

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 8TH OCTOBER 2025, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors S. M. Evans (Chairman), B. Kumar (Vice-Chairman), S. Ammar, A. Bailes, R. Bailes, S. J. Baxter, J. Clarke, S. R. Colella, A. M. Dale, J. Elledge, D. J. A. Forsythe, E. M. S. Gray, C.A. Hotham, R. J. Hunter, H. J. Jones, M. Marshall, K.J. May, B. McEldowney, S. T. Nock, D. J. Nicholl, S. R. Peters, J. Robinson, J. D. Stanley, K. Taylor, H. D. N. Warren-Clarke, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

Officers: Mr J. Leach, Mr B. Watson, Mrs. C. Felton, Mr M. Cox and Mrs. J. Bayley-Hill

44\25 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D. Hopkins, R. Lambert, P. McDonald and S. Robinson.

45\25 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor R. Hunter declared an other registerable interest in respect of Minute Item No. 55/25 concerning the fourth Question on Notice for consideration at the meeting in respect of Nailer's Yard in that he was employed by HS2.

[This Question on Notice was later withdrawn and was not considered at this meeting].

46\25 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 16TH JULY AND 3RD SEPTEMBER 2025**

The minutes from the Council meetings held on 16th July and 3rd September 2025 were submitted for Members' consideration.

During consideration of the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 16th July 2025, Members raised concerns that the wording of the minutes did not reflect the language used by some Councillors in the debate. In response, the Chairman acknowledged that it was not appropriate for that language to be used.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 18.3 a recorded vote was taken in respect of the accuracy of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 16th July 2025.

Members voting FOR the minutes as an accurate record:

Councillors S. Baxter, A. Dale, J. Elledge, D. Forsythe, E. Gray, H. Jones, B. Kumar, M. Marshall, K May, B. McEldowney, S. Nock, S. Peters, J. Stanley, K. Taylor, H. Warren-Clarke, S. Webb and P. Whittaker (17).

Members voting AGAINST the minutes as an accurate record:

Councillors S. Ammar, A. Bailes, R. Bailes, J. Clarke, S. Colella, C. Hotham, R. Hunter, D. Nicholl and J. Robinson (9).

Members who ABSTAINED in the vote on the accuracy of the minutes:

Councillor S. Evans (1).

Therefore, the vote confirming the accuracy of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 16th July 2025 was carried.

During consideration of the minutes from the Council meeting held on 3rd September 2025 a standards matter was raised in respect of the declarations made at that meeting. This matter was addressed outside of the meeting.

Members noted that the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd September 2025 should state that this was an 'Extraordinary' meeting of Bromsgrove District Council.

RESOLVED that, subject to the amendment detailed in the preamble above, the minutes of the Council meetings held on 16th July and 3rd September 2025 be approved as a true and accurate record.

47\25

TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND/OR HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

During this item, the Chairman made the following statement:

"I know this whole chamber will join me in sending our condolences on behalf of this Council to the Jewish community in Manchester, and Bromsgrove, along with the wider Jewish community, following the

horrific terror attack that took place on Yom Kippur. Our thoughts are with everyone affected by the horrific act”.

The Head of Paid Service informed Members that an online all-Member briefing regarding Local Government Reorganisation had been arranged and was due to take place on 16th October 2025 at 6pm. A request was made by Members that this session be recorded and made available to those Members who were unable to attend this briefing. It was confirmed that this request would be accommodated.

48\25

TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER

There were no updates from the Leader on this occasion.

49\25

TO RECEIVE COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Ms G. Crosby-Read asked the following question:

"Why are amendments not being made to ensure the regenerated park at Upland Grove is accessible?"

Additional comments made during consideration of this question included the importance of inclusive play provision during the regeneration of local parks and play spaces.

The Leader responded that there would be a written response provided after the meeting to the question by the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Climate Change in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules.

Ms K. Crosby-Read asked the following question:

"What are Bromsgrove council planning to do with the General Fund Reserve estimated to be approximately £12-14 million, which is over five times the amount of the 5% benchmark that the Government recommends being the minimum requirement needed to be held by a council?"

Additional comments made during consideration of this question included the outcome of any remaining funds left in Bromsgrove District Council's General Fund when Local Government Reorganisation had been implemented.

