

Public Document Pack



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

TUESDAY 9TH SEPTEMBER 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, R. J. Hunter, B. Kumar, S. A. Robinson, J. D. Stanley and H. D. N. Warren-Clarke

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. **Council Tax Recovery (Pages 7 - 22)**
4. **Planning Enforcement (Pages 23 - 30)**

5. **Task Group Updates**
6. **Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Update**
(Pages 31 - 32)
7. **Finance and Budget Working Group - Membership Report and Update**
(Pages 33 - 40)
8. **Cabinet Work Programme** (Pages 41 - 42)
9. **Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme** (Pages 43 - 44)
10. **Overview and Scrutiny Action Sheet** (Pages 45 - 48)
11. **To consider any urgent business, details of which have been notified to the Assistant Director Legal Democratic and Procurement Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.**
12. **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 |
|---------|-----------|
| 13 | 3 |
| 14 | 3 |
| 15 | 3 |

13. **Expansion of Commercial Waste Collection Service - Pre-Scrutiny**
(Report to follow)

This report will follow in a supplementary papers pack to this agenda once it has been published by the consideration of Cabinet.

14. **Windsor Street (Options Paper)** (Pages 49 - 110)
15. **To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 22nd July 2025** (Pages 111 - 126)

J. Leach
Chief Executive

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

1st September 2025

If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact
Sarah Woodfield
Parkside, Market Street, Bromsgrove, B61 8DA
Tel: (01527) 64252 Ext: 1605
Email: s.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 and for any such items the live stream will be suspended and that part of the meeting will not be recorded.



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

This page is intentionally left blank

Overview and Scrutiny Board 2025

9th September

Council Tax Debt Recovery

| | |
|--|---|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder | Councillor Sue Baker |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | No |
| Relevant Assistant Director | Debra Goodall Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services |
| Report Author | Job Title: David Riley Contact email: david.riley@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: |
| Wards Affected | All |
| Ward Councillor(s) consulted | No |
| Relevant Council Priority | Financial Stability |
| Non-Key Decision | |
| If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting. | |

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The board is asked to **RESOLVE** to **NOTE** the contents of the report.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At a meeting on the 11th of February 2025 the Overview and Scrutiny Board referenced an article attributed to Martin Lewis. The meeting minutes note:

“A Member advised the Board of a recent article provided by Martin Lewis, Money Savings Expert. The report suggested that residents consulted with their local constituents to enquire how compassionate and fair the Council were with the debt recovery process for Council Tax, if residents were in financial difficulties. Also, if bailiffs were a requirement, was the debtor charged further costs.”

The Committee has requested a report detailing the procedures for council tax recovery and the use of enforcement agents.

- 2.2 Although the Committee did not provide a reference to the article mentioned it is likely Members were referring to a report presented by Mr Lewis in his capacity as the chair and founder of The Money and Mental Health Policy Institute (MMHPI). The report titled *“In the Public Interest?”* examines public sector debt recovery practices, with a particular focus on council tax collection.

Overview and Scrutiny Board 2025

9th September

2.3 The “*In the public interest?*” report argues that the legislation governing council tax collection requires reform and highlights that practices adopted by local authorities can cause harm to individuals in debt, particularly those people with mental health conditions. The report identifies four areas for improvement:

- **Communication:** Council correspondence is primarily sent by postal letter. It is often formal and legalistic which may deter individuals with mental health or financial difficulties from taking action to resolve their debt.
- **Rapid escalation:** The speed at which council tax debt escalates - referred to by MMHPI as “the council tax trap” – can prevent people from being able to take action to manage their debt.
- **Automation and flexibility:** The reliance on automated procedures and strict procedures can result in a lack of flexibility, leaving people feeling unheard and unsupported.
- **Enforcement Action:** The report suggests that certain enforcement actions may exacerbate financial hardship and that they can be counterproductive and may worsen a person’s financial situation.

A full citation and link to the MMHPI report are included in section 8 Appendices and Background Papers.

2.4 In response to the Overview and Scrutiny Board’s request this report sets out to:

- Explain the legislative framework governing for council tax recovery
- Describe the procedures applied by Bromsgrove District Council
- Summarise the recommendation of the MMHPI report.
- Identify the actions the council can take to improve the recovery process and the barriers to improvement.

2.5 Council Tax Recovery Legislative Framework

The recovery of council tax is governed by The Local Government Finance Act 1992 [the act], and The Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1992 (as amended) [the regulations].

Under the act, the secretary of state is empowered to make regulations that define:

- The procedures councils must follow when billing and collecting council tax:
- The enforcement powers available for non-payment:

Overview and Scrutiny Board 2025

9th September

- The steps councils must take when exercising those powers.

This section provides an overview of the key legislative provisions.

- 2.6 The regulations require councils to issue a council tax demand notice “as soon as practicable” after setting the council tax for the relevant year.¹ The notice assumes that
- The taxpayer will be liable for the full year; and
 - No changes will occur to discounts, reductions, premiums or the council tax band during the tax year.
- 2.7 Taxpayers are entitled to pay their council tax in instalments, typically over ten months if the notice is issued before the 30th of April. If issued later the number of instalments is reduced based on the number of full months remaining in the year (e.g. nine instalments if issued in May, eight in June, etc).²
- 2.8 Additional rules apply if the notice is issued after 31st December, or the total amount payable is less than £10, when the council tax must be paid in a single instalment. The minimum instalment value is £5.00 and where the standard instalment plan would provide instalments below this then the number of instalments will be adjusted accordingly. This ensures that no instalment is below the minimum value.
- 2.9 Taxpayers may request to pay in 12 instalments.³ If the request is made before 15th April the full 12-month profile is provided, if made later the number of instalments is reduced proportionally.
- 2.10 Councils and taxpayers may agree on alternative instalment arrangements, either before or after the demand notice is issued.⁴
- 2.11 Where a taxpayer's liability changes (e.g. due to the loss of a discount) an adjustment notice is issued. Instalments already due remain payable, and future instalments are amended to reflect the change to the amount payable.
- 2.12 If a taxpayer fails to pay their statutory or agreed instalments, the council initiates recovery action, as set out in the regulations. The recovery process is divided into two stages:

¹ Reg 19 Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1992 [CT(A&E) Regs]

² Schedule 1 CT(A&E) Regs

³ Reg 20(1A) CT (A&E) Regs

⁴ Reg 20(5) CT (A&E) Regs

Overview and Scrutiny Board 2025

9th September

-
- **Billing Stage:** Includes the initial demand notice and reminder notices.
 - **Enforcement Stage:** Involves the application for a liability order and the use of enforcement powers.
- 2.13 The recovery process begins with a reminder notice. The contents of the reminder notice are set out in the regulations, the reminder must include
- The amount due;
 - An explanation that if the payment is not made within seven days, the full year's council tax becomes payable; and
 - A further explanation that if payment of the full year's council tax is not made within an additional seven days, then further recovery action will be taken⁵.
- 2.14 If a subsequent instalment is missed after the first reminder is paid a second reminder notice will be sent. The second reminder includes a warning that any future missed instalments will result in the full year's council tax becoming immediately payable.⁶
- 2.15 If payment is not received after a reminder the council may apply to the Magistrates' Court for a Liability Order. The liability order confirms that the taxpayer is liable for the unpaid council tax and enables the council to take further recovery action.⁷
- 2.16 If a liability order is being applied for because the council taxpayer has received two reminders and then failed to pay a future instalment on time, the council must first send a final notice. The final notice will give the taxpayer seven days to pay the outstanding amount.⁸
- 2.17 The application for the liability begins with a complaint to the Magistrates' Court and the issue of a summons to the taxpayer. The summons will include the costs of making the application. The application for the liability order will be supported by evidence that:
- The council tax was properly demanded, and the amount has become payable.
 - The council tax remains unpaid.
 - The correct procedures have been followed in setting, demanding and recovering the council tax.

⁵ Reg 23(1) CT (A&E) Regs

⁶ Reg 23(4) CT (A&E) Regs

⁷ Reg 34 CT (A&E) Regs

⁸ Reg 33 CT (A&E) Regs

Overview and Scrutiny Board 2025

9th September

- 2.18 The liability order application is not intended to examine the reasons why a person has not paid their council tax. The magistrates will make a liability order if they are satisfied that the sum has become payable and had not been paid.⁹
- 2.19 A taxpayer may raise the following valid defences against the making of a liability order include:
- **No entry in the valuation list:** There is no valid entry for the property in the Council Tax Valuation List for the relevant period.
 - **Council tax not properly set:** The council tax was not lawfully set by the local authority.
 - **Improper demand:** The council tax was not demanded in accordance with statutory requirements (e.g. incorrect reminder or missing reminder notices).
 - **Amount has already been paid:** The taxpayer has already paid the amount being claimed.
 - **Six-year rule:** The liability order has been applied for more than six years since the amount became due.¹⁰
 - **Failure to serve notices promptly:** The billing authority failed to serve the demand notice “as soon as practicable” in accordance with Regulation 19(1) of the Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1992.
 - **Outstanding penalties under appeal:** The amount being claimed includes a penalty that is currently under appeal or arbitration.
 - **Bankruptcy or insolvency proceedings:** The taxpayer is subject to ongoing bankruptcy or winding-up proceedings.
- 2.20 Once a liability order is granted the council gains additional powers to recover the council tax debt, these powers are:
- **Request for information:** The debtor must, when requested in writing, provide details of their employment, earnings, other income, and details of any person who would be jointly and severally liable for the council tax.¹¹
 - **Attachment of Earnings:** The council may instruct the debtor’s employer to deduct payments directly from their wages.¹²
 - **Deductions from Benefits:** If the debtor receives certain benefits (Universal Credit, Pension Credit, Income Support, Jobseeker’s

⁹ Reg 34(7) CT (A&E) Regs

¹⁰ Reg 34(3) CT (A&E) Regs

¹¹ Reg 36 CT (A&E) Regs

¹² Reg 37 CT (A&E) Regs

Overview and Scrutiny Board 2025

9th September

Allowance, or Employment and Support Allowance) the council can request deductions are made from the benefit.¹³

- **Taking Control of Goods:** Enforcement agents (bailiffs) may be instructed to recover the debt. The process adds extra costs to the case and can lead to the seizure and sale of a debtor's goods.¹⁴
- **Attachment of Councillor's Allowances:** If the debtor is an elected member of a billing authority or major precepting authority the council make an attachment of allowances order.¹⁵
- **Committal to Prison:** If enforcement agents have been unable to recover the debt, the council may apply to the magistrates' court for a committal warrant. The court will carry out a means enquiry, which is a formal investigation of the debtor's financial circumstances, to determine whether the failure to pay was a result of wilful refusal (deliberate non-payment despite having the means to pay) or culpable neglect (failure to pay due to avoidable negligence).

The court can:

1. Remit all or part of the debt, which will be done if they find the debtor genuinely unable to pay.
2. Postpone imprisonment on conditions e.g. regular payments
3. Commit the debtor to prison for up to 3 months where there has been wilful refusal or culpable neglect.¹⁶

- **Charging Order:** If the debt is more than £1000 the council may apply for a charging order securing the debt against the debtor's home.
- **Insolvency Proceedings:** For debts over £5,000 the council may initiate bankruptcy proceedings.

2.21 The council can take whichever enforcement option that it considers appropriate and can attempt recovery using a specific action more than once but cannot take two actions at the same time for the same debt. For example, if the council instructs enforcement agents to collect a debt, then it cannot issue an attachment of earnings order for same debt whilst the enforcement agents are instructed.¹⁷ If enforcement agents are unsuccessful the debt would be returned to the council, who can later, refer the debt to enforcement agents for a second time.

