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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

TUESDAY 25TH JUNE 2024

AT 6.00 P.M.

PARKSIDE SUITE - PARKSIDE

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

AGENDA

1. **Election of Chairman**
2. **Election of Vice-Chairman**
3. **Apologies for Absence and Named Substitutes**
4. **Declarations of Interest and Whipping Arrangements**

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.

5. **Overview and Scrutiny Training - Outcomes of the Training and Work Prioritisation Session** (Pages 5 - 20)
6. **Finance and Budget Working Group - Membership Report** (Pages 21 - 26)
7. **Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Election of Representative for 2024-25**
8. **Task Group Updates**
9. **Cabinet Work Programme** (Pages 27 - 48)
10. **To consider, and if considered appropriate, to pass the following resolution to exclude the public from the meeting during the consideration of item(s) of business containing exempt information:-**

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

Item No	Paragraph
11	3, 4

11. **To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 22nd April 2024** (Pages 49 - 76)

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd April 2024, including the confidential minutes record, are included in this agenda.

Sue Hanley
Chief Executive

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

17th June 2024

If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact
Mat Sliwinski

Parkside, Market Street, Bromsgrove, B61 8DA
Tel: (01527) 64252 Ext: 3095
Email: mateusz.sliwinski@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

GUIDANCE ON FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS

Please note that this is a public meeting.

You are able to see the agenda documents for this meeting from the Committee Pages of the Council's website.

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

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

Notes:

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



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

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Overview and Scrutiny Board 2024

25th June

Overview and Scrutiny Training – Outcomes of the Training and Work Prioritisation Session

Relevant Portfolio Holder		Councillor Karen May
Portfolio Holder Consulted		
Relevant Head of Service		Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services
Report Author Claire Felton	Job Title: Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services Contact email: c.felton@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk	
Wards Affected		N/A
Ward Councillor(s) consulted		N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)		An Effective and Sustainable Council
Non-Key Decision		
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Overview and Scrutiny Board RESOLVE:-

- 1) To determine whether to add items arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Training and Work Prioritisation Session to the Overview and Scrutiny Board’s Work Programme for the 2024/25 municipal year;
- 2) Subject to any suggested tweaks, to determine whether to adopt the work prioritisation tool at Appendix 1 to enable the Overview and Scrutiny Board to select appropriate items for scrutiny during the year; and
- 3) To update the layout of the Overview and Scrutiny Board’s work programme as detailed at Appendix 2 to the report.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 An Overview and Scrutiny Training and Work Prioritisation Session was held on Wednesday 12th June 2024.
- 2.2 The report details the outcomes of this training and invites Members to consider whether to add subjects suggested for scrutiny during the session to the Overview and Scrutiny Board’s Work Programme for 2024/25.

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- 2.3 Members are also invited to consider whether to introduce a work prioritisation tool to help the Board determine whether to select items for scrutiny.
- 2.4 Based on comments arising during the session, a new proposed layout to the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Work Programme is suggested in this report.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

Introduction

- 3.1 The Council's approach to Overview and Scrutiny was highlighted by Members as a strength during the review of the authority's governance structure that was completed by the Governance Systems Task Group in 2023.
- 3.2 One proposal arising from this review was that an annual Overview and Scrutiny Work Prioritisation session should be held, in line with best practice.
- 3.3 Refresher training in respect of the Overview and Scrutiny function was delivered on 12th June 2024. This session also provided an opportunity for Members to hold the first work prioritisation session since the governance review was completed.
- 3.4 The session was attended by nine Non-Executive Councillors, Councillors R. Bailes, Dale, Gray, McDonald, Nock, S. Robinson and Stanley. One Cabinet Member, Councillor McEldowney, also attended the training.

Scrutiny Work Programme Prioritisation Tool

- 3.5 In discussing work prioritisation for the year ahead, Members started by considering best practice approaches to setting the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme. As part of this process, Members noted that items which match the following are often considered best practice for scrutiny to investigate:
- Items linking to the Council Plan and key priorities within the plan
 - Issues that are a major priority or concern for the local community
 - Major potential risks or threats
 - Important opportunities or policy changes

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- 3.6 Reference was made to the importance of identifying the key items for scrutiny during the municipal year and Members noted the need to enable sufficient time to be allocated to each topic in a way that would add value. It was noted during the training that quality, rather than quantity, should be the focus of the overview and scrutiny function and that it was likely that the Board could add more value by focusing on reviewing one or two substantive items per meeting rather than by discussing numerous subjects, when there would be limited time available at meetings to add value.
- 3.7 Members also recognised that there were alternative ways to receive information and that doing so, through a “first look” for some topics, would create capacity on the work programme. Subjects suggested as potentially suitable for a “first look” Member Briefing included:
- The District Heat Network
 - Biodiversity
 - Street Sweeping
- 3.8 It should be noted that dates were identified at the start of the municipal year for potential Member briefings and items identified during the session for information could be scheduled for consideration at these briefings.
- 3.9 Some potential topics were discussed where Members noted that there were alternative options already available for Councillors to consider those matters in detail outside the Overview and Scrutiny process. It was suggested that these subjects might potentially not need to be the subject of scrutiny, which would free capacity within Overview and Scrutiny to focus on other subjects. This included:
- The Bromsgrove District Local Plan - Members noted this was due to be discussed with Councillors at forthcoming meetings of political groups as well as at meetings of the Strategic Planning Steering Group, which could be attended by all Members.
 - Levelling Up Project – Update on Funding – The suggestion was made that this could be discussed at meetings of the Finance and Budget Working Group.
- 3.10 Members recognised that requests could be received to incorporate additional items into the scrutiny work programme during the year. This could include suggestions made by Councillors at meetings of the

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Board, items identified from the Cabinet Work Programme for pre-scrutiny and subjects referred to Overview and Scrutiny by Council.

- 3.11 Some concerns were raised that the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Work Programme could become very busy, should all items that were suggested for scrutiny during the year be added to the work programme.
- 3.12 With this in mind, Members discussed the potential for the Overview and Scrutiny Board to adopt a work prioritisation tool. Some examples were provided during the training of the criteria that Members might wish to incorporate into a prioritisation tool. Based on these examples and the discussions amongst Members held at the training session, a draft suggest scrutiny work prioritisation tool has been attached at Appendix 1 for Members' consideration. It should be noted that as this tool is in draft form, Members may want to amend the content at the Board meeting in June 2024 to add or remove further criteria that Members feel would be helpful.

Subjects Suggested for Scrutiny

- 3.13 During the training Members discussed and identified some subjects that could be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Work Programme for consideration during the 2024/25 municipal year.
- 3.14 In discussing these subjects, Members considered information shared during the training as well as the current work programme, the Cabinet Work Programme and other suggestions submitted by Members, (including those submitted in advance).
- 3.15 Based on these discussions, the following key subjects were suggested as a focus for scrutiny during the year:
- The Bromsgrove play audit – Members discussed the potential for the subject of the play audit to be discussed at a number of meetings of the Board, including an initial overview and scrutiny at one meeting followed by a detailed review of the draft report prior to Cabinet approval at another meeting. It was acknowledged that the play audit was also due to be considered by the Cabinet Advisory Group (CAG), but Members noted that Overview and Scrutiny had a separate role, through its challenge function, in respect of considering this subject.

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- Anti-social behaviour (ASB) – Concerns were raised about ASB in the District. The suggestion was made that this could form the basis of a report to the Board alongside the separate annual update to the Board concerning the work of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership in Bromsgrove District. Whilst the legislation in respect of the partnership does not enable Members to scrutinise the work of individual partner organisations, Members noted that the Council's representative on the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel could also be invited to attend the meeting when community safety and ASB is discussed, in order to assist with discussions concerning this subject.
- Changes to waste services in response to the Environment Act 2021 – Members noted that proposals detailed in the Environmental Act 2021, especially with regard to food waste collection services, would have implications for the authority and the wider District. There was general consensus amongst Members that detailed scrutiny of this subject would therefore add value.

Work Programme – Presentation

- 3.15 During the training, consideration was given by Members to the existing content of the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Work Programme and the appropriate layout of this document.
- 3.16 It was noted that in recent years, standing administrative items have been included on the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme. Whilst these items may continue to be included on the agenda, they do not form the basis generally of substantive items on the agenda. Therefore, the suggestion was made that these items did not necessarily need to be listed on the work programme for consideration at every meeting and instead the focus could be on substantive items. This would potentially help Members to manage the Board's workload.
- 3.17 Reference was also made to the inclusion of a reserve list of items on the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Work Programme and Members noted that substantive items could be listed in this section of the work programme where no date had or could yet be set for consideration of those subjects.
- 3.18 Taking into account these suggestions, a draft updated Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme has been produced at Appendix 2 to

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this report. This updated work programme includes the key items for scrutiny that were identified during the training, as well as a list of items where the dates for consideration currently remain to be confirmed and a couple of other items that were already included on the work programme in the 2023/24 municipal year for Members' consideration.