The Leader responded that there would be a written response provided to the question after the Council meeting by the Cabinet Member for Finance in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules.

50\25

URGENT DECISIONS

Members were informed that there had been two Urgent Decisions made since the last ordinary meeting of the Council. These were in respect of Nailers Yard and an extension to the deadline for the public consultation for the Local Development Plan.

During consideration of this item, Members queried who had signed the urgent decisions as the names of Members and Officers did not appear in the documentation provided at this meeting. It was confirmed that in line with the Council's Urgency Procedure Rules the decisions had been signed off by the Chief Executive Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chairman of the Council, the Leader of the Council and the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board. In the case of the decision in respect of Nailer's Yard it was clarified that the Vice-Chairman had signed off the Urgent Decision in place of the Chairman who had not been available when the decision was made.

Members were informed that a written record was kept of the approval from each of the signatories for audit purposes and that the decisions were available to view publicly on the Council's website.

In terms of the scrutiny of the Urgent Decision in respect of Nailers Yard, and in line with the Council's Urgency Procedure Rules, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board had been consulted, along with the Group Leaders who were provided with an update on the status of Nailers Yard prior to the decision being made.

The timeline of the Urgent Decision in respect of Nailers Yard was queried by some Members, and it was clarified that as soon as the Leader had been notified of the necessity to release extra funding for this project, a Group Leaders meeting was convened as detailed above.

The Chairman informed Members that as this item was for noting, should Members have any further questions regarding this matter it could be raised outside of this meeting.

51\25

CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Members were informed that Councillor S. Ammar was now the Liberal Democrat Member on the Overview and Scrutiny Board and that Councillor E. Gray was the named substitute for the Labour Group on the Licensing Committee.

It was noted that there were vacant seats on both the Overview and Scrutiny Board and Audit, Standards and Governance Committee and that it was hoped that this matter could be resolved in the near future.

52\25

TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER A REPORT FROM THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Community Safety presented the annual report for Members' consideration. In doing so the following was highlighted:

- The North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP) had agreed a three-year action plan and the priorities identified as a result of data gathered. Following the retirement of the previous Chairman of the NWCSP, a new Chairman had been appointed. It was reported that the Executive Director for Environment and Communities of Bromsgrove District Council would carry out this role going forward.
- Environmental Services had experienced a number of challenges over the previous year; however the team were well placed to continue to deliver the high-quality service to Bromsgrove and its residents. The new waste freighters were due to be delivered to the depot by December 2025 along with new pavement sweepers. It was confirmed that the depot was currently fully staffed.
- Fly-tipping within the District remained a concern. However, it was noted that the Officer response team continued to respond effectively and quickly to instances of fly-tipping that were reported in order to ensure that Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Officers could carry out their investigations using evidence collected at the fly tipping site.
- A weekly food collection service had been introduced during the year for businesses and would be offered to residents the following year. Some funding from the Government had been received to implement the food collection waste service. This would provide funding for the food caddies and vehicles. However, the amount, if any, of revenue funding to operate the service was still unknown.

- A commercial waste service had been operating at the Council for ten years and a report was due to be considered at this meeting to consider the expansion of this service.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Community Safety thanked the Community Safety and Environmental Services Teams for their hard work and commitment to providing the District with high quality services.

Following the presentation of the report, Members asked questions in several areas. These included:

- Would the street information on the Council's website be updated to inform residents when any replacement bins that had been missed during the deliveries would now take place? – Members were informed that any missed bins could only be identified if the Environmental Services Team were informed by residents. Therefore, it was requested that residents notified the team who would quickly rectify any missed replacement bin deliveries.
- Were there any plans to provide any additional recycling bins in and around the town centre e.g. Sanders Park? – It was reported that these were relatively new bins and an expansion of availability of these bins would hopefully be carried out as soon as possible. A response from Officers would be requested and provided following the meeting. In terms of any communications in respect of the new recycling bins, it was hoped that these bins would increase awareness and educate residents of the necessity to place uncontaminated waste within them in order to increase recycling rates.
- Tree Management and Tree Planting Policy – What Council owned land would be utilised for the planting of trees and how many trees had been planted since a Motion on Notice was considered on this subject in July 2024? – A response from Officers would be requested and provided to Members following the meeting.
- Bulky Collections – As the bulky collection service seemed to be successful, were there any concerns regarding capacity over the coming months as there seemed to be a trend for increased numbers of residents accessing the service in October, November and December? In addition, were there any plans to increase the service? – it was noted that there were no concerns in respect of capacity over the coming months and no plans to increase the service which was currently running well.