2.22 When a council tax debt is being collected by deductions from a debtor's benefits, certain protections apply. During the period from the request for deductions until the deductions cease, no enforcement

¹³ The Council Tax (Deductions from Income Support) Regulations 1993

¹⁴ Reg 45 CT (A&E) Regs

¹⁵ Reg 44 CT (A&E) Regs

¹⁶ Reg 47 to 48 CT (A&E) Regs

¹⁷ Reg 52 CT (A&E) Regs

Overview and Scrutiny Board 2025

9th September

action can be taken for any other council tax debt of the debtor or their partner.¹⁸

2.23 Bromsgrove Council's Recovery Procedures

Bromsgrove District Council's cabinet approved a revised debt recovery policy on 7th December 2016. The policy sets out the steps that the council will take when recovering council tax debt.

2.24 The policy set out the steps the council will take at each stage of the recovery process. The key points are:

- **Reminder Notices:** Reminders will be issued between 10 to 18 days of the instalment due date. There are certain time of the year when this may be reduced to 7 days.
- **Days to pay:** The policy follows the statutory framework and allows seven days for the payment to be paid.
- **Final Notice:** Final notices will be sent when a taxpayer is late for a third time in the tax year.
- **Summons and Liability Order Application:** Liability orders will be sought where a taxpayer has failed to pay and has not contacted to make a payment arrangement.
- **Enforcement:** The policy sets out how the council will consider all available enforcement options.
 - **Information Request:** The request for information will be sent to debtors within five days of the liability order being granted.
 - **Attachment of Earnings Order:** AOE is the council's preferred method of enforcement and will be used in preference to enforcement agents.

We will allow debtors to make a payment arrangement before issuing an AOE, but if the arrangement fails an order will be made without any further notification to the debtor.

- **Deductions from Benefits:** Deductions from benefits will be used to collect a debt in preference to other methods of recovery except where there are other members of the household who are not liable but contribute to household expenses, the debtor owns property and a charging order may be appropriate, the debtor has savings or capital which could be used to discharge the debt.

¹⁸ Reg 54 CT (A&E) Regs

Overview and Scrutiny Board 2025

9th September

-
- **Enforcement Agents:** If an attachment of earnings order, or deductions from benefit are not available then Enforcement Agents will be instructed to recover the debt.
 - **Insolvency, Charging Orders, and Committal to Prison:** Where enforcement agents have been unsuccessful the council will consider the use of insolvency, charging orders or application for committal.
- 2.25 The debt recovery policy was adopted in December 2016 and operational challenges, and the functionality of the council's revenues software have required amendments to the process set out in the policy.
- 2.26 The policy sets out that the council will follow the statutory process for recovery, with debts progressing from reminder to default within 14 days. In practice the council moves cases from billing stage to reminder, then to second reminder, and on to final notice before issuing a summons.
- 2.27 A non-payer, who missed their April instalment and made no payment, would therefore receive three notices before the debt progressed to summons. A taxpayer who continual late payments would also receive three notices in the tax year, but the case would progress sequentially Bill, 1st Reminder, 2nd Reminder, Final Notice, Summons. This means that on their third late payment there would be no additional notice before the summons was issued.
- 2.28 The flow charts attached at appendix A and B provide a visual summary of the statutory recovery progression from demand notice to summons and the process adopted by Bromsgrove Council.
- 2.29 The council has reviewed the provision of enforcement services and appointed new enforcement agents from April 2025. The procurement process included an assessment of the protections and policies that the agents have in place for supporting vulnerable debtors. The protections which the enforcement agents have adopted include:

Policy and Standards: We treat everyone as potentially vulnerable until satisfied to the contrary, recognising that vulnerability is subjective and transient. Our policies adhere to each council's specification and code of conduct, ensuring fairness, consistency, and sensitivity to personal circumstances

Welfare Support and Financial Difficulties Team (WSFDT): Cases identified as potentially vulnerable or in financial difficulties are referred to our specially trained WSFDT for one-on-one case management.

Overview and Scrutiny Board 2025

9th September

This team liaises with third-sector organisations like Citizens Advice, Christians Against Poverty, and StepChange and will ensure the customer has had the opportunity to seek independent advice. We liaise with the client before continuing action. Where cases are retained as opposed to returned under client guidelines the team ensures that appropriate support is in place, including case holds and implement sustainable payment arrangements. 84% of which are sustained due to their basis in affordability, negotiated by staff attuned to the circumstances and needs of the customer.

Specialist Training: As part of their mandatory training Marston staff and EAs receive specialist training in mental health, suicide prevention, and dementia awareness. This training includes professional drills for identifying and handling vulnerability and mental health issues, such as TEXAS (Thank, Explain, eXplicit consent, Ask, Signpost), IDEA (Impact, Duration, Episodes, Assistance), BRUCE (Behaviour, Remembering, Understanding, Communication, Evaluation), and BLAKE (Breathe, Listen, Ask, Keep-safe, End). Where safeguarding concerns are identified we will inform the client immediately.

2.30 MMHPI Report and Recommendations.

The MMHPI report made a series of recommendations for improvements to council tax administration and enforcement. Some of the recommendations, such as lowering the maximum deduction rate for universal credit and reviewing attachment of earnings reduction rates, are directed at Government, but several of the recommendations are targeted at, or can be implemented by local authorities without direction from Government. These recommendations are:

- **Local authority collection departments are made a political priority:** The report states that collection teams are often under-resourced and as a result actions which could be carried out in house, such as communicating with debtors are carried out by external enforcement agents.
- **Boosting take-up, generosity and variety of support:** The MMHPI report highlights that maximising the take-up of council tax discount and reductions can help people who are struggling with debts through highlighting any discounts that they may be entitled to.
- **Building fairness into repayment timelines:** The rapid escalation from the issue of a reminder notice to the full council tax becoming payable is a key issue for MMHPI. It is recommended that council tax recovery is moved into line with consumer credit where firms will often wait 3 to 6 months before a person becomes liable to pay their debt in full.

Overview and Scrutiny Board 2025

9th September

- **Introduce a pre-action protocol:** MMHPI recommends that local authorities implement an enhanced version of the Money Advice Trust's pre-action protocol which will ensure that:
 there is proactive contact with debtors,
 arrangements are affordable and proportionate,
 discretionary powers to reduce council tax are used,
 vulnerable debtors are protected,
 warm referrals to advice agencies are established.

2.31 Actions and Barriers to Improvement

To better align Bromsgrove District Council's council tax recovery procedures with the recommendations of the Money and Mental Health Policy Institute (MMHPI), a series of targeted actions could be taken. These actions enhance fairness, transparency, and support vulnerable residents, while maintaining effective debt collection. Each proposed action includes a statement of the key barriers to implementation and suggested mitigations to help overcome those challenges. The following table summarises these proposals:

| Proposed Action | Barriers to Implementation | Suggested Mitigations |
|---|--|---|
| 1. Implement a revised debt recovery strategy and procedures | <p>Requires coordination across departments</p> <p>Staff retraining needed</p> <p>Potential resistance to change</p> <p>Limited resources within the recovery services with 2.54 FTEs in post managing CT and NDR enforcement across the Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough.</p> | <p>Pilot revised procedures in a limited area</p> <p>Provide training and change management support</p> <p>Review resources within the Recovery Team and provide additional support for the delivery of enhanced recovery function.</p> |
| 2. Introduce a pre-action protocol (based on Money Advice Trust guidance) | <p>May delay recovery timelines and impact on collections.</p> <p>Additional administrative burden</p> | <p>Develop standardised templates and processes.</p> <p>Automate parts of the protocol process such</p> |

Overview and Scrutiny Board 2025

9th September

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| | and insufficient resources within existing team to carry out pre-action contacts. | as initial email and text message contacts. Consider procurement of telephone contact software to enable outbound contact campaigns. |
| 3. Trial pre-enforcement intervention team. | <p>No existing resource available for pre-enforcement team.</p> <p>Developing new protocols and procedures and training team.</p> <p>Management of outbound contact campaigns is resource intensive, and systems do not support outbound campaigns.</p> | <p>Develop standardised templates and processes.</p> <p>Review telephony system and determine the extent to which outbound call management is available.</p> <p>Trial joint-working with customer services team on outbound contact management.</p> <p>Procurement of dedicated contact management software to manage outbound campaigns.</p> |
| 4. Implement the Single Financial Statement (SFS) | <p>Staff training required</p> <p>Integration with existing systems and procedures may be complex</p> <p>Staff commitment to use of the SFS.</p> | Partner with advice agencies for training |
| 5. Review website and communication materials to better publicise discounts and reductions | <p>Requires content redesign and web development</p> <p>Risk of information overload for users</p> | <p>Use plain language and visual aids</p> <p>Test with user groups for clarity</p> |

Overview and Scrutiny Board 2025

9th September

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | No capacity within service to review website content. | |
| 6. Engage with Citizens Advice and debt advice sector to establish warm referral pathways | Requires formal partnership agreements Data sharing and GDPR compliance issues | Use consent-based referral models Develop joint working protocols |
| 7. Allocate budget for discretionary council tax reductions | Competing budget priorities Requires political support and financial planning | Present cost-benefit analysis (e.g. reduced enforcement costs) Start with a pilot fund and evaluate impact |

These actions aim to improve fairness, transparency, and support for vulnerable residents while maintaining effective council tax collection. However, the actions cannot be delivered with the existing resources of 2.54 FTE allocated to recovery of council tax and non-domestic rates.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 Sections 2.1 to 2.27 provide summary of the legislation governing council tax recovery and the procedures implemented within Bromsgrove. Section 2.29 provides details on the barriers to improvements in processes.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Implementing pre-action protocols and improvements to council tax recovery would need a commitment from the council to meet the costs of additional resources within the council's recovery team.
- 4.2 Implementing the MMHPI recommendation to proactively utilise the council's discretionary power to reduce council tax on a case-by-case basis would require the allocation of a budget to meet the losses to the council tax collection fund.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The recovery of council tax is governed by a statutory framework established under the Local Government Finance Act 1992, supported by secondary legislation including The Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1992, as amended. The legislation sets out the procedures that billing authorities must follow for the billing,

Overview and Scrutiny Board 2025

9th September

collection and enforcement of council tax, including the powers available to recover unpaid amounts and the safeguards that apply during the recovery process.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

6.1 None

Relevant Council Priority

6.2 The report updates Members on arrangements in place for Council Tax recovery. This helps to support the corporate priority of financial stability.

Climate Change Implications

6.3 None

Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.4 None

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 None

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Murray T and Smith F. *In the public interest? The psychological toll of local and national government debt collection practices*. Money and Mental Health Policy Institute. September 2024

<https://www.moneyandmentalhealth.org/publications/in-the-public-interest/>

Cabinet Meeting Minutes: Agenda Item 7, Revised Debt Recovery Policy Bromsgrove District Council, 7th December 2016.

