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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

TUESDAY 15TH APRIL 2025 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, D. J. Nicholl, S. A. Robinson and J. D. Stanley

<u>AGENDA</u>

- 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. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 25th March 2025 (Pages 5 - 16)

- 4. Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/25 (Pages 17 40)
- 5. Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Update (Pages 41 42)
- 6. Finance and Budget Working Group Update
- 7. **Task Group Update**
- 8. **Cabinet Work Programme** (Pages 43 54)
- 9. **Overview and Scrutiny Action Sheet** (Pages 55 58)
- 10. **Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme** (Pages 59 62)
- 11. To consider any urgent business, details of which have been notified to the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.

J. Leach Chief Executive

Parkside Market Street BROMSGROVE Worcestershire B61 8DA

7th April 2025

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

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GUIDANCE ON FACE-TO-FACE <u>MEETINGS</u>

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 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.



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

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

25th March 2025

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

25TH MARCH 2025, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors P. M. McDonald (Chairman), S. T. Nock (Vice-

Chairman), A. Bailes, R. Bailes, A. M. Dale, E. M. S. Gray,

R. J. Hunter, B. Kumar, M. Marshall, D. J. Nicholl, J. Robinson and

J. D. Stanley

Observers: Councillor B. M. McEldowney

Other Attendees: Mr N. Moon and Mr R. Church (Applied

Resilience)

Officers: Mr. G. Revans, Ms. M. Worsfold and Mrs S. Woodfield

103/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

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

104/23 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

Councillor J. Robinson declared a pecuniary interest in relation to Minute Item No. 110/24 – Cabinet Work Programme – due to his appointment as County Councillor at Worcestershire County Council (WCC).

105/23 <u>UPDATE ON HEATWAVES PREPAREDNESS (IMPACT OF</u> HEATWAVES TASK GROUP RECOMMENDATION)

Mr N. Moon, Chief Executive and Mr R. Church, Incident Management & Resilience Specialist of Applied Resilience (AR) presented an update on Heatwaves Preparedness to the Board.

The topics discussed included updates on Heatwaves at the Local Resilience Forum Level, Cools Hubs, Plans, Warning and Informing, Priority Services Register, Business Continuity Plans and Training.

Following the presentation, the Chairman of the Impact of Heatwaves Task Group, Councillor M. Marshall welcomed AR to the meeting and commenced proceedings. Along with Members of the Board; the following considerations were raised:

- Updates at the Local Resilience Forum Level During discussions in the Impact of Heatwaves Task Group sessions the establishment of Worcestershire Prepared (WP) had been discussed to review risks, however this was not mentioned in the presentation. Was the work still ongoing? Members were informed that the schemed was still being established, with the Terms of Reference still to be agreed. A mascot was being designed to encourage the scheme as a whole for community resilience, not just specifically for the Impacts of Heatwaves. It was also explained that AR were not leading on the scheme and the intention was for the group to carry out co-ordinated engagement for Heatwaves Preparedness.
- Was the operation of groups and agencies independent of LGR or would this also be reviewed? The Board were informed that the partnership was formed by forty partners and would have significant implications. The West Mercia Local Resilience Forum (LRF) had not discussed the implications of LGR specifically and were focusing mostly on the statutory responsibilities. However, LRF would be keeping pace with developments and would be considering the necessary service provisions. Members were also advised that LGR had been added as a specific risk to the LRF register.
- Cool Hubs Why were Cool Hub provisions for designated facilities specifically chosen for Churches of England, could other places of worship be explored? – It was explained that the Diocese had been considered as there had been good engagement, however, part of Worcestershire Prepared was to engage with all areas.
- How would the provision of Cool Hub facilities work for residents if availability was only for available during routine opening times? It was felt by Members that reliability of everyday Cool Hub venues was a necessity. – The Board were informed that opening times of venues were reliant and dependant on the severity of the civil emergency.
- A specific list of the facilities participating in the Cool Hub provision were requested for Members' consideration to also include venues which had air conditioning units present and those which did not. – It was agreed that this would be provided.
- Members requested Cool Hub provisions for the wider District should be explored to ensure adequate accessibility to all residents. - Members were informed that sourcing other venues was ongoing, including contacts with local parishes as a possible option. Engagement would be encouraged with WP, including the relevant partners and with voluntary sectors and agencies. Members were also advised that the provision for transporting vulnerable individuals to Cool Hub locations was also being considered.
- How would the provision of Cool Hubs be communicated to the public? – Engagement with the public and the use of facilities

would be dependent on the scale of the overall adverse level response. If there was an impending severe Heatwave Impact, the LGR would provide activate communications.

- Had equipment been procured for extra Cool Hub provision? –
 The Board were advised that the intension was only to provide
 facilities that were available within budget, however, if air
 conditioning units could be procured, other venues would be
 sourced. Members were advised that libraries did include air
 conditioning units and churches did not, however the thickness of
 the buildings' construction deemed them as an effective Cool Hub
 provision.
- It was suggested by a Member that sport centres and gym facilities could be explored as an option as the venues were equipped with air conditioning. In response Members were advised that up front costings were difficult to request, as opposed to rest centres. In response Members expressed the view that the suggested venues should be explored in further detail as a necessity for the local area. In response Members were advised that if there was an adverse weather risk, that the venues were more likely to support the scheme, however, there had been challenges in the past, with some similar venues refusing to assist.
- Was there information available to manage reducing risk during heatwaves, for example, lighting fire for BBQs and if there was information available to encourage sensible behaviour for dog owners during the summer months. – Members were advised that fires were part of the national monitoring. The Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service would also adapt their messaging of risk, depending on intelligence. The scheme was also reliant on partnerships to push out messages. The suggestion of sensible behaviour for dog owners would be fed back for the Worcestershire Prepared comms programme.
- Business Continuity Plans Could the Board be provided with progress on the Business Continuity Plans. - AR were in the process of meeting with all Assistant Directors and their teams to discuss business continuity plans. Members were also advised that keeping pace with the learning of cyber-attacks was an integral part of the plans.
- Priority Services Register Was there progress to ensure the
 most vulnerable in the District were being included on the Priority
 Services Register and if figures could be provided? The Board
 were advised that AR were not routinely provided with specific
 figures from utility services advising who had been put onto the
 register, however, AR were keen to promote the service and
 would review the suggestion further.
- Could WP consider managing their own Priority Services Register rather than relying on utility companies? – Members were informed that civil contingency plans could be reviewed if coordinated effectively, as an additional responsibility to be included in the BDC Adverse Weather Plan.

Overview and Scrutiny Board 25th March 2025

- Could the promotion and provision of the Priority Services Register (along with the relevant contact details) be included with the Council Tax bill distribution as a consideration? – It was agreed that this would be reviewed further and added to the list of requirements for the BDC Adverse Weather Plan.
- Plans Could the Board be updated with progress of the BDC adverse weather plan. The Board were informed that the plan was due for sign off and should be available by April, however, there was a need to review further Cool Hub provisions. Members were also advised that the LRF Adverse Weather Plan would be ready by next year.
- Did WP provide support for all weather conditions and not just extreme weather? – The Board were advised that WP were set up to advise on all weather conditions. There were also robust practices and training in place to assist Officers and Members for emergency planning.
- How would Members be informed of a severe weather warning, to ensure preparedness for residents. Members were informed that included in the Council's Adverse Weather Plan would be actions required to notify residents that the local area were moving to an adverse weather warning. In response, Members expressed concerns that there seemed to be insufficient time to warn residents and requested a more robust approach. In response it was explained that there were emergency operational steps outlined in the BDC Business Continuity Plan and that any warnings were dependant on the Meteorological Office triggering a response.
- **Training** Training was requested for Members to ensure that robust provisions were in place to provide the necessary advice to residents in preparedness for a Heatwave.
- Warning and Informing If a comprehensive list of campaigns could be circulated who warn and inform residents of adverse weather conditions. It was agreed that clearer guidance could be collated and provided in a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet, ahead of the BDC Adverse Weather Plan completion. Members were also advised that an integral part of WP responsibilities was to co-ordinate residents to the relevant available necessary documentation.
- Did NHS Surgeries provide sufficient information to residents to promote extreme weather preparedness advice? – The Board were informed that NHS Surgeries had their own formal protocols for extreme weather condition provisions, with clear robust guidance provided and were also part of WP.

