidance indicates that 10-20% of all spaces should be an EV charging space. For Parkside this would result in between 9 and 18 EV spaces.
- 6.18 Parkside car park scored 2 for surfacing, and therefore could benefit from improvements, with a few directional and bay markings needing updating within the next 5 years. An image showing the current condition of Parkside can be seen below.

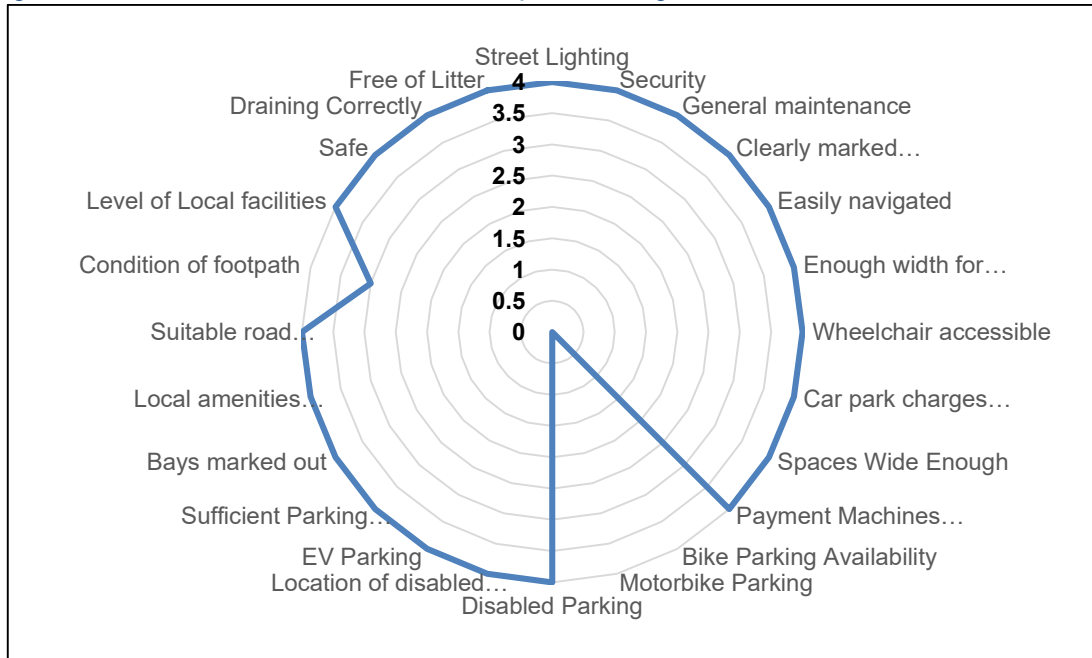
Photograph 1: Parkside Car Park Photo



Recreation Road South car park

- 6.19 Recreation Road South car park has a total of 312 spaces, 20 of which are blue badge spaces and is accessed and egressed for vehicles by a single entrance on Recreation Road. Pedestrians access the car park from available entrances off Market Street and Recreation Road. It is located adjacent to ASDA supermarket as well as a walking distance of the town centre.
- 6.20 Recreation Road South is a pay and display car park accepting both machine payments as well as app payments.
- 6.21 As shown in **Figure 7**, Recreation South car park scores well on most areas with an average score of 3 so is deemed to be good.

Figure 7: Recreation Road South Car park Scoring.



6.22 The only point where which Recreation Road South car park scored poorly are detailed below:

- 'Bike & Motorbike Parking.'

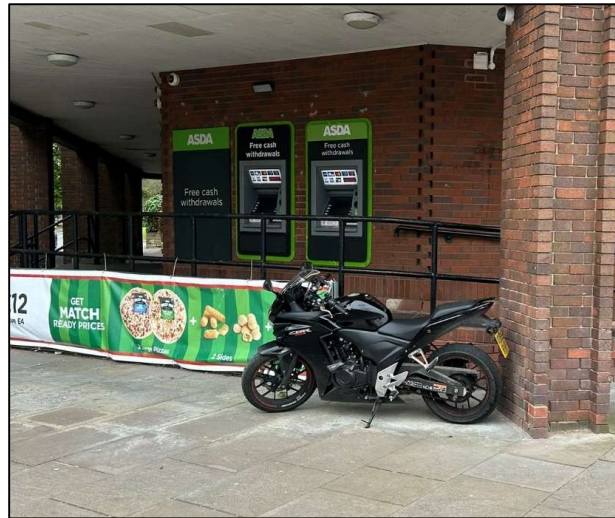
6.23 Overall, the car park is in a good condition with surfacing to a high quality and two EV parking spaces, there are several payment machines with the tariffs clearly displayed across the car park. An image of the car park can be seen overleaf.

Photograph 2: Recreation Road South Car park Photo



6.24 During a site visit motorcycles were observed to be parked on footways due to the lack of motorcycle parking available.

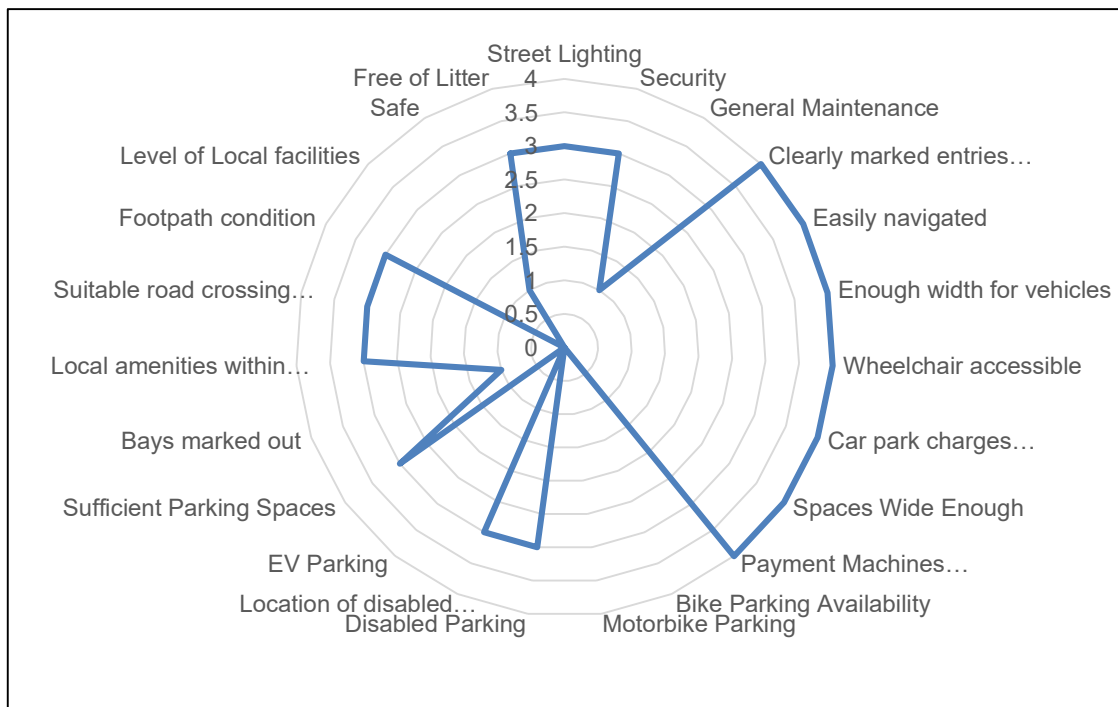
Photograph 3: Recreation Road Car Park Photo



School Drive car park

- 6.25 School Drive car park has a total of 128 spaces, 2 of which are blue badge spaces, and is accessed, and egressed is a single entrance off School Drive which leads to Stratford Road. The pedestrian access to the car park is off School Drive.
- 6.26 School Drive car park is a pay and display car park accepting both machine payments as well as app payments. As shown in **Figure 8**, School Drive Car park scores well on most areas with an average score of 2.5 so is deemed to be satisfactory.

Figure 8: School Drive Car park Score.



6.27 The key points of which School Drive car park scored poorly are detailed below:

- 'EV Parking.'
- 'Bicycle & Motorcycle Parking' and
- 'Surfacing'

6.28 Overall, School Drive car park is in a poor condition with surfacing and lining to a low quality and no EV parking provision. There are several payment machines with the tariffs clearly displayed across the car park. An image of the car park can be seen below:

Photograph 4: School Drive Car park

Photograph 5: School Drive Car park



6.29 As shown above the surfacing and lining would benefit from being refreshed. However, given the levels of utilisation for this car park it is unclear whether it would offer economic benefit to BDC to resurface the car park due to the low levels of utilisation recorded.

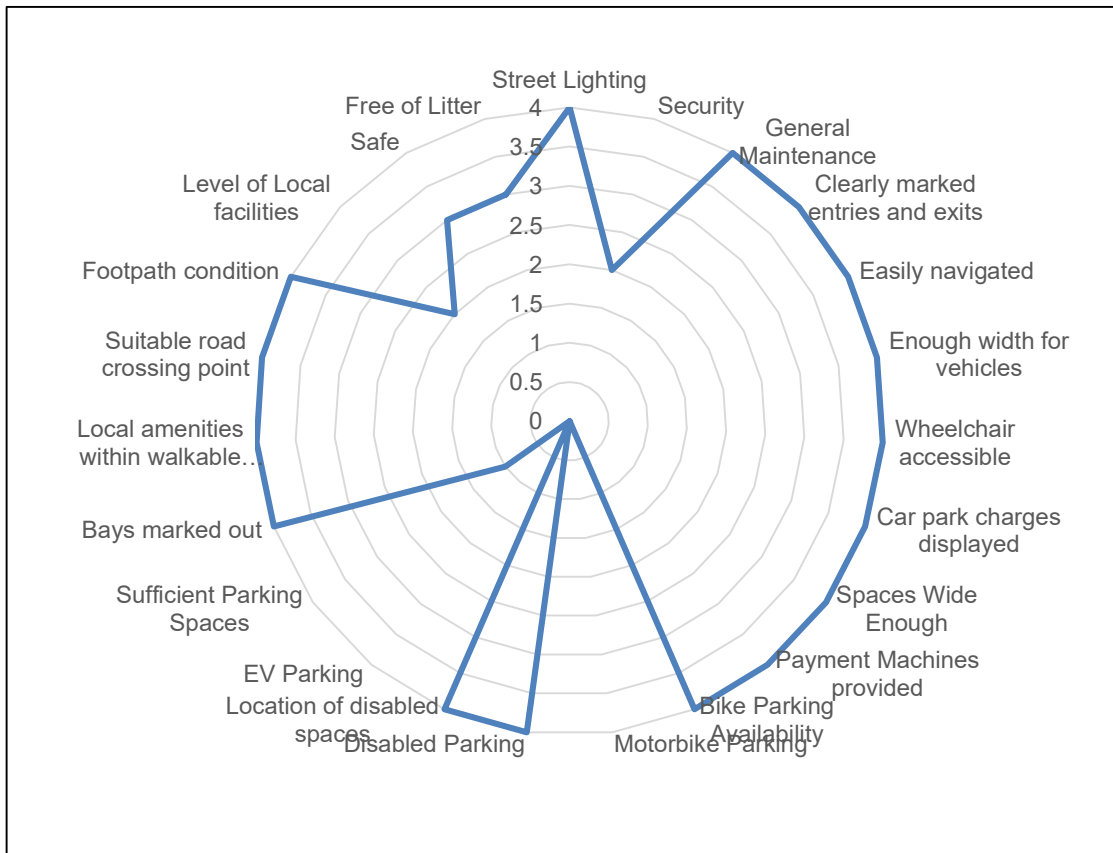
St John Street car park

6.30 St John Street car park is a short stay car park with a maximum stay of 3 hours and has a total of 60 spaces, 4 of which are blue badge spaces. The car park is located outside Waitrose and its primary function is to serve customers shopping in Waitrose.

6.31 However, due to its proximity to the town centre and visibility for visitors it is well used for town centre visitors and shoppers. The access and egress are via a single entrance from Market Street. Pedestrians can access the car park from Market Street and through a footpath that leads to Worcester Road.

6.32 St John Street car park is a pay and display car park accepting both machine payments as well as app payments. As shown overleaf in **Figure 9**, St John Street car park scores well on most areas with an average score of 2.5 so is deemed to be satisfactory.

Figure 9: St John Street Car park



6.33 The key points of which St John Street car park scored poorly are detailed below:

- 'EV Parking,' and
- 'Motorcycle Parking'

6.34 Overall, the car park is in a good condition with surfacing to a good quality. For improvement, the car park could benefit from EV provision. Given the high occupancy and the short stay nature, the car park would benefit from fast EV charging capacity. There is a lack of motorcycle parking within the car park, so the car park could benefit from including motorcycle parking provision.

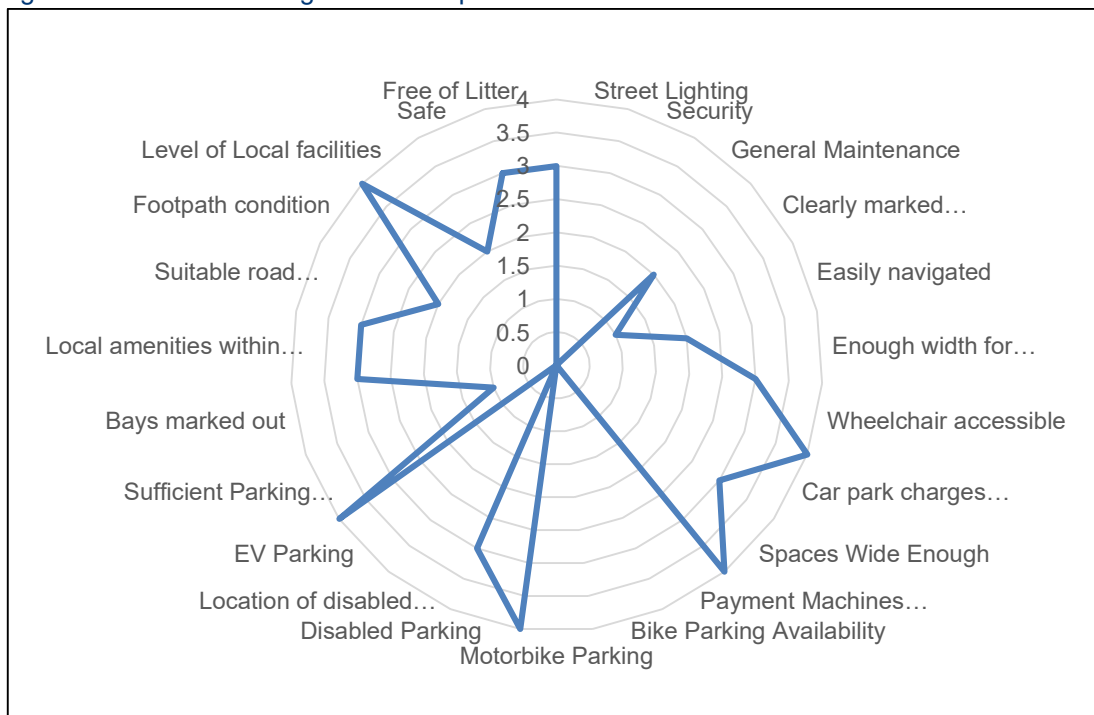
Stourbridge Road car park

6.35 Stourbridge Road car park has a total of 76 spaces, 5 of which are blue badge spaces. The car park is located near the library and District Council offices. The access and egress are via a single entrance from Stourbridge Road. Pedestrians can access the car park via Stourbridge Road and Birmingham Road.

6.36 Stourbridge Road Car park is a pay and display car park accepting both machine payments as well as app payments.

6.37 As shown in **Figure 10**, Stourbridge Road Car park scores poorly on most areas with an average score of 2.2 so is deemed to be satisfactory.

Figure 10: Stourbridge Road Car park Score



6.38 The key points of which Stourbridge Car Park scored poorly are detailed below:

- 'Secure,'
- 'Motorcycle and Bicycle Parking'
- 'EV Parking,' and
- 'Surfacing'

6.39 Overall, the car park is in a poor condition with the bay markings worn away and several potholes within the car park making it very unappealing for people to want to park there.

6.40 The car park scored poorly for the 'Secure' category due to it not being appealing to leave a car at as well as a lack of CCTV across the whole car park. This could be a major factor as to why there are such low levels of utilisation seen within this car park. An image displaying the current conditions can be seen overleaf.

Photograph 6: Stourbridge Road Car park

Photograph 7: Stourbridge Road Car park

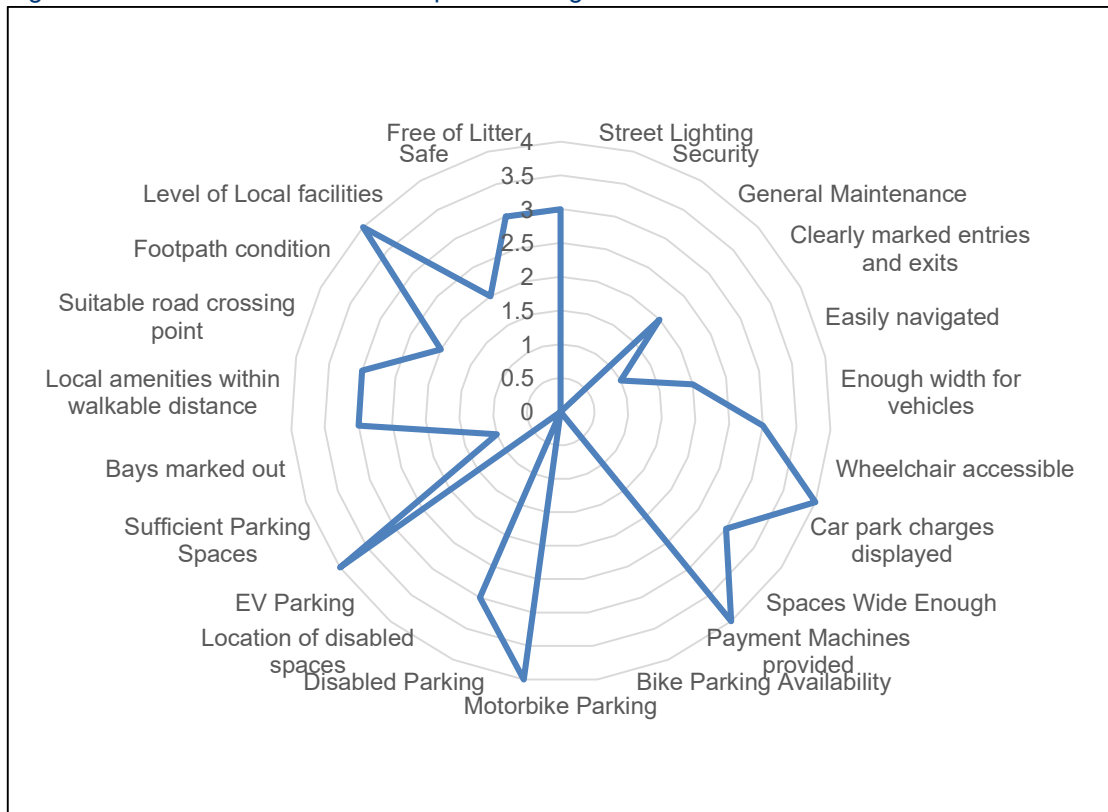


- 6.41 If it is redeveloped EV charging spaces are recommended, similar to other car parks across the town centre, offering a further incentive for people to park there.
- 6.42 Also, there is a lack of motorcycle parking within the car park so the car park could benefit from including motorcycle parking provision.

Windsor Street car park

- 6.43 Windsor Street car park is a short stay car park with a maximum stay of 3 hours and has a total of 71 spaces, 6 of which are blue badge spaces and 2 EV charging spaces. The car park is located along Windsor Street which is a road that runs parallel to the High Street making this car park attractive to visitors and shoppers to the town centre. This is supported by the car park having the highest occupancy rates over a day.
- 6.44 There is a car park entrance and a separate exit although both feed onto Windsor Street. Pedestrians access the car park from Windsor Street. Windsor Street car park is a pay and display car park accepting both machine payments as well as app payments.
- 6.45 As shown overleaf in **Figure 11**, Windsor Street car park scores well on most areas with an average score of 3.1 so is deemed to be good overall.

Figure 11: Windsor Street Car park Scoring



6.46 The key points of which Windsor Street Car park scored poorly are detailed below:

- ‘Sufficient Parking Spaces,’ and
- ‘Motorcycle and Bicycle Parking’

6.47 The first metric stated above where it scored poorly was ‘Sufficient Parking Spaces,’ whereas stated in the occupancy data the car park is at capacity so there may not be enough space for people to be able to park there. A solution would be to redirect users using signage to other nearby car parks which have capacity such as New Road.

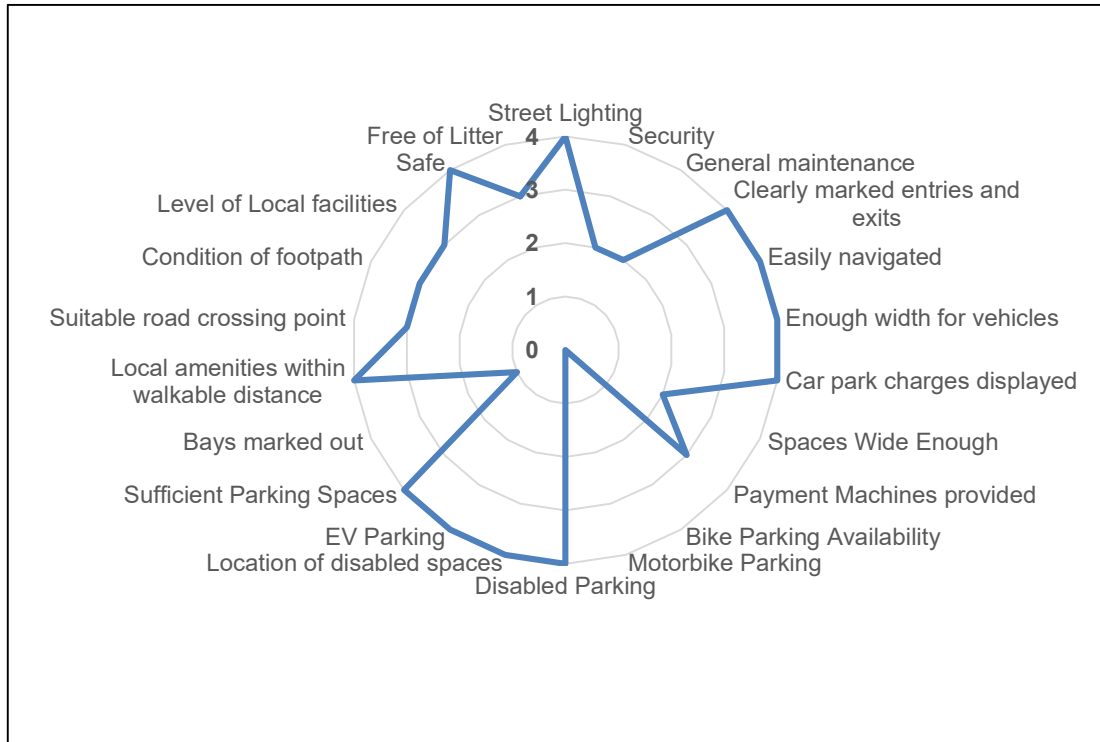
6.48 The second metric stated above in which the car park scored poorly is ‘Motorcycle and Bicycle Parking.’ To correct this, secure cycle parking could be provided on the footway next to the car park. As for motorcycle parking, due to the car park being at capacity at its peak, there isn’t the space to reallocate a space for motorcycle parking within this car park specifically.

Aston Fields car park

6.49 Aston Fields car park is a short stay car park with a maximum stay of 2 hours and has a total of 40 spaces, 2 of which are blue badge spaces. The car park also has 2 EV charging spaces. The car park is located outside of Bromsgrove Town Centre near to Bromsgrove Train Station, which already has its own designated car park. Aston Fields Car park is a free car park.

6.50 As shown overleaf in **Figure 12**, Aston Fields Car park scores well on most areas with an average score of 3 so is deemed to be good overall.

Figure 12: Aston Fields Car park Scoring



6.51 The key points of which Aston Fields car park scored poorly are detailed below:

- ‘Bays Marked Out,’ and
- ‘Motorcycle and Bicycle Parking’

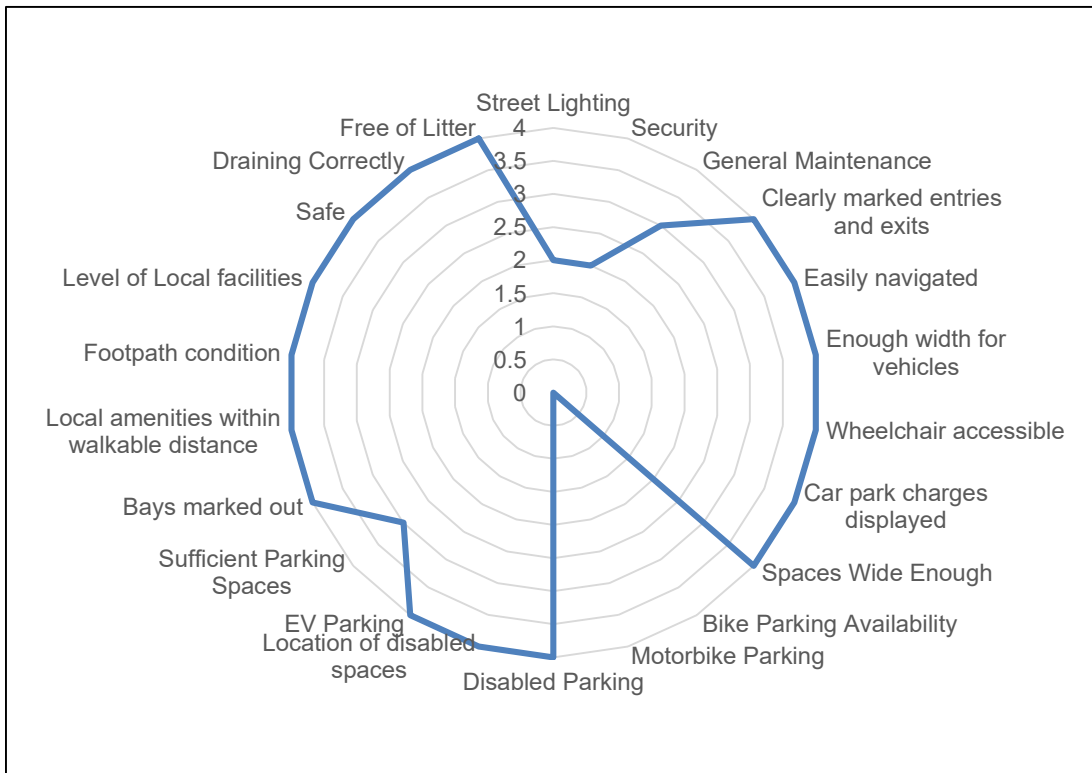
6.52 The first metric of which the car park scored poorly was ‘Bays Marked out,’ this is due to the car park being gravel surfaced at the time of the visit, and the bays not being marked out apart from a small white marker on the kerb. As of the time of revising this report, the car park had been resurfaced and relined, which will boost both metrics accordingly.

Sanders Park Car park

6.53 Sanders Park car park is a free car park and has a total of 80 spaces, 6 of which are blue badge spaces. The car park also has 2 EV charging spaces. The car park is located along on the edge of Bromsgrove Town Centre and adjacent to Sanders Park.

6.54 As shown in **Figure 13**, Sanders Park car park scores well on most areas with an average score of 3.4 so is deemed to be good overall.

Figure 13: Sanders Park Car park Scoring



6.55 The key point of which Sanders Park car park scored poorly are detailed below:

- 'Motorcycle and Bicycle Parking'

6.56 The metric stated above in which the car park scored poorly is 'Motorcycle and Bicycle Parking,' due to its location adjacent to Sanders Park, cycle parking would be useful to be installed. As for Motorcycle Parking, due to the car park having capacity at its peak, there is space to reallocate a space for motorcycle parking within this car park.

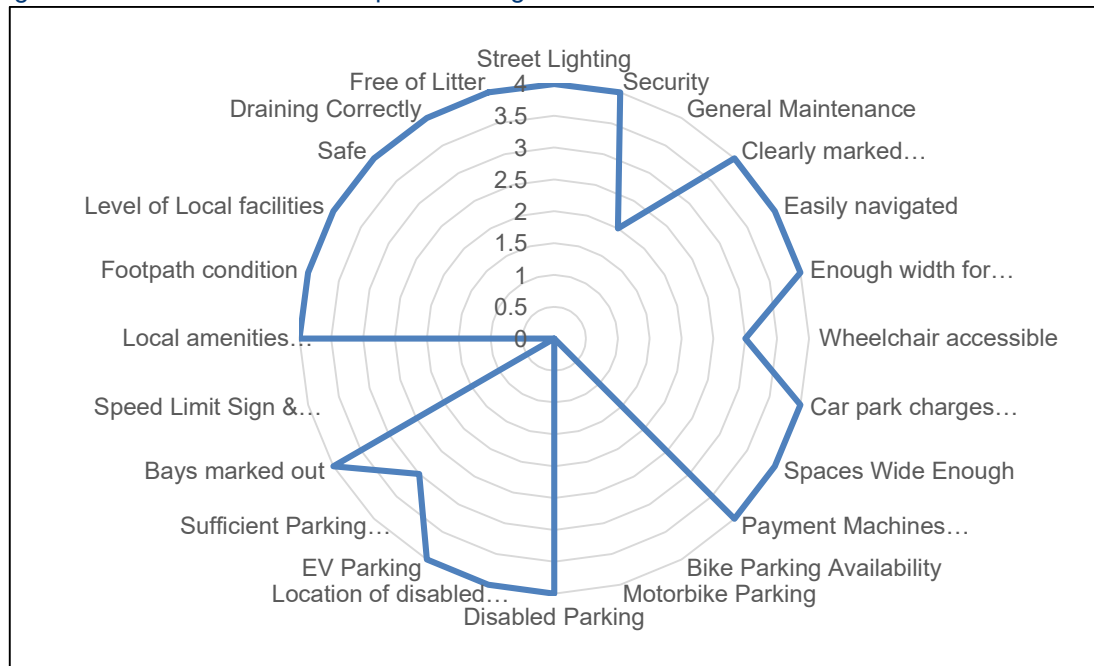
6.57 Overall, the car park scored well across most metrics and is ideally placed for people to be able to park securely to use Sanders Park on the outskirts of Bromsgrove Town Centre

Alvechurch Car park

6.58 Alvechurch car park is a free car park and has a total of 45 spaces, 3 of which are blue badge spaces. The car park also has 2 EV charging spaces. The car park is located near the centre of Alvechurch Village and close to the Village Hall.

6.59 As shown in **Figure 14**, Alvechurch car park scores well on most areas with an average score of 3.4 so is deemed to be good overall.

Figure 14: Alvechurch Car park Scoring



6.60 The key points of which the car park scored poorly are detailed below:

- 'Motorcycle and Bicycle Parking'
- 'Speed Limit Signage'
- 'General Maintenance'

6.61 The metric stated above in which Alvechurch car park scored poorly is 'Motorcycle and Bicycle Parking,' given that it is the only car park in the village it could benefit from the installation of Motorcycle and cycle parking spaces and there is adequate space for it to be installed.

6.62 The car park currently has no speed signage to alert drivers to lower their speed however it does have speed humps to control speed as drivers enter/exit the car park which can be seen overleaf in **Photographs 8 and 9**. Currently, the car park is in a good condition but in 5 years could potentially require resurfacing.

Photograph 8: Alvechurch Car park



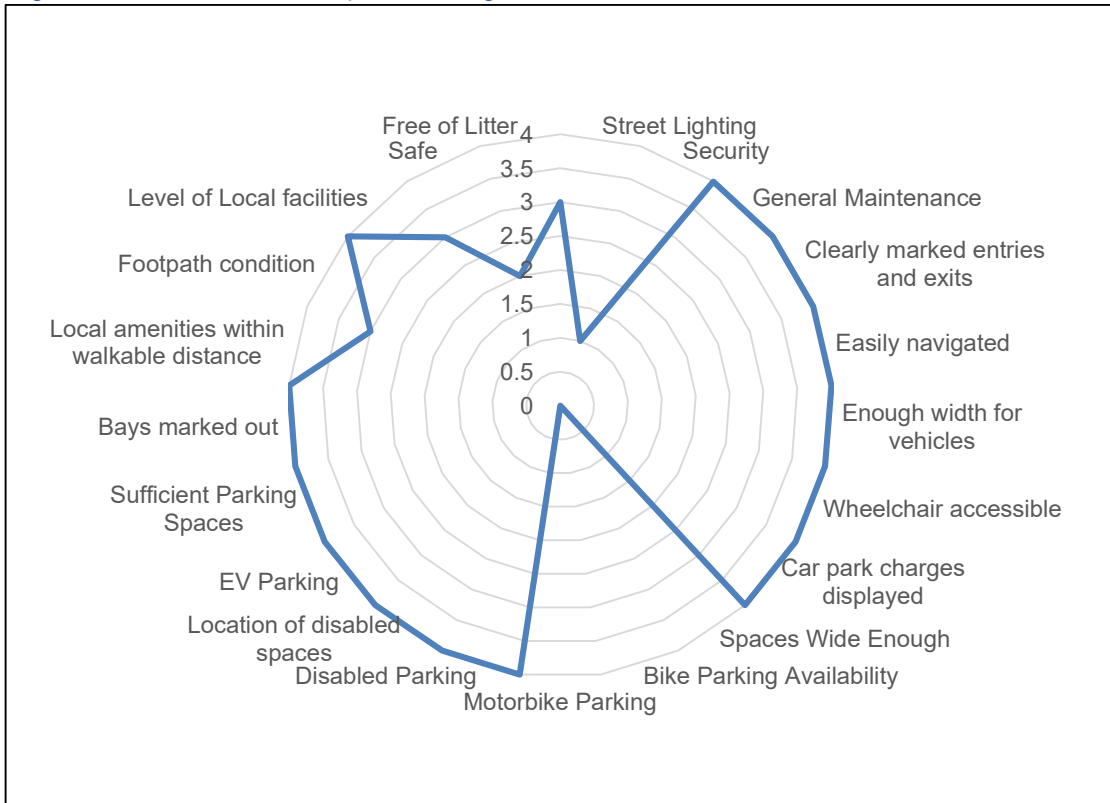
Photograph 9: Alvechurch Car park



Catshill Car park

- 6.63 Catshill car park is a free car park and has a total of 15 spaces, 1 of which are blue badge spaces. The car park also has 2 EV charging spaces. The car park is located on Golden Cross Lane near to Catshill Village Hall and local shops and amenities.
- 6.64 As shown in **Figure 15**, Catshill Park car park scores well on most areas with an average score of 3.2 so is deemed to be good overall.

Figure 15: Catshill Car park Scoring



- 6.65 The key points of which the car park scored poorly are detailed below:
- 'Motorcycle and Bicycle Parking'
- 6.66 The metric stated above in which Catshill car park scored poorly is 'Motorcycle and Bicycle Parking,' given the car park only has 15 spaces it is not deemed necessary for cycle or bicycle parking to be installed given the location of the car park.
- 6.67 Images below highlight the current conditions at Catshill car park can be seen below.

Photograph 10: Catshill Car park



Photograph 11: Catshill Car park



6.68 Overall, the car park scored well across most metrics and is ideally placed for people to be able to park securely to use the local amenities within Catshill.

7. Parking Occupancy

Average Occupancy by car park

7.1 Car parking occupancy data has been provided by BDC and analysed to understand occupancy rates at car parks operated by BDC.

7.2 Data has been provided for the period 22/04/24 – 28/04/24. This considered to be a typical week within a neutral month with no school holidays or public holidays to impact the findings.

7.3 The data is therefore considered to give an accurate representation of typical occupancy levels. The results can be seen in **Table 5**, with the following colour coding:

- **Red** = Less than 30% Occupancy
- **Orange** = 30% - 60% Occupancy
- **Green** = Greater than 60% Occupancy

Table 5: Average Occupancy by Car park

Car park	Weekday Average Occupancy			Saturday Average Occupancy			Sunday Average Occupancy		
	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
New Road car park	35%	35%	13%	56%	68%	18%	29%	46%	9%
North Bromsgrove car park	7%	10%	7%	21%	19%	2%	13%	13%	1%
Parkside car park	42%	68%	30%	47%	77%	18%	14%	32%	6%
Recreation Road South car park	30%	40%	32%	43%	61%	32%	20%	33%	N/A
School Drive car park	11%	25%	19%	12%	33%	25%	4%	8%	12%
St John Street car park	43%	83%	96%	64%	98%	88%	13%	37%	13%
Stourbridge Road car park	7%	5%	2%	1%	11%	7%	1%	2%	0%
Windsor Street car park	39%	73%	77%	73%	95%	53%	22%	10%	11%

7.4 As can be seen above in **Table 5**, there are 3 car parks which have the highest occupancy rates of above 60% in both Monday-Friday as well as on the weekend, with St John Street having a 96% average occupancy rate on a weekday evening, 98% peak average occupancy rate on Saturday afternoon. Overall, across the chargeable times, the car park was at 60% utilisation.

- 7.5 As well as St John Street car park, Windsor Street car park had a high utilisation rate of 77% on a weekday evening, 95% on a Saturday afternoon and 22% on a Sunday morning. Overall, across all the chargeable times, the average utilisation was 50% across all 3 days.
- 7.6 The car parks with the lowest utilisation are Stourbridge Road car park and School Drive car park. Firstly, Stourbridge Road car park had a peak average utilisation rate of only 7% on a weekday morning, 11% on a Saturday afternoon and 2% on a Sunday afternoon. The overall utilisation rate for Stourbridge Road was 4% across all the chargeable hours. A factor as to why the utilisation is low on the car park is due to Aldi being adjacent which has free parking for customers, as well as Bromsgrove retail park to the east which also has free parking. Utilisation was low during a site visit on 24th June 2024 which can be seen in **Photographs 12 and 13**.

Photograph 11: Stourbridge Road Car park

Photograph 12: Stourbridge Road Car park



- 7.7 School Drive was also mainly below 30% peak utilisation on the surveyed week, with the weekday utilisation being 19%, the Saturday being 23%, and the Sunday being the lowest at 8%. The overall average utilisation across all the chargeable hours was slightly higher than Stourbridge Road at 17%.

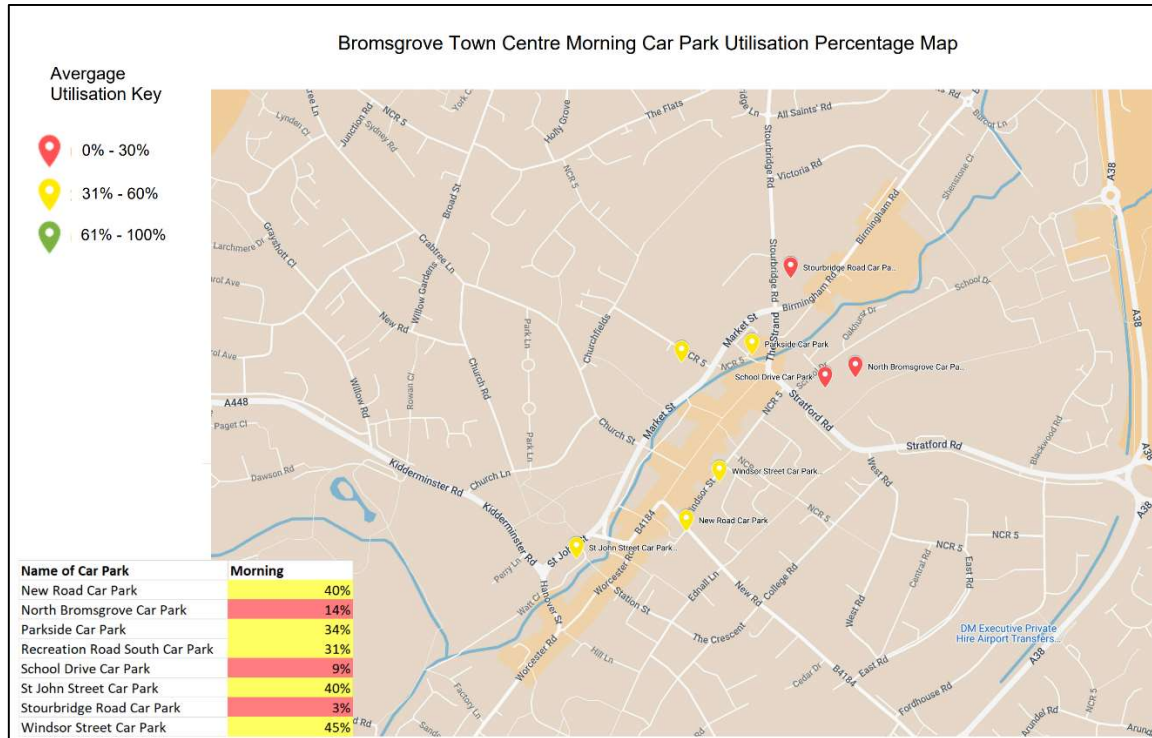
Existing Utilisation of Car parks

- 7.8 Using payment data collected from transaction reports analysing all methods of payments, Debit Card, Credit Card, Cash and Online/App payments, utilisation estimates for each car park has been calculated.
- 7.9 For a weekday, a Saturday and a Sunday, each car park has been split into three periods, Morning, Afternoon, Evening as well as a map showing the average throughout the total opening hours of the car park.

7.10 In the figures below, an average utilisation map for the morning, afternoon and evening periods has been provided.

7.11 The following map in **Figure 16** shows a utilisation estimate for the morning period across a standard Weekday, Saturday, and Sunday.

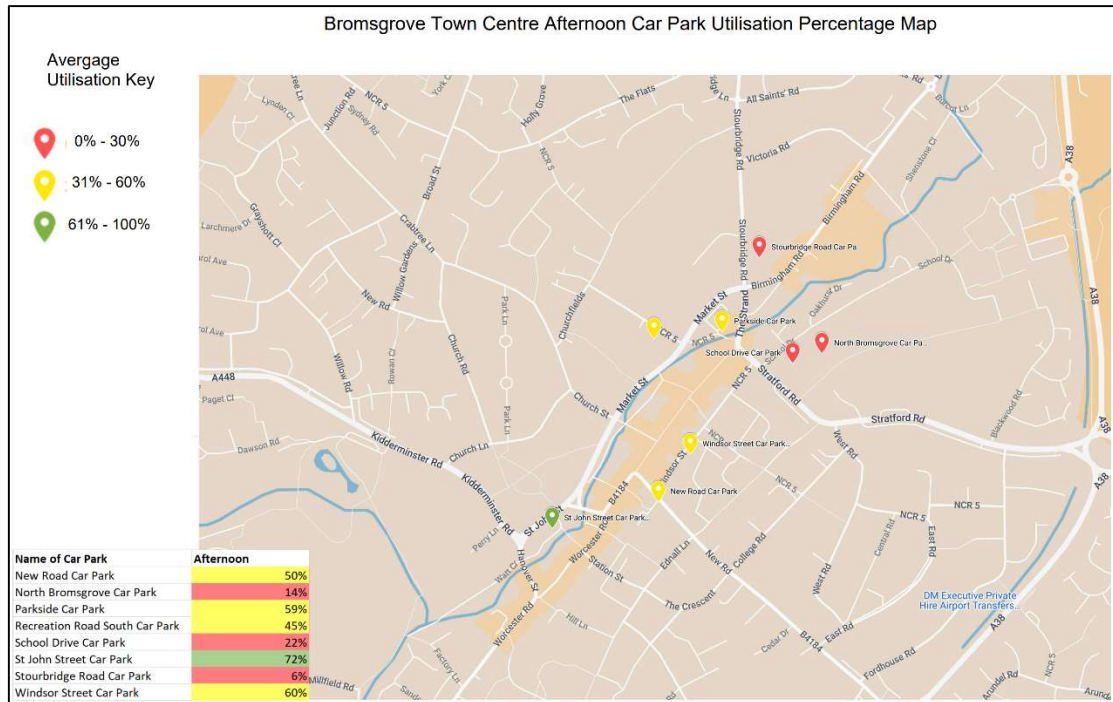
Figure 16: Morning Period Utilisation Map Bromsgrove Centre



7.12 As can be seen in the figure above, in the morning period across the three days, no car parks in Bromsgrove are fully utilised, whilst 5 out of the 8 car parks have a utilisation percentage of approximately 31-60%, with North Bromsgrove car park, Stourbridge Road car park and School Drive car park having the lowest utilisation percentage (less than 30%), with Stourbridge Road car park having just 3%.

7.13 The figure overleaf shows the afternoon period across all three days:

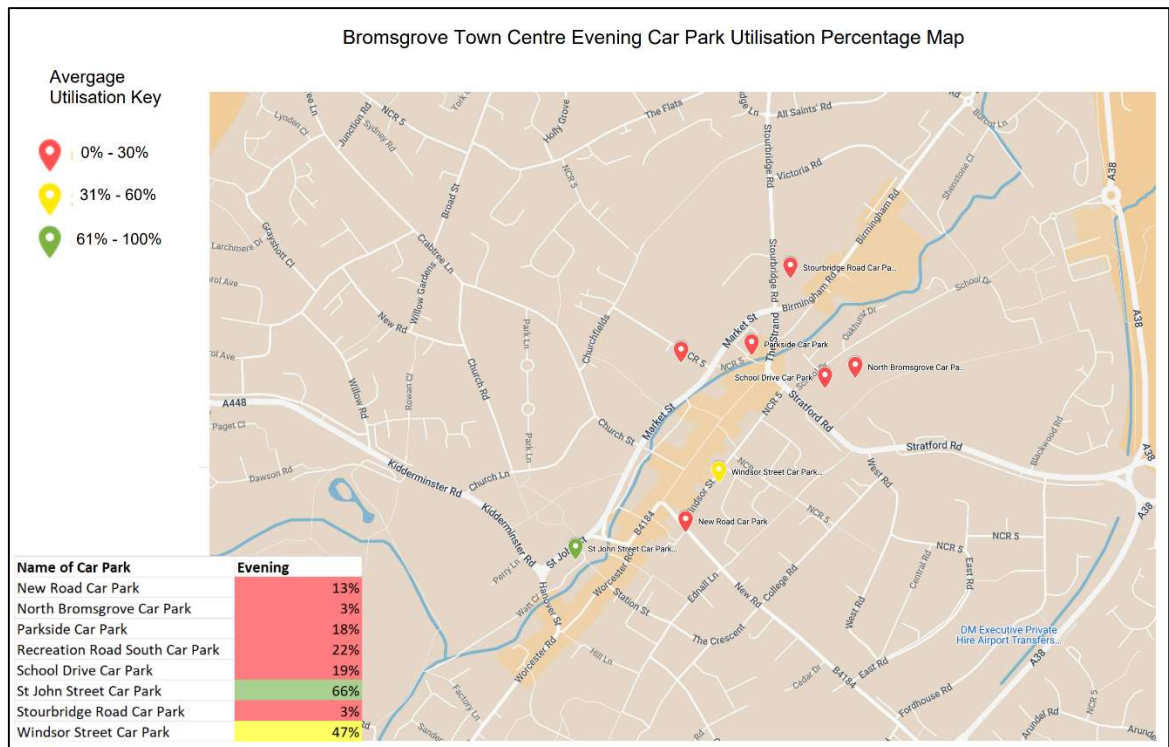
Figure 17: Afternoon Period Utilisation Map Bromsgrove Centre



7.14 Similarly to the morning period, most car parks are in the red utilisation bracket or the yellow. However, St John Street car park has a utilisation percentage of 72%, whilst Windsor Street car park' has a utilisation percentage of 60%.

7.15 The figure overleaf shows the Evening period across all three days.

Figure 18: Evening Period Utilisation Map Bromsgrove Centre



7.16 'St John Street car park' and Windsor Street car park' are consistently the car parks with the highest utilisation into the evening. On the other hand, many of the other car parks are estimated to be majorly under-utilised, with Stourbridge Road car park and North Bromsgrove car park having just 3% estimated utilisation throughout the entire period.

Summary

7.17 Overall, the two short stay car parks (Windsor Street and St John Street) had the highest utilisation, consistently of above 60% in the afternoon and the evening on average. For these two car parks, the morning saw the lowest utilisation at 45% and 40% respectively, on average.

7.18 The car parks with the lowest utilisation on average during the morning hours was Stourbridge Road, School Drive, and North Bromsgrove car parks which had 3%, 9%, and 14% utilisation respectively, this follows similar themes shown in **Table 5**.

7.19 The car parks with the lowest utilisation on average during the afternoon hours was again Stourbridge Road, School Drive, and North Bromsgrove car parks which had slightly higher values than was recorded in the mornings at 6%, 22%, and 14%, respectively.

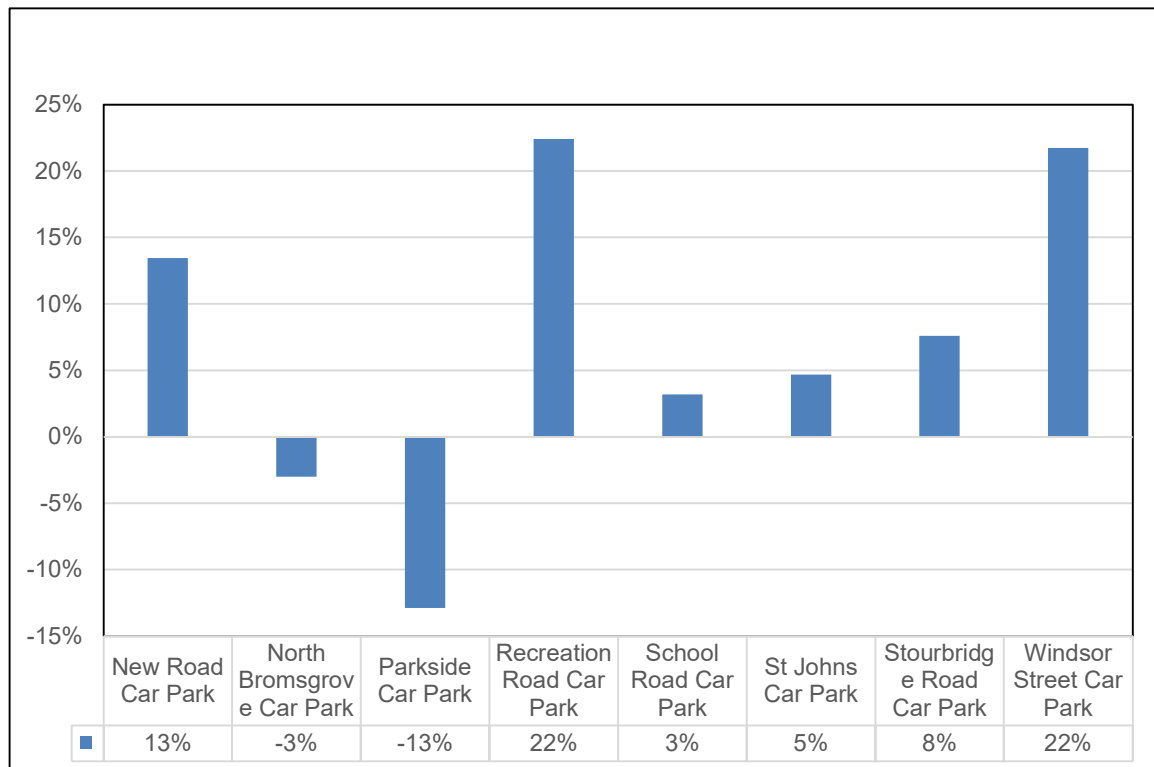
7.20 The car parks with the lowest utilisation on average during the morning hours was Stourbridge Road and North Bromsgrove car parks which had only 3% utilisation each, respectively.

7.21 A key theme seen from the figures above is that the car parks with the lowest utilisation are all located to the northeast of the town centre.

Change between Weekday and Weekend Occupancy

7.22 The graph in **Figure 19** highlights the change between weekday and weekend average occupancy values to see if there are any trends across the car parks.

Figure 19: Change between weekday and weekend average occupancy



- 7.23 None of the publicly owned car parks have equal usage between the weekdays and weekends, although School Drive and North Bromsgrove car parks have the smallest change between the weekdays and the weekend.
- 7.24 This could be due to their proximity to the leisure centre which sees a large number of spaces utilised on the evenings as highlighted earlier, and there would be a similar amount using the leisure centre during the weekend when people aren't working, to go to the gym, attend swimming lessons etc.
- 7.25 Three of the car parks have a difference of below 5% between the weekday and the weekend, and these are School Road, North Bromsgrove, and St Johns car parks which have a change of +3%, -3%, and +5% respectively.
- 7.26 The highest percentage change seen is on both Recreation Road and Windsor Street car parks at 22% higher on the weekend than on a weekday. For Recreation Road specifically, this is due to it being located adjacent to Asda supermarket and people typically tend to go food shopping on a Saturday when they are not working.
- 7.27 For Windsor Street, utilisation is higher on the weekend due to its proximity to the town centre and more people using the facilities of Bromsgrove town centre on the weekends.

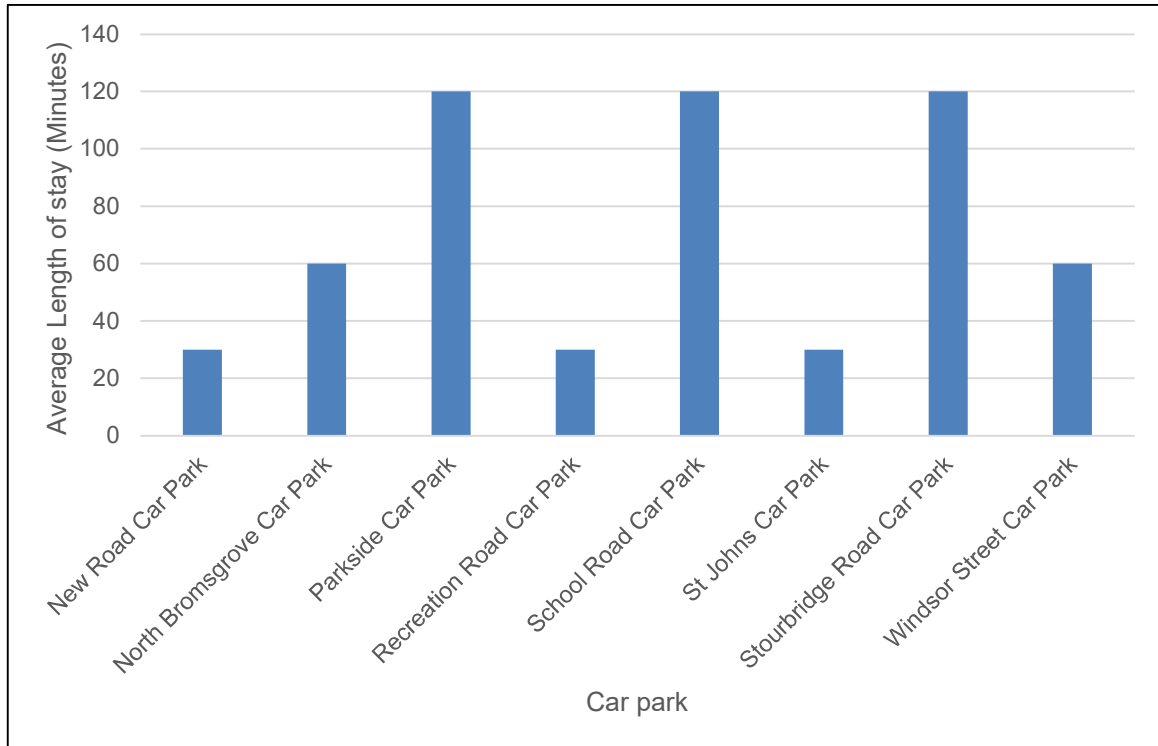
Average Length of Stay per Car park

- 7.28 The average length of stay for each car park has been identified by finding the most common amount of time purchased for each car park and seeing what amount of time that equates to for the tariff. This is the most accurate way of calculating the value however an assumption that the user of the car park stays for the whole amount of time purchased has been made to calculate this.

Weekday

7.29 The graph in **Figure 20** shows the Average Length of stay for an average weekday for each car park.

Figure 20: Average length of stay for an average weekday.

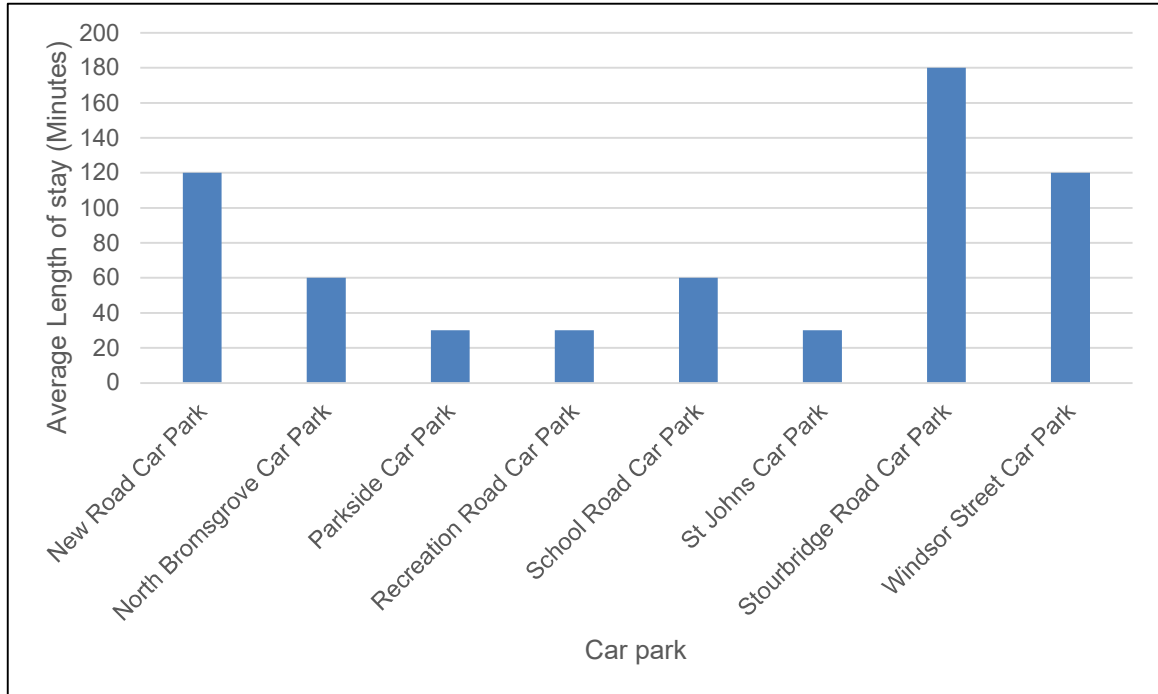


7.30 As shown above, the average length of stay for a weekday was highest on Parkside car park, School Drive car park and Stourbridge Road car park at 120 minutes (3 hours). The car parks with the lowest average length of stay for a weekday were New Road, Recreation Road, and St Johns car parks at 30 minutes in length.