- 3.19 It should be noted that as this is a draft work programme, the content can be amended by the Overview and Scrutiny Board. There also remains scope for the Board to update the content of the work programme during the course of the year to incorporate additional items that may be identified by Members. This could include items identified for pre-scrutiny during the year, as the Cabinet Work Programme is updated on an ongoing basis and published at the start of each month.
- 3.20 Whilst the dates of scheduled meetings of the Board have been recorded on the draft work programme, it should be noted that Members could convene additional meetings during the year where necessary.
- 3.21 Members are also asked to note the role of the Finance and Budget Working Group. Many reports scheduled for consideration by the Cabinet, which focus on financial matters, are routinely reported to the Finance and Budget Working Group for consideration. Meetings of the group need to take place prior to Board meetings, so that any recommendations arising from the working group can be reported to the Board.

Other Points Raised

- 3.22 During the session, reference was made to the way in which items are identified in the Cabinet Work Programme. Members suggested that there was a need for the narrative to be clearer so that the Overview and Scrutiny Board could identify the purpose of those items and make a reasoned determination as to whether those items would be suitable for scrutiny.
- 3.23 In addition, concerns were raised about changes to the dates when items are due to be considered by the Cabinet Work Programme and the implications that this could have for overview and scrutiny in terms of managing their work programme.
- 3.24 Consideration was also given to how Members could achieve the best outcomes through overview and scrutiny of particular subjects. The

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suggestion was made that, when considering the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme at meetings of the Board, Members could also identify some key lines of enquiry in relation to substantive items due for consideration at the following meeting of the Board. This would help Officers and other expert witnesses to prepare in advance of their attendance at meetings of the Board but would not prevent Members from asking additional questions on the subject during the meetings.

- 3.25 With this in mind, suggested wording has been included on the draft Overview and Scrutiny work programme, At Appendix 2, which highlights the actions that Members could take in future when considering the work programme at meetings of the Board.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council has access to finite resources and it is important for Members to ensure that these are used in the most constructive way in order to effectively support the overview and scrutiny process at the Council.
- 4.2 A tool to help Members to select appropriate items for scrutiny during the year may enable the Overview and Scrutiny Board to make the best use of resources.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Board operates in accordance with relevant legislation and the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, detailed at Part 12 of the Council's constitution.
- 5.2 Whilst the Overview and Scrutiny Board may opt to consider a range of matters that can have an impact on the local community, the Board cannot scrutinise specific Licensing and Planning applications, which are subject to separate regulatory processes.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 6.1 Refresher training for Members and a review of the items that are due to be considered by the Board, scrutiny Task Groups and scrutiny Working Groups during the year should enable Members to ensure that the scrutiny function makes the best use of the resources available.

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This supports the Council's strategic purpose to be an effective and sustainable Council.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.2 There are no specific climate change implications arising from this report.
- 6.3 However, Members may consider issues relating to climate change and should have regard to the climate change implications of proposals put forward through the overview and scrutiny process during the year.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.4 There are no specific equalities and diversity implications.
- 6.5 However, Members may consider issues relating to equalities and diversity matters and should have regard to the equalities implications of proposals put forward through the overview and scrutiny process during the year.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 There is a risk that if the Overview and Scrutiny Board tries to scrutinise too many items at meetings Members may not achieve constructive outcomes from scrutiny. The advice provided at the training was that a focus on a small number of substantive items at meetings can result in better quality overview and scrutiny than consideration of lots of subjects in a shorter period of time.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Draft Scrutiny Work Prioritisation Tool

Appendix 2 – Draft Updated Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Lead Director / Head of Service	Claire Felton	14 th June 2024

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Financial Services	Pete Carpenter	17 th June 2024
Legal Services	Claire Felton	14 th June 2024

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Appendix 1 – Draft Overview and Scrutiny Work Prioritisation Tool

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

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

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

APPENDIX 2 - WORK PROGRAMME

2024-2025

RECOMMENDATION

Members are invited to consider the content of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme and in so doing to:

- 1) Identify any changes required to the content of the work programme; and
- 2) Suggest key lines of enquiry in respect of substantive items on the agenda for consideration at the next meeting of the Board.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Date of Meeting	Subject	Lead Officer / Member
25 th June 2024	<u>Substantive Item</u> Outcomes of the Overview and Scrutiny Training and Work Prioritisation Session	
	<u>Administrative item</u> WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – election of Representative	
23 rd July 2024	<u>Substantive item</u> Council Biodiversity Policy – Overview (deferred to July due to elections)	Ruth Bamford, Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services
	Impact of Heatwaves Task Group – Final Report	Councillor Mick Marshall
	<u>Information Item</u> Local Heritage Action List – Quarterly Up	Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager
10 th September 2024	<u>Substantive Items</u>	
	Play Audit – Initial Overview and Discussion	Ishrat Karimi-Fini, Cultural Services and Parks Manager

Agenda Item 5

Date of Meeting	Subject	Lead Officer / Member
19 th November 2024	<u>Substantive items:</u>	
	Pre-Decision Scrutiny – Bromsgrove Play Audit and Investment Strategy final report	Ishrat Karimi-Fini, Cultural Services and Parks Manager
	6-Month Review of Working Arrangements - Hybrid Leader and Cabinet Governance Model	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Democratic & Property Services (Monitoring Officer)
	<u>Information item</u> Local Heritage Action List – Quarterly Update	Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager
6 th January 2025	<u>Substantive Item</u>	
11 th February 2025	<u>Substantive Item</u> Medium Term Financial Plan – Tranche 2 Budget including Fees and Charges (following consultation) – including any recommendations on the subject arising from the Finance and Budget Working Group	Peter Carpenter, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer
	<u>Information Item</u> Local Heritage Action List – Quarterly Update	Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager
25 th March 2025	<u>Substantive Item</u>	
15 th April 2025 (meeting reserved for consideration of O&S Annual Report and Review of 2024-25)	<u>Substantive Item</u> Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2024-25	Chairman of the Board

Agenda Item 5

ITEMS FOR WHICH DATES ARE STILL TO BE CONFIRMED

	Scrutiny of North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (There is a legal requirement to review this every year)	Bev Houghton, Community Safety Manager
	Scrutiny of Anti-Social Behaviour (it is suggested this be considered at the same meeting as the Community Safety Partnership update - one of the three key themes identified at the Overview and Scrutiny training)	
	Changes to Waste Services including Food Waste Collections – Overview (One of the three key themes identified at the Overview and Scrutiny training)	Guy Revans, Executive Director
	Levelling Up Funding Projects in Bromsgrove – Update (It was suggested that the Overview and Scrutiny training that this could be referred for the consideration of the Finance and Budget Working Group instead)	Peter Carpenter, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer
	New Build Affordable Housing in Bromsgrove – Overview Briefing	Ruth Bamford, Head of Planning, Regeneration & Leisure
	Bromsgrove District Council Plan (Date dependent on consideration by the Cabinet)	Sue Hanley, Chief Executive
	Update on the Artrix	Representatives of the Artrix Holding Trust

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Finance and Budget Working Group

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor S. R. Colella
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services
Report Author: Mat Sliwinski	Job Title: Democratic Services Officer Contact email: mateusz.sliwinski@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Wards Affected	N/A
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	N/A
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Overview and Scrutiny Board is asked to:-

- a) Appoint a Chairman of the Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group;**
- b) Agree the Membership of the Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group; and**
- c) Confirm the Terms of Reference of the Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group was set up by the Overview and Scrutiny Board a number of years ago to carry out detailed scrutiny of a number of Financial Reports (listed in the Terms of Reference) and to assist in scrutiny of the Council's budget setting.
- 2.2 The purpose of this report is to formalise the membership of the Group for 2024-25 and to confirm that the terms of reference (updated during the 2022-23 municipal year) remain relevant.

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3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

3.1 Chairman

Historically the Chairman of the Working Group has been the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board. Members are asked to consider whether they are happy with this arrangement to continue for the forthcoming municipal year. If this is not the case, then consideration needs to be given as to how a Chairman would be appointed.

3.2 Membership

It has been agreed within the terms of reference that the Working Group be composed of the Chairman of the Audit, Standards & Governance Committee and 6 Members of the Board with a quorum of 3. Working Groups are not required to be politically balanced, although it would be good practice to have each political group represented.

Members are asked to choose the membership of the Working Group (Cabinet members cannot be represented). For any Member wishing to sit on the Working Group, meetings have been scheduled for this year as per below, although there may be a need for extra meetings when the need is identified, particularly during the budget setting period.

- 18th July 2024
- 5th September 2024
- 18th November 2024
- 2nd January 2025
- 10th February 2025
- 19th March 2025

All meetings are due to start at 6.00pm and will be held remotely (on Microsoft Teams).

The Chairman of the Audit, Standards & Governance Committee will be contacted about his membership on the Working Group in due course.

3.3 Terms of Reference

The terms of reference are reviewed at the beginning of each municipal year since the inception of the Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group.

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Members are asked to consider whether they feel that these continue to be relevant or whether there is a need for any amendments to be made. The terms of reference are not exhaustive and from time to time the Working Group have considered a number of items at the request of the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance. It remains at the discretion of the Working Group as to whether they carry out these additional pieces of work.