- Reduction in Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) funding for 2025-2026 – did the information contained within the report regarding Community Safety Partnership funding reflect the twenty per cent reduction in funding for this municipal year? – it was reported that there had been a reduction in West Mercia Police funding of £8 million for this year, which had inevitably resulted in a reduction in funding for the Partnership. The data contained in the report was from April 2025 and therefore reflected the information available prior to any reduction in funding.
- Breakdown of video evidence – Could there be some breakdown in areas of where video evidence had been captured in terms of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and crime and disorder? It was noted that due to the sensitive nature of this evidence, this information was not possible to provide as it might impact on any future court proceedings.
- Community Safety Team attendance in other centres within the District – Members requested clarification as to whether the Community Safety Team would be able to visit areas outside Bromsgrove town centre where there had been issues with ASB. It was noted that Officers would visit where a need had been identified. If there was ASB within the other centres Members could encourage residents to report these issues in order for Officers to understand the needs within these areas.
- Online Road Sweeping Schedule – It was requested that an updated schedule be provided on the Council's website as the current timetable on the website was not up to date. It was clarified that the schedule was currently being updated and would be available very shortly.
- Increased presence of Police and Community Safety Officers on the streets – There had been a reported increase in ASB within the District. In light of the recent reduction in funding for the PCC, what could the Council do to work with the West Mercia Police to assist in their operations? – Members were informed that this was a difficult question to respond to, due to limitations in resources within the Police.
- Delay of the implementation of the food waste service –The Council had requested the information from the Department for the Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in terms of funding for this service to be rolled out, however the Council had still not received a response. The Council was in discussions with neighbouring Councils and other external partners to look at the potential to provide a shared service due to space and capacity issues required to implement this new service. It was noted that

the deadline for the implementation of a food waste collection service was April 2026. This was in line with the requirements of the Environment Act 2021.

- Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) – was it possible to access the data relating to these signs in order to demonstrate a change in driving behaviours when these were installed. It was reported that there was the possibility to access the data and any Parish Councils that were responsible for VAS could access this kind of data. The importance for these signs was that they were sited in the correct spot. A point of clarification was made in that the data from VAS gifted to Bromsgrove District Council by Worcestershire County Council in unparished areas could be accessed.
- Could at least one recycling bin be provided to Parish Councils in the other centres within the District? – A response from Officers would be requested and provided following the meeting.

During consideration of this report the Place Team Coordinators, Community Safety Manager and Community Safety Projects Officer were thanked specifically for their hard work and dedication. However, Members also extended their thanks to all the hard work undertaken by the Environmental and Community Safety teams over the previous year.

53\25

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET

Members were asked to note that in addition to the recommendations considered at this meeting there was one further recommendation made at the Cabinet meeting held on 10th September 2025 in respect of the Extension to the Consultation Period for Bromsgrove District Council's Local Plan. This recommendation had already been agreed in accordance with the Council's Urgency Procedure Rules on 16th September 2025, as discussed earlier in the meeting and therefore would not be debated under this item.

Revocation of the Bromsgrove Road and Lickey End Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)

During consideration of this item, the Standing Orders were suspended until the end of the Council meeting in order to allow the Technical Services Manager from Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) to speak on this technical report, if necessary.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services presented the report for Members' consideration. In doing so the following was highlighted:

- This report was good news for the District as it indicated an improvement in air quality within the AQMAs at these locations. It was necessary under legislation that if air quality within AQMAs improved consistently then the AQMA would need to be revoked.
- The improvement in air quality might be attributed to several factors including a decrease in traffic and increase in the use of electric vehicles and improvements in efficiency of diesel engine technology.
- Monitoring of locations continued even when AQMAs were being revoked. If any changes to the data were identified, there would be a review of the revocation of the AQMA at these sites.

Members queried how the continued monitoring would be undertaken in the future. The Technical Services Manager for WRS reported that there were three strands to delivery of the monitoring and air quality management work. These were as follows:

1. Diffusion tube networks would remain at the sites and would provide data in order to monitor levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO²). This monitoring equipment was also located at other sites within the District.
2. There were three real time air quality monitoring devices within the District.
3. An Air Quality Strategy was being developed currently in order to tackle air quality in areas within the District that were not subject to an AQMA. This was alongside a 'behaviour change' project currently underway across the County.