Saturday

7.31 The graph in **Figure 21** shows the Average Length of stay for a Saturday for each car park.

Figure 21: Average Length of stay for a Saturday.

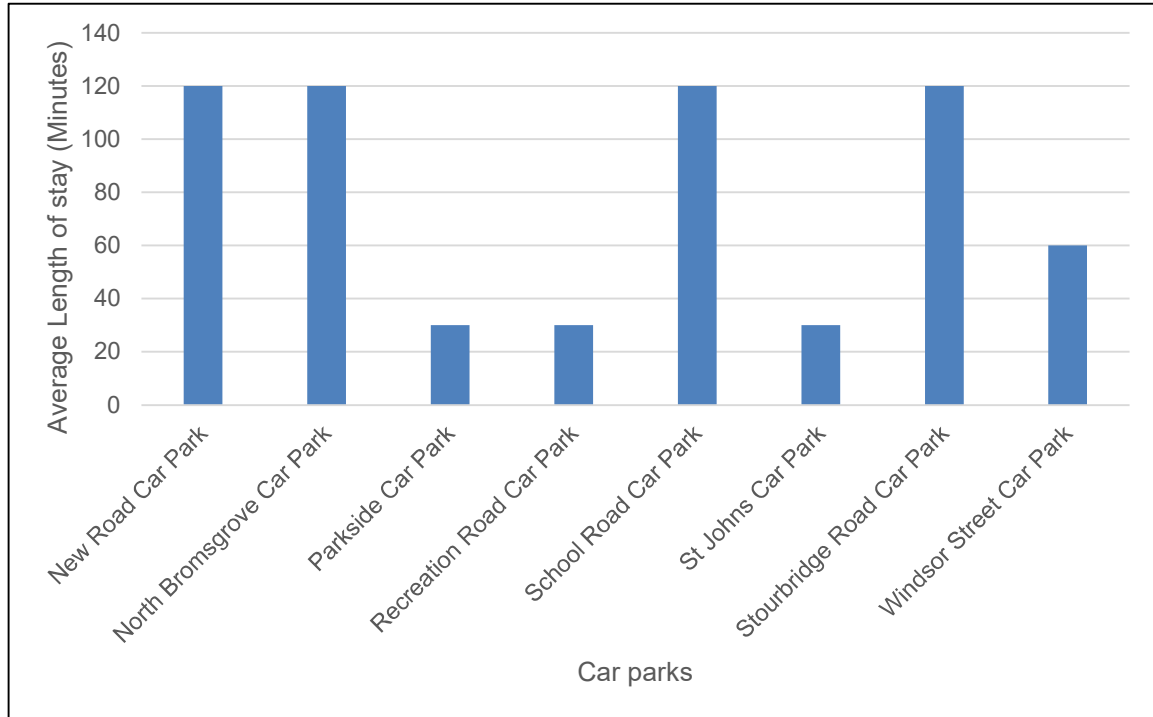


7.32 As shown above, the average length of stay for a Saturday was highest on Stourbridge Road car park at 180 minutes (3 hours) and New Road car park & Windsor Street car park at 120 minutes (2 hours). The car parks with the lowest average length of stay for a Saturday were Parkside Road, Recreation Road, and St Johns car parks at 30 minutes in length.

Sunday

7.33 The graph in **Figure 22** shows the Average Length of stay on a Sunday for each car park.

Figure 22: Average Length of stay for a Sunday



7.34 As shown above, the average length of stay for a Sunday was highest on New Road car park, North Bromsgrove car park, School Drive car park and Stourbridge Road car park at 120 minutes (2 hours). The car parks with the lowest average length of stay for a weekday were Parkside Road, Recreation Road, and St Johns car parks at 30 minutes in length.

Overview

7.35 As highlighted above, the average length of stay for all transactions made on the payment apps as well as the machine transactions was calculated through trip data provided by BDC.

7.36 Overall, New Road car park had longer stays recorded on both Saturday and Sunday at 120 minutes (3 hours) in length in comparison to an average stay of 30 minutes on a weekday.

7.37 North Bromsgrove car park had shorter stays recorded on a weekday as well as on a Saturday with stays averaging 60 minutes (1 hour). This differs to Sunday in which the average stay was 120 minutes (2 hours).

7.38 On Saturday and Sunday, Parkside car park, Recreation Road car park and St Johns car park all had average stays of 30 minutes. This remained the same for Recreation Road and St Johns car park on Thursday with the average stay once again being 30 minutes. However, Parkside car park slightly increased with an average stay of 60 minutes (1 hour).

7.39 School Road car park had stays of 120 minutes (2 hours) on both a weekday and Sunday. This differs to Saturday which had an average stay recorded of 60 minutes (1 hour).

7.40 Stourbridge Road car park has the longest average stay on Saturday at 180 minutes (3 hours). The average stay recorded on a weekday and Sunday was 120 minutes (2 hours) respectively.

- 7.41 Finally, Windsor Street car park had the longest average stay on Saturday at 120 minutes (2 hours) in length. This is greater than the average stay recorded for a weekday and Sunday at 60 minutes (1 hour) in length.
- 7.42 Interestingly, the average length of stay recorded across most of the car parks over the three surveyed dates were below 2 hours, with only Stourbridge Road on Saturday having an average length of stay of 3 hours.

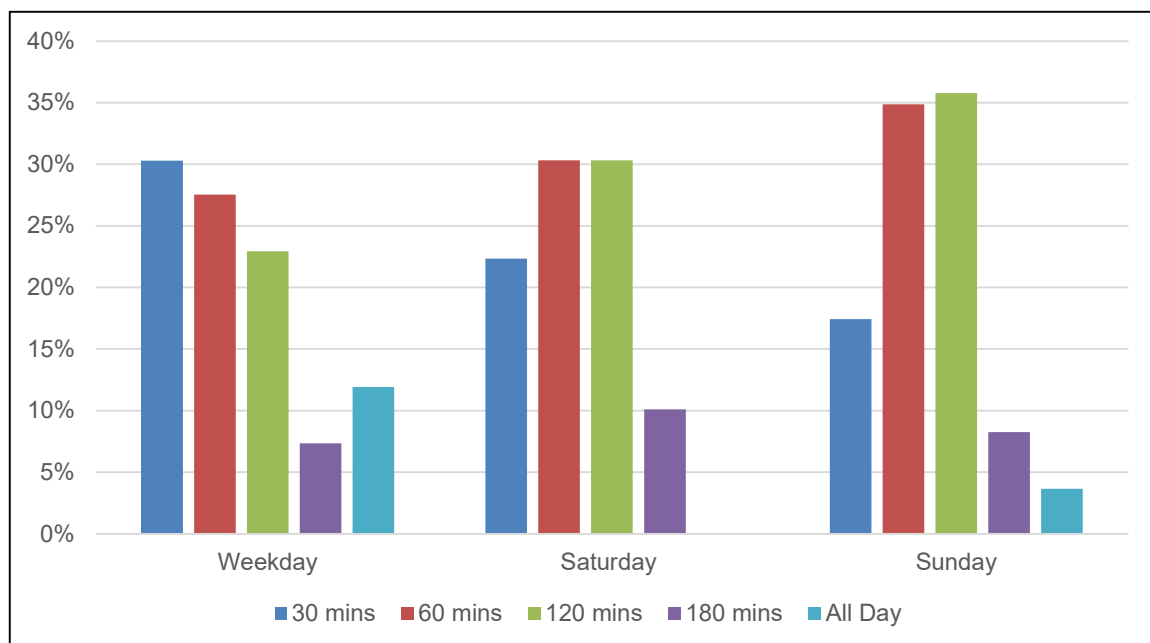
Length of Time Purchased by Car park

- 7.43 This section reviews the average length of time purchased for each car park for both machine transactions as well as app and online transactions.

New Road

- 7.44 The graph in **Figure 23** indicates the percentage split for the length of time of all transactions for New Road car park for a weekday, Saturday, and Sunday.

Figure 23: Percentage split for the length of time of all transactions for New Road Car park



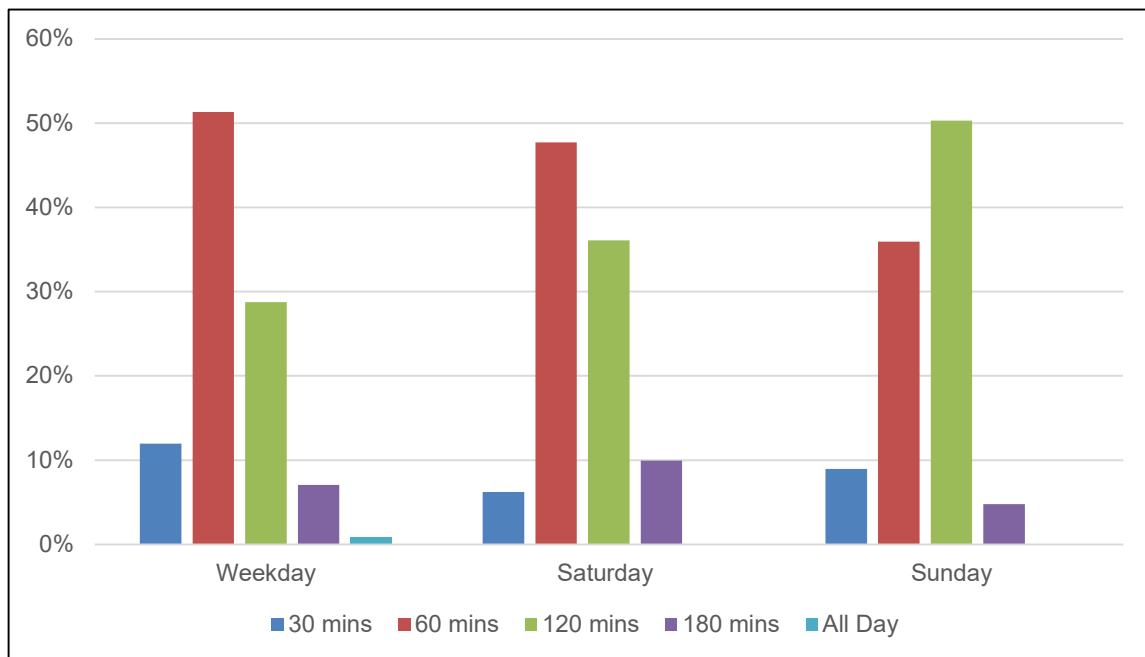
- 7.45 For a weekday, 30% of all transactions on New Road Car park were for 30 minutes of parking. 28% and 23% was recorded for 60 minutes and 120 minutes of parking time, respectively.
- 7.46 The lowest percentage of transactions on a weekday was for 180 minutes at 7%. This is followed by all day transactions which accounted for 12% of all transactions on New Road Car park on a weekday.
- 7.47 On Saturday, the percentage of transactions for 30 minutes decreases in comparison to a weekday to 22% of all transactions recorded on Saturday. The percentage of transactions for 120 minutes and 180 minutes is 30% each and is the greatest amount of time people choose to park for. The lowest proportion of transactions was for stays of 180 minutes at 10% of all transactions recorded on Saturday. There were no transactions recorded for stays greater than 3 hours on Saturday for New Road Car park.

7.48 On Sunday, the lowest proportion of stays across all 3 surveyed days for 30 minutes was recorded at being 17% of all transactions made on Sunday. The highest proportion of stays was seen for 120 minutes with 36% of all transactions on Sunday being for this length of time. This is followed by 60 minutes which has 35% of all transactions recorded. Overall, Sunday has a larger proportion of people choosing to stay for up to an hour than any other day.

North Bromsgrove

7.49 The graph in **Figure 24** indicates the percentage split for the length of time of all transactions for North Bromsgrove car park for a weekday, Saturday, and Sunday.

Figure 24: Percentage split for the length of time of all transactions for North Bromsgrove car park



7.50 For a weekday, 51% of all transactions on North Bromsgrove car park were for 60 minutes of parking times. 29% and 7% was recorded for 120 minutes and 180 minutes of parking time, respectively. The lowest percentage of transactions on a weekday was for all day transactions at 1%. This is followed by 30-minute stays which accounted for 12% of all transactions on North Bromsgrove car park on a weekday.

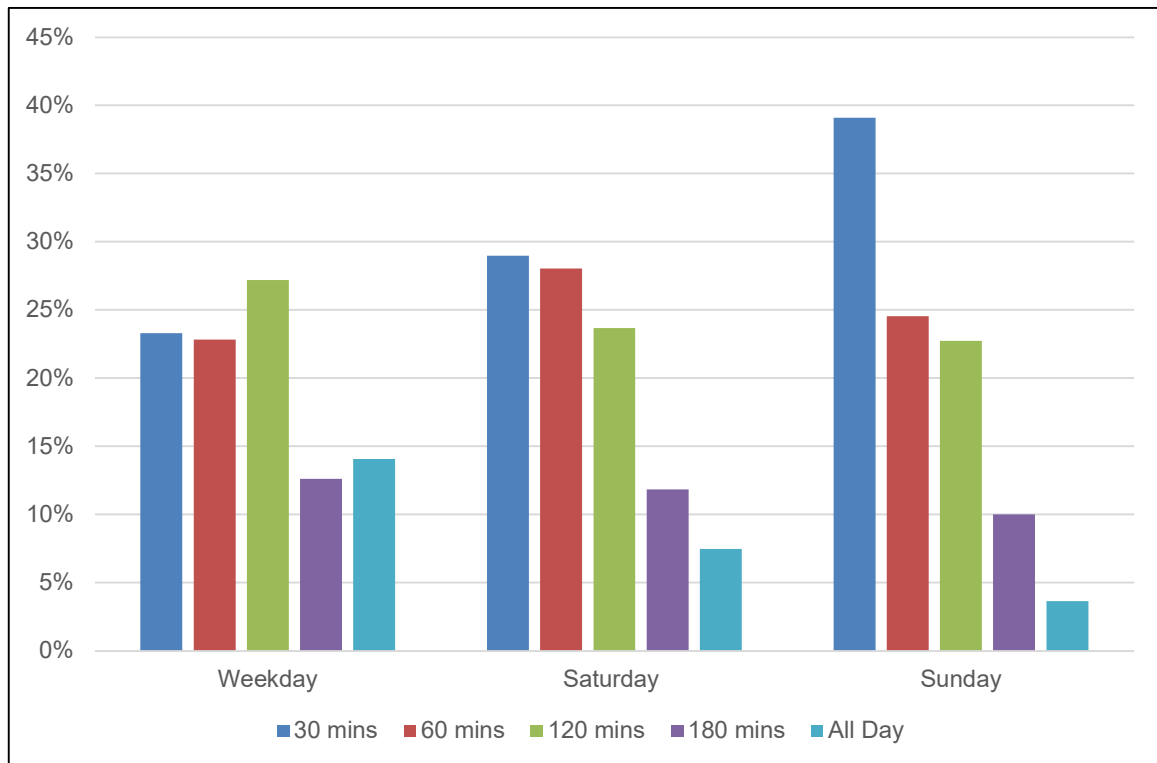
7.51 On Saturday, the percentage of transactions for 30 minutes decreases in comparison to a weekday to 6% of all transactions recorded on Saturday. The percentage of transactions for 120 minutes and 180 minutes is 36%, and 10%, respectively. The greatest proportion of transactions was for stays of 60 minutes at 48% of all transactions recorded on Saturday. There were no transactions recorded for stays greater than 3 hours on Saturday for North Bromsgrove car park.

7.52 On Sunday, the lowest proportion of stays across all 3 surveyed days for 60 minutes was recorded at being 36% of all transactions made on Sunday. The highest proportion of stays was seen for stays of 120 minutes at 50% of all transactions made on Sunday. There are a small proportion of stays between 2 and 3 hours in length which was recorded as 5% of all the transactions recorded on Sunday. There were no transactions for stays longer than 3 hours recorded.

Parkside

7.53 The graph in **Figure 25** indicates the percentage split for the length of time of all transactions for Parkside car park for a weekday, Saturday, and Sunday.

Figure 25: Percentage split for the length of time of all transactions for Parkside car park



7.54 For a weekday, 27% of all transactions on Parkside car park were for 120 minutes of parking times. 23% was recorded respectively for 30 minutes and 60 minutes of parking time. The lowest percentage of transactions on a weekday was for transactions between 2 and 3 hours in length at 13%. This is followed closely by all day transactions which accounted for 14% of all transactions on Parkside car park on a weekday.

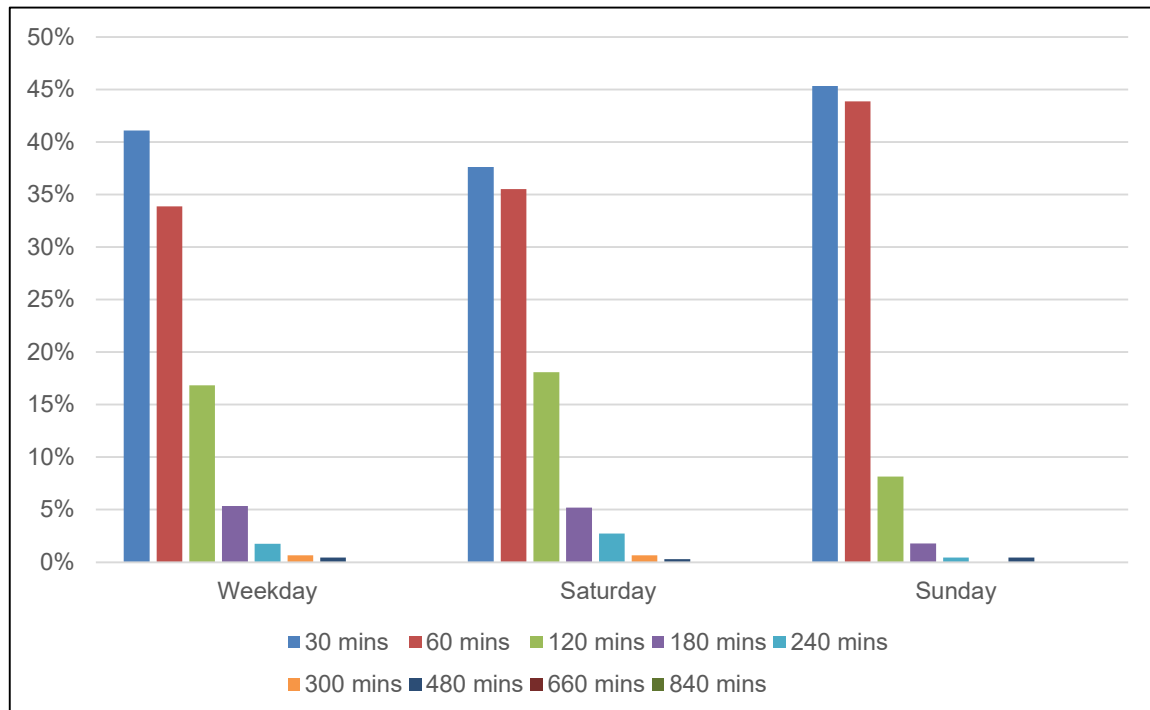
7.55 On Saturday, the percentage of transactions for 30 minutes increases in comparison to a weekday to 29% of all transactions recorded on Saturday. The percentage of transactions for 120 minutes and 180 minutes is 24%, and 12%, respectively. The second greatest proportion of transactions was for stays of 60 minutes at 28% of all transactions recorded on Saturday. The proportion of all day stays accounted for 7% and was the lowest recorded overall.

7.56 Sunday recorded the highest proportion of all transactions for 30 minutes in length at 39% of all transactions recorded on Sunday. The highest proportion of stays was seen for stays of 120 minutes at 25% of all transactions made on Sunday. There are a smaller proportion of stays between 2 and 3 hours in length which was recorded as 23% of all the transactions recorded on Sunday. The proportion of transactions for stays longer than 3 hours were recorded as being 4% of the total transactions recorded on Sunday.

Recreation Road South

- 7.57 The graph in **Figure 26** indicates the percentage split for the length of time of all transactions for Recreation Road car park for a weekday, Saturday, and Sunday. Recreation Road operates slightly differently to all the other car parks in Bromsgrove with longer stay tariffs included on this graph up to 14 hours (840 minutes) in length.

Figure 26: Percentage split for the length of time of all transactions for Recreation Road car park

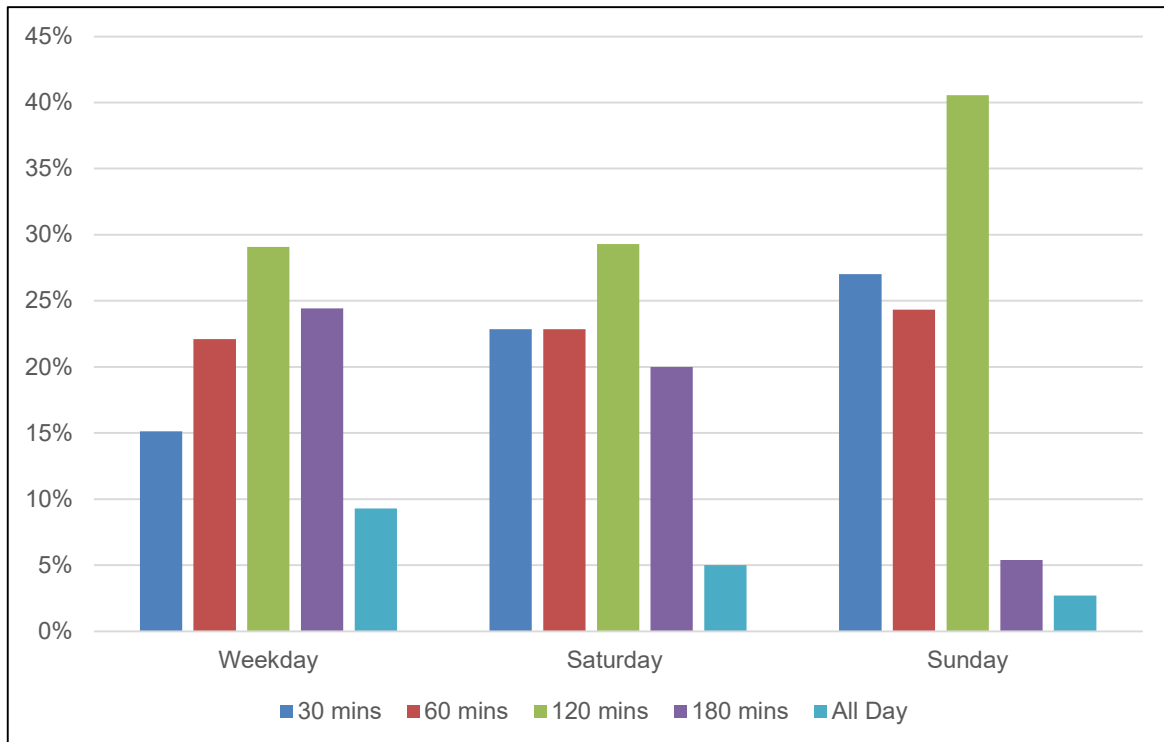


- 7.58 For a weekday, 41% of all transactions on Recreation Road car park were for 30 minutes of parking times. 34% was recorded for 60 minutes of parking time. This is followed by 16% of transactions on a weekday being for stays between 1 and 2 hours. Finally stays of between 2 and 3 hours were recorded as 5% of all transactions on as weekday. After this, transactions of length between 4 and 14 hours were recorded as 4% of all transactions.
- 7.59 On Saturday, the percentage of transactions for 30 minutes increases in comparison to a weekday to 38% of all transactions recorded on Saturday. The percentage of transactions for 120 minutes and 180 minutes is 18%, and 5%, respectively. The second greatest proportion of transactions was for stays of 60 minutes at 35% of all transactions recorded on Saturday. Again, as stated for the weekday transactions of length between 4 and 14 hours were recorded at 5% of all transactions recorded on Saturday.
- 7.60 Sunday recorded the highest proportion of all transactions for 30 minutes in length at 45% of all transactions recorded on Sunday. This is followed by stays of 60 minutes at 44% of all transactions made on Sunday. There are a smaller proportion of stays between 1 and 2 hours in length which was recorded as 8% of all the transactions recorded on Sunday. The proportion of transactions for stays longer than 2 hours were recorded as being 4% of the total transactions recorded on Sunday.

School Drive

7.61 The graph in **Figure 27** indicates the percentage split for the length of time of all transactions for School Drive car park for a weekday, Saturday, and Sunday.

Figure 27: Percentage split for the length of time of all transactions for School Drive car park



7.62 For a weekday, 29% of all transactions on School Drive car park were for 120 minutes of parking time. 15% and 22% was recorded respectively for 30 minutes and 60 minutes of parking time. The second highest proportion of transactions were for 3 hours of parking time, this being 24% of all transactions. All-day parking on a weekday is high here, being 9% of all transactions on a weekday.

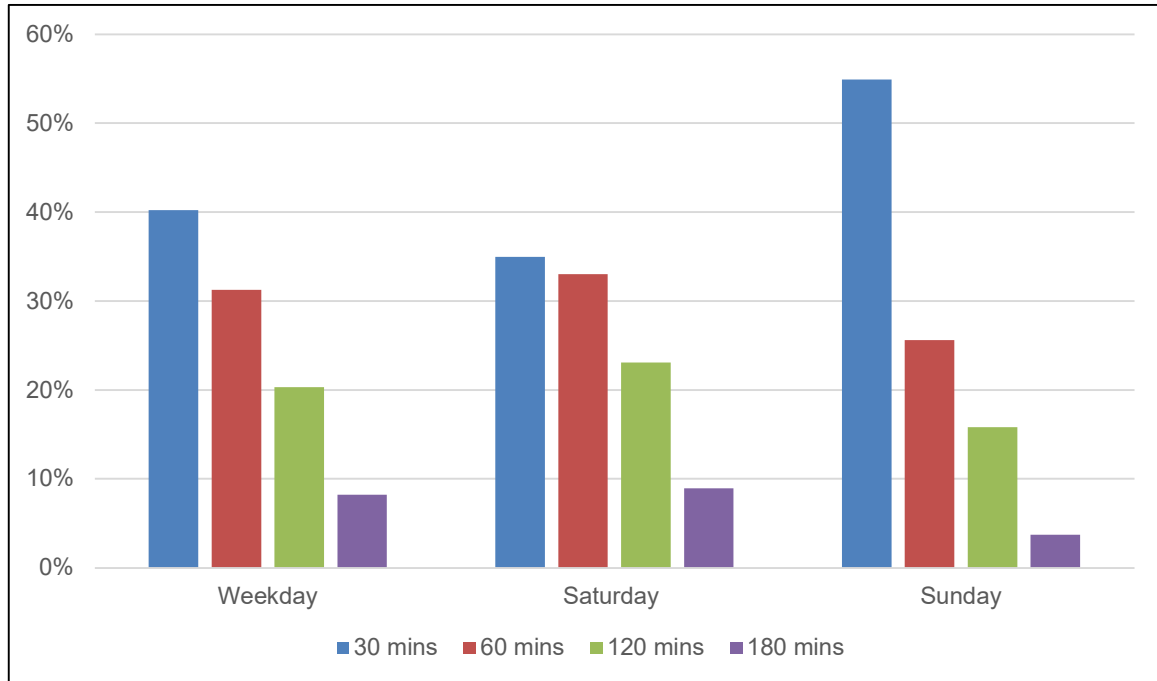
7.63 On Saturday, the percentage of transactions for 30 minutes increases in comparison to a weekday to 23% of all transactions recorded on Saturday. This proportion is the same for stays of 60 minutes in length. The percentage of transactions for 120 minutes and 180 minutes is the highest at 29%. Parking stays of 180 minutes fall slightly in comparison to the weekday at 20% of all transactions on Saturday. The proportion of all day parking stays accounted for 5% and was the lowest recorded overall.

7.64 Sunday recorded the highest proportion of all transactions for 30 minutes in length, at 27% of all transactions recorded. The highest proportion of stays was for 120 minutes at 41% of all transactions. There was a smaller proportion of stays for 3 hours in length, which was recorded as 5% of all the transactions recorded on the Sunday. The proportion of transactions for stays longer than 3 hours were recorded as being only 3% of the total transactions recorded.

St John Street

7.65 The graph in **Figure 28** indicates the percentage split for the length of time of all transactions for St John Street car park for a weekday, Saturday, and Sunday.

Figure 28: Percentage split for the length of time of all transactions for St John Street car park



7.66 For a weekday, 20% of all transactions on St John Street car park were for 120 minutes of parking times. 40% and 31% was recorded respectively for 30 minutes and 60 minutes of parking time. Stays of 180 minutes accounted for 8% of all weekday transactions.

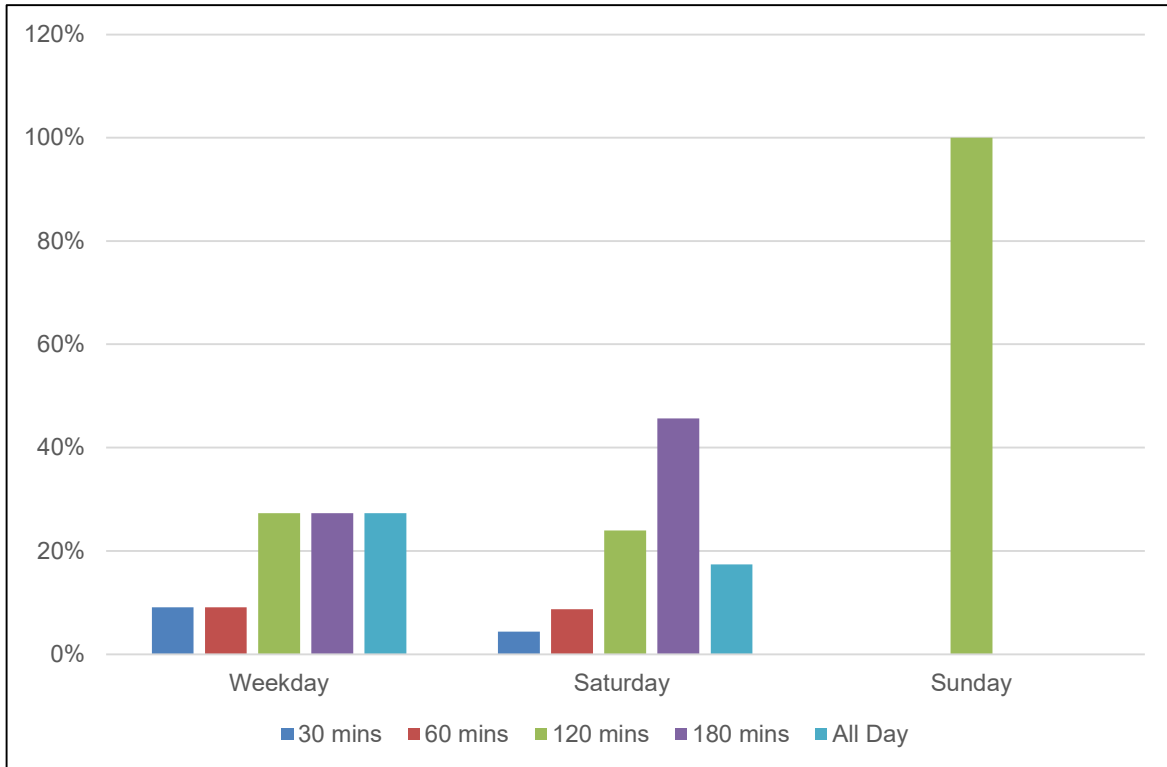
7.67 On Saturday, the percentage of transactions for 30 minutes decreased in comparison to a weekday, to 35% of all transactions recorded on Saturday. 33% of stays were for 60 minutes in length. The percentage of transactions for 120 minutes and 180 minutes was at 23% and 9%, respectively.

7.68 Sunday recorded the highest proportion of all transactions for 30 minutes in length, at 55% of all transactions recorded. Stays of 1 hour made up 25% of all transactions on Sunday and stays of 2 hours made up 16% of all transactions on Sunday. There was a small number of transactions for 3 hour stays on Sunday at 4%.

Stourbridge Road

7.69 The graph in **Figure 29** indicates the percentage split for the length of time of all transactions for Stourbridge Road Car park for a weekday, Saturday, and Sunday.

Figure 29: Percentage split for the length of time of all transactions for Stourbridge Road Car park



7.70 For a weekday, 9% of all transactions on Stourbridge Road Car park were for 30 and 60 minutes of parking times, respectively. 27% was recorded respectively for stays of 120 minutes, 180 minutes, and all-day transactions.

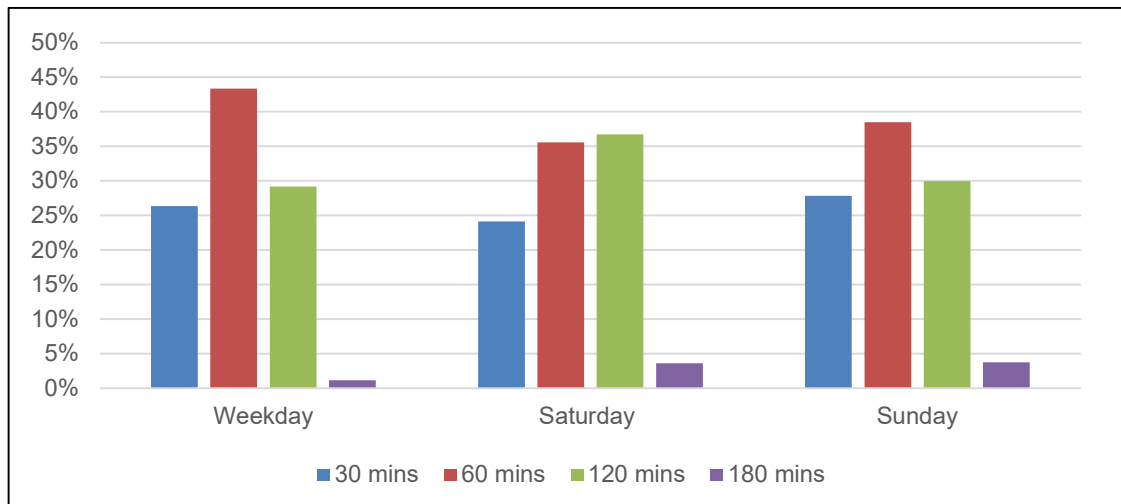
7.71 Saturday has a much more varied picture in comparison to the weekday, with the highest proportion of stays being for 3 hours at 46%. This is followed by stays of 2 hours in length at 22%. The lowest overall proportion of stays was for 30 minutes and 60 minutes at 4% and 9%, respectively. All day stays made up around 18% of all transactions on Saturday.

7.72 Due to there being only a handful of customers using the car park on Sunday, customers only stayed at the car park for a maximum of 2 hours, and there were no other lengths of time purchased. This once again highlights the underutilised nature of this car park.

Windsor Street

- 7.73 The graph in **Figure 30** indicates the percentage split for the length of time of all transactions for Windsor Street car park for a weekday, Saturday, and Sunday.

Figure 30: Percentage split for the length of time of all transactions for Windsor Street car park



- 7.74 For a weekday, 43% of all transactions on Windsor Street car park were for 60 minutes of parking times. The second highest recorded length of time purchase was for 2 hours at 29%. 26% was recorded for 30 minutes of parking time. Stays of 180 minutes account for 1% of all weekday transactions.
- 7.75 On Saturday, the percentage of transactions for 30 minutes decreased in comparison to a weekday to 24% of all transactions recorded on Saturday. 36% of stays were for 60 minutes in length. The percentage of transactions for 120 minutes and 180 minutes were 37% and 4%, respectively.
- 7.76 The highest proportion of stays on Sunday were stays of 60 minutes in length at 38% of users. This is followed by stays of 120 minutes in length at 30%, and then stays of 30 minutes which made up 28% of the total transactions recorded on the Sunday. Stays of 3 hours in length were recorded to make up around 4% of the transactions recorded on Sunday.

Overview

- 7.77 Overall, most car parks that offer all day tariffs saw a low parking utilisation and higher proportion of stays up to 3 hours in length. Therefore, BDC should consider whether there is a benefit to increasing tariffs on shorter stays at the car parks and to look at changing the way the tariffs work, to exclude more of the long stay tariffs.
- 7.78 On the Short Stay car parks at St John Street and Windsor Street, most stays were only up to 2 hours instead of the 3 hours which they are allowed at a maximum. Shorter stays were found to be more popular on Sundays. This analysis can help to shape the pricing strategy to increase revenue based on the current patterns of use of each car park.
- 7.79 Recreation Road South car park saw a high proportion of stays up to 2 hours and after that time, the proportion of users of the car park is very low. Therefore, an adjustment of the tariffs could be better suited to look at implementing an all-day tariff on the car park for people who choose to stay more than 2 hours, to increase revenue.

8. Pricing

Off Street Parking Tariffs

- 8.1 Parking charges across Bromsgrove are consistent, with most Long Stay car parks charging the same tariff for users, the only exception being Recreation Road car park. This location has an hourly tariff up to a stay of 5 hours in comparison to the other Long Stay car parks, which only go up to a stay of 3 hours, before the user needs to pay for an all-day tariff. Short stay car parking is consistent with the two Short Stay car parks charging the same tariff up to 3 hours.
- 8.2 A detailed breakdown of the tariffs charged across all car parks across Bromsgrove can be seen in **Table 6**.

Table 6: Bromsgrove Public Off Street Car parking Tariffs

Car park	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours	5 hours	All Day
Recreation Road South	£1	£2	£3	£4	£5	£8
North Bromsgrove	£1	£2	£3	-	-	£6
Parkside	£1	£2	£3	-	-	£6
Stourbridge Road	£1	£2	£3	-	-	£6
School Drive	£1	£2	£3	-	-	£6
New Road	£1	£2	£3	-	-	£6
St Johns Street (Short Stay 3 hours)	£1.30	£2.50	£3.80	-	-	-
Windsor Street (Short Stay 3 hours)	£1.30	£2.50	£3.80	-	-	-
Aston Fields (Short Stay 2 hours)	Free					
Sanders Park	Free					
Alvechurch	Free					
Catshill	Free					

Pricing as a demand tool

Research

- 8.3 From our analysis, current parking tariffs in BDC are reasonable, having regard to current demand levels and a comparison with neighbouring towns. There is an opportunity to review tariff levels, particularly if revenue raised is reinvested to improve the parking experience.
- 8.4 Available research by the British Parking Association¹ and the Local Government Association² suggests that space availability is more important than pricing. Car park charging is often perceived, particularly amongst businesses, as being a key determinant for changes in footfall levels in town and city centres. Over three-quarters of the business owners / workers interviewed for research in 2015³, suggested that car parking options have an impact on the number of people coming into the town centre and therefore on their custom.
- 8.5 Most research concludes that the general availability of spaces is felt by visitors to be more important than cost in their overall decision about visiting. This is understandable as parking provision is only useful if customers can utilise appropriate parking at the right locations to suit their needs.
- 8.6 Primarily, customers value the certainty of being able to park when and where they want to. Whilst this does not always meet the objectives for the town, convenience is a quality for which most people are willing to pay.

Tariff Recommendations

- 8.7 As a finite resource, parking in Bromsgrove town centre needs to be managed and tariffs are one of the main ways of doing this, with an application of setting reasonable charges to the following principles:
- Ensuring they are fair and reasonable for all user groups having regard to the needs of the individual community.
 - Manage turnover of spaces effectively
 - Off-set the Council's costs of operating the car parks.
 - The need to generate revenue for investing in future physical and technological improvements as highlighted earlier in this report, to ensure the continuous improvement and sustainability of parking services. For example, is it appropriate and sustainable to continue to offer free parking at some car parks and free evening/Sunday parking at others?
 - Providing lower cost all day parking (where possible) for workers
 - Preventing rail commuters from occupying bays that are needed for visitors and workers.
 - Concessions should only be applied where there is a SMART objective for doing so and where their impact can be tracked and measured to ensure that identified objectives are met.

¹ British Parking Association (2013) - Re-Think! Parking on the High Street: Guidance on Parking Provision in Town and City Centres

² Local Government Association (2020) - Revitalising town centres: a toolkit for councils

³ Welsh Government (2015) - Assessing the impact of car parking charges on town centre footfall

Evening Charging

- 8.8 From our investigations, free evening parking is only offered at some public car parks in neighbouring authorities. Privately owned shopping centres always charge for evening and Sunday parking, which would suggest that from their experience, reasonable charges do not impact footfall. We have limited or no data to evidence occupancy of off-street car parks during evenings and Sundays, therefore more surveys and consultation would be required to support our options.
- 8.9 Based upon the data we have analysed, our experience of other similar locations and the fact that charges are applied at nearby towns, it is not anticipated that the introduction of low and reasonable charges during these periods would materially influence parking demand. Income derived from evening and Sunday would help fund service improvements at the car parks and additional capacity. Therefore, BDC should assess the introduction of evening charges at car parks in the main settlements.
- 8.10 Based upon our analysis and experience elsewhere, if an evening and Sunday tariff of £1 per visit was introduced by BDC throughout the district, this could result in a potential additional income of c£200,000 per annum.

Free Parking in District or Local Centres

- 8.11 Whilst parking charges may deter some convenience retail customers where parking costs may represent a much larger proportion of retail spend, if set at a fair level they could help ensure that parking spaces in Bromsgrove town centre frequently turnover, thereby increasing overall footfall.
- 8.12 This effect can sometimes also be achieved by utilising limited stay restrictions without charging motorists, however the successful management and enforcement of car parks comes at a financial cost that needs to be funded to be sustainable, usually by charging for these parking visits. No parking provision is actually free, as costs must be funded, even if not by the motorist. For example, at out-of-town retail parks, where free parking is often quoted as a major attraction, these parking management costs are paid for by retail tenants via lease service charges. At a time when local authority budgets are under immense pressure, it is increasingly important that parking services are self-sufficient, whilst ensuring that parking continues to support local businesses and communities. Implementing a reasonable charging policy can meet these objectives. Free parking is currently available on car parks in Alvechurch, Catshill, Aston Fields and Sanders Park.
- 8.13 A potential option is that charges are implemented, where possible, in Alvechurch car park, and Aston Fields, due to their respective locations, and usage could benefit from a small charge. In both locations, elected Members complained of the car parks being used for anti-social activities or vehicles being left overnight. Having a charging regime would bring both car parks into the patrol regime of CEOs, which would mean that usage would be regularly monitored. At Sanders Park, because this location serves a recreation purpose and is not open 24 hours a day, it is recommended to retain free parking here.
- 8.14 It is difficult to accurately forecast the potential revenue from introducing the charges on free car parks as there is no usage data available, however we estimate that it would be more than c£100,000 per annum.

Cleaner Vehicle Concessions

- 8.15 To encourage the use of lower emission vehicles, an option could be to freeze future tariff increases for electric or low emission vehicles so that their use is incentivised.

9. Future Growth & Trends

Overview

- 9.1 In this section, a review has been conducted to investigate future growth and potential trends; this review focuses on trends in car parking provision and how this is being influenced by changes in travel behaviour, as well as changing habits for shopping, working, education and leisure.
- 9.2 Consideration has also been given in terms of the COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit implications on retail growth and trends in town centres, which includes modal shift and a reduced retail demand. This has been considered to determine the possible implications and demand for future parking capacity.

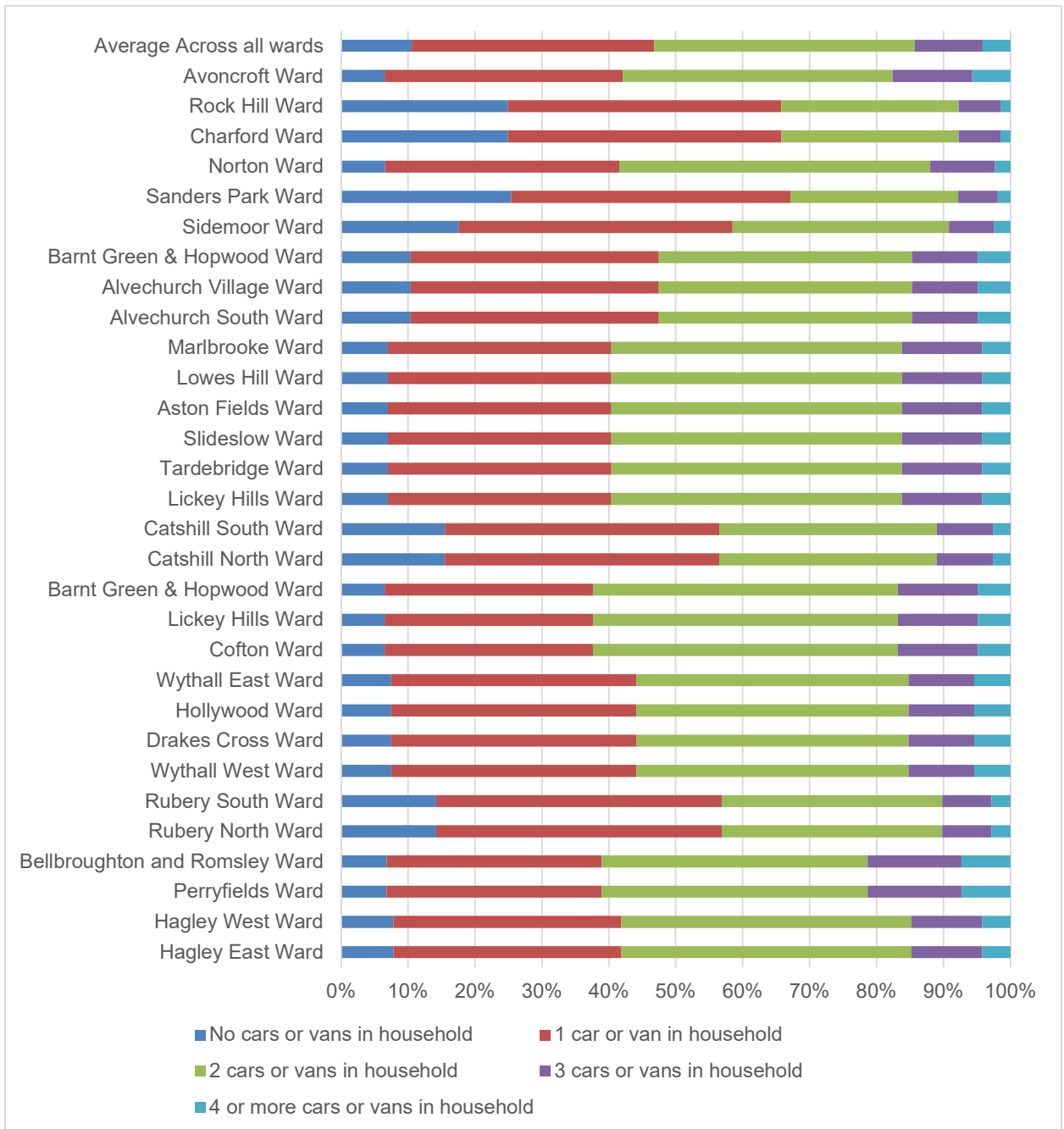
Worcestershire County Council Local Plan Aims

- 9.3 As the local highway authority for Bromsgrove is Worcester County Council it is useful for an insight into their objectives within their local plan and a summary of this can be seen below:
- To reduce the impacts of transport in Worcestershire on the local environment, by reducing transport-related emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, with the desired outcomes of tackling climate change and reducing the impacts of transport on public health.
 - To contribute towards better safety, security, health, and longer life expectancy in Worcestershire, by reducing the risk of death, injury or illness arising from transport and promoting healthy modes of travel.
- 9.4 The key objectives outlined specifically for BDC as part of the Worcestershire Local Plan are:
- To enable and promote growth;
 - To relieve congestion;
 - To tackle air quality issues;
 - To enhance transport network reliability and resilience.
- 9.5 Overall, there is a clear shift towards active travel and public transport, shifting people from private car use. This could have an impact on the level of occupancy seen in car parks across the district.

Public Transport Modal Shift

- 9.6 Car ownership and travel trends have been analysed as part of this study, and an analysis of the ownership of cars across each respective ward can be seen overleaf in **Figure 31**.

Figure 31: Car Ownership by Ward



9.7 As can be seen above, some of the wards have around 36% of households owning 1 vehicle; the wards with the largest percentage of households with one vehicle are Rubery South, Rubery North, Sanders Park, Catshill North and Catshill South, at around 42%.

9.8 The percentage of households which own two vehicles is on average 39% with the following wards having the greatest percentages - Cofton, Lickey Hills, Barnt Green and Hopwood Park which all have 45.5% of households having 2 vehicles. Norton has the highest percentage at 46.5% of households owning 2 vehicles.

9.9 The number of households which own 3 or 4 vehicles is around 10% on average for 3 vehicles and 4% on average for households which own 4 vehicles.

9.10 Across all the data, an average has been created shown at the top of Figure 31. This shows that across all wards the largest proportion of people own 2 cars/vans within a household at 39%, this is followed by 1 car/van per household at 36%. The lowest proportion overall was households with 4 or more cars/vans at 4%. Therefore, most households own 2 cars or less at 86%, with only 14% of households across the district owning 2 or more vehicles.

9.11 **Table 7** below highlights the number of Cars/Vans owned per household on a national scale.

Table 7: National Car/Van Availability

Number of Cars/Vans per Household	Percentage
No cars or vans in household	26%
1 car or van in household	42%
2 cars or vans in household	25%
3 cars or vans in household	6%
4 cars or vans in household	1%

9.12 The national average has been analysed in the above table which shows the most common is to own 1 car/van per household nationally at 42%. Bromsgrove on average is lower than this by 6% at 36%. The proportion of households which do not own a vehicle across Bromsgrove is significantly lower than the national average at 10% compared to the 26% stated above. In comparison to this the number of households within Bromsgrove which own 4 or more vehicles is similar to the national trend at 4% compared to the 1% above.

9.13 Given the high level of car ownership, significant modal shift is required to encourage more people to use public transport.

Car Parking Usage

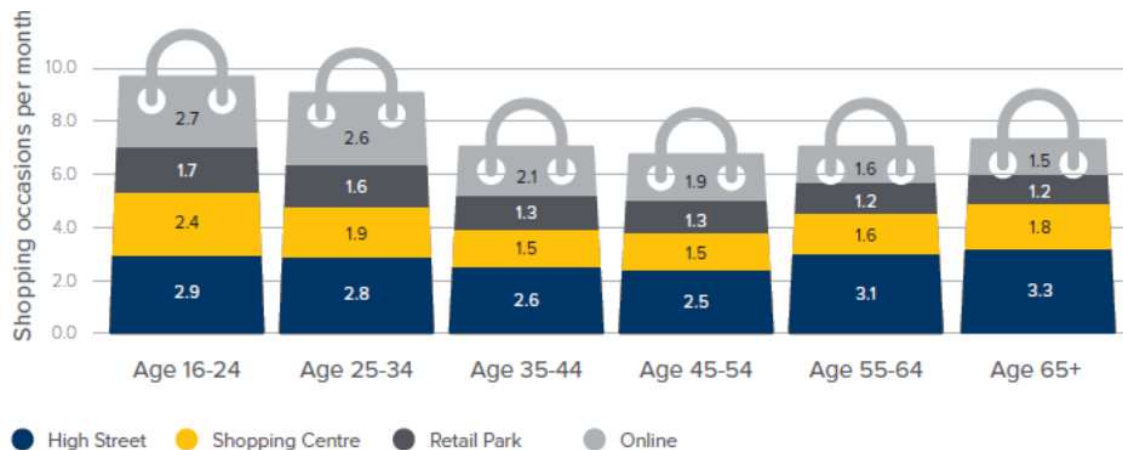
9.14 Traditionally, car parking in centres has been intended for retail, employment, and educational uses. However, given changes in retail spending habits, the repopulation of centres (greater residential development and changes to permitted development rights), and the strategic purpose of centres over recent years, the use of centres is likely to have changed accordingly, and therefore the purpose of car parking may also need to adapt to ensure that it meets the needs of users.

9.15 A study in 2019⁴ provides insight into retail changes on the high street due to the increase of online purchasing, which may have an impact on the demand or town centre and high street parking.

9.16 The report found that 10% of consumers would shop less in physical stores in the next 12 months. **Figure 32** shows that the proportion of shopping occasions per month that occurred online was equal to or less than using the high street. There still seems to be a future demand for the high street for shopping, albeit this may also be affected by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

⁴ Retail Economics and Womble Bond Dickinson (2019) - Digital Tipping Point Retail Report.

Figure 32: Shopping Occasions Per Month By Age



- 9.17 The improvement in mobile data connectivity, such as expansion of 4G and new 5G networks, as well as growth of online retailers such as Amazon, coupled with the grocery businesses' (e.g. Tesco) gradual expansion into non-food items over the past 20 years, has had significant consequences for physical shopping destinations, and the retail offer in centres, throughout the UK.
- 9.18 In slow decline over the past 20 years, the massive expansion of online retail has led to even lower levels of footfall across the high streets including impacting on retail parks and shopping centres. Online sales have massively accelerated this decline in recent years.
- 9.19 If this continues it would mean that demand for car parking would reduce and a reduction in car park capacity should follow to balance the costs of maintenance and operation. Valuable land taken up by under-utilised car parks may be better used for other needs, such as employment and housing development.

Projected Parking Demand 2024 to 2039

Growth Rates

- 9.20 The car parking supply in Bromsgrove town centre overall is currently adequate for the demand. Traffic growth data from the TEMPRO tool has been applied to the surveyed data to project future parking demand within the town centre. The growth in car ownership within Bromsgrove has been applied, rather than trip end growth, as the projected growth is greater.
- 9.21 TEMPRO, the Trip End Model Presentation Program, is a tool designed to allow for detailed analysis of pre-processed trip-end, journey mileage, car ownership and population/workforce planning data from the DfT National Trip End Model (NTEM).
- 9.22 TEMPRO is the industry standard tool for estimating traffic growth, which is required when assessing the traffic impact of a development on the local highway network (including car parking demand).
- 9.23 **Table 8** shows the predicted growth levels for Bromsgrove from TEMPRO based on the existing town centre conditions.

Table 8: Predicted growth levels for Bromsgrove from TEMPRO

Day	Years Between	Average Trip Growth
Average Weekday	2024-2039	1.2069
Average Saturday	2024-2039	1.2123
Average Sunday	2024-2039	1.2182

Future Parking Occupancy Levels

9.24 Following the current parking occupancy analysis conducted in **Table 5**, the above growth factors from the TEMPRO traffic growth tool have been applied to the levels seen from the initial analysis, to give an approximate value for the occupancy of car parks within Bromsgrove town centre in 2039. The future occupancy levels calculated can be seen below in **Table 9**.

- **Red** = Less than 30% Occupancy
- **Orange** = 30% - 60% Occupancy
- **Green** = Greater than 60% Occupancy

Table 9: Average 2039 Occupancy by Car park

Car park	Weekday Average Occupancy			Saturday Average Occupancy			Sunday Average Occupancy		
	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
New Road Car park	67%	82%	22%	67%	82%	22%	36%	56%	11%
North Bromsgrove Car park	9%	12%	9%	26%	30%	2%	18%	18%	1%
Parkside Car park	50%	82%	36%	56%	93%	22%	17%	39%	8%
Recreation Road South Car park	36%	48%	39%	52%	74%	39%	25%	41%	N/A
School Drive Car park	13%	30%	23%	14%	39%	30%	5%	10%	14%
St John Street Car park	52%	100%	100%	77%	100%	100%	16%	45%	16%
Stourbridge Road Car park	9%	5%	2%	1%	14%	9%	1%	2%	0%
Windsor Street Car park	47%	88%	93%	88%	100%	65%	26%	13%	13%

Summary of Future Growth

- 9.25 As discussed, from the findings of our growth analysis, the current level of parking provision is deemed acceptable for the future growth year of 2039 in Bromsgrove town centre, with only St John Street and Windsor Street car parks predicted to operate at capacity across both weekdays and weekends.
- 9.26 Although Parkside and New Road Car parks are expected to be at a high utilisation level in 2039, should the demand be managed across the car parks which have spare capacity, by using tools such as wayfinding or VMS (as discussed later in this report) the demand on these car parks can be managed.

Future Requirement for Churchfields Car Park

- 9.27 Since 2022, the Churchfields multi-storey car park in Bromsgrove town centre has been closed due to anti-social behaviour.
- 9.28 From analysis of existing parking demand through the utilisation figures shared by BDC, we have ascertained that Bromsgrove town centre has adequate car parking provision both now, and in the future, without the need to reopen Churchfields car park. This is because in Bromsgrove town centre, only two short stay car parks (Windsor Street and St John Street) have utilisation consistently of above 60%, and this is only in the afternoons and the evening.
- 9.29 Furthermore, as discussed in the section above, findings of TEMPRO traffic growth analysis show that current level of parking provision is adequate even for the future growth year of 2039, with only St John Street and Windsor Street car parks predicted to operate at capacity across both weekdays and weekends. Although Parkside and New Road Car parks are expected to be at a high utilisation level in 2039, should the demand be managed across the car parks which have spare capacity, by using tools such as wayfinding or VMS (as discussed later in this report) the demand on these car parks can be managed.
- 9.30 Therefore, it can be safely determined that Churchfields car park is no longer required. Existing Bromsgrove town centre car parks can comfortably meet demand, both now and in 2039. It is recommended that BDC explore disposal of the car park / land for regeneration purposes.