Last year, the Overview and Scrutiny Board has requested that the final Medium Term Financial Plan – Tranche 2 Budget report be considered as an item at a regular meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Board.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications in respect of this report. Although it should be noted that there are resource implications in respect of officer time in attending and preparing for the meetings.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications relating to this report, other than those in respect of the Overview and Scrutiny function as a whole. The Working Group is currently not constituted, but merely an arrangement set up by the Overview and Scrutiny Board to improve its working going forward in respect of scrutinising the budget and finances of the Council.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 6.1 The work of the Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group contributes towards ensuring that the Council continues to provide sustainable services to its residents.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.2 There are no climate change implications in respect of this report.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

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- 6.3 There are no direct customer/equalities and diversity implications in respect of this report.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 No specific risks have been identified.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference of the Finance & Budget Scrutiny Working Group (updated January 2023).

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD Finance & Budget Scrutiny Working Group

Terms of Reference

This Terms of Reference shall apply from the start of the 2024/25 Municipal Year

The Finance & Budget Scrutiny Working Group has been set up by the Overview & Scrutiny Board to carry out detailed scrutiny/pre-scrutiny of a number of Financial Reports (listed below) and the setting of the Council's budget.

1. The Working Group shall comprise 7 Members, to be made up of 6 Members (who are Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board) plus the Chairman of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee. The quorum shall be 3. The Working Group will meet throughout the year at intervals dependent upon the reports to be considered. It is anticipated that this will be most frequent during the budget setting period.
2. Should a vacant post remain after members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board had been approached, members of the Overview and Scrutiny "pool" (i.e. those who do not sit on the Scrutiny Board and are also not Cabinet Members) may be appointed to fill the vacancy.
3. The update on the Working Group will be a standing item on the agenda of the Overview & Scrutiny Board and either a verbal or written report will be provided at each of the Board's meetings.
4. The Working Group is able to make recommendations in one of two ways (dependent on the timescales of its meetings and the reports it considers); by reporting back to the Overview & Scrutiny Board, which will then put forward its recommendations for consideration by Cabinet or directly to Cabinet/Council.
5. The work of the Working Group will be reviewed as part of the Overview & Scrutiny Board's annual report process.

The Working Group will scrutinise the following reports, which had previously been part of the Overview & Scrutiny Board's Work Programme:

- Finance Monitoring Report (on a quarterly basis)
- Write Off of Debts Report (received annually)

Budget Scrutiny

Scrutiny of the budget will cover the following areas, although this list is not exclusive.

- Full review of the cost centres for actual spend, involving comparable figures for consecutive years.
- Assessing income levels.

Agenda Item 6

- Considering the quarterly budget monitoring report.
- Reviewing the capital programme and borrowing costs.
- Commenting on the report format for budget reports to Committee.
- Considering links to the strategic purposes.
- Scrutinise business cases in respect of investment opportunities identified by the Council.
- Investigating new pressures on savings.
- Reviewing reserves and balances.
- Assessing any sources of external funding that has been received.

CABINET LEADER'S WORK PROGRAMME

1 JULY 2024 TO 31 OCTOBER 2024
(published as at 14th June 2024)

This Work Programme gives details of items on which key decisions are likely to be taken in the coming four months by the Council's Cabinet

The Work Programme gives details of items on which key decisions are likely to be taken by the Council's Cabinet, or full Council, in the coming four months. **Key Decisions** are those executive decisions which are likely to:

- (i) result in the Council incurring expenditure, foregoing income or the making of savings in excess of £200,000 or which are otherwise significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- (ii) be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the district;

If you wish to make representations on the proposed decision you are encouraged to get in touch with the relevant report author as soon as possible before the proposed date of the decision. Contact details are provided, alternatively you may write to the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services, Parkside, Market Street, B61 8DA or e-mail: democratic@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

The Cabinet's meetings are normally held every four weeks at 6pm on Wednesday evenings at Parkside. They are open to the public, except when confidential information is being discussed. If you wish to attend for a particular matter, it is advisable to check with the Democratic Services Team on (01527 64252 ext 3031) to make sure it is going ahead as planned. If you have any queries Democratic Services Officers will be happy to advise you. The full Council meets in accordance with the Councils Calendar of Meetings. Meetings commence at 6pm.

CABINET MEMBERSHIP

Councillor K J May	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships and Enabling
Councillor S. Baxter	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Regeneration
Councillor S. Colella	Cabinet Member for Finance
Councillor B. McEldowney	Cabinet Member for Leisure and Climate Change
Councillor K. Taylor	Cabinet Member for Planning, Licensing and Worcestershire Regulatory Services
Councillor S. Webb	Cabinet Member for Health and Well Being and Strategic Housing
Councillor P. Whittaker	Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Community Safety

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Audit, Governance and Standards Committee Annual Report 2023/24 Key: Yes	Council Not before 17th Jul 2024		Report of the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	Mateusz Sliwinski, Democratic Services Officer
Bromsgrove District Council Plan Key: Yes	Council Not before 17th Jul 2024 Cabinet 17 Jul 2024		Report of the Chief Executive	Helen Mole, Business Improvement Manager Tel: 01527 881685 Councillor K. J. May
Levelling Up Update on Windsor Street Contract and Market Hall Development Key: Yes	Cabinet 17 Jul 2024 Council 17 Jul 2024	This report will include exempt information that will need to be considered in private session.	Report of the Deputy Chief Executive	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor K. J. May, Councillor S. J. Baxter

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Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24 Key: Yes	Council Not before 17th Jul 2024		Report of the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	Mateusz Sliwinski, Democratic Services Officer
Productivity Plans Key: Yes	Cabinet 17 Jul 2024		Report of the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor K. J. May
Recommissioning of the Promoting Independent Living Service (Home Improvement Agency) Key: Yes	Cabinet 17 Jul 2024 Council 17 Jul 2024		Report of the Head of Community and Housing Services	Matthew Bough, Housing Development and Enabling Manager Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor S. A. Webb

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Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Cabinet Appointments to Outside Bodies Key: No	Cabinet 24 Jul 2024		Report of the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Deemocratic and Property Services Tel: 01527 881429 Councillor K. J. May
Cost of Living Proposal - Update Key: Yes	Cabinet 24 Jul 2024		Report of the Head of Community and Housing Services	Judith Willis, Head of Community and Housing Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3284 Councillor K. J. May
District Heat Network Revisions Key: Yes	Cabinet 24 Jul 2024		Report of the Head of Community and Housing Services	Judith Willis, Head of Community and Housing Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3284 Councillor S. R. Colella, Councillor B. M. McEldowney

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Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Levelling Up - Update Key: Yes	Cabinet 24 Jul 2024	This report may contain exempt information which would need to be considered in private session.	Report of the Deputy Chief Executive	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor K. J. May
Performance Outturn Reports 2021/2022, 2022/2023, 2023/2024 Key: No	Cabinet 24 Jul 2024		Report of the Head of Finance and Customer Services	Debra Goodall, Head of Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070 Councillor S. R. Colella
Performance Outturn Report 2023/24 Key: No	Cabinet 24 Jul 2024 Council 9 Oct 2024		Report of the Interim Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor S. R. Colella

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Q4 Revenue Monitoring 2023/2024 (including Update on the Fleet) Key: Yes	Cabinet 24 Jul 2024		Report of the Head of Finance and Customer Services	Debra Goodall, Head of Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070 Councillor S. R. Colella
Page 14 of 14 Treasury Management Outturn Report Key: No	Cabinet 24 Jul 2024 Council 9 Oct 2024		Report of the Head of Finance and Customer Services	Debra Goodall, Head of Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070 Councillor S. R. Colella
Bromsgrove District Plan Consultation Key: No	Cabinet 11 Sep 2024 Council 9 Oct 2024		Report of the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services	Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager Tel: 01527 881325 Councillor K. Taylor

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Draft Council Tax Support 2025/2026 (prior to consultation) Key: No	Cabinet 11 Sep 2024		Report of the Head of Finance and Customer Services	Debra Goodall, Head of Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070 Councillor S. R. Colella
Financial Recovery Programme Report Key: Yes	Cabinet 11 Sep 2024		Report of the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor S. R. Colella
Food Waste Business Case and Associated Waste Related Issues Key: Yes	Cabinet Not before 11th Sep 2024	This report may contain exempt information which may need to be considered in private session.	Report of the Executive Director (Leisure, Environmental and Community Services)	Guy Revans, Executive Director (Interim) Tel: 01527 64252 ext 3292 Councillor P. J. Whittaker

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Council

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Initial Budget Setting Report Key: Yes	Cabinet 11 Sep 2024		Report of the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor S. R. Colella
Medium Term Financial Plan - Tranche 1 Budget including Fees and Charges (prior to consultation) Key: No	Cabinet 11 Sep 2024		Report of the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor S. R. Colella
Q1 Revenue and Performance Monitoring 2024/2025 Key: Yes	Cabinet 11 Sep 2024		Report of the Head of Finance and Customer Services	Debra Goodall, Head of Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070 Councillor S. R. Colella

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Young Persons Independent Living Supported Accommodation Key: Yes	Cabinet 11 Sep 2024		Report of the Head of Community and Housing Services	Amanda Delahunty, Strategic Housing Officer Tel: 01527 881269 Councillor S. A. Webb
Bromsgrove Draft Air Quality Action Plan Key: No	Cabinet 20 Nov 2024		Report of the Head of Community and Housing Services	Judith Willis, Head of Community and Housing Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3284 Councillor K. Taylor
Bromsgrove Play Audit and Investment Strategy Key: Yes	Cabinet 20 Nov 2024		Report of the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services	Ishrat Karimi Fini, Parks and Events Service Manager Tel: 07713 085872 Councillor B. M. McEldowney