[Cabinet papers 7th December 2016](#)

Overview and Scrutiny Board 2025

9th September

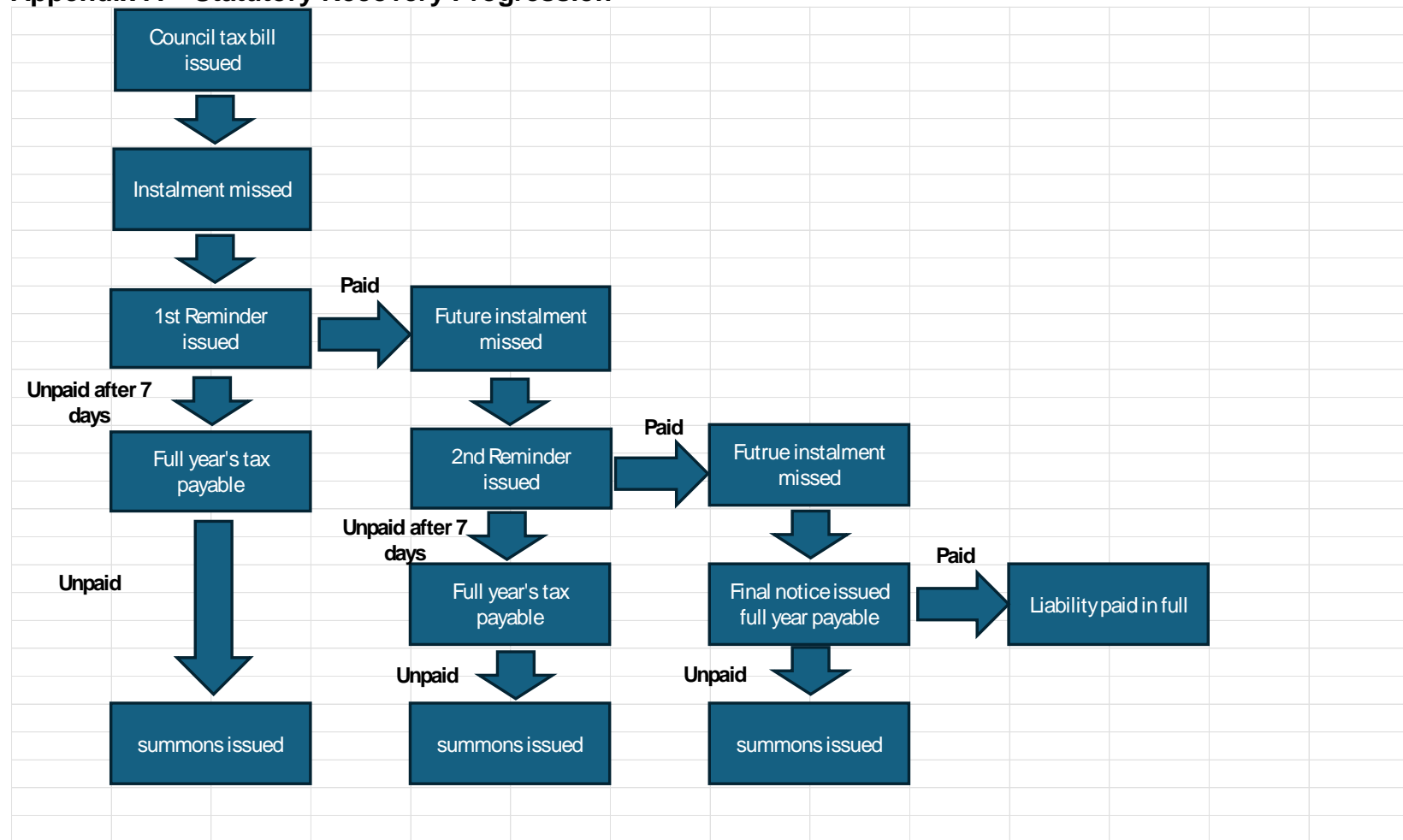
9. REPORT SIGN OFF

| Department | Name and Job Title | Date |
|--|--------------------|----------------|
| Portfolio Holder | . | |
| Lead Director / Assistant Director | Debra Goodall | 17 August 2025 |
| Financial Services | | |
| Legal Services | Nicolca Cummings | 28 August 205 |
| Policy Team (if equalities implications apply) | | |
| Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply) | | |

Overview and Scrutiny Board

9th September 2025

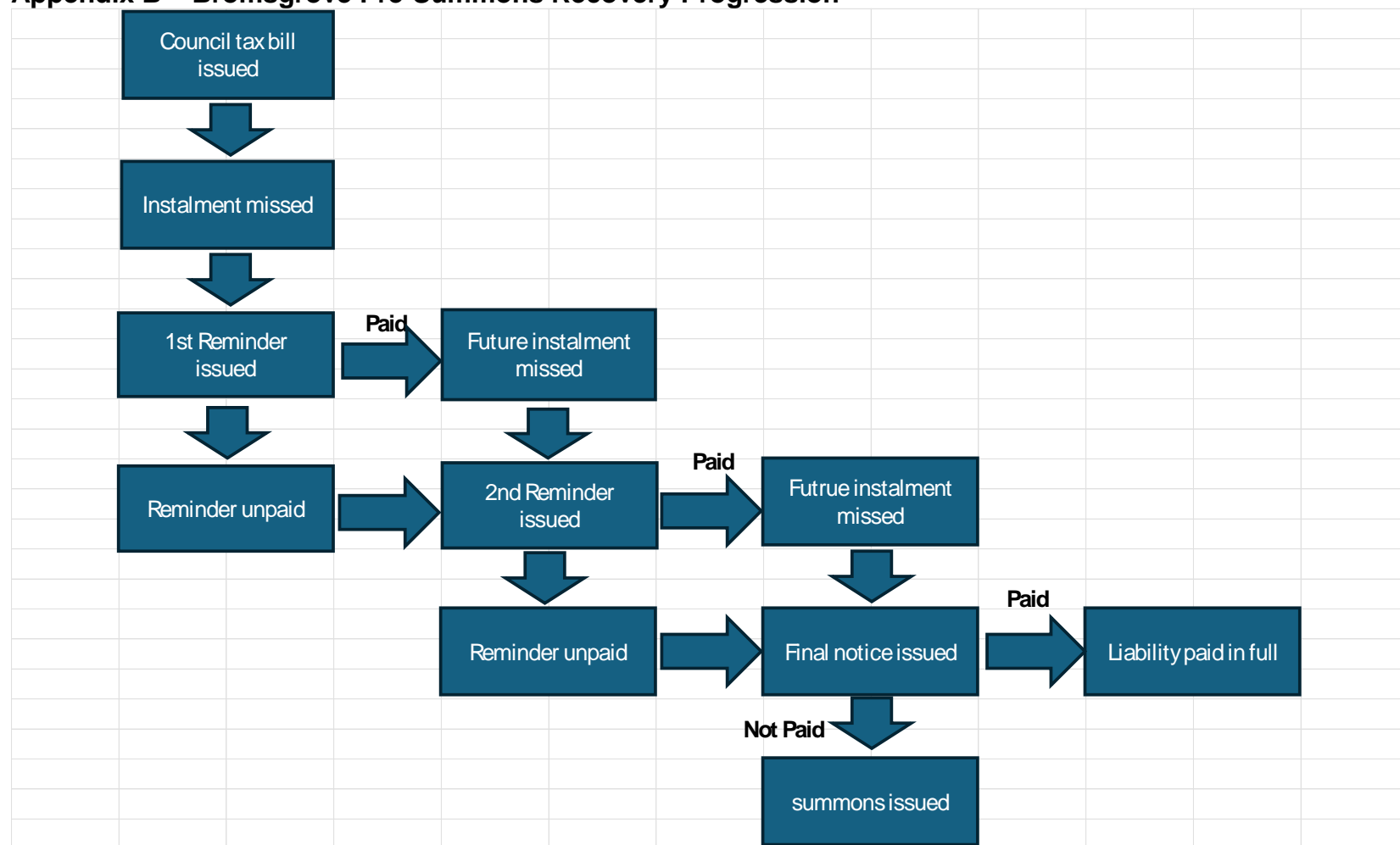
Appendix A – Statutory Recovery Progression



Overview and Scrutiny Board

9th September 2025

Appendix B – Bromsgrove Pre-Summons Recovery Progression



Overview and Scrutiny 2025

9th September

Update on Planning Enforcement

| | |
|--|---|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder | Councillor Kit Taylor |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | Yes |
| Relevant Assistant Director | Simon Wilkes, Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services & Ruth Bamford, Assistant Director for Planning, Leisure and Culture Services |
| Report Author Mark Cox | Job Title: Technical Services Manager, WRS Contact email: mark.cox@worcestershire.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01562 738023 |
| Wards Affected | ALL |
| Ward Councillor(s) consulted | None |
| Relevant Council Priority | Housing, Environment and Economic Development |
| 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 Committee is asked to **RESOLVE** that the report be noted.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) has been assisting development control with planning enforcement work since March 2021. Restrictions during COVID lockdowns, staff shortages, lack of enforcement experience and increased demand with planning applications had caused a back log of planning enforcement cases. It was recognised by planning colleagues that WRS staff had experience of compiling evidence and preparing enforcement files for prosecution, and that these skills could be applied to assist in reducing the backlog of cases. In addition, planning colleagues recognised the importance of moving towards a proactive intelligence-led approach to tackle these enforcement issues.
- 2.2 During the latter part of 2023 and into the first part of 2024, through its various reporting processes, the Council decided to bring the enforcement functions of planning, Fly-Tipping, littering and dog fouling together under their shared regulatory service (WRS) to sit alongside the existing Environmental Health and Licensing functions. In June

Overview and Scrutiny 2025

9th September

2024, planning enforcement was largely transferred to WRS to deliver on behalf of the Council.

- 2.3 During the decision-making process, the Council decided to invest temporarily in additional resource, for a period of two years, to assist with clearing of the backlog of planning enforcement cases.
- 2.4 The planning policy and decision-making function was retained by the Planning Officer in Development Management as it was felt they would be better placed to provide consistency with decisions taken in wider development management work.
- 2.5 This information report reviews the approach taken by WRS during this period.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 It is difficult to set out a true baseline on the impact of the assistance WRS Officers have provided to date as, for some cases, WRS Officers have been assisting Planning colleagues with the investigation officer role since COVID. However, 1st June 2024 saw the formal transfer of the function to the shared service, so the approach to enforcement became the one used by WRS and the investment of resource in planning enforcement commenced.
- 3.2 The following table provides a number of snapshots across the period since the pandemic, setting out some pertinent information against key parameters taken from the shared service arrangements.

| Service delivery method | 2019/20 Planning only, Pre-COVID | 2023/24 Planning with WRS assistance | 2024/25 WRS planning enforcement |
|---|--|---|---|
| Number of claims of Alleged Planning Breach reported in period | Not recorded | Not recorded | 320 [149 new cases & 171 open cases passed to WRS] |
| Number of alleged planning breaches where an investigation was required | 160 | 158 | 302 cases* |
| % of reported alleged breaches that require investigation | Not available | Not available | 88% of new cases |

Overview and Scrutiny 2025

9th September

| | | | |
|--|---------------|---------------|---|
| Number of Priority 1 cases received as set out in the Enforcement Policy | Not recorded | Not recorded | 5 |
| % of valid cases closed in period resolved by informal compliance or no issue. | Not recorded | Not recorded | 98.9% [173 out of 175] |
| Number of open cases at end of period. | Not available | Not available | 426 (complainants rather than cases) |
| % of valid cases with Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) served | Not available | Not available | 3 |
| % of valid cases with warning letters | Not available | Not available | 12 |
| No. of valid cases with Community Protection Warnings (CPWs) served | 0 | 0 | 1 case (7 CPW) |
| No. of cases with Community Protection Notices (CPNs) served | 0 | 0 | 1 case (7 CPN) |
| No. of cases with Enforcement Notice served | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| No. of cases where Notice served with intelligence log submission made | 0 | 6 | 2 |

* 18 identified as not planning breaches and closed at first point of contact.