Future Requirement of Stourbridge Road Car Park

- 9.31 The car park with the lowest utilisation on average is Stourbridge Road car park which had less than 20% utilisation, even at extreme peak times, and as low as under 5% utilisation at other times. This underuse could be due to a variety of reasons, due to the poor relative condition of the car park in terms of surfacing, lighting, or that it is located away from the town centre shopping core.
- 9.32 The Strategic Review has identified that the site requires significant improvements in many factors to bring it up to standard, however it is unlikely that improvements alone will increase utilisation and therefore the investment would be unwise where enhancements could be better made elsewhere.
- 9.33 It is therefore recommended that BDC take the necessary steps to explore disposal of the site so it they can be used for regeneration purposes. From the utilisation figures shared by BDC, it is extremely unlikely that the disposal of the site will have a negative impact on parking capacity at other sites. Although there will be a transfer of current users to other car parks across the town centre, this is expected to be of such a low figure as to be unnoticeable.

10. Redevelopment & Improvement to Public Parking Across Bromsgrove Town Centre

Redevelopment Options

- 10.1 School Drive Car park requires significant improvements such as resurfacing and better lighting. However, given the underutilisation of this car park and its prime location it is deemed ideal to take some of the burden off other car parks with the recommended disposal of Churchfields car park.
- 10.2 Another factor which could increase utilisation and therefore revenue on both North Bromsgrove car park and School Drive is to address the free on street parking directly outside the leisure centre, which is completely uncontrolled and can be seen below.

Photograph 14: School Drive On Street Parking



- 10.3 The above highlights the current on street parking provision which is used as free parking for the leisure centre, to avoid the parking fee at North Bromsgrove car park. Therefore, this area could be redesigned as a short-stay overspill of the North Bromsgrove car park, to ensure that people use North Bromsgrove and School Drive car parks.
- 10.4 Furthermore, if the redevelopment of School Drive Car park should go ahead and given its location to the Town Centre as well as other short stay car parks such as Windsor Street, this should be considered as short stay parking given the high levels of utilisation seen across the existing short term car parks, and therefore, extra capacity would be required in the future.

- 10.5 To further assist the increase in levels of short stay parking within Bromsgrove town centre, New Road could be converted to a short stay car park allowing BDC to increase parking revenues due to the higher tariffs seen for short stay car parks.
- 10.6 Aston Fields car park has a low utilisation due to its inaccessibility and overall, this car park is limited by the 2-hour limit on short stay, this causes the low utilisation levels seen and this should be extended if the car park is retained.
- 10.7 The car park could have a small charge implemented which is lower than what Bromsgrove Train Station car park charges, so it becomes a viable choice for people choosing to leave their car at the train station when they commute.

EV Charging Spaces

- 10.8 Given the increase in take up of electric vehicles, there is a reasonable assumption to be made that the car parks within Bromsgrove should have a suitable EV charging provision available. Currently, only 6 car parks (50%) have EV charging available.

Charging Types

- 10.9 There are currently 3 broad types of charging station currently in use:
- Rapid are the fastest type, able to charge an EV to 80% in 20-40 minutes depending on battery capacity and starting state of charge. These are mostly installed in motorway service areas or similar facilities.
 - Fast chargers are the most common in car parks and are available in two power capabilities (7kW and 22kW). These can charge a compatible EV in 3-5 hours, or in 1-2 hours if both vehicle and charger are compatible with the higher power.
 - Slow charging units are rated at 3kW. Charging times vary on unit speed and vehicle.
- 10.10 As the technology develops other charger types will appear.

EV Charging

- 10.11 BDC should continue installing EV charging provision at the same rate as existing. This would allow for the uptake in the use of electric vehicles to continue to increase overall.

Providing a Positive Parking Experience

- 10.12 The use of technology could improve the customer experience. This can be achieved by the following:

Communication with Motorists and influencing behaviour

- 10.13 The data gathered from parking technology can be used to communicate with and inform motorists, influencing their behaviour to help relieve congestion at peak periods. Effective use of this opportunity would enable drivers to make informed choices about whether to drive or use other forms of transport, when and where spaces are most likely to be available and the best route to use.
- 10.14 If the information is provided, integrated information systems would also have the potential to recommend alternative travel methods, encouraging the use of public transport for all or part of journeys based on a combination of speed, convenience, and price.

- 10.15 For example, systems could advise drivers travelling to Bromsgrove town centre that Recreation Road car park is likely to be full and advise the use of an alternative car park or arrival, during less busy periods. This information would help manage demand and ensure that where capacity is an issue, all spaces are used as efficiently as possible throughout the day.

Acceptance of a variety of Payment Methods

- 10.16 The use of electronic payment methods (including contactless at the parking facility and payment by app) are already of increasing importance and are already in use in the district. Digitisation is essential to accommodate future car and transport advances.
- 10.17 In terms of immediate benefits, it would make it easier to create time-based permits and special permits for specific functions, enabling the Council to tailor products to meet the needs of the communities it serves. Creating convenient alternatives to cash is an essential pre-requisite for any parking operator that aims to reduce or remove cash payment.

Pay by licence plate.

- 10.18 This can be used in several ways. At payment terminals (aka pay and display machines). Requiring customers to enter their licence plate number when paying removes the need for customers to return to their vehicles to place a ticket in the windscreen.
- 10.19 It enables monitoring of parking places by mobile ANPR and provides data on length of stay and return rates. We understand that some of the existing pay and display machines have this capability, but it is not currently used. Whilst initially, some car park users may be resistant to typing in numbers, we would expect this to only be a short-term familiarity issues as these systems are widely used successfully elsewhere (increasingly so when linked to ANPR enforcement systems on privately operated car parks).
- **Pay on Foot - An ANPR system would assist with vehicle identification (for example with lost tickets, issues at exit etc) and with usage statistics.**
 - **Pay by app - The licence plate is the vehicle identifier.**
 - **Permits and long-term passes - When combined with ANPR, customers can use these permits and passes seamlessly in pay on foot car parks; when combined with the new payment terminals these can be used in short term car parks. Other long term ticket types can also be created for specific types of users (e.g. commuter, tourist, rural residents, carers) to support other council policies.**
 - **Discounts and offers - Payment by licence plate simplifies the process of offering discounts and validations, using an online system to manage the process of applying a discount to the parking session.**

Pay for time used rather than pay on arrival

- 10.20 As the current pay and display system requires payment on arrival, users are required to predict their length of stay. In 2017 City of York Council and the local Business Improvement District commissioned customer research, and one of the key findings of which was that 67% of respondents expressed a preference for “pay on exit” systems as they were not certain of their length of stay upon arrival.
- 10.21 There are alternative to pay on arrival that have been successfully implemented elsewhere. Although pay on foot with barriers in larger or more strategically important car parks is not currently used in Bromsgrove as most places it is restricted to multi-storey car parks, however

barriered systems (sometimes linked to ANPR) are becoming more commonly used by local authorities on larger surface car parks.

- 10.22 Pay on foot has the advantage that users must pay to leave, reducing the need to patrol and issue PCNs (note that PCNs can still be relevant for those who park inappropriately, e.g. in Blue Badge bays).
- 10.23 As this is an engineered system, it can fail, therefore appropriate maintenance and support contracts would be required to manage any breakdowns. On larger surface car parks where, adjoining properties have rights of access, RFID passes would have to be supplied to allow these rights to continue. Alternatively, if ANPR is installed, licence plate details for rightsholders can be stored to provide access automatically.

Case Study – Cheshire West and Chester

Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWCC) operates both on and off-street parking within its boundary. It had historically operated its off-street car park using pay and display except for one car park in Chester which had pay and display on some floors and pay on exit on the remainder. Due to issues with the pay on exit system, CWCC considered options for its replacement and the potential to extend the system to other car parks in Chester. This was for several reasons including:

- Improving compliance rates at off street car parks – enforcement resources had been prioritised to on street to ensure statutory obligations were complied with.
- To improve payment options. Existing machines accepted only coins and no change was given.
- To provide functionality for the introduction of concession arrangements with local businesses A WPS Pay on Foot and ANPR (licence plate recognition) system was subsequently installed at 7 of its car parks in Chester and new pay and display machines at other which now allow contactless payment and provide change for cash payment. Functionality includes: -
- Recognition of season ticket/pre-payment card holders with barriers raising automatically
- CWCC resident Blue Badge Holders Park free for up to 4 hours using a chip system applied to the badge which the pay on foot system recognises.
- A system to manage free parking for specific users such as visitors to surgeries. A custom-built Ticket Entry Terminal in each entry lane enabling visitors to choose between concession parking and public parking. If a concession ticket is chosen the system automatically analyses the parking status and provides visitors with a 'concession parking available' ticket (to be validated within the concession
- A web-based application that allows business to pay towards or for its customers' parking.
- An intercom system linked to the Council's car park management office during operational hours. Outside these periods, issues are managed by the CWCC's main CCTV control room.
- A flexible WPS maintenance contract, supported by front line maintenance from CWCC officers if required.

Since installation, revenue has increased significantly with the capital costs being recouped within 12 months. The system has allowed CWCC to focus more resources on enforcing on-street parking contraventions to keep traffic moving in the city. As reasonable provision was made for customer support and equipment maintenance there have been no material issues with system reliability.

The Case for Cashless

- 10.24 For the customer, the need to carry change for cash payments can be inconvenient. Where coins are accepted, the Council currently needs to securely collect and process the income at a cost to the authority. There is also the risk of break-ins to payment machines with a potential loss of income. Reducing the number of coins collected by the authority would decrease the cost of processing this income and reduce the potential for theft. However, while reducing the number of parking payment machines could lead to revenue savings on maintenance, saving on the collection and processing costs would only be achieved if the actual proportion of coins coming through the system is reduced.
- 10.25 Despite new payment choices, previous research⁵ shows that many customers remain keen to use cash. However, contactless cards are changing the way customers pay for other products and services, and it may be time to use this as a way of removing cash from parking. Customers expect to be able to pay for services as seamlessly as possible, using new technologies where appropriate, and want a quick and effortless service.
- 10.26 The rationale is clear for moving to card only payment, removing the risk of theft and vandalism through the removal of cash storage in car park pay machines. However, experience to date suggests that other Councils have elected to retain the option to pay by cash in one form or other. While not a statutory requirement, retaining the option to pay in cash is often retained has been justified to encourage people to visit and support local business, to accommodate disadvantage and address equality concerns.

Summary

- 10.27 BDC should aim to become cashless. An increase in customers using credit/debit card is anticipated once all pay and display machines have contactless available. In car parks with multiple terminals, the Council should consider replacing some of their machines with cashless only terminals to encourage the use of credit/debit card transactions.
- 10.28 A marketing campaign highlighting the availability and convenience of card payments should also be proposed by BDC to increase awareness and increase cashless uptake. As cashless usage increases the Council would be able to opt to convert more machines to contactless only.

⁵ Link (2024) – Access to Cash Review

11. Future Trends Summary

Parking and the Net Zero Carbon Agenda

- 11.1 In 2019, the UK Government and the devolved administrations committed to the Net Zero target as recommended by the Climate Change Committee. Reaching net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions requires extensive changes across the economy, but the foundations are in place. Major infrastructure decisions need to be made soon and quickly implemented. These changes are unprecedented in their overall scale, but large-scale transitions have been achieved successfully in the UK before, such as the natural gas switchover in the 1970s or the switch to digital broadcasting in the 2000s.
- 11.2 Achieving the long-term goal of a zero-carbon economy would call for many far-reaching and structural changes to how we live and how we travel. The type of vehicles we drive, how many of us would own them and where we work are significant factors in the overall picture.
- 11.3 In the shorter term, there is a need to improve multi-modal access to town centres, offices, hospitals, and public services. For the foreseeable future, privately owned cars would remain a predominant mode of transport. Improving access in a zero-carbon economy means finding ways to accommodate cars while minimising the environmental impact and providing maximum flexibility for the future.
- 11.4 As covered above, in that greater provision of charging infrastructure should be provided, but also that the need for cars should be reduced by making Smarter Choices such as active travel (i.e. walking, cycling and public transport) the easiest option. To this effect, new developments should be car-free or have restricted on-site parking or be situated within controlled parking zones and have adequate cycle facilities.

Future Trends and Mobility Summary

- 11.5 This section has reviewed future growth and potential trends such as car parking provision, changes in travel behaviour and changing habits for retail.
- 11.6 The prominence of buses in the Bromsgrove, which serve communities with low car ownership, as well as being the only public transport mode to some of the centres, means that bus usage would remain stable.
- 11.7 The combination of recent changes in retail spending habits, accelerated through factors such as the increase in online retail and the pandemic as well as the repopulation of centres, through greater residential development and changes to permitted development rights, means that the use of centres is likely to have changed accordingly. Some of these changes could significantly reduce the longer-term demand on high streets and shopping centres, resulting in less car parking being required. The purpose of car parking may also need to adapt to ensure that it meets the needs of users, including availability of secure freight or coach parking.
- 11.8 It has also found that when looking at attitudes of parking users that expenditure is not a major consideration for the average car owner, yet location, convenience and the sized bays are high priorities. Any cost-related considerations more so relate to payment preferences that have shifted due to a change in public attitudes to app-based platforms away from handling cash and touching buttons or screens.
- 11.9 Public car parks in centres are likely to be impacted by future development and growth through the Bromsgrove Local Plan. Targets to meet the future under-supply of housing and employment land need may bring pressure on under-utilised car parks to be disposed of to provide residential development opportunities or accessible investment sites in centres. Car

parks that are under occupied within strategic centres and town centres provide an opportunity for employment sites, as they are accessible and have a large surface area, making them ideal. They are also quicker to deliver on such sites. Indeed, some authorities are currently carrying out reviews of the potential for development within strategic centres, including housing development beyond existing housing allocations and commitments.

Signage Across Bromsgrove

- 11.10 Across all the local centres and wards across Bromsgrove where public parking is available, clear signage should be provided to make drivers aware of all the options available to them. This is due to there being a direct link between a town centre economy and how easy the town centre is to access for all modes of transport. Ideally a town centre should be walking distance to all major transport hubs such as car parks, bus stations, and rail stations. Whilst Bromsgrove has a rail station it is located over one mile away from the town centre.

Bromsgrove Town Centre

- 11.11 The only reliable method of allowing visitors to make this decision is through signage. There is currently only a handful of car parking signs within the town centre and the quality is considered poor. There is very little information included with virtually all signs simple stating a direction where parking is available. This isn't sufficient to create an efficient town centre parking experience and is likely to result in certain car parks being used regardless of the intended location.
- 11.12 Another key feature for accessing the town centre is how straight forward and clear signage is for visitors from their transport mode to the destination. The success of good car park directional signage for vehicles would be completely undone if the subsequent signage directing visitors from the car park to their destination is poor. Therefore, wayfinding is used to support directional signage.
- 11.13 This is most commonly signed through use of finger posts with key destinations such as town centre, toilets, bus/rail station, and others being signed in the direction of travel. These can be supported through simple and complex monolith signs that can include maps and key information. These can also be modern day tourist information systems.
- 11.14 The location and number of way-finding signs is as important as vehicular signs. It should be possible for a visitor to have no understanding of a town centre, to make their way from a car park to their destination without any confusion.
- 11.15 This is important as it may steer people towards car parks with lower utilisation instead of parking at busier car parks simply by making them aware that they are there.
- 11.16 There are four types of car parking signage that have been considered as part of this signage review. These are:
- **Strategic car parking signage that provides car parking directional information for a number of car parks or parking locations in the town centre.**
 - **Car park advanced directional signage that provides directional information for a few car parks in an area such as Parkside and Recreation Road South.**
 - **Providing advanced directional signage to Aston Fields Car park when travelling towards the train station.**
 - **Car park Variable Message Signs that provide car parking directional information across the town centre.**

- Specific car park sign that can be static or Variable Message Sign for individual car park
- Direct traffic towards Sanders Park as a leisure destination

11.17 Figures 35 and 36 below show examples of these signs.

Figure 33: Directional Car park Sign Example



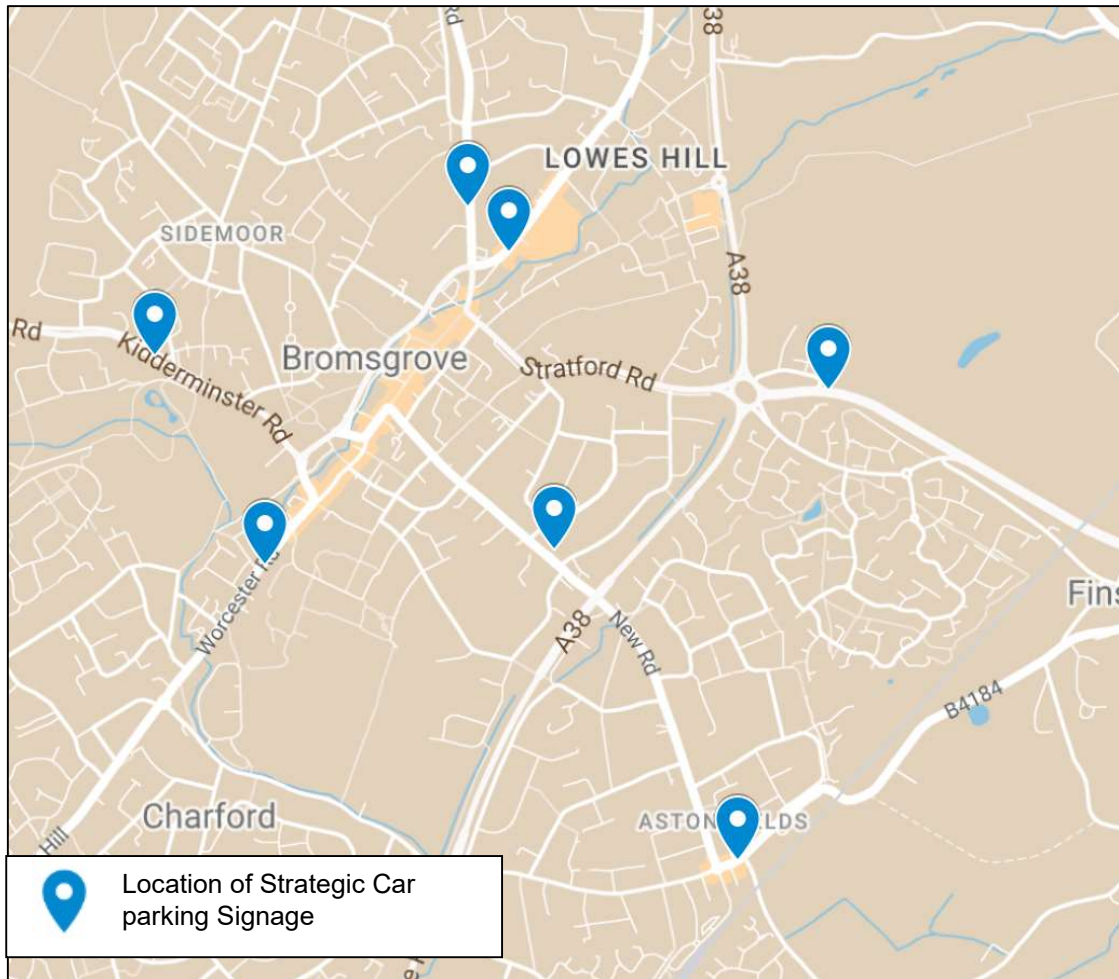
Figure 34: Directional Car park Sign Example



11.18 The examples above highlight how simple directional signs can have great effectiveness in shaping the direction in which people choose to travel and is a crucial factor to help redistribute the occupancy of car parks across Bromsgrove Town Centre.

11.19 To achieve the most effectiveness, the signs should be positioned in the following places shown on Figure 37.

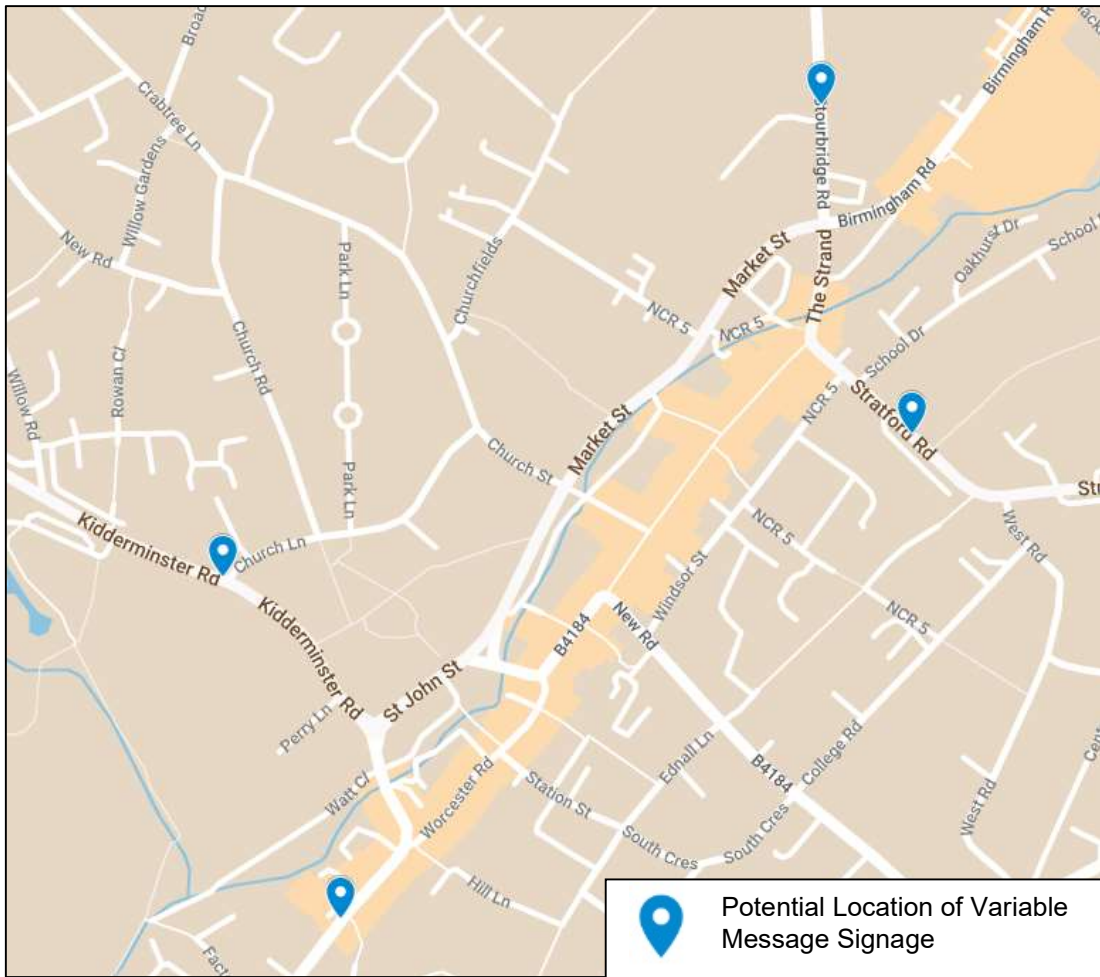
Figure 35: Location of Strategic Car park Signage In Bromsgrove Town Centre



Variable Message Signs (VMS)

- 11.20 A Variable Message Sign (VMS) is classified as “a device capable of displaying, at different times, two or more aspects.” These aspects may take the form of a sign prescribed by the TSRGD 2016.
- 11.21 A VMS is one of the most effective methods of providing key clear concise information to drivers as they travel to their destination. Car park guidance VMS provides car park information such as the number of spaces available within a car park. VMS can use both forms such as a free text sign displaying “Car Park A Full, Please Use Car Park B.”
- 11.22 Bromsgrove town centre is compact which makes locating VMS more straightforward. Potential locations where variable message signage could be installed can be seen overleaf in **Figure 38**.

Figure 36: Potential Locations of Variable message signage



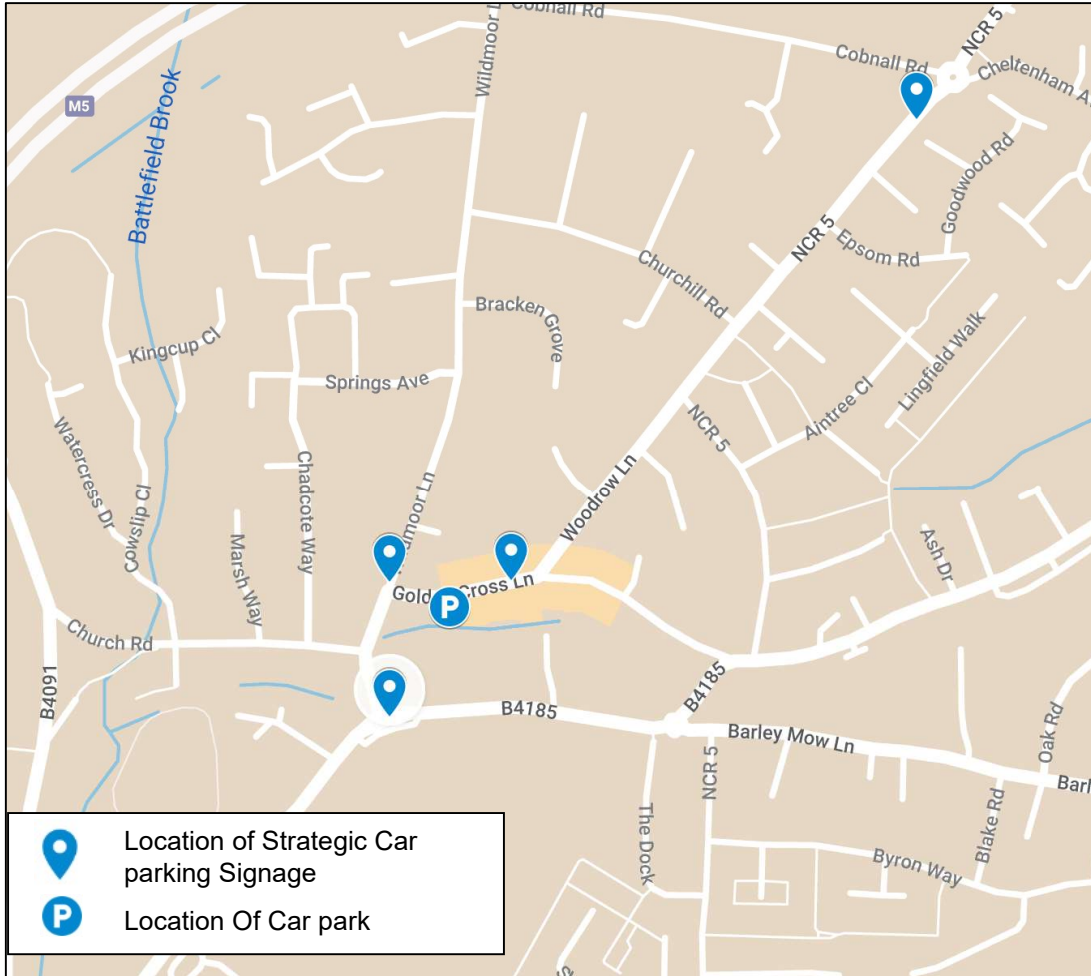
11.23 The locations highlighted above have been chosen due to being the key access roads into Bromsgrove town centre and would give drivers plenty of time to decide on where is best to park, the VMS sign states that their favoured car park is full.

Alvechurch and Catshill

11.24 Given that Alvechurch only has one publicly owned off-street car park, some advanced signage on key roads entering would benefit the town, especially for users who do not park there regularly. Requirements for Catshill are similar, however Catshill would also benefit from implementing VMS which details the EV charging that is available on its car park.

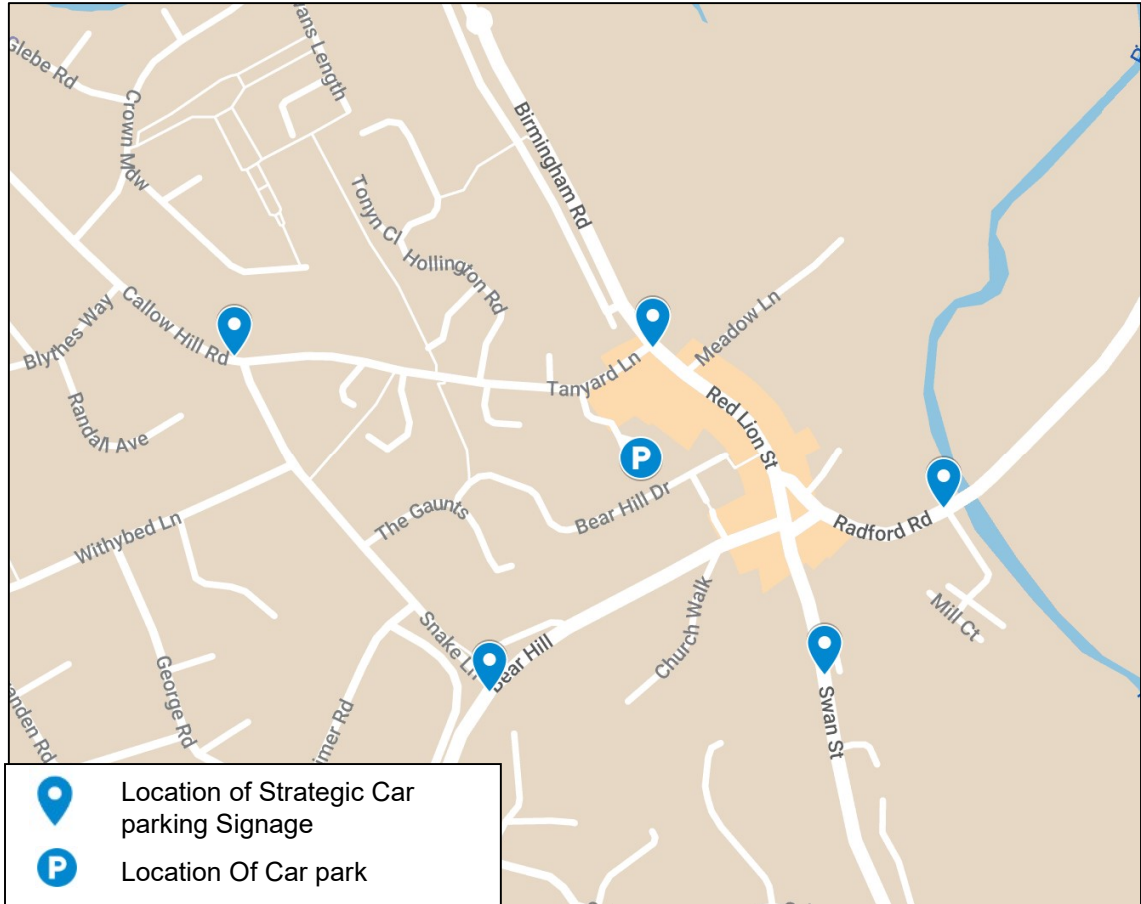
11.25 The suggested location of VMS for Catshill car park can be seen overleaf in **Figure 39**.

Figure 37: Approximate Suggested Location for Parking Signage In Catshill



11.26 The suggested location of VMS for Alvechurch Car park can be seen overlaid in **Figure 40**.

Figure 38: Approximate Suggested Location for Parking Signage In Alvechurch



12. Conclusion and Recommendations

- 12.1 This Strategic Review has reviewed the supply and demand for parking in Bromsgrove town centre and the surrounding areas both now and in the future.
- 12.2 Committed development in the pipeline could affect the number of parking spaces that are occupied. There is a need to achieve the best balance between the sometimes-conflicting requirements of a parking strategy, i.e. its role in supporting the town centre economy, the public realm, income to BDC and other operators, traffic congestion and the objective to encourage sustainable transport and development. In developing a future parking strategy there is a need to avoid causing unintended consequences.
- 12.3 There is a significant amount of parking in the town centre, of a similar scale to comparator towns of similar populations. Public transport plays a limited role in the movement of people to and from the town centre, in comparison with many other towns that have better bus services. Therefore, Bromsgrove is relatively car-dominated.
- 12.4 The charging tariff utilised in Bromsgrove town centre is well balanced with short stay parking available in all public car parks and long stay in all but one. The parking charges are consistent with similar towns and, the condition of the public car parks is good, but some potential improvements have been identified.
- 12.5 The surveys and ticket sales show that Saturdays are significantly busier than weekdays, except in a few car parks that are popular with commuters and season ticket holders during the week (i.e. Parkside).
- 12.6 We have considered the results of our analysis and have highlighted the five most crucial aspects of the study that BDC should progress further. These aspects are detailed below:
- **Improve car park directional signage to town centre car parks and associated way-finding signage to direct visitors to nearby facilities in the town centre.**
 - **Investigate a nighttime car parking tariff that can be used as a basis to advertise the nighttime offer in Bromsgrove and encourage the evening economy.**
 - **Consider improvements to town centre car parks, which could be generated by increasing parking tariffs as the benchmarking exercise suggests there is scope for an increase. This would support improvements to the town centre overall and an increase in the town centre offering.**
 - **Invest in redeveloping School Drive car park to make it more attractive to people wishing to use the car park.**
 - **Place yellow lining on the on-street parking outside of the leisure Centre to encourage people to use the paid parking there instead of parking for free.**
 - **Aim to get more people to pay for parking charges by using card payments or by the app, with the long-term aim to go cashless, to reduce costs for BDC as well as making sure that all transactions are secure.**
- 12.7 Detailed recommendations for each car park can be seen in **Table 10**.

Table 10: Summary of Recommendations

Car park	Recommendations
New Road car park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider implementing an evening charge • Consider installing an ANPR system to manage ticketing in the car park • Consider the possibility of making New Road a short stay car park to take some of the strain off existing short stay car parks
North Bromsgrove car park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of 5mph speed limit signs to make the car park safer for pedestrians • Consider implementing an evening charge • Consider installing yellow lining along school drive to prevent drivers from parking in the free on street bays adjacent from the charged car parks • Consider installing an ANPR system to manage ticketing in the car park
Parkside car park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider implementing an evening charge • Consider installing an ANPR system to manage ticketing in the car park • Consider the installation of EV charging spaces
Recreation Road South car park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider introducing an all day tariff for stays of over 3 hours • Consider implementing an evening charge • Consider installing an ANPR system to manage ticketing in the car park • Consider installation of motorcycle & bicycle parking
School Drive car park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renovate the lining and surfacing in the car park • Installation of EV charging spaces • Consider the possibility of converting part/all the car park to a short stay to take some of the strain off existing short stay car parks. • Installation of high-quality signage to guide people to the car park • Consider installing an ANPR system to manage ticketing in the car park
St John Street car park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the installation of EV charging spaces • Consider installation of motorcycle & bicycle parking • Consider installing an ANPR system to manage ticketing in the car park
Stourbridge Road car park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider disposing of this car park site due to low utilisation and high renovation costs
Windsor Street car park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of high-quality signage to guide people to other town centre car parks to ease capacity issues • Consider installing an ANPR system to manage ticketing in the car park

Aston Fields car park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider removing the short stay restrictions • Consider bringing in charging which is competitive with Bromsgrove Train Station Car Park
Sanders Park car park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider installation of motorcycle & bicycle parking
Alvechurch car park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the viability of bringing in a small charging regime for the car park • Installation of 5mph speed limit signs to make the car park safer for pedestrians • Consider installation of motorcycle & bicycle parking • Installation of high-quality signage to guide people to the car park
Catshill car park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the viability of bringing in a small charging regime for the car park • Installation of high-quality signage to guide people to the car park

12.8 As a finite resource, parking in Bromsgrove town centre needs to be managed and tariffs are one of the main ways of doing this, with an application of setting reasonable charges. There is a need to generate revenue for investing in future physical and technological improvements, to ensure the continuous improvement and sustainability of parking services. Based upon the data we have analysed, our experience of other similar locations and the fact that charges are applied at nearby towns, it is not anticipated that the introduction of low and reasonable charges during these periods would materially influence parking demand. Income derived from evening and Sunday would help fund service improvements at the car parks and additional capacity. Therefore, BDC should assess the introduction of evening charges at car parks in the main settlements.

12.9 Based upon our analysis and experience elsewhere, if an evening and Sunday tariff of £1 per visit was introduced by BDC throughout the district, this could result in a potential additional income of c£200,000 per annum. A potential option is that charges are implemented, where possible, in Alvechurch car park, and Aston Fields, due to their respective locations, and usage could benefit from a small charge. In both locations, elected Members complained of the car parks being used for anti-social activities or vehicles being left overnight. Having a charging regime would bring both car parks into the patrol regime of CEOs, which would mean that usage would be regularly monitored. It is difficult to accurately forecast the potential revenue from introducing the charges on free car parks as there is no usage data available, however we estimate that it would be more than c£100,000 per annum.

12.10 From analysis of existing parking demand through the utilisation figures shared by BDC, we have ascertained that Bromsgrove town centre has adequate car parking provision both now, and in the future, without the need to reopen Churchfields car park. This is because in Bromsgrove town centre, only two short stay car parks (Windsor Street and St John Street) have utilisation consistently of above 60%, and this is only in the afternoons and the evening.

12.11 Furthermore, as discussed earlier in the report, findings of TEMPRO growth analysis show that current level of parking provision is adequate even for the future growth year of 2039, with only St John Street and Windsor Street car parks predicted to operate at capacity across both weekdays and weekends.

12.12 Although Parkside and New Road Car parks are expected to be at a high utilisation level in 2039, should the demand be managed across the car parks which have spare capacity, by

using tools such as wayfinding or VMS (as discussed later in this report) the demand on these car parks can be managed.

- 12.13 Therefore, it can be safely determined that Churchfields car park is no longer required. Existing Bromsgrove town centre car parks can comfortably meet demand, both now and in 2039. It is recommended that BDC explore decommissioning the site so that the land can be disposed of for regeneration purposes.



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Bromsgrove Strategic Parking Review

Part Two: Car Park Management Review

2 August 2024

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Comments

Final Issue following client comments

Revision	Status
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Cnn Contractual	S2 Information
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Executive Summary

This report covers Part Two of the Strategic Review of Car Parking in Bromsgrove. As part of this report, we have reviewed car park management arrangements with solutions identified to reduce the need for off-street parking enforcement including an outline of costs, together with operational and enforcement issues. We have also recommended time of day restrictions to address existing parking issues and assess enforcement requirements for identified parking management design options.

During our review, we have considered how Bromsgrove District Council's car parks are currently being managed. This is particularly timely given the town has undergone changes in land use and shopping behaviour over recent years which has impacted upon the popularity and functions of the town centre. Retail developments and regeneration projects in Bromsgrove have impacted on the demand for travel and the popularity of different parking areas, so there is a need to review whether the current parking provision is meeting the needs of the town, both at present and in the future. Currently, all car parks are within reasonable walking distance of most of the town centre, and that residents and visitors have a good range of existing provision to choose from.

The report includes a review of existing car park management strategies in Bromsgrove town centre compared to local authority areas with a similar demographic on social and economic needs. These have been assessed using factors such as existing conditions and enforcement methods. In comparing the effectiveness of different parking management approaches, lessons learned have been established from other areas, and the report determines how these approaches can be adopted by Bromsgrove to meet future needs.

Our proposed management approach recommends that parking enforcement should remain a sufficient deterrent to encourage motorists to comply with the regulations, however the primary purpose of penalty charge notices (PCNs) should only be to encourage compliance with parking restrictions in Bromsgrove, and not for the purposes of revenue generating. Rather, by further improving the parking offer, through offering cashless parking in all Bromsgrove town centre car parks for example, efficiencies can be found which in turn could increase revenue. The main efficiency would come with a potential reduction in the need for Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO) presence in Bromsgrove town centre, if for example the parking infrastructure at certain sites changed to embrace innovative enforcement methods. Also, use of new and existing technologies can enhance the user experience, in making parking easier and providing different ways to pay. There is also the potential to reduce back-office administration and allow for an improved offer relative to season tickets and contract parking.

An analysis of the impacts of future developments on Bromsgrove town centre car parking shows that there are several new residential developments which could influence traffic flow within Bromsgrove town centre, and parking provision, in particular car parks. The primary concern is the potential impact from the Land at Perryfields Road and Whitford Road developments. The larger site is following a phased development approach, and that due to the proximity to the town centre, it can be assumed that many residents will access the centre through sustainable transportation methods. However, the St John Street car park, in particular, could see an increase in traffic leading to the car park capacity being reached, as it is already the most utilised car park from the data analysed. The Recreation Road South car park could also see an increase in usage as it is one of the car parks nearest to new residents. Therefore, the impacts from both developments need to be considered by BDC as part of any future parking strategy for the town centre. Implementation of a zoning system in Bromsgrove to assist with identifying the geographical distribution of town centre developments could help to allocate associated parking demand to appropriate car park locations. When considered alongside a car park pricing strategy, the zoning system could also help to focus

more expensive parking towards the central areas of Bromsgrove, with less expensive parking options located around the edges of the town centre, with the aim of reducing the impact of vehicles penetrating the town centre.

Our review analysed typical CEO enforcement activity in the town centre over a typical weekday period, within a neutral month. We found that some car parks within the town centre were frequently visited by CEOs, with a considerable amount of time spent at the North Bromsgrove and Recreation Road South sites in particular, but very few PCNs were issued at either. This indicates that, whilst the threat of a PCN acts as a deterrent in Bromsgrove town centre, compliance with parking regulations is currently high, and therefore, alternative approaches could be considered to reduce the level of CEO presence and resource required within the town centre. In analysing car park user payment patterns, we have ascertained that car parking in Bromsgrove town centre is suitable for exploring alternative car parking management arrangements. Currently, most payments for parking are made by credit/debit card at the payment machines, however, cash payment remains high across all sites, in particular School Road car park where around 45% of all transactions were cash transactions.

There is a considerable economic case for car parking within Bromsgrove town centre going cashless, as it would reduce maintenance costs for the operation of Pay and Display machines as well as the cost of collecting the cash from the machines. App/online payments are currently very low, so it is further recommended that more information/signage is provided to make users aware that they do not have to necessarily use the pay and display machines to pay for car parking.

As part of our review, a SWOT (*Strengths – Weaknesses – Opportunities – Threats*) analysis of potential car parking management arrangements was conducted. Adopting a “business as usual” approach is not optimal as the only benefits appear to be that the service provider and service users are familiar operating and using the service as it is at present. However, this is far outweighed by factors such as maintaining systems and infrastructure that support cash payment, and security concerns such as protecting revenue in the payment machines. Installing an ANPR system across Bromsgrove town centre car parks offers significant benefits in terms of security, efficiency, and revenue management. From the SWOT analysis, ANPR is deemed the most advantageous method to install at off-street town centre public car parks due to the strengths and weaknesses outweighing the strengths and weaknesses of a barrier system and “business as usual.”

There is a legal framework for BDC to follow to implement fixed ANPR cameras in off-street public car parks in Bromsgrove, if this recommendation is to be pursued. However, before using ANPR cameras in off-street public car parks (under both civil and criminalised regimes), BDC must satisfy themselves that they have the power to install and use the cameras as intended. This is a complex area of the law. It is critical that BDC establish the necessary power to use cameras for parking enforcement, otherwise any enforcement action taken on the basis of evidence generated may be invalid. We advise that BDC involve their legal advisers on this crucial point from the outset.

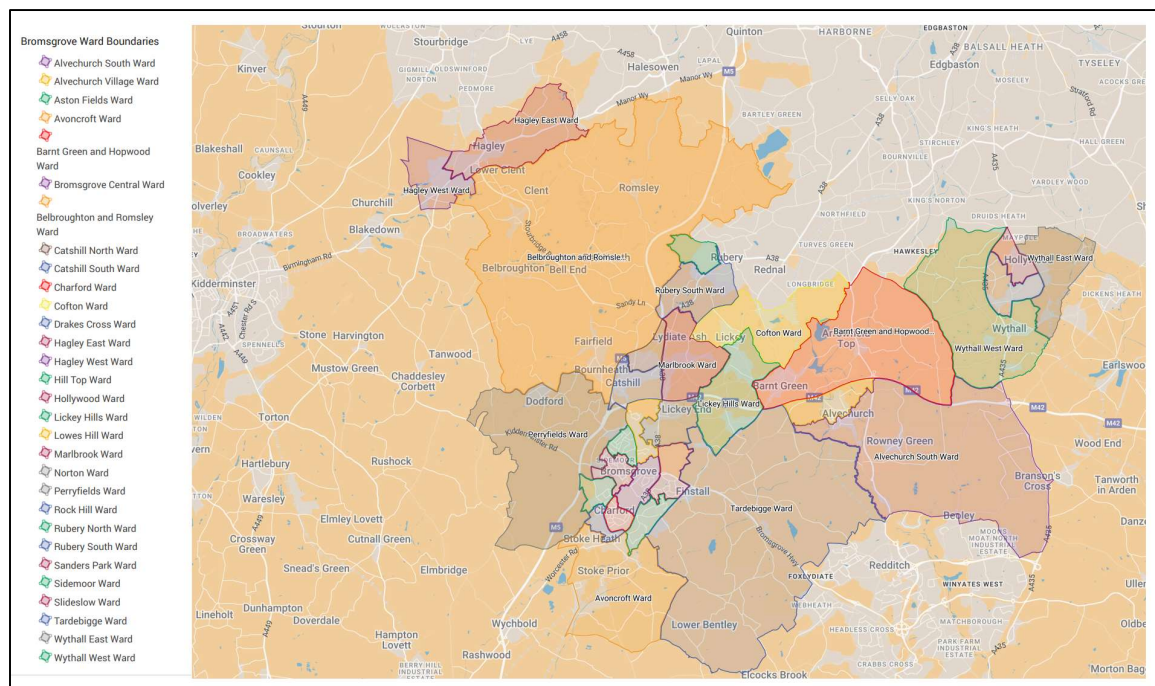
There are cost, maintenance, and potential privacy concerns to overcome, and to maximise the benefits and mitigate the risks, BDC will need to undertake careful planning, compliance with regulations, and robust cybersecurity measures. Integrating ANPR with the existing online payment/smart parking solution could further enhance the user experience and operational efficiency. Furthermore, installation of ANPR offers significant opportunities for BDC to receive detailed data on parking habits across their car parks, helping to make informed decisions on tariffs, redevelopment, and improvements to car parks. Our Management Review has taken revenue generation, costs of installing an ANPR system and the return on investment into account in evaluating the preferred option. Should the current management arrangement be enhanced with ANPR technology in Bromsgrove town centre car parks, the CEO resource could be freed up to patrol other areas of the district with a focus on on-street enforcement.

1. Introduction

The Brief

- 1.1 Waterman Infrastructure & Environment ('Waterman') have been commissioned by Bromsgrove District Council to undertake a Car Park Management Review of Bromsgrove Town Centre and the surrounding areas.
- 1.2 As part of this review, we have considered existing car park management arrangements with solutions identified to reduce the need for off-street parking enforcement, including an outline of costs, together with operational and enforcement issues. We have also recommended time of day restrictions to address existing parking issues and assess enforcement requirements for identified parking management design options.
- 1.3 The district boundary and the respective wards within Bromsgrove are illustrated in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Bromsgrove Wards



Background

- 1.4 This Management Review considers how Bromsgrove District Council's car parks are being managed. This is particularly timely given the town has undergone changes in land use and shopping behaviour over recent years which has impacted upon the popularity and functions of the town centre.
- 1.5 Retail developments and regeneration projects in Bromsgrove have impacted on the demand for travel and the popularity of different parking areas, so there is a need to review whether the current parking provision is meeting the needs of the town, both at present and in the future.
- 1.6 This study includes a review of existing car park management strategies in Bromsgrove town centre and local wards compared to local authority areas with a similar demographic on social and economic needs. These have been assessed using factors such as existing conditions and enforcement methods.

- 1.7 Additionally, the report provides solutions to address car parking management, reducing the need for off street parking enforcement at certain locations allowing wardens to cover greater distances outside of the town centre. This is also discussed in the On-Street Parking Enforcement Review report.
- 1.8 Further in this Management Review, the possibility of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) camera use is explored, outlining the costs, as well as operational and enforcement issues.

Report Format

- 1.9 The structure of this report is as follows:
- **Section 2** reviews other local authorities car park management strategies.
 - **Section 3** presents the existing parking provision.
 - **Section 4** reviews proposed developments across the Bromsgrove District Council Boundary.
 - **Section 5** analyses the current payment trends across the car parks managed by Bromsgrove District Council.
 - **Section 6** conducts a SWOT analysis of the preferred management method.
 - **Section 7** considers the alternative parking strategy measures and presents the recommended strategy; and
 - **Section 8** provides a summary of the report findings.

2. Car Park Management Approach Comparisons

Introduction

- 2.1 The purpose of this section is to compare the effectiveness of different parking management approaches from local authority areas, to establish any lessons learned from other areas, and to determine how these approaches can be adopted by Bromsgrove to meet future needs.
- 2.2 Bromsgrove is a traditional market town located in Worcestershire, with a population of approximately 99,200 (Census, 2021). Bromsgrove borders the built-up area of Birmingham to the north. Other towns and villages in the district include Alvechurch, Aston Fields, Belbroughton, Catshill, Clent, Hagley, Rubery, Stoke Prior and Wythall.
- 2.3 For Bromsgrove District Council, currently off-street car parking enforcement is contracted to Wychavon District Council (WDC) to administer. They have a finite resource of 5.5 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) spread across the district and CEOs are based out of Bromsgrove town centre.
- 2.4 From analysis of the beat patterns of the Civil Enforcement Officers, which was covered in the Strategic Review, the most common areas being enforced are within Bromsgrove town centre, notably public car parks within the core town centre area.
- 2.5 A review has been undertaken of the car parking management arrangements of the following three local authorities who have recently either completed a 5-year plan for car parking, renegotiated their parking enforcement contracts, or have recently updated their car parking strategies to meet parking needs both for the present and in the future:
 - Bracknell Forest
 - Oldham
 - Cheshire West and Chester
- 2.6 The three areas were chosen as comparators, as they have similar values to Bromsgrove in terms of demographics, as well as social and economic needs. These have been assessed using factors such as existing conditions and enforcement methods.

Bracknell Forest

- 2.7 The Enforcement and Parking Management Strategy for Bracknell Forest Council between 2019 – 2024 has been reviewed. Lessons learned from Bracknell's approach, and how it could be applied in Bromsgrove's approach, are as follows:
 - In terms of enforcement and management, enforcement should remain an important part of delivering a parking strategy for Bromsgrove, as a sufficient deterrent to encourage motorists to comply with the regulations.
 - Parking measures should be used to support continued economic growth and increasing dwell times, manage traffic and secure enough revenue to cover the cost of car parking. However, the primary purpose of penalty charge notices should be to encourage 100% compliance with parking restrictions, and as such raising revenue should not be an objective of parking enforcement, and therefore, going forward, targets should not be set in respect of numbers of PCNs issued or revenue collected from PCNs.
 - There is no doubt that contract efficiencies could be made via a redefinition of staffing roles and responsibilities whereby existing roles are combined; this also provides a great resilience for redeployment of staff.

- The traditional approach has been to ensure a physical presence of staff, but modern technological capabilities and infrastructure allow for a reduction in workforce with the move to central control and automation as is the industry norm. There is however a balance to be struck as a move such as this is likely to have a perceived reduction in customer service.
- Use a Variable Messaging System (VMS), located at key entry points into Bromsgrove town centre; this would provide information to motorists about parking availability in the main town centre car parks. VMS data counters can record all entries and exits to estimate occupancy. This can be used to direct and control parking (at busy times and for large events) and reduce congestion at key times.
- Offer cashless parking in all Bromsgrove's car parks. By further improving the offer, Bracknell found efficiencies which in turn could increase revenue. The main efficiency would come with a potential reduction in civil enforcement officer staffing if for example the parking infrastructure at certain sites changed from pay and display to ANPR.
- Use new and existing technologies to enhance the user experience, in making parking easier and providing different ways to pay. Digital technology can be used to better inform motorists of the choices available to them and parking availability information.
- Consider the development of an online portal system, which will have the potential to reduce back-office administration and allow for an improved offer relative to season tickets and contract parking. The intention is that this web-based system could enable the user to make an application for either a single season ticket on an individual basis or for several season tickets on behalf of a company. There is the potential that this system could also allow for a complete cashless parking solution whereby a bank card is registered and debited each time a registered vehicle leaves the car park.

Oldham

2.8 Oldham Town Centre is situated in a similar location to Bromsgrove, both being in close proximity to a major city. Population sizes are also similar with both their town centres and surrounding wards having a population of approximately 100,000. Lessons learned from Oldham's approach, and how it could be applied in Bromsgrove's approach, are as follows:

- Implement of a zoning system to assist with identifying the geographical distribution of town centre developments and help to allocate associated parking demand to appropriate car park locations.
- The aim of this zonal system would be to create a more evenly distributed provision of car parking spaces around the town centre. When combined with a complementary routeing and signage strategy, this will allow drivers to be guided quickly to an appropriate car park depending on the direction from which they approach the town centre. This should reduce incidences of traffic circulating the town centre searching for a car parking space.
- When considered alongside a car park pricing strategy, a zoning system could also help to focus more expensive parking towards the central areas, with less expensive parking options located around the edges of the town centre, with the aim of reducing the impact of vehicles penetrating the town centre.

Cheshire West & Chester

- 2.9 Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWCC) operates both on and off-street parking within its boundary. It had historically operated its off-street car park using pay and display except for one car park in Chester, which had pay and display on some floors and pay on exit on the remainder.
- 2.10 Due to issues with the pay on exit system, CWCC considered options for its replacement and the potential to extend the system to other car parks in Chester. Lessons learned from CWCC's approach, and how it could be applied in Bromsgrove's approach, are as follows:
- To install a Pay on Foot and ANPR (licence plate recognition) system at designated car parks with functionality including recognition of season ticket/pre-payment card holders with barriers raising automatically, resident Blue Badge Holders parking free for up to 4 hours using a chip system applied to the badge which the pay on foot system recognises.
 - Implement a web-based application that allows businesses to pay towards or for its customers' parking.
 - A flexible maintenance contract, supported by front line maintenance from Bromsgrove officers if required. Since installation, CWCC found that revenue increased significantly with the capital costs being recouped within 12 months. The system could also help with Bromsgrove's' parking enforcement operations, allowing WDC to focus more resources on enforcing on-street parking contraventions to keep traffic moving in the district.

Summary

- 2.11 In this section we have compared the effectiveness of different parking management approaches, to establish any lessons learned from other areas, and to determine how these approaches can be adopted by Bromsgrove to meet future needs. In areas that have similar values to Bromsgrove in terms of demographics, as well as social and economic needs, existing conditions and enforcement methods were reviewed.
- 2.12 It was found that parking enforcement should remain a sufficient deterrent to encourage motorists to comply with the regulations, however the primary purpose of penalty charge notices should only be to encourage compliance with parking restrictions, and not to raise revenue; thereby targets should not be set in respect of numbers of PCNs issued or revenue collected.
- 2.13 Contract efficiencies can be made via a redefinition of staffing roles and responsibilities whereby existing roles are combined; this also provides a great resilience for redeployment of staff. Modern technological capabilities and infrastructure allow for a reduction in workforce with the move to central control and automation as is the industry norm. There is however a balance to be struck as a move such as this is likely to have a perceived reduction in customer service.
- 2.14 At key entry points into Bromsgrove town centre, use a Variable Messaging System (VMS) could provide information to motorists about parking availability in the main town centre car parks. This can be used to direct and control parking (at busy times and for large events) and reduce congestion at key times.
- 2.15 By further improving the parking offer through offering cashless parking in all Bromsgrove's car parks, efficiencies could be found which in turn could increase revenue. The main efficiency would come with a potential reduction in civil enforcement officer staffing if for example the parking infrastructure at certain sites changed from pay and display to ANPR. Use new and existing technologies to enhance the user experience, in making parking easier and providing different ways to pay.

- 2.16 More prevalent utilisation of digital technology can be used to better inform motorists of the choices available to them and parking availability information. Also, to consider the development of an online portal system, which will have the potential to reduce back-office administration and allow for an improved offer relative to season tickets and contract parking.
- 2.17 Implement of a zoning system in Bromsgrove to assist with identifying the geographical distribution of town centre developments and help to allocate associated parking demand to appropriate car park locations. When considered alongside a car park pricing strategy, the zoning system could also help to focus more expensive parking towards the central areas, with less expensive parking options located around the edges of the town centre, with the aim of reducing the impact of vehicles penetrating the town centre.

3. Review of Existing Car Parking Provision

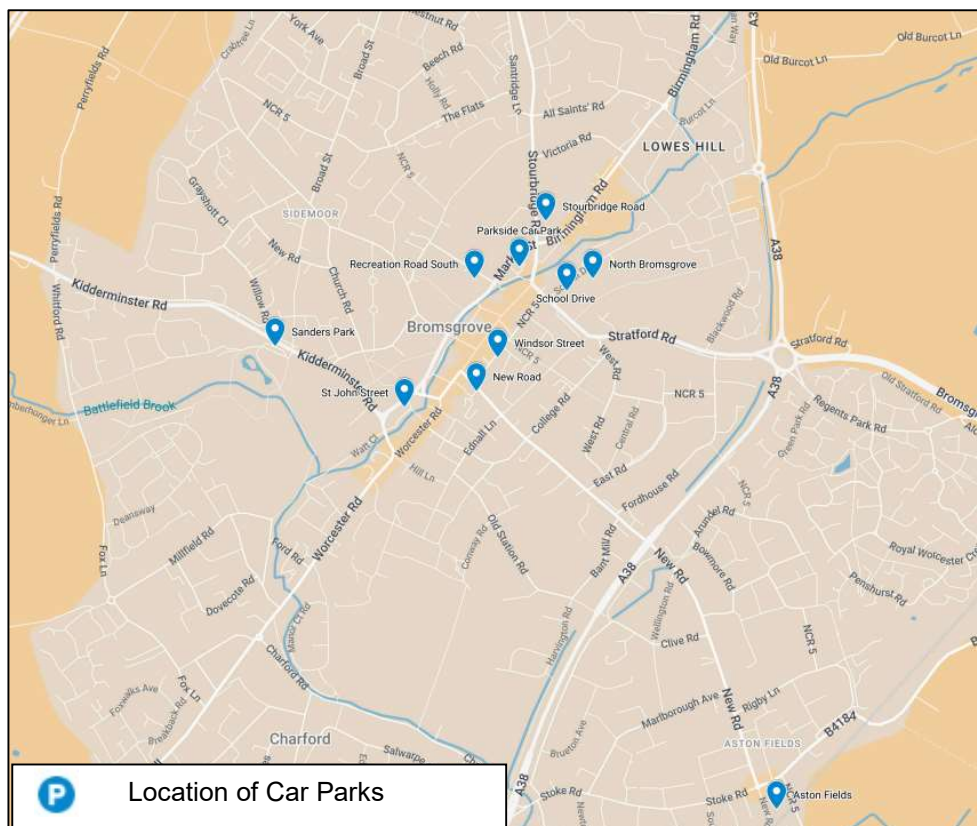
Introduction

- 3.1 In this section we have undertaken a review of existing off-street car parking provision within Bromsgrove town centre, including the spatial distribution of off-street car parks.
- 3.2 Our review has also looked at typical CEO enforcement activity over a typical weekday period, within a neutral month. This was to ascertain a baseline for typical enforcement activity within the town centre.
- 3.3 We have analysed the number of visits to each location and compared this with the number of PCNs issued. We have also analysed the average time spent monitoring each car park by CEOs, and where particular locations attract the highest resources. We have given the approximate total time spent monitoring by enforcement officers over the 7-day period and an average time spent in each car park.
- 3.4 To help predict future trends and management propositions, we have provided various reasons users park at each car park within the town centre. This is in order to make the case for change for an enforcement approach at these locations.