Members were keen to understand, if monitoring, as detailed above, was still due to be undertaken, how this would be different to the AQMA monitoring currently taking place? It was stated that there would not be the need for formal reporting of the monitoring data collected at these sites which currently was reported to DEFRA. However, the monitoring would remain.

The issue of particulate matter was raised and the monitoring that was currently in place for this type of air pollution. Some Members felt that an increase in this type of monitoring would be greatly beneficial for the District and could potentially be implemented as a community investment project ahead of Local Government Reorganisation. It was felt that this would be an opportunity to improve the health and wellbeing of residents within the District.

The Leader agreed that a report on particulate matter would be presented at a future Cabinet meeting for consideration.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor K. Taylor and seconded by Councillor P. Whittaker. On being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED that

the Lickey End, Bromsgrove Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and the Redditch Road, Bromsgrove, AQMA be revoked.

Treasury Management Outturn Report 2024/2025

The Cabinet Member for Finance presented the Treasury Management Outturn Report 2024/2025 for the consideration of Council.

Members were informed that the Council had adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (the CIPFA Code), which required the Authority to approve as a minimum semi-annual and annual Treasury Management Outturn reports. The Treasury Management Strategy, as approved by Council in February 2024, and monitoring continued to take place with risk being at the centre of the reporting.

The Treasury Management Outturn Report 2024/2025 concentrated on the national outlook and a more local economic environment. It was noted that the Council had no external borrowing and that Capital Fund Projects were funded by internal borrowing only.

The CIPFA Code stated that a Council's Investment Strategy must be prudent. It was confirmed that all of the Council's Treasury Management activities throughout the year fully complied with the principles in the Treasury Management Code and the Authority's approved Treasury Management Strategy.

Prudential indicators were monitored by the Authority. These indicators were Liability, Security, Liquidity and Interest Rate Exposures. It was confirmed that the Council was compliant in all the prudential indicators.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor S. Baxter and seconded by Councillor K. May. On being put to the vote Members

RESOLVED to note

- 1) the Council's Treasury performance for the financial year 2024/25.
- 2) the position in relation to the Council's Prudential indicators.

Adoption of Fixed Penalty Charge for Breach of Community Protection Notice

As detailed earlier in the meeting, the Standing Orders were suspended until the end of the Council meeting in order to allow the Technical Services Manager from Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) to speak on this technical report, if necessary.

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Licensing and WRS and the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Community Safety presented the report for Members' consideration. It was noted that, if agreed, the recommendation would strengthen Officer powers in respect of issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) when a Community Protection Notice (CPN) had not been effective. It was hoped that in implementing such FPNs, it would result in a much more formal process in dealing with enforcement issues such as dog fouling.

Members queried whether, alongside the issuing of a FPN, there would be the potential to recoup the cost of the collection of a fly-tip within the District. The Technical Services Manager from WRS explained that in most instances of fly-tipping or littering, these types of FPNs would not be appropriate. In these cases, a different type of FPN would be issued which incurred a higher fine. The specific type of FPN dealt with within the report would be applicable when a process of issuing an informal warning, followed by a formal Community Protection Warning and then a CPN had been issued. For the most part, by the time that the CPN had been issued the breach would have been resolved. Should this not be the case then it might be appropriate to move towards prosecution. However, in cases where there had been partial compliance in a CPN, it might not be in the public's interest to move to prosecution, in these cases an FPN could be issued to discharge the liability of the breach. Examples of these cases provided were side waste issues and untidy land cases.

Questions were raised about whether it would be appropriate to issue these kinds of FPNs in incidences when ASB e.g. drug use was reported. It was reiterated that the purpose of this suggested FPN was for it to be used if appropriate when a CPN had not been effective. Members queried situations when those who had been served with this type of FPN did not pay the fine and whether there would be an extra incurred cost to the Council if the matter moved to prosecution. For the

most part, any costs would be in terms of Officer time. However, in serving the FPN it would strengthen the Council's' case that all steps had been taken in order to gain compliance in a reasonable manner prior to legal proceedings.

