

Public Document Pack



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

TUESDAY 10TH SEPTEMBER 2024

AT 6.00 P.M.

PARKSIDE SUITE - PARKSIDE

MEMBERS: 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, H. D. N. Rone-Clarke and J. D. Stanley

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence and Named Substitutes**
2. **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.
3. **Play Audit - Initial Overview and Discussion (Pages 5 - 8)**
4. **Housing Task Group - Membership Report (Pages 9 - 14)**
5. **Finance and Budget Working Group Update (including membership) (Pages 15 - 16)**
6. **Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Update**

7. **Cabinet Work Programme (Pages 17 - 28)**
8. **Overview and Scrutiny Board - Action Sheet (Pages 29 - 34)**
9. **Overview and Scrutiny Board - Work Programme (Pages 35 - 38)**
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 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 |
|---------|-----------|
| 11 | 3 |
| 12 | 3 |

11. **To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting for the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 11th July and 23rd July 2024 (Pages 39 - 64)**
12. **Levelling-Up Report - Approval of Contractor - Pre-Scrutiny (Report to follow)**

This report will follow in a Supplementary Papers pack once the report has been published for Cabinet's consideration (due for publication on Tuesday 3rd September 2024).

Sue Hanley
Chief Executive

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

31st August 2024

**If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact
Sarah Woodfield**

**Parkside, Market Street, Bromsgrove, B61 8DA
Tel: (01527) 64252 Ext: 1605
Email: sarah.woodfield@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk**

GUIDANCE ON FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS

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

GUIDANCE FOR ELECTED MEMBERS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING MEETINGS IN PERSON

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

Notes:

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



INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

Access to Information

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

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

You can access the following documents:

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

at www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

Overview & Scrutiny

Date: 10th September 2024

Bromsgrove District Play Audit and Investment Strategy – Progress Update

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder | | Councillor B. McEldowney |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | | Yes |
| Relevant Head of Service | | Ruth Bamford |
| Report Author | Job Title: Ishrat Karimi Fini Contact email: ishrat.karimifini@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 881204 | |
| Wards Affected | | All |
| Ward Councillor(s) consulted | | |
| Relevant Strategic Purpose(s) | | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green Living Independent, Active and Healthy Lives The Green Thread |
| Key Decision / Non-Key Decision. | | 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 RESOLVE to note the update on the progress of the Bromsgrove District Council Play Audit and Investment Strategy.

2. **BACKGROUND**

Leisure Strategy

- 2.1 Responding to the recommendations in the Leisure and Culture Strategy for Bromsgrove District that was endorsed by members in October 2022, a detailed Play Audit and Investment Strategy is being prepared and is scheduled to be presented to Cabinet in November 2024.
- 2.2 There was a presentation of the emerging document at a meeting of the Cabinet Advisory Group (CAG) on 18 July 2024.

Overview & Scrutiny

Date: 10th September 2024

Meeting Council Objectives

- 2.3 The preparation of the Play Audit and Investment Strategy contributes to achieving council and wider objectives.
- 2.4 Play has many benefits for children and young people which include physical development, cognitive development, health and wellbeing, environmental awareness and providing an opportunity for children and young people to mix, gather and relax.
- 2.5 In terms of a policy context the Play Audit and Investment Strategy if implemented in due course will contribute to Health and Wellbeing which is a key consideration and included as part of the Bromsgrove Council Plan, the Local Plan and the Leisure and Cultural Strategy. All the above recognise the value of health and wellbeing for Bromsgrove District and its residents. Furthermore, it is noted that the Bromsgrove Community survey highlighted the importance of being able to access parks and open spaces close to where people live and that these facilities were both inclusive and affordable.

The Scope of the Audit

- 2.6 The audit has been commissioned in order to ascertain the current provision of play equipment within the District. Data has been gathered in respect of travel distance and condition of provision including areas in need of investment such as infrastructure improvements or resurfacing. The audit includes spaces provided by the Council, Parish Councils and third-party providers and only publicly accessible play spaces have been included.
- 2.7 There are currently eighty-five play spaces publicly available within the District. Forty areas managed by Bromsgrove District Council, thirty by Parish Councils and fifteen by third party providers e.g. Community Associations.
- 2.8 The assessment identifies a hierarchy of play provision based on an accessibility model that is comparable to national guidelines. These are:
- Local Play Spaces – within four hundred metres with a five-to-ten-minute walking distance
 - Neighbourhood Play Spaces – within eight hundred metres with a ten-to-fifteen-minute walking distance.

Overview & Scrutiny

Date: 10th September 2024

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 Depending on the decisions taken by the Cabinet later this year, further investment in play areas may be required in future, including through potential budget bids.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This is an update report for Overview and Scrutiny on the progress of the Bromsgrove District Council Play Audit and Investment Strategy and as such there are no financial implications.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Not applicable at this stage.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Council Priorities

- 6.1 Equipped children's play spaces enable children to play, be active and spend time outdoors. This contributes to living active and healthy lives.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.2 The play audit and Investment strategy seeks to address deficiencies in play provision across the district allowing all households, where reasonably practicable, to have access to good quality play spaces within walking times of up to 10 to 15 minutes. If implemented in due course, this supports the development of neighbourhoods where local facilities can be accessed on foot or through active travel.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.3 In due course, the Play Audit and Investment Strategy propose addressing deficiencies in the accessibility of play provision across the district, providing more children and young people, and their families, with access to play provision within walking distance of home.
- 6.4 Investment and upgrading of play spaces, in due course, will allow inclusive design principles to be followed and there would be

Overview & Scrutiny

Date: 10th September 2024

consultation locally around the opportunities to improve the play provision at each site.

7. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 Ongoing investment is required to keep play spaces in a condition that meets national standards and reduces the frequency and scale of insurance claims.