Off-Street Car Parking Enforcement

- 3.5 Bromsgrove town centre and surrounding wards have 10 car parks. **Figure 2** below shows the locations of the Off-Street car parks in Bromsgrove town centre.

Figure 2: Bromsgrove Parking Locations Enforced by Bromsgrove District Council



3.6 **Table 1** overleaf shows the off-street areas featured in the **Figure 2**, monitored by enforcement officers between 22/04/24 – 28/04/24. **Figure 3** below shows the number of enforcement notices issued between 22/04/24 – 28/04/24 in Bromsgrove Town Centre.

Figure 3: Bromsgrove Town Centre Enforcement Notices Issued 22/04/24 – 28/04/24

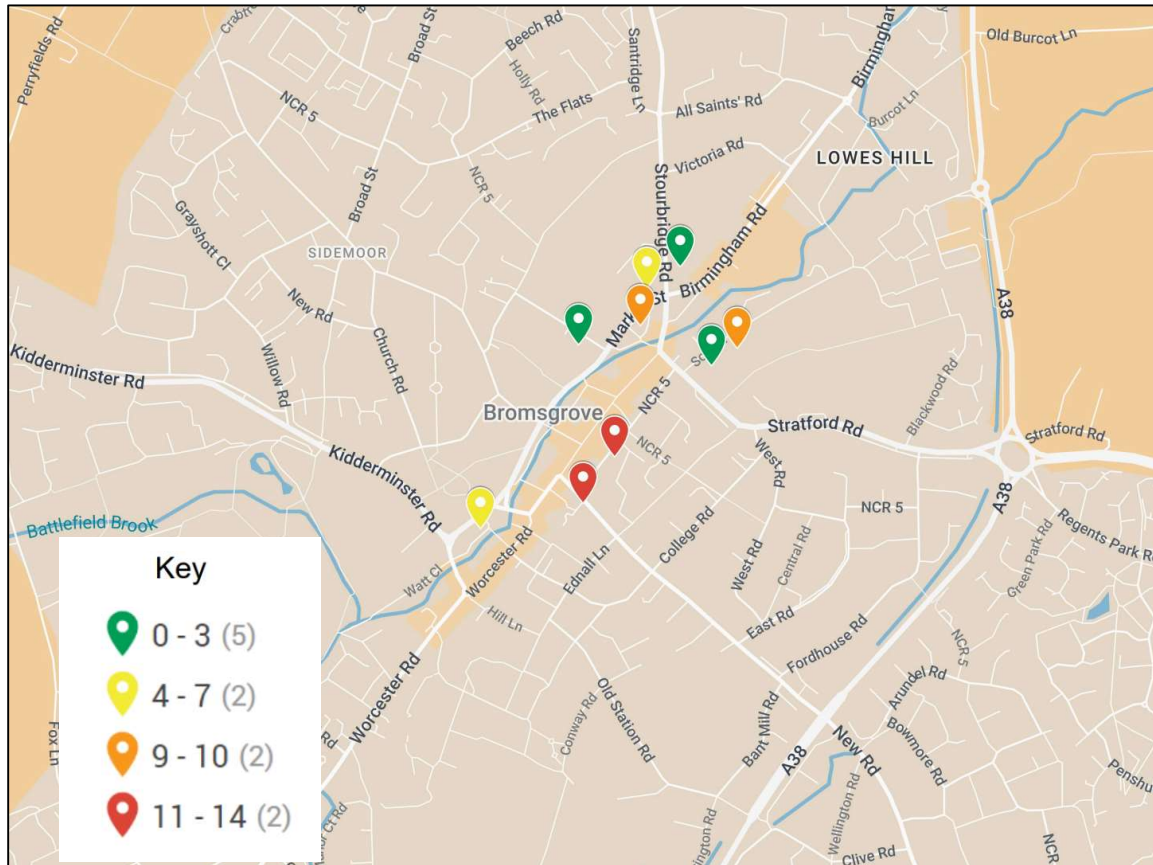


Table 1: Car Park Enforcement 22/04/24 – 28/04/24

Location	Number of Visits	Observed Vehicle Count	Notices Issued	Average Time	Total Time
Alvechurch Tanyard Lane Car Park	5	3	3	00:03:59	00:19:57
Aston Fields Car Park	9	4	1	00:05:20	00:47:59
New Road Car Park	18	16	11	00:08:08	02:26:15
North Bromsgrove Car Park	15	26	10	00:12:03	03:00:45
Parkside Car Park	38	22	9	00:06:14	03:56:50

Location	Number of Visits	Observed Vehicle Count	Notices Issued	Average Time	Total Time
Parkside Offices Car Park	7	4	4	00:05:07	00:35:51
Recreation Road South Car Park	73	11	3	00:06:39	08:05:39
School Drive Car Park	27	8	3	00:08:25	03:47:10
St John Street Car Park	19	19	7	00:09:16	02:55:58
Stourbridge Road Car Park	5	0	0	00:05:21	00:26:43
Windsor Street Car Park	37	42	14	00:07:19	04:30:54

- 3.7 As can be seen in **Table 1** above, 'Recreation Road South' car park is the most visited car park by enforcement officers with 73 visits over the 7-day period, this comes to approximately 10 visits per day. Despite the high number of visits from enforcement officers, and the fact the car park is the busiest in Bromsgrove town centre and surrounding wards, there are a low number of notices issued with just 3.
- 3.8 The car parks with the highest notices issued are, 'Windsor Street Car Park,' 'New Road Car Park' and 'North Road Car Park' with 14, 11 and 10 Notices issued by enforcement officers. 'Stourbridge Road Car Park' and 'Aston Fields Car Park' have the lowest number of Notices Issued with 0 and 1. A number of car parks have 3 Notices issued including 'Recreation Road South'.
- 3.9 The car park with the highest average time spent monitoring by enforcement officers is 'North Bromsgrove Car Park' with an average time of 00:12:03 each visit. Therefore, 'North Bromsgrove Car Park' is the car park where enforcement officers spend the most time in a week with just over 3 hours being spent there.
- 3.10 To conclude, the approximate total time spent monitoring by enforcement officers over the 7-day period is 30:54:01, with an average time spent in each car park of 00:07:05.

Car Park User Preferences

- 3.11 With 9 car parks within reasonable walking distance of most of the town centre, Bromsgrove residents and visitors have a range of car parks to choose from.
- 3.12 To help predict future trends and management propositions **Table 2** below shows a number of reasons users park at each car park within the centre.

Table 2: Benefits of Parking in each Car Park

Car Park	Possible Reasons of Parking here	Possible Reasons to Avoid
New Road Car Park	Easy walking distance to High Street	Majority of Car Park on a slope
North Bromsgrove Car Park	Main Car Park for the Leisure Centre	
Parkside Car Park	Easy walking distance to High Street	
Parkside Offices Car Park	Facilities nearby such as Churchfields Surgery and Bromsgrove Library	Further out from town centre
Recreation Road South Car Park	Proximity to Asda Superstore. Large site and easy to navigate, easy walking distance to High Street	
School Drive Car Park	Proximity to Leisure Centre	Likely to park in 'North Bromsgrove Car Park' for Leisure Centre
St John Street Car Park	Proximity to Waitrose Car Park, within reasonable walking distance to High Street	Reputation of being busy
Stourbridge Road Car Park	Possible Aldi Overflow	More likely to park in Aldi Car Park for Aldi, Condition is not as appealing as nearby alternatives. Parking available over the road
Windsor Street Car Park	Easy walking distance to High Street	Reputation of being busy

3.13 As seen in the figures and tables above, many car parks within the town centre share similar reasons to park there, thus the choice of usage comes down to user preferences (including start/end destination) for visitors to Bromsgrove town centre. The car parks are well used, compliance with regulations appears to be high, and therefore, alternative approaches could be considered to reduce CEO resource at these locations.

3.14 'Stourbridge Road Car Park' and 'School Drive Car Park' lack direct incentives to park and would therefore be classed as back-up / overflow car parks only.

Summary

3.1 In this section we have undertaken a review of existing off-street car parking provision within Bromsgrove town centre, including the spatial distribution of off-street car parks. We have found that all car parks are within reasonable walking distance of most of the town centre, and that residents and visitors have a good range of existing provision to choose from.

- 3.2 Our review has also analysed typical CEO enforcement activity in the town centre over a typical weekday period, within a neutral month. We found that some car parks within the town centre were frequently visited by CEOs, with a considerable amount of time spent at the Recreation Road South site in particular, but very few PCNs were issued.
- 3.3 This indicates that, whilst the threat of a PCN acts as a deterrent, compliance with parking regulations is currently high, and therefore, alternative approaches could be considered to reduce the level of CEO presence and resource required within the town centre.
- 3.4 We have provided various reasons users park at each car park within the town centre. Many car parks within the town centre share similar reasons to park there, thus ultimately coming down to user preferences (including start/end destination). They are well used, compliance with regulations appears to be high, and therefore, alternative approaches could be considered to reduce CEO resource at these locations.

4. Meeting Future Car Parking Needs

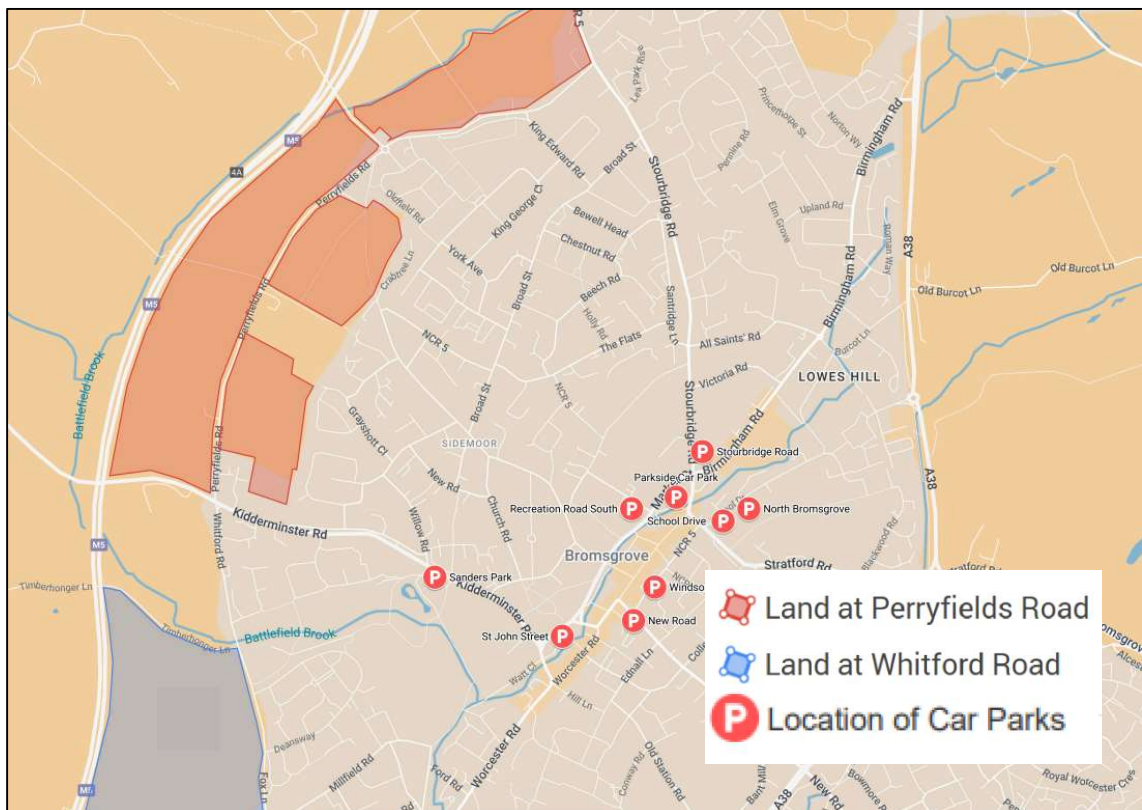
Introduction

- 4.1 As part of our Management Review, we have investigated whether Bromsgrove town centre car parking provision is fit to meet the future needs of residents and visitors, and whether additional provision is required.
- 4.2 In this section, we have reviewed the impacts of future developments as outlined in the adopted Bromsgrove Local Development Plan 2011-2030. These future developments are identified as “Committed Developments” in the LDP and therefore, BDC has confidence in these coming forward within the plan period.

Impacts of Committed Developments

- 4.3 From analysing the spatial distribution of committed developments, we have identified that there are several new residential developments which could have an effect on traffic flow within Bromsgrove town centre and parking provision in particular car parks.
- 4.4 Primarily amongst these is the impacts derived from the following developments as found in **Figure 4** below.

Figure 4: Committed Developments in vicinity of Bromsgrove Town Centre



- 4.5 As can be seen in the figure above, there are two developments on the western side of Bromsgrove Town Centre which could have an impact on future provision:
 - Land at Perryfields Road development - phased development for up to 1,300 dwellings
 - Whitford Road - up to 490 dwellings

4.6 The development of these sites would naturally increase parking occupancy within the town centre. Due to the proximity to the town centre, it can be assumed that many residents would access the centre through sustainable transportation methods, however despite this, the St John Street car park could see an increase in traffic leading to the car park capacity being reached, moreover as it is already the most utilised car park across the 3 days analysed.

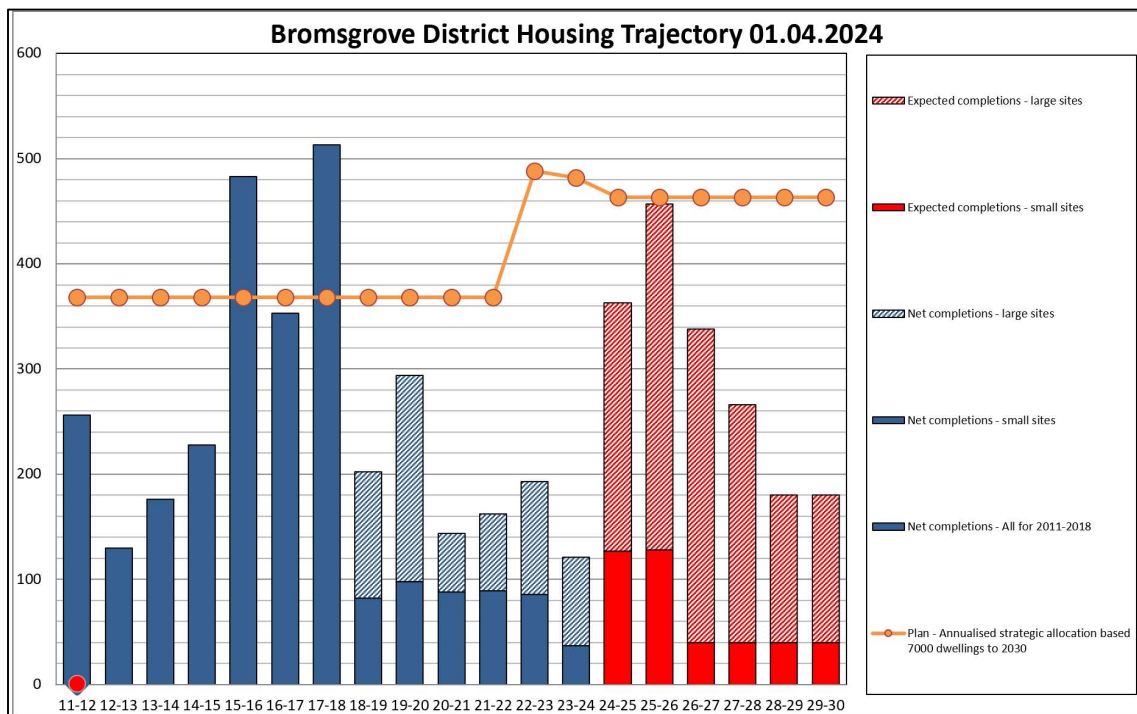
4.7 **Table 3** shows the previous 3 years of dwellings delivered compared to the requirements:

Table 3: Previous Three Years Housing Delivery

Year	Completions	Plan requirement
2020 / 21	144	368
2021 / 22	162	368
2022 / 23	193	368
Total	499	1104

4.8 The total delivery of houses is 499. The total planned requirements were 1,104. Therefore, 45% of proposed houses have been built within the district. This indicates that development is not currently coming forward as planned, although impacts need to be considered as part of an overall parking strategy. This is further portrayed in **Figure 5** below:

Figure 5: Bromsgrove District Housing Trajectory



Summary

- 4.9 As part of our Management Review, we have reviewed the impacts of future developments as outlined in the adopted Bromsgrove Local Development Plan 2011-2030.
- 4.10 We have identified that there are several new residential developments which could influence traffic flow within Bromsgrove town centre and parking provision in particular car parks. The primary concern is the potential impact from the Land at Perryfields Road and Whitford Road developments.
- 4.11 The development quantum for both sites combined is nearly 2,000 homes, and these will naturally increase parking occupancy within the town centre.
- 4.12 The larger site is following a phased development approach, and that due to the proximity to the town centre, it can be assumed that many residents will access the centre through sustainable transportation methods.
- 4.13 However, the St John Street car park in particular could see an increase in traffic leading to the car park capacity being reached, as it is already the most utilised car park across the 3 days analysed. The Recreation Road South car park could also see an increase in usage as it is one of the car parks nearest to new residents.
- 4.14 Therefore, the impacts from both developments need to be considered by BDC as part of any future parking strategies for the town centre.

5. Analysis of Existing Payment Patterns

Introduction

- 5.1 To ascertain the suitability of exploring alternative management arrangements for Bromsgrove town centre car parks, we have analysed user payment behaviour to understand payment patterns.
- 5.2 In this section, we analyse the paid council operated car parks to ascertain the proportion of transactions that are made by cash or card at a pay and display machine, or by online payments which BDC have recently commenced operating.

Payment Patterns

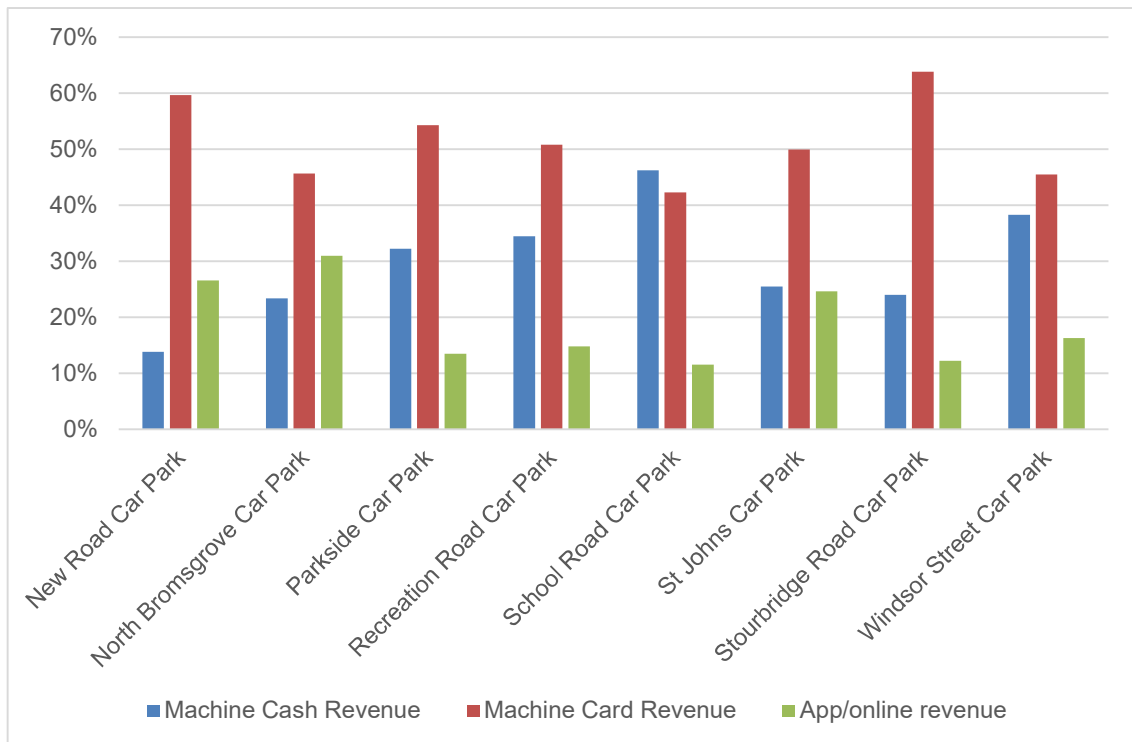
- 5.3 The analysis was conducted between the dates 22/04/2024 and 28/04/2024. The dates were chosen due to it being within a neutral month, with no school holidays or public holidays to impact the findings. This was so a realistic representation could be made of the payment methods that are currently used in a typical week.
- 5.4 Overall, the split of transactions for the chosen week can be seen below in **Table 4**.

Table 4: Percentage of Revenue by Method

Payment Method	Percentage of Revenue
Cash at Machine	31%
Card at Machine	50%
App/Online Payments	19%

- 5.5 From the data analysed, around 50% of users choose to pay with a debit/credit card when paying for parking in car parks across Bromsgrove town centre. Significantly, 31% of users still choose to pay by cash, with App/Online payments only being 19%.
- 5.6 A further, in-depth review of the current payments received from the specific car parks around Bromsgrove is provided in **Figure 7**.

Figure 5: Payment Type by Car Park



- 5.7 **Figure 7** shows that most payments during a typical week in a neutral month were made by paying by credit/debit card at payment machines. However, cash payment remains high across all sites, in particular School Road Car Park where around 45% of all transactions were cash transactions. This is the most popular method of payment at this site.
- 5.8 New Road Car Park which has the lowest proportion of cash transactions at 13% and one of the highest card transaction proportions at 59%.
- 5.9 A common trend is that app/online payments are below 35% on all car parks with the lowest being 11% at School Road. This is most likely due to people not being aware that they are able to pay by app/online.

Summary

- 5.10 In this section, through analysing car park user payment patterns, we have ascertained that car parking in Bromsgrove town centre is suitable for exploring alternative car parking management arrangements.
- 5.11 Currently, most payments for parking are made by credit/debit card at the payment machines, however, cash payment remains high across all sites, in particular School Road car park where around 45% of all transactions were cash transactions.
- 5.12 There is a considerable economic case for car parking within Bromsgrove town centre going cashless, as it would reduce maintenance costs for the operation of Pay and Display machines as well as the cost of collecting the cash from the machines.
- 5.13 Operating a cashless system across all car parks would allow for revenue to be protected as well as reducing operating costs. To implement this however, users' habits of choosing to pay with cash would need to change. App/online payments are currently very low, so it is further recommended that more information/signage is provided to make users aware that they do not have to necessarily use the pay and display machines to pay for car parking.

6. Car Park Management Options Appraisal

Introduction

- 6.1 Having established that Bromsgrove town centre car parks are suitable for exploring alternative car parking management arrangements, in this section we explore options for alternative arrangements through a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis
- 6.2 This has been conducted for Option 1 – Implementing an ANPR system, and Option 2 – Installation of Ticketed Barriers, as well as a “Do Nothing” (Business as Usual) option.
- 6.3 This has been conducted to formulate an options appraisal through leveraging strengths, addressing weaknesses, exploiting opportunities, and mitigating threats:

Do Nothing (Business as Usual)

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organisational Familiarity 2. Familiarity for Users 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintenance and Technical Issues 2. Dependence on Existing Systems 3. Technological Obsolescence 4. Revenue Protection Risks
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continuity of service 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regulatory Changes 2. Technological Obsolescence 3. Revenue Protection Risks

The SWOT analysis above shows that the Strengths in adopting a “business as usual” approach would be organisational familiarity with operating the service as it is at present. This approach would also give existing users familiarity, in that the approach would not be changed. This may best support the users who currently pay by cash.

Opportunities derived from adopting a “business as usual” approach come from the continuity of service it would provide for the existing operation.

Weaknesses and Threats concern an ongoing requirement to maintain the systems and infrastructure that support cash payment. There would be a dependence on maintaining existing systems and infrastructure which may become obsolete with advances in payment methods and parts to maintain them. Protecting revenue in the payment machines is also an ongoing weakness and threat in that they are currently, or could be in the future, a target for criminal activity, given that they are currently a source of cash.

Option 1: Implementing an ANPR system

Introduction

- 6.4 An automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) system captures the vehicle registration number of vehicles when they drive in and out of a car park. Rather than buy a ticket when the customer arrives, they will need to pay before they exit the car park, so there will be no ticket to display. A receipt can be printed from the payment machines.
- 6.5 When paying at the machines the customer will need to put in their registration number into the machine, and the machine will calculate how long they have been in the car park. They allow for credit/debit card payment (including contactless).
- 6.6 A system is typically set to allow for vehicles to pick up/drop off or find a space. If the customer spends longer than the limit, they will need to pay for parking. If they do not pay for parking, they can get issued with a PCN.

<p>Strengths</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved Security 2. Efficiency in Parking Management 3. Enhanced Revenue Management 4. Data Collection 5. Convenience for Users 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High Initial Cost 2. Maintenance and Technical Issues 3. Privacy Concerns 4. Dependence on Technology
<p>Opportunities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integration with Smart Parking Solutions 2. Enhanced Customer Service 3. Futureproofing 	<p>Threats</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regulatory Changes 2. Public Resistance 3. Technological Obsolescence 4. Cybersecurity Risks

In terms of implementing an ANPR system for car parks in Bromsgrove, the Strengths are in improved security - Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) systems can enhance the security of a car park by identifying and recording all vehicles entering and exiting. This helps in deterring criminal activities such as theft and vandalism. The strengths also provide efficiency in parking management; ANPR systems streamline parking operations by automating entry and exit processes. This will reduce the need for manual checks and can speed up the flow of traffic, reducing congestion at peak times. Also, enhanced revenue management can be derived from an ANPR system; it could be integrated with payment systems to enforce parking fees accurately, ensuring all users are charged correctly. This minimises revenue loss due to unpaid parking. Data collection is also a strength, as the systems can provide valuable data on parking usage patterns, helping to optimise space utilisation and inform future improvements. Finally, it is a convenient option, in that users could benefit from a smoother and quicker parking experience as ANPR reduces the need for physical tickets and barriers.

In terms of Weaknesses, there is a high initial cost. The installation and setup of ANPR systems can be expensive, requiring significant upfront investment in hardware, software, and infrastructure. ANPR systems require regular maintenance and updates to ensure accuracy and functionality.

Technical failures could lead to operational disruptions. The use of ANPR involves the collection and storage of vehicle data, which can raise privacy issues among users. Compliance with data protection regulations like GDPR will be essential. Also, over-reliance on ANPR technology can be problematic if there are system failures or power outages, potentially causing operational bottlenecks.

Opportunities derived from installing an ANPR system allow for integration with smart parking solutions; these systems can be integrated with other smart parking technologies, such as real-time space availability indicators, mobile app payments, and reservation systems, enhancing the overall user experience. Enhanced customer service can also be derived, with data from ANPR able to be used to offer personalised services, such as loyalty programs for frequent users or targeted promotions. Moreso, implementing ANPR systems position BDC to adapt to future developments in automated and connected vehicle technologies.

In terms of Threats, regulatory changes such as potential future changes in data protection and privacy regulations could impose additional compliance requirements or restrict the use of ANPR technology. Users may also have concerns about privacy and data security, leading to resistance or reduced patronage if they feel their personal information is not adequately protected. Rapid advancements in technology could render current ANPR systems obsolete, necessitating further investment in upgrades or replacements. Also, ANPR systems are vulnerable to cyber-attacks, which could compromise sensitive data and disrupt operations. Robust cybersecurity measures are essential to mitigate this threat.

Summary

- 6.7 Installing an ANPR system in a car park offers significant benefits in terms of security, efficiency, and revenue management. However, it also entails high costs, maintenance requirements, and potential privacy concerns.

Option 2 – Installation of Ticketed Barriers

- 6.8 A barrier-controlled car park is a parking facility that uses barriers to regulate vehicle access and exit. Typically, vehicles must pass through a barrier that raises or lowers based on specific conditions, such as payment status or the presence of a valid parking ticket.
- 6.9 Vehicles must stop at the barrier, which either raises automatically after payment is made or allows exit after the driver presents a ticket or validates their stay. Payments can be made at machines located near the entrance or exit, or through mobile apps. Some systems may also allow for pre-booking. Many barrier-controlled car parks are equipped with surveillance cameras and other security measures to enhance safety and monitor activity. These car parks often charge based on the duration of stay, making it easier to manage parking time and fees.
- 6.10 This type of system helps to manage parking availability, reduce congestion, and ensure that only paying customers have access to the parking facility.

<p>Strengths</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved Security 2. Revenue Management 3. Reduced Theft and Vandalism 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High Installation Costs: 2. Maintenance Requirements: 3. Operational Disruptions: 4. Limited Scalability 5. User Inconvenience
<p>Opportunities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integration with Modern Technology 2. Enhanced Customer Service 3. Data Collection 	<p>Threats</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technological Obsolescence: 2. Regulatory Changes: 3. Public Resistance: 4. Competition from Alternative Solutions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

In terms of implementing ticketed barriers to car parks in Bromsgrove town centre, the Strengths of this approach are the security benefits; barrier systems control entry and exit points, reducing unauthorised access to car parks and enhancing overall security. Also, they would ensure accurate fee collection by controlling vehicle entry and exit based on payment or validation, and function as a deterrent to potential thieves and vandals by creating a controlled environment.

Weaknesses include the significant initial investment required for the purchase and installation of barrier systems. Ongoing maintenance would be necessary to keep the barriers operational, which could incur additional costs. Also, barrier malfunctions could cause delays and operational disruptions, leading to user dissatisfaction. A traditional barrier system may not be easily scalable or adaptable to future technological advancements. Finally, physical barriers can be seen as inconvenient by users, particularly during peak times when queues may form.

In terms of Opportunities, a barrier system could be integrated with technologies like ANPR, RFID, or contactless payment systems to enhance functionality and user experience. By implementing automated ticketing and payment systems, the parking process could be streamlined, improving customer satisfaction. Also, barrier systems can collect data on parking usage patterns, which could be used to optimise parking management operations and inform future improvements.

Threats come from the technological obsolescence that could occur from implementing such a system; rapid advancements in technology could render existing barrier systems obsolete, necessitating further investment in upgrades. Changes in regulations regarding access control and data privacy could impact the use and functionality of barrier systems. Also, users may resist the installation of barriers due to perceived inconvenience or privacy concerns. Finally, increasing availability of alternative parking management solutions, such as ANPR-only systems or app-based entry systems, could reduce the attractiveness of traditional barrier systems.

Summary

- 6.11 Installing a barrier system in Bromsgrove town centre car parks could offer several strengths, including enhanced security, effective access control, and better revenue management. However,

it also comes with weaknesses such as high initial and ongoing costs, potential for operational disruptions, and user inconvenience.

Recommendation of Preferred Option for Car Park Management

- 6.12 The SWOT analysis shows that adopting a “business as usual” approach is not optimal as the only benefits appear to be that the service provider and service users are familiar operating and using the service as it is at present. However, this is far outweighed by factors such as maintaining systems and infrastructure that support cash payment, and security concerns such as protecting revenue in the payment machines.
- 6.13 Installing an ANPR system across Bromsgrove town centre car parks offers significant benefits in terms of security, efficiency, and revenue management. There are cost, maintenance, and potential privacy concerns to overcome, and to maximise the benefits and mitigate the risks, BDC will need to undertake careful planning, compliance with regulations, and robust cybersecurity measures. Integrating ANPR with the existing online payment/smart parking solution could further enhance the user experience and operational efficiency.
- 6.14 Installing a barrier system in Bromsgrove town centre car parks could offer several strengths, including enhanced security, effective access control, and better revenue management. However, it also comes with weaknesses such as high initial and ongoing costs, potential for operational disruptions, and user inconvenience.
- 6.15 Therefore, from the SWOT analysis, ANPR is deemed the most advantageous method to install at off-street town centre public car parks due to the strengths and weaknesses outweighing the strengths and weaknesses of a barrier system and “business as usual.” Furthermore, installation of ANPR also offers significant opportunity for BDC to receive detailed data on parking habits across their car parks, helping them to make informed decisions on tariffs, redevelopment, and improvements to car parks.

7. Costs and ROI of Preferred Car Park Management Option

Introduction

- 7.1 In this section we explore the preferred option to improve car park management within the district through installing an ANPR system at Bromsgrove town centre public car parks.
- 7.2 The installation of ANPR cameras would provide a system to monitor vehicles entering and exiting the car parks and would provide information on length of stay (without the requirement for the installation of a barrier at the entrance and exit of the car park). The estimated cost of installing ANPR cameras and the legal framework to implement the system is detailed in the sections below.

Cost of an ANPR System

- 7.3 The cost of installing and maintaining an ANPR parking management system depends upon several variables and factors that need to be considered. However, we have given a broad order of magnitude cost of the elements that would be involved in the installation. These are broken down below:
- Video Camera Cost (Not including server and software) - £470 - £700.
 - Specialised ANPR Camera Cost (One off) - £1,000 - £3,000
 - Average Installation Cost Range: £700 - £1,000
 - Barrier or Gate Installation Cost Range: £1,500 - £3,000
 - Server / software – £35,000 - £55,000
 - Maintenance – Variable depending on contractor

Legal Framework to Implement an ANPR System

- 7.4 Broadly speaking, there are two scenarios when fixed ANPR cameras may be deployed in off-street public car parks in Bromsgrove. These are:
- **within a civil or special enforcement area (C/SEA) where enforcement is undertaken using powers set out in the Traffic Management Act 2004 (civil regime); and**
 - **within areas where parking enforcement is undertaken using powers set out in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (criminalised regime).**
- 7.5 In either the civil or criminalised regime, car parks should be provided on the basis of proper orders under the Road Traffic Regulation Act (RTRA) 1984 (e.g. the powers in Section 32 and 33 with Orders under Section 35 and Contraventions under Section 35A).
- 7.6 Before using ANPR cameras in off-street public car parks (under both civil and criminalised regimes), BDC must satisfy themselves that they have the power to install and use the cameras as intended. This is a complex area of the law. BDC should carefully consider the provisions of Section 35 of the RTRA 1984 and decide whether they enable an order to be made by the authority for the use of ANPR cameras at particular locations.
- 7.7 BDC might also consider the potential use of more general or ancillary powers, for example, under the Local Government Act 1972 or the Localism Act 2011. It is critical that BDC establish the necessary power to use cameras for parking enforcement, otherwise any enforcement action taken on the basis of evidence generated may be invalid. We advise that BDC involve their legal advisers on this crucial point from the outset.

- 7.8 Regulated car parks that are within a Civil or Special Enforcement Area (C/SEA) must be managed in accordance with the powers set out in the Traffic Management Act (TMA) 2004. As noted above, TMA 2004 enforcement still requires a Traffic Order (TRO/TMO) or Parking Places Order to be made under the RTRA 1984.
- 7.9 The Government confirmed a major set of reforms amending the TMA in the form of the Deregulation Act in April 2015 to make parking policy in England more motorist-friendly via restrictions on camera enforcement by local authorities. However, the reforms mainly concerned on-street parking only.
- 7.10 In C/SEA where parking contraventions only carry civil financial penalties BDC must still satisfy themselves that the same points discussed above regarding the need to establish the power to use the camera, and to ensure its use is lawful. In addition, cameras may only be used to capture evidence upon which a penalty charge is issued if they are 'approved devices'.
- 7.11 In summary, the key points for C/SEA are that:
- The car parks are within a C/SEA as specified in schedule 8 of the TMA (Greater London), or by an order made by the Secretary of State under Schedule 8. The way any such order is couched is important. If the order is only couched in terms of roads then arguably it may not apply to off-street parking. However, provided the order is defined in terms of an area (or areas) then it is likely that this encompasses any off-street car parks within the area(s). Alternatively specific car parks may be identified in CEA Orders.
 - The PCN level has been set in accordance with Schedule 9 of the TMA. The vehicle owner's copy of the PCN should be fixed to the windscreen, so it must be weatherproof or able to fit a weatherproof envelope. It should be fixed in such a way that it cannot easily be removed by wind or passers-by.
 - The cameras are 'approved devices' as required by the General Directions and meet the requirements in the Approved Devices Regulations.
 - BDC has due regard to the relevant Statutory Guidance issued by the Department for Transport (or Welsh Ministers in Wales), and other relevant considerations such as data protection and privacy law.
- 7.12 The rationale for the previous points regarding the use of ANPR cameras within a C/SEA are as follows:
- The TMA and associated Regulations and Orders**
- 7.13 The government confirmed a major set of reforms amending the TMA 2004 in the form of the Deregulation Act 2015 to make parking policy in England more motorist-friendly via restrictions on camera enforcement by local authorities.
- 7.14 So far as off-street parking is concerned, the Secretary of State for Transport wrote to all English local authorities in September 2014 indicating that the Government opinion was that it was unlawful for local authorities to use CCTV/ANPR in public car parks and informed them that DVLA would not supply information in those circumstances. That remains the Government's position.
- 7.15 However, local authorities have challenged this position and claim to have legal opinion to the contrary. English local authorities such as Lichfield and Crawley have already installed ANPR in their off-street car parks and it is recommended that BDC engage with both authorities on their approach and lessons learned.
- 7.16 Part 6 of the TMA sets out a regime for the civil enforcement of road traffic violations. Section 73 sets out the types of road traffic contravention which are subject to civil enforcement, including

parking contraventions. Section 74 and Schedule 8 make provisions about which areas are civil enforcement areas or may be designated civil enforcement areas. Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 8 states that the whole of Greater London is a civil enforcement area for parking violations, and paragraph 1 of Part 2 states that the appropriate national authority (i.e. the Secretary of State for Transport in England or the Welsh Ministers in Wales) may designate other areas as civil or special enforcement areas.

- 7.17 Section 72 of the Act empowers the appropriate national authority to make regulations regarding the imposition and payment of penalty charges. The relevant regulation in this context is the Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions (England) General Regulations 2007 (the 'English Regulations').
- 7.18 Section 92 (1) of the TMA 2004 defines an 'approved device' simply as 'a device of a description specified in an order made by the appropriate national authority'. Further provisions about this process of approval are contained in Orders (made under sections 89 and 92 of the TMA), which is the Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions (Approved Devices) (England) Order 2007.
- 7.19 In this case the Orders contain a schedule which sets out various technical requirements which approved ANPR devices must meet (such as that the device must include a securely mounted camera that is connected to a recording system and so on). The Orders state (at article 2) that an approved device is simply a device which has been certified by the Secretary of State as meeting the technical requirements set out in the Schedule.
- 7.20 In England the approval of devices is undertaken by the Vehicle Certification Authority on behalf of the Department for Transport. The British Parking Association (BPA) has a list of certifications of approved devices.

The Statutory Guidance

- 7.21 Section 87 of the TMA requires local authorities to 'have regard' to guidance issued by the appropriate national authority as to how they should exercise their civil enforcement functions. The relevant guidance in England is the 'Secretary of State's Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on the Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions' dated 28 February 2008 (the 'English Guidance').
- 7.22 Paragraphs 48 to 50 of the English Guidance concern enforcement using approved devices. Paragraph 48 states:
- 'The Secretary of State recommends that approved devices are used only where enforcement is difficult or sensitive and CEO enforcement is not practical. Approved devices should not be used where permits or exemptions (such as resident permits or Blue Badges) are not visible to the equipment may apply.'*
- 7.23 This part of the Guidance potentially creates restrictions on the use of ANPR cameras which are not contained in the legislation. The effect of this part of the Guidance is not straight forward and would ultimately need to be considered in the particular context in which BDC would be thinking of using the cameras.
- 7.24 All the parking Penalty Charge Notices, regardless of whether the contravention was detected by person or camera, must be issued by a human. CEOs must check the validity of any contraventions captured by camera before agreeing to serve a PCN. The CEO may potentially become a witness in any subsequent adjudication or court action.

Return on Investment (ROI) of an ANPR system

- 7.25 Despite the initial outlay, ANPR cameras would provide a return on investment in several ways after they are installed. The returns fall within the following four categories:
- **Improved Security:** ANPR systems can significantly enhance security measures, potentially reducing crime rates and associated costs.
 - **Efficient Traffic Management:** These systems can streamline traffic flow and reduce congestion, leading to time and fuel savings for citizens.
 - **Automated Revenue Collection:** ANPR can automate toll collection and parking fee management, potentially increasing revenue and reducing operational costs.
 - **Data-Driven Decision Making:** The data collected by ANPR systems can inform urban planning and policy decisions, leading to long-term cost savings.
- 7.26 They also offer benefits in terms of:
- Automated Vehicle Access;
 - Easy User Experience;
 - Opportunity to grow revenue allowing pre-booking;
 - Can filter vehicles that are charged at the car park, authorised vehicles that effectively have a permit can automatically be approved to the desired parking rate;
 - Drivers do not need any technology attached or equipped to vehicles.
 - Can temporarily store data until a condition is met (such as paying a parking ticket).
- 7.27 The installation of ANPR cameras at the significant car parks around Bromsgrove town centre would allow for CEOs to dedicate more resource towards enforcing on-street parking issues.

Recommended Locations for ANPR systems

- 7.28 ANPR parking systems are recommended at the following car parks:
- **Recreation Road South Car Park;**
 - **Windsor Street Car Park;**
 - **St John Street Car Park;**
 - **New Road Car Park;**
 - **Parkside Car Park;**
 - **North Bromsgrove Car Park;**
 - **School Drive Car Park; and,**
 - **Aston Fields Car Park.**
- 7.29 These car parks have been selected as there is sufficient parking demand, on a regular basis, for an ANPR system to be beneficial.

Income & Costs

- 7.30 **Table 5** shows a breakdown of the income from parking charges and penalty charges, exclusive of VAT, per year, for the last 3 years that data is available:

Table 5: Income from Parking Charges

Year	Income from parking charges exclusive of VAT	Income from penalty charges exclusive of VAT
2021 – 22	£470,183.61	£20,571.42
2022 – 23	£1,004,128.92	£48,547.31
2023 – 24	£875,133.54	£45,068.88

7.31 As can be seen above, taking the most recent year in a post Covid-19 economy, £875,133.54 was generated from parking charges and £45,068.88 from penalty charges for Bromsgrove District Council. Using these figures, a standard week generates £16,830 from parking charges and £866 from penalty charges.

7.32 An ANPR camera is estimated to cost circa £5,700 for full installation per car park (excluding maintenance/software etc).

7.33 If installed at 8 car parks as proposed above, this would cost Bromsgrove District Council £45,600 plus between £35,000 and £55,000 to establish a server, with variable maintenance costs.

Installation & Signage

7.34 Examples of how cameras can be positioned as well as the signage required can be seen below.

Photograph 1: Example of ANPR Camera



Summary

- 7.35 In this section, we have outlined the preferred option to improve car park management within the district through installing an ANPR system at Bromsgrove town centre public car parks.
- 7.36 The estimated cost of installing ANPR cameras, if installed at 8 car parks as proposed above, would cost Bromsgrove District Council a broad order of magnitude £46,000 plus between £35,000 and £55,000 for establishing a server, not including maintenance costs. This cost could be offset against roughly £925,000 of annual income generated from parking charges and penalty charges combined.
- 7.37 There is a legal framework for BDC to follow to implement fixed ANPR cameras in off-street public car parks in Bromsgrove, if this recommendation is to be pursued. However, before using ANPR cameras in off-street public car parks (under both civil and criminalised regimes), BDC must satisfy themselves that they have the power to install and use the cameras as intended. This is a complex area of the law. BDC should carefully consider the provisions of Section 35 of the RTRA 1984 and decide whether they enable an order to be made by the authority for the use of ANPR cameras at particular locations.
- 7.38 BDC might also consider the potential use of more general or ancillary powers, for example, under the Local Government Act 1972 or the Localism Act 2011. It is critical that BDC establish the necessary power to use cameras for parking enforcement, otherwise any enforcement action taken on the basis of evidence generated may be invalid. We advise that BDC involve their legal advisers on this crucial point from the outset.
- 7.39 Despite the initial outlay, ANPR cameras could provide a return on investment in several ways after they are installed, including improved security, efficient traffic management, automated revenue collection and data-driven decision making.

8. Summary and Recommendations

- 8.1 The study includes a review of existing car park management strategies in Bromsgrove. We have assessed the existing conditions and enforcement methods and have provided the basis of solutions to address car parking management in the town centre, reducing the need for off-street car parking enforcement at certain locations allowing CEOs to cover greater distances outside of the town centre.
- 8.2 There is a large amount of parking in Bromsgrove town centre, of a similar scale to comparator towns of similar populations. Committed developments in the pipeline may affect the number of parking spaces that need to be provided and the demand for public parking in the town centre.
- 8.3 There is a need to achieve the best balance between the sometimes-conflicting requirements of a parking strategy, i.e. its role in supporting the town centre economy, the public realm, income to Bromsgrove District Council and other operators, traffic congestion and the objective to encourage sustainable transport and development. In developing a future parking strategy there is a need to avoid causing unintended consequences.
- 8.4 Bromsgrove District Council CEO enforcement data was analysed between 22nd April 2024 and 28th April 2024. This was to ascertain a baseline for typical CEO enforcement activity over a typical weekday period, within a neutral month. The data analysed shows Recreation Road South to be the most visited car park by CEOs with 73 visits over the 7-day period. The car park with the highest average time spent monitoring by CEOs was found to be North Bromsgrove Car Park with an average time of over 12 minutes for each visit. This town centre car park is the car park where enforcement officers spend the most time in a week, with just over 3 hours being spent there. The approximate total time spent monitoring Bromsgrove town centre car parks by CEOs over the 7-day period we analysed was 30 hours per CEO, with an average time spent in each car park being roughly 7 minutes.
- 8.5 Our recommendation to improve car parking management is to install ANPR parking cameras at town centre car parks. This would provide a system to monitor vehicles entering and exiting the car park at all times of the day, the length of stay, and payment. This hugely reduces the chances of cars that have overstayed being missed, since the cameras would operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- 8.6 Broadly speaking, there is a legal framework for BDC to follow to implement fixed ANPR cameras in off-street public car parks in Bromsgrove, if this recommendation is to be pursued. However, before using ANPR cameras in off-street public car parks (under both civil and criminalised regimes), BDC must satisfy themselves that they have the power to install and use the cameras as intended. This is a complex area of the law. BDC should carefully consider the provisions of Section 35 of the RTRA 1984 and decide whether they enable an order to be made by the authority for the use of ANPR cameras at particular locations. BDC might also consider the potential use of more general or ancillary powers, for example, under the Local Government Act 1972 or the Localism Act 2011. It is critical that BDC establish the necessary power to use cameras for parking enforcement, otherwise any enforcement action taken on the basis of evidence generated may be invalid. We advise that BDC involve their legal advisers on this crucial point from the outset.
- 8.7 A drawback to the ANPR camera proposal is that there is a considerable initial cost of buying and installing the infrastructure, but despite this, the benefits provided appear to outweigh the initial cost.
- 8.8 Should the current management arrangement be enhanced with ANPR technology in Bromsgrove town centre car parks, CEO resource could be freed up to patrol other areas of the district with a focus on on-street enforcement.



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Bromsgrove Strategic Parking Review

Part Three: Review of On-Street Enforcement

10 May 2024

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This document has been prepared and checked in accordance with Waterman Group's IMS (BS EN ISO 9001: 2015, BS EN ISO 14001: 2015 and BS EN ISO 45001:2018)

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PO1	S3	17/09/2024	Jack Wellings Transport Planner	James Picton Senior Transport Planner	Richard White Associate Director
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Comments

Final Issue following client comments

Revision	Status
Pnn Preliminary (shared; non-contractual)	S1 Coordination
Cnn Contractual	S2 Information
	S3 Review & Comment
	S4 Review & Authorise
	S5 Review & Acceptance
	A0, A1, An Authorised & Accepted (n=work stage if applicable)

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Executive Summary

As part of a Strategic Review of Car Parking in Bromsgrove, Waterman Infrastructure and Environment have been commissioned by Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) to provide analysis and recommendations of enforcement for on-street parking in the district. The issues of on-street parking, both within centres, on residential streets, and outside schools at peak times have been raised as a concern by BDC elected Members and members of the public. Our analysis suggests that there are several parking issues within the district, including parking outside of shops, take aways and schools. Commencing with a BDC Parking Cabinet Advisory Group in May 2024, which gathered strong Member interest, all issues raised were investigated through summer 2024 by means of numerous site visits, meetings with elected Members out on site and a public engagement event in Aston Fields. Comments made by elected Members and members of the public have been addressed in this document through observations out on site, with recommendations for each issue, on a thematic basis.

On-street parking enforcement is currently contracted to Wychavon District Council (WDC) under a Service Level Agreement. BDC has employed Wychavon District Council (WDC) to undertake Civil Parking Enforcement for over 10 years. The services covered by this include the delivery of on and off-street parking enforcement and the associated full administration including appeals and adjudication. With the SLA having expired, there is an opportunity to look at alternatives. WDC have a finite resource of 5.5 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) spread across a mainly rural district, and this brings challenges in both coverage and logistics. However, our investigations found that there are several locations and streets which are frequently visited by civil enforcement officers in preference to others. From analysis of the beat patterns of the Civil Enforcement Officers, the most common areas being enforced are Bromsgrove town centre, Barnt Green and Rubery. This could be due to historical factors, logistics or commonality of repeat offences, but it is clearly a situation that is a cause for frustration within BDC.

The general pattern of enforcement action means that there are several locations in the district, such as Hagley, Alvechurch and Belbroughton in which enforcement action could be targeted, where elected Members and residents have raised concerns with the perceived lack of presence of CEOs when and where it really matters. In our view, WDC could be better supported through a simpler conduit by which residents can report their concerns on parking violations / inconsiderate parking to enable the service to be more responsive. An awareness-raising campaign, mainly through social media platforms and community engagement, could be coordinated by BDC and Worcestershire County Council (WCC) as Highway Authority to encourage considerate parking. The recent update of the Highway Code and the gathering impetus towards criminalising pavement parking in the future, could be a good hook in which to frame the campaign. The current contract with WDC is currently under review and, in line with Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities in England on Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions, which was updated in 2022, we have made some suggestions where the contract can be enhanced so it follows the latest guidance and that WDC can do everything within its powers to enforce parking violations.

Parking outside schools at peak times was frequently raised as a concern during our engagement and is a long-term historical issue in most places. Some schools have taken their own approaches to addressing parking concerns, such as measures to directly appeal to drivers, however this does not appear to have been coordinated at district or county level. There are examples of good practice within the district that could be suitable for other locations, and/or where BDC can learn from neighbouring Local Authorities who are facing similar problems. For example, lack of coverage of Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) outside some schools do not give CEOs the powers to enforce parking violations; we suggest there is a need for more to be implemented around the district, so that CEOs have the powers to address problem hotspots.

We have made several recommendations through this document which could go some way towards alleviating illegal parking in the district. These include:

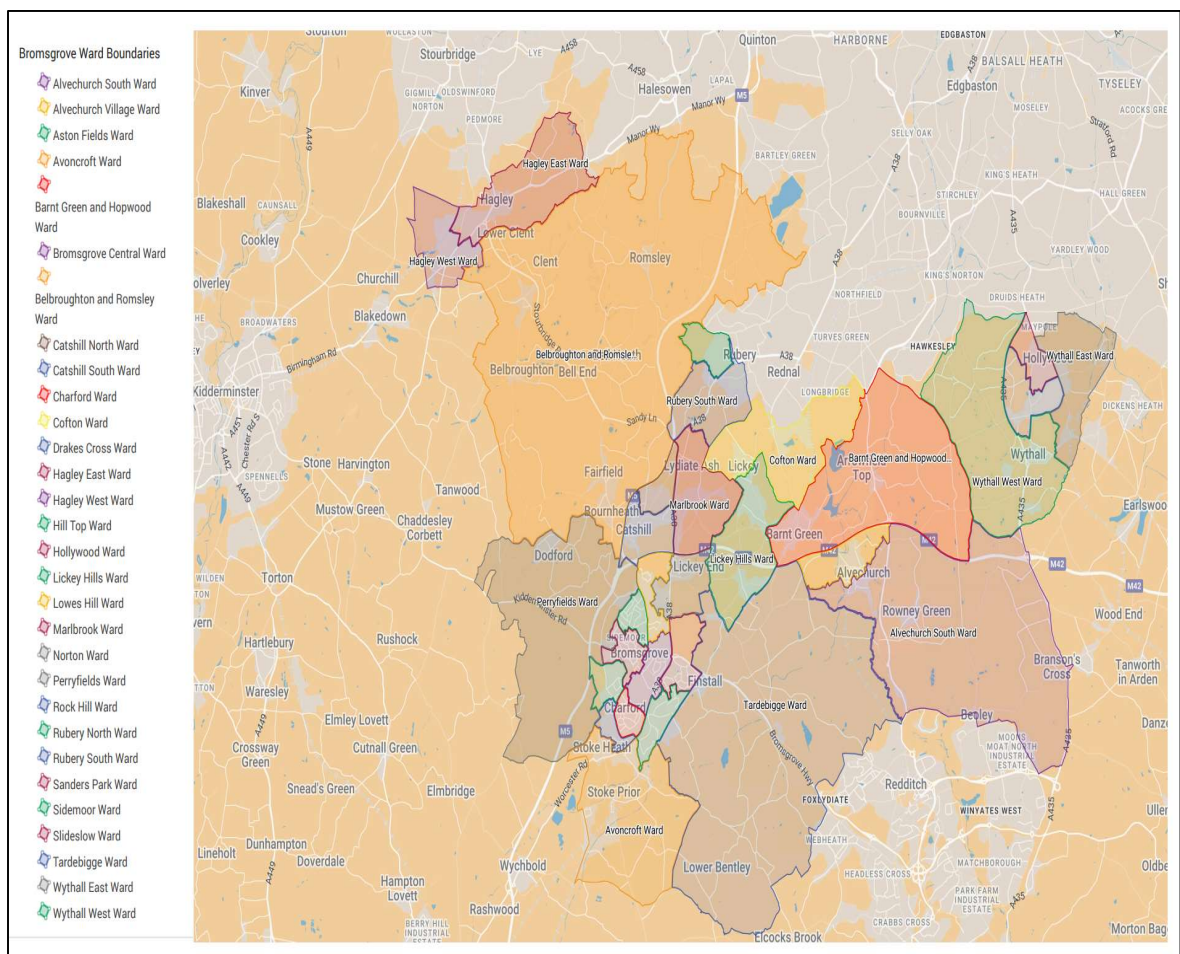
- A BDC social media and community engagement campaign, targeted at drivers, to encourage considerate parking outside of shops and schools, as a “softer measure” behavioural change campaign.
- Further investigation and action to review and amend “harder measure” parking restrictions and increase coverage of signing and lining options (i.e. double yellow lines, designated parking areas).
- BDC and WCC to investigate the potential of developing an online tool to enable BDC residents to log parking violations and persistent offences, linked to the current WCC system to report environmental concerns and problems with street furniture (i.e. street lighting, pavements). This could be used by WDC as a measure to target resources from local intelligence.
- Consideration by WDC of potential opportunities to free-up CEOs from patrolling off-street car parks in Bromsgrove Town Centre through the recommendations to use ANPR enforcement in certain locations, thus enabling the freeing-up of resources to patrol locations where problems have been reported to persist and presence is currently low. It is recommended that CEO coverage be increased to 20% of all CEO patrols to be undertaken outside of Bromsgrove Town Centre.
- Coverage of TROs, outside of schools, in the district to be reviewed and increased where problems persist. This will give CEOs the powers to enforce parking violations and will discourage inconsiderate parking.
- BDC and WDC to investigate the feasibility of using vehicle-mounted ANPR enforcement at parking hotspots outside of schools, thus further freeing up CEO resource to target problem areas.
- In line with updated Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities in England on Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions, adopt the suggestions where the contract can be enhanced so it follows the latest guidance and that WDC can do everything within its powers to enforce parking violations.
- A further public consultation exercise on the future of the Shopmobility Service as an update to previous consultation carried out in 2021.
- Investigate the feasibility of resiting the Shopmobility service to the High Street.