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Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Carbon Reduction Strategy and Implementation Plan - Annual Review Key: No	Cabinet 20 Nov 2024 Council 4 Dec 2024		Report of the Head of Community and Housing Services	Matthew Eccles, Climate Change Manager Councillor B. M. McEldowney
Half Yearly Treasury Management Report Key: No	Cabinet 20 Nov 2024 Council 4 Dec 2024		Report of the Head of Finance and Customer Services	Debra Goodall, Head of Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070 Councillor S. R. Colella

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Medium Term Financial Plan - Tranche 1 Budget including Fees and Charges (following consultation) Key: No	Cabinet 20 Nov 2024 Council 4 Dec 2024		Report of the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor S. R. Colella
2022 Revenue and Performance Monitoring 2024/2025 Key: Yes	Cabinet 20 Nov 2024		Report of the Head of Finance and Customer Services	Debra Goodall, Head of Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070 Councillor S. R. Colella
Council Tax Base 2025/2026 Key: No	Cabinet 7 Jan 2025 Council 22 Jan 2025		Report of the Head of Finance and Customer Services	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor S. R. Colella

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Discretionary Reduction - Council Tax Section 13a1(C) Policy Key: Yes	Cabinet 7 Jan 2025 Council 22 Jan 2025		Report of the Head of Finance and Customer Services	Debra Goodall, Head of Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070 Councillor S. R. Colella
Council Tax Empty Homes Discounts and Premiums Key: Yes	Cabinet 7 Jan 2025 Council 22 Jan 2025		Report of the Head of Finance and Customer Services	Debra Goodall, Head of Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070 Councillor S. R. Colella

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Final Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/2026 Key: Yes	Cabinet 7 Jan 2025 Council 22 Jan 2025		Report of the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor S. R. Colella
Non-Domestic Rates Discretionary Rate Relief Policy Key: Yes	Cabinet 7 Jan 2025 Council 22 Jan 2025		Report of the Head of Finance and Customer Service	Debra Goodall, Head of Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070 Councillor S. R. Colella

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Medium Term Financial Plan - Tranche 2 Budget including Fees and Charges (following consultation) Key: No	Cabinet 12 Feb 2025 Council 19 Feb 2025		Report of the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor S. R. Colella
Pay Policy 2025/2026 Key: No	Cabinet 12 Feb 2025 Council 19 Feb 2025		Report of the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)	Becky Talbot, Human Resources & Development Manager Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor S. R. Colella

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Council Tax Resolutions 2025/2026 Key: No	Cabinet 19 Feb 2025 Council 19 Feb 2025		Report of the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor S. R. Colella
Finance Recovery Programme Report Key: No	Cabinet 26 Mar 2025		Report of the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor S. R. Colella
Q3 Revenue and Performance Monitoring 24/5 Key: Yes	Cabinet 26 Mar 2025		Report of the Head of Finance and Customer Services	Debra Goodall, Head of Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070 Councillor S. R. Colella

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Appendix – Explanation of Items on the Cabinet Forward Plan

1. Audit, Standards and Governance Committee Annual Report 2023/24

Report on the activities of the Committee, presented to the Council annually.

2. Bromsgrove District Council Plan

The new Council Plan for Bromsgrove District Council which details its strategic purposes.

3. Levelling Up Update on Windsor Street Contract and Market Hall Development

The report sets out progress on delivery of specific Levelling Up projects in the Bromsgrove Town Centre.

4. Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24

Report on the activities of Overview and Scrutiny Board and its sub-committees and task / working groups. Presented to the Council annually.

5. Productivity Plans

The details of this item will be provided at the meeting.

6. Recommissioning of the Promoting Independent Living Service (Home Improvement Agency)

A report on the recommissioning of the contract for Home Improvement Agency – a service to support people to make modifications to their homes (including through Disabled Facilities Grant).

7. Cabinet Appointments to Outside Bodies

The report sets out Cabinet's proposals regarding Member appointments to outside Bodies.

8. Cost of Living Proposal – Update

An update on the use of funding agreed for use towards Cost-of-Living initiatives, as agreed by Council in April 2024.

9. District Heat Network Revisions

Due to technological changes to how District Heat Networks operate, to consider a revised delivery model to that initially agreed by Council.

10. Levelling Up – Update

The report sets out progress on delivery of Levelling Up projects in the Bromsgrove Town Centre.

11. Outturn Reports 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24

This report updates on the Council's 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24 outturn (achieved) financial positions. and performance position in 2023-24.

12. Performance Outturn Report 2023/24

The report to update members on the Council's 2023/24 outturn (achieved) performance position in 2023-24.

13. Q4 Revenue Monitoring 2023/24 (including Update on the Fleet)

To provide a current financial position in relation to Revenue Budget for the period January to March 2024 (2023-24). The report also provides an update on the position regarding the Council's Waste Vehicles Fleet.

14. Treasury Management Outturn Report

Treasury Outturn Report for 2023/24 includes the outturn position on the Council's Capital and Treasury Management Strategies, including all prudential indicators.

15. Bromsgrove District Plan Consultation

A report on the consultation with regard to the Local Plan (development) for Bromsgrove District.

16. Draft Council Tax Support 2025/26 (prior to consultation)

The council is required by section 13A(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (LGFA '92) to make a council tax reduction (CTR) scheme specifying the reductions in council tax that will be provided to people who are in financial need, or to classes of people who are in general in financial need. This report provides draft proposals.

17. Financial Recovery Programme Report

This report set out the progress on processes the Council has been following to rectify a deterioration in its financial position and processes due to the impact of the implementation of a new financial system in February 2021 during the Covid-19 pandemic period.

18. Food Waste Business Case and Associated Waste Related Issues

A report on the business case for the food waste collection service. Also an update on the associated issues regarding waste service.

19. Initial Budget Setting Report

An initial report regarding the setting of Council Revenue Budget for 2025-26.

20. Medium Term Financial Plan – Tranche 1 Budget including Fees and Charges (prior to consultation)

The Council proposes to set its budget in two Tranches for 2025/26 to 2027/28 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) process. This Tranche 1 report is the initial budget proposal to be considered for approval in Autumn 2024, prior to consultation.

21. Q1 Revenue and Performance Monitoring 2024/25

To provide a current financial position in relation to Revenue Budgets for the period April to June 2024 (2024-25). The report also provides a position on the organisational performance measures, as of Quarter 1 (up to end of June 2024).

22. Young Persons Independent Living Supported Accommodation

A report detailing a proposal for supported accommodation for young people with disabilities.

23. Bromsgrove Draft Air Quality Action Plan

The draft action plan to deliver improvements in air quality in Bromsgrove.

24. Bromsgrove Play Audit and Investment Strategy

A review of all play areas in the District, including an accessibility assessment and identification of gaps in provision. The play audit will consider how future play provision could be designed to improve the overall accessibility of play provision and address any gaps.

25. Carbon Reduction Strategy and Implementation Plan – Annual Review

Annual review of progress in meeting targets and delivering the Carbon Reduction Strategy and a review of the implementation plan.

26. Half Yearly Treasury Management Report

A half yearly update on the Council's Capital and Treasury Management Strategies, including all prudential indicators.

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

The Council proposes to set its budget in two Tranches for 2025/26 to 2027/28 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) process. This Tranche 1 report is the initial budget proposal to be considered for approval in Autumn 2024, after consultation.

28. Q2 Revenue and Performance Monitoring 2024/2025

To provide a current financial position in relation to Revenue Budgets for the period July to September 2024 (2024-25). The report also provides a position on the organisational performance measures, as of Quarter 2 (up to end of September 2024).

29. Council Tax Base 2025/2026

To consider a report on the Council Tax Base for 2025-26.

30. Discretionary Reduction - Council Tax Section 13a1(C) Policy

The council has the power under section 13A(1)(C) of The Local Government Finance Act 1992 (LGFA '92) to reduce the amount of council tax that a person is liable to pay. The section 13A(1)(C) power may be exercised on a case-by-case basis or by determining a class of case in which the liability will be reduced.

31. Council Tax Empty Homes Discounts and Premiums

Details the Council's policies regarding reduction or removal of the discount for unoccupied dwellings and, in the case of long-term empty homes, regarding policies on imposing a council tax premium.

32. Final Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/2026

The council is required by section 13A(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (LGFA '92) to make a council tax reduction (CTR) scheme specifying the reductions in council tax that will be provided to people who are in financial need, or to classes of people who are in general in financial need.

33. Non-Domestic Rates Discretionary Rate Relief Policy

Section 47 of The Local Government Finance Act 1988 [the act] provides Local Authorities with the power to award discretionary rate relief, to charitable and other non-profit making organisations that meet certain criteria. This policy also provided Council's framework for delivering discretionary relief – including retail relief and supporting small business relief.

34. Medium Term Financial Plan - Tranche 2 Budget including Fees and Charges (following consultation)

The Council proposes to set its budget in two Tranches for 2025/26 to 2027/28 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) process. This Tranche 2 report is the final budget proposal to be considered for approval in February 2025.

35. Pay Policy 2025/2026

A statement that sets out Council's policies relating to remuneration of its chief officers, lowest paid employees and the relationship between the remuneration of its chief officers and its employees who are not chief officers.