- 3.3 Whilst the above numbers are consistent across the different periods, the fundamental difference of approach has been the prioritisation of enforcement. Any reported breaches of planning control since June 2024 have been reviewed at source in-line with the Council's Planning Enforcement Policy and WRS' intelligence-led approach and consequently prioritised accordingly.
- 3.4 This has led to a targeted approach ensuring breaches of planning control that are the most justifiably contentious are addressed promptly and with appropriate resource. The converse of this is that some

Overview and Scrutiny 2025

9th September

breaches of lower risk will take longer to investigate than may otherwise had been the case if they were addressed without any priority assigned.

- 3.5 The above approach has enabled staff time to ensure informal approaches are explored thoroughly for most cases, but where breaches are escalating or the harm being caused is severe, resources are focused and concentrated on taking appropriate enforcement action as swiftly as possible.
- 3.6 In all situations where enforcement is required, council officers will attempt to ensure compliance with planning rules through negotiation and persuasion. How much time is dedicated to the informal approach before any formal action is taken is dependent on the severity and speed of harm being caused, however an informal resolution is permitted at any time prior to formal action being concluded.
- 3.7 Where formal action is required, WRS Investigating Officers will complete the necessary steps to confirm the offence and prepare a formal notice. The investigating officer must always liaise with the planning officer to ensure appropriate policy has been considered, that the wording of the notice is consistent with wider planning decisions and that it meets legal requirements.

Case Study 1 - Long running issue concerning business.

- 3.8 This is an example of a long running case. Planning Officers requested assistance from WRS Officers in 2021 and was one of the first cases that was passed to WRS to investigate. Unfortunately, informal approaches did not resolve the issues and matters escalated quickly persisting for several years despite formal stop and enforcement notices being served. WRS Officers addressed new breaches as they arose by serving new notices. The case was reviewed regularly with a view to establishing the enforcement tool that would address the most significant harm to the greatest effect. Recognising that planning enforcement notices alone would not remedy the harm, a temporary injunction was sought and granted with a view to a full injunction to follow should this not provide resolution. Behind the scenes, compliance monitoring helped provide confidence to the residents that action was being taken and indicated to the perpetrators that enforcement action would be taken if they failed to comply with relevant directions. As a result of this approach, WRS have achieved almost full compliance which may negate the need for a full injunction.

Overview and Scrutiny 2025

9th September

Case Study 2 – Long running complaints of vehicles being left on major road bridges to advertise commercial services

- 3.9 Complaints had been received by the planning department for several years about 4 companies using this approach to advertise. Informal action had minimal impact on their behaviour. The legislation in relation to this is complex and each perpetrator must be considered separately. WRS Officers have engaged in partnership working with the relevant Highways authority (i.e., National Highways or Worcestershire County Council) to secure Traffic Regulation Orders which will instigate double yellow lines on the bridge.
- 3.10 Two of the companies responded positively to this initial informal approach by WRS, complying with the request to cease the activity. A third ceased activity following service of a formal Community Protection Warning which was not adhered to. This escalated to a Community Protection Notice (CPN) in line with processes under the Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. The vehicle subject to the CPN has since been removed with one vehicle appearing recently which is now subject to the above process.
- 3.11 The approach in the enforcement policy looks to try to achieve resolution informally in the initial stages for the majority of cases. This means it can take several years to reach the point of formal action beyond service of a notice. As a result, whilst no prosecution has taken place since June 2024, WRS officers have two cases being prepared for submission to the Council's solicitor, who can then consider the most appropriate disposal, including putting the matter before the Courts.
- 3.12 WRS's initial focus during this period has been to develop prioritisation and on delivering an intelligence-led approach, which ensure resources are allocated appropriately and priority cases are identified early. The initial triage of cases (as has always been done) now includes identification of priority in line with the Enforcement policy which provides consistency of approach for cases of equal priority irrespective of the Investigating Officer.
- 3.13 During an investigation, once an offence or pattern of offending has been identified, intelligence logs are submitted and recorded on the shared intelligence system. Such submissions provide clarity of entities (names, phone numbers, addresses and vehicles) that enable an offence. By recording such information routinely and consistently, officers are able to assess this alongside wider data, with analysis of this allowing the service to target resources at the entities most likely to perpetrate such offences if formal action is not taken. Traditionally,

Overview and Scrutiny 2025

9th September

such intelligence submissions have been limited to the larger, high-profile cases, however this approach is increasingly being applied to all cases where an offence has been committed. The submissions are searchable and can be shared with/ disseminated to other organisations where appropriate so that cross border or multi-agency approaches can be taken where appropriate.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council agreed an additional financial allocation to go alongside its existing contribution to the WRS budget, to cover the newly allocated functions, and work is delivered within this existing budget.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Enforcement action is taken in line with the Planning Enforcement Policy.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 None.

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 The Bromsgrove Council Plan 2024-2027 includes both housing and the environment as key priorities, and planning enforcement would support both, helping to protect the environment from illegal development that damages amenity for the community, but also ensuring that permitted development does comply with the permissions as determined by the local authority.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 None.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.4 None.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The current arrangement has reduced delays in investigation by providing dedicated investigative resource with experience in collating evidence and preparing enforcement files. Some delays are currently

Overview and Scrutiny 2025

9th September

being experienced where planning policy advice/reasons are being sought from planning officers who are focused on determining planning applications within statutory timescales. Development Control are working with WRS officers to resolve the delays and provide advice or rationale more quickly so that cases can be closed in a reasonable timeframe or enforcement action can be pursued without risking abuse of process allegations due to delay.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Planning Enforcement Policy - [Bromsgrove Enforcement Policy](#)

Overview and Scrutiny 2025

9th September

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

| Department | Name and Job Title | Date |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Portfolio Holder | Councillor Kit Taylor | Consulted 20.08.2025 |
| Lead Director / Assistant Director | Simon Wilkes & Ruth Bamford | 20.08.2025 |
| Financial Services | Deb Goodall | Consulted 20.08.2025 |
| Legal Services | Nicola Cummings | Consulted 20.08.2025 |

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report – 30th July 2025

One item on the agenda **Routine Immunisation**

- Worcestershire has a high level of population protection against vaccine preventable diseases, and it is important that uptake is maintained or improved.
- The committee were told that Worcestershire's vaccination uptake in the selected vaccination programme was consistently higher than for Midlands and England. The members asked how it compares within Worcestershire in various districts and likewise in another neighbouring county. They will return with answers.
- Measles is one of the most infectious diseases known with each case able to infect up to 15 others if the expected population is unvaccinated. Members asked what happens when residents of Worcestershire go into Birmingham to work and catch these diseases and how NHSE is going to prevent this cross infection?
- MMR uptake in Worcestershire is high compared to the national figure. Their ambition remains to improve the figure from 90.8% significantly for 2 doses at 5 years of age to achieve the highest level of herd immunity.
- Winter planning – NHSE would like to see the start of winter with as many children and adults protected against vaccine preventable diseases.

This page is intentionally left blank

Overview and Scrutiny Board 2025

9th September

Finance and Budget Working Group

| | |
|--|--|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder | Councillor S. Baxter |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | No |
| Relevant Head of Service | Claire Felton, Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services |
| Report Author: Jane Oyenuga | Job Title: Trainee Democratic Services Officer Contact email: jane.oyenuga@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk |
| Wards Affected | N/A |
| Ward Councillor(s) consulted | N/A |
| Relevant Council Priorities | Sustainability |
| 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 Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group for the municipal year 2025/26.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group was set up by the Overview and Scrutiny Board to carry out detailed scrutiny of a number of Financial Reports (listed in the Terms of Reference) and to assist in scrutiny of the Council's budget setting.
- 2.2 Due to recent changes to the membership of the Board, following changes to the political balance at the Council, and following agreement at the previous meeting of the Board to consult with Board Members who were not in attendance at the meeting; the purpose of this report is to formalise the membership of the Group for 2025-26.

Overview and Scrutiny Board 2025

9th September

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

Chairman

- 3.1 Historically the Chairman of the Working Group has been the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board. It was agreed at a previous Board meeting held on 17th June 2025 that Councillor P. McDonald be appointed as the Chairman of the Finance and Budget Working Group for the ensuing municipal year 2025/26.

Membership

- 3.2 It has been agreed within the terms of reference that the Working Group be composed of the Chairman of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee and 6 Members of the Board with a quorum of 3. Scrutiny Working Groups are not required to be politically balanced, although it would be good practice to have each political group represented.
- 3.3 Current Members of the Board who have been confirmed as Members of the Working Group are: Councillors P.M. McDonald (Chairman), A. Bailes and S.T. Nock. Councillor E. M. S. Gray, as Chairman of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee has also been confirmed as a Member of the Working Group.
- 3.4 At the meeting of the Board held on 17th June 2025, Councillor Hunter, who was also a current Member of the Board, expressed an interest in being appointed to the working group. Councillor Hunter subsequently confirmed in writing that he no longer wished to be appointed to serve on this group in 2025/26.
- 3.5 At that same meeting of the Board, Councillor S. Ammar confirmed that she would like to be appointed to the Working Group (at the time, Councillor Ammar was a Member of the Board). However, following changes to the political balance agreed at the Council meeting held on 19th June, Councillor Ammar was no longer a Member of the Board and therefore not automatically eligible to serve on the group.

Overview and Scrutiny Board 2025

9th September

-
- 3.6 At the Board meeting held on 17th June, Councillor C.A. Hotham, who was attending the meeting as a substitute, expressed an interest in serving as a Member of the Finance and Budget Working Group, should there be a relevant vacancy available.
- 3.7 Councillor S.R. Colella (who was not a Member of the Board) expressed an interest in serving as a Member of the Working Group by email on 10th August 2025.
- 3.8 Therefore, Members are asked to note that there are three Members of the Overview and Scrutiny 'pool', Councillors Ammar, Hotham and Colella; who although not currently Members of the Board, have expressed an interest in being appointed as Members of the Finance and Budget Working Group in 2025/26.
- 3.9 Members are asked to choose the membership of the Working Group (Cabinet Members cannot be represented). It should be noted that the Terms of Reference for the group state that Members must be Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, (with the exception of the Chairman of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee where s/he is not a member of the Board). However, the Terms of Reference for the working group also state "*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.*"
- 3.10 For any Member wishing to sit on the Working Group, meetings have been scheduled for this year as per below, although there may be a need for extra meetings when the need is identified, particularly during the budget setting period. Conversely, meetings may be cancelled if there is no business to be considered on a particular date.
- 5th September 2025
 - 17th November 2025
 - 5th January 2026
 - 6th February 2026
 - 23rd March 2026

Overview and Scrutiny Board 2025

9th September

- 3.11 All meetings are due to start at 6.00pm and will be held remotely (on Microsoft Teams). Any meetings held on Friday will commence at 1.00pm.

Terms of Reference

- 3.12 The terms of reference are reviewed at the beginning of each municipal year since the inception of the Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group. The Overview and Scrutiny Board approved the current terms of reference for the working group at the Board meeting held on 17th June 2025.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications in respect of the recommendations this report. Although it should be noted that there are resource implications in respect of officer time in attending and preparing for the meetings.
- 4.2 Detailed scrutiny of the Council's budget forms an important part of the budget setting process at the Council and helps to enhance accountability and transparency.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

6. OTHER – IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation Implications

- 6.1 There are no implications for Local Government Reorganisation.

Relevant Council Priority

Overview and Scrutiny Board 2025

9th September

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

Climate Change Implications

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

Equalities and Diversity Implications

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

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 No specific risks have been identified.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendices - Terms of Reference of the Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group (last amended 09/06/25).

Background Papers – Finance and Budget Working Group report to the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 17th June 2025.