On consideration of our findings and recommendations, we suggest a “Parking Task Group” should be established between BDC, WDC and WCC to put these recommendations into action.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report focuses on on-street car parking enforcement and identifies 'hot spots' for where traffic/parking enforcement issues exist. The report explores solutions that could be implemented to improve this situation. This also includes a review of the enforcement service provided by Wychavon District Council (WDC).
- 1.2 A review of on-street enforcement has been carried out to address member and resident concerns. A review of concentration of enforcement and hotspots for law breaking/nuisance has also been undertaken, focusing on repeat offences.
- 1.3 A variety of thematic options have been recommended, emphasising the need for a comprehensive approach towards addressing on-street parking issues.
- 1.4 To gain a local view on the issues of on street parking, elected Members were engaged with through summer 2024, and a public engagement event was carried out in one ward in July 2024. Any local intelligence shared by elected Members through email was investigated further.
- 1.5 The district boundary and the respective wards within Bromsgrove are illustrated in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Bromsgrove Wards



Report Format

1.6 The structure of this report is as follows:

- **Section 2** reviews on street enforcement;
- **Section 3** analyses the on street parking;
- **Section 4** is the summary of councillor issues;
- **Section 5** identifies hot spots;
- **Section 6** explains Traffic Regulation Orders;
- **Section 7** summaries the Contract;
- **Section 8** provides a summary of the report findings; and,
- **Section 9** is the summary and conclusions.

2. Background

- 2.1 On street parking enforcement is currently undertaken by Wychavon District Council (WDC). The CEOs patrol between 7am – 10pm. The areas that are patrolled are:
- **Bromsgrove;**
 - **Hagley;**
 - **Belbroughton;**
 - **Barnt Green;**
 - **Wythall;**
 - **Rubery**
- 2.2 The most recurring complaints from elected Members and residents concerns on street parking around drop off and pick up times at schools with limited Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) in the district.
- 2.3 During June and July 2024, several meetings were held with WDC to discuss on street parking enforcement in Bromsgrove and surrounding areas. There have been recent major changes to Recreation Road and Churchfields car parks which have changed from “pay on foot” to Pay & Display. There are approximately 5.5 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) CEOs currently patrolling. The team is a joint resource between Bromsgrove and Redditch District Council areas, so they have a considerable area to enforce.
- 2.4 Due to several parking offenses being undertaken outside of entertainment venues on Friday and Saturday evenings, a series of late shift patterns can be undertaken which take place between 8pm to 10pm. If availability of staff falls short of the required number, shifts patterns and beats are amended accordingly.

3. On Street Parking Enforcement Analysis

- 3.1 Through engagement during summer 2024, the issues of on-street parking were raised as an ongoing concern by elected Members and residents. Therefore, WDC provided information on all roads in which a CEO visited, as part of their beat patterns.
- 3.2 The roads in which the highest number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) were issued, between 01/04/2023 and 31/03/2024, within the Bromsgrove District, are provided in **Table 1** below. The full output is provided in **Appendix A**.

Table 1: On Street Parking Analysis

Road	Number of Visits	Observed Counts	Notice Issued (PCN's)	Percentage Visits where PCNs issued	Percentage Counts where PCNs issued
Worcester Road, Bromsgrove	981	2,402	183	19%	7%
Crown Close, Bromsgrove	1,134	292	181	16%	62%
The Strand, Bromsgrove	1,945	211	115	6%	54%
Church Street, Bromsgrove	1,468	209	105	7%	50%
Churchfields, Bromsgrove	1,626	6,535	87	5%	1%
College Road, Bromsgrove	553	2,924	65	12%	2%
Market Street, Bromsgrove	3,834	1,117	60	1%	5%
High Street, Bromsgrove	2,270	158	57	2%	36%
Hewell Road, Barnt Green	185	805	55	29%	7%
New Road, Rubery	61	563	39	64%	7%
Worcester Road, Hagley	126	659	38	30%	5%
Fiery Hill Road, Barnt Green	193	138	37	19%	27%
Windsor Street, Bromsgrove	1,604	92	34	2%	37%
The Square, Alvechurch	119	430	31	31%	7%

- 3.3 The information provided by WDC show that most PCNs were issued on Worcester Road in Bromsgrove with 183 PCN's issued within the year. There are 14 locations across the district where 31 or more PCN's have been issued in the course of a year.
- 3.4 Two roads in Bromsgrove town centre, Worcester Road and Crown Close, have by far the most numbers of PCNs issued; there is an average of one PCN issued at these locations every two days.

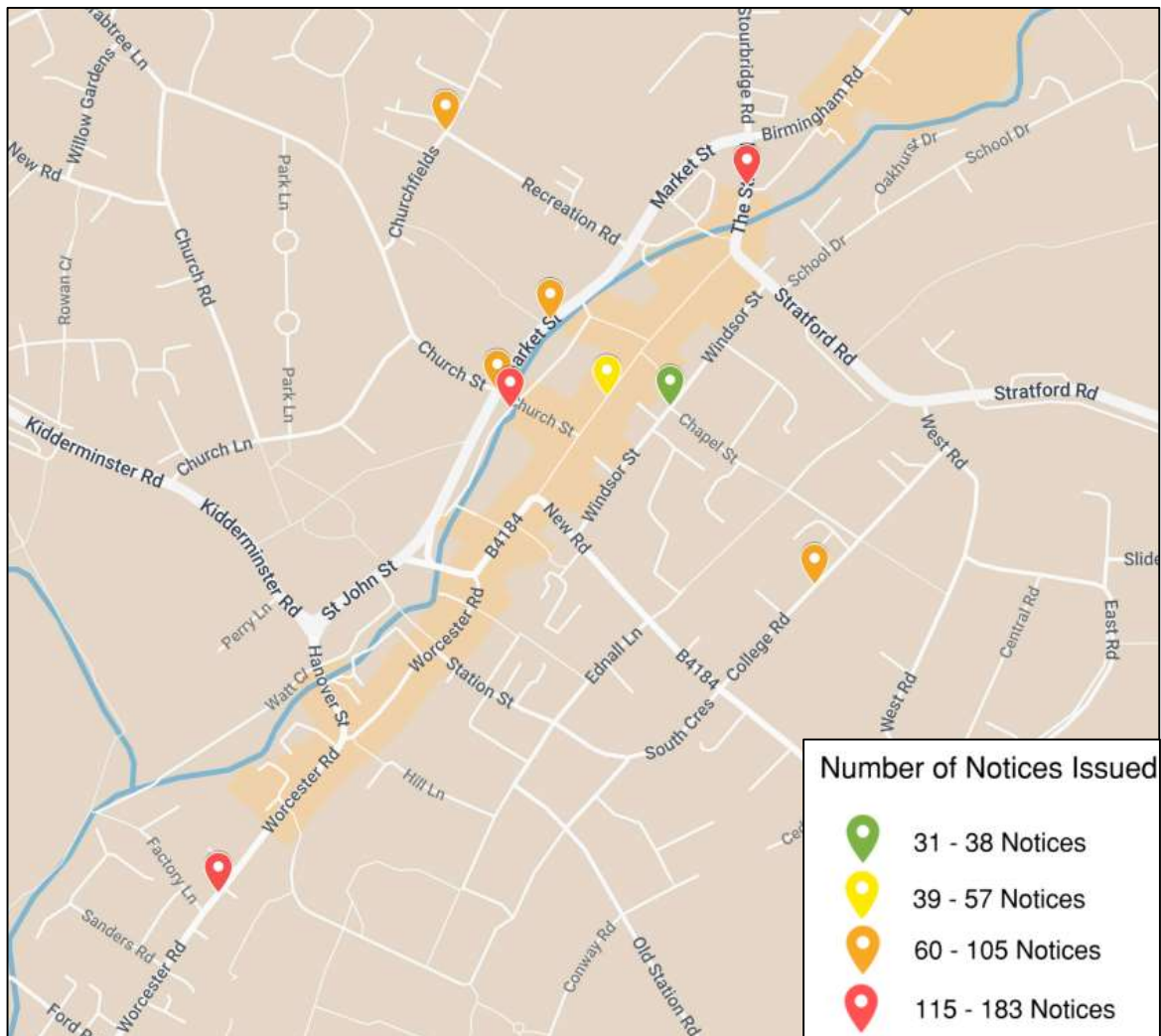
Off the 14 locations with the most PCNs issued, Bromsgrove town centre locations make up 8 locations in this list.

- 3.5 The observed counts were taken on occasions when a vehicle was observed for a discretionary period before a CEO issued the driver with a PCN. An example of this would include a vehicle parked on double yellow lines. In this instance, the CEO would observe the vehicle for a period of time, typically between 1 and 5 minutes, to determine whether any activity is taking place (e.g. loading/unloading, a passenger boarding or alighting the vehicle).
- 3.6 On most occasions, vehicles will drive away within the observation time. If no activity is taking place during the observation time, a PCN will be issued.
- 3.7 WDC's system records how many observations are made, regardless of whether a PCN had been issued or not.
- 3.8 A PCN is issued if a car is parked illegally (over the vehicles allotted time or parked on restrictions). This is issued by a CEO when monitoring roads in the district.
- 3.9 In the sections below, we have provided maps to show where PCNs are being issued in each local centre, to visualise where enforcement activity is concentrated:

Bromsgrove Town Centre

- 3.10 The points on the map extract in **Figure 2** below shows the locations of PCNs being issued between 01/04/2023 and 31/03/2024 within Bromsgrove town centre.

Figure 2: Number of PCN's issued in Bromsgrove



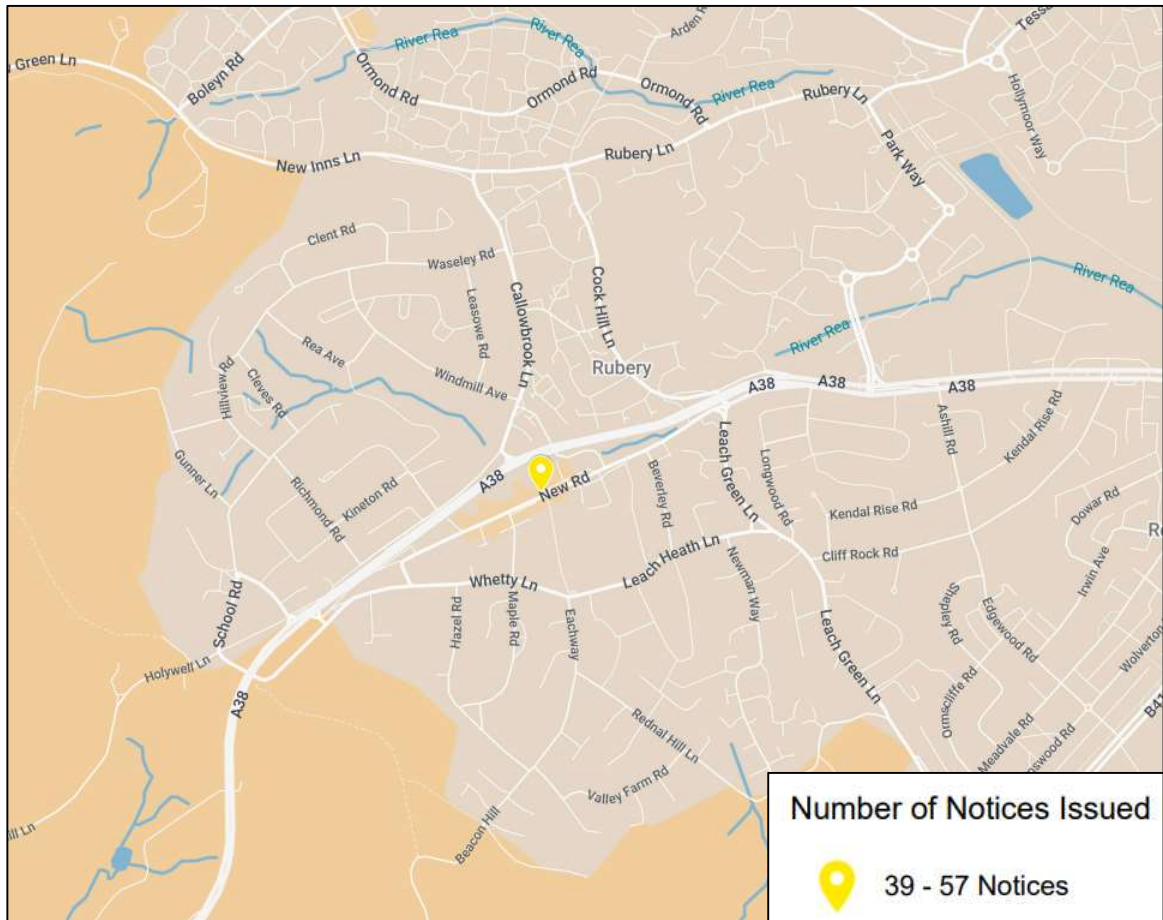
3.11 **Figure 2** shows that the majority of the PCNs issues are in the centre of Bromsgrove and it can be seen where the main parking attractors are in the town.

3.12 It is noted that Bromsgrove town centre has excellent coverage of CEOs, that beat patterns pick up the problematic locations and that CEOs are responsive to issuing PCNs at these locations. This may be due to the fact economic activity within Bromsgrove is concentrated here, as well as the fact the CEO welfare unit is located here also.

Rubery

3.13 The points on the map extract in **Figure 3** below shows the locations of PCN's being issued in Rubery between 01/04/2023 and 31/03/2024:

Figure 3: Number of PCN's issued in Rubery

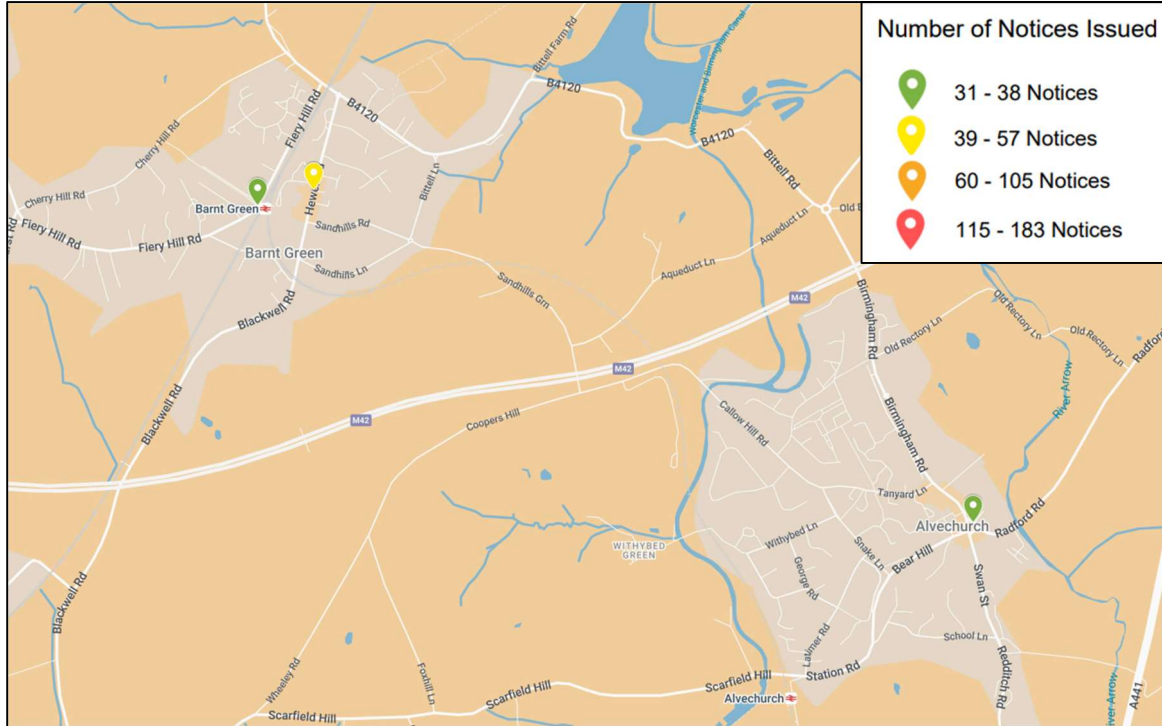


3.14 **Figure 3** shows that the majority of the PCN's are located on New Road in the centre of Rubery. As this is the main shopping street in Rubery it makes sense to target enforcement action here, however issues were raised by Members over inconsiderate parking on adjoining streets and at The Avenue industrial estate, which do not appear to have been observed as frequently.

Barnt Green and Alvechurch

- 3.15 The points on the map extract in **Figure 4** below shows the locations of PCN's being issued in Barnt Green and Alvechurch between 01/04/2023 and 31/03/2024:

Figure 4: Number of PCN's issued in Barnt Green and Alvechurch

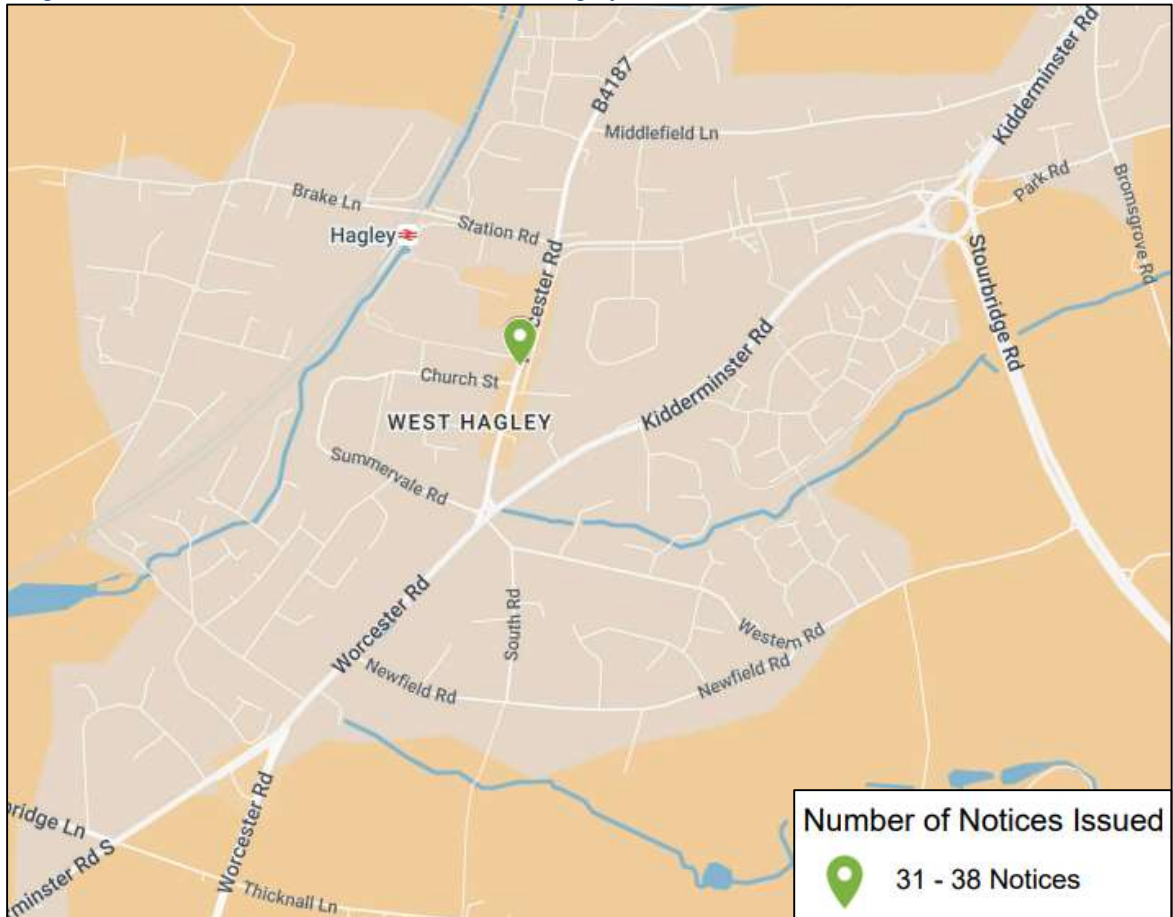


- 3.16 The map extract in **Figure 4** shows that the majority of the PCN's in Barnt Green were issued on Hewell Road, where the main shopping activity takes place, and directly outside Barnt Green train station on Fiery Hill Road. Members and residents have raised issues with parking on Sandhills Road and Sandhills Lane, which do not appear to have been observed by CEOs as frequently.
- 3.17 For Alvechurch, the majority of PCNs were issued by the village centre car park on Birmingham Road. It should be noted that the centre covers a wide area, and this includes a number of schools where problematic parking has been raised by Members, including further along Birmingham Road towards the M42 bridge.

Hagley

- 3.18 The points on the map extract in **Figure 5** shows the locations of PCNs being issued between 01/04/2023 and 31/03/2024:

Figure 5: Number of PCN's issued in Hagley

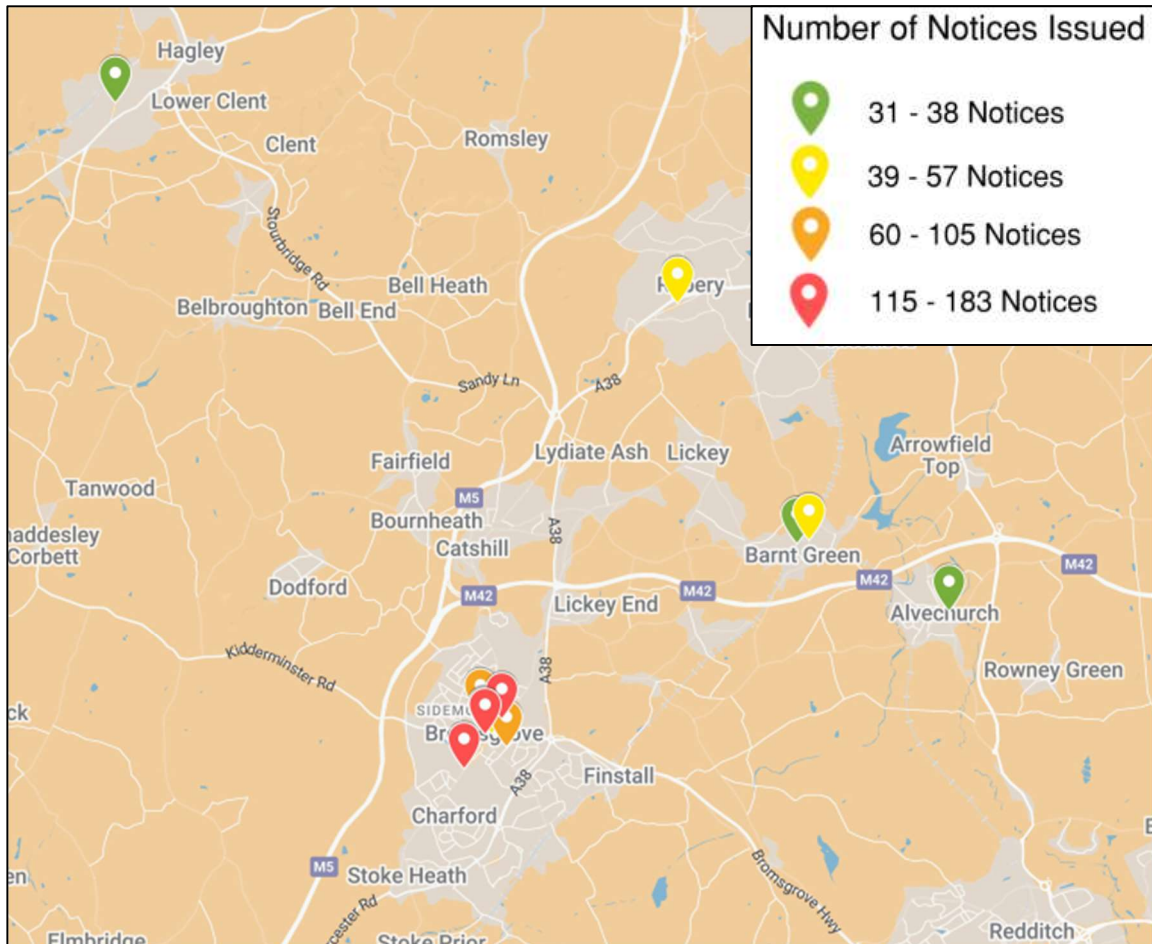


- 3.19 The map extract in **Figure 5** shows that the majority of the PCN's were issues on Worcester Road in Hagley village centre. There are, however, wider parking issues in Hagley associated with parking outside schools and colleges on Station Road and Park Road, where only a small number of PCNs were issued.

Bromsgrove District

- 3.20 The points on the map extract in **Figure 6** shows the locations of PCN's being issued between 01/04/2023 and 31/03/2024 across the whole district. A map is provided at **Appendix F** for the Bromsgrove District area.

Figure 6: Highest Number of PCN's issued in Bromsgrove District



Summary

- 3.21 Analysis of enforcement activity shows that CEO activity is concentrated in Bromsgrove town centre, which is where the CEO welfare unit is located. Other highly visited places are the village centres of Barnt Green, Rubery and Hagley.
- 3.22 There are several places which did not have a high number of PCN's issued. This includes Belbroughton, Hagley and Alvechurch. However, these locations are visited regularly. The places with a high number of visits and low PCNs issued are detailed in **Section 5** of this report.
- 3.23 There are further gaps in enforcement activity that could be targeted by local intelligence to discourage repeat offences. The villages of Catshill, Romsley, Lickey and Rowney Green do not appear to be visited as frequently as could be, and there is a risk that parking issues will remain entrenched. In the following sections, we discuss how parking issues can be targeted and addressed through coordinated action, targeting hotspots and contractual enhancements.

4. Targeting of Parking Issues - Addressing Elected Member and Resident Concerns

- 4.1 During engagement with elected Members and residents in Summer 2024, numerous concerns were raised about parking at problematic locations and with regular frequency. Therefore, in July and August 2024, a site visit was undertaken by members of the project team to each of the places of concern.
- 4.2 These visits were carried out to enable the team to observe parking issues, to determine the root cause, as well as observe any associated issues caused by illegal or inconsiderate parking.
- 4.3 The summary of elected Member and residents' comments, any notes from the site visits and the body responsible for this, are provided in **Table 2** below. The table provides a summary of comments made by location, what was observed during the site visits and the recommendation, along with action owner.
- 4.4 The full table including site visit photos are provided in **Appendix G**.

Acronyms = WDC – Wychavon District Council (Parking Enforcement)

WCC – Worcestershire County Council (Highways)

BDC – Bromsgrove District Council

WMRE – West Midlands Rail Executive (as part of West Midlands Combined Authority)

WMP – West Mercia Police

NFA – No further action required

Table 2: Summary of Issues

District	Comments	Recommendation	Action Owner
Rubery	Lack of enforcement for vehicles parked illegally.	Increase frequency of CEO activity on New Road	WDC
	Frequent parking outside shop frontages and illegal parking by American Candy and Banophool restaurant.	Increase frequency of CEO activity on New Road.	WDC
	Diagonal parking at shops, cars now too big.	Reline spaces to better economise spacing and increase capacity.	WCC
	Poor parking bay marking and lining outside takeaways (Ruby Chinese).	Reline parking spaces.	WCC
	Parking issues on Whetty Lane including opposite Coppice Close and on Leach Heath Lane.	N/A	NFA
Aston Fields	On Stoke Road there are reports of lack of enforcement.	Increase frequency of CEO activity in Aston Fields, targeted at problem locations.	WDC
	Needs dedicated lined parking bays – outside row of shops.	Investigate opportunities to increase parking capacity.	WCC

	Inconsiderate parking by large vehicles.	Work with Co-Op store to encourage use of dedicated loading bay.	WDC
	School parking issues affecting the rugby club.	Increase frequency of CEO activity in Aston Fields, targeted at problem locations. Work with school to encourage considerate parking and investigate possibility of implementing a TRO.	BDC, WDC, WCC
	Parking in the vicinity of Fringe Green Road causes traffic from the traffic signals to merge due restricted carriageway spaces and limits visibility.	Increase frequency of CEO activity in Aston Fields, targeted at problem locations.	WDC
	Key issues are lack of parking for residents as they have no driveways and a garage opposite on Stoke Road.	Increase frequency of CEO activity in Aston Fields, targeted at problem locations.	WDC
	It has been suggested to use old station car park and issue permits to residents.	Await resurfacing work in Summer / Autumn 2024 and monitor usage	BDC
Alvechurch	Lack of enforcement in the town centre. Long stay parking beyond limits	Increase frequency of CEO activity in Alvechurch, targeted at problem locations.	WDC
	Lack of EV charging on street.	Investigate opportunity for an EV charging station outside Village Hall.	WCC
	School parking issues – needs enforcement and better signage.	Increase frequency of CEO activity in Alvechurch, targeted at problem locations. Work with school to encourage considerate parking and investigate possibility of implementing a TRO.	WDC, WCC BDC
	Village Hall parking bays need repainting.	N/A	NFA
Beoley (Portway)	Lack of enforcement, cars dumped, needs better lining and double yellows (near to Fishing Republic) on Alcester Road.	Increase frequency of CEO activity in Portway, targeted at this location. Investigate double-yellow lining along length of Alcester Road to Penn Road junction. Provide hatching at junction of Alcester Road and Penn Road to discourage parking on junction.	WDC, WCC
	Lack of enforcement on Dumble Pit Lane. Better signage needed. Make a one-way street?	Increase frequency of CEO activity in Portway, targeted at this location.	WDC, WCC
Hagley	Issues around school – lack of enforcement, ignoring parking restrictions, lack of double yellow or faded road markings.	Increase frequency of CEO activity in Hagley, targeted at Park Road and Station Road. Investigate relining along Park Road and Station Road.	WDC, WCC

	Issues with school traffic and inconsiderate parking from both Hagley Catholic and Haybridge Schools – needs better lining and enforcement		
	Parish car park – workers use it when it should be for shoppers, look at enforcement arrangements, needs EV provision, better lining	Investigate feasibility of resurfacing the car park with better lining of spaces, signage to advise of parking restrictions and EV charging provision.	WDC, BDC, WCC
	Better lining and spacing for improving capacity on side of Worcester Road opposite shops	Investigate re-lining parking bays to economise space along Worcester Road.	WCC
	Train car park – many drop-offs near to station to avoid parking charges, needs better lining on residential streets.	BDC officers to raise parking issues at Hagley with WMRE with a view to finding a solution for the station car park. Investigate further double-yellow lines and clearly defined parking spaces on Station Road, Brake Lane and Sweetpool Road.	BDC, WCC, WMRE
Belbroughton	Outside infant school – reline double yellow?	Investigate relining at this location	WCC
	Outside Talbot Pub – needs better lining and management. Lack of enforcement especially when big events are going on	Increase frequency of CEO activity in Belbroughton, targeted at this location.	WDC, WMP
Clent	Lack of parking management near to National Trust car parks – people parking in village centre or on surrounding roads. Needs double yellows and enforcement	Increase frequency of CEO activity in Clent, targeted at this location, and coordinate with WMP. Investigate further double-yellow lines and clearly defined parking spaces on Hagley Wood Lane.	WDC, BDC, WCC, WMP
Fairfield	Inconsiderate parking outside Fairfield school, needs better lining (currently faded), needs double yellows not single, needs to be enforced	Investigate relining at this location	WCC
Romsley	Bays outside Co-op need better lining	Investigate lining clearly defined parking spaces at this location	WCC
	One way in/out for accessing parade of shops, being used inconsiderately	Investigate reducing entrance / exit width to shopping parade to encourage on-way flow.	WCC

Barnet Green	Better management of car parking around rail station – double yellows and enforcement needed	Investigate lining clearly defined parking spaces at this location	BDC / WDC
	Use Victoria / social club car park for overflow shoppers parking?	BDC to speak to Social Club about this opportunity	BDC
	Rationalise high street parking times, should be 1 hour across the board?	BDC / WDC to investigate feasibility of rationalising wait times to discourage long-stay parking.	BDC WDC
	Better marking and signage around schools	Investigate relining at this location	WCC
	Reline bays and lines	Investigate relining at this location	WCC
	Longer double yellows to deter long-stay parking on residential street	Investigate relining at this location	WCC
Catshill	Parking management by Catshill First School – better signing and lining	Investigate relining at this location	WCC
	Better parking management around shops – lining bays etc	Investigate relining at this location	WCC
	Better parking management outside One Stop, paint bays in and hatching at junction?	Investigate relining at this location	WCC
	Paint parking bays on the highways to deter pavement parking	Investigate relining at this location	WCC

Summary of Actions

WDC – Wychavon District Council (Parking Enforcement)

- Increase frequency of CEO activity at problem locations

WCC – Worcestershire County Council (Highways)

- Investigate further double-yellow lining at problem locations.
- Provide junction hatching at problem locations o discourage parking on junctions.
- Reline on-street spaces at particular locations to better economise spacing and increase capacity.
- Reline parking spaces.
- Investigate implementing TROs outside schools where they currently do not exist and where parking issues are persistent.

BDC – Bromsgrove District Council

- Work with schools and local businesses where parking issues persist to encourage considerate parking or use of dedicated facilities.

- Investigate feasibility of rationalising wait times within village centres, to ensure usage of shops. Restaurants etc is balanced and equitable, and that spaces are used for the correct purposes.
- Investigate issuing residents parking permits at problem locations.
- Speak to landowners about opportunities for overspill parking.
- Await resurfacing /upgrading work to particular car parks and monitor usage.
- Investigate further Electric Vehicle charging provision in car parks and on-street spaces in village centres.

WMRE – West Midlands Rail Executive (as part of West Midlands Combined Authority)

- BDC officers to raise parking issues at Hagley with WMRE with a view to finding a solution for the station car park.

WMP - West Mercia Police

- Coordinated action between WDC and WMP to address parking issues in Belbroughton and Clent.

Conclusion

- 4.10 The issues raised by Members were supported through our own observations during the site visits. These included large vehicles parking in restricted areas and vehicles parked at junctions. Some of the comments are at specific times of the day such as school drop off and pick up, parking on certain roads and issues around takeaways.
- 4.11 Following the comments raised by Members and residents, and the subsequent site visit to view these areas of concern, a number of 'hot spots' have been identified where enforcement and / or potential solutions are possible.

5. Targeting of Parking Issues - Hot Spots

- 5.1 From the PCN data received from WDC, coupled with the councillor comments, it has been identified that within the Bromsgrove District, there have been many PCN's issued to cars parked illegally over a 12-month period. The places with the highest number of PCN's issued is identified in **Table 1** (in **Section 3**).
- 5.2 Cars tend to illegally park when they are parking for short periods of time. Clusters and hot spots tend to be within the vicinity of schools, shops, and takeaways.
- 5.3 An extract of **Table 1** is provided in **Table 3**. Roads that had less than 60 PCN's over a year issued have been removed from the extracted table.

Table 3: On Street Parking Analysis (Extract of Table 1)

Road	Number of Visits	Observed Counts	Notice Issued (PCNs)	Percentage of PCNs issued
Worcester Road, Bromsgrove	981	2,402	183	19%
Crown Close, Bromsgrove	1,134	292	181	16%
The Strand, Bromsgrove	1,945	211	115	6%
Church Street, Bromsgrove	1,468	209	105	7%
Churchfields, Bromsgrove	1,626	6,535	87	5%
College Road, Bromsgrove	553	2,924	65	11%
Market Street, Bromsgrove	3,834	1,117	60	1%

- 5.4 There have also been locations where there has been many observed illegal parking but a lower number of PCN's issued. This is identified in **Table 4**.

Table 4: High Observed Counts

Road	Number of Visits	Observed Counts	Notice Issued (PCNs)	Percentage of PCN's issued
Churchfields, Bromsgrove	1,626	6,535	87	1%
College Road, Bromsgrove	553	2,924	65	2%
Recreation Road, Bromsgrove	1,293	1,277	16	1%
Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove	53	84	2	2%
New Road, Bromsgrove	829	129	1	1%

- 5.5 From **Table 4**, the reasons why a low percentage of PCNs have been issued is possibly due to a high number of vehicles moving on upon seeing the CEO and, therefore only one or two percent of tickets have been issued.

- 5.6 Specifically, this was observed outside schools when parents / guardians are dropping off pupils at the start of the day and picking up and the end of the school day. There could be additional times when cars are parked for after school activities such as parents evening and school performances for example. CEO's cannot issue PCN's if there is no Traffic Regulation Order in place (there is more information on Traffic Regulation Orders in **Section 6**).

Rubery

- 5.7 During the site visit, it was observed that cars were parked on double yellow lines along New Road and outside shop frontages. There were no CEOs on patrol during the site visit. However, as shown in **Appendix A**, CEOs visited New Road 61 times.
- 5.8 As suggested by the elected Members here, the diagonal parking bays are inadequate to accommodate modern vehicle dimensions. To accommodate larger parking spaces, a redesign of the parking areas on New Road would be required. This could potentially result in the loss of parking space availability.

Aston Fields

- 5.9 The parking bays outside the Co-op on Stoke Road were clearly marked and sufficient for three vehicles, however, during the site visit, it was observed that vehicles, including an HGV, were parked illegally on Stoke Road outside the Co – op. There were no CEO's on patrol during this visit, although, as shown in **Appendix A**, CEO's visited Stoke Road 62 times.
- 5.10 The issues around the school on Rigby Lane would be affected during school start and finish times. The site visit was undertaken during the school summer holidays, so no issues were viewed on the day.
- 5.11 Regarding the issues at the Stoke Road / Fringe Green Road priority junction, there were vehicles parked opposite Fringe Green Road, however, there was no queuing back from the junction the A38. A potential to improve traffic flow and sight lines in and out of the junction is to extend the double yellow lines to improve sight lines for vehicles exiting onto Stoke Road, especially during times when it is queueing back from the A38.
- 5.12 There was no illegal parking recorded at dwellings around the garage on Stoke Road. There is a lack of driveways, and the garage is operational. The potential solution is to allow residents to apply to permit parking along Stoke Road.
- 5.13 There have been suggestions to use Aston Fields Social Club Car Park and better utilise the old station car park (Aston Fields Car Park). Both car parks had no vehicles parked on them during the site visit. The social club car park is a private car park which would require liaison with the social club and Aston Fields Car Park is two hours free parking and the machine issues tickets for this, but that is the maximum stay permitted.

Alvechurch

- 5.14 One of the issues in Alvechurch is that there is a lack of enforcement in the town centre and vehicles park for longer than the permitted time limits. There were no CEO's on patrol during this visit, although, as shown in **Appendix A**, CEO's visited The Square, Alvechurch 119 times. Also, no vehicle electric charging points were observed on street.
- 5.15 The parking bays outside the Village Hall were in the process of being re-painted as this issue was raised by the Members.

- 5.16 At Alvechurch CofE Middle School, there are parking issues. The councillor has suggested enforcement and improved signage. Cones were placed along the curb line to prevent vehicles from parking.
- 5.17 These issues could be resolved by re-painting the yellow lines and making Alvechurch a higher priority on the CEO's beat.

Beoley, Portway

- 5.18 On Alcester Road in Portway, there have been Parish Councillor complaints about a lack of enforcement and vehicles parked on double yellow lines. During the site visit, it was observed that vehicles were parked on both sides of the road on double yellow lines as well as on the verges. These issues could be resolved by making Portway a priority on the CEO's beat (which as shown in **Appendix A**, CEO's visited Alcester Road 33 times) or the installation of a camera along this section of Alcester Road.
- 5.19 There was also a comment about parking along Dumble Pit Lane. During the site visit, a vehicle was parked on the double yellow lines. There is also a suggestion to make the road one-way. However, the road serves the petrol filling station. The petrol filling station can also be accessed from the A435 northbound carriageway. A further review of the impact of making the road one-way would have to be undertaken in terms of capacity and vehicle routing.

Hagley

- 5.20 The issues in Hagley are parking issues at the primary school on Park Lane and the two secondary schools on Brake Lane. It was observed that a number of the road markings were faded. There were no CEOs on patrol during this visit, although, as shown in **Appendix A**, CEOs visited Park Road 54 times and Brake Lane 6 times during 2023/2024.
- 5.21 The car park in the centre of Hagley, the Shopper's Car Park, was relatively full during the site visit. The overflow is vehicles parking on Worcester Road. It was viewed during the site visit that the on-street parking was fully utilised and no illegal parking was observed. As shown in **Appendix A**, CEO's visited Worcester Road 126 times.

Belbroughton

- 5.22 The lining outside the infant school was faded. On roads outside the Talbot Pub, there was no cars parked illegally and the lining was adequate. There were no CEOs on patrol during this visit, although, as shown in **Appendix A**, CEO's visited High Street 104 times. There is, however, an issue of the number of vehicles being driver after visiting a pub which may be addressed by the police.

Clent

- 5.23 The councillor raised the issue that there was lack of parking management near to the National Trust Car Park and vehicles park on surrounding roads. It was observed on the site visit that vehicles park on both sides of Hagley Wood Lane to avoid paying for the National Trust Car Park. There were no CEOs on patrol during this visit, although, as shown in **Appendix A**, CEO's visited Holy Cross Green three times. A potential solution to this issue is to provide directional signage to the Walton Hill Car Park which is located approximately 0.75km to the east of the National Trust Car Park on Hagley Wood Road.
- 5.24 These issues could be resolved by re painting the yellow lines and making Hagley a higher priority on the CEO's beat.

Fairfield

- 5.25 The lining outside the school had faded. Therefore, re painting the lines would be required. There were no CEOs on patrol during this visit, although, as shown in **Appendix A**, CEO's visited B4091 Stourbridge Road 10 times.

Romsley

- 5.26 The lining outside the Co-op were adequate during the site visit and there we no vehicles observed using the in and out accessing the parade of shops inconsiderately. There were no CEOs on patrol during this visit, although, as shown in **Appendix A**, CEOs visited B4091 Stourbridge Road 10 times.

Barnt Green

- 5.27 At the railway station in Barnt Green, the councillor suggest that better enforcement is required on roads around the station. This includes Hewell Road, Fiery Hill Road and Station Approach. They suggest double yellow lines and enforcement. There were no cars parked illegally during the site visit and there were no CEOs on patrol during this visit, although, as shown in **Appendix A**, CEO's visit Fiery Hill Road 193 times and Hewell Road 185 times.
- 5.28 There have been suggestions to use Barnt Green Social Club Car Park as an additional facility to add capacity. The social club car park had no vehicles parked on it during the site visit. The social club car park is a private car park which would require BDC to liaise with the social club and seek an agreement.
- 5.29 There is a suggestion by the councillor to rationalise high street parking times. During the site visit it was observed the parking was limited to a maximum of 30 mins outside the Tesco. Elsewhere on Hewell Road, parking is restricted to a maximum of 2 hours. All the available parking was utilised, however, a high number of cars were arriving and departing, especially in the 30 min parking section outside Tesco's.
- 5.30 It was also observed during the site visit that the lining was faded on Hewell Lane. This was lining for the parking bays and lining around in the vicinity of St Andrew's CofE First School. Therefore, the re painting of these lines will be required.

Catshill

- 5.31 During the site visit, it was observed that lining was faded around Catshill First School. There were suggestions from Members for better parking management around shops on Golden Cross Lane, better parking management at One Stop on Woodrow Lane and for painting parking bays on the highway to deter pavement parking.
- 5.32 A van was parked on the footway whilst a delivery outside one of the restaurants on Golden Cross Lane. Therefore, better signing and lining would be required as well as obstruction so vehicles cannot park on the footway.

Committed Developments

- 5.33 A review of the committed developments in the district has identified that there are several new residential developments which could have an effect on the number of vehicles parking on street.
- 5.34 The analysis undertaken of the existing car parks within Bromsgrove town centre identify that there is currently capacity available for additional vehicles from these proposed developments. Therefore, on street parking issues should not exacerbated by these new developments.
- 5.35 The impact of the committed developments on district and local centres is not currently known. Further work is required to understand demand and impact on the local highway network and parking capacity within these centres.

Summary

- 5.36 The on street parking issues identified by the councillors, coupled with the number of PCN's issued and the subsequent site visits, have been summarised, and potential solutions for each district have been provided.
- 5.37 It is also stated that there are several committed developments across the district, however, these are not likely to have an impact on the level of on-street parking in Bromsgrove town centre. It is unclear whether they would have an impact on local centres, and so further work is required to understand the impacts.

6. Targeting of Parking Issues - Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs)

- 6.1 A TRO is the responsibility of the highway authority. The highway authority for BDC (and WDC) is Worcestershire County Council (WCC).
- 6.2 To enable a CEO to issue a PCN on a vehicle, a TRO must be in place for the PCN to be issued. “Zig-zag” yellow markings outside schools are only enforceable if a TRO is present.
- 6.3 There are currently only four locations in Bromsgrove District that have TROs on the yellow “Zig Zag” lines on the road outside schools, and these are:
- **Shawhurst Lane, Coppice Primary School and Woodrush Hight School, Wythall;**
 - **Bradford Lane, Belbroughton Primary School, Belbroughton;**
 - **B4551 Bromsgrove Road, St Kenelms Primary, Romsley; and,**
 - **Gunner Lane, Holywell Primary School, Rubery.**
- 6.4 Therefore, given the lack of coverage, in order to allow CEOs to address parking issues outside of schools through enforcement, BDC must request that WCC implement more TRO's so that CEOs can issue PCNs if vehicles are parked illegally.
- 6.5 There is a large amount of parking that occurs outside schools when dropping off and picking up pupils. There have been instances of illegal parking in Barnt Green, Alvechurch, Hollywood and Hagley.
- 6.6 Despite the schools having advisory signing and lining, informing drivers that there are restrictions to parking in this location, there are many reported instances where this on street illegal parking is an issue.
- 6.7 As previously mentioned, there are a high number of PCN's issued on Shawhurst Lane as there is a TRO in place which allows CEO's to issue PCN's. However, schools in Barnt Green, Alvechurch, Lickey, and Hagley, amongst others, do not have these TRO's. The current parking restrictions on roads by the schools are shown below in **Figures 7, 8, 9 and 10.**

Figure 7: Barnt Green



Figure 8: Alvechurch



Figure 9: Hagley Primary School



Figure 10: Haybridge School



The roads where TRO's have been adopted to and the PCN's are enforceable are Shawhurst Lane and Bradford Road and as such there are a high number of PCN's issued. The parking restrictions on Shawhurst Lane and Bradford Road are shown below in **Figure 11** and **12**.

Figure 11: Shawhurst Lane, Hollywood



Figure 12: Bradford Road, Belbroughton



- 6.8 Many of the problems raised by elected Members and residents, and observed during site visits, appear to be outside schools, shops, and takeaways.
- 6.9 Therefore, the introduction of greater coverage of TROs in problem hot spots would allow CEOs to issue PCNs in these locations, and therefore a TRO would need to be applied for and implemented by WCC at the following locations.
- 6.10 We have listed these by order of strategic priority:
- **New Road, Rubery;**
 - **Stoke Road, Aston Fields (particularly outside Co-op);**

- **On Rigby Lane outside Rigby Hall School;**
 - **Hagley Primary School, Park Road, Hagley;**
 - **Haybridge High School and Sixth Form, Brake Lane, Hagley;**
 - **Hagley Catholic High School, Brake Lane, Hagley;**
 - **Hewell Road, Hewell Lane and Fiery Hill Road, Barnt Green; and,**
 - **Catshill First School, B4185 Gibb Lane.**
- 6.11 A TRO in these locations would allow CEO's to issue PCN's to the vehicles parked illegally. The number of visits could potentially increase with the ability to issue PCN's to those vehicle parked illegally.
- 6.12 Currently, the issue of arriving to a location without a TRO, illegal parking can only be observed and not acted upon.

7. Targeting of Parking Issues - Wychavon District Council (WDC) Parking Enforcement Contract and Shopmobility Service

- 7.1 The contract between Wychavon District Council (WDC) and Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) is summarised in this section. This covers both parking enforcement and the Shopmobility service.
- 7.2 On-street parking enforcement is currently contracted to Wychavon District Council (WDC) under a Service Level Agreement. BDC has employed Wychavon District Council (WDC) to undertake Civil Parking Enforcement for over 10 years. The services covered by this include the delivery of on and off-street parking enforcement and the associated full administration including appeals and adjudication.
- 7.3 For the Patrol services, the requirements of WDC are currently carried out by 5.5 FTE employees, consisting of CEOs. These CEOs are also a shared resource with Redditch District Council. The employees carry out patrols on BDC Car Parks and to enforce on street parking regulations. These patrols are carried out primarily between 7am and 10pm, Monday to Sunday.
- 7.4 A key requirement of the current contract is that 10% of patrol time is required to be undertaken in areas such as Rubery, Hagley, Wythall and Barnt Green. From the data analysed, it appears that this requirement is being met, although it is worth noting that this still leaves large areas with lack of coverage of CEOs.
- 7.5 As part of this review, discussions were held with WDC regarding the efficacy of the current contract. Matters such as coverage, levels of enforcement and use of local intelligence were discussed, however the main issue WDC face is the retention of CEOs, given the nature of the work. As can be seen in previous chapters, our investigations of patrols and PCNs found that there are several locations and streets which are frequently visited by civil enforcement officers in preference to others.
- 7.6 The general pattern of enforcement action means that there are several locations in the district, such as Worcester Road, Hagley, The Square, Alvechurch and New Road, Aston Fields in which enforcement action could be targeted, where elected Members and residents have raised concerns with the perceived lack of presence of CEOs when and where it really matters.
- 7.7 With the SLA having expired, there is an opportunity to look at alternatives to the existing arrangements. In considering the wide range of options for BDC parking enforcement services, and how to deliver them, we discuss which option provides the best value for money, is efficient and effective and demonstrates Best Value through continuous improvement. Throughout the three-part Strategic Review, we have done this by critically assessing the current arrangements and by looking at how services are provided by other councils and other organisations.

2022 Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities in England: Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions

- 7.8 First and foremost, before considering the recommended option, it is advised that BDC update any future SLA in line with recently updated Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities in England on Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions (2022).
- 7.9 In the updated Statutory Guidance, there are now provisions that allow for CEOs to issue information leaflets or warning notices. This could be particularly useful at locations such as outside of a school where we have recommended for a TRO to be adopted, and, whilst it is going through the formal processes, to provide those carrying out parking violations ample warning of future enforcement action.

- 7.10 Furthermore, provisions allow, if the CEOs have the time available, such as from the freeing up of resource, to carry out related traffic management tasks. There is the opportunity for CEOs to carry out tasks such as informing the police of criminal parking activity and reporting suspected abandoned vehicles, both issues which have been raised during engagement and encountered during site visits.
- 7.11 Provisions also allow for officers to be classified as “Dual Function” CEOs where they can carry out functions under more than one act. For example, a CEO may be authorised under the Traffic Management Act for the purposes of carrying out parking enforcement duties, but that same CEO may also be authorised under environmental legislation for the purposes of carrying out environmental enforcement duties such as issuing fixed penalty notices for littering or dog fouling. This could bring benefits for both environmental and public health outcomes but would need to be discussed/agreed between services as to the requirements and how it could be implemented, if this is an option that is of interest.
- 7.12 More pertinently, the updated provisions allow local authorities outside of London to, for the first time, enforce “moving traffic contraventions”, such as endorsable offences as dangerous parking, obstruction, failure to comply with police “no parking” signs placed in emergencies, and any vehicle where security or other traffic policing issues are involved, including the need to close roads or set up diversions. Parking offences at pedestrian crossings or zigzag lines may be enforced by the police or the authority but any action by the police currently takes precedence.
- 7.13 A Commencement Order in the updated guidance gives those local authorities in England outside London with existing civil parking enforcement powers, the ability to apply to the Secretary of State for an order designating all or part of their network as a civil enforcement area for moving traffic contraventions. From the guidance being enacted in October 2022, to October 2023, up to 52 Local Authorities had applied for a commencement order under the first two tranches.
- 7.14 It is recommended that BDC review the further passage of legislation in this regard as creating a cohesive civil enforcement regime will remove numerous inconsistencies which inherently arose due to the disparate enabling legislation, enabling more efficient future administration.

Option Assessment

- 7.15 Three options have been considered for a future SLA and are discussed in this section:

Option 1 – Do-Nothing

For the Do-Nothing option, this implies that the SLA remains as it currently stands and is merely updated according to additional provisions in the 2022 Guidance.

Option 2 – SLA Enhancements

The Contract Enhancements option implies that for the parking enforcement element, the new SLA would need to integrate our recommendations for contractual enhancements, so that it follows the latest guidance and best practice and integrates the recommendations of our reports.

Option 3 – Alternative Provider

The final option, an Alternative Provider, implies that BDC do not continue with WDC and retender for the service, perhaps opening up parking enforcement for an SLA with a private contractor.

- 7.16 For the Shopmobility element, we believe a further review is required, including an updated survey of service users, to understand their views and needs, especially with regards to maintenance of Shopmobility equipment, response times to customer enquiries, or comments on the booking

system and registration, so that BDC can ensure the service is fit for purpose and can provide strategic direction and support.

Option 1 – Do-Nothing

- 7.17 'Do nothing' means the SLA is simply carried over for WDC to deliver parking enforcement services for another set period. This would represent the 'status quo' by retaining the current arrangements.
- 7.18 There could be benefits from the continuity of service, but this option would not address resident of Member concerns about the efficacy of the service and would not fulfil the strategic objectives set by BDC or the recommendations of our review.
- 7.19 There would be a loss of collaboration opportunity to deliver cost savings. This option would not require any financial investment, but BDC would also receive no cost savings and efficiencies from recommendations made in our reports. BDC will still have a compliant CEO team but will lose potential resilience benefits.

Option 2 – SLA Enhancements

- 7.20 This option implies that for the parking enforcement element, a new SLA be agreed with WDC with negotiated enhancements that integrate our recommendations in the reports.
- 7.21 In the second document of our strategic review, regarding off-street car parking facilities, we have recommended that BDC adopt enforcement by ANPR cameras at certain high-volume car parks in Bromsgrove town centre. This would free up resource to enable CEOs to spend a greater amount of time outside of Bromsgrove town centre, as they would not be required to patrol certain public car parks.
- 7.22 We recommend that BDC negotiate a 10% increase in the requirement of patrol time to be undertaken outside the town centre and that this requirement explicitly includes areas where poor coverage has been reported, such as Catshill and Belbroughton. This would mean that in the revised contract, there would be a requirement that 20% of patrol time be carried out in outlying areas. This would of course be subject to the recommendation being adopted from the previous element of our strategic review, in that ANPR equipment is adopted at the 8 Bromsgrove town centre car parks, to free up CEO resource to patrol elsewhere in the district.
- 7.23 This option will demonstrate ownership of change in the face of the government funding challenge and will embed a change culture. It will deliver cost savings and protect or enhance frontline services in priority areas.
- 7.24 Due to rise of contactless payments, BDC will be able to reduce cash collection, providing a saving of around £50,000 per annum. The reduced amounts taken in cash as a result of the above should mean that the amounts in the payment machines are unlikely to decrease as customers switch to card or online payments.
- 7.25 Further, there could be benefits from continuity of service and BDC will benefit from the additional enforcement presence and/or deterrence that ANPR will provide in Bromsgrove town centre. Under the current arrangements, if one of the CEOs are ill, there is smaller pool of staff to cover the district, and the impact is that there is less reach of the CEOs. This could result in more dropped PCNs and decreased resilience.

Option Three - Alternative Provider

- 7.26 A third option, an Alternative Provider, implies that BDC do not continue with WDC and outsource the service, perhaps opening up parking enforcement to a private contractor, with a new SLA to be agreed that integrates the recommendations made in the reports.

- 7.27 There are a number of economies of scope and economies of scale that could be derived, although lessons learned from other LA's that had implemented such an option would need to be followed.
- 7.28 Under a private provider, there are naturally opportunities for innovation and investment, as well as potential for increased productivity, however there could be risk management issues as parking enforcement on behalf of BDC is now undertaken by a third-party.
- 7.29 Further, there is a risk that any new provider may seek their own service model and this may be driven by different objectives, for example to boost revenue by targeting the most lucrative areas for enforcement. In which case the recommendation to raise CEO coverage outside of Bromsgrove town centre to provide better CEO coverage to outlying areas may not be followed through.

Preferred Option: It is recommended that **Option 2 – SLA Enhancements** is pursued. The SLA should be renegotiated with WDC to enhance the service offer. The key objective should be freeing up resource to enable CEOs to spend a greater amount of time outside of Bromsgrove town centre. We recommend that BDC negotiate a 10% increase in the requirement of patrol time to be undertaken outside the town centre and that this requirement explicitly includes areas where poor coverage has been reported, such as Catshill and Belbroughton. This would mean that in the revised contract, there would be a requirement that 20% of patrol time be carried out in outlying areas. This would of course be subject to the recommendation being adopted from the previous element of our strategic review, in that ANPR equipment is adopted at the 8 Bromsgrove town centre car parks, to free up CEO resource to patrol elsewhere in the district. This option will demonstrate ownership of change in the face of the government funding challenge and will embed a change culture. It will deliver cost savings and protect or enhance frontline services in priority areas. Due to rise of contactless payments as a result in the change of payment methods, BDC will be able to reduce the need for cash collection. Further, there could be benefits from continuity of service and BDC will benefit from the additional enforcement presence and/or deterrence that ANPR will provide in Bromsgrove town centre.

Further Considerations - Shopmobility

- 7.30 BDC's Shopmobility scheme provides mobility scooters for the purposes of shopping in Bromsgrove town centre. It is a member's only scheme and registrations / bookings are taken through telephone and email bookings. During the weekday, depending on provision of equipment, it can be a "turn up and go" service, but for Saturday bookings, it is advised that bookings are taken 24 hours in advance of visits to guarantee availability.
- 7.31 Under the Shopmobility element of the contract, WDC use reasonable endeavours to ensure that the Shopmobility service is operated in accordance with its opening hours, practices, and procedures.
- 7.32 The current service is listed as operating out of Churchfields Multi-story car park, which has been closed since 2022 and, from the supply and demand surveys we conducted in the first part of our strategic review, is currently surplus to requirements. If the service is to continue in its current format, a new venue is required.
- 7.33 There are currently several vacant units on Bromsgrove High Street which could be ideal for a new site, to ensure convenience for current/potential users and maximum presence and exposure for potential users.

- 7.34 A survey of users was conducted in 2021 however results are not publicly available. Data has not been made available by WDC for matters such as maintenance of Shopmobility equipment, response times to customer enquiries, or comments on the booking system and registration. However, BDC has a contractual obligation to fund the repair and replacement of the Shopmobility equipment as necessary and provide strategic direction and support.
- 7.35 As part of the contract, the level of service provision for Shopmobility can be varied at the request of BDC, dependent on decisions as to the future of the service.
- 7.36 Given the time that has passed since the previous survey, and that it was conducted during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is recommended that a further review is required of the efficacy of the current service, including with service users, in the post-pandemic environment. This is because both service users' shopping habits and willingness to share public spaces have largely returned to pre-pandemic levels, and therefore a survey conducted from this point onwards may be more reflective of the current and future needs of service users.