In terms of reporting, Members were informed that issues such as fly-tipping, untidy land and side waste matters could be reported through Bromsgrove District Council's website. Wider ASB matters would need to be reported to other appropriate partners.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor K. Taylor and seconded by Councillor P. Whittaker. On being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED that

A Fixed Penalty Notice Charge of £100 for failure to comply with a Community Protection Notice be adopted.

Quarter 1 2025/26 Finance and Performance Monitoring Report

The Cabinet Member for Finance presented the report for Members' consideration. In doing so, and as detailed earlier in the meeting, Members were informed that the Council was compliant in terms of Treasury Management and prudential indicators. It was noted that the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee had requested more detailed information in respect of Balance Sheet Monitoring which had been included in this report.

During consideration of this report, it was raised that there seemed to be a discrepancy in the amount of annual deficit forecast for the Council. The report indicated that there was an annual deficit at the end of Quarter one of approximately £173,000. However, in looking in further detail, Members had identified some potential inaccuracies within the savings across several Council service areas (Corporate Services, Legal and Democratic Services and Regeneration and Property Services) which would result in a deficit of £587,360. It was further discussed that, given the report on Expansion of the Commercial Waste Service, also due to be considered at this meeting and which requested additional funding, it would not be appropriate to consider an increase in spending until such time as an accurate picture of the Council's current financial position could be provided.

Members requested that some further information be provided regarding the concerns that had been raised. It was felt that, as the potential

inaccuracies had only just been highlighted, it would not be appropriate to provide a response at this meeting, and the report should be deferred to the Extraordinary Council meeting due to take place on 19th November 2025. This would give Officers the opportunity to look at the areas raised and provide a more detailed narrative in November 2025. Some specific areas that Members requested be looked at were funding for The Artrix, rent revenue for Nailers Yard and the commentary contained within the report. Members were advised that if there were any further specific areas that Members felt needed to be addressed regarding this report, this should be raised prior to the next meeting, in order for Members and Officers to provide as fulsome responses as possible.

Expansion of Commercial Waste Collection Service

As detailed in the preamble above, this report was not considered at this meeting. It was agreed that consideration of the Expansion of Commercial Waste Collection Service report should instead be deferred to the Extraordinary Council meeting on 19th November 2025.

54\25

TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE CABINET HELD ON 23RD JULY AND 10TH SEPTEMBER 2025

Members queried the membership of the Town Centre Steering Group. It was reported that the membership of the Town Centre Steering Group had not been finalised, however this would include cross-party membership from Councillors of Bromsgrove District Council and other local partners.

The minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 23rd July and 10th September 2025 were noted.

55\25

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Question submitted by Councillor A. Bailes

“At the Extraordinary Council meeting on 3rd September 2025, this Council, with the support of the Leader, voted to endorse the North and South Worcestershire Unitary Councils as part of the Local Government Reform process. However, just eight days later, the Leader, in her capacity as a County Councillor, voted against a motion proposing that the County Council support the North and South Worcestershire Unitary Councils.

Could the Leader please clarify this apparent contradiction and categorically confirm her position on supporting the North and South Worcestershire Unitary Councils?"

In responding to the question, the Leader of Bromsgrove District Council read out an extract from the opening statement included in the Motion on Notice considered at the Worcestershire County Council (WCC) meeting, as detailed in Councillor A. Bailes's question. The extract read as follows:

"Following the outcome of the election in which the Conservatives lost their majority fighting on a platform of one unitary authority, for the whole of Worcestershire the County Council...."

The Leader clarified that the above statement was not correct and that she had not undertaken her WCC election campaign in agreement with a One Worcestershire model of local government. The context of the vote on the Motion on Notice at WCC required those supporting it to have campaigned on a one Unitary Authority proposal and, it was confirmed, she did not.

Councillor A. Bailes asked a supplementary question in respect of this matter.

In doing so, he stated that at the [Extraordinary Council] meeting held on 3rd September 2025, the Leader had voted for a two unitary Authority approach to local government as a result of listening to the residents, but he suggested that the situation now appeared to have changed. He then asked the following supplementary question: "Could the Leader confirm when the shift occurred and why?"