This page is intentionally left blank

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD **Finance & Budget Scrutiny Working Group**

Terms of Reference

This Terms of Reference shall apply from the start of the 2025/26 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, other than in exceptional circumstances, such as planned absence.

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 2025 TO 31 JANUARY 2026

(published as at 1st September 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;

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, Economic Development and Enabling |
| Councillor S. Baxter | Deputy Leader and 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 |
|---|------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Bereavement Services – Burial Strategy Key: No (New !!) | Cabinet 19 Nov 2025 | | Report of the Assistant Director Environmental and Housing Property Services | Doug Henderson, Environmental Services Manager Councillor P. J. Whittaker |
| Expansion of Septic Tank Emptying Service Key: No | Cabinet Not before 19th Nov 2025 | This report may contain exempt information that would need to be considered in private session | Report of the Assistant Director Environmental and Housing Property Services | Matthew Austin, Environmental Services Manager Tel: 01572 882537 Councillor P. J. Whittaker |
| Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant Key: No | Cabinet 19 Nov 2025 | | Report of the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services | Amanda Delahunty, Strategic Housing Officer Tel: 01527 881269 Councillor S. A. Webb |
| Medium Term Financial Plan Tranche 1 Budget Report 2026/2027 Key: Yes | Cabinet 19 Nov 2025 | | Report of the Deputy Chief Executive & Finance Officer | Bob Watson, Deputy Chief Executive & Finance Officer Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3224 Councillor S. J. Baxter |

| 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 Monitoring Report (including Financial Savings) Key: No | Cabinet 19 Nov 2025 Council 3 Dec 2025 | | Report of the Deputy Chief Executive & Finance Officer | Debra Goodall, Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070 Councillor S. J. Baxter |
| Quarter 2 2025/26 Performance Monitoring Report Key: No | Cabinet 19 Nov 2025 Council 3 Dec 2025 | | Report of the Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services | Rebecca Green, Policy Manager Tel: 01527 881616 Councillor S. J. Baxter |
| Treasury Management half Yearly Report 2024/2025 Key: No | Cabinet 19 Nov 2025 Council 3 Dec 2025 | | Report of the Deputy Chief Executive & Finance Officer | Bob Watson, Deputy Chief Executive & Finance Officer Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3224 Councillor S. J. Baxter |

| 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 |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| Windsor Street Site Key: Yes | Cabinet 19 Nov 2025 | This report may contain exempt information that would need to be considered in private session | Report of the Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services | Rebecca McElliott, Regeneration Project Delivery Manager Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3333 Councillor K. J. May |
| Biodiversity First Consideration Report Key: No (New !!!) | Cabinet 7 Jan 2026 | | Report of the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services | Matthew Eccles, Climate Change Manager Tel: 01527 881259 Councillors B. McEldowney and P. Whittaker |
| Climate Change Strategy 2026 to 2031 Key: No (New !!!) | Cabinet 7 Jan 2026 Council 21 Jan 2026 | | Report of the Assistant Director 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 |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| Council Tax Base Report 2026/27 Key: No | Cabinet 7 Jan 2026 Council 26 Jan 2026 | | Report of the Deputy Chief Executive & Finance Officer | Bob Watson, Deputy Chief Executive & Finance Officer Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3224 Councillor S. J. Baxter |
| Council Tax - Empty Homes Discounts and Premiums 2026/27 Key: No | Cabinet 7 Jan 2026 Council 21 Jan 2026 | | Report of the Deputy Chief Executive & Finance Officer | Bob Watson, Deputy Chief Executive & Finance Officer Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3224 Councillor S. J. Baxter |
| Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27 Key: No | Cabinet 7 Jan 2026 Council 26 Jan 2026 | | Report of the Deputy Chief Executive & Finance Officer | Bob Watson, Deputy Chief Executive & Finance Officer Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3224 Councillor S. J. Baxter |
| Discretionary Council Tax Reduction Policy 2026/27 Key: No | Cabinet 7 Jan 2026 Council 21 Jan 2026 | | Report of the Deputy Chief Executive & Finance Officer | Bob Watson, Deputy Chief Executive & Finance Officer Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3224 Councillor S. J. Baxter |

| 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 Deputy Chief Executive & Finance Officer | Bob Watson, Deputy Chief Executive & Finance Officer Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3224 Councillor S. J. Baxter |
| Non Domestic Rates - Discretionary Rates Relief Policy 2026/27 Key: No | Cabinet 7 Jan 2026 Council 21 Jan 2026 | | Report of the Deputy Chief Executive & Finance Officer | Bob Watson, Deputy Chief Executive & Finance Officer Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3224 Councillor S. J. Baxter |
| Medium Term Financial Plan Tranche 2 Budget Report 2026/2027 Key: No | Cabinet 11 Feb 2026 Council 18 Feb 2026 | | Report of the Deputy Chief Executive & Finance Officer | Bob Watson, Deputy Chief Executive & Finance Officer Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3224 Councillor S. J. Baxter |
| Council Tax Resolutions 2026/27 Key: No | Cabinet 18 Feb 2026 Council 18 Feb 2026 | | Report of the Deputy Chief Executive & Finance Officer | Bob Watson, Deputy Chief Executive & Finance Officer Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3224 Councillor S. J. Baxter |

| 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 3 2025/26 Finance Monitoring Report (including Financial Savings) Key: No | Cabinet 25 Mar 2026 Council May 2026 | | Report of the Deputy Chief Executive & Finance Officer | Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services Councillor S. J. Baxter |
| Quarter 3 2025/26 Performance Monitoring Report Key: Yes | Cabinet 25 Mar 2026 Council May 2026 | | Report of the Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services | Rebecca Green, Policy Manager Tel: 01527 881616 Councillor S. J. Baxter |

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix – Explanation of Items on the Cabinet Forward Plan

Bereavement Services – Burial Strategy

To provide a clear and formal process in maintaining the Council's provision for burial to the local community across both Bromsgrove and Redditch, this will help monitor and support budget planning, fees and charges, as well as burial capacity and future provision

Expansion of Septic Tank Emptying Service

To formalise a new Commercial food waste service to support existing commercial customers and safeguard our customer base, increasing the number of vehicles and staff to support both of these elements and also increase Council resilience.

Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant

The purpose of the ringfenced Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant fund is to give local authorities control and flexibility in managing homelessness pressures and supporting those who are at risk of homelessness.

Medium Term Financial Plan Tranche 1 Budget Report 2026/27

The Council proposes to set its budget in two Tranches for 2026/27 to 2028/29 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) process. This Tranche 1 report is the initial budget proposal to be considered for approval in Autumn 2025, after consultation.

Quarter 2 2025/26 Finance and Performance Monitoring Report

To provide a current financial position in relation to Revenue Budgets for the period July to September 2025 (2025-26). The report also provides a position on the organisational performance measures, as of Quarter 2 (up to end of September 2025).

Treasury Management half Yearly Report 2024/25

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

Windsor Street Site

To consider the future use of the Windsor Street and associated delivery options.

Climate Change Strategy 2026 to 2031

The Climate Change Strategy is building on the existing 3-year carbon reduction strategy which comes to an end in 2025. The new strategy is to coincide with BDC's commitment to have reached 50% net zero by 2030 and looks to highlight progress and actives on other aspects of climate change mitigation, such as Biodiversity and supporting our residents on the wider net zero journey across the District.

Council Tax Base Report 2026/27

To consider a report on the Council Tax Base for 2026-27.

Council Tax – Empty Homes Discounts and Premiums 2026/27

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

Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27

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

Discretionary Council Tax Reduction Policy 2026/27

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

Medium Term Financial Plan Tranche 1 Budget Report 2026/27

The Council proposes to set its budget in two Tranches for 2026/27 to 2028/29 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) process. This Tranche 1 report is the initial budget proposal to be considered for approval in Autumn 2025, prior to consultation.

Non Domestic Rates – Discretionary Rates Relief Policy 2026/27

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

Medium Term Financial Plan Tranche 2 Budget Report 2026/27

The Council proposes to set its budget in two Tranches for 2026/27 to 2028/29 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) process. This Tranche 2 report is the final budget proposal to be considered for approval in February 2026.

Council Tax Resolution 2026/27

To approve the calculated Council Tax base for 2026-27 and approve the Council Tax requirement (Council approval).

Quarter 3 2025/26 Finance Monitoring Report (including Financial Savings)

To provide a current financial position in relation to Revenue Budget for the period October to December 2025 (2025-26).

Quarter 3 2025/26 Performance Monitoring Report

The report provides a position on the organisational performance measures, as of Quarter 3 (up to end of December 2025).

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

2025-2026

ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

| Date of Meeting | Subject | Lead Officer / Member |
|--|---|---|
| 28 th October 2025 (Extra) | <u>Substantive Items</u> | |
| | Citizens Advice (Uses of grant funding) (Requested 17/6/25 by Cllr Gray) | Judith Willis, Assistant Director Community and Housing Services/Chris Roberts, Chief Officer, Citizens Advice Bureau |
| | Housing Task Group – Final Report (TBC) | Councillor Warren-Clarke (Chairman of Housing Task Group) |
| | <u>Information Items</u> | |
| | 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 | <u>Substantive Items</u> | |
| | Windsor Street Site (Pre-Scrutiny) (Requested 17/6/25 by Cllr S. Robinson) (This report may include <u>exempt</u> information) | Rebecca McElliott, Regeneration, Project Delivery Manger |
| | Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant (Pre-Scrutiny) | Amanda Delahunty, Housing Development and Enabling Manager |
| | Capacity of the Minor Works Team (Requested 2/7/25 by Cllr McDonald) (TBA) | Rachel Egan, Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services |
| | <u>Overview Items</u> | |
| | BDHT (Services provided) (Requested 17/6/25 by Cllr S.T. Nock) (TBA) | Matthew Bough, Strategic Housing Services Manager |
| | | |

Agenda Item 9

| Date of Meeting | Subject | Lead Officer / Member |
|--|---|--|
| 6 th January 2026 | <u>Substantive Items</u> | |
| | <u>Information items</u> 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 | <u>Substantive Items</u> | |
| | <u>Information Items</u> | |
| 24 th March 2026 | <u>Substantive Items</u> Update on Heatwaves Preparedness (Yearly Update) (Impact of Heatwaves Task Group Recommendation). | Guy Revans, Executive Director |
| | <u>Information Items</u> Levelling Up Fund Programme (Quarterly Update) | Rachel Egan, Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services |
| | Local Heritage Action List (Quarterly Update) | Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager |
| 14 th April 2026 (meeting reserved for consideration of O&S Annual Report and Review of 2025-26) | <u>Substantive Items</u> Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2025-26 | Chairman of the Board |

ALL MEMBER BRIEFINGS

| Date of Meeting | Subject | Lead Officer / Member |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| 2 nd March 2026 | Anti-Social Behaviour (Tools and Powers) | Bev Houghton, Community Safety Manager |

BDC Overview and Scrutiny Board - Action Sheet (2025/26)