RESOLVED that the Update on Heatwaves Preparedness be noted.

106/23 LOCAL HERITAGE ACTION LIST (QUARTERLY UPDATE)

The Principal Conservation Officer presented the Local Heritage Action List Quarterly Update for Member's consideration.

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The Board were informed of progress on preparing the lists and are still inviting nominations for all areas.

Work on drafting the lists for Lickey and Blackwell, Bromsgrove, Wythall and Bournheath continued but had been reduced due to staff sickness and a rise of Development Management work in January and February. It was hoped that the delay would allow the Bromsgrove Society to contribute to the Bromsgrove list also.

Following consideration of the presentation, Members provided the following comments:

- A Member queried how the selection process for listings was coordinated and requested if Lickey End and Norton could be a future consideration of review, advising that some listed buildings were situated in the area. – In response the Board were informed that parishes were generally considered instead of by ward area (apart from the Bromsgrove and Rubery areas) and the Conservation Team had decided that Parishes/areas were selected in alphabetical order for fairness. It was advised that the Conservation Team were happy to receive any nominations which would be banked, however, may not be reviewed until the parish/area in which they are located is being reviewed. However, a visit could be arranged to provide a local listing information evening to provide a talk on the allocation process.
- A Member requested progress on the drafting of lists for Lickey and Blackwell. – In response the Board were informed that lists were being actively worked on and there had been discussions with the Parish Council, albeit some time ago. They had also submitted nominations.
- A Member suggested if Aston Field could be considered. Advice
 of how to locate the nomination forms on the BDC Website was
 provided to Members.
- When reviewing Bromsgrove, was it solely the Town Centre for consideration? – In response the group were advised that it was not solely the Town Centre and that a list of the wards included in the Bromsgrove area would be provided for Members' consideration.
- Were further delays envisaged due to the rise in the Development Management work? – In response Members were informed that the work for the local plan was unpredictable, however, it was hoped progress on the lists would improve with the impending return of a staff member who had been on sick leave.
- Would Rubery be a future consideration? The Principal Conservation Officer advised that Rubery could be a consideration. It was highlighted that the Cardinal Newman's House had been flagged for consideration which was within the District's jurisdiction, at a recent talk given by the Principal Conservation Officer.

• A Member raised concerns regarding Bilberry Hill Tearooms based in the Cofton Parish, which had been gifted to Birmingham City Council but had seemed reluctant to assist with the building's restoration. The building had dilapidated and was in serious need of repair. It was requested if the building could be reviewed by the Conservation Team. – The Board were advised that if the building was in private ownership and not listed, it would be difficult to assist. However, the Conservation Team were aware that West Midlands Building Preservation Trust had shown interest in the building, and if they were prepared to take it on as a project, they would have access to various grant monies to repair it. It was agreed that contact details would be provided to Councillor A. Dale.

RESOLVED that the Local Heritage Action List (Quarterly Update) by noted.

107/23 <u>WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY</u> COMMITTEE - UPDATES

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 held on 8th January and 20th February 2025.

Updates on the dental service, Care Quality Commission inspection of Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust (Well Led Inspection), mitigating winter pressures and urgent and emergency care and overview from West Midlands Ambulance Service were discussed.

Following the presentation Members discussed several points which included:

- Members raised concerns of the current state of the NHS Dental Service being seemed to be regarded as a residual service. It was queried if the National Dental Recovery Plan was having a positive impact and if there were necessary steps in place to ensure the dental service was adequately provided? – It was advised that the recovery plan was incomplete and still in progress. As the Board minutes were in the public domain, requests for data were not generally provided and was therefore difficult to analyse progress without the necessary data available.
- Concerns of the Integrated Care Board (ICB) cuts were raised by the Board and it was queried if the cuts would have an adverse effect on the Dental Service. – In response Members were advised that funding had been discussed during previous Board meetings and cuts to middle management had been suggested, however the considerations had not been welcomed. Specific questions would be progressed at a future HOSC meetings to provide further data.

- Members raised concerns and requested further details regarding issues with a closed culture and racism in some areas of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust with risk management process in need of review. – Members were advised that the issue was raised with the Board but were reluctant to comment and were advised that the Board would be reviewing the situation further.
- Identified deaths of patients whilst waiting for an ambulance was raised with concern by Members and it was requested if specific numbers were provided by the Board? – It was advised that there had been three cases and that the Ambulance Service were very open and honest with their response. It was acknowledged that there had been one preventable death and two cases where the service could have provided more adequate care.

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

108/23 FINANCE AND BUDGET WORKING GROUP - UPDATE

The Chairman of the Finance and Budget Working Group, Councillor P. McDonald updated the Board of the recent meeting which took place on Friday 21st March 2025.

A new software system was being utilised within the Council to analyse data, which would flag important information. Officers presenting the new software at the meeting were very enthusiastic. Members felt encouraged that the tool was a vast improvement on past software and would be a great asset for future data analysis.

Members were also encouraged by the recovery plan which was in a good position for the impending LGR.

The Board were also advised that the group had paid a fond farewell to Peter Carpenter, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer who was due to leave the Council. The group ensured that thanks were recorded for the work carried out by him and that the respect and support from the Council had been overwhelming.

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

109/23 TASK GROUP - UPDATES

The Democratic Services Officer, who administered the Housing Task Group, provided an update on behalf of the Chairman of the Housing Task Group to the Board.

Members were informed that the group were on track and had covered each of the terms of reference items for investigation in various meetings with Officers. The next scheduled meeting would be held in person on 3rd April 2025 to draft the report and recommendations.

RESOLVED that the Housing Task Group update be noted.

110/23 **CABINET WORK PROGRAMME**

The Cabinet Work Programme was considered by the Board.

It was requested and the Board agreed that the Contaminated Land Strategy which was to be considered at Cabinet on 18th June 2025 should be scrutinised by the Board and be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for its meeting to be held on 17th June 2025.

LGR was raised by Members with the following points for consideration:

- Redundancies
- TUPE
- Vacancies
- Workforce

Members expressed the view that the Board should be considered to assist Cabinet with LGR and that the impending report should be scrutinised by the Board. – In response the Executive Director informed the Board that most staff would be TUPED over. The Minister had put out a statement that all Local Authorities who were required to, had submitted their interim plan. £7.6 m funding would be made available to twenty-one areas involved in LGR. Once a Unitary or North/South divide had been established with senior roles considered to be at most risk.

The Executive Director felt that the Board did have a role to play to review how services would be run with the impact of vacancies and redundancies. The Chief Executive would also be reviewing how to report to Cabinet and to the Overview and Scrutiny Board on a regular basis.

A report would be commissioned with other Local Authorities in the Worcestershire area to review LGR in more detail, with a transparent and balanced view considered integral as part of the review. Joint Chief Executives were meeting to discuss next steps and would look to commission a report.

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

111/23 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMMES

The Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme was considered by Members with the following points discussed:

- The Chairman raised and it was agreed by the Board that the Local Heritage Action List Quarterly Update would be moved from the June to the July meeting to free up some space on the work programme.
- A Member requested an update of progress for the Refuge Fleece Replacement. It was agreed this would be provided to the Board.
- It was raised by a Member and agreed by the Board that the Bromsgrove District Plan item should be removed from the June meeting and an extraordinary meeting be set up to scrutinise in further detail. Members did also discuss the need to ensure the meeting scheduled should be considered in line with the Strategic Planning Steering Group meetings also being held for Members.