8. **APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

9. **REPORT SIGN OFF**

| Department | Name and Job Title | Date |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------|
| Portfolio Holder | Councillor B. McEldowney | 22.08.24 |
| Lead Director / Head of Service | Ruth Bamford | 29.08.24 |
| Financial Services | Peter Carpenter | 29.08.24 |
| Legal Services | Nicola Cummings Claire Felton | 29.08.24 |

**Overview and Scrutiny Board
2024**

10th September

Housing Task Group

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder | | Councillor Shirley Webb – Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing and Strategic Housing |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | | - |
| Relevant Head of Service | | Judith Willis, Head of Community and Housing Services |
| Report Author: Sarah Woodfield | Job Title: Democratic Services Officer Contact email: sarah.woodfield@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk | |
| Wards Affected | | All |
| Ward Councillor(s) consulted | | N/A |
| Relevant Strategic Purpose(s) | | All - Enabling |
| 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) Agree the Membership of the Housing Task Group; and**
- b) Appoint a Chairman of the Housing Task Group.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At the last meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 23rd July 2024, Members agreed that a Task Group should be established looking at Affordable Housing Provision within the District.
- 2.2 The purpose of this report is to formalise the membership of this Task Group, considering requests received to date from Members who have asked to be included in the Task Group following last meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

3.1 Membership

It has been the existing practice within the Council that Task Groups are composed of 5 Members with a quorum of 3. Councillors are asked to consider if this is an appropriate number of Members for this Task Group. It is not specified as to whether that membership needs to be politically balanced, although it would be good practice to have each political group represented.

Members who have indicated they would like to join the Housing Task Group are Councillors H. D. N. Rone-Clarke, P. M. McDonald, A. Bailes, B. Kumar, and A. Dale. The Board is asked to consider whether to grant to these membership of the Housing Task Group.

Members are asked to note that the Task Group will meet regularly throughout the review.

3.2 Terms of Reference

The terms of reference was agreed by Members at the last Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 23rd July 2024.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications in respect of this report. Although it should be noted that there will be resource implications in respect of officer time in attending and preparing for the Task Group meetings and there may be resource implications associated with any recommendation(s) made by the Task Group.

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. Task Group is currently not constituted, but an arrangement available to the Overview and Scrutiny Board to consider a matter of interest in depth.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 6.1 The work of the Task Groups would contribute towards meeting the strategic purpose of providing residents with the enabling mechanisms to do what they need to do to meet their purpose.

Climate Change Implications

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

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 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 at this stage.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

This page is intentionally left blank

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD

Housing Task Group

Terms of Reference as at September 2024

Looking at Housing Provision within Bromsgrove District Council's Operations Task Group has been set up by the Overview and Scrutiny Board to carry out detailed scrutiny/pre-scrutiny of the above topic.

1. The Task Group be made up of 5 Members with a quorum of 3. The Task Group will meet throughout the next six months at intervals to be decided by the Group.
2. Meetings will be restricted to 1.5 hours in order for the Group to remain focused (with the option to extend should it be deemed necessary).
3. The Task Group agreed that if Members missed more than 2 meetings then they would no longer be on the Task Group.
4. The Task Group will be a standing item on the agenda of the Overview and Scrutiny Board and either a verbal or written report will be provided at each of the Board's meetings.
5. The Task Group is able to make recommendations to the Overview & Scrutiny Board who will then put forward its recommendations for consideration by Cabinet or directly to Cabinet/Council.
6. The Task group is expected to complete the investigation in six months and provide its findings and recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Board in a written report at that time.
7. Should the Task Group not complete its work within that timescale, then an interim report will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Board with a request for further time to complete the investigations.

Aims and Objectives of the Task Group

The Task Group will undertake a scrutiny investigation into Housing Provision within Bromsgrove District Council's Operations and will cover the following areas:

1. Based on background information provided to the group, to identify the extent to which "fleeceholding" is a challenge in Bromsgrove District and whether there are any actions to address or influence this locally.

Agenda Item 4

2. To scrutinise information about the rules with respect to providing Section 106 monies to support infrastructure for housing and communities in the District (*this should not duplicate the work of the Strategic Planning Steering Group and it is noted that Members cannot scrutinise specific planning applications*).
3. To investigate the extent to which there is an issue locally for residents who are considered to be “asset rich” but potentially “revenue poor” and the support available locally to residents in this position. This should involve the group exploring whether there are any gaps in provision that could be addressed by the Council or partner organisations (*Members to revisit the findings of the Fuel Poverty Task Group, for information, to avoid duplicating the work of that earlier investigation*).

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)
6. No substitute will be permitted to sit on the Finance and Budget Working Group.

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.
- 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 OCTOBER 2024 TO 31 JANUARY 2025
(published as at 30th August 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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| New National Forest Application Key: Yes | Cabinet Not before 1st Oct 2024 | This report will contain exempt information that may 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 |
| Bromsgrove District Plan Consultation Key: No | Cabinet Not before 20th Nov 2024 Council Not before 4th Dec 2024 | | Report of the Assistant Director of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services | Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager Tel: 01527 881325 Councillor K. Taylor |
| Bromsgrove Draft Air Quality Action Plan Key: Yes | Cabinet 20 Nov 2024 | | Report of the Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services | Judith Willis, Assistant Director Community and Housing Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3284 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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bromsgrove Play Audit and Investment Strategy Key: Yes | Cabinet 20 Nov 2024 | | Report of the Assistant Director of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services | Ishrat Karimi Fini, Parks and Events Service Manager Tel: 07713 085872 Councillor B. M. McEldowney |
| Carbon Reduction Strategy and Implementation Plan - Annual Review Key: No | Cabinet 20 Nov 2024 Council 4 Dec 2024 | | Report of the Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services | Matthew Eccles, Climate Change Manager Councillor B. M. McEldowney |
| District Heat Network Revisions Key: Yes | Cabinet 20 Nov 2024 | | Report of the Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services | Judith Willis, Assistant Director Community and Housing Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3284 Councillor S. R. Colella, Councillor B. M. McEldowney |

| 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 20 Nov 2024 | | Report of the Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services | Debra Goodall, Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070 Councillor S. R. Colella |
| Food Waste Business Case and Associated Waste Related Issues Key: Yes | Cabinet 20 Nov 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 |
| Half Yearly Treasury Management Report Key: No | Cabinet 20 Nov 2024 Council 4 Dec 2024 | | Report of the Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services | Debra Goodall, Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070 Councillor S. R. Colella |