17th June 2025 Meeting

| Subject | Action Required | Action Taken | Officer(s) Responsible | Other Comments | Status |
|------------------------------------|--|--|---|----------------|---|
| Contaminated Land Strategy | To engage with Councillor K. May to provide a review of surveys carried out at Chadwick Lane and Beoley. | 19/6/25 – Email to relevant officer for action. 8/7/25 Further request sent. | Mark Cox, WRS | | Completed: 30/7/25 - The information requested concerning landfills in Bromsgrove has been provided to Cllr May. |
| Installation of EV Chargers | 1. To enquire if Zest Eco Ltd can provide assurances that disabled access will be a priority for EVCI. | 19/6/25 – Email to relevant officer for action. | Simon Parry, Assistant Director Environmental Housing and Property Services | | Completed: 2/7/25 PAS document emailed to all Members. |
| | 2. To provide profit share totals since installation from Equans. | 19/6/25 – Email to relevant officer for action. 9/7/25 – Further request sent. 18/7/25 – Chased a response 12/8/25 – Chased a response 26/8/25 – Chased a response | | | Outstanding: Officer update 21/7/25 – Climate Change Manager chased with Equans for this data and followed up 21/7/25. However, no response received to date. |
| | 3. To discuss Terms and Conditions arrangements with Zest regarding possible | 19/6/25 – Email to relevant officer for action. | | | Completed: Response 21/7/25 – “With regards to the revenue/profit share in relation to |

| Subject | Action Required | Action Taken | Officer(s) Responsible | Other Comments | Status |
|---------|--|--|------------------------|----------------|--|
| | immediate revenue share arrangements. | 9/7/25 – Further request sent. 18/7/25 – Chased a response. | | | the contract with Zest, under the terms of the contract it states: The Profit Share shall be payable by the Supplier to the Buyer on the first anniversary of the date of the Lease of the relevant Site. This occurs when "Following calculation of EVCI Income and Costs for the relevant Calculation Period..., the Profit shall be established." |

22 July 2025 Meeting

| Subject | Action Required | Action Taken | Officer(s) Responsible | Other Comments | Status |
|---|---|---|---|----------------|--------------------|
| Local Heritage Action List | Lickey and Blackwell Heritage Lists - To include Councillor Kumar into any relevant communications (including future communications). | 31/7/25 - Emailed Mary Worsfold 12/8/25 - Chased response 26/8/25 – Chased a response | Mary Worsfold, Principal Conservation Officer | | Outstanding |
| Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategic Framework | Officers to consider an elected Member to be part of the Town Centre Steering Group. | 31/7/25 – Emailed Lyndsey Berry 1/8/25 – Chased for a response | Lyndsey Berry, Bromsgrove Centres Manager | | Outstanding |
| | A promotional video to be produced to communicate the 'vision' to the public. | 31/7/25 – Emailed Lyndsey Berry 1/8/25 – Chased for a response | Lyndsey Berry, Bromsgrove Centres Manager | | Outstanding |

| Subject | Action Required | Action Taken | Officer(s) Responsible | Other Comments | Status |
|--|---|--------------|---|--|--|
| Finance and Budget Working Group - Membership | 29/7/25 - Sent follow up email to all members of overview and scrutiny 'pool' asking for further expressions of interest in joining FBWG to fill the remaining 3 vacancies. | | Sarah Woodfield, Democratic Services Officer | To be reported to and decided by the Board at the September meeting. | Completed |
| Levelling Up Fund Programme Quarterly Update | Next update to be provided at the October meeting | | | | Completed (on the work programme for October) |

This page is intentionally left blank

Overview and Scrutiny 2025

9th September

Windsor Street Site Delivery Options

| | |
|--|---|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder | Councillor Karen May |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | Yes |
| Relevant Assistant Director | Rachel Egan, Assistant Director Regeneration & Property |
| Report Author | Rebecca McElliott Job Title: Regeneration Project Manager email: Rebecca.mcellriott@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk |
| Wards Affected | All |
| Ward Councillor(s) consulted | No |
| Relevant Council Priority | Economic Development Housing |
| Key Decision – No | |
| If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting. | |
| This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph(s) 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended – Appendix 3 and Appendix 4. | |

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Overview and Scrutiny Board is asked to:-

- 1) Note the contents of the report.**
- 2) Consider and comment on the options for the delivery of housing on the Windsor Street site.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Windsor Street is a key redevelopment site in the heart of Bromsgrove Town Centre. Once a derelict site left vacant since 2014 after Worcestershire County Council and the Fire Service moved to new premises, it faced persistent challenges with vandalism and anti-social behaviour. Thanks to intervention from the Council, the site will now be fully remediated and made ready for exciting redevelopment opportunities, helping to revitalise this central part of the town. A plan of the site can be found at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Previous attempts to redevelop the site had been unsuccessful, due to both concerns around abnormal costs for decontamination and

Overview and Scrutiny 2025

9th September

regarding the scale and design of the proposals which weren't supportable in planning terms. As a result, the public sector, through Bromsgrove District Council, have taken the lead by acquiring the site and looking to de-risk and provide for a viable development to be delivered. The site is identified in various adopted plans and strategies as offering a key redevelopment opportunity to provide new housing stock in a sustainable location in the heart of Bromsgrove Town Centre.

- 2.3 Bromsgrove District Council made a successful application to the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) for £14.5m. In the LUF application, it was stated that the project could enable the delivery of up to 60 high quality residential units in the town centre to help rebalance the residential market and subsequently increase footfall and dwell time in the town centre, strengthening the local economy. The total budget attributed to the Windsor Street site is £3,490,000.
- 2.4 In addition to the LUF funds, a further £84,000 was awarded from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), £100,000 from the One Public Estate (OPE) programme and an additional £722,000 was secured from the Brownfield Land Release Fund (BLRF).
- 2.5 The Council have been able to secure the future of the site and bring it forward for redevelopment without any funding contribution from the Council. It has been solely funded by external funding partners.
- 2.6 Thomas Lister Surveyors were commissioned to review potential future uses of the site. They concluded that the redevelopment of the site for retail purposes is not likely to be commercially attractive and that office demand would be met by the Nailers Yard development. This advice, combined with the fact that BLRF funding must be used to accelerate the release of housing sites, means that the project team have only considered residential use on the site. If the site does not deliver housing, the BLRF funding (£722k) and OPE funding (£100k) would have to be repaid by the Council.

3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 Bromsgrove District Council instructed City Demolition to undertake the demolition of the existing buildings on the site. Brownfield Solutions and Soilfix are implementing phase one of the remediation strategy to decontaminate the site.
- 3.2 Ground water monitoring wells have been installed. Phase one remediation will be completed by September 2025. If phase two remediation is required, the site will be fully remediated by February

Overview and Scrutiny 2025

9th September

2026, at which point it can be redeveloped. Brownfield Solutions are currently in discussions with the Environment Agency to agree what, if any, remediation will be required under phase two. Based on results from phase one, it is likely that some further localised remediation treatment will be required.

4. DELIVERY OPTIONS

- 4.1 In early 2022, ONE Creative produced a feasibility study to consider the residential potential on the site. They considered three options which were refurbishing the existing buildings on site, delivering fifty apartments within two four storey buildings and delivery of twenty-nine two and three bed family homes. An indicative layout of the third option can be found at Appendix 2.
- 4.2 Option one is no longer deliverable as the existing buildings could not be retained due to asbestos. The second option was discounted because the Council's Conservation Officer had reservations as to the appropriateness of the scale and massing of the building adjacent to the grade II listed Chapel. In addition, Spadesbourne Homes have recently delivered 39 one-bedroom units at the Burcot Lane development which has reduced the demand for this type of accommodation. The strategic housing team have advised that the development should provide family accommodation of 2, 3 and 4-bedroom homes in line with current housing need.
- 4.3 There are three potential delivery options that have been considered as well as a do-nothing option for comparison. Thomas Lister were asked to provide a development appraisal for three options – dispose with outline planning permission to a private developer (A), dispose with outline planning permission to a RSL (B) and develop through Spadesbourne Homes (C). The only difference between option A and B is that a sale is likely to be at an undervalue to an RSL. Therefore, these have been considered as one option below (A). Following conversations with Group Leaders, the decision was taken to explore a partnership option which is listed as option C below but was not considered by Thomas Lister in the original development appraisal.

Option A – outline planning permission and disposal

- 4.4 Option A would involve the Council securing outline planning consent before marketing the site on the open market and inviting offers based on the consented scheme. The expected gross development value (GDV) can be found at Appendix 4. It would cost an estimated

Overview and Scrutiny 2025

9th September

£100,000 to obtain outline planning permission. This is included and not in addition to the GDV.

- 4.5 Securing outline planning permission before disposing of the site will significantly increase its value and attractiveness to potential developers, by reducing risk and uncertainty. It allows them to proceed with confidence knowing the principle of development is approved, even if details are not finalised.
- 4.6 It will be necessary for the Council to market the site with a restriction that any purchaser must deliver housing. Otherwise, BLRF and One Public Estate (OPE) funding will have to be paid back as a condition of the grant funding is that the site would be released for housing. There may be an impact on the sale price achieved for the site as any restriction can reduce value.
- 4.7 There have been three recent planning applications for the site submitted by external applicants when the site was under WCC and the Fire Service ownership (not BDC), one of which was withdrawn. Both applications (Ref 15/0836 and Ref 16/0191) were schemes for retirement living with alternative designs. Both applications were refused and upheld at appeal for the following reasons –
 - a) *The effect on the character and appearance of the area, including on the setting of a number of listed buildings and on the setting of the Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area (the BTCA).*
 - b) *The effect on highway safety in relation to parking, access and servicing.*
- 4.8 Given that previous planning applications were refused on the grounds above, it is unlikely that any scheme for apartments would be accepted because of the effect on the character and appearance of the area.
- 4.9 Option A is the option with the lowest level of risk to the Council and the least financial input but has the lowest level of control for the Council. This option would enable housing to be delivered on the site with a capital receipt being realised as soon as the site is disposed of but there would be no ongoing revenue for the Council. It is unlikely that more than 30% affordable homes would be delivered on the site.
- 4.10 Selling the site to an RSL below market value has legal implications due to duty to achieve best value.

Option B – Develop through Spadesbourne Homes Ltd and retain market value properties (dispose of affordable units)

Overview and Scrutiny 2025

9th September

- 4.11 Option B is based on the Council bringing forward the development through the council-owned housing company, Spadesbourne Homes Limited. There were lessons learned from the Burcot Lane redevelopment project which include –
- a) Carrying out due diligence early to identify where any infrastructure is in the ground. Utility maps are often incorrect, and the developer (Spadesbourne) would be liable for undertaking any works that require relocation of services.
 - b) The major delay in the development was the disposal of properties within Allen Court due to different tenure types. Any future development that included flats, should only be one tenure type e.g. market rent or social housing within each building.
 - c) Whilst providing properties for sale assists in cross subsidy, the developer (Spadesbourne) is required to provide a 2-year defect liability period from date of purchase and the construction contractor only has a one-year defect liability period from handover to Spadesbourne. This one year also includes the timeframe for sales to be achieved. Therefore, this risk must be costed as part of the overall project budget.
- The project team would ensure that these factors are considered if option B was the preferred delivery option for the site at Windsor Street.
- 4.12 The Council would have full control in this scenario and as such it can therefore specify quality, build and design standards to ensure that the aspirations for this site are fully met. However, as the sole funder of the project, the Council has 100% of the financial exposure relating to the project. Any cost overruns not covered in the contractor agreement will be the sole responsibility of the Council. The Council is also responsible for managing all risk relating to delivery and must bear the consequences should a certain risk materialise.
- 4.13 In order to test this option, an investment model has been produced by Thomas Lister which models the potential investment returns that might be generated through the Council delivering the scheme and then retaining income through the rental of the market properties, whilst disposing of the affordable element to a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partner. This mirrors the approach taken by the Council at Burcot Lane.
- 4.14 For the purposes of the investment model, an indicative value has been included at Year 3 of the appraisal, following completion of the scheme when it is assumed that the affordable units would be sold to a RSL

Overview and Scrutiny 2025

9th September

partner. The estimated value of these properties can be found at Appendix 4. The payback period for the investment is identified as being year 46.