36. Council Tax Resolutions 2025/2026

To approve the calculated Council Tax base for 2025-26 and approve the Council Tax requirement (Council approval).

37. Finance Recovery Programme Report

This report set out the progress on processes the Council has been following to rectify a deterioration in its financial position and processes due to the impact of the implementation of a new financial system in February 2021 during the Covid-19 pandemic period.

38. Q3 Revenue and Performance Monitoring 24/5

To provide a current financial position in relation to Revenue Budget for the period October to December 2024 (2024-25). The report also provides a position on the organisational performance measures, as of Quarter 3 (up to end of December 2024).

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

22ND APRIL 2024, 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, S. A. Robinson and H. D. N. Rone-Clarke

Observers:

Councillor S. J. Baxter (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Regeneration)

Councillor K. Taylor (Cabinet Member for Planning, Licensing and WRS)

Councillor S. A. Webb (Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing and Strategic Housing)

Councillor M. Marshall

Officers: Mr. G. Revans, Ms J. Willis, Mrs. C. Felton, Mr S. Parry, Mrs. J. Bayley-Hill, Mr M. Austin, Mr. M. Bough and Mr. M. Dunphy, and Mr. M. Sliwinski

98/23

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor J. D. Stanley.

99/23

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS

Councillor A. Bailes declared an Other Disclosable Interest in relation to Agenda Item Number 15, Minute Number 112/23 – Parking Enforcement Consultancy, as he was a Manager of a Consultancy specialising in Transport Planning, Traffic Engineering, Sustainable Transport, Parking, and Transport Economics. Councillor A. Bailes confirmed that the Consultancy did not operate in Bromsgrove District.

Councillor A. Bailes remained in the meeting for consideration of this item and took part in the debate thereon.

There were no further Declarations of Interest.

100/23

GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS REVIEW - IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS UPDATE

The Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services introduced the report which provided details of the outcomes of the last meeting of the Constitution Review Working Group (CRWG) which took place on 12th March 2024. It was reported that various changes to the Council's constitution were discussed at that meeting, details of which were included in the report. The Board was asked to determine whether to endorse the CRWG recommendations for onward consideration by Cabinet and full Council.

Following the presentation, Members asked a number of questions and the following was noted:

- Proposal to remove reference to the former Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) from the Joint Arrangements document – It was noted that reference to GBSLEP was being removed from the Council's constitution because the organisation was no longer in existence.
- Changing the location of Planning call in process in the Council's Constitution – The review of the Council's constitution found that guidance in respect of the call in process for planning applications was not placed in the most logical position. It was therefore proposed that it should be incorporated into the Planning Procedure Rules at Part 14 of the Constitution, as detailed in Appendix B to the report.
- Arrangements regarding Planning site visits – It was proposed by CRWG that temporary arrangements regarding site visits, introduced as a result of the covid-19 pandemic, be removed from the constitution. In response to a question about frequency of planning site visits, Members were advised to contact the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services separately about the subject.
- Clarification on the proposed changes to the Scrutiny Procedure Rules in respect of the types of items that would not be accepted for Overview and Scrutiny Board consideration and in respect of when a subject might not be debated by the Board – Members were of the view that the term 'significant' was imprecise when used in the last sentence of the first bullet point of paragraph 3.14 in the report. This stated: *"It is therefore proposed that the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules should be amended so as to clarify that a subject may not be considered at a meeting if it has previously been debated at a meeting of the Board held in the preceding 6 months, unless there has been a significant change in circumstances"*
- It was felt by Members that the closing clause of the above sentence should read: *"significant in the opinion of the Chairman, having discussed it with Officers"*. Officers undertook to incorporate this into the updated document to be presented to Cabinet.

- Reference was made to the Member Enquiries Guidance - 'Best Practice for Handling Members' Enquiries' - document proposed as an appendix to Part 22 of the Council's Constitution. It was felt that this document was much needed in terms of defining the level of service that Councillors could expect from Officers, and responsiveness to elected member enquiries.

Following the discussion, recommendations as printed in the report were proposed, seconded, and, being voted upon, agreed.

RECOMMENDED

- 1) That the Joint Arrangements, at Part 7 of the constitution, be updated, as detailed in Appendix A;
- 2) That the Planning Procedure Rules, at Part 14 of the constitution, be updated, as detailed in Appendix B and the Planning Call In process be removed from the Officer Scheme of Delegations at Part 6 of the constitution;
- 3) That the Scrutiny Procedure Rules, at Part 12 of the constitution, be updated as detailed in Appendix C;
- 4) That the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee Procedure Rules, at Part 13 of the constitution, be updated as detailed in Appendix D;
- 5) That the amendments to the Member Officer Relations Protocol, at Part 22 of the constitution, whereby the Member Enquiries Guidance should be added as an appendix to that part of the constitution, be approved; and
- 6) That the Committee terms of reference for the Licensing (Miscellaneous) Sub-Committees A and B for the number of Councillors be amended as detailed in Appendix F.

101/23

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 by HOSC at its meetings on 15th March 2024 and 16th April 2024. Members were provided with a written copy of the updates provided by Councillor B. Kumar. Some of the points highlighted for Members' consideration included:

- An inspection of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust (including Hill Crest Mental Health Ward) had taken place, and the Trust was given an overall rating of 'Requires Improvement' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Concerns

were raised in particular about staffing levels and patient experience at the Hill Crest Mental Health Ward in Redditch.

- Acute Dermatology Service Provision – It was reported that a series of resignations and retirements by Consultants and the Trust's difficulty in recruiting permanent staff, were having an adverse impact on dermatology services, including longer waiting times. However, the Trust had made interim arrangements and a contract with a private sector provider, HealthHarmonie, had eased the impact.
- Cancer detection in Worcestershire – Worcestershire was reported as having good rates of cancer detection at 60 per cent which compared favourably with the England average of 54.1 per cent. Various agencies were involved in optimising early cancer detection, for example the use of Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) in primary care to identify patients at risk of having colorectal cancer. It was noted that take up rates for cancer screening, including cancer screening programme for women, bowel cancer, breast screening rates were higher than the national average in Worcestershire.
- Routine Immunisation – It was reported that there was a high level of take up of the MMR vaccine in Worcestershire at 90 per cent compared to 83 per cent nationally.

Following the update, Members asked about an improvement plan for the Hill Crest Mental Health Ward in the context of long-term issues at that setting. Councillor B. Kumar explained that there were persistent issues with this Mental Health Ward which included a shortage of staff and contract arrangements in place whereby in the event of lack of beds at the facility patients were being transferred to a unit in Wales. Furthermore, the Ward was old and dilapidated.

A reference was made to the Impact of Heatwaves Short Sharp Review currently taking place and the importance of the Council providing awareness, particularly the young and people with fair skin, about the dangers of direct exposure to strong sunlight.

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

102/23

IMPACT OF HEATWAVES SHORT SHARP REVIEW - TERMS OF REFERENCE

Councillor M. Marshall introduced the item, having been appointed Chairman of the Impact of Heatwaves Short Sharp Review at its first meeting. Councillor M. Marshall recapped on the background to the decision to launch this review. It was noted that full Council agreed on 24th January 2024 to commission the Overview and Scrutiny Board to undertake a review of the impact of extreme heat events.

Councillor M. Marshall provided a detailed explanation of the aims of the Short Sharp Review as set out in the Terms of Reference. It was reported that the first meeting was held on 26th March 2024, which was attended by Public Health Officer from Worcestershire County Council and a representative from Applied Resilience, an organisation providing Emergency Planning service to the Council.

It was highlighted there was plenty of resources already available to the public regarding heatwave risk and protection. A number of public agencies were aware of this issue and had procedures in place. The key aims of this Review were to identify ways to improve coordination between agencies with regard to heatwave events planning and to ensure there were readily accessible resources available advising residents on how to prepare for heatwaves.

In response to a question, it was reported that the next meeting would be held on 24th April 2024. It was planned that meetings of the Short Sharp Review Group would take place once per month and it was hoped the investigation could be concluded by July 2024.

RESOLVED that the Terms of Reference for the Impact of Heatwaves Short Sharp Review be approved and that Councillor M. Marshall be confirmed as the Chairman of the Short Sharp Review.

103/23

REPROFILING OF CAPITAL FLEET REPLACEMENT BUDGET - DOMESTIC WASTE FLEET

[At the discretion of the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Board, this item was moved forward to be considered as item 6 on the agenda].

The Environmental Services Manager provided a report on reprofiling of capital fleet replacement budget and in doing so noted that in 2021, as part of a review of Council finances, the decision was taken to extend the life of operational refuse fleet vehicles by an extra year, from 7 to 8 years, before replacement. At that time, it was also decided to start refurbishing Waste Collection Vehicles to extend their life by a further period in order to reduce capital expenditure on new vehicles and make savings that could be put towards the future purchase of more expensive energy efficient vehicles, as part of the Council's carbon reduction ambitions.

It was reported that as part of the decision in 2021, no appropriate allowance was made for the operational impact that refurbishment, which removed multiple vehicles from use for extended periods and required the use of hire vehicles to support service delivery. This had resulted in unbudgeted revenue pressure. In addition, the first few vehicles took around 12 months to be refurbished due to parts and supply issues that were affecting the sector in 2022-23. Subsequent vehicles had also overrun on planned refurbishment timescales, resulting in significant unbudgeted costs on hire vehicles.