Private
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 |
|--|---------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant Key: No | Cabinet 20 Nov 2024 | | Report of the Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services | Amanda Delahunty, Strategic Housing Officer Tel: 01527 881269 Councillor S. A. Webb |
| Low Cost Housing Capital Receipts Key: No | Cabinet 20 Nov 2024 | | Report of the Assistant Director of Community Safety and Housing | Amanda Delahunty, Strategic Housing Officer Tel: 01527 881269 Councillor S. A. Webb |
| Medium Term Financial Plan - Tranche 1 Budget including Fees and Charges (prior to consultation) Key: No | Cabinet 20 Nov 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 |

Page 21

| 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 |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| Q2 Revenue and Performance Monitoring 2024/2025 Key: Yes | Cabinet 20 Nov 2024 | | Report of the Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services | Debra Goodall, Assistant Director 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 Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services | Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor S. R. Colella |
| Discretionary Reduction - Council Tax Section 13a1(C) Policy Key: Yes | Cabinet 7 Jan 2025 Council 22 Jan 2025 | | Report of the Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services | Debra Goodall, Assistant Director 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 |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| Council Tax Empty Homes Discounts and Premiums Key: Yes | Cabinet 7 Jan 2025 Council 22 Jan 2025 | | Report of the Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services | Debra Goodall, Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070 Councillor S. R. Colella |
| 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 |

| 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 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 Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Service | Debra Goodall, Assistant Director 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 |
| Independent Remuneration Panel Recommendations 2025/26 Key: No | Council 22 Jan 2025 | | Report of the Deputy Chief Executive | Darren Whitney, Electoral Services Manager Tel: 01527 881650 Councillor K. J. May |
| 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 Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services | Debra Goodall, Assistant Director 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 |
|--|---------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Audit, Standards and Governance Committee Annual Report 2024/25 Key: Yes | Council Not before 2nd Jun 2025 | | Report of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee | Sarah Woodfield, Democratic Services Officer Councillor H. D. N. Rone-Clarke |
| Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/25 Key: Yes | Council Not before 2nd Jun 2025 | | Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Board | Sarah Woodfield, Democratic Services Officer Councillor P. M. McDonald |

This page is intentionally left blank

BDC Overview and Scrutiny Board

Action Sheet – 25th June 2024

| Subject | Action Required | Action Taken | Officer(s) Responsible | Other Comments | Status |
|-------------------|---|---|---|--|--|
| Play Audit | 1. Confirmation as to when consultants and / or officers will be available to talk to Members individually about play areas in their wards. This action was agreed notwithstanding the advisory group. There was an expectation that in addition to this members would be given an opportunity to speak to the consultants about issues in their Wards. | Officers notified of this request Arrangements to be confirmed to Members. | Assistant Director for Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services / Park & Events Services Manager | Cabinet Advisory Group (CAG) - 18 th July 2024 (consultants to present on this date). | Consultants will be available for individual discussions on the 23/07/24 and 25/07/24 inclusive. |
| | 2. Provide Members with a list of matters to consider prior to (CAG) on 18 th July on play areas in their wards so that Members can prepare in advance. | Officers notified of the request to provide a list to Members. Awaiting responses from Officers (26/06/2024). | Assistant Director for Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services / Park & Events Services Manager | Cabinet Advisory Group (CAG) - 18 th July 2024 (consultants to present on this date). | Consultants are due to provide a list to Assistant Director week c/c 15 th July. This will then be provided ahead of CAG. |
| | 3. Progress report on the play area audit / strategy to be presented at the September O&S meeting. | O&S due to receive a report on this subject in September (work programme updated accordingly). | Park & Events Services Manager | | Item added to the O&S work programme for September meeting. |

| Subject | Action Required | Action Taken | Officer(s) Responsible | Other Comments | Status |
|---|--|---|---|---|--|
| Development Plan | <p>Arrange meetings with individual ward members about proposed developments in their wards (development plan).</p> <p>Provide detail on Housing Growth numbers and areas identified for delivery.</p> | <p>It is understood officers met with political groups (part of briefings on the local plan). Individual meetings are now taking place.</p> | <p>Strategic Planning & Conservation Manager</p> | <p>Email sent to Members by Democratic Services advising of the dates for individual meetings to commence.</p> | <p>The Officer responsible advised (15/07/2024) that the individual meetings are now taking place.</p> |
| Overview and Scrutiny Committee | <p>To circulate action log following each meeting to Members. And put progress on actions as agenda item at each meeting.</p> | <p>To be actioned after the meeting, subject to agreement by Officers.</p> | <p>Democratic Services</p> | <p>Ongoing action.</p> | <p>First iteration published for 23rd July O&S meeting.</p> |
| Affordable Housing | <p>Report to cover the topics of current number of affordable houses in the District, affordable housing targets and if Council was meeting its targets, as well as projections for future demand.</p> | <p>A report to be provided on 23 July 2024.</p> | <p>Strategic Housing & Business Support Manager</p> | <p>This report is due for consideration on 23rd July Board meeting. (May be a task group set up as a consequence).</p> | <p>Will be completed after the 23rd July meeting.</p> |
| Waste Services including Food Waste Services | <p>To provide a briefing session.</p> | <p>An-all Member briefing currently being planned for</p> | <p>Executive Director</p> | <p>Note: These indicative dates are dependent on national government.</p> | <p>The plan is to take a report to Cabinet in November and look to hold an all-Member</p> |