Option C – Partnership with private developer or RSL

- 4.15 Option C considers the Council forming a partnership with either a private developer or RSL to deliver housing on the site. There are different types of partnership arrangements that could be put in place, including:
- a) A Joint Venture (JV) whereby the Council and partner form a separate entity to develop a specific site. This often involves the Council contributing land and the developer contributing capital and expertise.
 - b) Development agreement whereby the Council forms a contract with a developer or RSL to deliver housing on the site, with the developer taking on the construction and management responsibilities.
 - c) Strategic partnership whereby the Council and a developer or RSL form a long-term partnership to deliver housing projects, potentially with a focus on affordable housing.
- 4.16 Establishing a joint venture structure can be time consuming and costly, as such the scheme must be of the appropriate scale to justify this route. Establishing a strategic partnership would require the Council to have multiple redevelopment sites available. Given that the site will deliver up to 29 housing units, a development agreement by way of contract is the most likely partnership arrangement that would be formed.
- 4.17 One of the benefits of a partnership is the potential increased access to funding and expertise. A partnership can pool land, funding, and other resources to make a development site more viable. Collaboration can also lead to the delivery of more affordable housing units and risks can be shared, such as financial and development. The Council can leverage their local knowledge and land asset whilst a developer can bring their financial resources, construction expertise, and market knowledge.
- 4.18 Setting up a partnership can incur higher procurement and transaction costs. Any partnership arrangement will require careful legal structuring to define roles, responsibilities and profit-sharing arrangements. These

Overview and Scrutiny 2025

9th September

complex legal agreements must be carefully drafted by a legal specialist. Prior to undertaking a procurement exercise, it is imperative that the Council ensure its goals align with the developer or RSL's commercial objectives.

- 4.19 Given that the site is only circa 0.7 hectares, it is unlikely that many private developers would express an interest as the minimum requirement is often 50 units.
- 4.20 If partnering with a RSL, it is likely that there would be an opportunity to apply for funding to support the delivery of additional affordable housing at 50% rather than 30%. The affordable properties could be owned and managed by a RSL (if BDC decided to partner with one) and the other 50% could be privately owned/let by Spadesbourne Homes Limited. There is an option to dispose of the market value properties, but this would not provide an ongoing revenue stream for the Council.
- 4.21 For option C, the Council would retain some control over the site with the risk and financial input being shared between the partners (to be agreed at beginning). This option would be the longest in terms of timescale to deliver as the Council would be required to procure a partner before any redevelopment could take place. This procurement process is likely to take up to twelve months.

Overview and Scrutiny

9th September 2025

5. **SUMMARY**

- 5.1 Each of the options are summarised in the table below. Members should consider what level of risk they are willing to accept and weigh that up with the level of control that they would like to retain over the site. Consideration should be given to how the scheme would be financed for each option and the timescale for delivery.

| Option | Financial | Risk | Timescale | Control | Strategic objectives |
|------------|---|--|-----------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| Do nothing | Pay back BLRF and OPE grants (£722k plus £100k) Costs to secure site | Minimal – BDC would have to return OPE and BLRF funding Reputational damage for returning funding and leaving site vacant Ongoing security of the site | N/A | N/A | No Strategic objectives would be met |

Overview and Scrutiny

9th September 2025

| | | | | | |
|--|---|------------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|
| Obtain outline planning permission and dispose | Planning permission (included within appraisal) | Low | Approximately 12 months to obtain outline permission and disposal | Least amount of control | Financial stability, the Council can reinvest the capital receipt in capital projects aligned to strategic priorities but unlikely to deliver more than 30% affordable housing |
| 50/50 partnership with developer/RSL | 50% of the total project costs - part of this can be site value | Medium (shared with partner) | 6 months to secure partner followed by 18 months for planning permission and procurement of contractor | Shared with partner | Private developer – unlikely to achieve above 30% affordable housing RSL – could achieve 50% affordable housing. High quality, energy efficient homes could be delivered |
| Develop through Spadesbourne Homes Ltd | 100% of costs payable by Council | High (all risk with Council) | 18 months for full planning permission and procurement of contractor | Total control | Option to increase social housing. High quality, energy efficient homes could be delivered |

Overview and Scrutiny 2025

9th September

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 For option A, the Council will have to provide a cost allowance for further planning and design costs which have been included within the appraisal. This allowance recognises that the site would be marketed following the Council securing outline planning consent. Sales, marketing and legal costs have also been included within the Thomas Lister Report (see Appendix 3).
- 6.2 With regard to Options B and C, the Council will need to provide a long-term lease to Spadesbourne Homes for the properties. The Council could also consider providing a loan to Spadesbourne Homes to cover the capital investment required with a payback period as outlined in Option B (Appraisal) at an appropriate cost of borrowing.
- 6.3 For option A, the Council will receive a capital receipt following the disposal of the site. The estimated capital receipt can be found at Appendix 4.
- 6.4 Options B and C would require the Council to provide capital investment to fully develop the site. For the purposes of the Thomas Lister investment model (see Appendix 3), it has been assumed that the affordable element of the scheme (30%) in option B would be sold to a Registered Social Landlord partner (after 3 years). Net rental income over the 47-year model has been calculated, noting that the Council would also still have ownership of the assets developed. Whilst the return is the greatest of the three options, the returns will not be realised for a number of years and require significant upfront capital investment.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There will be different legal implications arising going forward dependent on the outcome of this report and which of the Options listed is taken forward. At this stage it is difficult to be more definitive and whichever option is selected will give rise to the need for further consideration of the legal implications and scoping work.
- 7.2 For Option B further work would be needed to review the governance arrangements and articles of Spadesbourne Homes Limited to establish that these would be suitable for purpose in terms of the project referenced in the report. This would also apply if a variant of Option C was selected involving Spadesbourne Homes Limited.
- 7.3 The Council is under a duty to achieve best value for the disposal of land in its ownership in accordance with section 123 of the Local

Overview and Scrutiny 2025

9th September

Government Act 1972. It is possible for there to be exceptions to this requirement if a disposal at an undervalue would achieve improvement to economic, social or environmental wellbeing of an area.

- 7.4 There would be legal implications arising from an arrangement to work in partnership with a RSL or developer under Option C as referenced in the main body of the report at paragraph 4.18.

8. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Council Priority

- 8.1 Redevelopment of the Windsor Street site is one of the key projects within the Council Plan and Centres Strategy. As a brownfield site, its redevelopment will meet housing needs whilst protecting the Green Belt. Transforming an underutilised site into residential use will increase footfall and support local businesses, contributing to a more vibrant town centre. This approach is part of the Council's broader strategy to regenerate the town centre, making it a more attractive place to live, work, and visit.

Local Government Reorganisation

- 8.2 The government intends to issue directions under section 24 of the Local Government Act requiring written consent from successor councils for land disposals worth more than £100,000, entering contracts of more than £1m for capital and entering contracts of more than £100,000 for non-capital (whole life costs). The timeline for the date of these has not yet been confirmed but in the meantime, the government expects councillors and statutory officers to be mindful of their responsibilities and for councils to work together in sharing information and making decisions that are in the best interests of the whole area.
- 8.3 If the Council decided to pursue option B or C, there is no guarantee that a future unitary authority would not dispose of the non-affordable properties on the site at market value. The affordable properties (between 30% and 50%) would have been transferred to an RSL and therefore protected from any sale.

Climate Change Implications

- 8.4 The redevelopment of the site has positive climate change implications as it involves the redevelopment of a brownfield site, encourages

Overview and Scrutiny 2025

9th September

sustainable urban living and land remediation will improve soil and water quality. New housing will be built to modern energy efficiency standards, reducing operational carbon emissions.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 8.5 Increasing the supply of housing (including affordable) in the district helps households on low incomes by providing them with good quality housing. It is important that the preferred option considers the potential for bringing appropriate housing stock to the market.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 9.1 Key risks associated with each option have been captured within the above SWOT analysis and summary table. A full risk register would need to be developed to fully capture and consider the risks for each option as each involve a different level of risk.

10. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Site Plan
2. Indicative Layout
3. Development Appraisal (Thomas Lister report – Exempt)
4. Financial Implications (Exempt)

11. REPORT SIGN OFF

| Department | Name and Job Title | Date |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Portfolio Holder | Cllr Karen May | 15/8/2025 |
| Lead Director / Assistant Director | Rachel Egan | 15/8/2025 |
| Financial Services | Bob Watson | 15/8/2025 |
| Legal Services | Claire Felton | 28/8/2025 |

Overview and Scrutiny 2025

9th September

| | | |
|--|----------------|-----------|
| Policy Team (if equalities implications apply) | Rebecca Green | 21/8/2025 |
| Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply) | Matthew Eccles | 21/8/2025 |

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 1 – Site Plan



This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 2 – Indicative Layout



This page is intentionally left blank

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

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

22ND JULY 2025, AT 6.00 P.M.

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

Observers: Councillor K. May (Leader of the Council), Councillor S. Baxter (Deputy Leader of the Council)

Officers: Mr B. Watson, Mr. G. Revans, Mrs. R. Egan, Ms. L. Berry, Mr. D. Henderson, Ms. R. McElliott, Ms. M. Worsfold, and Mr. M. Sliwinski

17/25

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S. Robinson with Councillor J. Robinson in attendance as her named substitute.

18/25

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS

There were no declarations of interest nor of party whip.

During consideration of this agenda item, a point of order was raised by a Member of the Committee. On the advice of officers, it was decided that the meeting be adjourned to seek advice of the Deputy Monitoring Officer in relation to this matter.

The meeting was adjourned between 6.06pm and 6.36pm. During this time, the Members concerned received advice on the matter from the Deputy Monitoring Officer.

Following the end of the adjournment, it was announced that the matter raised was not within the remit of Overview and Scrutiny Board and would be addressed through the correct process.

[Councillors R. Hunter and J. Robinson left the meeting following the end of the adjournment]

19/25

TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 17TH JUNE 2025

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

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

20/25

BROMSGROVE TOWN CENTRE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK - PRE-SCRUTINY

A strategic framework for Bromsgrove Town Centre was presented to Members which had been developed in collaboration with the portfolio holder and shaped through two stakeholder workshops. The framework aimed to consolidate various existing policies and plans into a unified vision for the town centre's future. It was designed to be inclusive and community-owned, rather than solely a Council initiative, to ensure resilience and relevance post Local Government Re-organisation (LGR).

The framework was grounded in placemaking principles and intended to guide regeneration activity, partnership engagement and investment priorities. It incorporated elements from the Bromsgrove Town 2040 Vision, Local Plan and regeneration projects funded through the Levelling-Up project.

Key strategic aims included the following:

- Transforming public spaces and connectivity
- Celebrating Bromsgrove's unique identity
- Enhancing town centre links and visitor access
- Building a safe and inclusive community
- Cultivating a thriving local business ecosystem
- Creating vibrancy to attract more visitors

The vision had been previously considered by Stakeholders and Members during various group activities to ensure all the aims and objectives were included.

An action plan encompassing the key strategic aims was to be developed under the oversight of a newly formed Town Centre Steering Group, comprising various stakeholders. This group would define Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), milestones, resource implications and explore the feasibility of establishing a Business Improvement District (BID). Progress would be monitored through an annual "State of the Town" health check which would link in with planning policies and quarterly reports would be provided as and where necessary.

During the meeting, Members raised several points which included the following:

- What health checks would be considered and how they would be graded? It was advised that the health checks would be assessed as part of the Council's planning policy framework

which would include baselines for footfall, vacancy rates, business support, rental values and other indicators. The Board were also encouraged to provide other health checks which they felt were important, for consideration.