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• It was considered by a Member and agreed by the Board that shops closing on Bromsgrove High Street should be scrutinised as an item by the Board. – In response the Chairman advised that a seminar had been set up with a Representative from the Bromsgrove Traders who had provided a talk to Members. After consideration of the seminar, Members had provided suggestions. The Chairman suggested that a report should be provided to the Board to update Members on progress of the suggestions made.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be noted.

112/23 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ACTION SHEET

The Overview and Scrutiny Action Sheet was considered by Members.

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

113/23

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

There was no urgent business for consideration.

114/23 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 Schedule 12A to the Act, as amended, the relevant paragraph of that part, in each case, being as set out below and that it is in the public interest to do so:-

<u>Item No</u> <u>Paragraph</u>

13 3

115/23 TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 11TH AND
17TH FEBRUARY 2025

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 11th and 17th February 2025 were considered.

A Member highlighted that there was a typographical error on page 43 which read as follows:

Overview and Scrutiny Board 25th March 2025

"If ANPR could be considered to pay on **exist** to encourage residents to stay in local areas for a longer period as opposed to the inconvenience of paying on entry".

It was noted that it should read as follows:

"If ANPR could be considered to pay on **exit** to encourage residents to stay in local areas for a longer period as opposed to the inconvenience of paying on entry".

A further typographical error was highlighted on page 44 which read as follows:

"If the consultants Waterman had engaged with **Warwickshire** County Council (WCC), as this was critical"?

It was noted that it should read as follows:

"If the consultants Waterman had engaged with **Worcestershire** County Council (WCC), as this was critical"?

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 11th and 17th February 2025 be agreed as a true and correct record.

(During 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 on the grounds that information would be revealed Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

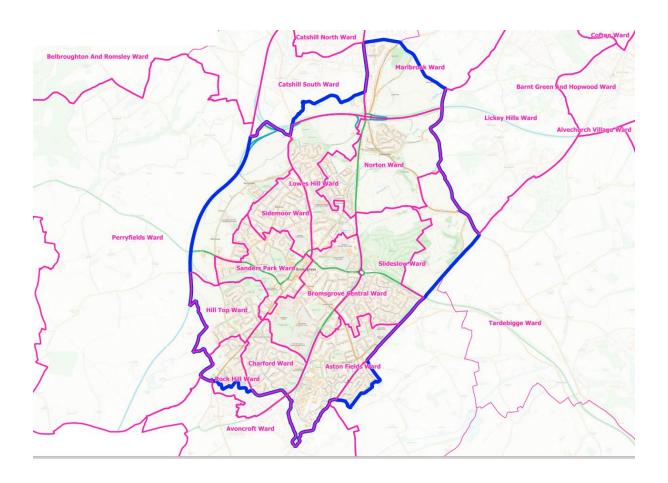
The meeting closed at 8.00 p.m.

Chairman

The following wards fall within the Bromsgrove area:

Aston Fields
Part of Avoncroft
Bromsgrove Central
Part of Catshill South
Charfield
Hill Top
Lowes Hill
Marlbrook
Norton
Part of Perryfields
Rock Hill
Sanders Park
Sidemoor
Slideslow

The map below identifies the areas:



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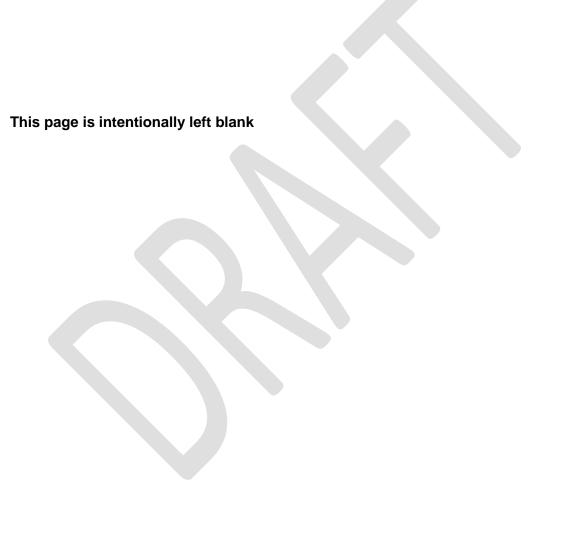
BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL LEGAL, DEMOCRATIC & PROPERTY SERVICES



Overview and Scrutiny **ANNUAL REPORT**

2024 - 2025





FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The second year of the new Council had been as challenging as the first, with the number of Task Groups and workload in general.

The Task Groups had completed their set agendas within the time limit and furthermore, most of the recommendations had been agreed and actioned by the Cabinet. As expected, the Board was required to increase the number of the meetings to manage an ever-increasing agenda, ensuring scrutiny was carried out efficiently and in a robust manner.

I would like to thank all Members of the Board who committed their time and energy to the tasks and of course to all who took part in Task Groups. I also realise the amount of work been placed on our Officers and would like to thank them for the help and assistance they gave to the Board.

Councillor Peter McDonald
Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board

INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to present the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report which outlines our work during 2024-2025 (this covers the municipal year from May 2024 to April 2025) and provides general information on the overview and scrutiny processes at Bromsgrove District Council (BDC).

Overview and Scrutiny is a key part of the democratic decision-making process in local Councils, where elected Councillors outside of the Cabinet can contribute to shaping Council policy, community well-being and accountability. This is done by reviewing Council services and policies, community issues and key decisions and making recommendations for improvement.

The four key principles of Overview and Scrutiny, as defined by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) the lead organisation supporting Overview and Scrutiny in the country, are:

- provide constructive "critical friend" challenge
- > amplify the voice and concerns of the public
- > be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role
- > drive improvement in public services.

The Members of the Board consider these principles when selecting topics to investigate whether it is holding the Cabinet to account, reviewing policies, policy development or scrutiny of external bodies.

MEMBERSHIP (The Board is made up of 11 Members)



Councillor P. M. McDonald (Chairman)



Councillor S. T. Nock (Vice-Chairman)



Councillor A. Bailes



Councillor R. Bailes



Councillor A. M. Dale



Councillor E. M. S. Gray



Councillor R. J. Hunter



Councillor B. Kumar



Councillor D.J. Nicholl



Councillor S. A. Robinson



Councillor J. D. Stanley

THE ROLE OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Overview and Scrutiny is a key part of the Council's political structure, and it plays a vital role in improving the services that people of the District use. It does not just look at the way the Council carries out its services, it can look at anything which affects the lives of people within the District, and it allows citizens to have a greater say in Council matters.

Overview and Scrutiny allows Councillors to review and scrutinise decisions, look at existing practices and make recommendations to help ensure the residents of Bromsgrove District receive excellent services. The aim is to ensure Overview and Scrutiny adds value to the Council's decision-making process and makes a positive contribution towards policy development.

The detailed terms of reference and procedure rules for the Overview and Scrutiny Board can be found at Part 5 and Part 12 of the Council's Constitution. The Council's Constitution can be accessed by using the following link.

Link to the Constitution of Bromsgrove District Council

(Please click on the latest date to access the most recent version of the Council's constitution).

<u>Meetings</u>

Throughout 2024-25, Overview and Scrutiny Board meetings had been taking place in person and were open to the public to attend at Parkside Hall in Bromsgrove. Meetings are live streamed if there is significant local interest in the items being considered at Overview and Scrutiny Board meetings. Meetings of Scrutiny Task Groups and Working Groups continue to be held remotely, since these meetings are private.

REPORTS CONSIDERED BY THE BOARD

The Board continued to receive updates to monitor the progress of recommendations it has made, with the recommendations made throughout this year outlined in this report. This contains both recommendations put forward by Task Groups and accepted by the Cabinet, together with recommendations put forward by the Board itself. In respect of Task Groups, the Board does, where necessary, receive an update report 12 months following acceptance of its recommendations.