Page 30

| Subject | Action Required | Action Taken | Officer(s) Responsible | Other Comments | Status |
|--|---|--|------------------------|----------------|--|
| | | Sept / Oct 2024. | | | briefing in Sept / Oct so that Councillors are fully briefed and have an understanding of the requirements and issues. |
| Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Extra) | Canvass Members re. holding an extra meeting of Overview and Scrutiny | Extra meeting took place on 11 th July at 5pm Members | Democratic Services | | Completed |

Page 31
11th July meeting – Action Sheet

| Subject | Action Required | Action Taken | Officer(s) Responsible | Other Comments | Status |
|---------------------|--|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Levelling Up | 1. Up-to-date risk registers to be provided for the next report. | Officers notified of this request | Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer / Assistant Director for Economic Development and Regeneration | This report will be pre-scrutinised by O&S on 10 th September. | Will be part of the 10 th September Report |
| | 2. Dates and the 10-week extension schedule to be updated with up-to-date information (Appendix D to the Levelling Up report for 11 th July meeting). | Officers notified of this request | Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer | | Will be part of the 10 th September Report |

| Subject | Action Required | Action Taken | Officer(s) Responsible | Other Comments | Status |
|---|---|--|--|---|---|
| Page 32 | 3. To check the safety and security of the windows at the Windsor Street site | Officers notified of this request | Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer | | The Committee will be updated – Property Services have been tasked with investigating this further. |
| | 4. To share a copy of the JS Dillon report with Members of Overview and Scrutiny. | A copy of this report has been circulated to Members on 15/07/2024. | Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer | | Completed: This exempt report has been circulated separately for Members' consideration. |
| Council Plan | To look at quarterly revenue and performance monitoring reports at main Overview and Scrutiny meetings . | Report will be programmed for consideration by a scrutiny body moving forward. | Assistant Director for Finance and Customer Services | Traditionally, Finance and Budget Working Group would consider this report. | RAISE AT O&S FOR DEBATE |
| Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme | Affordable Housing Report – Officers to be notified of the key lines of enquiry in relation to the report coming to O&S on 23 rd July. | Officers notified of key lines of enquiry on 12/07/2024. | Strategic Housing and Business Support Manager / Democratic Services | At the request of Chairman, the draft Terms of Reference for a potential task group on Housing will be considered | Due to be considered by O&S on 23 rd July. |

| Subject | Action Required | Action Taken | Officer(s) Responsible | Other Comments | Status |
|----------------|--|---|--|--|---------------|
| | | | | at 23 rd July meeting. | |
| | Disabled Facilities Grant – Recommissioning of the Home Improvement Agency Promoting Independent Living Service (item agreed for addition to the O&S Work Programme) | Officers have been notified of the request to consider this item. | Strategic Housing and Business Support Manager | The Leader requested the Board to scrutinise contract arrangements proposed for the new successful bidder. | |

23rd July meeting – Action Sheet

Page 33

| Subject | Action Required | Action Taken | Officer(s) Responsible | Other Comments | Status |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Update on the Local Heritage List | To organise a meeting with Councillor Kumar re lists for Bromsgrove Town, the parishes of Lickey and Blackwell and Wythall. | SW emailed Mary Worsfold 26/7/24. | Principal Conservation Officer | SW chased progress 13/8/24 | 21/8/24 MW in process of arranging a meeting with Cllr Kumar |
| Affordable Housing | To look at provision for supported housing for younger adults at Burcot Lane (conversation with Councillor May). | SW emailed Matthew Bough 26/7/24. | Strategic Housing Services Manager | | |

This page is intentionally left blank

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

WORK PROGRAMME 2024-2025

AS OF 1 September 2024

ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

| Date of Meeting | Subject | Lead Officer / Member |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| 10 th September 2024 | <u>Substantive Items</u> | |
| | Play Audit (Initial Overview and Discussion) | Ishrat Karimi-Fini, Cultural Services and Parks Manager |
| | Levelling Up Report – Approval of Contractor (Pre-scrutiny) | Peter Carpenter, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer |
| 19 th November 2024 | <u>Substantive Items</u> | Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager |
| | Bromsgrove District Plan Consultation (Pre-scrutiny) (TBC) | |
| | Bromsgrove Play Audit and Investment Strategy final report (Pre-Decision Scrutiny) | 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) |
| 6 th January 2025 | <u>Information item</u> | Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager |
| | Local Heritage Action List (Quarterly Update) | |
| 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 |

Agenda Item 9

| Date of Meeting | Subject | Lead Officer / Member |
|--|---|--|
| | <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> Update on Heatwaves Preparedness (Impact of Heatwaves Task Group Recommendation) | Guy Revans, Executive Director |
| 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 |

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 |
| | Update on the Artrix | Representatives of the Artrix Holding Trust |
| | | |

ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED INITIALLY VIA A “FIRST LOOK” MEMBER BRIEFING

Agenda Item 9

| | | |
|--|---------------------------|---|
| All-Member briefing scheduled for 2 nd September 2024 | The District Heat Network | Judith Willis, Head of Community and Housing Services |
| All-Member Briefing scheduled for 29 th October 2024 | Street Sweeping | Guy Revans, Executive Director |
| All-Member briefing scheduled for 13 th November 2024 | Biodiversity Policy | Ruth Bamford, Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services |

This page is intentionally left blank

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

11TH JULY 2024, AT 5.00 P.M.