The Leader confirmed that no shift had occurred and that at each different meeting a decision was required following consideration of the information provided. She expressed the view that it was important to make decisions based on the evidence provided and this was the approach that she had taken. The Leader confirmed that she was very willing to explore the option of a North and South Authority approach to local government and she was committed to the best outcome for the residents within the District whatever model of unitary governance was eventually adopted.

Question submitted by Councillor S. Colella

“Can the Portfolio Holder and Cabinet Member for Leisure and Climate Change please confirm whether the Bromsgrove Town Centre Christmas lights turn on is cancelled or not cancelled please.

Residents have the right to know what’s really happening because no sooner had the press release gone out from yourself and the Deputy Leader of the Council stating that it was cancelled, there was a further press release from the Leader of the Council that she was looking into the cancellation and was doing everything she could to get it re-instated.”

The Cabinet Member for Leisure and Climate Change responded to the question and informed Members that the Council had issued a very clear statement confirming that the Christmas lights turn on was happening and when. He confirmed that he was delighted to be able to reaffirm this at this meeting.

The annual Christmas fun Event, which celebrated the start of the festive season in Bromsgrove and featured the official Christmas Lights Switch-on, was coming to the Town Centre. Members were informed that it was to be held in Bromsgrove High Street on Saturday 22nd November 2025 between 3:00pm and 5:30pm, with the switch-on scheduled for 5:00pm.

Events included:

- Christmas Market – Festive stalls with gifts, crafts, food, and seasonal treats.
- Roaming Entertainment – Santa, Elves, Fairies and Christmas-themed performers bringing magic to the streets.
- Live Music – Performances from a local choir and brass band to set the festive atmosphere.
- Christmas Pantomime – Fun, interactive performances for families.
- Christmas lights on countdown along the length of the high street at 5pm.

Councillor S. Colella asked a supplementary question in respect of this matter.

“Was the Cabinet Member satisfied that the event would be safe for all those who chose to attend?”

The Cabinet Member for Leisure and Climate Change stated that the event would be safe for all those who chose to attend.

It was clarified that the switch on would take place in the original location and that the Christmas Market would be open on Friday 21st November 2025.

Question submitted by Councillor D. Nicholl

“Why does Bromsgrove District Council only retain online recordings of Council meetings until the minutes are approved when neighbouring Councils like Warwick District Council keep them online for twelve months?”

The Leader of the Council responded that Bromsgrove District Council retained online recordings of meetings of the Council in accordance with UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) for the purpose of assisting in the subsequent preparation of the minutes of the meeting, as required under the Local Government Act 1972. Once the minutes had been signed, they served as a record of the meeting, and it was no longer necessary to retain the recording which was deleted in accordance with the published disposal schedule in line with UK GDPR. This had been discussed many times with Members at Member Development Steering Group and Constitutional Review Working Group meetings and it had been agreed that this was the arrangement that would remain in place. It was noted that she could not comment on the process that Warwick District Council had adopted.

Councillor D. Nicholl asked a supplementary question in respect of this matter and in doing so suggested that the retention of live recordings only until the minutes were approved seemed inadequate and that retention for a longer period might improve Member behaviour at meetings. The Leader suggested that this matter should be referred back to the Constitution Review Working Group because, as highlighted in her earlier response, when data was retained there needed to be a legitimate reason to do so under GDPR legislation.

The final question in respect of the funding for Nailers Yard submitted by Councillor C. Hotham was deferred until such time as a clear picture of the Council's financial position could be confirmed.

Prior to the consideration of the Motions on Notice, the Chairman announced it had been agreed that the first Motion on Notice would not be considered at this meeting due to the Council meeting taking place during the pre-election period for the Worcestershire County Council by-election due to take place on 30th October 2025. Due to the exceptional circumstances of the Motion not being considered in a timely manner at the Council meeting on 16th July 2025 and the extraordinary circumstances of it not being considered at this meeting, the Chairman had exercised his discretion, and, in this instance, the Motion would now be considered at the Extraordinary meeting of the Council on 19th November 2025. It was reiterated that this was an exceptional circumstance and would not set a precedent for future Extraordinary Council meetings.

Members raised their concerns in respect of Motions on Notice that dealt with WCC matters considered previously during a pre-election period. The Chairman explained that he had been given advice by the Monitoring Officer, who had indicated that it was not appropriate to debate the first Motion on Notice included in the agenda at this time.