During the year the Board had made several recommendations. There has been continued support from the relevant Cabinet Members this year, with regular attendance at Overview and Scrutiny meetings in relation to reports concerning Cabinet Members' areas of responsibility. This has given the Cabinet an opportunity to hear first-hand the debate and any recommendations made by the Board. The Chairman of the Board attends Cabinet meetings to present any recommendations made. On several occasions, whilst the Board had not made any recommendations in respect of an item, it had endorsed and/or supported recommendations which were then considered by Cabinet at its meetings.

The Board is due to consider the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2024-25 at the meeting due to be held on 15th April 2025.

THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD'S WORK PROGRAMME

Topics for the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme were selected. The topics that the Board chose to prioritise as 'key' in 2024-25 were: The Bromsgrove Play Audit; North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (including Anti-Social Behaviour); Changes to Waste Services in response to the Environment Act 2021 and Council's Levelling-Up Projects. Topics selected for a 'first look' briefing to all Councillors were: The District Heat Network; Biodiversity; Street Sweeping and Food Waste.

In addition to the above, an update was provided to the Board in respect of the Impact of Heatwaves Task group recommendation for the Board to be provided with an annual update.

Several other areas of interest have also been identified such as EV Chargers, Recycling on Bromsgrove High Street and Council Tax Debt Recovery. These have all been included on the Board's Work Programme for consideration during the 2025-2026 municipal year.

OVERVIEWS

Affordable Housing Briefing

During the meeting the definition of affordable housing, number and size of the affordable housing delivered, housing register information, affordable housing needs and future delivery were discussed.

Play Audit

During its meeting, Members were advised that the audit was being commissioned in order to ascertain the provision of play equipment within the District. Data was gathered in respect of travel distance and condition of provision, including areas in need of investment, such as infrastructure improvements or resurfacing. The audit included spaces provided by the Council, Parish Councils and third-party providers and only publicly accessible play spaces be included.

There were 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. The assessment identified a hierarchy of play provision based on an accessibility model that was comparable to national guidelines which were Local Play Spaces within four hundred metres with a five-to-ten-minute walking distance and Neighbourhood Play Spaces within eight hundred metres with a ten-to-fifteen-minute walking distance.

The Basement Project (Aims of Grant Funding)

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

The Council supported the Basement Project with both Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse grant funding. The purpose of the ringfenced Homelessness Prevention Grant fund was to give Local Authorities control and flexibility in managing homelessness pressures and supporting those who were at risk of homelessness. The Government expected Local Authorities to fully enforce the Homelessness Reduction Act and contribute to ending rough sleeping by increasing activity to prevent single homelessness, reduce family temporary accommodation numbers through maximising family homelessness prevention and eliminate the use of unsuitable bed and breakfast accommodation for families for longer than the statutory six-week limit.

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

North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP) (including Anti-Social Behaviour

In line with the Council's Constitution, the Board scrutinise the work of the Community Safety Partnership on an annual basis.

During consideration of the report at this year's meeting, the Board were informed that at its Planning meeting in February 2024, the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP) reviewed and agreed its new priorities for the following three-year period. The Partnership Plan set out the priorities that the CSP would focus on for a three-year period, with an annual refresh to capture any emerging issues and trends.

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

In 2023-24 new funding was made available by the Home Office via the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to support Community Safety partners in Implementing the Serious Violence Duty, an annual ring-fenced amount to identify and address local issues at a District level and also allocated additional Safer Communities funding to NWCSP.

PRE-SCRUTINY

Levelling-Up

During various meetings, updates on the Levelling Up Projects at Windsor Street, Market Hall site and the Public Realm works were discussed.

Members were informed that Cabinet were to approve the appointment of City Demolition for the demolition of existing buildings and associated site remediation, removal of existing redundant services and utilities and to approve a 10-week extension in the Market Hall Pre Construction Service Agreement (PCSA) in order to fully validate costs. The Overview and Scrutiny Board endorsed the report recommendations.

Members were also advised of the use of Kier for the delivery of the main works at the former Market Hall site following the Value Engineering exercises which had been approved in July 2024. Discussions also included the possible letting of the former Market Hall site and how associated parking issues could be mitigated, updates on the risk registers and how risks were being mitigated and the overall costs and how the project was to be financed. It had also been discussed that the Council had applied for and was awarded £14.5m of Levelling Up Funding.

During the various quarterly reports Members were briefed on the progress of the schemes at the Windsor Street site, Public Realm works, Former Market Hall, Risk Registers and how risks would be mitigated and also sought Members' approval to agree that the frequency of updates to the Overview and Scrutiny Board in respect of Levelling-Up be quarterly, which was endorsed by the Board.

Bromsgrove District Council Plan

A presentation was provided on the new Bromsgrove District Council Plan for 2024-2027. The Council Plan provided an overarching vision for the District, with four new priorities being Economic Development; Housing; Environment and 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 to ascertain areas of success and those where improvement was needed. The Overview and Scrutiny endorsed the Council Plan for approval.

Woodland Creation Application

The Overview and Scrutiny Board endorsed the Woodland Creation Application for approval.

Bromsgrove Play Audit and Investment Strategy

The report set out a factual analysis of the play equipment within the District, detailing Council owned sites, location and who managed the specific areas. The Play Audit and Investment Strategy sought 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 ten to fifteen minutes.

The Bromsgrove Play Audit which considered the accessibility of play provision, considered the contribution of all 85 play spaces, however the Bromsgrove Play Investment Strategy was focused on the 40 play spaces, for which Bromsgrove District Council had responsibility.

An amendment to the following Recommendation was endorsed by the Board:

"That the approach to capital investment as presented in The Bromsgrove Play Audit and Investment Strategy (Appendix 2) is accepted and that Officers are requested to prepare bids *in consultation with Ward Members* for capital funding, as applicable, to be considered in due course and in the context of other funding bids".

The amendment to the recommendation was considered at the Cabinet meeting held on 10th December 2024 and approved.

Introduction of Food Waste Collection (Pre-Scrutiny)

During this item the Board were informed that the Government had set a new statutory duty under the Environment Act 2021 to introduce a dedicated separate weekly collection of food waste from all households by 31st March 2026, alongside expanded requirements on dry recycling.

Working closely with Worcestershire County Council (WCC) as the Waste Disposal Authority, the Council were able to accommodate the changes to dry recycling without any modification to the existing green bin service. The report focused primarily on the changes required from the new food waste service. As the Council operated such a service, additional resources were required to operate and due to the size restrictions of the depots, were unable to add them to the existing arrangements without significant investment in additional land as well as an expansion of the Operator's Licence with the Traffic Commissioner and Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA). In addition to the challenges regarding space restrictions on providing the service, it would require procurement and delivery of food waste caddies for each property, additional bins for communal properties, and additional dedicated vehicles and staff to collect the waste.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board endorsed the recommendations for approval.

Refuse Fleet Replacement and Wheeled Bin Pressures (Pre-Scrutiny)

Members were asked to consider the "Diamond" bins which were limiting the Council's ability to meet the statutory duties, as well as increasing operating costs. It was proposed that BDC replace all the existing "Diamond" wheeled bins with industry standard "Comb" 240ltr wheeled bins or to consider replacing all the existing green and brown "Diamond" wheeled bins with industry standard "Comb" 240ltr wheeled bins and replace the existing 240ltr wheeled bins for residual waste, with 180ltr "Comb" wheeled bins.

The option to reduce the size of the residual waste bin, although would support immediate benefits regarding recycling performance, might add additional challenges,

should the Council look to make further changes to expand the service and/or reduce the frequency of residual waste collection to further pressurise the waste stream and reduce operating costs linked to the non-recyclable waste.

Like for like replacement of all existing Diamond Wheeled bins would require Capital investment including delivery and expected credits against the recycled "Diamond" bins. A decision to reduce the size of the 240ltr residual waste bins to 180ltrs would reduce costs and would also support increased recycling quantities and take up of the food waste service expected to start in 2026 based on a current fortnightly collection service.