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

Observers:

Councillor K. J. May – Leader of the Council

Councillor S. J. Baxter – Deputy Leader of the Council (on Microsoft Teams)

Councillor C. A. Hotham

Councillor M. Marshall

Officers: Mrs. S. Hanley, Mr P. Carpenter, Mr. S. Carroll (on Microsoft Teams), Mrs. R. Green, Mrs. J. Bayley-Hill and Mr. M. Sliwinski

12/24

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors R. J. Hunter and J. D. Stanley.

13/24

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS

There were no declarations of interest nor of whipping arrangements.

14/24

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

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

4 3

15/24

LEVELLING UP UPDATE ON WINDSOR STREET CONTRACT AND

MARKET HALL DEVELOPMENT - PRE-SCRUTINY

An update was provided on the Levelling Up Projects at Windsor Street, at Market Hall site, and the Public Realm works.

It was reported that challenges had been experienced with delivery of the three Levelling Up projects in Bromsgrove with a number of external factors having influenced the expected delivery timescales and costs of these projects. It was reported that at present the combined projects overspend was projected at £1.769 million. It was expected that the cost and value engineering would result in this overspend figure reducing to circa £1 million.

In order for the projects to proceed the Council would need to look to finance this gap and it was explained that this could be achieved either through debt financing or by making an application for the funding available through the now defunct Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP), which currently held £2.45 million of funds yet to be devolved to the Council through the winding up process. The funds available from the former GBSLEP could only be accessed once it was clear what level of finance the Council required to cover the overspend.

An outline of the progress with the tender process for the Windsor Street project was provided. It was stated that MDA were appointed as project managers for the demolition and clearance of the Windsor Street site. The Planning Application submitted by the Council for the demolition of existing buildings and associated site remediation, removal of existing redundant services and utilities had been approved on 4th June 2024. MDA had undertaken a tender process for the demolition works and following this City Demolition were appointed. It was expected that demolition of the site commences in August 2024 and be completed before the end of the calendar year.

It was noted that issues were being experienced with a spike in vandalism at the Windsor Street which required the Police, the security company and minor works team to attend site daily. This was resulting in call out and boarding costs of circa £400 a day to keep the site safe (prevent vandalism and breaking into the site). It was clarified that dealing with security of the site would become the responsibility of the demolition contractors once the site demolition had started.

Members were advised that the Council had applied for Brownfields Clearance Funding for the Windsor Street site project to support with the additional costs anticipated as a result of interventions requested from the Environment Agency (EA). The outcome of this bid would be known at the end of summer.

For Public Realm part of Levelling Up projects, it was reported that Worcestershire County Council were responsible for the design and delivery given their statutory responsibilities. It was noted that

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was in place between Bromsgrove District and Worcestershire County Councils to ensure both parties were fully sighted on detail of the projects, the funding conditionality and timescales in respect of payments for the project.

For Market Hall site project, it was noted that the Council appointed Kier in April 2024 to deliver the Pre-Construction Service Agreement (PCSA) and submit a cost plan for the Council to review before entering into the main works contract.

It was noted that for Market Hall project the use of steel instead of concrete was now recommended by Kier due to lower cost and availability in the supply chain. A 10-week extension to the PCSA was being recommended in the report submitted before Members to enable Value Engineering (VE) to be undertaken, with Kier due to submit their forecast final cost account by the end of August 2024 and completed design to be available in September 2024. If changes proposed required an additional planning application, consultation would need to continue in parallel with the planning process with local traders and the Ward Councillor for the area.

The recommendations as printed in the report were endorsed by the Board.

RECOMMENDED that:

- 1) The Cabinet approve the appointment of City Demolition for the demolition of existing buildings and associated site remediation, removal of existing redundant services and utilities; and
- 2) The Cabinet approve a 10 week extension in the Market Hall Pre Construction Service Agreement (PCSA) in order to fully validate costs.

(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)).

16/24

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL PLAN - PRE-SCRUTINY

The Policy Manager presented the proposed Council Plan, providing overview of each of the sections. It was reported that the development of the Council Plan had taken place over a number of months and had begun with some sessions supported by the Local Government Association (LGA). Once key priorities had been identified, there were two further workshops held with Cabinet Members and the Corporate Management Team (CMT) to progress further the key priorities that had previously been identified.

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

1. Economic Development
2. Housing
3. Environment
4. Infrastructure

It was noted that operationally, the Council Plan informed the service business planning process and helped to determine the Medium Term Financial Plan. The priorities and objectives contained within the Plan would be monitored using specific measures in order to ascertain the success and any areas of improvement.

Following the presentation, there were a number of points raised by Members:

- Members commended the Council Plan and noted that it reflected the whole of the District. Some Members suggested that the 'Monitoring, Review & Reporting' section should include performance data against key measures covered in the Plan. It was responded that performance data on the measures covered in the Council Plan was provided regularly through Quarterly Finance and Performance Monitoring Reports that were presented to Cabinet and scrutinised by Finance and Budget Working Group (sub-committee of Overview and Scrutiny Board). The finance and performance monitoring were combined within a single report and the next step was to improve the format of the monitoring reports to make them more accessible to residents.
- Number of registered births in Bromsgrove – It was explained that data for the number of births in Bromsgrove was taken by registered home address at the time of birth (on UK birth certificate). Therefore, people born in a hospital outside Bromsgrove who had Bromsgrove as registered address were classed as Bromsgrove residents for the purposes of population data.
- It was highlighted that increasing the employment rate in Bromsgrove required good transport links to be provided between the outlying areas of the District and key population centres such as Bromsgrove Town, Birmingham and Worcester. It was commented by Members that some areas such as Alvechurch had managed to obtain extra bus services, however, bus routes were designed by Worcestershire County Council (WCC) and West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) within West Midlands and the Council needed to work with these bodies on matters concerning bus services.