Summary

- 7.37 It is recommended that SLA enhancements are pursued in a new SLA with WDC to provide parking enforcement services. The key objective should be freeing up resource to enable CEOs to spend a greater amount of time outside of Bromsgrove town centre. We recommend that BDC negotiate a 10% increase in the requirement of patrol time to be undertaken outside the town centre and that this requirement explicitly includes areas where poor coverage has been reported, such as Catshill and Belbroughton.
- 7.38 This would mean that in the revised contract, there would be a requirement that 20% of patrol time be carried out in outlying areas. This would of course be subject to the recommendation being adopted from the previous element of our strategic review, in that ANPR equipment is adopted at the 8 Bromsgrove town centre car parks, to free up CEO resource to patrol elsewhere in the district.
- 7.39 This option will demonstrate ownership of change in the face of the government funding challenge and will embed a change culture. It will deliver cost savings and protect or enhance frontline services in priority areas. Due to rise of contactless payments as a result in the change of payment methods, BDC will be able to reduce the need for cash collection.
- 7.40 Further, there could be benefits from continuity of service and BDC will benefit from the additional enforcement presence and/or deterrence that ANPR will provide in Bromsgrove town centre.
- 7.41 The key issues are the retention of CEOs, and that they mainly visit the same streets. Therefore, other areas in the district are not visited as regularly and PCN's are not issued to vehicles parking illegally. Therefore, any CEO activity must be increased to provide better coverage and target problem locations.
- 7.42 The issuing of information leaflets or warning notices could be particularly useful outside of a school where we have recommended for a TRO, to provide those committing parking violations ample warning of future potential enforcement action.
- 7.43 Regarding Shopmobility, there is a requirement for a re-survey of service users as the previous survey was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the current Shopmobility location is Churchfields Multi Storey, which was closed in 2022, and the location of the service needs to be reviewed to better serve its users.

8. Recommendations and Next Steps

8.1 The analysis provided suggests that there are parking issues within the Bromsgrove district. These are parking outside of shops, take aways and schools. Therefore, there are a few recommendations which could alleviate illegal parking. These are:

- Increase the number of CEO's and include a variety of places to patrol (including Belbroughton, Clent and Portway);
- Update signing and lining (reline faded road markings and programme maintenance of road markings);
- Review signing and lining (is their adequate signage to deter vehicles from parking);
- Implement TRO's on restricted parking at schools where currently there is no TRO in place;
- Schools to examine the potential for providing a drop off and pick up zones / areas;
- A social media and community engagement campaign to be rolled out in Autumn 2024, targeted at drivers, to encourage considerate parking outside of shops and schools, as a "softer measure" behavioural change campaign.
- Further investigation and action to review and amend "harder measure" parking restrictions and increase coverage of signing and lining options (i.e. double yellow lines, designated parking areas).
- BDC and WCC to investigate the potential of developing an online tool to enable BDC residents to log parking violations and persistent offences, linked to the current WCC system to report environmental concerns and problems with street furniture (i.e. street lighting, pavements). This could be used by WDC as a measure to target resources from local intelligence.
- Consideration by WDC of potential opportunities to free-up CEOs from patrolling off-street car parks in Bromsgrove Town Centre through the recommendations to use ANPR enforcement in certain locations, thus enabling the freeing-up of resources to patrol locations where problems have been reported to persist and presence is currently low. It is recommended that CEO coverage be increased to 20% of all CEO patrols to be undertaken outside of Bromsgrove Town Centre.
- Coverage of TROs, outside of schools, in the district to be reviewed and increased where problems persist. This will give CEOs the powers to enforce parking violations and will discourage inconsiderate parking.
- BDC and WDC to investigate the feasibility of using vehicle-mounted ANPR enforcement at parking hotspots outside of schools, thus further freeing up CEO resource to target problem areas.
- In line with updated Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities in England on Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions, adopt the suggestions where the contract can be enhanced so it follows the latest guidance and that WDC can do everything within its powers to enforce parking violations.
- A further public consultation exercise on the future of the Shopmobility Service as an update to previous consultation carried out in 2021.
- Investigate the feasibility of resiting the Shopmobility service to the High Street.

- Leaflets / flyers / social media campaign to remind drivers of where not to park. Reinforce that double yellows are there for a reason.
- In Aston Fields, encourage better communication between Rigby Hall School and Bromsgrove Rugby Club. This is in the case of events occurring at the same time, such as, weekday evening matches and parents evening or school production.
- An issue identified on Hagley Wood Lane is the amount of parking which currently is undertaken. This is due to Nimmings Wood Car Park being a National Trust car park which requires payment to park. There is, however, another car park approximately 0.75km to the east of this car park at Walton Hill which is free and cars parked on Hagley Wood Lane could utilise this car park. Therefore, improved directional signage on Hagley Wood Road to Walton Hill Car Park would reduce the number of vehicles parked on the roadside on Hagley Wood Road;
- Better road maintenance across all areas clearing tree debris off the road; and Review that drainage is adequate.

8.2 These recommendations are for the consideration of Bromsgrove District Council. It is recommended that a Parking Task Group be established between stakeholders to put the recommendations into action.

Appendices

A. On-Street Car Parking Analysis

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Road	Number of Visits	Observed Counts	Notice Issued Percentage
Worcester Road, Bromsgrove	981	2,402	183
Crown Close, Bromsgrove	1,134	292	181
The Strand, Bromsgrove	1,945	211	115
Church Street, Bromsgrove	1,468	209	105
Churchfields, Bromsgrove	1,626	6,535	87
College Road, Bromsgrove	553	2,924	65
Market Street, Bromsgrove	3,834	1,117	60
High Street, Bromsgrove	2,270	158	57
Hewell Road, Barnt Green	185	805	55
New Road, Rubery	61	563	39
Worcester Road, Hagley	126	659	38
Fiery Hill Road, Barnt Green	193	138	37
Windsor Street, Bromsgrove	1,604	92	34
The Square, Alvechurch	119	430	31
Birmingham Road, Bromsgrove	532	395	28
New Road, Aston Fields	156	170	22
Chapel Street, Bromsgrove	523	31	21
Shawhurst Lane, Hollywood	50	32	21
Stoke Road, Bromsgrove	62	102	17
Recreation Road, Bromsgrove	1,293	1,277	16
Perry Lane, Bromsgrove	175	32	15
The Crescent, Bromsgrove	200	188	14
High Street, Belbroughton	104	36	13
A448 Stratford Road, Bromsgrove	960	26	11
Alcester Road, Beoley	33	10	10
Buntsford Hill, Bromsgrove	61	14	10
Park Road, Hagley	54	22	9
Lydiate Ash Road, Lydiate Ash	100	10	8
South Crescent, Bromsgrove	114	14	8
Gunner Lane, Rubery	20	12	7
Leach Heath Lane, Rubery	32	14	7
B4091 Stourbridge Road,	518	9	6
Ednall Lane, Bromsgrove	194	59	6
St Godwalds Road, Aston Fields	52	104	6
Bear Hill, Alvechurch	82	5	4
Finstall Road, Aston Fields	85	25	4
St Kenelms Road, Romsley	49	43	4
Windsor Gardens, Bromsgrove	11	6	4
A448 Kidderminster Road,	207	4	3
All Saints Road, Bromsgrove	161	7	3
Bromsgrove Road, Romsley	50	18	3
Buntsford Drive, Bromsgrove	22	3	3
Station Street, Bromsgrove	96	9	3
The Dock, Bromsgrove	11	4	3
Westbourne Terrace, Bromsgrove	15	6	3
Blackmore Lane, Bromsgrove	315	2	2
Bradford Lane, Belbroughton	16	2	2
Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove	53	84	2
Carlyle Road, Aston Fields	5	4	2
Church Lane, Bromsgrove	247	9	2
Crabtree Lane, Bromsgrove	72	3	2
Golden Cross Lane, Catshill	34	41	2
Old Birmingham Road, Bromsgrove	35	6	2

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Sandhills Road, Barnt Green	23	5	2
Shawhurst Croft, Hollywood	31	3	2
St Chads Road, Rubery	14	4	2
Station Road, Hagley	23	6	2
A38 Birmingham Road, Bromsgrove	29	1	1
Beverley Road, Rubery	27	2	1
Birmingham Road, Alvechurch	7	1	1
Callow Brook Lane, Rubery	3	1	1
Chapel Street, Hagley	7	2	1
Coronation Terrace, Bromsgrove	3	3	1
George Street, Bromsgrove	3	1	1
Groveley Lane, Crofton Hackett	21	1	1
Hanover Street, Bromsgrove	297	3	1
Hazel Road, Rubery	7	6	1
Hill Lane, Bromsgrove	108	1	1
Kidderminster Road, Bromsgrove	80	4	1
Kinver Drive, Hagley	1	1	1
Malvern Road, Lickey	3	1	1
New Road, Bromsgrove	829	129	1
Newfield Road, Hagley	1	1	1
North Road, Bromsgrove	1	1	1
Oakhurst Drive, Bromsgrove	3	1	1
Oldfields, Hagley	2	1	1
Parsonage Drive, Crofton Hackett	17	1	1
Poplar Drive, Barnt Green	1	1	1
Red Lion Street, Alvechurch	70	6	1
Santridge Lane, Bromsgrove	126	2	1
School Drive, Bromsgrove	957	5	1
School Drive, Wythall	35	2	1
Station Drive, Hagley	3	1	1
Swan Street, Alvechurch	15	5	1
Warmington Road, Hollywood	3	1	1
Wellington Road, Bromsgrove	3	1	1
West Road, Bromsgrove	323	1	1
Woodrow Lane, Bromsgrove	14	4	1
A441 Redditch Road, Alvechurch	1	1	0
A448 New Road, Bromsgrove	9	0	0
A456 Worcester Road, Hagley	4	0	0
A491, Bromsgrove	3	0	0
Abbey Close, Bromsgrove	4	0	0
Aintree Close, Catshill	5	0	0
Alcester Road, Bromsgrove	5	0	0
All Saints Place, Bromsgrove	60	0	0
B4091 Stourbridge Road, Fairfield	10	1	0
B4096 Old Birmingham Road,	6	2	0
B4187 Worcester Road, Hagley	6	0	0
B4551 Bromsgrove Road, Romsley	3	0	0
Barkers Lane, Wythall	12	0	0
Barley Mow Lane, Catshill	1	0	0
Barrington Road, Rubery	2	0	0
Beaudesert Road, Hollywood	1	0	0
Belvedere Drive, Bromsgrove	22	0	0
Birmingham Road, Lydiate Ash	72	0	0
Bittell Road, Barnt Green	3	0	0

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Blackwood Road, Bromsgrove	8	0	0
Braces Lane, Bromsgrove	48	1	0
Braces Lane, Catshill	18	0	0
Brake Lane, Hagley	6	2	0
Broad Street, Bromsgrove	11	0	0
Charford Road, Bromsgrove	11	7	0
Church Hill, Belbroughton	2	0	0
Church Road, Belbroughton	32	0	0
Church Road, Bromsgrove	65	2	0
Church Street, Hagley	11	4	0
Cottage Lane, Catshill	26	0	0
Crabtree Drive, Bromsgrove	6	0	0
Crabtree Lane, Aston Fields	1	0	0
Dark Lane, Romsley	1	0	0
Dovecote Road, Bromsgrove	3	0	0
Dragoon Fields, Bromsgrove	1	0	0
Drawbridge Road, Aston Fields	1	1	0
Drayton Road, Belbroughton	3	0	0
Drummond Road, Aston Fields	1	0	0
Eachway, Rubery	1	0	0
Echells Close, Bromsgrove	2	0	0
Forge Drive, Bromsgrove	1	0	0
Golden Cross Lane, Bromsgrove	1	0	0
Hagley Hill, Bromsgrove	2	0	0
Hagley Wood Lane, Romsley	57	3	0
Hanbury Road, Bromsgrove	1	0	0
Hartle Lane, Belbroughton	18	0	0
Hewell Lane, Barnt Green	30	0	0
Highfield Road, Bromsgrove	2	0	0
Holy Cross Green, Clent	3	0	0
Latimer Road, Alvechurch	1	0	0
Leach Lane, Rubery	2	1	0
Legion Road, Rubery	8	0	0
Lickey Road, Rubery	5	0	0
Lickey Square, Lickey	21	0	0
Linehouse Lane, Catshill	12	2	0
Lodge Crescent, Hagley	20	1	0
Manor Court Road, Bromsgrove	4	0	0
Manor Court Road, Lickey	1	0	0
Maple Road, Rubery	4	0	0
Market Street Service Road,	16	0	0
Marlborough Avenue, Aston Fields	8	0	0
Marlgrave Court, Bromsgrove	1	0	0
Martin Close, Bromsgrove	1	0	0
May Lane Service Road, Wythall	1	0	0
May Lane, Hollywood	24	0	0
Meadow Road, Bromsgrove	1	0	0
Meadow Road, Wythall	25	3	0
Meadowfield Road, Rubery	2	0	0
Meadowvale Road, Bromsgrove	1	0	0
Middlefield Road, Aston Fields	6	2	0
Mill Lane, Bromsgrove	293	0	0
Mill Lane, Wythall	1	0	0
Nash Lane, Belbroughton	32	0	0





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New Road - Northern Service Road,	2	0	0
New Road (Stub Road), Rubery	1	0	0
New Road, Belbroughton	1	0	0
Newton Road, Rubery	1	0	0
Old Birmingham Road, Lickey	40	3	0
Old Rectory Lane, Alvechurch	1	0	0
Old Station Road, Bromsgrove	4	0	0
Orchard Croft, Barnt Green	3	0	0
Park Road, Bromsgrove	1	0	0
Providence Road, Bromsgrove	11	0	0
Radford Road, Alvechurch	3	0	0
Rigby Lane, Aston Fields	29	0	0
Sanders Road, Bromsgrove	7	1	0
Sandhills Lane, Barnt Green	16	2	0
Santridge Lane, Barnt Green	1	0	0
Sawn Street, Alvechurch	1	0	0
School Drive, Barnt Green	1	0	0
School Road, Rubery	4	0	0
Sherwood Road, Aston Fields	85	2	0
Sherwood Road, Stoke Prior	1	0	0
Silver Street, Wythall	5	0	0
Snake Lane, Alvechurch	3	0	0
Sommerville Road, Hagley	1	0	0
St John Street, Bromsgrove	282	0	0
Station Road, Aston Fields	7	0	0
Station Road, Bromsgrove	13	2	0
Station Road, Wythall	3	0	0
Stoke Road, Wythall	1	2	0
Summervale Road, Hagley	2	0	0
Swift Close, Bromsgrove	8	0	0
Tanyard Lane, Alvechurch	28	0	0
Tanyard Lane, Bromsgrove	2	0	0
The Avenue, Rubery	50	2	0
The Flats, Bromsgrove	15	0	0
The Hedgerows, Bromsgrove	1	0	0
The Square, Bromsgrove	5	0	0
Victoria Road, Bromsgrove	63	1	0
Westbourne Close, Bromsgrove	2	0	0
Whetty Lane, Rubery	53	1	0
Wildmoor Lane, Bromsgrove	1	0	0
Woodrow Lane, Belbroughton	1	0	0
Worcester Close, Hagley	3	1	0
Worcester Lane, Hagley	2	0	0
York Road, Hagley	1	0	0

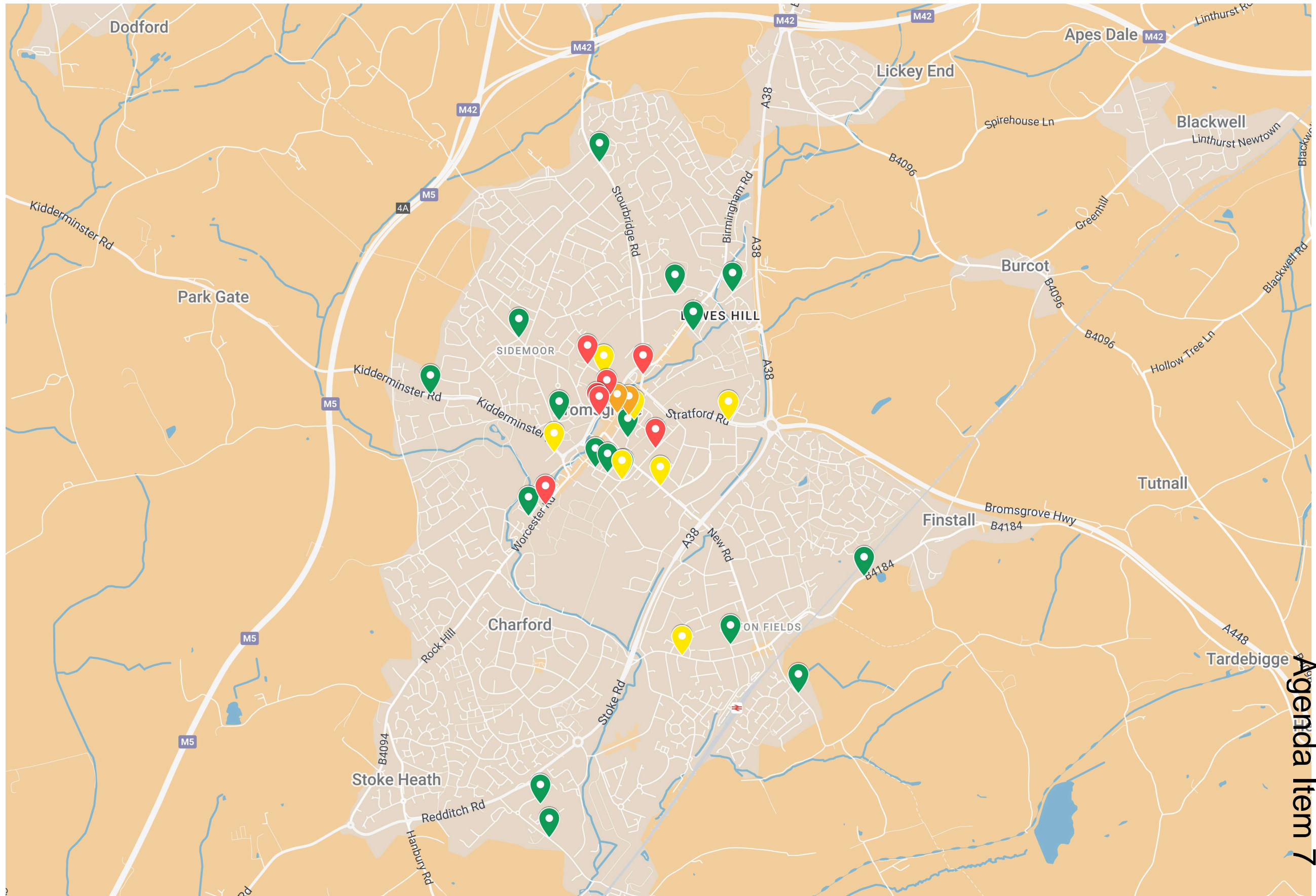
B. Bromsgrove Parking Charge Notices

Bromsgrove Town Centre Map of On Street Enforcement between 01.04.23 - 31.03.24

Number of Notices Issued

-  2 - 10 Notices
-  11 - 27 Notices
-  28 - 59 Notices
-  60 - 183 Notices

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C. Rubery Parking Charge Notices

Rubery Map of On Street Enforcement between 01.04.23 - 31.03.24

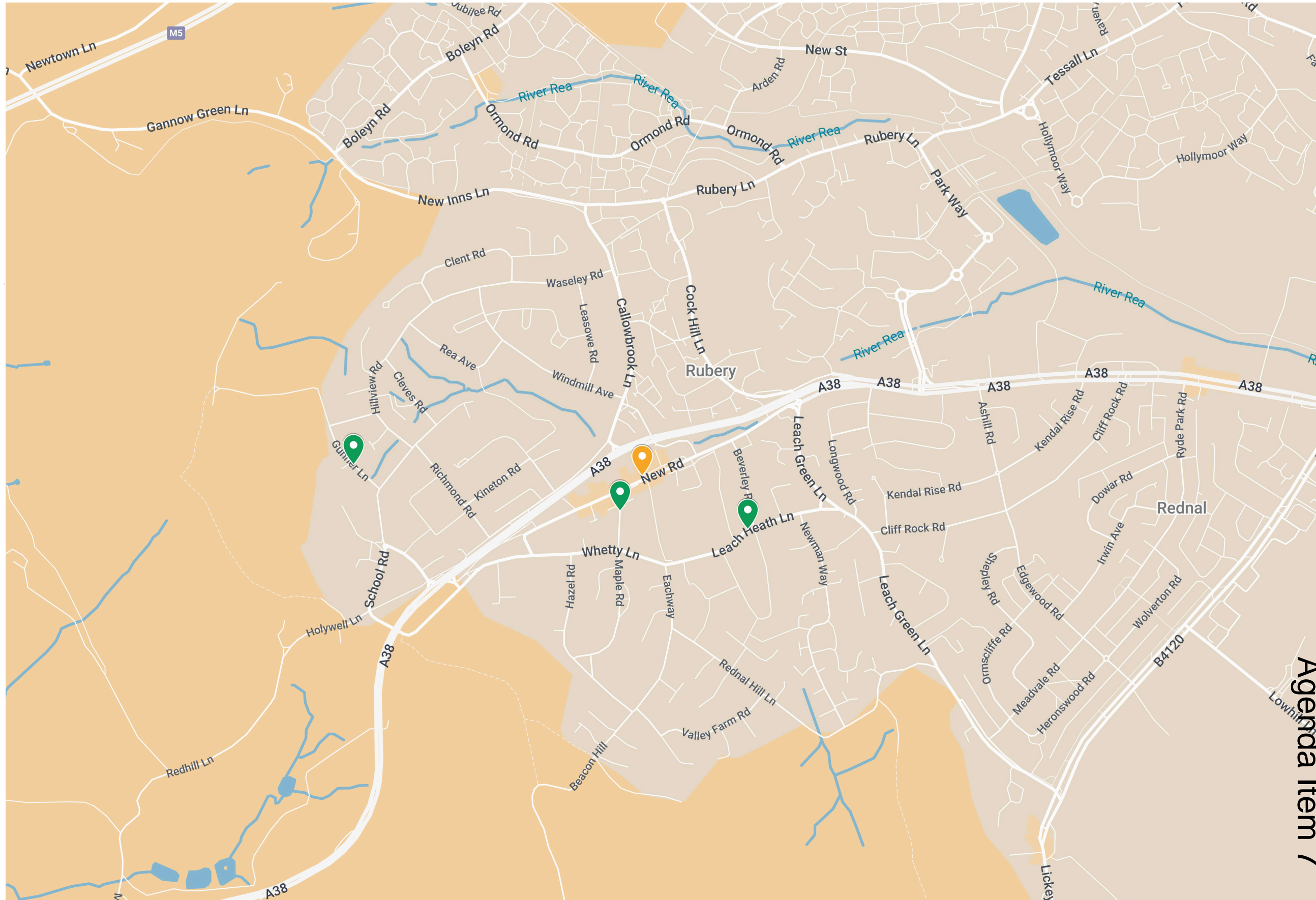
Number of Notices Issued



2 - 10 Notices



28 - 59 Notices





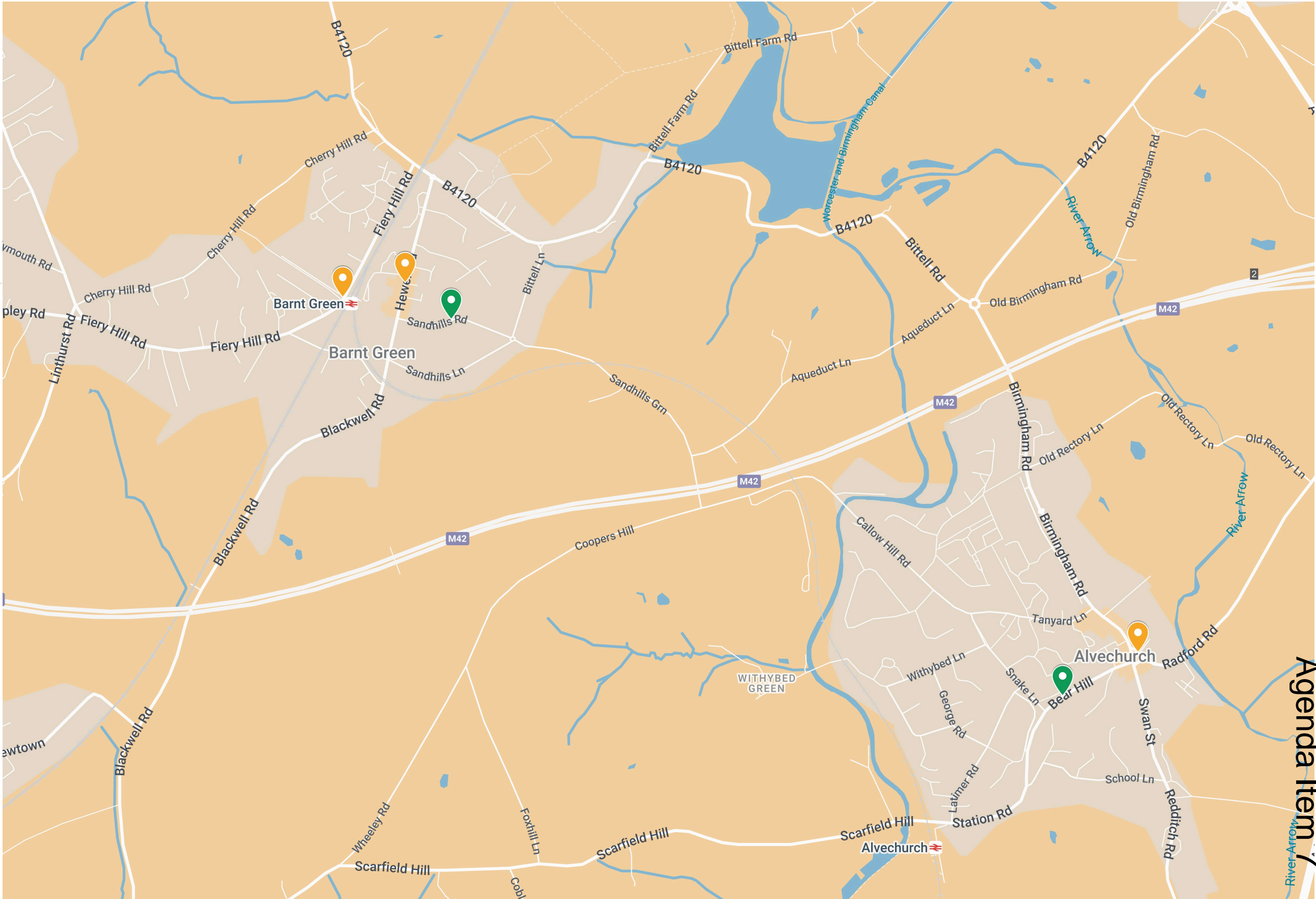
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D. Barnt Green and Alvechurch Parking Charge Notices

Barnt Green & Alvechurch Map of On Street Enforcement between 01.04.23 - 31.03.24

Number of Notices Issued

-  2 - 10 Notices
-  28 - 59 Notices





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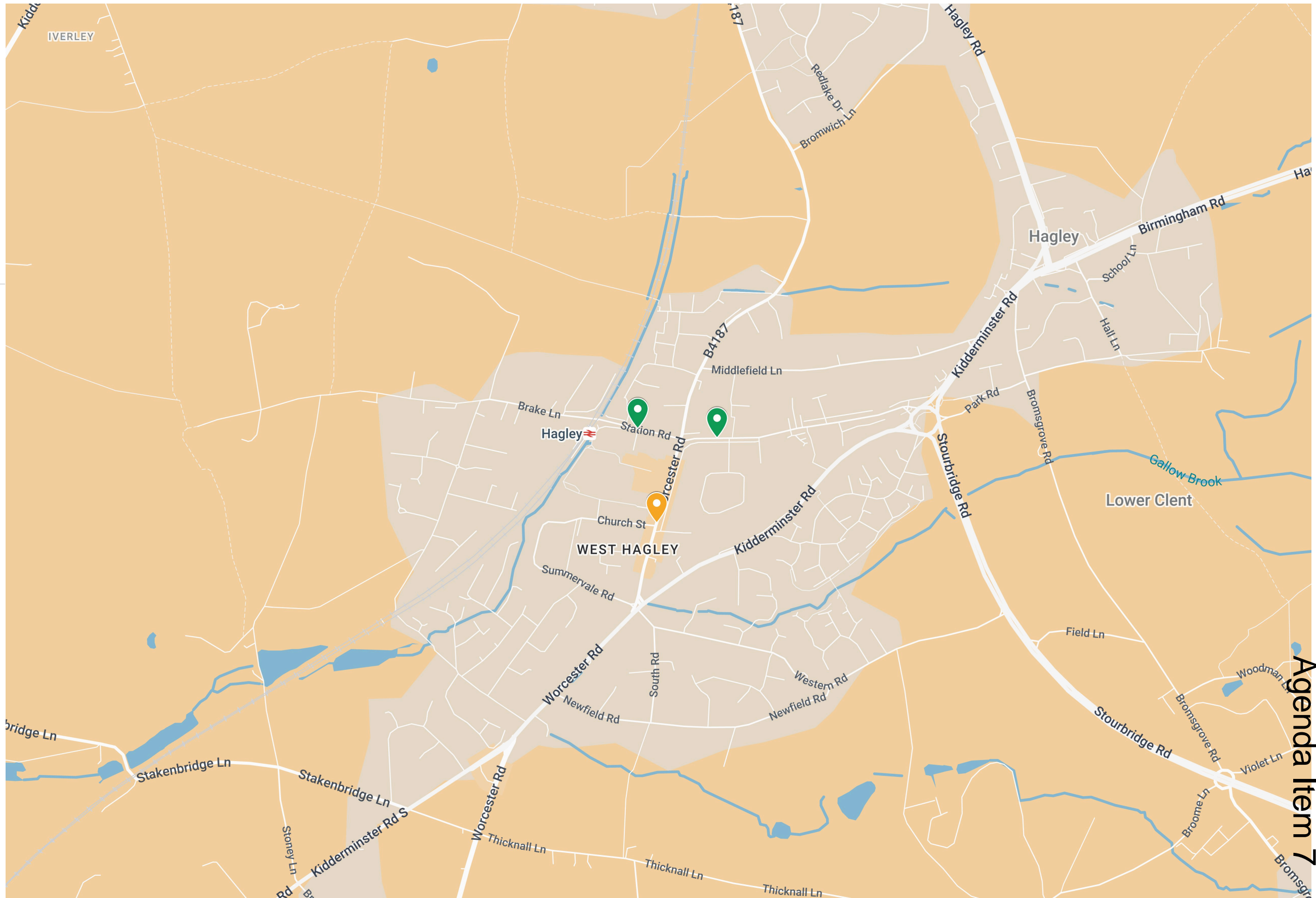
E. Hagley Parking Charge Notices

West Hagley Map of On Street Enforcement between 01.04.23 - 31.03.24

Number of Notices Issued

 2 - 10 Notices





 28 - 59 Notices

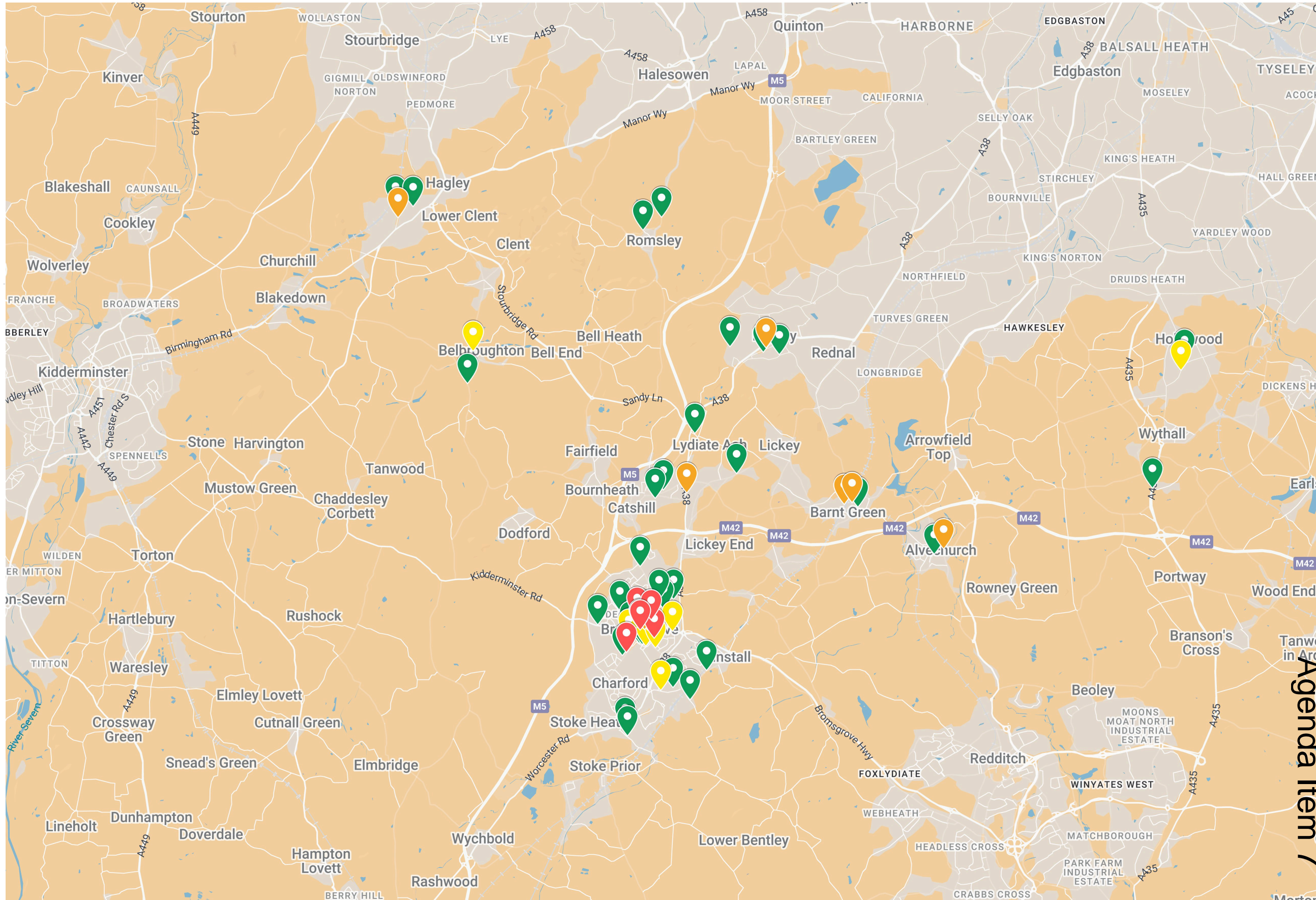


F. Bromsgrove District Parking Charge Notices

Bromsgrove and Surrounding Wards Map of On Street Enforcement between 01.04.23 - 31.03.24

Number of Notices Issued










-  2 - 10 Notices
-  11 - 27 Notices
-  28 - 59 Notices
-  60 - 183 Notices






















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G. Councillor Comments

District	Councillor Comments	Photo from Site Visit	Site Visit Notes	District	Councillor Comments	Photo from Site Visit	Site Visit Notes
Rubery	Lack of enforcement for vehicles parked illegally.		Increase frequency of CEO activity on New Road	Aston Fields	On Stoke Road there are reports of lack of enforcement.		Increase frequency of CEO activity in Aston Fields, targeted at problem locations.
	Frequent parking outside shop frontages and illegal parking by American Candy and Banophool restaurant.		Increase frequency of CEO activity on New Road.		Needs dedicated lined parking bays – outside row of shops.		Investigate opportunities to increase parking capacity.
	Diagonal parking at shops, cars now too big.		Reline spaces to better economise spacing and increase capacity.		Inconsiderate parking by large vehicles.		Work with Co-Op store to encourage use of dedicated loading bay.
	Poor parking bay marking and lining outside takeaways (Ruby Chinese).		Reline parking spaces.		School parking issues affecting the rugby club.		Increase frequency of CEO activity in Aston Fields, targeted at problem locations. Work with school to encourage considerate parking and investigate possibility of implementing a TRO.
	Parking issues on Whetty Lane including opposite Coppice Close and on Leach Heath Lane.		N/A		Parking in the vicinity of Fringe Green Road causes traffic from the traffic signals to merge due restricted carriageway spaces and limits visibility.	 	Increase frequency of CEO activity in Aston Fields, targeted at problem locations.

District	Councillor Comments	Photo from Site Visit	Site Visit Notes	District	Councillor Comments	Photo from Site Visit	Site Visit Notes
Aston Fields (cont.)	Parking in the vicinity of Fringe Green Road causes traffic from the traffic signals to merge due restricted carriageway spaces and limits visibility.		Increase frequency of CEO activity in Aston Fields, targeted at problem locations.	Beoley (Portway)	Lack of enforcement, cars dumped, needs better lining and double yellows (near to Fishing Republic) on Alcester Road.	 	Increase frequency of CEO activity in Portway, targeted at this location. Investigate double-yellow lining along length of Alcester Road to Penn Road junction. Provide hatching at junction of Alcester Road and Penn Road to discourage parking on junction.
	Key issues are lack of parking for residents as they have no driveways and a garage opposite on Stoke Road.		Increase frequency of CEO activity in Aston Fields, targeted at problem locations.				
	It has been suggested to use old station car park and issue permits to residents.		Await resurfacing work in Summer / Autumn 2024 and monitor usage				
Alvechurch	Lack of enforcement in the town centre. Long stay parking beyond limits		Increase frequency of CEO activity in Alvechurch, targeted at problem locations.	Hagley	Issues around school – lack of enforcement, ignoring parking restrictions, lack of double yellow or faded road markings. Issues with school traffic and inconsiderate parking from both Hagley Catholic and Haybridge Schools – needs better lining and enforcement Parish car park – workers use it when it should be for shoppers, look at enforcement arrangements, needs EV provision, better lining	 	Increase frequency of CEO activity in Hagley, targeted at Park Road and Station Road. Investigate relining along Park Road and Station Road. Investigate feasibility of resurfacing the car park with better lining of spaces, signage to advise of parking restrictions and EV charging provision.
	Lack of EV charging on street.		Investigate opportunity for an EV charging station outside Village Hall.				
	School parking issues – needs enforcement and better signage.		Increase frequency of CEO activity in Alvechurch, targeted at problem locations. Work with school to encourage considerate parking and investigate possibility of implementing a TRO.				
	Village Hall parking bays need repainting.		N/A				
					Better lining and spacing for improving capacity on side of Worcester Road opposite shops		Investigate re-lining parking bays to economise space along Worcester Road.
					Train car park – many drop-offs near to station to avoid parking charges, needs better lining on residential streets.		BDC officers to raise parking issues at Hagley with WMRE with a view to finding a solution for the station car park. Investigate further double-yellow lines and clearly defined parking spaces on Station Road, Brake Lane and Sweetpool Road.

District	Councillor Comments	Photo from Site Visit	Site Visit Notes	District	Councillor Comments	Photo from Site Visit	Site Visit Notes	
Hagley (cont.)	Issues around school – lack of enforcement, ignoring parking restrictions, lack of double yellow or faded road markings.		Increase frequency of CEO activity in Hagley, targeted at Park Road and Station Road. Investigate relining along Park Road and Station Road.	Barnt Green	Better management of car parking around rail station – double yellows and enforcement needed		Investigate lining clearly defined parking spaces at this location	
	Issues with school traffic and inconsiderate parking from both Hagley Catholic and Haybridge Schools – needs better lining and enforcement					Use Victoria / social club car park for overflow shoppers parking?		BDC to speak to Social Club about this opportunity
						Rationalise high street parking times, should be 1 hour across the board?		BDC / WDC to investigate feasibility of rationalising wait times to discourage long-stay parking.
Belbroughton	Outside infant school – reline double yellow?	 			Better marking and signage around schools	 	Investigate relining at this location	
	Outside Talbot Pub – needs better lining and management. Lack of enforcement especially when big events are going on					Reline bays and lines		Investigate relining at this location

District	Councillor Comments	Photo from Site Visit	Site Visit Notes	District	Councillor Comments	Photo from Site Visit	Site Visit Notes
Barnt Grenn (cont.)	Longer double yellows to deter long-stay parking on residential street		Investigate relining at this location	Catshill (continued)	Better parking management outside One Stop, paint bays in and hatching at junction?		Investigate relining at this location
Catshill	Parking management by Catshill First School – better signing and lining		Investigate relining at this location				
	Better parking management around shops – lining bays etc		Investigate relining at this location				
				Romsley	Bays outside Co-op need better lining		Investigate lining clearly defined parking spaces at this location
					One way in/out for accessing parade of shops, being used inconsiderately		Investigate reducing entrance / exit width to shopping parade to encourage on-way flow.



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UK & Ireland Office Locations



Appendix 4
Bromsgrove PCN Information – Quarterly Summary

Bromsgrove PCN Information - Quarterly Summary												
	Q1 2024		Q1 2023		Q2 2024		Q2 2023		Q3 2024		Q3 2023	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
On-Street PCNs Issued	536	38.29	294	37.60	406	32.64	273	35.36	613	40.79	301	43.06
Off-Street PCNs Issued	864	61.71	488	62.40	838	67.36	499	64.64	890	59.21	398	56.94
Total PCNs Issued	1400		782		1244		772		1503		699	
Out of Town On-Street PCNs Issued	192	13.71	72	9.21	120	9.65	46	5.96	210	13.97	51	7.30
Time Spent On-Street (Town) Mins	33969	47.44	20933	39.12	28339	44.02	20610	39.72	37245	49.67	18849	48.37
Time Spent On-Street (Other Areas) Mins	10290	14.37	7868	14.70	10752	16.70	6016	11.59	13316	17.76	4699	12.06
Time Spent Off-Street Mins	27344	38.19	24706	46.17	25281	39.27	25266	48.69	24419	32.57	15419	39.57
Total Patrol Time Mins	71603		53507		64372		51892		74980		38967	
Income Received from PCNs	£38,440.57		£21,569.96		£32,559.30		£25,142.98		£41,604.20		£22,559.44	

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

12th February 2025

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2025/6 TO 2027/8 – Tranche 2

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr. Steve Colella, Finance Portfolio Holder
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Debra Goodall
Report Author	Job Title: Assistant Director Finance & Customer Services email:Debra.goodall@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel:
Wards Affected	N/A
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	All
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	
This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph(s) 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The Council has set its budget in two Tranches this year as it did in the 2024/5 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) process. The initial Tranche was published in December 2024 and approved initial pressures and increases at Council in January. This second Tranche is being considered now that the final Local Government Settlement figures are known. The final budget will be approved at Council in February.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet are asked to Recommend to Council that:

- 1 The Tranche 2 growth proposals.
- 2 The additional funding to the Council as per the final Local Government Settlement, including the estimated levels for 2026/7 and 2027/8.
- 3 The Tranche 2 savings proposals, including an increase of Council Tax of 2.99%.
- 4 Approve the Commercial and Worcestershire Regulatory Services fee increases for 2025/26.
- 5 The updated five year Capital Programme 2025/6 to 2029/30 along with its ongoing revenue costs.
- 6 The levels of Earmarked Reserve being carried forward into future years and the setting up of the Property and ERP Reserves..
- 7 The level of General Fund balances following additions from the 2025/6 MTFP.
- 8 Members take account of any feedback from the Tranche 2 consultation process undertaken.

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Cabinet note that:

1. Members understand and accept the implications set out in the S151 Officers Robustness (S25) 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 for completion prior to vesting day.

3. Background

Introduction

- 3.1 The Council sets a 3-year Medium Term Financial Plan every year, with the final Council Tax Resolution being approved by Council in February. This year's process has been more difficult due to the following factors:
- The starting point from the 2024/5 MTFP is positive with respective neutral balances at the starting points for both years.
 - That this is the first budget of a new National Government and will be for only 1 year in duration. The Government have indicated that resources are tight which has been reflected in the Provisional Local Government Settlement in December.
 - The present cost of living crisis which continues to impact our most vulnerable residents.
 - Three years accounts (2020/21 to 2022/23) delivered with a "disclaimer Opinion" and 2023/24 Accounts also likely to have a similar opinion. In this instance, the reason for this will be the limitation of scope imposed by statute (not by the local authority). A disclaimer due to the backstop does not of itself indicate a local authority failing but the ongoing implications are still not clear.
 - The continued uncertainty of the existing movement of the Government to funding projects for specific outcomes and the movement of this from a bidding process to an "allocations" process.
 - Uncertainty over the final mode of working for the Council and what will be required by the new Government, our residents and our Members.
 - Loss of key personnel, present vacancies rates (although only half the national average), and staff retention – linked to the Workforce Strategy.
 - Business Rates and Council Tax Income – and associated collection rates and reliefs linked to the "cost of living" crisis and C-19 grants working their way through our system.
 - Inflation is now moving back to the Government target of 2%.

As such, it is prudent to split the budget process into two tranches,

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- Having an initial Tranche which seeks to close as much of the deficit as possible using information known as at the end of October and seeking approval for those savings to be implemented at Council in January,
- Having a second Tranche after the Christmas break, for which approval will be sought in February, that takes account of the Local Government Settlement whose final detail will not be known until early January.

3.2 This report will set out:

- The approved Tranche 1 Position including base assumptions.
- The impact of the Local Government Settlement.
- Council Priorities
- Strategic Approach
- The final Tranche 2 three year balanced budget, including updated assumptions.
- Impact of Tranche 2 on Reserves and Balances.
- The 5 year Capital Programme.
- The Risk Assessment
- The S151 Officers Robustness Statement
- Consultation Details.

The approved Tranche 1 Position including base assumptions.

3.3 It is important to set out the base assumptions under which the budget is constructed. These assumptions can then be stress tested for various scenarios to test the robustness of the overall budget. The Tranche 1 base assumptions were:

- Council Tax – Figures assume the full 1.99% allowable increase over all years of the 3 year MTFP. The Local plan has housing increases of 457 and 338 in the first two years of the MTFP. For prudence, at the moment it is assumed that increases of 200 and 150 over these years.
- Business Rates Increases – business rates assume growth based on Pooling with the other Districts and the County Council.
- New Homes Bonus/Government Grants – It is assumed that levels would be the same as previous years.
- Pension Fund assumptions takes account of the latest triennial valuation which was received in September 2022. It was noted that there is a significant risk is that the next revaluation will be actioned in 2026 and as such the 2026/7 figure could well change pending the outcome of that exercise.

3.4 The following “generic” pressures and savings were included in Tranche 1:

- The Pay Award is increased from 2% to 3% for 25/6. This would be an additional £154k cost.

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- Pension Fund Actuarial Triennial Revaluation. Although the fund continues to perform well we are concerned on the reducing numbers of live members in the scheme and so have included an amount from 2026/7 of £200k as a potential risk.
- Fees and Charges assumed an increase of 2%. However, given 50% of fees and charges costs link to staff costs and these possibly will increase at 5% for the 2024/5 financial year. Therefore, to keep pace this this increase of costs it is proposed that a 4% increase is made.
- The largest change however will link to upcoming Waste Requirements. The Council is required to implement these proposals from April 2026. The impact on Council budgets is significant in terms of both Revenue and Capital with an ongoing £950k revenue cost, £95K Capital costs and one off implementation costs of £100k.
- Bromsgrove School loses its Business Rates reliefs as part of the Budget. This relief of circa £500k would become part of the collection fund calculation with for planning purposes circa 50% coming to the Council and 50% going back to the Government.
- Additional Artrix Costs at £31k a year.
- Additional inflation of 5% on contract is included at 5% which is £90k.
- A review has been undertaken of Corporate Budgets (Council Tax/Business Rate, Investment Income and Debt) against expected numbers and due to a number of factors there is a positive position.
- The Council had 4% in to cover staff inflation in 2024/5. This pay award is now circa 5% and so this adjustment has also been made in the corporate budgets.

3.5 Departmental changes, due to contract pressures and demographics have also been taken into account. These departmental changes result in an overall £1.387m revenue pressure in the 2025/6 financial year and then £938k by 2027/8. The overall Tranche 1 Position is summarised in the following Two tables, the first taking account of “Corporate” issues, the second then adding on the “Departmental” issues.

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Year	2025/6 £000	2026/7 £000	2027/8 £000
Opening Position	8	7	7
Changes			
Increase Pay Award to 3%	154	154	154
Pension Revaluation (addn costs)		200	200
Increase Fees and Charges to 4%	-200	-200	-200
Increased Waste Interest costs	27	27	27
Increased Waste MRP costs		68	68
Waste Project costs (capitalised)		20	20
Increased Waste Revenue costs		950	950
School Business Rates	-250	-250	-250
Artrix Maximum Costs	31	31	31
Contract Inflation	90	90	90
Improvements in Corporate Budgets	-343	-393	-607
1% Additional 24/5 Payoll cost over Budget	154	154	154
Net additional Costs	-337	851	637
Updated Position	-329	858	644

Year	2025/6 £000	2026/7 £000	2027/8 £000
Position after Corporate Items	-329	858	644
Departmental Items	1,387	976	938
Position after Departmental Items	1,058	1,834	1,582

Table 1 Tranche 1 Position

- 3.6 At Tranche 1, there is a £1m deficit to be closed which rises to an ongoing £1.5m problem in 2027/8. £1m of this amount from 2026/7 onwards is linked to the impact of the changes to Waste Regulations.

The impact of the Local Government Settlement

- 3.7 The Chancellors Autumn Statement was made on the 30th October had the following impacts on Council budgets:
- A 3.2% real-terms increase in Core Spending Power (CSP) for the whole sector in 2025-26. This will include £1.3b additional grant funding, of which at least £600m will be directed to social care.
 - The Budget was silent on council tax referendum limits, but the DCN expectation is that referendum principles will stay at 2.99% for districts.
 - £233m new funding for homelessness prevention. This will be in addition to the £1.3b grant funding mentioned above.
 - £1b to extend the Household Support Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments into 2025-26.
 - £1.1b new funding through implementation of the Extended Producer Responsibility scheme for recycling.

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- Right to Buy: councils will be permanently allowed to retain 100% of receipts locally and discount levels will revert to pre-2012 levels from 21st November.
- Business Rates support to the retail, hospitality and Leisure sector, although it is not known the route of compensation yet for Councils.
- A £500m increase to the Affordable Homes Programme in 2025-26.
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund has been extended for 2025-26 at a reduced level of £900m, a 40% decrease on the current year. It is not yet clear whether this funding will continue.
- Employer national insurance (NI) contributions will increase by 1.2% to 15% from April 2025 but councils are expected to be reimbursed for this. The impact of this on Bromsgrove if this was not funded is £144k.
- The National Living Wage will increase by 6.7% to £12.21. Minimum wage for 18- to 20-yearolds will increase by 16% to £10 per hour.

3.8 The Provisional Local Government Settlement was made on the 18th December 2024. In that settlement the Councils Core Sending Power is unchanged at £13.42m. However, this zero increase in spending power masks a significant change in funding with Councils expected have a 2.99% increase in Council Tax to get to that Break Even position, with “Other Grants” reducing by a corresponding amount. As the Council, as other Councils, already assume, maximising Council Tax increases in their existing forward plans this is settlement with no inflation built in. This is reflected in the following table:

	2025/6	2024/5	Difference	Difference
	£m	£m	%	£m
Settlement Fund				
Assessment	2.02	1.983	1.9%	0.037
Assumed Council Tax	9.836	9.499	3.5%	0.337
Other Grants	1.564	1.937	-19.3%	-0.373
Settlement Control				
Totals	13.42	13.419	0.0%	0.001

Table 2 Local Government Settlement Figures

3.9 As set out in 3.7 above, the Government have however given specific targeted Grant Funding for a number of initiatives. This funding is single year, as Local Government Funding is being significantly changes for the 2026/7 settlement. However, the impacts on the Council for this targeted funding is:

- £700m additional grant funding – Bromsgrove has not received any additional Grant Funding.
- Council Tax in Tranche 2 will be increased from 1.99 to 2.99%.
- £233m additional Homelessness Prevention Grant. Bromsgrove has received £349k, which is £88k more than in reports discussed and approved in December.

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- £1.1b new funding through implementation of the Extended Producer Responsibility scheme for recycling. Bromsgrove has received £1,004k which is included in the Tranche 2 budget proposals.
- Right to Buy changes are not applicable for Bromsgrove.
- Business Rates support to the retail, hospitality and Leisure sector is expected to be neutral and Government Funded.
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund has been extended for 2025-26 at a reduced level of £900m. Bromsgrove has received £918k split Revenue £748k and Capital £170k.

3.10 In addition to those items set out above, following the World Climate Conference in December there are likely to be ongoing targets in this area. Councils have already declared “Climate Emergencies” and have challenging carbon reduction targets to deliver by 2030, 2040 and 2050. At the moment plans are within existing budgets, but as we move through the next three-year period there will be the requirement for the prioritisation of resources and approval of additional funding on a scheme by scheme basis. These will need to be taken account of in future budgets, although a significant part of this budget spend will be Capital in nature.

3.11 There are a number of other significant factors in looking at the 24/5 budget which are linked to the Local Government Finance Market. Presently:

- There are a number of Local Authorities who have now issued S114 Statements.
- Although Bromsgrove is now up to date with its accounts, these accounts have “Disclaimer Opinions” and it is likely that the Council will receive “Disclaimer Opinions” for at least the 23/4 and 24/.5 Accounts. The ramifications of these “disclaimer Opinions” on the wider Local Government Sector and individual Councils is not clear. There will be circa 600 of these “Disclaimer Opinions” across English Councils.
- The Government Devolution Bill and the reorganisation of two tiered areas to unitary authorities by the end of this Governments first term. This will have significant impact on Worcestershire Councils.

3.12 Significant Grant levels not set out in 3.9 above are:

- Housing Benefit Administration Subsidy - £146,878
- Discretionary Housing Payments - £62,332
- Discretionary Housing Payments Administration - £11,114
- New Burdens Funding (UC) £2,770
- Revenue Support Grant £118,000
- New Homs Bonus £24,000
- Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Grant £36,000
- Funding Floor (formally Funding Guarantee) £1,111,000
- S31 Grant Funding for Business Rates Subsidy (RHL) will be base on the NNRA1 forms

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- National Insurance Contribution – The Final Local Government Settlement on the 3rd February allocated a sum of £0.1m. This is circa £200k less than the Councils requirements and this difference is reflected as an additional pressure.
- Housing Benefit Subsidy £11,192,229 (24/5 level – 25/6 level not known)
- Disabled Facilities Grant - £1,285,847 (up from £1,130,316) – Capital
- Capital DEFA allocation for Food Waste Bins/Vehicles £902,511 - Capital

3.13 As part of the Budget process the following reports have been approved in the January 2025 Cycle of meetings:

- The Council Tax Base for 2025/26.
- The final Council Tax Support Scheme for 2025/26.

The following reports linked to the budget were updated in the 2024/25 MTFP and have not changed since that time:

- The Discretionary Council Tax Reduction Policy.
- Council Tax – Empty Homes Discounts and Premiums.
- Non Domestic Rates – Discretionary Rates Relief Policy.

Council Strategic Priorities

3.14 The Leader and Cabinet, with the support of the Corporate Management Team, have updated the Councils Strategic Priorities and these have been approved by Council.

3.15 The final Council Plan provided an overarching vision for the District with the four new priorities as follows:

- Economic Development
- Housing
- Environment
- Infrastructure

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'We aspire to create a welcoming environment that prioritises quality of life, where residents and businesses feel a deep sense of belonging and connection.'



3.16 The council's vision, priorities and themes are connected using a 'green' thread:

"A green thread runs through the Council plan. Climate change and carbon reduction are key issues within the plan and the relevant measures identified to evaluate performance will help the Council to understand both activities and progress in this area".

3.17 Opportunities and Challenges highlighted in the plan include:

The opportunities include:

- The location of Bromsgrove for business; with Worcestershire, regionally and beyond.
- The entrepreneurial and community spirit within Bromsgrove District.
- Keeping businesses in the district when they grow.
- The amazing natural environment of the district.
- The creative options provided through new technologies to enhance our services and our customers experiences.

The challenges include:

- The ongoing financial challenge- to both the organisation but also our communities and residents through the real pressures presented by cost of living and the housing market.
- Continuing to support those who are most vulnerable, and manage the increasing costs.
- Keeping businesses in the District when they grow.
- Understanding the different community needs across the district
- The need for enhanced digital and physical connectivity.

3.18 The council cannot deliver all priorities on its own. In some cases, it can support, influence, or work collaboratively with other partner agencies to persuade them to take a particular course of action/undertake a particular

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project. Considerable support and input from partner organisations will be needed for priorities to be successfully achieved.

3.19 We talk in the Risk section about the impending Devolution of powers in Local Government and the setting up of Unitary Councils in existing 2 tier areas before the close of this Parliament. This will have a significant impact on the Council. In light of this, the Council is reviewing schemes that can be delivered and completed within the next three years to ensure that a legacy of a sustainable attractive Bromsgrove is transferred on vesting day with infrastructure and amenities reflecting stakeholder requirements to make a difference to the residents of Bromsgrove's lives. Initiatives under review for inclusion and approval following updated business cases are:

- Full funding of the 10 year play strategy agreed by Council in 2024 (only 5 years are in the present capital programme) including non-Council assets set out in that report.
- Bromsgrove Town Centre public realm – continuation of improvements on the high street, Church Street, Mill Lane, Worcester Road. Resurfacing, street furniture and lighting upgrade, and possible acquisitions to deliver further regeneration. C.£2m
- Rubery – high street design feasibility study to create central plaza/meeting space and reconfigure parking – c.£120k.
- Work in other centres although this will need to link with Parish Councils and un-Parished areas who also have responsibilities.
- Full programmes of litter bin replacement.
- Investment to upgrade our parks facilities.
- Investment in a new Depot to reflect differing needs for services and vehicles in the future.