During consideration of the item, a recommendation was endorsed by the Board "To endorse the proposal within the report to: Replace all our existing "Diamond" wheeled bins with industry standard "Comb" 240ltr wheeled bins (no change in size for any waste streams)".

The amendment to the recommendation was considered at the Cabinet meeting held on 7th January 2025 and approved.

Strategic Parking Review (Pre-scrutiny)

The purpose of this report was to inform the Board that Waterman Infrastructure and Environment had been commissioned by BDC to undertake the Strategic Parking Review as through various meetings there was a clear desire expressed by Members to ensure a more equitable balance in patrols across the whole District.

A key element of delivery was to ensure a clear partnership working amongst the various stakeholders, it was therefore recommended that a Parking Task Group be established including representatives from BDC, WDC and Warwickshire County Council (WCC) to work through the various options pertinent to each organisation.

To assess how car parking enforcement may be delivered in the medium and long term, an options appraisal identifying the positives and negatives of the three key options had been undertaken which included maintaining the SLA with WDC, tender out to external contractors and delivery with internal resources.

The publication of the English Devolution White Paper on 16th December 2024 had provided uncertainty on the impact that this would have on BDC over the forthcoming two to four years. As such, continuity of service for parking enforcement was recommended by an extension to the period of the services delivered by WDC. This continuity would ensure compliance of service delivery during the period of the extended SLA and would also allow officers the time and capacity to deliver the Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) solutions for the three car parks identified.

The Shopmobility Service was also discussed which had five customers with one customer being a regular user.

During consideration it was felt by that the Business Case and Service Review had not addressed the points raised by Members during various meetings and as such

Members were unable to endorse the suggested recommendations to Cabinet. However, the following were Recommended:

- The Business Case and Service Review for the strategic parking review be deferred for 6 months until the issues have been addressed as not fit for purpose, in that it doesn't cover bringing the service in house.
- 2) There should be an increase in the proposed Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO) patrol time, greater than 25%, included in the Service Level Agreement (SLA), as the current proposal of 25% is not considered to be adequate.
- 3) More CEOs should be funded to operate in the District as opposed to introducing an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) service.
- 4) The Council retain cash payment options for car parks in the District.
- 5) A study be launched reviewing parking in Alvechurch.

The suggested recommendations were considered at the Cabinet meeting held on 12th February 2025. The Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Regeneration addressed the recommendations during the presentation of the report and stated that as a result of the pre-scrutiny, there had been several changes to the recommendations contained within the Cabinet report.

Local Development Scheme (LDS)

During this item Members were informed that following Government consultation on the 12th December 2024, a new version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published and to meet the requirement, a new Local Development Scheme (LDS) had been produced. The LDS was the timetable for the Planning Policies which the Council intended to produce and outlined the likely path the Bromsgrove District Local Plan would take to adoption.

The Board endorsed the recommendation to Cabinet.

Bromsgrove Local Heritage List (Pre-Scrutiny)

This report updated Members on the tasks which were undertaken by the Conservation Team to prepare the Bromsgrove Local Heritage List (LHL). Work for the Parishes of Alvechurch, Beoley, Belbroughton and Fairfield and Dodford with Grafton had been completed. The report also gave an update of progress for other areas within the District.

A six-week consultation period had commenced with letters sent to all owners/occupiers providing information about the consultation, including the listing for their property. Following completion of the consultation process the LHL for each parish was finalised. The Conservation Team were asking Cabinet to recommend that Council approve the LHL list which would then be a material consideration in the planning process. The Board endorsed the recommendation to Cabinet.

During various quarterly updates held the Board were advised of progress 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. The Board were also informed of progress on preparing the lists and inviting nominations for Lickey and Blackwell and Barnt Green. Work on drafting the lists for Lickey and Blackwell, Bromsgrove, Wythall and Bournheath continued but had been reduced due to staff sickness and a rise of Development Management work in January and February.



INFORMATION ITEMS

Worcestershire Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)

The Council's representative on the Worcestershire-wide Health Overview and Scrutiny must be a Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Board and is required to provide the Board with regular updates on the work being carried out.

The Board's representative for the municipal year 2024-25 was Councillor B. Kumar. During the year Councillor B. Kumar provided comprehensive and informed updates on meetings of HOSC and responded to questions from Members on matters including:

- Mental Health provision in Worcestershire (including Hill Crest MH Ward)
- Children's Hearing Services
- Health Services Winter Planning
- Review of Public Health Function.
- Health Care System Plans (including Urgent Community Response)
- West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) calls
- Community Ambulances and Primary Care (GP) Access within Worcestershire
- Access to GP appointments
- Herefordshire and Worcestershire Primary Care Access Recovery Plan

<u>Hybrid Leader and Cabinet Governance Model – Sixth-Month Review of Working Arrangements</u>

The six-month review of working arrangements (hybrid Leader and Cabinet governance model) report reviewed how the Hybrid Leader and Cabinet model of governance had been working at BDC for the last six months.

The key proposals outlined was that the Council should have a Hybrid Leader and Cabinet model of governance moving forward. To enable this to be delivered, the recommendation was underpinned by six sub-proposals summarised as follows: -

- That the changes to the constitution detailed in the October 2023 report be implemented.
- That working protocols be introduced to embed more collegiate working.
- That Cabinet Advisory Groups (CAGs) be introduced.
- That action be taken to improve communications with Members.
- That a Memorandum of Understanding between all political group leaders to maintain these working arrangements for at least the next four years be introduced.
- That the arrangements be reviewed in six months' time by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

WORKING GROUPS

Finance & Budget Working Group

This Group met on six occasions during the year with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling in attendance at all the Group's meetings, together with the Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer) and the Head of Finance and Customer Services.

The list below contains some of the topics/reports which the Working Group had considered and gives an insight into the work that has been carried out:

- 2024-25 Budget
- Medium Term Financial Plan 2024-25 to 2026-27 Tranche 1 and Tranche 2 Reports
- Finance and Performance Monitoring Reports
- The Financial Outturn Report
- Council Tax Empty Homes Discounts and Premiums report
- Council Tax Support Scheme
- Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates Discretionary Relief Policy
- Council Tax and Business Rates Yield 2024-25
- Financial Recovery Plan
- Blue Badge Holders Parking Proposal
- Ward Funds Proposal

During the first meeting of the municipal year the Overview and Scrutiny Board appointed the Chairman and Members to the Finance and Budget Working Group. The Members for the 2024 – 2025 municipal year were Councillor P. McDonald, Councillor S. T. Nock, Councillor A. Bailes, Councillor R. Bailes, Councillor S. Robinson. Councillor H.D.N. Rone-Clarke was appointed to sit on the Group in his role as the Chairman of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee in line with the Terms of Reference of the Working Group. Discussions also took place about allowing substitutes on the Finance and Budget Working Group, most Members felt that no substitutions should be allowed on the Working Group. It was also felt that Members would first discuss whether the quorum should remain at three before considering changes to the current terms of reference.

During its meeting on 23rd July 2024 the Board were informed that three recommendations were agreed by the Finance and Budget Working Group at its July meeting and were proposed to Overview and Scrutiny Board for their onward recommendation to Cabinet. These recommendations were:

1. That 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.

At the meeting of Cabinet on 24th July, recommendations 1 and 2 above were referred to the Strategic Planning Steering Group (SPSG) for consideration.

Recommendation 3 was agreed in the following format: 'Subject to updating the Cabinet Work Programme to schedule items for consideration "not before" particular dates, to ensure that when deadlines are provided in Council reports, these are realistic and are being adhered to'.

The Terms of Reference was also discussed regarding Point 6 "No substitute will be permitted to sit on the Finance and Budget Working Group" be amended to "No substitute will be permitted to sit on the Finance and Budget Working Group, other than in exceptional circumstances, such as planned absence".