- Concerns were raised about the fulfilment of the Local Plan's affordable housing contributions in some house building projects in the District. Longbridge site was cited where it was reported that the affordable housing contribution could be reduced from 40 to 30 per cent because the houses were built in stages due to cost.
- The issues of hidden and unidentified pockets of deprivation in the District was discussed. It was noted that the English indices of deprivation and other national deprivation data did not always reveal hidden poverty, sometimes among residents in areas classed as more affluent. An issue of fuel poverty among residents who lived in larger properties and could no longer afford to heat their homes was highlighted by a Member.
- A Member asked regarding the infrastructure requirement as part of the new Local Plan for the District. It was noted that this would be detailed within the Local Plan as a separate document from this Council Plan and that the new Local Plan would be produced for the period from 2031 which was outside the timescale for this Council Plan.

The recommendation as printed in the report was endorsed.

RECOMMENDED that The Council Plan attached at Appendix 1 be approved.

17/24

CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Cabinet Work Programme was presented for Members' consideration.

During the discussion, it was requested that a Cabinet report due to appear on the Cabinet Work Programme concerning disabled facilities grant - recommissioning of the Independent Living Service be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme. This was agreed by the Board.

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

18/24

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

Members discussed the possibility of setting up a Task Group to investigate the issue of Housing. It was noted that a report on Affordable Housing would be presented to the next meeting, which would include answers to Members' questions, including on definitions of the term affordable housing. It was noted that the Board would need to agree the terms of reference for the task group prior to it commencing. It was also noted that a Housing Needs Study document for the District was

Agenda Item 11

Overview and Scrutiny Board
11th July 2024

available, which could help Members with assisting whether a task group investigation was required and, if so, which areas to investigate.

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

The meeting closed at 7.34 p.m.

Chairman

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

TUESDAY 23RD JULY 2024, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors P. M. McDonald (Chairman), S. T. Nock (Vice-Chairman), A. M. Dale, E. M. S. Gray, B. Kumar, S. A. Robinson and H. D. N. Rone-Clarke

Observers:

Councillor K. J. May - Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships and Enabling

Councillor S. R. Colella - Cabinet Member for Finance

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

Councillor M. Marshall

Officers: Mr. G. Revans, Mr. M. Bough, Ms. M. Worsfold, Mrs J. Gresham, Mr. M. Sliwinski and Mrs S. Woodfield

19/24

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor A. Bailes, Councillor R. Bailes and Councillor R.J. Hunter. Councillor C.A. Hotham was in attendance as named substitute for Councillor A. Bailes and Councillor S.M. Evans as named substitute for Councillor R.J. Hunter.

20/24

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS

There were no declarations of interest nor of whipping arrangements.

21/24

TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 25TH JUNE 2024

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 25th June 2024 were considered.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 25th June 2024 be agreed as a true and correct record.

22/24

UPDATE ON LOCAL HERITAGE LIST FOR BROMSGROVE DISTRICT

The Principal Conservation Officer presented the update for the Local Heritage List for Bromsgrove District. Since the last update presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 22nd April 2024, progress had been made on the Bromsgrove Local Heritage list. Draft lists for the parishes of Alvechurch, Belbroughton and Fairfield, Beoley and Dodford with Grafton were published and a six-week consultation process carried out.

Overall, Officers were pleased with the residents' response to the consultation events in those areas and with the feedback received. It was felt that with the additional descriptions of properties, residents had a better understanding of the process.

Following the presentation, Members thanked the Principal Conservation Officer for the detailed report and added that they were pleased to see progress being made.

Having reviewed the report, the following comments were made by Members:

- Why Parish Councils had not been involved in the consultation process? It was confirmed that the parish clerks had been consulted and had assisted in organising talks with residents. Officers had also been in recent communications with the parish clerks regarding nominations. It was agreed that a meeting be arranged to talk through the process with Councillor B. Kumar.
- Conservation Officer resource. It was confirmed that a recruitment process for a new Conservation Officer role was underway and interviews were imminent.

RESOLVED that the Update on Local Heritage List for Bromsgrove District be noted.

23/24

AFFORDABLE HOUSING BRIEFING

The Strategic Housing Services Manager addressed the Board. The briefing note had been prepared for the Overview & Scrutiny Board on the delivery of affordable housing in the District and covered the definition of affordable housing, number and size of the affordable housing delivered, housing register information and affordable housing need and future delivery.

Following the detailed report members thanked the Strategic Housing Services Manager. Having reviewed the report members made the following comments:

- Had provisions for independent living been considered for younger children and the disabled? Members were advised that Worcestershire County Council and Bromsgrove District Council both funded supported housing for young people through the Foyer scheme run by St Basils. It was also explained that the Council were working with registered providers to have homes adapted to enable people to remain in their homes.

A further point was raised concerning young people leaving care provision. Members had previously raised the potential of having care provision included at the new Burcot Lane site. The Strategic Housing Services Manager undertook to review the matter further.

During discussions the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing and Strategic Housing offered to organise a visit to St Basils if Members were interested.

The Chairman requested a further explanation of the Foyer scheme. Members were advised that the scheme was a twenty-four hour support service for young people, run through St Basils, and provided interim accommodation and support services for young people. Staff provided the skills necessary for young people to live independently, such as learning how to manage their own home and to provide aid with employment opportunities.

Members sought further details on the utilisation of Spadesbourne Homes to deliver private rented and affordable homes, helping to balance the housing market on Council owned land. It was advised Spadesbourne Homes was a Council owned housing company leasing privately rented properties.

Discussions continued with a query raised regarding residential development of 200 dwellings being liable for a minimum 40% Affordable Housing contribution. Members queried why that in the Local Plan it stated "up to". Members suggested it should read "minimum". It was explained that issues with site viability sometimes hindered this suggestion.