Strategic Approach

3.20 The Council has come into the 2025/26 budget process with a number of conflicting issues. These include:

- An ongoing in year 2024/25 deficit at Q2 of a £344k to close.
- The requirement to fund future pay award which are circa 50% of costs. Over the past 3 years these pay awards have been significantly higher than "normal". Although nationally agreed, these have not been funded.
- Increases in Council Tax are limited at 2.99%, which is significantly lower than the present rates of inflation.
- The fact that Local Government Finance will change significantly in the 2025/6 settlement which is not known at the moment and which is multi year.
- That over the course of this Parliament all 2 tier areas, such as Worcestershire will be converted into Unitary Authorities.

3.21 The next section sets out the Tranche 2 position. In it the Council moves to a considered sustainable position over the 3 year planning period. One significant factor that has been taken account of is the fact that Local

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Government funding will change significantly in 2026/27 and so in this budget it is prudent to minimise any savings pending the upcoming funding review.

3.22 The level of reserves and balances presently held suggest that although significantly more is held than the suggested 5% recommended level for the General Fund, that any calls on this amount for a significant emergency situation would reduce levels by possibly 50%.

3.23 The Council must adapt how it operates to take advantage of customer requirements, technology, available resources, and the economic and environmental conditions to remain a sustainable viable organisation. To ensure this happens there will be the need for future investment, efficiencies and possibly the requirement to fund redundancy (both from reserves and balances).

3.24 As set out later in the Robustness Statement, in compiling Tranche 1 of the budget, assumptions were based on the best information held then. Issues the Council is facing are not unique, they are being faced by almost all Councils. Tranche 2 of the budget has adjusted for any funding that the Government will provide but primarily sets out other options to close the Tranche 1 deficit,

The final Tranche 2 three year balanced budget, including updated assumptions

3.25 The Council started Tranche 2 of the Budget with the following financial deficits to close:

Year	2025/6 £000	2026/7 £000	2027/8 £000
Position after Corporate Items	-329	858	644
Departmental Items	1,387	976	938
Position after Departmental Items	1,058	1,834	1,582

Table 3 Opening Tranche 2 Position

3.26 The financial settlement, as set out in paragraphs 3.9 and 3.10 above had no increase in overall funding and a number of areas of specific targeted funding:

3.27 The Council has assessed a number of other options to move to what it believes is a considered sustainable position over the 3 year planning period. This process has the following additional Income

- **Council Tax** – The Government expects as part of the Local Government Settlement for all Councils to increase Council Tax levels by the maximum 2.99%. The Council assumed a 1.99% increase in

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Tranche 1 and so this increases that level by £96k to come in line with Government expectations

- **Actuarial Changes from 2026.** Following a conversation with the new Actuary and the Worcestershire Treasurers at the end of November, expectations are now that in the 2026 Triennial Revaluation there will be minimal increases. This saves £150k
- ERP Funding Allocations – the Council have received £1,004k in ERP Funding. As per the table below, this will be allocated over the three year funding period with £250k allocated for specific marketing initiatives to move the initiative forward across all sectors.
- 24/25 Salary Adjustment – Now that actual salary increases have been allocated for 2024/25 as part of the December payroll, this savings can be made
- Capitalisation of Salaries – The Council should be allocating staff costs to capital projects. It has not done this in the past. At the moment an assumption of a 5% recharge has been made, – this needs to be sustainable over time. These capitalisation amount have been added to the capital programme.
- One Off Funding from the Finance Reserve. There are finance specific items in the departmental pressures that are one off in nature. These can be funded from the Earmarked Finance Reserve.
- Departmental Efficiencies – to balance the overall budget, there is the requirement for departmental efficiencies to be made. These are highlighted in the following table:

Service	Net Budget	Savings £250k
BDC Regulatory	384	7
Business Transformation & OD	1,874	36
Chief Exec	893	17
Housing and Community Services	1,182	23
Environmental Services	4,138	80
Finance & Customer Services	1,442	28
Legal & Democratic	1,111	21
Planning and Leisure	1,241	24
Regeneration and Property	726	14
Totals	12,991	250

Table 4 – Departmental Efficiencies

- Savings on the VM Ware Contract – it was expected that this contract would have a 10 fold increase with a change of supplier but in December we were able to limit the increase to a far smaller increase.

And the following additional costs

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- Replacement Bins – Bromsgrove are now the only Council in England with its type of Bin. This is limiting the options in the purchasing of the Refuse Fleet. There was a report that went to Cabinet on the 6th January setting out the issues.
- WRS Uplift for Inflation – these are the agreed increases approved at the WRS Board in November 2024.
- Local Government Settlement Costs – these now reflect the changes to funding in the 2025/26 Local Government Financial Settlement. The most significant is the £352k reduction in Government Grants.
- The Sunrise Project - The project focusses on supporting the most vulnerable and complex customers often known to organisations for repeat and reactive demands and identified as having a high level of contact with multiple partner agencies. The expenditure will improve the financial sustainability and health and wellbeing of residents, and in particular those more vulnerable residents. The project is tenure blind and includes the provision of access to courses to improve employment opportunities and quality of life.
- The Final Local Government Settlement on the 3rd February allocated the Council £0.1m for the National Insurance changes. This is £200k less than the Council’s requirements and this difference is shown now as a pressure.

3.28 The net effects of these changes is summarised in the table below. Overall there is a net £167k deficit in 2025/26, increasing to £1030k in 2026/27, before reducing to £399k in 2027/28. This is an overall call on general fund reserves of £1,596k.

Year	2025/6 £000	2026/7 £000	2027/8 £000
Position after Departmental Items	1,058	1,834	1,582
Additional 1% Council Tax	-96	-96	-96
Adjustment for Actuaries figures		-150	-150
Allocation of ERP Funding from Reserve		-335	-335
Updated ERP Adjustment	-100	-115	-115
Salary Adjustment 24/5	-150	-150	-150
Capitalisation at 2.5%	-375	-375	-375
Capitalisation to 5.00%	-375	-375	-375
Finance Reserve	-289		
CMT £250k Efficiencies	-250	-250	-250
VM Ware Contract Savings	-120	-120	-120
ERP Spend on Communications (TBC)	100	100	50
Replacement Bin Requirements	120	420	420
WRS Agreed Uplifts	29	29	29

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Increased Council Tax Budget	26	23	-307
Reduced Government Grant	352	352	352
The Sunrise Project	37	38	39
Further National Insurance requirement	200	200	200
Updated Totals	167	1,030	399

Additional Grant Allocations			
UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Revenue	748		
UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Capital	169		

ERP Allocation - 1 Year only to Reserve	1,004		
Local Plan – Green Belt Reviews	70		

Table 5 Tranche 2 Position

3.29 **Appendix A** sets out the Departmental Budgets.

Updated Fees and Charges

3.30 The Council has commercial rates it charges for its commercial Environmental Services Customers. These are set out in confidential **Appendix B**.

3.31 In addition, updated Worcestershire Regulatory Service Charges are set out for approval in **Appendix C**. These are increased in line with increases in the service across the County which are at the 4% level unless set by statute.

Impact of Tranche 2 on Reserves and Balances

3.32 The existing 24/25 MTFP saw general fund balances at a break even position over the three year planning moving the Council towards sustainability. In the 2023/24 budget, the Council was prudent and reviewed all its earmarked Reserves and reallocated a substantial amount to the General Fund and also a newly formed Utilities Reserve due to the significant pressure on budgets in that area. As we have moved into 2024/25 there have been additional inflationary pressures linked to significant unfunded nationally agreed staffing increases. This has been partly offset by the Utilities Reserves. Years 2 and 3 of this reserve are not now required and have been transferred to the General Fund to bolster its position.

3.33 The projected 2025/6 to 2027/7 position, at Tranche 1, had £3,050k of pressures to mitigate. This has been mitigated down in Tranche 2 to a £1,596k overall pressure over the three years with an ongoing issue of £399k a year to resolve in 2027/28 onwards. This is a slightly different approach to

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the previous two MTFP's where the Councils have moves to a "sustainable position" over the three year period but reflects that fact that Local Government will have a new 3 year settlement from the 2026/7 financial year and with those allocation methods only being consulted on in the Spring of 2025. It would not be prudent to balance the budget by reducing services when the new settlement might have those services as a priority area.

- 3.34 Presently, the General Fund sits at a value of £12.781 (taking account of the Tranche 2 position) at the 31st March 2028. This sum is over 25% of gross expenditure and significantly above the 5% benchmark quoted by the Government a being a minimum requirement. If Housing Benefit payments, which are passported through the Council are ignored than this percentage rises to over 30% of expenditure.
- 3.35 The Council has now closed its accounts up to the 2022/23 financial year and has received "Disclaimer Opinions" for those three years. Because those years are now closed there is certainty over the Earmarked Reserve balances which at the 31st March 2028 sit at a value of £9.484m.
- 3.36 This Earmarked Reserves level of £9.484m assumes that all Ward budgets are funded from the Financial Services Reserve.
- 3.37 Specific Reserves will be set up for the following purposes
- £100K for a review of the Property function
 - An ERP Reserve of £1,004K to transfer the grant funding for ERP schemes and release it over the three year MTFP period.

The detailed position in respect of Reserves is set out in **Appendix D**.

The 5 Year Capital Programme

- 3.38 The Council over the past number of years has not spent its capital programme allocations in year. A review has been carried out of
- All schemes that have not started (both from 23/24 and from previous years)
 - Schemes that have started
- To assess deliverability and links to revised strategic priorities.
- 3.39 Present rationale is for any scheme not yet started (unless grant or S106 funded) to rebid for funds as part of the 2025/26 budget process. The Summary Capital Programme is set out in the following Table:

Table 6 Summary Capital Programme

- 3.40 The priority in capital terms is for the Council to spend its grant funding. It has the following:

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Year	Total Programme	Revised Total	Council Funded	Grant Funded
2024/5	6,376,987	21,267,936	10,996,671	10,271,265
Carry Fwd	14,890,949			
2025/6	17,351,727		8,017,369	9,334,358
2026/7	3,222,841		2,422,841	800,000
2027/8	2,469,459		1,669,459	800,000
2028/9	2,310,531		1,510,531	800,000
2029/30	2,373,749		1,573,749	800,000

Table 6 Capital Programme

- Levelling Up of £16.1m (£14.5m Grant, £1.6m Council) which now needs to be spent by the 30th September 2025 (being the Market Hall Scheme)
- UK Shared Prosperity Funding of £918k for 2025/26 – which is one year only funding.

3.41 **Appendix E** sets out the present capital programme to be agreed.

3.42 The following are the changes between what was presented in Tranche 1 and the present:

- The items carried forward from 2023/24 to 2024/25 have been fully reviewed and updated as part of the Closure of Accounts 2023/24 process.
- The requirement of a firewall for Parkside at £9,750 has ben integrated into the programme.
- The requirement for an additional £25k a year for laptops for new starters has also been integrated into the programme.
- The Market Hall redevelopment has been reprofiled and overall shows a £1.4m deficit, which presently is being funded by the Council.
- The requirement to replace the Wheely Bin fleet has been added at a cost of £2.2m as per the Cabinet Report of the 6th January 2025.
- Updated funding for 2025/6 has been added for both UKSPF and DFG Budgets.
- The Government funding for the new Food Waste Service (Vehicles and Containers) has been added at £902k. This is still over £500k short of our overall requirement.
- The updated play audit implementation profile from the December 2024 report has been added – no change was required for the revenue funding assumptions.
- Inclusion of the capitalisation of salaries.

3.43 The significant Council spending continues to be the Fleet Replacement Programme although it is slipping into the future as we await the Governments final Environment Bill and confirmation of the type of vehicles required after 2030.

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- 3.44 The Council is undertaking a review of all its assets, linked to the requirement of Council buildings to be at Level C Energy Efficiency. A report is expected early in 2025 setting the Councils fixed asset approach.
- 3.45 The Capital Programme is very closely linked to the Asset Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and Asset Investment Strategy. These Strategies set out how the Council can invest and borrow funds and to whom. They are set out in **Appendices F, G, H and I**. These Strategies have been reviewed by the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee in January 2024.

The Risk Assessment

- 3.46 As set out in this Report we are budgeting in a time of extreme uncertainty:
- There having been a change of National Government and this being their first year of being the administration since 2010.
 - The 2025/6 Local Government Financial Settlement is only for one year and overall have a £352k reduction in central grants.
 - There will be a new financial settlement formula in 2026/7, which will be for three years, but the make-up of this settlement formula will only start to be consulted on in the spring of 2025.
 - The Government have also announced significant reorganisation of the Local Government Sector with Worcestershire which is 2 tier moving to a Unitary setup by the end of this Parliament. At the present time, the format of Unitary Councils in Worcestershire is unclear as are the rules in relation to use of Reserves and Balances in the intermediate period and the obvious impact on the Councils Staff, Members and present Stakeholders.
 - The status of Councils with “Disclaimer Opinions” on their accounts. It is understood there will be over 500 of these opinions across English Councils.
 - The ongoing issue of Funding, with the care element of Local Government taking more over the “overall” resource pot on a yearly basis leaving less for other services we provide to the public.
- 3.47 As per the Risk Reports that are reported to Audit, Governance and Standards and Committee there are the following specific Risks linked to finance:
- Resolution of the approved budget position.
 - Financial process rectification (in relation to the 2020/21 Accounts and subsequent years not being approved – which is close to some sort of resolution with the “Disclaimer Opinions”).
 - Decisions made to address financial pressures and implementing new projects that are not informed by robust data and evidence.
 - Adequate workforce planning.

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- 3.48 In addition, in this time of uncertainty the Council will also need to embed a new Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Resources, both of whom have been appointed in January 2025 and will start after their respective notice periods.
- 3.49 There are the core risks of implementation of any Council financial plan in that:
- Any savings proposal must pass the S151 Officers tests for robustness and delivery. If items are not deliverable or amounts not obtainable, they cannot be included.
 - Implementation of savings to time and budget – there must be full implementation processes documented to ensure implementation within timescales.
 - Non delivery is a high risk - Savings are tracked and reviewed on a quarterly basis at the Audit Standards and Governance Committee to ensure implementation happens based on the plans and the assumptions will become part of the Council's core processes.
 - Loss of key personnel will be crucial, especially given the impending Local Government Reorganisation and mitigation plans will need to be drawn up which in themselves will require resources to administer and deliver.
 - Change of corporate direction/priorities given the upcoming changes in the sector.

The S151 Officers Robustness Statement

- 3.50 For Tranche 2, the opinion of the Interim Director of Finance is that the risks contained in the 2025/26 budget estimates have been minimised as far as is possible.
- 3.51 In the past two years the Council have moved to the delivery of sustainable budgets however these have been impacted by three years of Pay Awards far in excess to those ever seen in Local Government. This, given the fact that staffing costs are approaching 50% of overall costs, has had a significant impact on council budgets over this period leading to in year overspend positions and has required subsequent mitigation in following years budgets.
- 3.52 Although inflation is reducing in the UK, given wider economic events and changes in other countries Governments and the move to more nationalistic policies it is not clear if inflation in particular will move back to being consistently within the Government's 2% target. This impacts Council costs but also those who have the requirement to use our services.
- 3.53 Employee budgets are almost 50% of the Council's costs. Over the past 18 months there has been a significant move to fill establishment positions. However, the Council is still running at levels of vacancy of around 100

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against an overall joint establishment of 850 and using considerable agency resource to ensure services are maintained. This attracts additional short term cost and the Workforce Strategy, implemented in 2023, is starting to mitigate this. This is shown in the Councils staff turnover figure being 50% of the National average at just over 7%. However, this remains the most significant financial risk to the Council.

- 3.54 The next most significant financial risk was the fact that that the Council had not been able to present its 20/21, 21/22 and 22/23 Accounts for Audit, and the possible inaccuracy of opening balances used in budgetary data. These three years have now been completed under the new “backstop” regulations, but because of the national audit Issues the Council has received “Disclaimer Opinions” for all three years. There are circa 500 of these opinions for English Councils and it is not clear of the implications of this on Councils and the wider sector. What the closure process has highlighted, now it has been completed for these years, is that the Council is in a stronger position in terms of reserves than was the started position. The 2023/4 Accounts have also now been completed and presented for Audit within the new “Backstop” requirements.
- 3.55 The revenue budget and capital programme have been formulated having regard to several factors including:
- Funding Available.
 - Inflation.
 - Risks and Uncertainties.
 - Priorities.
 - Service Pressures.
 - Commercial Opportunities.
 - Operating in a Post C-19 environment.
- 3.56 The MTFP highlights that the current financial position has moved, following the Local Government Settlement, to a position of requiring £1.596m of funding from General Fund Reserves over the three year period. This is a departure from the previous two years where the Council has tried to move to a more ongoing sustainable position. The reason for this movement in the short term is that
- In year three 2027/28, the ongoing deficit to close going forward is £399k.
 - That the Local Government Financial Settlement methodology will significantly change in 2026/27, and it would not be sensible to make savings where those services might need to be re-instated.
 - That the general fund will still be at a strong level – at £12.781m after allowing for this support which is well above 25% of gross turnover.
- 3.57 The Council has reviewed the Councils position in line with the CIPFA Resilience Index. The data for the resilience index is obtained from the Revenue Expenditure and Financing England Outturn Report 2023-24 ('RO Forms') and reflects figures submitted by Local Authorities to MHCLG,

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published on 12 December 2024. The Council in comparison to its nearest neighbours and levels of risk:

- Has lower risk in terms of levels of reserves, interest payable, levels of debt, and growth being above the baseline.
- Has a slightly higher than average fees and charges to Services expenditure ratio.

This reflects that fact that the Council has no long terms debt and reasonable levels of General Fund and Earmarked Reserves. With fees and charges, these are the only real avenue to revenue increases given the limits on Council Tax rises.

- 3.58 In line with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, this report of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) sets out the robustness of estimates included in the budget and the adequacy of the Council's reserves.

The Chief Financial Officer's opinion is that the estimates are robust

- 3.59 Relevant budget holders are responsible for individual budgets and their preparation. All estimates are then scrutinised by Financial Services staff and the Corporate Management Team prior to submission to Members.
- 3.60 The two tranche 2025/26 budget process has ensured that all budget assumptions have been reviewed and reconsidered by Officers, and then Members, through the Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group, Cabinet and Council.
- 3.61 The budget has a £1.596m call on General Fund Reserves over the three year period but by year 3 does start to move to a more sustainable position. More work will need to be done to embed changes to ensure financial sustainability is embedded across the organisation, especially with the change coming forward for Local Government in terms of Funding and Structure.

Adequacy of Reserves

- 3.62 Budget and MFTP proposals forecast the level of General Fund balances at £12.781m as at 31st March 2028 which is over five times the recommended 5% of net level as set out in the Reserves section.
- 3.63 The present positive medium term financial position, takes into account the updated position in terms of accounts now being closed to the 2023/24 financial year however the "Disclaimer Opinions" still give the potential of possible issues with Opening Balances. It is prudent for the Council to build reserves as they are the Council's single source of funding for business change initiatives.
- 3.64 Further work will be undertaken to ensure that expenditure levels are sustainable and matched by income over the medium to long term. Plans are

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therefore in place to continue to review budgets and identify and accelerate further savings opportunities.

Collection Fund and Precepts

- 3.65 The Council Tax collection fund is anticipated to be in surplus based on December data by £0.595m, which will be distributed amongst the major preceptors using the prescribed formulae. The Council's share of the surplus payable as a one-off sum in the following financial year 13% of the total which amounts to £76k.
- 3.66 Worcestershire County Council, Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority and the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner are due to set their precepts in the week commencing 3rd February. This will enable the Council to set the Council Tax on 19th February 2025. The precepting bodies Council Tax requirements will be included in the formal resolutions which will be presented to Council on 19th February.

Consultation Details

- 3.67 The Council has consulted on its Tranche 1 budget. This budget consultation opened on Thu 5 December 2024. An email invite was sent to the Bromsgrove Community Panel. The survey was also promoted on a variety of social media channels. The survey closed at 12noon on Thursday 2 January 2025.
- 3.68 The response rate for the community panel was 48%. There were a total of 278 valid responses received.
- 3.69 Question 16 gives the splits of Age Ranges of the people who filled out the questionnaire. The vast majority were over 50.
- 3.70 The survey asked respondents to rank the three most important services they felt the Council should invest in. These were:
- Local Economic Development and Employment (47.1% of respondents).
 - Community Safety (44.6.% of respondents).
 - Maintenance of the Landscape and Environment (43.8.% of respondents)
- 3.71 6 questions had responses well over 50% agreeing or strongly agreeing, and only two had responses lower than 50% - these being
- Do you agree that the Council should invest more in our front-line services to cover increases in fuel at a 49.6% approval rate.
 - Do you support fees and charges (this excludes parking) rising by 4% to keep them in line with inflation and rising staffing costs at a 40.2% approval rate.

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- 3.72 The highest approval rating, at 86.2% was the question - Do you agree that the Council should invest in economic development in order to support local businesses, start-ups, the town and local centres and to prioritise local skills.
- 3.73 Two further questions were asked on what level of increase to Bromsgrove District Council's proportion of Council Tax do you support?
- 61.5% agreed of strongly agreed with a 1.99% increase.
 - This dropped to 45.8% at 2.99%.
- 3.74 There were 2 free test questions:
- Please let us know your suggestions for investing in the district to increase prosperity and enhance appeal for residents and businesses alike?
 - There were 178 responses to this question.
 - Responses to this question provided many suggestions and comments regarding the district. The top three themes were Bromsgrove Town Centre, supporting businesses and the importance of infrastructure, from roads to public transport. These themes had many cross overs, from the impact of traffic, encouraging a diverse range of businesses into the town and reducing costs to visitors and businesses alike.
 - Suggestions included:
 - Reducing business rates / relief
 - Reducing parking costs
 - Supporting independent retailers
 - Bringing in key major retailers
 - Understanding offer on High Street- too many charity shops, cafes, hair & vaping businesses
 - Utilise empty shops- for small businesses, new start-ups, housing, community use
 - Improve the market- quality, offer, number of days
 - Make the town vibrant, attractive & distinctive- develop attractions, encourage visitors
 - Improve the appearance & maintenance of the high street
 - Improved public transport
 - Support active travel
 - Access grants wherever possible
 - Ensure a district-wide view
 -
 - Please let us know any other comments on the budget or ideas for reducing costs or increasing income to ensure Council services remain sustainable?
 - There were 118 responses to this questions.
 - Of the responses to this question, the largest category fell into the theme of efficiency and value for money. Other themes included

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infrastructure, focusing on those in need, ensuring transparency and accountability asset utilisation, and the town centre.

- Suggestions included:
 - Reviewing salaries
 - Ensuring right skills within the council
 - Outsource some functions
 - Explore alternative methods of delivery e.g. co-operatives, partnerships
 - Reduce use of consultants
 - Review fees & charges
 - Commercial opportunities e.g. logs, compost or specific services
 - Turn off lights / utilise smart sensors
 - Reduce events
 - Promote events better to increase revenue
 - Community use of buildings
 - Energy generation e.g. solar panels in car parks
 - Convert buildings into housing e.g. multi-storey by Asda
 - Increase enforcement fines e.g. fly tipping & littering
 - Support the voluntary sector
 - Reducing business rates / relief
 - Review council tax
 - Better coordination around highways and roadworks

3.75 The consultation spreadsheet sets out the overall summary and a breakdown by question is shown as **Appendix H**.

3.76 Tranche Two of the budget will be consulted on following its publication on the 4th February. Any comments will be fed into Cabinet and Council on the 19th February 2025.

3.77 The Council will raise awareness of the budget proposals via use of social media.

4. **IMPLICATIONS**

Financial Implications

4.1 Financial implications are set out in Section 3.

Legal Implications

4.2 A number of statutes governing the provision of services covered by this report contain express powers or duties to charge for services. Where an express power to charge does not exist the Council has the power under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 to charge where the activity is

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incidental or conducive to or calculated to facilitate the Council's statutory function.

Service / Operational Implications

- 4.3 Monitoring will be undertaken to ensure that income targets are achieved through the Quarterly Finance and Performance Reports to Cabinet and the Quarterly Savings Reports to Audit Standards and Governance Committee.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 4.4 The implementation of the revised fees and charges will be notified in advance to the customer to ensure that all users are aware of the new charges and any concessions available to them.
- 4.5 Initial Equalities Impact Assessments must be taken where required. None have been required with this budget.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 It is crucial that the Councils sets a balanced budget in order for it to deliver sustainable services to its Stakeholders. There are significant risks in any budget and these are set out in sections 3.44 to 3.47.
- 5.2 There is a risk that if fees and charges are not increased that income levels will not be achieved, and the cost of services will increase. This is mitigated by managers reviewing their fees and charges annually.

6. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Budgets by Department
Appendix B – Environmental Services Commercial Fees & Charges (**Exempt**)
Appendix C – Worcestershire Regulatory Services Fees & Charges
Appendix D – Reserves
Appendix E – 5 Year Capital Programme
Appendix F – 2025/6 Capital Strategy
Appendix G – 2025/6 Treasury Management Strategy
Appendix H– 2025/6 MRP Statement
Appendix I– 2025/6 Investment Strategy
Appendix J – Consultation Breakdown

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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Appendix A – Budgets by Department

To Follow – being updated for NI changes following Government Advice in Final Local Government Settlement on the 3rd February 2025

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

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Appendix C – Worcestershire Regulatory Services Fees and Charges

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES		2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Stray Dogs	Fine (statutory)	£25.00	£25.00	£25.00
	Out of hours charge	£47.00	£50.00	£52.00
	Repeat offender penalty	£42.00	£45.00	£47.00
	Administration Charge	£17.00	£18.00	£19.00
	Kennelling per dog, per day	£18.00	£20.00	£21.00
	Kennelling of dangerous dogs - per dog, per day (by temperament or breed)	£26.00	£28.00	£29.00
	Vet's fees	At cost	At cost	At Cost
	Treatment Costs (wormer, flea treatment etc.)	£12.00	£13.00	£13.50
	Return charge (during office hours when resource available)	£42.00	£45.00	£47.00
	Penalty charge for non-compliance of Microchipping regulations (not microchipped or contact details out of date) or Control of Dogs Order 1992 (no owner contact details on collar or tag)	New	£15.00	£16.00
	Environmental Information Regulations request	Where request relates to 'contamination of the land' charge applied to locate and provide the information requested.	£46.00 per hour to collate information (as estimated at time of request)	£49.00 (flat fee)
Littering - Fixed Penalty Notice for Depositing Litter (section 87/88 - Environmental Protection Act 1990)	Reduced Fine (Paid within 10 days)		£50.00	£60-100
	Full Fine Amount		£80.00	£100-£150
Fixed Penalty Notice for Failure to produce authority (Waste Carrier's Licence) (Section 5/5B Control of Pollution (Amendment) Act 1989) Reduced Fine (Paid within 10 days)	Reduced Fine (Paid within 10 days)		£200.00	£210.00
	Full Fine Amount		£300.00	£325.00

Fixed Penalty Notice for Failure to produce documentation (Waste Transfer Notes) (Section 34(5) and regulations made under it 34(6)/34A Environmental Protection Act 1990) Reduced Fine (Paid within 10 days)	Reduced Fine (Paid within 10 days)		£200.00	£210.00
	Full Fine Amount		£300.00	£325.00
Fixed Penalty Notice for Breach of Waste Duty of Care (section 34 Environmental Protection Act 1990)	Reduced Fine (Paid within 10 days)			£120-£200
	Sliding scale		£100-£300	£150-£400
Flytipping – Fixed Penalty Notice for Depositing Controlled Waste (Section 34(1)(a) and Section 33(2)(a) Environmental Protection Act 1990	Reduced Fine (Paid within 10 days)			£150-£250
	Full Amount sliding scale		£150-£400	£300-£500
Training Certificates	Health / Export	£95 + VAT	£100 + VAT	£ 104 + vat
	Annual specific export inspection Certificate	£428 + VAT	£457 + VAT	£475.00 + vat
	Per hour (minimum 1 hour)	£50.00	£54.00	£56.00
FHRS (Food Hygiene Rating Scheme) re-rating		£178.00	£190.00	£198.00
Food Advisory Visits		£150.00	£160.00	£166.00
Private Water Supplies	Risk Assessment per hour (minimum 1 hour)	£59 per hour	£63 per hour	£66.00 per hour
	Investigation per hour (minimum 1 hour)	£59 per hour	£63 per hour	£66.00 per hour
	Granting an Authorisation per hour (minimum 1 hour)	£59 per hour	£63 per hour	£66.00 per hour
	Sampling Visit per hour (minimum 1 hour)	£59 per hour	£63 per hour	£66.00 per hour
	Sample analysis per sample taken	£59.00 per hour plus laboratory charges	£63.00 per hour plus laboratory	£66.00 per hour plus laboratory
	Sample taken during check monitoring	£59.00 per hour plus laboratory charges	£63.00 per hour plus laboratory	£66.00 per hour plus laboratory
	Sample taken during audit monitoring	£59.00 per hour plus laboratory charges	£63.00 per hour plus laboratory	£66.00 per hour plus laboratory

LICENSING ACT 2003 - FEES SET BY CENTRAL GOVERNMENT - SAME FOR ALL DISTRICT COUNCILS

Temporary Event Notices		
Fee to serve a Temporary Event Notice (TEN)		£21.00
Copy of a TEN (if lost or stolen)		£10.50
Personal licences		
Application for the grant of a personal licence		£37.00
Fee for a replacement personal licence (if lost or stolen)		£10.50
Fee to notify a change of name or address on a personal licence		£10.50
Applications for new premises licences or club premises certificates		
Applications for the grant of a premises licence or club premises certificate		
Band A (NDRV 0 - 4300)		£100.00
Band B (NDRV 4301 - 33000)		£190.00
Band C (NDRV 33001 - 87000)		£315.00
Band D (NDRV 87001 - 125000)		£450.00
Band E (NDRV 125001 +)		£635.00
premises is used exclusively or primarily for the supply of alcohol for consumption on the premises)		
Band A (NDRV 0 - 4300)		£100.00
Band B (NDRV 4301 - 33000)		£190.00
Band C (NDRV 33001 - 87000)		£315.00
Band D (NDRV 87001 - 125000)		£900.00
Band E (NDRV 125001 +)		£1,905.00
Additional fees for grant of a premises licences (for large venues with capacities over 5000)		
5000 - 9999		£1,000.00
10000 - 14999		£2,000.00
15000 - 19999		£4,000.00
20000 - 29999		£8,000.00
30000 - 39999		£16,000.00
40000 - 49999		£24,000.00
50000 - 59999		£32,000.00
60000 - 69999		£40,000.00
70000 - 79999		£48,000.00
80000 - 89999		£56,000.00
Applications to vary premises licences and club premises certificates		
Applications to vary a premises licence or club premises certificate		
Band A (NDRV 0 - 4300)		£100.00
Band B (NDRV 4301 - 33000)		£190.00
Band C (NDRV 33001 - 87000)		£315.00
Band D (NDRV 87001 - 125000)		£450.00
Band E (NDRV 125001 +)		£635.00
Applications to vary a premises licence (where the premises is used exclusively or primarily for the supply of alcohol for consumption on the premises)		
Band A (NDRV 0 - 4300)		£100.00
Band B (NDRV 4301 - 33000)		£190.00
Band C (NDRV 33001 - 87000)		£315.00
Band D (NDRV 87001 - 125000)		£900.00
Band E (NDRV 125001 +)		£1,905.00
Application for a minor variation of a premises licence or club premises certificate		£89.00

Annual maintenance fees		
	Annual premises licence or club premises certificate fee	
	Band A (NDRV 0 - 4300)	£70.00
	Band B (NDRV 4301 - 33000)	£180.00
	Band C (NDRV 33001 - 87000)	£295.00
	Band D (NDRV 87001 - 125000)	£320.00
	Band E (NDRV 125001+)	£350.00
	Annual premises licence (where the premises is used exclusively or primarily for the supply of alcohol for consumption on the premises)	
	Band A (NDRV 0 - 4300)	£70.00
	Band B (NDRV 4301 - 33000)	£180.00
	Band C (NDRV 33001 - 87000)	£295.00
	Band D (NDRV 87001 - 125000)	£640.00
	Band E (NDRV 125001+)	£1,050.00
	Additional annual fees premises licences (for large venues with capacities over 5000)	
	5000 - 9999	£500.00
	10000 - 14999	£1,000.00
	15000 - 19999	£2,000.00
	20000 - 29999	£4,000.00
	30000 - 39999	£8,000.00
	40000 - 49999	£12,000.00
	50000 - 59999	£16,000.00
	60000 - 69999	£20,000.00
	70000 - 79999	£24,000.00
	80000 - 89999	£28,000.00
Other applications and notifications		
	Application to transfer a premises licence	£23.00
	Application to vary a premises licence to nominate a premises supervisor	£23.00
	Fee to change name or address of the holder of a premises licence	£10.50
	Fee to change the name or address of a designated premises supervisor on a premises licence	£10.50
	Fee for a replacement premises licence or club premises certificate (if lost or stolen)	£10.50
	Fee to notify licensing authority of a property interest in a premises licence	£21.00
	Notification of change or club name or alteration to club rules	£10.50
	Notification of change of registered address of club	£10.50
	Interim authority notice following death, incapacity or insolvency of licence holder	£23.00
	Application for grant of a provisional statement	£315.00
Pavement Licenses		
	Every 6 months	£100.00

LICENSING FEES AND CHARGES	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE			
Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence	£260.40	£278.60	£289.70
Private Hire Vehicle Licence	£241.50	£258.40	£268.70
Temporary Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence	£195.30	£209.00	£217.40
Temporary Private Hire Vehicle Licence	£181.10	£193.80	£201.60
Private Hire Operator Licence (5 year)	£1,180.20	£1,262.80	£1,313.30
Hackney Carriage / Private Hire Driver Licence (3 year)	£244.70	£261.80	£272.30
Knowledge Test	£24.20	£25.90	£26.90
Replacement vehicle licence plate	£24.20	£25.90	£26.90
Replacement driver's licence	£22.10	£23.60	£24.50
Transfer of ownership of a licensed vehicle	£39.90	£42.70	£44.40
Criminal Record (DBS) Check	£58.80	£62.90	£65.40
ANIMAL ACTIVITY LICENCES			
Hiring out horses, breeding of dogs, providing or arranging the provision of boarding for cats or dogs and selling			
Application fee	£329.00	£355.00	£365.70
Licence fee (1 year)	£184.00	£199.00	£205.00
Licence fee (2 years)	£364.00	£393.00	£404.80
Licence fee (3 years)	£546.00	£590.00	£607.70
Application to vary a licence	£240.00	£259.00	£266.80
Veterinary fees (if applicable)	Recovered at cost		
Local authority inspection (on request of licence holder)	£164.00	£177.00	£182.30
Keeping or training animals for exhibition (only)			
Application fee	£219.00	£237.00	£244.10
Licence fee (3 years)	£300.00	£324.00	£333.70
Application to vary a licence	£158.00	£170.00	£175.10
Veterinary fees (if applicable)	Recovered at cost		
Local authority inspection (on request of licence holder)	£163.00	£177.00	£182.30
ACUPUNCTURE, COSMETIC PIERCING, SEMI-PERMANENT SKIN COLOURING, TATTOOING, ELECTROLYSIS			
Fee to register a premises	£142.80	£152.80	£158.90
Fee to register a practitioner	£93.50	£100.00	£104.00
GAMBLING ACT 2005 (inc. SMALL LOTTERIES)			
Small society lotteries			
Fee to register a small society lottery	£40.00	£40.00	£40.00
Small society lottery annual maintenance fee	£20.00	£20.00	£20.00
Application for the grant of a premises licence			
Betting (excluding tracks)	£1,849.10	£1,978.50	£2,057.60
Betting Tracks	£1,542.50	£1,650.50	£1,716.50
Bingo	£2,216.60	£2,371.80	£2,466.70
Adult Gaming Centres	£1,266.30	£1,354.90	£1,409.10
Family Entertainment Centres	£1,266.30	£1,354.90	£1,409.10

Premises licence annual fees			
Betting (excluding tracks)	£381.20	£407.90	£424.20
Betting Tracks	£634.20	£678.60	£705.70
Bingo	£634.20	£678.60	£705.70
Adult Gaming Centres	£634.20	£678.60	£705.70
Family Entertainment Centres	£476.70	£510.10	£530.50
Application to vary a premises licence			
Betting (excluding tracks)	£951.30	£1,017.90	£1,058.60
Betting Tracks	£791.70	£847.10	£881.00
Bingo	£1,112.00	£1,189.80	£1,237.40
Adult Gaming Centres	£951.30	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
Family Entertainment Centres	£735.00	£786.50	£818.00
Application to transfer a premises licence			
Betting (excluding tracks)	£758.10	£811.20	£843.60
Betting Tracks	£601.70	£643.80	£669.60
Bingo	£759.20	£812.30	£844.80
Adult Gaming Centres	£758.10	£811.20	£843.60
Family Entertainment Centres	£601.70	£643.80	£669.60
Application for a provisional statement			
Betting (excluding tracks)	£1,849.10	£1,978.50	£2,057.60
Betting Tracks	£1,542.50	£1,650.50	£1,716.50
Bingo	£2,216.60	£2,371.80	£2,466.70
Adult Gaming Centres	£1,266.30	£1,354.90	£1,409.10
Family Entertainment Centres	£1,266.30	£1,354.90	£1,409.10
Application for the grant of a premises licence (provisional statement holders)			
Betting (excluding tracks)	No fee set	£833.60	£866.90
Betting Tracks	No fee set	£833.60	£866.90
Bingo	No fee set	£837.10	£870.60
Adult Gaming Centres	No fee set	£837.10	£870.60
Family Entertainment Centres	No fee set	£696.60	£724.50
Application for reinstatement of a premises licence			
Betting (excluding tracks)	£739.20	£790.90	£822.50
Betting Tracks	£590.10	£631.40	£656.70
Bingo	£739.20	£790.90	£822.50
Adult Gaming Centres	£739.20	£790.90	£822.50
Family Entertainment Centres	£590.10	£631.40	£656.70
Premises licence fees (miscellaneous)			
Copy of a premises licence (all types)	£25.00	£25.00	£25.00
Notification of a change in respect of a premises licence (all types)	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00
Licensed Premises Gaming Machine Permits			
Application for grant of a permit	£150.00	£150.00	£150.00
Application for variation of a permit	£100.00	£100.00	£100.00
Application for the transfer of a permit	£25.00	£25.00	£25.00
Annual permit fee	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00
Change of name shown on a permit	£25.00	£25.00	£25.00
Request for a copy of a permit	£15.00	£15.00	£15.00

Licensed Premises Gaming Machines (Automatic)			
Fee to serve notification	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00
Club Gaming Permits			
Application for grant of a permit	£200.00	£200.00	£200.00
Application for grant of a permit (Club premises certificate holders)	£100.00	£100.00	£100.00
Application for variation of a permit	£100.00	£100.00	£100.00
Application for renewal of a permit	£200.00	£200.00	£200.00
Application for renewal of a permit (club premises certificate holders)	£100.00	£100.00	£100.00
Annual permit fee	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00
Request for a copy of a permit	£15.00	£15.00	£15.00
Club Machine Permits			
Application for grant of a permit	£200.00	£200.00	£200.00
Application for grant of a permit (Club premises certificate holders)	£100.00	£100.00	£100.00
Application for variation of a permit	£100.00	£100.00	£100.00
Application for renewal of a permit	£200.00	£200.00	£200.00
Application for renewal of a permit (club premises certificate holders)	£100.00	£100.00	£100.00
Annual permit fee	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00
Request for a copy of a permit	£15.00	£15.00	£15.00
Family Entertainment Centre Gaming Machine Permit			
Application for grant of a permit	£300.00	£300.00	£300.00
Application for renewal of a permit	£300.00	£300.00	£300.00
Change of name shown on a permit	£25.00	£25.00	£25.00
Request for a copy of a permit	£15.00	£15.00	£15.00
Prize Gaming Permits			
Application for grant of a permit	£300.00	£300.00	£300.00
Application for renewal of a permit	£300.00	£300.00	£300.00
Change of name shown on a permit	£25.00	£25.00	£25.00
Request for a copy of a permit	£15.00	£15.00	£15.00
Temporary Use Notices			
Fee to serve a Temporary Use Notice	£287.00	£307.10	£319.40
Request for a copy of a Temporary Use Notice	£25.00	£25.00	£25.00
STREET TRADING			
Annual street trading consent - food - initial	£1,519.40	£1,625.80	£1,690.80
Annual street trading consent - food - renewal	£1,393.40	£1,490.90	£1,550.50
Annual street trading consent - non-food - initial	£1,267.40	£1,356.10	£1,410.30
Annual street trading consent - non-food - renewal	£1,140.30	£1,220.10	£1,268.90
SCRAP METAL DEALERS LICENCES			
Application for a new site licence	£296.00	£311.00	£320.30
Fee per additional site	£153.00	£160.00	£164.80
Application for renewal of a site licence	£245.00	£257.00	£264.70
Fee per additional site	£153.00	£170.00	£175.10
Application for a new collectors licence	£148.00	£155.00	£159.70
Application for renewal of a collectors licence	£97.00	£102.00	£105.10
Variation of a licence	£67.00	£70.00	£72.10
Request for a copy of a licence (if lost or stolen)	£26.00	£27.00	£27.80

ZOO LICENCES			
Application for grant or renewal of a licence	£250.00	£267.50	£278.20
Secretary of state inspector and veterinary fees	Recovered at cost		
DANGEROUS WILD ANIMALS (DWA)			
Application for grant or renewal of a licence	£235.00	£251.50	£261.60
Veterinary inspection fees	Recovered at cost		
SEX ESTABLISHMENTS			
Application for grant or renewal of a licence	£1,020.00	£1,091.40	£1,135.10
Application for transfer of licence	£500.00	£535.00	£556.40
Application for variation of licence	£1,020.00	£1,091.40	£1,135.10
PAVEMENT LICENCES			
Application for a pavement licence (6 months licence)	£100.00	£100.00	£0.00
Application for a new pavement licence - 2 years			£500.00
Application for a renewal pavement licence - 2 years			£350.00
STREET AMENITY PERMISSIONS			
Application for grant of a new permission	£200.00	£214.00	Ceased - £
Application for renewal of a permission	£55.00	£58.90	Ceased - £
HYPNOTISM			
Application for authorisation	£50.00	£53.50	£55.60

Appendix D – Reserves Position

	Balance as at 31 March 2022 £000	Transfers In 2022/23 £000	Transfers Out 2022/23 £000	Balance as at 31 March 2023 £000	Transfers In 2023/24 £000	Transfers Out 2023/24 £000	Balance as at 31 March 2024 £000	Prior Yr Bud Prior year Changes	Transfers In 2024/25 £000	Transfers Out 2024/25 £000	Balance as at 31 March 2024 £000	Transfers In 2025/26 £000	Transfers Out 2025/26 £000	Balance as at 31 March 2024 £000	Transfers In 2026/27 £000	Transfers Out 2026/27 £000	Balance as at 31 March 2024 £000	Transfers In 2027/28 £000	Transfers Out 2027/28 £000	Balance as at 31 March 2024 £000
General Fund Balances	14,235	7,881	(9,012)	13,104	1,747	(1,330)	13,521	1,200		(344)	14,377		(167)	14,210		(1,030)	13,180		(393)	12,781
General Fund:																				
Building Control Other	7	0	0	7	0	0	7	0	0	0	7	0	0	7	0	0	7	0	0	7
Building Control Partnerships	82	0	0	82	0	0	82	0	0	0	82	0	0	82	0	0	82	0	0	82
Community Services	271	50	0	321	0	(125)	196	0	0	0	196	0	0	196	0	0	196	0	0	196
Economic Regeneration	1,348	0	0	1,348	50	0	1,398	(600)	0	0	798	0	0	798	0	0	798	0	0	798
Election Services	51	34	0	85	0	0	85	0	0	0	85	0	0	85	0	0	85	0	0	85
Environmental Services	27	0	0	27	0	0	27	0	0	0	27	0	0	27	0	0	27	0	0	27
Financial Services	4,705	0	0	4,705	430	(500)	4,635	(750)	0	0	3,885	0	(334)	3,551	0	0	3,551	0	0	3,551
HR Backlog Funding								75	0	0	75	0	0	75	0	0	75	0	0	75
ICT Backlog Funding								75	0	0	75	0	0	75	0	0	75	0	0	75
Housing Schemes	864	0	0	864	0	0	864	0	0	0	864	0	0	864	0	0	864	0	0	864
ICT Systems	197	0	0	197	0	0	197	0	0	0	197	0	0	197	0	0	197	0	0	197
Leisure/Community Safety	151	0	(36)	115	0	0	115	0	0	0	115	0	0	115	0	0	115	0	0	115
Local Neighbourhood Partnerships	16	0	0	16	0	0	16	0	0	0	16	0	0	16	0	0	16	0	0	16
Other	67	0	0	67	0	0	67	0	0	0	67	0	0	67	0	0	67	0	0	67
Planning & Regeneration	133	330	0	463	0	0	463	0	0	0	463	0	0	463	0	0	463	0	0	463
Regulatory Services (Partner Share)	73	12	0	85	0	0	85	0	0	0	85	0	0	85	0	0	85	0	0	85
Replacement Reserve (Inc. Recycli)	0	0		0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shared Services (Severance Costs)	311	0	0	311	0	0	311	0	0	0	311	0	0	311	0	0	311	0	0	311
Covid-19 (General Covid Grant)	766	0	0	766	0	0	766	0	0	0	766	0	0	766	0	0	766	0	0	766
Covid-19 (Collection Fund)	4,789	0	(3,185)	1,604	0	0	1,604	0	0	0	1,604	0	0	1,604	0	0	1,604	0	0	1,604
Utilities				0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ward Budgets				0			0	0	234	(78)	156	0	(78)	78		(78)	0			0
Council Tax Hardship Fund	0	79	0	79	0	0	79	0	0	0	79	0	0	79	0	0	79	0	0	79
Property Services Review											0	100	(100)	0			0			0
EPR Funding Allocation											0	1,004	(100)	904		(450)	454		(450)	4
Artrix Holding Trust	0	17	0	17	0	0	17	0	0	0	17	0	0	17	0	0	17	0	0	17
Total General Fund	13,858	522	(3,221)	11,159	480	(625)	11,014	(1,200)	234	(78)	9,970	1,104	(612)	10,462	0	(528)	9,934	0	(450)	9,484

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Appendix E – Capital Programme

Cap Proj	Description	Department	Funding detail	Carried Fwd to 24/5	2024/25 Budget £	2024/25 Total £	Spend 24/5	2025/26 Total £	2026/27 Total £	2027/28 Total £	2028/29 Total £	2029/30 Total £	Council 24/25 £	Council 25/26 £	Council 26/27 £	Council 27/28 £	Council 28/29 £	Council 29/30 £	3rd Party 24/25 £	3rd Party 25/26 £	3rd Party 26/27 £	3rd Party 27/28 £	3rd Party 28/29 £	3rd Party 29/30 £	
	Large Schemes																								
	Levelling Up Fund Fund																								
	- Government Funded	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Grant Funding					0	0	0	0	0													
200072	Market Hall (LUF)	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure	Levelling Up Fund	12,337,104	6,109,104	1,921,799	9,228,000	0	0	0	0	0		3,000,000						6,109,104	6,228,000				
200073	Ef - Fire Station	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure	Levelling Up Fund	1,209,674	1,209,674	77,300	0	0	0	0	0	0									1,209,674				
	- Council Funded		Borrowing					0	0	0	0	0													
	UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Capital Element	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Grant Funding					0	0	0	0	0													
	- Revenue Element	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Grant Funding					0	0	0	0	0													
	- Remainder (to be allocated)	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Grant Funding	627,001	1,784,215	2,411,216	918,000	0	0	0	0	0													
								0	0	0	0	0													
								0	0	0	0	0													
200006	Schemes Agreed to Continue Burcot Lane	Financial & Customer Services	Public works loan board and grant homes england	0	0	0	-915,914	0	0	0	0	0		0	0										
200007	CCTV	Community & Housing GF Services	Capital Receipts/Borrowi		0	0		0	0	0	0	0		0	0										
200008	Funding for DFGs	Community & Housing GF Services	Grant income WCC	13,432	1,130,316	1,143,748	567,033	1,285,847	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000											800,000	800,000	
200009	Home Repairs Assistance	Community & Housing GF Services	Long Term Debtors	115,602	50,000	165,602		50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000		50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000							
200010	Energy Efficiency Installation	Community & Housing GF Services	Capital Receipts/Borrowi	102,190	110,000	212,190		0	0	0	0	0		110,000	0										
200016	New Finance Enterprise system	Financial & Customer Services	Capital Receipts		20,000	20,000		20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000		20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000							
200019	Fleet Replacemnet new line			0	2,180,000	2,180,000	13,860	1,265,000	820,000	0	0	0		2,180,000	1,265,000	820,000	0	0							
200022	Replacement Parking machines and Upkeep of Sites	Environmental Services	Capital Receipts/Borrowi	12,745	125,000	137,745	95,003	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000		125,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000							
200030	Wheelie Bin Purchase	Environmental Services	Capital Receipts/Borrowi	0	60,000	60,000	88,272	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000		60,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000							

Cap Proj	Description	Department	Funding detail	Carried Fwd to 24/5	2024/25 Budget £	2024/25 Total £	Spend 24/5	2025/26 Total £	2026/27 Total £	2027/28 Total £	2028/29 Total £	2029/30 Total £	Council 24/25 £	Council 25/26 £	Council 26/27 £	Council 27/28 £	Council 28/29 £	Council 29/30 £	3rd Party 24/25 £	3rd Party 25/26 £	3rd Party 26/27 £	3rd Party 27/28 £	3rd Party 28/29 £	3rd Party 29/30 £	
New	Buildings	Legal and Property	Borrowing	100,000	100,000	200,000	780	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000													
200045	Greener Homes	Community & Housing GF Services	Grants & Contributions	0	0	0	6,125	0	0	0	0	0	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000							
200026	Rubery Redevelopment works					0	821	0	0	0	0	0								0	0				
200082	New Digital Service	Community & Housing GF Services	Borrowing	33,668	0	33,668		0	0	0	0	0	0	0											
200033	Bus Shelters	Environmental Services	Borrowing	18,000	18,000	36,000	19,180	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000							
200069	Cisco Network Update	Business transformation & Organisational Development	Borrowing	0	0	0		34,877	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000													
200070	Server Replacement Est(Exact known Q2 2022)	Business transformation & Organisational	Borrowing	-7,951	177,500	169,549		18,500	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	0	34,877	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000							
200071	Laptop Refresh	Business transformation & Organisational	Borrowing	13,458	150,000	163,458	18,152	5,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	177,500	18,500	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000							
200075	Sanders Park	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	S106	0	0	0	8,550	0	0	0	0	0	150,000	5,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000							
	Fleet Replacement Costs			9,400	0	9,400		15,000	0	0	0	0		15,000											
	Wheely Bin Increases			85,000	0	85,000		0	0	0	0	0													
	Wild Flower Machinery			62,000	0	62,000		0	0	0	0	0													
2000105	Initial Play Audit Requirements			87,000	364,000	451,000		0	0	0	0	0	364,000												
	Updated Play Audit Requirements (Dec 24)							166,242	159,841	226,459	67,531	155,749		166,242	159,841	226,459	67,531	155,749							
	Movement of ICT Cyber Capital Works Forward			50,000	-50,000	0		0	0	0	0	0	-50,000												
	New ongoing Cyber security budget				25,000	25,000		25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000							
	Play Area, PDS and Sport improvements at Lickey End Recreation Ground in accordance with the S106 Agreement	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	S106 19/0137/FUL	22,626	37,956	60,582	30,000	0	0	0	0	0													

Cap Proj	Description	Department	Funding detail	Carried Fwd to 24/5	2024/25 Budget £	2024/25 Total £	Spend 24/5	2025/26 Total £	2026/27 Total £	2027/28 Total £	2028/29 Total £	2029/30 Total £	Council	Council	Council	Council	Council	Council	3rd Party	3rd Party	3rd Party	3rd Party	3rd Party	3rd Party	3rd Party
													24/25 £	25/26 £	26/27 £	27/28 £	28/29 £	29/30 £	24/25 £	25/26 £	26/27 £	27/28 £	28/29 £	29/30 £	
	Food Waste Collection - fund for Vechgicles and containers							902,511	0	0	0	0													
	Replacement Wheeled Bins							2,200,000	0	0	0	0								902,511					
	Parkside - Requirement for a firewall							9,750	0	0	0	0													
	Laptops for new Starters							25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	0													
	Salary Capitalisation							750,000	750,000	750,000	750,000	750,000													
	Arrix - Landlord Obligations				20,000	20,000	17,587	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000													
	Total				14,890,949	6,376,987	15,039,936	1,993,474	17,351,727	3,222,841	2,469,459	2,310,531	3,424,500	8,017,369	2,422,841	1,669,459	1,510,531	1,573,749		10,271,265	9,334,358	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000

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Appendix F – Capital Strategy

Introduction

- 1.1 This capital strategy report gives a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. It has been written in an accessible style to enhance members’ understanding of these sometimes technical areas.
- 1.2 Decisions made this year on capital and treasury management will have financial consequences for the Authority for many years into the future. They are therefore subject to both a national regulatory framework and to local policy framework, summarised in this report.

Capital Expenditure and Financing

- 1.3 Capital expenditure is where the Authority spends money on assets, such as property or vehicles, that will be used for more than one year. In local government this includes spending on assets owned by other bodies, and loans and grants to other bodies enabling them to buy assets.
- 1.4 In 2025/26, the Authority is planning capital expenditure of £2.7m as summarised below:

Table 1: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Expenditure in £ millions

	2023/24 actual	2024/25 forecast	2025/26 budget *	2026/27 budget	2027/28 budget
General Fund services	3.4	4.2	2.7	2.3	1.5
Regeneration	0.5	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
TOTAL	3.9	6.1	2.7	2.3	1.5

The Council is still to finalise work required for the adoption of IFRS16 linking to the accounting for leases which must be implemented by the 2025/26 financial year.

1.5 The main General Fund capital projects are the three Levelling Up Projects which amount to £16m of expenditure and include Public Realm Improvements £1.0m, The New Market Hall Centre amounts to £10.3m, and clearance of the Windsor Street site ready for redevelopment. The Council received approval from the Ministry of Housing, Local Government and Communities on the 30th January 2025 that delivery of these projects could be extended until the 31st March 2026. Both the Windsor Street and Public Realm projects were completed by the end of the 2024/5 financial year. The Burcot housing development was completed in early 2024 (£10.0m). Following a change in the Prudential Code, the Authority no longer incurs capital expenditure on investments.

1.6 **Governance:** Service managers bid annually in January to include projects in the Authority’s capital programme. Bids are collated by corporate finance who calculate the financing cost (which can be nil if the project is fully externally financed). The Audit Standards and Governance Committee and then the Cabinet appraises all bids based on a comparison of strategic priorities against financing costs and makes recommendations to Council. The final capital programme is then presented to Cabinet in February and to Council in February each year.

➤ For full details of the Authority’s capital programme, including the project appraisals undertaken, see Tranche 2 of the 2025/26 Medium Term Financial Plan.

1.7 All capital expenditure must be financed, either from external sources (government grants and other contributions), the Authority’s own resources (revenue, reserves and capital receipts) or debt (borrowing, leasing and Private Finance Initiative). The planned financing of the above expenditure is as follows:

Table 2: Capital financing in £ millions

	2023/24 actual	2024/25 forecast	2025/26 budget *	2026/27 budget	2027/28 budget
External sources	0.9	2.7	0.8	0.8	0.8
Own Resources	3.0	3.4	1.9	1.5	0.7

Debt	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
TOTAL	3.9	6.1	2.7	2.3	1.5

- 1.8 Debt is only a temporary source of finance, since loans and leases must be repaid, and this is therefore replaced over time by other financing, usually from revenue which is known as minimum revenue provision (MRP). Alternatively, proceeds from selling capital assets (known as capital receipts) may be used to replace debt finance. Planned [MRP / repayments] and use of capital receipts are as follows:

Table 3: Replacement of prior years' debt finance in £ millions

	2023/24 actual	2024/25 forecast	2025/26 budget *	2026/27 budget	2027/28 budget
Minimum revenue provision	0.9	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.4
Capital Receipts	0.9	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

- The Authority's full minimum revenue provision statement is available within the body of this report.

- 1.9 The Authority's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP and capital receipts used to replace debt. The CFR is expected to increase by £2.7m during 2025/26. Based on the above figures for expenditure and financing, the Authority's estimated CFR is as follows:

Table 4: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Financing Requirement in £ millions

	31.3.2024 actual	31.3.2025 forecast	31.3.2026 budget	31.3.2027 budget	31.3.2028 budget
General Fund & Regeneration	38.6	42.7	45.4	47.7	49.2
TOTAL CFR	38.6	42.7	45.4	47.7	49.2

1.10 **Asset management:** To ensure that capital assets continue to be of long-term use, the Authority has an asset management strategy in place. Within this strategy, individual properties and associated land will be further evaluated to determine:

- The operational necessity and benefit.
- Projected costs of ensuring all elements of the buildings continue to meet legislative requirements and performance standards.
- Planned and cyclical maintenance costs for elements nearing the end of their 'life' expectancy, ensuring service provision is maintained without unnecessary interruption. Costs associated with meeting future EPC rating minimum requirements.
- Rent levels (and net costs for each building) and revised leases.
- Alternative or rationalised portfolio or joint enterprises for service delivery.

By evaluation of all factors cited above, informed decisions can be made to determine which assets are:

- No longer cost effective to run, where outlay exceeds earning potential
- No longer viable for effective service delivery
- Surplus to requirements

Asset considerations will be presented to Cabinet on a half yearly basis for approval for disposal, unless there is an urgent requirement for a decision.