The following were also discussed:

- Section 24 Notice remained whilst the Authority's accounts were unaudited.
- Agency staff utilisation had reduced by 10% since the previous update.
- Woodland Creation scheme due to be considered by the Board before it was presented to Cabinet.
- 2021/2022 accounts which were due to be discussed at the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee scheduled to be held on Thursday 10th October 2024. The Government passed legislation on 9th September 2024 that all Councils had until 13th December 2024 to submit their 2021/2022 accounts. These accounts would also go out to public consultation.

During the meeting held on 10th September 2024 the Chairman discussed the Terms of Reference with the Board. Following discussions the Board agreed the following change be made from "No substitute will be permitted to sit on the Finance and Budget Working Group" to "No substitute will be permitted to sit on the Finance and Budget Working Group, other than in exceptional circumstances, such as planned absence".

The following were also discussed:

- The Section 24 Notice remained whilst the Authority's accounts would be audited by external auditors.
- Agency staff utilisation had reduced by 10% since the previous update to Members, with the number of new employees likely to reduce agency staff numbers even further. The use of an independent audit adviser had been discussed previously but it was agreed this was too costly to the Council purse.
- The Woodland Creation bid was also discussed, with this scheme due to be looked at by Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board before it was presented to Cabinet. The Deputy Chief Executive updated the Members regarding the 2021/2022 accounts which were due to be discussed at the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee scheduled to be held on Thursday 10th October 2024. The Government passed legislation on 9th September 2024 that all Councils had until 13th December 2024 to submit their 2021/2022 accounts. These accounts would also go out to public consultation.

At its meeting held on 6th January 2025 the Medium-Term Financial Plan Tranche 1 Budget was discussed as follows:

- A one-year settlement was agreed.
- The agreed 3.25 percentage increase in grant funding had been re-evaluated to 0 percent. Consultations were ongoing to review the funding.
- There would be a 2.99 percentage increase in Council Tax.
- There was an agreement of a 3 percent increase in pay awards (an estimated £154k).
- It was agreed that National Insurance contributions would be funded by the Government.
- The Council to allocate £1m revenue funding for the Food Waste Collection Service.
- A dividend of £250k would be provided by Bromsgrove School.

During its meeting held on 11th February 2025 the Tranche 2 of the Budget setting was discussed as follows:

- The Council would be increasing the Council Tax by a further 1%.
- There was no increase in government funding and a balanced budget was to be taken from the general fund.
- After consideration of The Poverty Truth Commission presented during the meeting, Members requested further information to detail how the commission had helped individuals and to provide examples. An extraordinary Finance and Budget Working Group meeting would take place on 18th February 2025 for further consideration of this item.

During the meeting held on 25th March 2025 the following were discussed:

 A new software system was being utilised within the Council to analyse data, which would identify important information and any trends or areas of improvement required. • Members were also encouraged by the recovery plan which was in a good position for the impending Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

TASK GROUP INVESTIGATIONS & SHORT, SHARP REVIEWS CARRIED OUT

For Task Groups The detailed final reports of all these investigations can be found on the Council's website within the Overview and Scrutiny section.

Impact of Heatwaves Task Group

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 report discussed with the Board on 23rd July 2024.

Members agreed to the recommendation that an annual report be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Board in order to update Members any areas of change in respect of the Impact of Heatwaves on the Community and any changes in the response to those events be noted. The report and its recommendations were subsequently noted at Cabinet at its meeting on 11th September 2024.

The report to consider the annual update was presented to the Board at its meeting held on 25th March 2025. The Board were briefed on the Council's preparedness for the impact of heatwaves as recommended by the Board. The topics discussed included updates on Heatwaves at the Local Resilience Forum Level, Cools Hubs, Plans, Warning and Informing, Priority Services Register, Business Continuity Plans and Training.

<u>Foodbank and Community Shop Provision Task Group – Proposed Amendment</u> to recommendation

The Chairman of the Foodbank and Community Shop Provision Task Group presented to the Board on 19th November 2024. It was explained that the report detailed the background to, as well as the wording of, an amendment suggested by Cabinet to Recommendation 4 of the Foodbank and Community Shop Provision Task Group, the other recommendations from the group having been approved by Cabinet earlier in the year.

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

The proposed amendment was "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 support the*

local community and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) to create a food bank in Rubery where a need has already been identified".

The Board agreed to endorse the proposed change to the wording of the Food Bank Task Group's fourth recommendation.

<u>Topic Proposal for Task Group – Housing</u>

On 23rd July 2024 Councillor Rone-Clarke presented the topic proposal for the Board's consideration. The Board endorsed the decision that a Housing Task Group be established and that the terms of reference be approved. Key objectives of the proposed task group review were to scrutinise the following areas:

- Fleece-holding 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.

During the meeting on 10th September 2024, it was explained that the purpose of the report was to formalise the Membership of the Task Group, considering requests received since the previous meeting. It was agreed that the Chairman would be appointed at the first task group meeting. The proposed membership of the Housing Task Group was approved by the Board.

During its meeting held on 19th November 2024 the Chairman of the Housing Task Group updated Members of its meeting which took place on 31st October 2024. The initial meeting had gone well, with positive engagement and discussions by all Members. During the debate Members had suggested that a further area could be explored in more detail. Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board were requested to consider and subsequently agreed the following as an addition to the Terms of Reference: "To scrutinise the allocations policy and housing register regarding eligibility, qualification and allocations and explore standards of housing let under the policy".

During various meetings the Board were informed of progress of the Housing Task Group. Members were informed that the group were on track and had covered each of the terms of reference items for investigation in various meetings with Officers. The next scheduled meeting would be held in person on 3rd April 2025 to draft the report and recommendations.

CONCLUSION

A significant amount of pre-scrutiny work has been carried out by the Board throughout the year and based on detailed discussions, a number of recommendations had been made to Cabinet and Full Council. Some of these recommendations were subsequently approved by the decision-making bodies. In addition to this, the work of the Finance and Budget Working Group has been useful in providing Members with an opportunity to look at complex finance reports in some considerable detail.

During the year, two task group investigations (Impact of Heatwaves and Foodbank Provision) had been concluded with a further Housing Task Group progressing well and had covered each of the terms of reference items for investigation in various meetings with Officers. The final report for this Task group was due to be considered by the Board at its meeting due to be held in June 2025. This would subsequently be considered at the cabinet meeting held in July 2025.



FURTHER INFORMATION

Overview and Scrutiny Board Meetings

Overview and Scrutiny Board meetings are open to the public. To find out more visit our website at http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/council/the-council/overview-and-scrutiny.aspx or telephone 01527 881288 and ask to speak to the Democratic Services Officer.

Public Involvement

If you would like to have your say on issues being considered by Overview and Scrutiny or to suggest a topic for consideration you can email scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk or complete the form on the Council's website at https://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/council/the-council/overview-and-scrutiny/public-participation.aspx

Giving Evidence

Members of the public or organisations with a special interest or knowledge about a particular topic being considered by Overview and Scrutiny can put forward evidence to a Committee or appear as a witness to give evidence for an investigation. If you think you or your organisation might be able to participate in an issue currently under review, please contact us.

If you have a personal issue with a Council service you may find it more useful to contact your local ward Councillor who can help you decide the best way to take it forward.

Contact Overview and Scrutiny

If you would like to find out more about any aspect of the Overview and Scrutiny Board then you can email scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk or telephone 01527 881288 and ask to speak to the Democratic Services Officer.