A point was also raised concerning Bromsgrove Council owning 30% equity in 109 Low-Cost Housing units. The owner could either purchase the 30% off the Council or sell on the open market at 100% of open market value and repay the Council the 30% share. Members queried why the Council did not maintain the 30% and sell the 70% at market value to be used for affordable housing provisions. Members also asked what the Council used the 30% equity for? It was explained a report went to Cabinet which set out the scheme and included in the report that a 30% equity be ring fenced for affordable housing. Members were also advised that within the Service Plan, provision would be sought to provide grants to registered providers.

Discussions continued concerning the number of social stock owned by different providers in the area. Members expressed their view that if a provider only owned a small amount of stock, that the level of support and service may be considerably less compared to Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT), who owned a considerably larger proportion of stock. The Chairman felt there was no substantial evidence of this suggestion. The Strategic Housing Services Manager added that the Housing Department had not received any complaints concerning this. Members were also reassured that all housing stock companies were monitored and regulated through the Regulator of Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman. It was suggested that the Council contact providers in order to potentially discuss stock rationalisation.

Some Members felt that since reviewing the report fully, it did seem to suggest that the Council were not narrowing the gap for the provision of affordable housing, adding concerns that the average cost of a home in Bromsgrove was unaffordable. Members agreed affordable housing did need to be reviewed and was a substantial issue.

RESOLVED that the briefing on Affordable Housing be noted.

24/24

TOPIC PROPOSAL FOR TASK GROUP - HOUSING (REPORT TO FOLLOW)

Councillor Rone-Clarke presented the topic proposal for the Board's consideration. It was noted that the potential to establish Housing Task Group was discussed by Members at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 11th July 2024.

Key objectives of the proposed task group review would be to scrutinise the following areas:

- Fleeceholding - Members “to address and influence” to assist residents.
- Section 106 monies to support infrastructure rules - Members located in town centres/urban areas could add significant value.
- To investigate “asset rich” but “revenue poor” residents and the support available locally to residents - This could involve the task group exploring potential gaps that could be addressed by the Council and partner organisations.

Councillor Rone-Clarke felt the task group would be a good opportunity for Members to gain knowledge from Officers and to view their perspectives on the key objectives. He pointed out that the task group proposal was not its final draft and welcomed Members’ thoughts.

Following the presentation of the topic proposal, Members agreed to establish the task group. The Chairman advised that Members were to consider their interest and to contact Democratic Services in the first instance.

RESOLVED that the Housing Task Group be established and that the terms of reference for the Task Group, as submitted, be approved.

25/24

IMPACT OF HEATWAVES TASK GROUP - FINAL REPORT

Councillor M. Marshall provided a detailed presentation of the Impact of Heatwaves Task Group and final report details.

The Short Sharp Review was commissioned by the Board on 12th February 2024 following a Motion submitted by Councillor Marshall to Council on 24th January 2024. The Motion was in respect of a review of immediate action be taken to educate and equip residents for impending heatwaves made more likely by climate change. The terms of reference were agreed on 22nd April 2024 with the final the report to be discussed with the Board in July 2024.

The context for the review was the aftermath of the more frequent and intense heatwaves being experienced internationally and in the UK. Several key lessons were learned nationally from that experience and

the review sought to establish how those lessons were being applied locally in the fulfillment of the Council's statutory duties as well as moral obligation to protect citizens.

As a first-tier responder, the District Council had statutory duties before, during and after civil emergencies. These duties included putting in place emergency plans, warning and informing the public about civil protection, sharing information and cooperating with other responders. They also included implementing business continuity plans and championing business continuity.

Two key lessons learnt nationally from the 2022 heatwaves were the need to firstly improve public information and awareness of the impact of heatwaves and secondly to improve cooperation and coordination between different agencies.

The Council's statutory duties were partly discharged through the West Mercia Local Resilience Forum which was part of a national network based on police force areas. They included representatives from Worcestershire County Council (WCC), District Councils, Police, Ambulance and Fire Services, NHS Bodies, The Health and Safety Executive, transport companies and utilities.

Wide-ranging areas of responsibility relating to heatwaves included working with vulnerable residents, especially older adults and children, caring for patients in NHS settings, protecting transport infrastructure, agricultural management, access to working air conditioning, environmental pollution, protecting homeless residents, maintaining water supplies and protecting the public against wildfires.

During the review the task group learnt in detail about the plans, protocols and command structures of the forum and the traffic light system used to trigger mobilization of any response. For heatwaves, these warnings trigger temperature thresholds which vary regionally but in the West Midlands a heatwave were defined as three consecutive days on which the daytime temperature exceeds 30 Degrees Celsius during the daytime and 15 Degrees Celsius at nighttime.

During the review, Worcestershire Prepared were established consisting of a range of partner organisations including WCC, District Councils, the NHS, Environment Agency, Police Fire and Rescue Services as well as voluntary partners. Worcestershire Prepared had a specific remit for engagement with local communities through a messaging service plus mobilising resources and perhaps most importantly providing a conduit

to sense check on whether these measures were adequate or working. During the review the task group members were repeatedly reminded that protecting the vulnerable from heatwaves was best achieved through utilities, social care and voluntary organisations.

Bridging the gap between national and regional measures and front-line action on the ground in the local communities were perhaps the area where local councillors could personally have the most impact. Encouraging local businesses to undertake their own risk assessments and develop their own business continuity plans was identified as a particular gap.

During the review the task group were supported extensively by the Council's partner organisation, Applied Resilience, which advised the Council on the discharge of its emergency planning responsibilities. Applied Resilience were currently undertaking an audit of potential rest centres across Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest which might be required for a variety of civil emergencies but will now include the provision of cooling centres within its scope. The task group was also advised that WCC would be developing print and digital messaging each year to educate and advise residents about preparations for potential heat events.