1.11 **Asset disposals:** When a capital asset is no longer needed, it may be sold so that the proceeds, known as capital receipts, can be spent on new assets or to repay debt. The Authority is currently also permitted to spend capital receipts “flexibly” on service transformation projects until 2025/26 although nothing is presently planned. Repayments of capital grants, loans and investments also generate capital receipts. The Authority plans to receive £0m of capital receipts in the coming financial year as follows:

Table 5: Capital receipts receivable in £ millions

	2023/24 actual	2024/25 forecast	2025/26 budget *	2026/27 budget	2027/28 budget
Asset sales	0.9	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Loans etc repaid	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
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Treasury Management

- 1.12 Treasury management is concerned with keeping sufficient but not excessive cash available to meet the Authority's spending needs, while managing the risks involved. Surplus cash is invested until required, while a shortage of cash will be met by borrowing, to avoid excessive credit balances or overdrafts in the bank current account. The Authority is typically cash rich in the short-term as revenue income is received before it is spent, but cash poor in the long-term as capital expenditure is incurred before being financed. The revenue cash surpluses are offset against capital cash shortfalls to reduce overall borrowing.
- 1.13 Due to decisions taken in the past, the Authority currently has no external long term (over 1 year) borrowing and £14.5m treasury investments at an average rate of 4.9%.
- 1.14 **Borrowing strategy:** The Authority's main objectives when borrowing is to achieve a low but certain cost of finance while retaining flexibility should plans change in future. These objectives are often conflicting, and the Authority therefore seeks to strike a balance between cheaper short-term loans and long-term fixed rate loans where the future cost is known but higher.
- 1.15 The Authority does not borrow to invest for the primary purpose of financial return and therefore retains full access to the Public Works Loans Board.
- 1.16 Projected levels of the Authority's total outstanding debt (which comprises borrowing, PFI liabilities, leases and transferred debt) are shown below, compared with the capital financing requirement (see above).

Table 6: Prudential Indicator: Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement in £ millions

	31.3.2024 actual	31.3.2025 forecast	31.3.2026 budget	31.3.2027 budget	31.3.2028 budget
General Fund (incl. PFI & leases)	3.9	6.1	2.7	2.3	1.5

Capital Financing Requirement	38.6	42.7	45.4	47.7	49.2
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- 1.17 Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, except in the short-term. As can be seen from table 6, the Authority expects to comply with this in the medium term.
- 1.18 **Liability benchmark:** To compare the Authority’s actual borrowing against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark has been calculated showing the lowest risk level of borrowing. This assumes that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level of £2m at each year-end. This benchmark is currently £5.69m and is not forecast to rise over the next three years.

Table 7: Borrowing and the Liability Benchmark in £ millions

	31.3.2024 actual	31.3.2025 forecast	31.3.2026 budget	31.3.2027 budget	31.3.2028 budget
Forecast Outstanding borrowing - GF	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Liability benchmark	5.69	5.69	5.69	5.69	5.69

- 1.19 The table shows that the Authority expects to remain borrowed below its liability benchmark. This is because cash outflows to date have been below the assumptions made when the loans were borrowed.
- 1.20 **Affordable borrowing limit:** The Authority is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the authorised limit for external debt) each year. In line with statutory guidance, a lower “operational boundary” is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

Table 8: Prudential Indicators: Authorised limit and operational boundary for external debt in £m

	2024/25 limit £m	2025/26 limit £m	2026/27 limit £m	2027/28 limit £m

Authorised limit – borrowing	60	60	60	60
Authorised limit – PFI and leases	1	1	1	1
Authorised limit – total external debt	61	61	61	61
Operational boundary – borrowing	55	55	55	55
Operational boundary – PFI and leases	1	1	1	1
Operational boundary – total external debt	56	56	56	56

- 1.21 **Treasury investment strategy:** Treasury investments arise from receiving cash before it is paid out again. Investments made for service reasons or for pure financial gain are not generally considered to be part of treasury management.
- 1.22 The Authority’s policy on treasury investments is to prioritise security and liquidity over yield, that is to focus on minimising risk rather than maximising returns. Cash that is likely to be spent in the near term is invested securely, for example with the government, other local authorities or selected high-quality banks, to minimise the risk of loss. Money that will be held for longer terms is invested more widely, including in bonds, shares and property, to balance the risk of loss against the risk of receiving returns below inflation. Both near-term and longer-term investments may be held in pooled funds, where an external fund manager makes decisions on which particular investments to buy and the Authority may request its money back at short notice.

Table 9: Treasury management investments in £millions

	2023/24 actual	2024/25 forecast	2025/26 budget *	2026/27 budget	2027/28 budget
Near-term investments	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5
Long-term investments	0	0	0	0	0

TOTAL	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5
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➤ Further details on treasury investments are in the Treasury Management Strategy part of this appendix.

- 1.23 **Risk management:** The effective management and control of risk are prime objectives of the Authority’s treasury management activities. The treasury management strategy therefore sets out various indicators and limits to constrain the risk of unexpected losses and details the extent to which financial derivatives may be used to manage treasury risks.
- The treasury management prudential indicators are in the treasury management strategy which are part of these appendices.
- 1.24 **Governance:** Decisions on treasury management investment and borrowing are made daily and are therefore delegated to the Director of Finance and staff, who must act in line with the treasury management strategy approved by Council. Quarterly reports on treasury management activity are presented to Cabinet. The Audit, Standards and Governance Committee is responsible for scrutinising treasury management decisions.

Investments for Service Purposes

- 1.25 The Authority makes investments to assist local public services, including making loans to local service providers, local small businesses to promote economic growth, and the Authority’s subsidiaries that provide services to stakeholders. Total investments for service purposes are currently valued at £0m.
- 1.26 **Risk management:** In light of the public service objective, the Authority is willing to take more risk than with treasury investments, however it still plans for such investments to break even after all costs. A limit of £2.5m is placed on total investments for service purposes to ensure that plausible losses could be absorbed in budgets or reserves without unmanageable detriment to local services.
- 1.27 **Governance:** Decisions on service investments are made by the relevant service manager in consultation with the Director of Finance and must meet the criteria and limits laid down in the investment strategy. Most loans and shares are capital

expenditure and purchases will therefore also be approved as part of the capital programme. The relevant service director and the Director of Finance are responsible for ensuring that adequate due diligence is carried out before investment is made.

Further details on service investments are in the Treasury Management Strategy.

Liabilities

- 1.28 The Authority is committed to making future payments to cover its pension fund deficit (which is in surplus as per the 2022 Triennial revaluation and the backlog will be cleared in 2037). It has also set aside £1.0m for Business Rates appeals.
- 1.29 **Governance:** Decisions on incurring new discretionary liabilities are taken by Heads of Service in consultation with the Director of Finance. The risk of liabilities crystallising and requiring payment is monitored by the corporate finance team and reported biannually to Cabinet. New liabilities exceeding £0.5m are reported to full council for approval/notification as appropriate.

Revenue Budget Implications

- 1.30 Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and MRP are charged to revenue. The net annual charge is known as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e. the amount funded from Council Tax, business rates and general government grants.

Table 10: Prudential Indicator: Proportion of financing costs to net revenue stream

	2023/24 actual	2024/25 forecast	2025/26 budget *	2026/27 budget	2027/28 budget
Financing costs (£m)	0.9	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.4

Proportion of net revenue stream	11.40%	11.50%	11.50%	11.50%	11.60%
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1.31 **Sustainability:** Due to the very long-term nature of capital expenditure and financing, the revenue budget implications of expenditure incurred in the next few years will extend for up to 50 years into the future. The Director of Finance is satisfied that the proposed capital programme is prudent, affordable and sustainable because of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) forecasts which show that the Council is financially sustainable over that period.

Knowledge and Skills

1.32 The Authority employs professionally qualified and experienced staff in senior positions with responsibility for making capital expenditure, borrowing and investment decisions. For example, the Director of Finance and Head of Service are qualified accountants with significant experience. The Authority pays for junior staff to study towards relevant professional qualifications including CIPFA and AAT.

1.33 Where Authority staff do not have the knowledge and skills required, use is made of external advisers and consultants that are specialists in their field. The Authority currently employs Arlingclose Limited as treasury management advisers and Bruton Knowles as property consultants. This approach is more cost effective than employing such staff directly and ensures that the Authority has access to knowledge and skills commensurate with its risk appetite.

➤ Further details on staff training can be found in the HR Employee Development section of the website.

Appendix G – Treasury Management Strategy

Introduction

- 2.1 Treasury management is the management of the Authority’s cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks. The Authority has invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risk are therefore central to the Authority’s prudent financial management.
- 2.2 Treasury risk management at the Authority is conducted within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy’s *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2021 Edition* (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Authority to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year. This report fulfils the Authority’s legal obligation under the *Local Government Act 2003* to have regard to the CIPFA Code.
- 2.3 Investments held for service purposes or for commercial profit are considered in a different report, the Investment Strategy.

External Context

Economic background:

- 2.4 The impact on the UK from the government’s Autumn Budget, slower expected interest rate cuts, a short-term boost to but modestly weaker economic growth over the medium term, together with the impact from President-elect Trump’s second term in office and uncertainties around US domestic and foreign policy, will be major influences on the Authority’s treasury management strategy for 2025/26.
- 2.5 The Bank of England’s (BoE) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) held Bank Rate at 4.75% at its December 2024 meeting, having reduced it to that level in November and following a previous 25bp cut from the 5.25% peak at the August MPC meeting. At the December meeting, six Committee members voted to maintain Bank Rate at 4.75% while three members preferred to reduce it to 4.50%.
- 2.6 The November quarterly Monetary Policy Report (MPR) expected Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth to pick up to around 1.75% (four-quarter GDP) in the early period of the BoE’s forecast horizon before falling back. The impact from the Budget pushes GDP higher in 2025 than was expected in the previous MPR, before becoming weaker. Current GDP growth was shown to be zero (0.0%) between July and September 2024 and 0.4% between April and June 2024, a further downward revision from the 0.5% rate previously reported by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).
- 2.7 ONS figures reported the annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation rate at 2.6% in November 2024, up from 2.3% in the previous month and in line with expectations. Core CPI also rose, but by more than expected, to 3.6% against a forecast of 3.5% and 3.3% in the previous month. The outlook for CPI inflation in the November MPR showed it rising above the MPC’s 2% target from 2024 into 2025 and reaching around 2.75% by the middle of calendar 2025. This represents a modest near-

term increase due to the ongoing impacts from higher interest rates, the Autumn Budget, and a projected margin of economic slack. Over the medium-term, once these pressures ease, inflation is expected to stabilise around the 2% target.

- 2.8 The labour market appears to be easing slowly, but the data still require treating with some caution. The latest figures reported the unemployment rate rose to 4.3% in the three months to October 2024 and economic inactivity fell to 21.7%. Pay growth for the same period was reported at 5.2% for both regular earnings (excluding bonuses) and for total earnings. Looking ahead, the BoE MPR showed the unemployment rate is expected to increase modestly, rising to around 4.5%, the assumed medium-term equilibrium unemployment rate, by the end of the forecast horizon.
- 2.9 The US Federal Reserve has continued cutting interest rates, bringing down the Fed Funds Rate by 0.25% at its December 2024 monetary policy meeting to a range of 4.25%-4.50%, marking the third consecutive reduction. Further interest rate cuts are expected, but uncertainties around the potential inflationary impact of incoming President Trump's policies may muddy the waters in terms of the pace and magnitude of further rate reductions. Moreover, the US economy continues to expand at a decent pace, rising at an (upwardly revised) annual rate of 3.1% in the third quarter of 2024, and inflation remains elevated suggesting that monetary policy may need to remain more restrictive in the coming months than had previously been anticipated.
- 2.10 Euro zone inflation rose above the European Central Bank (ECB) 2% target in November 2024, hitting 2.2% as was widely expected and a further increase from 2% in the previous month. Despite the rise, the ECB continued its rate cutting cycle and reduced its three key policy rates by 0.25% in December. Inflation is expected to rise further in the short term, but then fall back towards the 2% target during 2025, with the ECB remaining committed to maintaining rates at levels consistent with bringing inflation to target, but without suggesting a specific path.

Credit outlook:

- 2.11 Credit Default Swap (CDS) prices have typically followed a general trend downwards during 2024, reflecting a relatively more stable financial period compared to the previous year. Improved credit conditions in 2024 have also led to greater convergence in CDS prices between ringfenced (retail) and non-ringfenced (investment) banking entities again.
- 2.12 Higher interest rates can lead to a deterioration in banks' asset quality through increased loan defaults and volatility in the value of capital investments. Fortunately, the rapid interest rate hikes during this monetary tightening cycle, while putting some strain on households and corporate borrowers, has not caused a rise in defaults, and banks have fared better than expected to date, buoyed by strong capital positions. Low unemployment and robust wage growth have also limited the number of problem loans, all of which are positive in terms of creditworthiness.
- 2.13 Moreover, while a potential easing of US financial regulations under a Donald Trump Presidency may aid their banks' competitiveness compared to institutions in the UK and other regions, it is unlikely there will be any material impact on the underlying creditworthiness of the institutions on the counterparty list maintained by Arlingclose, the authority's treasury adviser.

2.14 Overall, the institutions on our adviser Arlingclose's counterparty list remain well-capitalised and their counterparty advice on both recommended institutions and maximum duration remain under constant review and will continue to reflect economic conditions and the credit outlook.

Interest rate forecast (December 2024):

2.15 The Authority's treasury management adviser Arlingclose expects the Bank of England's MPC will continue reducing Bank Rate through 2025, taking it to around 3.75% by the end of the 2025/26 financial year. The effect from the Autumn Budget on economic growth and inflation has reduced previous expectations in terms of the pace of rate cuts as well as pushing up the rate at the end of the loosening cycle.

2.16 Arlingclose expects long-term gilt yields to remain broadly at current levels on average (amid continued volatility), but to end the forecast period modestly lower compared to now. Yields will continue remain relatively higher than in the past, due to quantitative tightening and significant bond supply. As ever, there will be short-term volatility due to economic and (geo)political uncertainty and events.

2.17 A more detailed economic and interest rate forecast provided by Arlingclose is in Appendix A.

2.18 For the purpose of setting the budget, it has been assumed that new treasury investments will be made at an average rate/yield of 4.6%, and that new long-term loans will be borrowed at an average rate of 5.2%.

Local Context

2.19 On 28th January 2025, the Authority had no borrowing and £14.5m of treasury investments. This is set out in further detail at **Appendix B**. Forecast changes in these sums are shown in the balance sheet analysis in table 1 below.

Table 1: Balance sheet summary and forecast

	31.3.24 Actual £m	31.3.25 Estimate £m	31.3.26 Forecast £m	31.3.27 Forecast £m	31.3.28 Forecast £m
Capital financing requirement	38.6	42.7	45.4	47.7	49.2
Less: External borrowing **	0	0	0	0	0
Internal borrowing	38.6	42.7	45.4	47.7	49.2
Less: Usable Reserves	-17.4	-17.2	-17.1	-17.1	-17.1
Less: Working Capital	-3.1	-3.1	-3.1	-3.1	-3.1
Treasury investments	-18.1	-22.4	-25.2	-27.5	-29.0

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

- 2.20 The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while balance sheet resources are the underlying sums available for investment. The Authority's current strategy is to maintain borrowing and investments below their underlying levels, sometimes known as internal borrowing.
- 2.21 The Authority has an increasing CFR due to the capital programme, but minimal investments but will be funding the programme through internal borrowing.
- 2.22 CIPFA's *Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities* recommends that the Authority's total debt should be lower than its highest forecast CFR over the next three years. Table 1 shows that the Authority expects to comply with this recommendation during 2025/26.
- 2.23 **Liability benchmark:** To compare the Council's actual borrowing against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark has been calculated showing the lowest risk level of borrowing. This assumes the same forecasts as table 1 above, but that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level of £0.2m at each year-end to maintain sufficient liquidity but minimise credit risk.
- 2.24 The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term investor in the future, and so shape its strategic focus and decision making. The liability benchmark itself represents an estimate of the cumulative amount of external borrowing the Council must hold to fund its current capital and revenue plans while keeping treasury investments at the minimum level required to manage day-to-day cash flow.

Table 2: Prudential Indicator: Liability benchmark

	31.3.24 Actual £m	31.3.25 Estimate £m	31.3.26 Forecast £m	31.3.27 Forecast £m	31.3.28 Forecast £m
Loans CFR	38.6	42.7	45.4	47.7	49.2
Less: Usable Reserves	-17.4	-17.2	-17.1	-17.1	-17.1
Less: Working Capital	-3.1	-3.1	-3.1	-3.1	-3.1
Net loans requirement	18.1	22.4	25.2	27.5	29.0
Plus: Liquidity allowance	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Liability benchmark	18.3	22.6	25.4	27.7	29.2

- 2.25 Following on from the medium-term forecasts in table 2 above, the long-term liability benchmark assumes capital expenditure funded by borrowing of £2m average a year, minimum revenue provision on new capital expenditure based on a 25 year asset life and income, expenditure and reserves all increasing by inflation of 2.5% a year.

Borrowing Strategy

- 2.26 The Authority currently holds £0 million of loans, as part of its strategy for funding previous years' capital programmes. The balance sheet forecast in table 1 shows that the Authority expects to borrow up to £0m in 2025/26. The Authority may however borrow to pre-fund future years' requirements, providing this does not exceed the authorised limit for borrowing of £60 million.
- 2.27 **Objectives:** The Authority's chief objective when borrowing money is to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving certainty of those costs over the period for which funds are required. The flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Authority's long-term plans change is a secondary objective.
- 2.28 **Strategy:** Given the significant cuts to public expenditure and in particular to local government funding, the Authority's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio. Short-term interest rates are currently higher than in the recent past but are expected to fall in the coming year and it is therefore likely to be more cost effective over the medium-term to either use internal resources, or to borrow short-term loans instead. The risks of this approach will be managed by keeping the Authority's interest rate exposure within the limit set in the treasury management prudential indicators, see below.
- 2.29 By doing so, the Authority is able to reduce net borrowing costs (despite foregone investment income) and reduce overall treasury risk. The benefits of [internal / short-term] borrowing will be monitored regularly against the potential for incurring additional costs by deferring borrowing into future years when long-term borrowing rates are forecast to rise modestly. Arlingclose will assist the Authority with this 'cost of carry' and breakeven analysis. Its output may determine whether the Authority borrows additional sums at long-term fixed rates in 2025/26 with a view to keeping future interest costs low, even if this causes additional cost in the short-term.
- 2.30 The Authority has previously raised the majority of its long-term borrowing from the PWLB but will consider long-term loans from other sources including banks, pensions and local authorities, and will investigate the possibility of issuing bonds and similar instruments, in order to lower interest costs and reduce over-reliance on one source of funding in line with the CIPFA Code. PWLB loans are no longer available to local authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield; the Authority intends to avoid this activity in order to retain its access to PWLB loans.
- 2.31 In addition, the Authority may borrow short-term loans to cover unplanned cash flow shortages.
- 2.32 **Sources of borrowing:** The approved sources of long-term and short-term borrowing are:
- HM Treasury's PWLB lending facility (formerly the Public Works Loan Board)
 - National Wealth Fund Ltd (formerly known as UK Infrastructure Bank Ltd)
 - any institution approved for investments (see below)
 - any other bank or building society authorised to operate in the UK

- any other UK public sector body
- UK public and private sector pension funds (except Local Government Pension Scheme)
- capital market bond investors
- UK Municipal Bonds Agency plc and other special purpose companies created to enable local authority bond issues

2.33 **Other sources of debt finance:** In addition, capital finance may be raised by the following methods that are not borrowing, but may be classed as other debt liabilities:

- leasing
- hire purchase
- Private Finance Initiative
- sale and leaseback

2.34 **Municipal Bonds Agency:** UK Municipal Bonds Agency plc was established in 2014 by the Local Government Association as an alternative to the PWLB. It issues bonds on the capital markets and lends the proceeds to local authorities. This is a more complicated source of finance than the PWLB for two reasons: borrowing authorities will be required to provide bond investors with a guarantee to refund their investment in the event that the agency is unable to for any reason; and there will be a lead time of several months between committing to borrow and knowing the interest rate payable. Any decision to borrow from the Agency will therefore be the subject of a separate report to full Council.

2.35 **Short-term and variable rate loans:** These loans leave the Authority exposed to the risk of short-term interest rate rises and are therefore subject to the interest rate exposure limits in the treasury management indicators below. Financial derivatives may be used to manage this interest rate risk (see section below).

2.36 **Debt rescheduling:** The PWLB allows authorities to repay loans before maturity and either pay a premium or receive a discount according to a set formula based on current interest rates. Other lenders may also be prepared to negotiate premature redemption terms. The Authority may take advantage of this and replace some loans with new loans, or repay loans without replacement, where this is expected to lead to an overall cost saving or a reduction in risk. The recent rise in interest rates means that more favourable debt rescheduling opportunities should arise than in previous years.

Treasury Investment Strategy

2.37 The Authority holds significant invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. In the past 12 months, the Authority's treasury investment balance has ranged between £1 and £14.5 million, and similar levels are expected to be maintained in the forthcoming year.

- 2.38 **Objectives:** The CIPFA Code requires the Authority to invest its treasury funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. The Authority’s objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income. Where balances are expected to be invested for more than one year, the Authority will aim to achieve a total return that is equal or higher than the prevailing rate of inflation, in order to maintain the spending power of the sum invested. The Authority aims to be a responsible investor and will consider environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues when investing.
- 2.39 **Strategy:** As demonstrated by the liability benchmark above, the Authority expects to be a long-term investor and treasury investments will therefore include both short-term low risk instruments to manage day-to-day cash flows and longer-term instruments where limited additional risk is accepted in return for higher investment income to support local public services.
- 2.40 The CIPFA Code does not permit local authorities to both borrow and invest long-term for cash flow management. But the Authority may make long-term investments for treasury risk management purposes, including to manage interest rate risk by investing sums borrowed in advance for the capital programme for up to three years; to manage inflation risk by investing usable reserves in instruments whose value rises with inflation; and to manage price risk by adding diversification to the strategic pooled fund portfolio.
- 2.41 **ESG policy:** Environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations are increasingly a factor in global investors’ decision making, but the framework for evaluating investment opportunities is still developing and therefore the Authority’s ESG policy does not currently include ESG scoring or other real-time ESG criteria at an individual investment level. When investing in banks and funds, the Authority will prioritise banks that are signatories to the UN Principles for Responsible Banking and funds operated by managers that are signatories to the UN Principles for Responsible Investment, the Net Zero Asset Managers Alliance and/or the UK Stewardship Code.
- 2.42 **Business models:** Under the IFRS 9 standard, the accounting for certain investments depends on the Authority’s “business model” for managing them. The Authority aims to achieve value from its treasury investments by a business model of collecting the contractual cash flows and therefore, where other criteria are also met, these investments will continue to be accounted for at amortised cost.
- 2.43 **Approved counterparties:** The Authority may invest its surplus funds with any of the counterparty types in table 3 below, subject to the limits shown.

Table 3: Treasury investment counterparties and limits

Credit rating	Banks unsecured	Banks secured	Government	Corporates	Registered Providers
UK Govt	n/a	n/a	£ Unlimited 50 years	n/a	n/a
AAA	£3 m 5 years	£3m 20 years	£3m 50 years	£3m 20 years	£1m 20 years
AA+	£3m 5 years	£3m 10 years	£3m 25 years	£3m 10 years	£1m 10 years
AA	£3m 4 years	£3m 5 years	£3m 15 years	£3m 5 years	£1m 10 years
AA-	£3m 3 years	£3m 4 years	£3m 10 years	£3m 4 years	£1m 10 years
A+	£3m 2 years	£3m 3 years	£3m 5 years	£3m 3 years	£1m 5 years
A	£3m 13 months	£3m 2 years	£3m 5 years	£3m 2 years	£1m 5 years
A-	£3m 6 months	£3m 13 months	£3m 5 years	£3m 13 months	£1m 5 years
None	£1.5m 6 months	n/a	£3m 25 years	£1m 5 years	£500k 5 years
Pooled funds and real estate investment trusts		£2.5m per fund or trust			

- 2.44 **Minimum credit rating:** Treasury investments in the sectors marked with an asterisk will only be made with entities whose lowest published long-term credit rating is no lower than [A-]. Where available, the credit rating relevant to the specific investment or class of investment is used, otherwise the counterparty credit rating is used. However, investment decisions are never made solely based on credit ratings, and all other relevant factors including external advice will be taken into account.
- 2.45 For entities without published credit ratings, investments may be made either (a) where external advice indicates the entity to be of similar credit quality; or (b) to a maximum of £500,000 per counterparty as part of a diversified pool e.g. via a peer-to-peer platform.

- 2.46 **Government:** Loans to, and bonds and bills issued or guaranteed by, national governments, regional and local authorities and multilateral development banks. These investments are not subject to bail-in, and there is generally a lower risk of insolvency, although they are not zero risk. Investments with the UK Government are deemed to be zero credit risk due to its ability to create additional currency and therefore may be made in unlimited amounts for up to 50 years.
- 2.47 **Secured investments:** Investments secured on the borrower's assets, which limits the potential losses in the event of insolvency. The amount and quality of the security will be a key factor in the investment decision. Covered bonds and reverse repurchase agreements with banks and building societies are exempt from bail-in. Where there is no investment specific credit rating, but the collateral upon which the investment is secured has a credit rating, the higher of the collateral credit rating and the counterparty credit rating will be used. The combined secured and unsecured investments with any one counterparty will not exceed the cash limit for secured investments.
- 2.48 **Banks and building societies (unsecured):** Accounts, deposits, certificates of deposit and senior unsecured bonds with banks and building societies, other than multilateral development banks. These investments are subject to the risk of credit loss via a bail-in should the regulator determine that the bank is failing or likely to fail. See below for arrangements relating to operational bank accounts.
- 2.49 **Registered providers (unsecured):** Loans to, and bonds issued or guaranteed by, registered providers of social housing or registered social landlords, formerly known as housing associations. These bodies are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing (in England), the Scottish Housing Regulator, the Welsh Government and the Department for Communities (in Northern Ireland). As providers of public services, they retain the likelihood of receiving government support if needed.
- 2.50 **Money market funds:** Pooled funds that offer same-day or short notice liquidity and very low or no price volatility by investing in short-term money markets. They have the advantage over bank accounts of providing wide diversification of investment risks, coupled with the services of a professional fund manager in return for a small fee. Although no sector limit applies to money market funds, the Authority will take care to diversify its liquid investments over a variety of providers to ensure access to cash at all times.
- 2.51 **Strategic pooled funds:** Bond, equity and property funds, including exchange traded funds, that offer enhanced returns over the longer term but are more volatile in the short term. These allow the Authority to diversify into asset classes other than cash without the need to own and manage the underlying investments. Because these funds have no defined maturity date but can be either withdrawn after a notice period or sold on an exchange, their performance and continued suitability in meeting the Authority's investment objectives will be monitored regularly.
- 2.52 **Real estate investment trusts:** Shares in companies that invest mainly in real estate and pay the majority of their rental income to investors in a similar manner to pooled property funds. As with property funds, REITs offer enhanced returns over the longer term but are more volatile especially as the share price reflects changing demand for the shares as well as changes in the value of the underlying properties.

- 2.53 **Other investments:** This category covers treasury investments not listed above, for example unsecured corporate bonds and unsecured loans to companies and universities. Non-bank companies cannot be bailed-in but can become insolvent placing the Authority's investment at risk.
- 2.54 **Operational bank accounts:** The Authority may incur operational exposures, for example through current accounts, collection accounts and merchant acquiring services, to any UK bank with credit ratings no lower than BBB- and with assets greater than £25 billion. These are not classed as investments but are still subject to the risk of a bank bail-in, and balances will therefore be kept below £2.0m per bank. The Bank of England has stated that in the event of failure, banks with assets greater than £25 billion are more likely to be bailed-in than made insolvent, increasing the chance of the Authority maintaining operational continuity.
- 2.55 **Risk assessment and credit ratings:** Credit ratings are obtained and monitored by the Authority's treasury advisers, who will notify changes in ratings as they occur. The credit rating agencies in current use are listed in the Treasury Management Practices document. Where an entity has its credit rating downgraded so that it fails to meet the approved investment criteria then:
- no new investments will be made,
 - any existing investments that can be recalled or sold at no cost will be, and
 - full consideration will be given to the recall or sale of all other existing investments with the affected counterparty.

Where a credit rating agency announces that a credit rating is on review for possible downgrade (also known as "negative watch") so that it may fall below the approved rating criteria, then only investments that can be withdrawn on the next working day will be made with that organisation until the outcome of the review is announced. This policy will not apply to negative outlooks, which indicate a long-term direction of travel rather than an imminent change of rating.

- 2.56 **Other information on the security of investments:** The Authority understands that credit ratings are good, but not perfect, predictors of investment default. Full regard will therefore be given to other available information on the credit quality of the organisations in which it invests, including credit default swap prices, financial statements, information on potential government support, reports in the quality financial press and analysis and advice from the Authority's treasury management adviser. No investments will be made with an organisation if there are substantive doubts about its credit quality, even though it may otherwise meet the above criteria.
- 2.57 When deteriorating financial market conditions affect the creditworthiness of all organisations, as happened in 2008, 2020 and 2022, this is not generally reflected in credit ratings, but can be seen in other market measures. In these circumstances, the Authority will restrict its investments to those organisations of higher credit quality and reduce the maximum duration of its investments to maintain the required level of security. The extent of these restrictions will be in line with prevailing financial market conditions. If these restrictions mean that insufficient commercial organisations of high credit quality are available to

invest the Authority's cash balances, then the surplus will be deposited with the UK Government, or with other local authorities. This will cause investment returns to fall but will protect the principal sum invested.

- 2.58 **Investment limits:** The Authority's revenue reserves available to cover investment losses are forecast to be £10.867 million on 31st March 2025 and £10.789 million on 31st March 2026. In order that no more than 42% of available reserves will be put at risk in the case of a single default, the maximum that will be lent to any one organisation (other than the UK Government) will be £5 million. A group of entities under the same ownership will be treated as a single organisation for limit purposes.
- 2.59 Credit risk exposures arising from non-treasury investments, financial derivatives and balances greater than £2m in operational bank accounts count against the relevant investment limits.
- 2.60 Limits are also placed on fund managers, investments in brokers' nominee accounts and foreign countries as below. Investments in pooled funds and multilateral development banks do not count against the limit for any single foreign country, since the risk is diversified over many countries.

	Cash limit
Any single organisation, except the UK Central Government	£5m each
UK Central Government	Unlimited
Any group of organisations under the same ownership	£5m per group
Any group of pooled funds under the same management	£5m per manager
Negotiable instruments held in a broker's nominee account	£5m per broker
Foreign countries	£5m per country
Registered providers and registered social landlords	£2.5m in total
Unsecured investments with building societies	£2.5m in total
Loans to unrated corporates	£1m in total
Money market funds	£20m in total
Real estate investment trusts	£2.5m in total

- 2.61 **Liquidity management:** The Authority uses detailed spreadsheets to determine the maximum period for which funds may prudently be committed. The forecast is compiled on a prudent basis to minimise the risk of the Authority being forced to borrow on unfavourable terms to meet its financial commitments. Limits on long-term investments are set by reference to the Authority's medium-term financial plan and cash flow forecast.
- 2.62 The Authority will spread its liquid cash over at least four providers (e.g. bank accounts and money market funds) to ensure that access to cash is maintained in the event of operational difficulties at any one provider.

Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

2.63 The Authority measures and manages its exposures to treasury management risks using the following indicators.

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

Credit risk indicator	Target
Portfolio average credit [rating / score]	A-

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

Liquidity risk indicator	Target
Total cash available within 3 months	£2.5m

2.66 **Interest rate exposures:** This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to interest rate risk. The upper limits on the one-year revenue impact of a 1% rise or fall in interest rates will be:

Interest rate risk indicator	Limit
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>rise</u> in interest rates	£500,000
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>fall</u> in interest rates	£500,000

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

2.68 **Maturity structure of borrowing:** This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of borrowing will be:

Refinancing rate risk indicator	Upper limit	Lower limit
Under 12 months	50%	0%
12 months and within 24 months	50%	0%
24 months and within 5 years	50%	0%
5 years and within 10 years	50%	0%
10 years and above	100%	0%

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

2.70 **Long-term treasury management investments:** The purpose of this indicator is to control the Authority's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The prudential limits on the long-term treasury management investments will be:

Price risk indicator	2025/26	2026/27	2027/27	No fixed date
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£1.0m	£0.5m	£0m	£0m

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

Related Matters

2.72 The CIPFA Code requires the Authority to include the following in its treasury management strategy.

2.73 **Financial derivatives:** Local authorities have previously made use of financial derivatives embedded into loans and investments both to reduce interest rate risk (e.g. interest rate collars and forward deals) and to reduce costs or increase income at the expense of greater risk (e.g. LOBO loans and callable deposits). The general power of competence in section 1 of the *Localism Act 2011* removes much of the uncertainty over local authorities' use of standalone financial derivatives (i.e. those that are not embedded into a loan or investment).

- 2.74 The Authority will only use standalone financial derivatives (such as swaps, forwards, futures and options) where they can be clearly demonstrated to reduce the overall level of the financial risks that the Authority is exposed to. Additional risks presented, such as credit exposure to derivative counterparties, will be taken into account when determining the overall level of risk. Embedded derivatives, including those present in pooled funds and forward starting transactions, will not be subject to this policy, although the risks they present will be managed in line with the overall treasury risk management strategy.
- 2.75 Financial derivative transactions may be arranged with any organisation that meets the approved investment criteria, assessed using the appropriate credit rating for derivative exposures. An allowance for credit risk calculated using the methodology in the Treasury Management Practices document will count against the counterparty credit limit and the relevant foreign country limit.
- 2.76 In line with the CIPFA Code, the Authority will seek external advice and will consider that advice before entering into financial derivatives to ensure that it fully understands the implications.
- 2.77 **Markets in Financial Instruments Directive:** The Authority has retained retail client status with its providers of financial services, including advisers, banks, brokers and fund managers, allowing it access to a smaller range of services but with the greater regulatory protections afforded to individuals and small companies. Given the size and range of the Authority's treasury management activities, the Director of Finance believes this to be the most appropriate status.

Financial Implications

- 2.78 The budget for investment income in 2025/26 is £203.6k based on an average investment portfolio of £4.5 million at an interest rate of 4.6%. If actual levels of investments and borrowing, or actual interest rates, differ from those forecast, performance against budget will be correspondingly different.
- 2.79 Where investment income exceeds budget, e.g. from higher risk investments including pooled funds, or debt interest paid falls below budget, e.g. from cheap short-term borrowing, then 50% of the revenue savings will be transferred to a treasury management reserve to cover the risk of capital losses or higher interest rates payable in future years.

Other Options Considered

- 2.80 The CIPFA Code does not prescribe any particular treasury management strategy for local authorities to adopt. The Director of Finance, having consulted the Cabinet Member for Finance and Enabling, believes that the above strategy represents an appropriate balance between risk management and cost effectiveness. Some alternative strategies, with their financial and risk management implications, are listed below.

Alternative	Impact on income and expenditure	Impact on risk management
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Invest in a narrower range of counterparties and/or for shorter times	Interest income will be lower	Lower chance of losses from credit related defaults, but any such losses may be greater
Invest in a wider range of counterparties and/or for longer times	Interest income will be higher	Increased risk of losses from credit related defaults, but any such losses may be smaller
Borrow additional sums at long-term fixed interest rates	Debt interest costs will rise; this is unlikely to be offset by higher investment income	Higher investment balance leading to a higher impact in the event of a default; however long-term interest costs may be more certain
Borrow short-term or variable loans instead of long-term fixed rates	Debt interest costs will initially be lower	Increases in debt interest costs will be broadly offset by rising investment income in the medium term, but long-term costs may be less certain
Reduce level of borrowing	Saving on debt interest is likely to exceed lost investment income	Reduced investment balance leading to a lower impact in the event of a default; however long-term interest costs may be less certain

Appendix A – Arlingclose Economic & Interest Rate Forecast – December 2024

Underlying assumptions:

- As expected, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) held Bank Rate at 4.75% in December, although, with a 6-3 voting split and obvious concerns about economic growth, presented a much more dovish stance than had been expected given recent inflationary data.
- The Budget measures remain a concern for policymakers, for both growth and inflation. Additional government spending will boost demand in a constrained supply environment, while pushing up direct costs for employers. The short to medium-term inflationary effects will promote caution amongst policymakers.
- UK GDP recovered well in H1 2024 from technical recession, but underlying growth has petered out as the year has progressed. While government spending should boost GDP growth in 2025, private sector activity appears to be waning, partly due to Budget measures.
- Private sector wage growth and services inflation remain elevated; wage growth picked up sharply in October. The increase in employers' NICs, minimum and public sector wage levels could have wide ranging impacts on private sector employment demand and costs, but the near-term impact will likely be inflationary as these additional costs get passed to consumers.
- CPI inflation rates have risen due to higher energy prices and less favourable base effects. The current CPI rate of 2.6% could rise further in Q1 2025. The Bank of England (BoE) estimates the CPI rate at 2.7% by year end 2025 and to remain over target in 2026.
- The MPC re-emphasised that monetary policy will be eased gradually. Despite recent inflation-related data moving upwards or surprising to the upside, the minutes suggested a significant minority of policymakers are at least as worried about the flatlining UK economy.
- US government bond yields have risen following strong US data and uncertainty about the effects of Donald Trump's policies on the US economy, particularly in terms of inflation and monetary policy. The Federal Reserve pared back its expectations for rate cuts in light of these issues. Higher US yields are also pushing up UK gilt yields, a relationship that will be maintained unless monetary policy in the UK and US diverges.

Forecast:

- In line with our forecast, Bank Rate was held at 4.75% in December.

- The MPC will reduce Bank Rate in a gradual manner. We see a rate cut in February 2025, followed by a cut alongside every Monetary Policy Report publication, to a low of 3.75%.
- Long-term gilt yields have risen to reflect both UK and US economic, monetary and fiscal policy expectations, and increases in bond supply. Volatility will remain elevated as the market digests incoming data for clues around the impact of policy changes.
- This uncertainty may also necessitate more frequent changes to our forecast than has been the case recently.
- The risks around the forecasts lie to the upside over the next 12 months but are broadly balanced in the medium term.

	Current	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26	Mar-27	Jun-27	Sep-27	Dec-27
Official Bank Rate													
Upside risk	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75
Central Case	4.75	4.50	4.25	4.00	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75
Downside risk	0.00	-0.25	-0.25	-0.50	-0.50	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75
3-month money market rate													
Upside risk	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75
Central Case	4.90	4.60	4.35	4.10	3.90	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85
Downside risk	0.00	-0.25	-0.25	-0.50	-0.50	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75
5yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.70	0.80	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90
Central Case	4.34	4.30	4.20	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.90	3.95	4.00	4.05	4.05	4.05	4.05
Downside risk	0.00	-0.50	-0.60	-0.65	-0.65	-0.70	-0.70	-0.75	-0.75	-0.80	-0.80	-0.80	-0.80
10yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.70	0.80	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90
Central Case	4.56	4.55	4.45	4.30	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25
Downside risk	0.00	-0.50	-0.60	-0.65	-0.65	-0.70	-0.70	-0.75	-0.75	-0.80	-0.80	-0.80	-0.80
20yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.70	0.80	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90
Central Case	5.05	5.00	4.90	4.80	4.70	4.65	4.65	4.65	4.65	4.65	4.65	4.65	4.65
Downside risk	0.00	-0.50	-0.60	-0.65	-0.65	-0.70	-0.70	-0.75	-0.75	-0.80	-0.80	-0.80	-0.80
50yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.70	0.80	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90
Central Case	4.52	4.70	4.60	4.50	4.40	4.35	4.35	4.35	4.35	4.35	4.35	4.35	4.35
Downside risk	0.00	-0.50	-0.60	-0.65	-0.65	-0.70	-0.70	-0.75	-0.75	-0.80	-0.80	-0.80	-0.80

PWLB Standard Rate = Gilt yield + 1.00%
 PWLB Certainty Rate = Gilt yield + 0.80%
 PWLB HRA Rate = Gilt yield + 0.40%
 National Wealth Fund (NWF) Rate = Gilt yield + 0.40%

Appendix B – Existing Investment & Debt Portfolio Position

	28/01/2025 Actual Portfolio £m	28/01/2025 Average Rate %
External borrowing:	0	0
Total external borrowing	0	0
Treasury investments:		
Banks, MMF & building societies (unsecured)	9.5	4.7
Government (incl. local authorities)	5.0	4.9
Total treasury investments	14.5	4.8
Net Investments	14.5	

Appendix I – Investment Strategy

Introduction

- 4.1 The Authority invests its money for three broad purposes:
- because it has surplus cash as a result of its day-to-day activities, for example when income is received in advance of expenditure (known as **treasury management investments**),
 - to support local public services by lending to or buying shares in other organisations (**service investments**), and
 - to earn investment income (known as **commercial investments** where this is the main purpose).
- 4.2 This investment strategy meets the requirements of statutory guidance issued by the government in January 2018 and focuses on the second and third of these categories.
- 4.3 The statutory guidance defines investments as “all of the financial assets of a local authority as well as other non-financial assets that the organisation holds primarily or partially to generate a profit; for example, investment property portfolios.” The Authority interprets this to exclude (a) trade receivables which meet the accounting definition of financial assets but are not investments in the everyday sense of the word and (b) property held partially to generate a profit but primarily for the provision of local public services. This aligns the Authority’s definition of an investment with that in the 2021 edition of the CIPFA Prudential Code, a more recent piece of statutory guidance.

Treasury Management Investments

- 4.4 The Authority typically receives its income in cash (e.g. from taxes and grants) before it pays for its expenditure in cash (e.g. through payroll and invoices). It also holds reserves for future expenditure and collects local taxes on behalf of other local authorities and central government. These activities, plus the timing of borrowing decisions, lead to a cash surplus which is invested in accordance with guidance from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. The balance of treasury management investments is expected to fluctuate between £1m and £14m during the 2025/26 financial year.

- 4.5 **Contribution:** The contribution that these investments make to the objectives of the Authority is to support effective treasury management activities.
- 4.6 **Further details:** Full details of the Authority’s policies and its plan for 2025/26 for treasury management investments are covered in a separate document, the treasury management strategy, which is part of these appendices.

Service Investments: Loans

- 4.7 **Contribution:** The Council will lend money to its subsidiaries, local businesses, local charities and housing associations to support local public services and stimulate local economic growth.
- 4.8 **Security:** The main risk when making service loans is that the borrower will be unable to repay the principal lent and/or the interest due. In order to limit this risk, and ensure that total exposure to service loans remains proportionate to the size of the Authority, upper limits on the outstanding loans to each category of borrower have been set as follows:

Table 1: Loans for service purposes in £ millions

Category of borrower	31.3.2024 actual			2025/26
	Balance owing	Loss allowance	Net figure in accounts	Approved Limit £m
Subsidiaries	0	0	0	1.0
Local businesses	0	0	0	0.5
Local charities	0	0	0	0.5
Housing associations	0	0	0	1.0
TOTAL	0	0	0	3.0

- 4.9 Accounting standards require the Authority to set aside loss allowance for loans, reflecting the likelihood of non-payment. The figures for loans in the Authority's statement of accounts are shown net of this loss allowance. However, the Authority makes every reasonable effort to collect the full sum lent and has appropriate credit control arrangements in place to recover overdue repayments.
- 4.10 **Risk assessment:** The Authority assesses the risk of loss before entering into and whilst holding service loans by using specialist advice to understand the market and the potential future demands of the market and the customers in it. It will also use benchmarking data from the market to determine future potential risks which need to be planned for. External advice is only sought from credible sources eg acknowledged experts in their fields and officers ensure that they fully understand any information given to them before decision or advice is taken.

Commercial Investments: Property

- 4.11 **Contribution:** The Authority invests via Regeneration schemes such as Levelling Up Fundings via the Government in property with the intention of making a profit that will be spent on local public services. Levelling Up funding in being invested in regenerating the Market Hall site and clearing the existing Fire Station site for future regeneration.

Table 2: Property held for investment purposes in £ millions

Property [type]	Actual	31.3.2024 actual		31.3.2025 expected	
	Purchase cost	Gains or (losses)	Value in accounts	Gains or (losses)	Value in accounts
N/A	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0

- 4.12 **Security:** In accordance with government guidance, the Authority considers a property investment to be secure if its accounting valuation is at or higher than its purchase cost including taxes and transaction costs.
- 4.13 *Where value in accounts is at or above purchase cost:* A fair value assessment of the Authority's investment property portfolio has been made within the past twelve months, and the underlying assets provide security for capital investment. Should the

2024/25 year end accounts preparation and audit process value these properties below their purchase cost, then an updated investment strategy will be presented to full Council detailing the impact of the loss on the security of investments and any revenue consequences arising therefrom.

- 4.14 *Where value in accounts is below purchase cost:* The fair value of the Authority's investment property portfolio is no longer sufficient to provide security against loss, and the Authority is therefore taking mitigating actions to protect the capital invested.
- 4.15 **Risk assessment:** The Authority assesses the risk of loss before entering into and whilst holding property investments by involving specialist advisors with expertise in the type of property being purchased, looking at historic data and speaking to other councils undertaking similar activities.
- 4.16 **Liquidity:** Compared with other investment types, property is relatively difficult to sell and convert to cash at short notice and can take a considerable period to sell in certain market conditions. To ensure that the invested funds can be accessed when they are needed, for example to repay capital borrowed, the Council ensures that properties purchased are in an active market where there is demonstrable demand to ensure that the authority does not purchase assets which it will not be able to sell on at a later date.

Loan Commitments and Financial Guarantees

- 4.17 Although not strictly counted as investments, since no money has exchanged hands yet, loan commitments and financial guarantees carry similar risks to the Authority and are included here for completeness.

Proportionality

- 4.18 The Council does not plan to become dependent on profit generating investment activity to achieve a balanced revenue budget.

Borrowing in Advance of Need

- 4.19 Government guidance is that local authorities must not borrow more than or in advance of their needs purely in order to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed. The Council would only not follow this guidance if interest rate forecasts and treasury advisor guidance set out that it was more cost effective, **in terms of significantly reduced debt interest charges**, for the Council to borrow for the **approved 3 year capital programme** at a point of time rather than when that expenditure is taking place over that 3 year period. It is unlikely that this will happen however the option should not be closed off. Funds would be invested. The Councils policies in investing the money borrowed, including management of the risks, would be as per normal short term Treasury Investments.

Capacity, Skills and Culture

- 4.20 **Elected members and statutory officers:** Member training will take place annually as part of the induction process. External advisors will provide reports to support investment decisions with officers ensuring that they fully understand them and can relate them to the strategic objectives and risk profile of the Council.
- 4.21 **Commercial deals:** Significant work has been undertaken using external advisors and relevant training courses have been attended to ensure that officers are fully aware of the code and statutory requirements of a local authority which is investing.

KPMG have developed a modelling tool for the Council to use when assessing potential purchases as a precursor to engaging with external consultants to ensure that potential purchases are likely to make sense from the perspective of the authority before incurring advisor costs. However, following an internal review of the policy, it has been decided that the Council may wish to make purchases which do not make a financial return or may indeed make a loss in the short term. On these occasions a business case will be developed which specifies the non-financial benefits of the investment. These are likely to be regenerative schemes for the greater good of the area with an intended long term impact. The regenerative and redevelopment benefits which will flow from the investment will be taken into account in the development of the business case, so if the net investment yield falls below 0.75% it can still proceed if these benefits are deemed to outweigh the lower than target yield.

- 4.22 **Corporate governance:** when investment decisions are to be made, they are to be led by the Council's Director of Finance in consultation with the Corporate Management Team. They will assess the potential investment opportunity using the KPMG

finance appraisal model and should they decide it presents a strong opportunity for the Council and complies with the relevant criteria a conditional offer can be made. A business case will then be developed and presented ensuring that once greater detail is included, it makes a satisfactory income yield and/or economic redevelopment and regeneration impact. When the business case is completed, if it is still compliant with the Council criteria, it will be presented to Cabinet for approval before purchase is completed. Once a purchase has been made the Director of Finance will provide quarterly reports in line with financial and monitoring reports on the status of the investment.

Investment Indicators

- 4.23 The Authority has set the following quantitative indicators to allow elected members and the public to assess the Authority’s total risk exposure as a result of its investment decisions.
- 4.24 **Total risk exposure:** The first indicator shows the Authority’s total exposure to potential investment losses. This includes amounts the Authority is contractually committed to lend but have yet to be drawn down and guarantees the Authority has issued over third party loans.

Table 3: Total investment exposure in £millions

Total investment exposure	31.03.2024 Actual	31.03.2025 Forecast	31.03.2026 Forecast
Treasury management investments	0	2	4
Service investments: Loans	0	0	0
Commercial investments: Property	0	0	0
TOTAL INVESTMENTS	0	2	4
Commitments to lend	0	0	0
Guarantees issued on loans	0	0	0
TOTAL EXPOSURE	0	0	0

- 4.25 **How investments are funded:** Government guidance is that these indicators should include how investments are funded. Since the Authority does not normally associate particular assets with particular liabilities, this guidance is difficult to comply with. However, the following investments could be described as being funded by borrowing. The remainder of the Authority's investments are funded by usable reserves and income received in advance of expenditure.

Table 4: Investments funded by borrowing in £millions

Investments funded by borrowing	31.03.2024 Actual	31.03.2025 Forecast	31.03.2026 Forecast
Treasury management investments	0	0	0
Service investments: Loans	0	0	0
Service investments: Shares	0	0	0
Commercial investments: Property	0	0	0
TOTAL FUNDED BY BORROWING	0	0	0

- 4.26 **Rate of return received:** This indicator shows the investment income received less the associated costs, including the cost of borrowing where appropriate, as a proportion of the sum initially invested. Note that due to the complex local government accounting framework, not all recorded gains and losses affect the revenue account in the year they are incurred.

Table 5: Investment rate of return (net of all costs)

Investments net rate of return	2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Forecast
Treasury management investments	5.2	4.9	4.6
Service investments: Loans	0	0	0
Service investments: Shares	0	0	0
Commercial investments: Property	0	0	0
ALL INVESTMENTS	5.2	4.9	4.6

Appendix J – Consultation Results

Bromsgrove District Council - Budget Consultation for 2025/26

The budget consultation opened on Thu 5 December 2024. An email invite was sent to the Bromsgrove Community Panel. The survey was also promoted on a variety of social media channels.

The survey closed at 12noon on Thursday 2 January 2025. The response rate for the community panel was 48%. There were a total of 278 valid responses received.

Q no.	Question	Responses	Total Responses	%
Q1 (276)	Are you a resident of Bromsgrove District and/or have a business based here?	Resident of Bromsgrove District	276	100.0%
		Have a business based here	11	4.0%
Q2 (273)	Please tell us where you live or where your business is located. (Please note, if you live and have a business in the District, please only tell us where you live)	Alvechurch South	4	1.5%
		Alvechurch Village	9	3.3%
		Aston Fields	25	9.2%
		Avoncroft	8	2.9%
		Barnt Green & Hopwood	5	1.8%
		Belbroughton and Romsley	24	8.8%
		Bromsgrove Central	27	9.9%
		Catshill North	7	2.6%
		Catshill South	4	1.5%
		Charford	13	4.8%
		Cofton	4	1.5%
		Drakes Cross	2	0.7%
		Hagley East	1	0.4%
		Hagley West	4	1.5%
		Hill Top	9	3.3%
		Hollywood	3	1.1%
Lickey Hills	6	2.2%		
Lowes Hill	15	5.5%		

		Marlbrook	11	4.0%
		Norton	11	4.0%
		Perryfields	7	2.6%
		Rock Hill	9	3.3%
		Rubery North	6	2.2%
		Rubery South	5	1.8%
		Sanders Park	11	4.0%
		Sidemoor	16	5.9%
		Slideslow	10	3.7%
		Tardebigge	12	4.4%
		Wythall East	3	1.1%
		Wythall West	2	0.7%
Q3 (276)	Which services do you think it is important for the Council to invest in?	Community and Voluntary Sector	39	14.1%
		Community Parks and Open Spaces	103	37.3%
		Community Safety	123	44.6%
		Environmental Sustainability	59	21.4%
		Events and Arts Activities	50	18.1%
		Local Economic Development and Employment	130	47.1%
		Maintenance of the Landscape and Environment	121	43.8%
		Strategic Housing	68	24.6%
		Waste and Recycling	108	39.1%
		Welfare and Financial Support	58	21.0%
Q4 (276)	Do you agree that the Council should reinvest in technology in order to make services more secure, effective and efficient and to be digital by default?	Strongly agree	62	22.5%
		Agree	115	41.7%
		Neither agree nor disagree	70	25.4%
		Disagree	22	8.0%
		Strongly disagree	7	2.5%
Q5 (275)	Do you agree that the Council should increase investment in temporary accommodation to	Strongly agree	60	21.8%
		Agree	100	36.4%
		Neither agree nor disagree	65	23.6%

	support homeless families and individuals in district?	Disagree	30	10.9%
		Strongly disagree	20	7.3%
Q6 (276)	Do you agree that the Council should invest in economic development in order to support local businesses, start-ups, the town and local centres and to prioritise local skills?	Strongly agree	116	42.0%
		Agree	122	44.2%
		Neither agree nor disagree	32	11.6%
		Disagree	1	0.4%
		Strongly disagree	5	1.8%
Q7 (273)	Do you agree that the Council should be investing in a Bromsgrove Business Improvement District (BID) to bring extra focus into the Bromsgrove Town Centre offering?	Strongly agree	81	29.7%
		Agree	108	39.6%
		Neither agree nor disagree	58	21.2%
		Disagree	16	5.9%
		Strongly disagree	10	3.7%
Q8 (276)	Do you agree that the Council should invest more in our front-line services to cover increases in fuel?	Strongly agree	35	12.7%
		Agree	102	37.0%
		Neither agree nor disagree	115	41.7%
		Disagree	16	5.8%
		Strongly disagree	8	2.9%
Q9 (274)	Do you agree that the Council needs to involve young people more in decision making and local democracy?	Strongly agree	64	23.4%
		Agree	103	37.6%
		Neither agree nor disagree	71	25.9%
		Disagree	28	10.2%
		Strongly disagree	8	2.9%
Q10 (276)	Do you agree that the Council should invest in greater data and systems support to enable the delivery of improved services and enhance decision making?	Strongly agree	34	12.3%
		Agree	113	40.9%
		Neither agree nor disagree	98	35.5%
		Disagree	28	10.1%
		Strongly disagree	3	1.1%
		Strongly agree	21	7.6%

Q11 (276)	Do you support fees and charges (this excludes parking) rising by 4% to keep them in line with inflation and rising staffing costs?	Agree	90	32.6%
		Neither agree nor disagree	55	19.9%
		Disagree	67	24.3%
		Strongly disagree	43	15.6%
Q12	In order to maintain services, what level of increase to Bromsgrove District Council's proportion of Council Tax do you support?			
Q12a (218)	Increase of 1.99%	Strongly agree	54	24.8%
		Agree	80	36.7%
		Neither agree nor disagree	42	19.3%
		Disagree	20	9.2%
		Strongly disagree	22	10.1%
Q12b (190)	Increase of 2.99%	Strongly agree	38	20.0%
		Agree	49	25.8%
		Neither agree nor disagree	22	11.6%
		Disagree	29	15.3%
		Strongly disagree	52	27.4%
Q13 (178)	Please let us know your suggestions for investing in the District to increase prosperity and enhance appeal for residents and businesses alike.	This was an open question and the comments will be analysed separately		
Q14 (118)	Please let us know any other comments on the budget or ideas for reducing costs or increasing income to ensure Council services remain sustainable.	This was an open question and the comments will be analysed separately		

About You

Answering these questions is optional. Any answers are completely anonymous and confidential. The reason why we ask you these questions is so we can:

- Make our council services open to everyone in the district
- Treat everyone fairly and appropriately when they use our services
- In consultations, make sure that we have views from all across the district

The Equality Act 2010 makes these aims part of our legal duties. Your answers help us check that we have met the law and help improve our services.

Q15 (272)	What is your current housing status?	Owner	171	62.9%
		Mortgaged	68	25.0%
		Part rent/part buy	2	0.7%
		Private renting	7	2.6%
		Council tenant	6	2.2%
		Social housing	6	2.2%
		Living with relatives	3	1.1%
		Private renting	8	2.9%
		Other (please specify)	1	0.4%
Q16 (273)	Which of the following best describes your age?	16-19yrs	0	0.0%
		20-29yrs	3	1.1%
		30-39yrs	22	8.1%
		40-49yrs	27	9.9%
		50-59yrs	51	18.7%
		60-69yrs	75	27.5%
		70-79yrs	70	25.6%
		80+ years	14	5.1%
		Prefer not to say	11	4.0%
Q17 (273)	Do you have any long-standing health condition or disability? (The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as 'a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities')	Yes	72	26.4%
		No	177	64.8%
		Prefer not to say	24	8.8%

Q18 (274)	Which best describes your gender?	Female	123	44.9%
		Male	137	50.0%
		Prefer not to say	12	4.4%
		Other (please specify)	2	0.7%
Q20 (273)	Which best describes your ethnicity	White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish. British	245	89.7%
		Any other White background	6	2.2%
		Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	4	1.5%
		Asian or Asian British	1	0.4%
		Black, African, Caribbean or Black British Arab	0	0.0%
		Prefer not to say	15	5.5%
		Other ethnic group	2	0.7%
Q21 (272)	Which best describes your religion or belief?	Atheist	28	10.3%
		Buddhist	0	0.0%
		Christian	143	52.6%
		Humanist	9	3.3%
		Hindu	0	0.0%
		Jewish	0	0.0%
		Muslim	3	1.1%
		Pagan	7	2.6%
		Sikh	0	0.0%
		No religion/belief	50	18.4%
		Prefer not to say	26	9.6%
		Other (please specify)	6	2.2%
Q49 (270)	Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?	Bisexual	9	3.3%
		Heterosexual	217	80.4%
		Lesbian or Gay	6	2.2%
		Prefer not to say	35	13.0%
		Other (please specify)	6	2.2%