Overview and Scrutiny
Legal, Democratic and Property Services
Bromsgrove District Council
Parkside, Market Street, Bromsgrove B61 8DA



Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report Monday 17th March 2025

Two items on the agenda

- Adult mental health rehabilitation redesign and acute inpatient improvement update
- Diabetes Pathway

Adult Mental Health Rehabilitation Redesign and Acute Inpatient Improvement – Update

- This exercise is to ensure that all who access services receive nationally standardised, evidence-based, quality care.
- The objectives for this programme include
 - Reduce unwarranted variations identified within inpatient and rehabilitation services.
 - o Reduce patients being placed out of area, to 0%.
 - o Achieve maintain length of stay of below 35 days.
 - o Ensure that the Trust no longer use any high-cost agency staff.
 - o Reduce rolling 12-month staff turnover to below 12%.
 - o Ensure patient -centred care.
 - Capture and analyse the impact of interventions to assess risks and benefits as part of evidence-based practice.

• Adult Mental Health Inpatients Quality Improvement

- Elimination of inappropriate out-of-area mental health bed placement and reducing length of stay.
- This programme will follow the phases below:

Phase 1	Development of	Complete
11100	programme initiation	C 5p.15.15
	document and	
	programme governance	
	(Jan 23- May 23)	
Phase 2	Idea formulation/hurdle	Complete
	process/patient staff	·
	engagement/ public	
	engagement and	
	feedback	
Phase 2A	Finalise case for change	Commenced May 2024
Phase 3	Public consultation and	Not started
	service improvement	
	(June 26-October 26)	
Phase 4	Implementation	Not started

Diabetes Pathway

Background

- Diabetes UK (2021) states more than 4.9 million people in the UK have diabetes and an additional 13.6 million people are at risk of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus. 90% of people with diabetes have Type 2 diabetes (non-insulin dependent) whilst 8% have Type 1 diabetes (Insulin dependent) and 2% have maturity onset diabetes.
- The prevalence of all types of diabetes in Worcestershire is 6.69% of the registered population (i.e. 41,9867 individuals). This is slightly lower than national average of 7.45%. Of these 38.373v have Type 2 diabetes and 2.999 have Type 1 diabetes.

• Type 1 Diabetes Pathway

- All people with Type 1 Diabetes receive structured education at Worcestershire Acute Hospital (WHAT). 52.2% of those diagnosed with Typ1 were offered structured education within 12 months of diagnosis, above the average for England of 46.6%. Attendance rates are also higher than England average: 13.0% vs 7.7%.
- To ensure people with Type 1 diabetes remain well, the Primary care team undertakes 9 care processes and 3 treatment targets.
- 9 care processes include: Weight and BMI, Blood pressure, HBA1c, retinopathy screening, smoking status and cholesterol level.
- 3 treatment targets are the optimal range for HbA1c, cholesterol and blood pressure.

• Type 2 Diabetes Pathway

- NHS Health checks frequently identify HbA1c that are above normal but below the diabetes threshold. This group of pre-diabetics and women with a history of gestational diabetes receive proactive annual reviews. They are also referred to Diabetes Prevention Programme.
- The Know Your Risk Tool is widely promoted and can support people to come forward.
- Assessment and management of Type 2 Diabetes is managed by nurses in the GP surgery and Diabetic Specialist Nurses from Worcestershire Acute Hospital Trust.
- In 2023, 91.8% of people in Herefordshire and Worcestershire with Type 2 Diabetes were offered structured education within 12 months of diagnosis, as compared to national average of 84.9%.
- A bespoke programme is also available for people aged 18-40 years, offering additional holistic support.

Compiled by
Cllr Bakul Kumar
3rd April 2025

CABINET LEADER'S WORK PROGRAMME



1 MAY 2025 TO 31 AUGUST 2025 (published as at 1st April 2025)

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;

you wish to make representations on the proposed decision you are encouraged to get in touch with the relevant report author as soon as consible 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, Standards and Governance Committee Annual Report 2024/25 Key: No	Council Not before 2nd Jun 2025		Report of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee	Sarah Woodfield, Democratic Services Officer sarah.woodfield@bromsgrovea ndredditch.gov.uk Councillor H. D. N. Rone- Clarke
©verview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/25 Key: No	Council Not before 2nd Jun 2025		Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Board	Sarah Woodfield, Democratic Services Officer sarah.woodfield@bromsgrovea ndredditch.gov.uk Councillor P. M. McDonald
Bromsgrove District Plan Consultation Key: No	Cabinet 18 Jun 2025 Council 19 Jun 2025		Report of the Assistant Director 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
Contaminated Land Strategy Key: No	Cabinet 18 Jun 2025 Council 16 Jul 2025		Report of the Director of Worcestershire Regulatory Services	Mark Cox, Technical Services Manager Tel: 01562 738023 Councillor K. Taylor
Promoting Independent iving Service Contract Proposals Key: Yes (New !!!)	Cabinet 18 Jun 2025 Council 16 Jul 2025	This report may contain exempt information that would need to be considered in private session.	Report of the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services	Matthew Bough, Housing Development and Enabling Manager Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor S. A. Webb
Warm Homes Local Grants funding and Resources Key: No (New !!!)	Cabinet 18 Jun 2025 Council 16 Jul 2025		Report of the Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services	Matthew Eccles, Climate Change Manager Tel: 01527 881259 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
Financial Outturn Report and Q4 Performance Monitoring Report 2024/2025 Key: No	Cabinet 23 Jul 2025 Council 8 Oct 2025		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Bob Watson, Deputy Chief Executive & Section 151 Officer bob.watson@bromsgroveandre dditch.gov.uk Councillor S. R. Colella
Revocation of the Bromsgrove Road and Lickey End Air Quality Management Area Key: Yes (New !!)	Cabinet 23 Jul 2025			Chris Poole 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
Treasury Management Outturn Report 2024/2025 Key: No	Cabinet 23 Jul 2025 Council 8 Oct 2025		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Bob Watson, Deputy Chief Executive & Section 151 Officer bob.watson@bromsgroveandre dditch.gov.uk Councillor S. R. Colella
Medium Term Financial Plan Scene Setting Report 2026/2027 Key: No	Cabinet 10 Sep 2025 Council 8 Oct 2025		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Bob Watson, Deputy Chief Executive & Section 151 Officer bob.watson@bromsgroveandre dditch.gov.uk 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
Quarter 1 2025/26 Finance and Performance Monitoring Report Key: No	Cabinet 10 Sep 2025 Council 8 Oct 2025		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Bob Watson, Deputy Chief Executive & Section 151 Officer bob.watson@bromsgroveandre dditch.gov.uk Councillor S. R. Colella
Medium Term Financial Plan Tranche 1 Budget Report 2026/2027 Key: Yes	Cabinet 19 Nov 2025		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Bob Watson, Deputy Chief Executive & Section 151 Officer bob.watson@bromsgroveandre dditch.gov.uk 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
Quarter 2 2025/26 Finance and Performance Monitoring Report Key: No	Cabinet 19 Nov 2025 Council 3 Dec 2025		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Bob Watson, Deputy Chief Executive & Section 151 Officer bob.watson@bromsgroveandre dditch.gov.uk Councillor S. R. Colella
Treasury Management half Yearly Report 2024/2025 Key: No	Cabinet 19 Nov 2025 Council 3 Dec 2025		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Bob Watson, Deputy Chief Executive & Section 151 Officer bob.watson@bromsgroveandre dditch.gov.uk 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 Base Report 2026/27 Key: No	Cabinet 7 Jan 2026 Council 26 Jan 2026		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Bob Watson, Deputy Chief Executive & Section 151 Officer bob.watson@bromsgroveandre dditch.gov.uk Councillor S. R. Colella
Council Tax - Empty Homes Discounts and Premiums 2026/27 Key: No	Cabinet 7 Jan 2026 Council 21 Jan 2026		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Bob Watson, Deputy Chief Executive & Section 151 Officer bob.watson@bromsgroveandre dditch.gov.uk 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 Support Scheme 2026/27 Key: No	Cabinet 7 Jan 2026 Council 26 Jan 2026		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Bob Watson, Deputy Chief Executive & Section 151 Officer bob.watson@bromsgroveandre dditch.gov.uk Councillor S. R. Colella
Discretionary Council Tax Reduction Policy 2026/27 Key: No	Cabinet 7 Jan 2026 Council 21 Jan 2026		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Bob Watson, Deputy Chief Executive & Section 151 Officer bob.watson@bromsgroveandre dditch.gov.uk 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 Report 2026/2027 Key: No	Cabinet 7 Jan 2026 Council 21 Jan 2026		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Bob Watson, Deputy Chief Executive & Section 151 Officer bob.watson@bromsgroveandre dditch.gov.uk Councillor S. R. Colella
Non Domestic Rates - Discretionary Rates Relief Policy 2026/27 Key: No	Cabinet 7 Jan 2026 Council 21 Jan 2026		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Bob Watson, Deputy Chief Executive & Section 151 Officer bob.watson@bromsgroveandre dditch.gov.uk 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 Report 2026/2027 Key: No	Cabinet 11 Feb 2026 Council 18 Feb 2026		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Bob Watson, Deputy Chief Executive & Section 151 Officer bob.watson@bromsgroveandre dditch.gov.uk Councillor S. R. Colella
Council Tax Resolution 2026/27 Key: No	Cabinet 18 Feb 2026 Council 18 Feb 2026		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Bob Watson, Deputy Chief Executive & Section 151 Officer bob.watson@bromsgroveandre dditch.gov.uk Councillor S. R. Colella