The delays in refurbishment timescales and the need to prioritise work on the Waste Collection fleet (Domestic & Commercial) had impacted on the availability of other vehicles required for statutory services such as road sweepers, Place Team vans for litter picking and fly tip removal. There had also been impact on discretionary and chargeable services such as the District Public Toilet cleaner's vehicle, and WRS's dog warden van, impacting on income generation of these services.

It was reported that in light of the increased costs and operational challenges arising from extended operational lifespans of the vehicles, overruns on refurbishment periods, and staffing issues within the workshop, it was proposed to revert to a seven-year replacement cycle on the Council's Waste fleet, and to re-profile the Capital Fleet Replacement budgets to support the purchase of replacement vehicles.

It was proposed that revenue funding be increased to support the ongoing use of hire vehicles to safeguard operational service delivery of the waste service during 2024-25. Revenue pressures were anticipated at £88,000 in 2024-25, £342,000 in 2025-26, and £372,000 in 2026-27 before a reduction in revenue payments as a result of bringing the replacement costs forward would result in predicted revenue saving of £339,000 in 2028-29, £660,000 in 2029-30, and £644,000 in 2030-31. The next vehicle replacement cycle would then be due in the 2031-32 financial year, when alternative types of vehicles, including electric-powered refuse vehicles, might become a more viable option for the Council.

It was also proposed that as part of reprofiling of capital fleet there be a purchase of 10 new internal combustion (ICE) refuse collection vehicles (at £210,000 per vehicle) in the 2024-25 financial year with a further 10 vehicles over 2025-26 and 2026-27 financial years. It was noted that with no current timescale for the rationalisation/relocation of the Council Depot Spaces, it was unlikely the Council would be in a position to invest in alternative-fuel vehicles before 2030. It was planned that instead, in 2024-25 the diesel internal combustion engine (ICE) fleet vehicles would be used with 30 per cent use of HVO (Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil) to support the Council's carbon reduction objective.

Following the report presentation, a number of matters were discussed by Members as follows:

- Approaching other authorities about purchase of refuse vehicles – It was reported that the Council did approach other authorities regarding how they utilise refuse vehicle fleet. Based on those conversations, it was apparent that many authorities continued to use internal combustion (ICE) vehicles. It was noted that there was an additional complexity in the Council approaching other authorities about the purchase of refuse vehicles in that Bromsgrove was one of only two authorities in the country having diamond lift bins. This led to considerable difficulties as the authority would need to find vehicles on the second-hand market

with compatible lifting mechanism (diamond lift) and such vehicles were highly uncommon across the UK.

- Member consultation on investment in refuse vehicles in 2024-25 – Members requested that, given the scale of investment in new refuse vehicles, an update be provided to Overview and Scrutiny Board once the process of purchasing of the 10 refuse vehicles had progressed to procurement stage.
- Costs set out in the report were solely for Bromsgrove District Council. It was noted that a similar fleet replacement programme was in place for Redditch. Due to joint service arrangements with Redditch, the Redditch fleet was able to support Bromsgrove service, for example when Bromsgrove vehicles were being serviced or undergoing statutory inspections. Costs were clearly delineated between the two authorities.
- Number of refuse fleet in stock at Bromsgrove Council – It was noted that the combined collection fleet consisted of sixteen 26-ton vehicles, one 18-ton vehicle, and three smaller trucks operating from the Bromsgrove Depot. There were three additional vehicles on the Council's commercial waste service, with a different lifting mechanism.
- Possibility of employing apprentices at the Depot and to operate refuse vehicles – It was highlighted that currently the Council did not have sufficient staffing capacity to maintain the fleet, and needed to recourse to hiring agency staff to maintain service operation. The Council was looking at restructuring the workshop to engage fitters and fan mechanics (at slightly lower experience level) and put in place arrangements to upskill through a skill-based pay system. It was commented that once the Council was in a position of having sufficient staff to support the workshop fully, opportunities around apprentices would be explored.
- It was noted that the Council had apprentices in the past, with some of the mechanics currently employed by the Council coming through the apprentice route. An example was given of one of the apprentices working at the Redditch workshop who had recently been appointed as a senior mechanic.
- Apprentice programme – It was reported that the last apprentice programme run by the Council for HGV mechanics was undertaken approximately 6-7 years ago.
- Staffing – It was noted that HGV mechanics from Birmingham and other areas were being approached about joining Bromsgrove District Council.
- Additional revenue costs already incurred – It was reported that there had already been additional costs incurred as a result of the

need to hire waste vehicles in 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24. Additional revenue of £150,000 was proposed to be allocated in 2024-25 for hire costs. This was based on hope that the supply of new vehicles would take approximately 40 weeks. Additionally, it was hoped that garden waste fleet, which stops operating over winter, could be used to support the service to reduce costs.

- Building spare capacity into service delivery – It was noted that spare vehicle capacity was built into service plans as the Council was required to have an Operator’s Licence agreed with the Traffic Commissioner and the DVSA. As part of these rules, the Council had to undergo scheduled inspections that took place every 6-8 to ensure safety of vehicles. During inspections vehicles could be off the road for extended periods which required spare capacity to be built in to allow continuation of service.
- Waste fleet situation – It was highlighted that waste fleet was the area of the wider Environmental Services most at risk and therefore this area was being prioritised following review by the Environmental Services Manager. It was highlighted that domestic waste collection was a statutory service and delivery of consistent service in this area had to be prioritised over other services such as street cleansing.
- Street cleansing fleet – Concerns were expressed about the Council only having two street cleansing vehicles available and whether that was enough to cover Bromsgrove District.
- Accounting for inflation in the purchase of waste fleet vehicles – Inflation was accounted for in the costs of purchasing refuse vehicles with the cost for 2024-25 being £220,000 and in subsequent years this was uplifted by £5,000 per year. It was highlighted that this was an estimation at this moment.
- Modelling the number of waste fleet vehicles in need of replacement – It was reported that the entire fleet was in urgent need of replacement, with those vehicles that had been recently refurbished only having a couple of years of useful life left. The Environmental Service Manager commented that in his professional opinion obtaining new refuse vehicles was the only viable option to keep the waste disposal service in operation over the next couple of years.
- It was explained that Bromsgrove had different types of bins from Redditch. Bromsgrove had diamond lift bins. The reason for this was that in 2004 Bromsgrove received grant funding from central government to invest in new waste technology. Investment was made in a type of waste collection vehicle known as a side loader which allowed operation of reduced staff as the vehicle could pull alongside the bin by the curb edge, allowing the mechanism to reach out, grab the bin, and lift it in. The diamond mechanism helps

centre the bin on this automated mechanism. It was noted that difficulties were experienced with use of this type of vehicle and the Council had to revert back to conventional fleet service when those vehicles reached end of life.

- HVO fuel – It was reported that switching to part use of HVO fuel in ICE vehicles had no noticeable impact on fuel efficiency of fleet vehicles but resulted in a slight increase in moisture related issues when vehicles had been parked up for long periods.
- Commercial waste service – It was reported that the Council's commercial waste service, which operated across Worcestershire and parts of Warwickshire, achieved net profit of circa £180,000 in the last financial year.
- The Chairman questioned why the change to reprofiling of the Capital Fleet Budget towards the purchase of new waste fleet vehicles was not reported at the February 2024 meeting of full Council when the budget for 2024-25 was approved. The Chairman questioned why the proposal submitted to Members in February 2024 still included a plan to refurbish the fleet, and why this had changed radically as in this report in April 2024, which noted that refurbishment was not a viable option and waste vehicles had to be replaced. The Environmental Services Manager responded that the process of looking at options around the fleet started in December 2023. At the time concerns were raised by the Environmental Services Manager regarding the refurbishment of fleet vehicles as a viable option and that the waste collection service was at high risk of failure. The proposals with regarding to fleet budget were not able to being finalised before the budget setting in February 2023. However, these reprofiling proposals, including the need to provide £150,000 revenue budget for 2024-25, were presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Board at the earliest date possible after the full extent of risk became known to the Service.
- Risk of not meeting statutory obligations – The Environmental Services Manager reported that at this point the Council had not failed any of its statutory duties. The impact of the problems within the service had impacted on the timescales for removal of larger fly tips, which were taking around 6-7 days to remove but still within statutory timescales to provide cleansing duties. The concern was delivery of the Environmental Services fleet over the next two years and that if weaknesses within the fleet were not addressed the Council would breach its statutory duties.
- The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Community Safety (including Car Parking) addressed the Board and in doing so noted that elected members had been provided with the opportunity to attend a presentation on the fleet, delivered by the Interim Executive Director. The Portfolio Holder commented that at

the moment he thought the move to electric for larger fleet vehicles would be impractical due to issues with range and infrastructure.