Because of the fast-changing nature of the challenges and responses the task group's recommendation was that an annual update be provided to the Board each Spring to assess any further lessons learnt and gauge the Council's readiness for impending heat events. Rules could and should be set by Central Government but Members based locally were best-placed to enact them and to sound the alarm.

Following the presentation Members thanked Councillor Marshall for the suggestion of the task group and for the detailed report, adding that it was good to know procedures were in place.

Members discussed the essential requirement for specific cooling areas in the District. Councillor Marshall suggested Members could assist to identify possible cooling centres within their Wards. He also advised Members that Worcestershire Prepared were specifically designed as an initiative to bridge the gap, providing knowledge at a local level and to provide the specific rules and regulations set nationally and regionally.

On being put to the vote the Impact of Heatwaves Task Group report recommendation was agreed and would be submitted to Cabinet to note at their next meeting in September 2024.

RECOMMENDED that the contents and recommendation of the Impact of Heatwaves Task Group Final report be noted.

RESOLVED that an annual report be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Board to update any areas of change in respect of the Impact of Heatwaves on the community and any changes in the response to these events be noted.

26/24

FINANCE AND BUDGET WORKING GROUP - UPDATE

The Chairman discussed the Finance and Budget Working Group meeting held on 19th July 2024, in particular with regards to Quarter 4 2023/24 Performance Monitoring Report presented at the meeting.

It was reported that four recommendations had been made during this meeting. The first being to reconsider the Council's Local Plan thresholds. Developers building up to 100 dwellings were to provide a maximum of up to 30% affordable houses in contrast to 200 dwellings developed, a maximum of up to 40% be built. The Chairman felt with this in mind, it was paramount to bridge the gap for affordable housing.

Members discussed the proposal, agreeing more affordable housing was needed locally. It was also discussed that the Council's priority should be to encourage residents to stay living within the District.

Discussions continued with some Members expressing concerns that the possible increase in affordable housing could encourage anti-social behaviour. Other members suggested issues with anti-social behaviour was more likely related to poor quality social housing, adding that mixed communities was a solution with residents possibly having a greater sense of a shared stake in their area and community.

The Chairman continued, advising lateness of reports was also discussed during the Finance and Budget Working Group. A further recommendation discussed was for Officers to ensure that when deadlines were provided in Council reports, these dates were realistic and should be adhered to. It was explained that lateness of reports was not providing members with confidence.

It was clarified that following discussion with Officers that the final recommendation in respect of the Market Hall site Levelling Up project had been withdrawn.

Following member discussions, the Executive Director confirmed that the Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager had advised there was scope within the Board to review these recommendations through the Strategic Planning Steering Group as part of the Local Plan review. Officers confirmed that the Housing Monitoring Report had been published on the Council's Website and could be circulated to Members for their consideration.

On being put to the vote the recommendations from the Finance and Budget Working Group, were agreed as recommendations to Cabinet.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) The Council seek maximum threshold of developer contribution (as set out below) in respect of the rate/proportion of affordable housing delivered for housing developments taking place in the District. The thresholds, as per the Council's Local Plan, are:
 - Up to 40% affordable housing (or a higher % if proposed [by a developer]) on greenfield sites or any site accommodating 200 or more dwellings.
 - Up to 30% affordable housing (or a higher % if proposed [by a developer]) on brownfield sites accommodating less than 200 dwellings.
- 2) that the 40 % thresholds referred to above be extended to any site accommodating below 100 dwellings, to narrow the ever-increasing gap between Market Houses and Affordable;
- 3) To ensure that when deadlines are provided in Council reports, these are realistic and are being adhered to be approved.

27/24

WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - UPDATE

The Council's Representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC), Councillor B. Kumar, updated the Board on the matters discussed at its recent meetings.

Two items considered on the agenda included Adult Mental Health Acute Inpatient and Rehabilitation redesign and strengthening the

patient and carer voice across Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust Service Delivery and in decision making.

Members were informed that Mental Health care had been at crisis point and urgently needed reviewing. The Community Mental Health Transformation Programme had developed new ways of working for adults with acute mental health needs, in partnership across several providers including the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sector and Social Care. The new national guidance stated that two levels of Mental Health Rehabilitation should be available: Level 1 – Community Rehabilitation Units and Level 2 – Intensive Rehabilitation Support.

Some objectives for the programme were:

- Patients being treated in one area.
- To reduce agency staff.
- Develop induction training.
- Implement “Best Use of Resources” philosophy.
- Using best practice, improving quality.
- Looking at emotional needs.
- Strengthening patient and carer voice.

Following the update, Members thanked Councillor Kumar for the detailed report. Members expressed their deep concerns for mental health patients, having personally witnessed the issues patients encountered within the NHS. Members felt encouraged that steps were being put in place to improve the care provided.

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

28/24

CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Cabinet Work Programme was presented for Members’ consideration.

Following discussions members requested the following change to be made:

On page 51 “New National Forest Application” be amended to read “New National Trust Application”.

The Executive Director noted the matter would be discussed with relevant officers.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Work Programme be updated as per the pre-amble above.

29/24

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD ACTION SHEET

The Overview and Scrutiny Board Action sheet was discussed by members.

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

30/24

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME (REPORT TO FOLLOW)

The Board reviewed The Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme.

During consideration the following were discussed by Members:

Play Audit Review - It was queried why the review was being split into two, with dates being provided for September and November. It was explained that the final report would not be available until end of October/beginning of November.

North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership. It was queried if a date had been provided. It was confirmed that a date had not yet been established.

Disabled Facilities Grant - Recommissioning of the Home Improvement Agency Promoting Independent Living Service – Members queried when a report would be made available to scrutinise. It was advised that a report be made available for Members imminently.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.40 p.m.

Chairman

This page is intentionally left blank