		any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Papers List	
and Performance	binet 25 Mar 2026 uncil May 2026		Report of the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	Bob Watson, Deputy Chief Executive & Section 151 Officer bob.watson@bromsgroveandre dditch.gov.uk Councillor S. R. Colella

BDC Overview and Scrutiny Board - Action Sheet (2024/25)

25th March 2025 Meeting

Subject	Action Required	Action Taken	Officer(s) Responsible	Other Comments	Status
Local Heritage Action List	Arrange discussions with Cllr Dale to provide details re: West Midlands Building Preservation Trust for Bilberry Hill Tearooms	Emailed relevant actions to Conservation 28/3/25. Chased 2/4/25.			Completed Received email 2/4/25 Principal Conservation Officer will be contacting Cllr Dale directly.
	Arrange discussions with Cllr Hunter to provide a talk on Local Heritage List nominations with Lickey End & Norton	Emailed relevant actions to Conservation 28/3/25. Chased 2/4/25.	Mary Worsfold, Principal Conservation Officer		Completed Received email 2/4/25 Principal Conservation Officer will be contacting Cllr Hunter directly.
Page 55	Provide a list of wards included in the Bromsgrove area listings	Emailed relevant actions to Conservation 28/3/25. Chased 2/4/25.			Completed List and map have been provided as an appendices to the minutes for 25 th March 2025 meeting.
Update on Heatwaves Preparedness	Provide comprehensive list of facilities currently participating in Cool Hub	Emailed Applied Resilience with list of Actions	Applied Resilience		Outstanding
	provision for Members and include venues with/without air conditioning units	27/3/25. Chased 2/4/25.			Outstanding
	Look to provide Cool Hub spaces for wider District and to be readily available				Outstanding
	Consider the costings of gyms and sports centres (which are air conditioned) to be a				Outstanding

Subject	Action Required	Action Taken	Officer(s) Responsible	Other Comments	Status	
	consideration for Cool Hubs					
	4. Sensible Dog Owners guidance in extreme weather conditions to be fed into Worcestershire Prepared Comms Programme				Outstanding	
	5. Provide a progress update of who is on Priority Services Register for Members				Outstanding	
Pa	6. Provide training to Members to enable them to prepare residents in extreme weather conditions				Outstanding	
Page 56	7. Look to promote and educate on the availability of the Priority Services Register as a flyer to be included in Council Tax			3/4/25 Email from Nick Moon - A meeting has been scheduled to discuss this.	Outstanding	
	8. Provide a FAQ sheet of warn and inform resources readily available				Outstanding	2
	Provide readily available guidance of what to do in extreme weather conditions for Members				Outstanding	בו מ מ
	10. Look to add to plans to expand vulnerable residents on the Priority Services Register				Outstanding	

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Subject	Action Required	Action Taken	Officer(s) Responsible	Other Comments	Status
Cabinet Work Programme	Contaminated Land Strategy Report (pre-scrutiny) to be arranged with Marc Cox and added to O & S Work Programme for June meeting		Sarah Woodfield, Democratic Services Officer		Completed
O & S Work Programme	Add Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) as an upcoming item to the Work Programme		Sarah Woodfield, Democratic Services Officer		Completed
	Re-schedule Local Heritage List update from June to July meeting		Sarah Woodfield, Democratic Services Officer		Completed
Ps	Provide members with an update on Refuse Fleet Replacement	Emailed Matt Austin on 28/3/25	Matt Austin, Environmental Services Manager		Completed Update was emailed to Members on 28/3/25
Page 57	Add Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategy Workshop (Next Steps) to Work Programme	Emailed Lyndsey Berry and discussed with Rachel Egan on 31/3/25	Sarah Woodfield, Democratic Services Officer		Completed Item scheduled for July

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

<u>2025-2026</u>

ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Date of Meeting	Subject	Lead Officer / Member
17 th June 2025	Overview Items	
	Council Tax Debt Recovery (Raised at O & S 11/2/25 Cllr E. Gray)	Dave Riley, Revenue Services Manager
	Installation of EV Chargers	Simon Parry, Assistant Director of Environmental and Housing Property Services
	Substantive Items	
	Bromsgrove District Plan Consultation (Pre-Scrutiny)	Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager
	Contaminated Land Strategy (Pre-Scrutiny)	Mark Cox, Technical Services Manager/Steven Williams (WRS)
	Administrative Items	
	WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Election of Representative	
22 nd July 2025	Overview Items	
	Recycling Bins (Bromsgrove High Street) (Raised at O & S 11/2/25 Cllr J. Robinson)	Doug Henderson, Environmental Services Manager
	Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategy Workshop (Next Steps) (TBA)	Rachel Egan, Assistant Director Regeneration and Property/Lindsey Berry, Bromsgrove Centres Manager
	Information Items	
	Local Heritage Action List (Quarterly Update)	Mary Worsfold, Principal Conservation Officer
	Levelling Up Fund Programme (Quarterly Update)	Rachel Egan, Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services
9 th September 2025	Substantive Items	

Date of Meeting	Subject	Lead Officer / Member
	Information Items Local Heritage Action List (Quarterly Update)	Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager
	Levelling Up Fund Programme (Quarterly Update)	Rachel Egan, Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services
18 th November 2025	Substantive Items 6-Month Review of Working Arrangements - Hybrid Leader and Cabinet Governance Model	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Democratic & Property Services (Monitoring Officer)
	Information Items	
6 th January 2026	Substantive Items	
	Information items Local Heritage Action List (Quarterly Update)	Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager
	Levelling Up Fund Programme (Quarterly Update)	Rachel Egan, Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services
10 th February 2026	Substantive Items	
	Information Items	
24 th March 2026	Substantive Items	
	Update on Heatwaves Preparedness (Yearly Update) (Impact of Heatwaves Task Group Recommendation).	Guy Revans, Executive Director
	Information Items Levelling Up Fund Programme (Quarterly Update)	Rachel Egan, Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services

Date of Meeting	Subject	Lead Officer / Member
	Local Heritage Action List (Quarterly Update)	Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager
14 th April 2026 (meeting reserved	Substantive Items	
for consideration of O&S Annual Report and Review of 2025-26)	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2025-26	Chairman of the Board

ALL MEMBER BRIEFINGS

Date of Meeting	Subject	Lead Officer / Member
24 th July 2025	Anti-Social Behaviour (Tools and Powers)	Bev Houghton, Community Safety Manager

MEETINGS TO BE SCHEDULED

Date of Meeting	Subject	Lead Officer / Member
TBC	Local Government Re-Organisation (LGR)	John Leach, CEO