- A Member proposed that the option of leasing the fleet vehicles with a maintenance agreement should be considered given the issues with recruitment of HGV mechanics and running maintenance costs. It was responded that due to the nature of the work delivering waste collection service there were a large number of minor accident damage. In addition, there were risks of failure to sensors and components within the lifting mechanism at any time. As such, the leasing options that were investigated by Officers were not thought to be viable due to restrictions on those leases. However, routine maintenance was outsourced as much as possible. If, at the procurement stage, there were viable lease options available, these would be considered.
- The Board considered whether it was necessary to set up a Task Group investigation due to the seriousness of the situation with regard to waste services fleet. It was noted that the Board previously agreed to being provided with a presentation on waste and recycling and implications of the Environment Act, including on a requirement to introduce food waste. This presentation would be provided at a July meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Board. It was felt by most Members that this presentation should be considered in the first instance and that no Task Group should be set up for the time being.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

104/23

AGILE WORKING - UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION

An update in relation to Members' questions on the Council's Agile Working was provided. The responses were provided in the briefing note. The following additional queries were raised at the meeting:

- 1) Review of the title 'Agile working' as it might be misconstrued as in project management terms it was a way of implementing large projects. Officers undertook to review the title as the initiative was important for recruitment and retention.

It was asked whether space utilisation exercise was being undertaken on a regular basis to identify issues such as double-booking of hot desk spaces within Council Offices and/or under-utilisation of shared space. The Executive Director undertook to ascertain whether space utilisation checks were being carried out by the Agile Project Team in relation to the hot desking booking system.

The Interim Executive Director explained that the Agile Project Team had a Project Manager who reported to the Agile Board. The Board was chaired by the Council's Chief Executive. It was noted that the majority of office-based staff at the Council were signed up to agile working

arrangements. It was highlighted that some staff were required to be available on site during all contracted hours due to the nature of their jobs. This applied for example to refuse collectors or staff employed at the depot. In general, service requirements took priority over agile arrangements so, when necessary, working patterns were adjusted to suit service requirements. Members requested that they be provided with quantitative data on the take up (number and proportion of staff) of agile working across the Council.

- 2) Investigate the possibility of introducing a follow up to measure satisfaction with customers' interaction with services. For example, a form of trustpilot-style of providing feedback when customers interact with service areas.

A Member commented that the Council needed to be able to measure Members' satisfaction with responsiveness of service areas to elected member enquiries. A question was asked concerning why the Council used a survey company to create a pilot survey for customers. It was responded that surveys produced by the Council in house generally had low response rates; a survey company would offer expertise that was hoped would result in greater engagement with this pilot. Members requested that details with regard to the cost of engaging survey company be provided.

- 3) Progress on increasing responsiveness of officers to member enquiries and what progress had been made in looking at this issue so far by the project team.

It was noted that the 'Best Practice for Handling Member Enquiries' document, as presented under item 3 (Minute No. 100/23), was endorsed by the Board. This document provided details of the process which would be followed when Members raise complaints / compliments in relation to officer responsiveness.

In summary, the following information was requested by Members:

- Whether a space utilisation exercise was being carried out periodically to determine the effectiveness of hot desking;
- Number and proportion of overall Council staff that had taken up agile working;
- The cost of engaging a survey company to work on creating a pilot for capturing residents' feedback.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

105/23

LOCAL HERITAGE LIST FOR BROMSGROVE DISTRICT - ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager provided a briefing update, which set out the progress to date in creating the Local Heritage

List (LHL) and showed the proposed action plan for completion of the LHL in 18 months.

It was reported that four the parishes – Alvechurch, Belbroughton, Beoley, and Dodford – had been surveyed and draft LHL's for these areas had now been compiled. 129 buildings and structures were being proposed for the LHL from these parishes. Draft lists for these parishes were ready to be consulted on in late spring 2024. Areas currently being surveyed included Bromsgrove Town, Lickey and Blackwell Parish, and Wythall Parish.

It was noted that at the previous meeting of Overview and Scrutiny a recommendation was (subsequently agreed by Cabinet) that the final Local Heritage List (LHL) for Bromsgrove District be completed within 18 months. This provided a target date for completion of LHL of September 2025. The works on compiling a list for parishes / areas would be carried out in alphabetical order. It was highlighted that Officers could not be certain how much work was required in each area until a survey for a given area was carried out. As the work progressed, Officers would be providing quarterly updates on progress to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

The Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager reported that during the process of creating LHL for their areas/wards, Ward Members would be contacted a minimum of three times: (1) when officers begin surveying; (2) on completion of the draft LHL for the Ward; (3) prior to adoption of the list for the area. It was highlighted that for parishes where survey work had been undertaken already, Ward Members would be contacted imminently to update on progress. This would also be the case for the three areas where survey work was being carried out at the moment.

Following the update, a Member thanked Officers for providing this briefing which set out a plan for completion of LHL and which included details of Member involvement in the process. A question was asked regarding whether submissions of proposals for inclusion on the LHL could still be made in respect of Lickey and Blackwell Parish. It was responded that the list creation was a continuous and iterative process and proposals for addition to the list could be submitted at any time.

In response to a question, it was noted that in areas which had parishes, Officers worked on the basis of parish boundaries rather than ward boundaries in respect of creating LHLs. A Member requested that it be highlighted and corrected in future documents that the correct name for Belbroughton Parish was Belbroughton and Fairfield Parish Council – the area covered by this Parish being the villages of Belbroughton and Fairfield (rather than only Belbroughton).

With respect to publicity for LHL consultations in each area, it was noted that Officers would be in contact with the Parish Councils. The LHL consultations would also be publicised at events in each local area.

Members were asked to liaise with Officers if they were aware of local events at which the Council could promote the LHL consultations.

Members requested that future briefings include a table setting out dates for completion of LHL at each area alongside a work programme outlining tasks to be undertaken in each area and progress in their completion. The Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager responded that detail would be added to the action plan table for the next update report.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

106/23

DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT (DFG)

The Strategic Housing Services Manager provided an overview of the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG). It was noted that these were mandatory grants to support the provision of adaptations to promote independent living within the home, subject to the provisions of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

It was explained that the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) provided each local authority in England with a DFG allocation contained within the Better Care Fund paid to the County Council and passported to Local Housing Authorities (including Bromsgrove).

It was explained that the grant was means-tested and there was a robust process followed to arrive at grant allocation decisions, starting with a comprehensive assessment of the applicant's needs.

It was noted that it was considered good practice to offer a Home Improvement Agency (HIA) service to support an accepted applicant and their family through the complicated process of carrying out major building works. In Worcestershire a partnership of the 6 Local Housing Authorities and Worcestershire County Council commissioned a HIA referred as the Worcestershire Promoting Independent Living Service and this was provided by Millbrook Health Care under a contract until March 2025.

Performance data was provided on the use of DFG in 2022-23, including on the types of building jobs carried out to enable a home adaptation, expenditure on the home adaptations by type, breakdown of the types of recipients of DFG by tenure and breakdown by age. It was noted that over 50 per cent of DFGs were for bathroom and stairlift adaptations.

Following the presentation, Members asked questions regarding the DFG and the following responses were noted:

- Review of maximum amount of DFG grant amount that can be awarded – It was noted that the current maximum amount of DFG grant that can be awarded to an individual was £30,000 and currently there were no discussions nationally around increasing

that amount. However, the Council had the power to provide discretionary top-ups to DFG grants.

- Resistance of landlords to providing adaptations through DFG grant – It was noted that in cases where recipients of DFG grant were living in rented accommodation, the landlord could refuse an adaptation being installed in their property. The Council did not possess powers to force the landlord to have the adaptation installed. However, the Council would discuss the issue with a landlord, explaining why the adaptation was needed and what the benefits they could have from the work undertaken.
- It was highlighted that the Operational Therapists (OT) service used for the DFG provision was specifically used by the Council for provision of DFG service and not shared with NHS Acute Trusts.
- Median delivery times of delivering an adaptation – It was clarified that delivery time of adaptations for DFG recipients were calculated from the time of OT referral to the home improvement agency (HIA) to completion of the works.
- It was noted that there was a statutory requirement for the Council to assess and process DFG applications sent from HIA within 6 months. The Council was on average completing this stage in 11 days.
- It was noted that in the current tender with the HIA, there was a performance management framework which set delivery targets for DFG adaptation works. Foundations, the Government approved HIA, was helping the Council draft the specification for a new tender.
- The Deputy Leader addressed the Board and cited a case work with a resident where it took three years for an adaptation to be installed. The Deputy Leader raised that this was not due to the Council Officers but slow progress made by the current HIA provider, and it was hoped that in the new tender the right performance measures and targets would be included to ensure that HIAs met targets.
- DFG Capital Allocation – It was noted that a total of £745,068.99 Government's DFG allocation was allocated to recipients in 2022-23. Any unspent amount was carried forward to the next financial year.
- Land charge placed on the property in which adaptations were being done – It was noted that a charge for works from DFG was placed against a property. This meant that if the property where an adaptation had been installed was sold within 10 years, the costs of the works would be recovered from proceeds of the sale.

- A Member made a comment that data in the report was now over 12 months old. It was explained that data up to 31st March 2024 would become available within the next 6-8 weeks.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

107/23

FOODBANK & COMMUNITY SHOP PROVISION TASK GROUP - FINAL REPORT

The Chairman of the Foodbank and Community Provision Task Group, Councillor E. M. S. Gray, presented the final report of the Task Group. In doing so, Councillor E. M. S. Gray provided details of the final recommendations of the Task Group, explaining rationale behind each recommendation in detail.