- The importance of monitoring space usage in the town centre was highlighted.
- Clarity of the diversity of stakeholders involved in consultations was requested. In response Members were informed that representatives within different sectors across the town centre were considered during workshop sessions.
- Clarification on the enhanced town centre links and visitor access approval was requested. A timeline was proposed to establish the steering group by the end of Quarter 4 to draft an action plan. Members were also advised that existing work with Worcestershire County Council (WCC) on local cycling and walking improvements and public realm enhancements were underway.
- Concerns were expressed regarding aligning the strategy with the future LGR and that learning from other models should be a consideration. Officers suggested that the priority was to establish the Town Centre Steering Group, however, it was noted that leaving a legacy for the local people to be proud of was a key priority.
- Suggestions were made to produce a promotional video to communicate the vision to the public.
- The need to include town centre living within the strategy was emphasised to attract people of all ages, with proposals to encourage residential development above shops and within key sites. Members were advised that part of the action plan would include forwarding development plans within key site areas.
- It was suggested that the Town Centre Steering Group should consider having a Member included to provide relevant expertise and report back findings to the Board.
- The BID process was clarified which included the requirement for a successful ballot among fifty percent of the rateable value of businesses within a defined area. This bid would determine the chargeable business rates to local businesses and the revenue generated for the Council.

There were no recommendations raised during the meeting for Cabinet based on the content of the report.

RESOLVED that the Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategic Framework report be noted.

21/25

LOCAL HERITAGE ACTION LIST - QUARTERLY UPDATE

An update was provided on the Local Heritage Action List to the Board.

Following the adoption of the first tranche earlier in the year the following were noted:

- Property owners had been notified.
- The website had been updated.
- Development Management colleagues had been briefed on the local list and its implications for planning applications.
- A draft list for Wythall had been completed, with consultation planned post-Local Plan consultation completion.
- Work on Lickey and Blackwell and Bromsgrove continued but progress had slowed due to staff absences and departures. Engagement with Bromsgrove Society was ongoing.
- Public outreach efforts included a talk at Lickey End. Nomination forms would also be made available as part of the engagement process.

Concerns were raised regarding communication with stakeholders in Lickey and Blackwell. A Member noted a lack of engagement, despite previous contributions and requested to be included in correspondence. The Principal Conservation Officer reported that there had been email discussions with the Parish Council and nominations had been forwarded to the Conservation Team, however, it was agreed to provide the Councillor with the relevant communications directly.

Questions were also raised about the timeline for reviewing other areas such as Rubery. It was confirmed that all areas would be addressed alphabetically, although staffing constraints made it difficult to provide a definitive timeline.

RESOLVED that the Local Heritage Action List Quarterly Update be noted.

22/25

BROMSGROVE TOWN CENTRE RECYCLING BINS

The report on recycling and waste collection arrangements in Bromsgrove Town Centre was presented. The Environmental Services Manager noted that the report had been drafted to address a request from the Overview and Scrutiny Board raised in February 2025 for a review of the implications of no longer recycling waste on Bromsgrove High Street.

The Environmental Services Manager highlighted that the Place Teams audit of the town centre recycling bins had shown poor levels of adherence to the use of each bin, with the contents of recycling bins

showing that only one fifth of the entire waste collected in those bins was recyclable when sorting by hand was undertaken.

The difficulty in sorting recyclable material from these bins was exacerbated by the fact that many fast-food outlets provided food in card packaging and when people dispose of such waste, for example pizza boxes, in the recycling bins the high levels of grease on the packaging are tainting the whole bin. Items tainted with grease could not be recycled. Paper or card items contaminated with glass, whether dust particles or larger pieces also could not be recycled. The Council was not recycling any waste from Bromsgrove High Street bins at the moment because of the cross-contamination of waste.

Following the report, Members discussed how the investment in new recycling bins could address the problem of recycling rates and on Bromsgrove High Street. It was suggested that instead of using generic recycling bins separate receptacles for glass, metal, plastic, and general waste were needed, thereby separating waste at the point of disposal and, in combination with targeted signage and public awareness campaigns, optimise recycling within the Town Centre.

The Environmental Services Manager estimated that the cost of replacing the current bins on Bromsgrove High Street with the bins that have separate receptacles for glass could be circa £5,000. It was noted that to ensure effectiveness in increasing recycling rates, this investment would need to be combined with appropriate positioning of the bins within the Town Centre and continuing work on promoting correct recycling procedures

Use of smart bin technology could also be explored as smart bins tracked fill levels and allowed for optimisation of collection routes. It was noted that such bins were already in use, for example by Worcester City Council.

It was clarified that this report concerned recycling bins that were intended to be installed on the high street for public use only. All businesses had to follow regulations for commercial waste disposal and were not allowed to dispose of waste in public bins. A Member expressed a concern that commercial businesses could be depositing waste in public bins on Rubery High Street. The Officer agreed to contact Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) regarding this matter to identify if enforcement action was necessary.

A question was raised about provision of bins in other high streets across the District, such as Alvechurch, Barnt Green, and Rubery. It was responded that this report concerned the provision of recycling bins within Bromsgrove Town Centre which was a priority but following this the Officers would do an assessment and compile a full list of recycling bins required across the district centres with the view to provide a joint budget bid for these bins. It was commented that procuring the bins in

bulk across a number of district centres would provide economies of scale, subject to an available budget being identified and approved.

It was agreed by the Board that at this meeting, a recommendation be put forward to Cabinet asking that Officers proceed with preparing a budget bid with the view of investing in new (recycling) bins for installation in Bromsgrove Town Centre.

RECOMMENDED that the Officers proceed with preparing a budget bid to Cabinet to invest in new (recycling) bins for installation in Bromsgrove Town Centre.

23/25

FINANCE AND BUDGET WORKING GROUP - MEMBERSHIP REPORT AND UPDATE

The Chairman of the Finance and Budget Working Group, Councillor P. McDonald, updated the Board on the recent meeting which took place on Thursday 17th July 2025.

The Chairman reported that the Quarter 4 Financial Outturn and Performance Monitoring Report was discussed, and Members of the Working Group had agreed that more detailed narrative was required in these reports going forward in order for Members and the public to better understand the content. Specific areas where further detail was felt to be needed was in respect of variances across service areas, information on the reasons for these variances and mitigations in place to ensure these were managed effectively. In addition, further information regarding the recharges made across both Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils during any financial year would also assist in better understanding the Council's financial position.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board discussed the points raised by Finance and Budget Working Group and a recommendation was put forward to the effect that a detailed narrative in terms of variance for each service area, together with detail on the action(s) being taken to address the variance/issue and the officer(s) responsible, be included in future iterations of quarterly finance and performance reports. In addition, the recommendation asked that information on recharge amounts be included in future reports. The Board agreed to making this recommendation to Cabinet.

Members also requested that the organisational chart be updated with up-to-date information in respect of officers' posts and contact details. This was agreed as an action to be completed by officers.

With respect to membership of the Finance and Budget Working Group, it was acknowledged that interest in joining the Working Group had been expressed by Councillors S. Ammar and C. Hotham to date. The Board felt that a follow up communication was required to members of the Overview and Scrutiny 'pool' (i.e. all elected members who were not represented on Cabinet) to ascertain if there were any further

expressions of interest. It was commented that this would ensure all elected members had time to consider on whether they wished to sit on the Working Group. In this case, it was agreed that consideration of further appointments to fill vacant positions on the Working Group be deferred to the next meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Board.

RECOMMENDED that future Quarterly Financial Outturn and Performance reports provide:

- i. a detailed narrative in terms of variance for each specific service area
- ii. for each area of high variance provide detail on the action(s) being taken to address the issue and the officer(s) responsible
- iii. information on recharge amounts.

24/25

TASK GROUP UPDATES

An update on the Housing Task Group was provided by its Chairman, Councillor H. Warren-Clarke. Councillor Warren-Clarke explained that bulk of the work had been completed, and the Task Group had one meeting left to formalise its recommendations. This meeting had had to be postponed on a couple of occasions, but it was expected that the Task Group would finalise and present its findings in the Autumn.

RESOLVED that Housing Task Group update be noted as per preamble above.

25/25

WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - UPDATE

The Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) representative, Councillor B. Kumar, reported that the meeting scheduled for 9th July 2025 had been cancelled and re-scheduled to 30th July 2025. Therefore, there was no update to provide at this meeting.

RESOLVED that the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) update be noted.

26/25

CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Cabinet Work Programme was presented for Members' consideration. Members requested that the following items from this work programme be added to the Overview and Scrutiny programme:

- Expansion of Commercial Waste Collection Service (due for consideration at the 9th September Overview and Scrutiny meeting)
- Expansion of Septic Tank and Emptying Service (due for consideration at the 9th September Overview and Scrutiny meeting)

- Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant (due for consideration at the 18th November Overview and Scrutiny meeting).

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Work Programme items set out above be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme.

27/25

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme was presented for Members' consideration. The items selected from the Cabinet Work Programme, at previous agenda item, were added to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be updated as per preamble above.

28/25

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ACTION SHEET

The Overview and Scrutiny Action Sheet was considered by the Board.

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

29/25

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.

30/25

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

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

| Item No | Paragraph |
|---------|-----------|
|---------|-----------|

| | |
|----|---|
| 15 | 3 |
|----|---|

31/25

LEVELLING UP FUND PROGRAMME - QUARTERLY UPDATE

The Regeneration Project Manager presented the Levelling Up Fund Programme projects update as follows:

- Windsor Street site: Ground water monitoring would continue to take place until mid-August 2025 with the results due to be submitted to the Environment Agency (EA). In the event ground water monitoring on site identified unacceptable levels of PFAS/PFOS (per and polyfluorinated alkyl substances), six-month of remediation would be undertaken, which would be due to conclude in January 2026.
- In general, the Windsor Street project remained on track to be completed by January 2026, meaning the site would be cleaned for redevelopment. The project was also within budget at present.
- Future use options paper for the Windsor Street site would be presented to Overview and Scrutiny in September 2025 and Cabinet in November 2025, asking Members to agree on how the site would be delivered for housing.
- Nailers Yard site: As reported at previous update to Overview and Scrutiny, there was a six-week delay to the project, incurred due to unforeseen ground obstructions.
- SCP Transport Planning had been tasked with undertaking the travel plan and welcome pack for the site, which was a planning condition that must be discharged prior to occupation.
- Members were advised that the wording of one of the planning conditions might need to be amended following the cancellation of Modeshift STARS subscription by Worcestershire County Council (WCC). Officers were awaiting information about the proposed change to how travel plans will be assessed.
- GJS Dillon were appointed to market the commercial building in December 2024, and would advertise the space and handle lettings on behalf of the Council.
- It was noted there had been early interest in the office and the food and beverage units at Nailers Yard.
- The project team was preparing to submit a full business case to Birmingham City Council (BCC) for access to the funds which the Council had deposited within the defunct Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) as part of the business rates pool arrangements. This fund totalled £2.425 million, and would be spent on Nailers Yard project once received. It was confirmed that the funds would not be received until 2026/27 financial year.

- The original budget for the Levelling Up programme was £16.103 million, made up of Levelling Up Fund (Government grant) and £1.6 million of funds from the Council, to be spent on the three projects (Nailers Yard, Windsor Street, Public Realm).
- Some additional funding of £1.08 million had been awarded and secured to Levelling Up projects in Bromsgrove since the original budget. In addition, it was planned to utilise the GBSLEP funding (not yet secured) of £2.425 million to the Levelling Up Programme.
- The final cost of the Levelling Up Programme was currently estimated at £18.65 million.

RESOLVED that the update on the progress of the Levelling Up Fund projects be noted.

(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 that included information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

The meeting closed at 7.56 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