Following the opening remarks by the Chairman of the Task Group, Members discussed the following aspects of the work undertaken by the Task Group:

- Funding provision to foodbank organisations –It was noted that one of the areas considered by the Task Group was distribution of funding to foodbanks in the District. Following visits to the foodbanks, it was deemed imperative for Members to understand mechanisms through which funding was provided to foodbanks. Members also asked for updates on which foodbanks operating in the District were being funded by the Council and/or via the funding that was distributed by the Council.
- An explanation was provided that Bromsgrove District Council did not provide any funding to foodbanks from its General Fund (the Council's budget). The Council had awarded the Government's Household Support Fund (HSF) to local organisations. This money had been provided to the District Council from Worcestershire County Council in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding. The purpose of the Fund was to support vulnerable households through lead local authorities as part of the support linked to the increase in the cost of living. This fund specifically related to providing assistance to vulnerable households in most need of support to help with energy and water, food, wider essentials, advice services and housing costs.
- As part of HSF grant funding distribution, foodbanks were awarded some funding. The requirement to receive funding was that the foodbank had been in existence for a minimum of 12 months as of the start of each new phase of Household Support Fund (HSF). It was reported that in March 2024 the HSF had been extended for an extra six months, and five foodbanks in the District benefited from this round of HSF funding. Information with regard to which foodbanks had been awarded this funding were published on the Council's website.

- It was reported that several organisations listed in the report provided other support services alongside foodbank operation. These organisations could also bid and receive funding from the Council in respect of other areas of their operation. For instance, some organisations received Homelessness Prevention Grant Support, approved annually by Cabinet, in respect of housing support. This funding was subject to its own eligibility and monitoring processes as detailed in Cabinet reports.
- Residents in need of travel across local authority boundaries to access foodbank provision – It was highlighted that in the course of investigation, Task Group Members highlighted anecdotal evidence of residents in wards bordering other local authorities, such as in Rubery and Hagley, accessing foodbanks across district boundaries. This was attributed to lack of foodbank provision in the outlying wards in Bromsgrove. A question was asked with respect of whether this issue was also identified in the Belbroughton and Romsley ward. It was responded that the Task Group Members were not aware of evidence of this in respect of Belbroughton and Romsley.

With respect of recommendation 4 of the Task Group Final Report, there was a suggestion that the wording of that recommendation be changed to:

“Where there is evidence that there is a need and no facility currently exists (such as Rubery), the Council will continue to support local communities to create food banks.”

It was noted that this amendment was proposed as it was felt that the current recommendation 4 contained a financial implication for the Council and the amended wording would provide a clarification as to the role that the Council would be able to provide in respect of supporting creation of new foodbanks. This proposal was not seconded and not subject to the vote.

Most Members were of the opinion that recommendation 4 as currently printed in the Task Group Final Report should not be changed and remain as follows:

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

Members of Overview and Scrutiny Board and the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing and Strategic Housing took the opportunity to thank the Task Group Members for their investigation and comprehensive final report.

On being put to the vote the Foodbank and Community Shop Provision Task Group report recommendations, as printed in the Final Report submitted, were agreed as a recommendation to Cabinet.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) That the Council update its website to include contact details of all foodbanks in the district which wish to be on the list. The Council will ensure that the webpage links to the foodbanks' websites and/or other contact details, such as telephone and social media, are up-to-date and that information on how to get in touch is easily accessible.
- 2) That all organisations providing foodbanks receive the appropriate and necessary support and resources from Bromsgrove District Council, which is proportionate and equivalent to their size and what they require. In the transition period, if the organisation is growing, appropriate support and funding needs to be allocated.
- 3) That the Council develop a consistent universal understanding / guidelines of what level of recording of users' personal information is required for the needs of the community engaged in the foodbank service without breaching the GDPR legislation. That the Council recognise there might be specific recording requirements as conditions attached to accessing specific funding streams.
- 4) That the Council endeavour to investigate, under the auspices of existing arrangements available to the Council, such as the Bromsgrove Partnership, whether communities in areas of the district that do not currently have foodbanks require this provision, and that the Council make best effort to create a foodbank in Rubery where a need has already been identified.
- 5) That the Council continues to develop opportunities to enable foodbank organisations to come together as part of a network to support each other and to promote the sustainability of the help being provided to the community across the district. That the Council makes clear that joining the network is a pre-requisite if applying for Council funding, should this become available in the future.

108/23

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

The Overview and Scrutiny Board Annual Report 2023-24 was submitted for Members' consideration. The Chairman reported that together with the Vice-Chairman of the Board he was due to meet with Officers to propose that the number of meetings of Overview and Scrutiny be increased in future municipal years. An outcome of this discussion would be reported to Members at the next meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Board.

A typographical error on page 9 of the Annual Report with respect to the membership of the Finance and Budget Working Group was reported. It was noted that the Member represented on the Finance and Budget Working Group was Councillor R. Bailes, not Councillor A. Bailes.

RESOLVED that subject to the amendment in the preamble above the Overview and Scrutiny Board Annual Report 2023-24 be noted.

109/23

CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Cabinet Work Programme was presented for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Work Programme be noted.

110/23

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

It was requested that an item with respect to new build affordable housing be added to the Board's work programme for the next meeting. It was requested that this report cover the topics of the current number of affordable houses in the District, affordable housing targets and whether the Council was meeting its targets, as well as projections for future demand.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be updated as per the pre-amble above.

111/23

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

RESOLVED: that under Section 100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of scheme 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:-

Item No Paragraph

15 3

16 3, 4

17 3, 4

112/23

PARKING ENFORCEMENT CONSULTANCY

The Interim Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services introduced this report and in doing so recapped that at the meeting of full Council on 21st February 2024, the Parking Enforcement Service Level Agreement with Wychavon District Council was considered and Members agreed to undertake a strategic review of parking services. The review would include on and off street parking enforcement and would support preparation of a business case for the future of the service. At 21st February 2024 full Council, it was agreed that a one-off budget of £50,000 be included in the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2024-25 to fund the proposed strategic review, including through engagement with consultants.

It was noted that the brief for the strategic review included three key deliverables:

- A review of existing parking requirements including supply and demand for now and in the future;
- A review of car park management arrangements with solutions identified to reduce the need for off street parking enforcement;
- Review of On-Street Enforcement will be carried out to address member and resident concerns around coverage of activities.

It was highlighted that through the strategic review the consultants would be engaging with Ward Members and Parish Councillors to identify local issues with regard to parking.

- Timeline for the consultants' work – It was anticipated at this point that the appointed consultants would begin work on the strategic review in mid-May with the work to take three months to complete. Final consultants' report was anticipated in September 2024 with regular meetings to ensure that the review remained on track.
- Number of car parks operated by Bromsgrove District Council – A Member commented that the Council operated 9 car parks and not 11 car parks, as stated under paragraph 2.1 of the report. The Member stated that this figure probably included Churchfield Car Park which was closed and one other should not be included. The Officer responded that part of the work was about understanding demand and currently 2 of the car parks, although closed currently, had uncertainty with regard whether they would be used in the future, hence the report stated a figure of 11 Council-operated car parks.
- Specialist parking consultants – The need to ensure that the Council employed specialist parking consultancy as part of this strategic review was highlighted by a Member. It was noted that understanding the specific parking issues and needs in areas outside of Bromsgrove Town Centre such as: occupancy and duration of use in car parks, the impacts of overspill into surrounding streets. It was highlighted by a Member that

involvement of the County Council in the strategic review was needed in order to ensure its success.

- Understanding how traffic wardens are operating – The Interim Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services reported that there was regular monthly reporting by Wychavon District Council to catalogue what areas the parking wardens were visiting and at what frequency.
- A Member commented that he thought an on-the-ground survey of parking provision in Alvechurch needed to be undertaken as a priority before the summer holiday period. The Member cited serious parking issues in that ward including loss of 40 parking spaces over the next few months (which represented 50 per cent of parking provision). The Officer responded that over the next few weeks conversations would be held with consultants and Ward Members, including assessment of the severity of the individual cases/areas. Based on these conversations, decisions would be made as to how the review would be undertaken in each ward/area.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

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

113/23

INTERIM UPDATE ON THE TRANSFER OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UNIT (EDU) FROM WYRE FOREST DC TO BROMSGROVE AND REDDITCH COUNCILS

An update was provided on the progress in the transfer of economic development unit (EDU) from Wyre Forest DC to Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils, including on the recruitment to the key posts in respect of the proposed new Economic Development, Regeneration and Property Service.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

(During the consideration of this item, Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to move to exclude the press and public prior to any debate of exempt matters on the grounds that information would be revealed which related to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and which related to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority

or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority).

114/23

TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 11TH MARCH 2024

The minutes of the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 11th March 2024, including the record of the confidential matters discussed at the meeting, were considered.

There was a request for an amendment to the minutes record in respect of the inaccuracy in the confidential minutes record of the subject matter that was considered in exempt session (Minute Item 86/23 – To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 12th February 2024). It was resolved that the inaccuracy would be corrected.

RESOLVED that subject to the amendment in respect of the confidential minutes record, the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 11th March 2024 be agreed as a true and correct record.

(During the consideration of this item, Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to move to exclude the press and public prior to any debate of exempt matters on the grounds that information would be revealed which related to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and which related to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority).

The meeting closed at 9.38 p.m.

Chairman

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3, 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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