Council considered the following Motion on Notice, submitted by Councillor E. Gray:

West Mercia Police and Crime Panel

"The Council calls on the Bromsgrove representative on the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel to actively address the issue of cross-border crime and anti-social behaviour affecting Bromsgrove. It is requested that our representative formally raises the matter with the Police Crime Commissioner (PCC), emphasising the need for improved collaboration between West Mercia Police and West Midlands Police."

In proposing the Motion on Notice, Councillor E. Gray stated that the purpose of the Motion was practical and served to enhance the intelligence service of cross border policing within Worcestershire and the neighbouring police forces, including West Midlands Police Force.

It was suggested that the Council's representative on the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel should outline at a future meeting of the Panel, the potential for Rubery Police Station to be used as a hub for crime intelligence. Furthermore, it was suggested that monthly meetings be arranged in order for intelligence sharing to take place with representatives of West Mercia and West Midlands Police. This would

provide the opportunity for those in attendance to look at current issues and any emerging issues and tackle them more effectively.

Following consultation with residents and local youth groups, it was noted that there were concerns regarding a lack of Police presence in local areas and that there had been an increase of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) particularly in the early evening. It was reported that this could have been as a result of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) not working certain hours resulting in a lack of Police presence in certain areas at critical times.

Councillor H. Jones, as the Council's representative on the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel, could be the advocate for this kind of collaborative working which would improve cross border policing and increase community safety.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor P. Whittaker expressed his thanks to Councillor E. Gray for proposing the Motion on Notice and recognised the importance of this cross border working with police colleagues to support Bromsgrove as a safe place to live and work. Councillor H. Jones, as the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel was urged to raise this matter at the next meeting of the panel, and to ask how collaboration between West Mercia Police and West Midlands Police was carried out and dealt with.

During consideration of this item, an amendment was proposed to the wording of this Motion by Councillor J. Robinson. The amendment was detailed as follows:

"The Council calls on the Bromsgrove representative on the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel to actively address the issue of cross-border crime and anti-social behaviour affecting Bromsgrove. It is requested that our representative formally raises the matter with the Police Crime Commissioner (PCC), emphasising the need for improved collaboration between West Mercia Police and West Midlands Police. Therefore, this Council calls on the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board to invite the Police and Crime Commissioner to one of their panels."

The amendment was proposed by Councillor J. Robinson and seconded by Councillor S. Ammar.

There was detailed debate in respect of this amendment. The areas raised included the following:

- The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) was the strategic lead for West Mercia Police rather than operational. Concerns were raised that if he was invited to a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, there was the potential for questioning to be focussed more on operational matters. It was with this in mind, that it was suggested that if the amendment was agreed there would be a need for questions to be asked on strategic matters only.
- It was acknowledged that the PCC had attended other elected Member meetings along with Senior Police officials, such as Parish Council meetings and Worcestershire County Council meetings. At these meetings, it was noted that operational matters had been discussed and actioned effectively.
- Members also noted that scrutiny should consider strategic matters as part of their considerations in order to hold all elected officials to account to achieve the best outcomes for the residents of Bromsgrove.
- The impact of cross border policing and its importance to the residents of Bromsgrove.
- Members noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Board was responsible for its own work programme. If Members were keen to have a discussion such as this at one of its meetings, then Members of the Board could request that it be placed on the Board's work programme.
- It was also noted, however, that there had been precedence at the previous Council meetings in referring Motions on Notice for discussion by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

Councillor H. Jones reported to Council that, at meetings of the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel, she held the PCC to account and had worked hard to implement projects that greatly improved the safety and security of those living in Bromsgrove.

Members expressed their eagerness to receive updates such as these in the future as it would help to provide transparency of the issues discussed at West Mercia Police and Crime Panel meetings.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 18.3 a recorded vote was taken on the amendment as follows:

Members voting FOR the amendment:

Councillors S. Ammar, A. Bailes, J. Clarke, S. Colella, S. Evans, C. Hotham, R. Hunter, D. Nicholl and J. Robinson (9).

Members voting AGAINST the amendment:

Councillors S. Baxter, A. Dale, J. Elledge, D. Forsythe, E. Gray, H. Jones, B. Kumar, M. Marshall, K. May, B. McEldowney, S. Nock, J. Stanley, K. Taylor, H. Warren-Clarke and S. Webb (15).

Members voting to ABSTAIN on the amendment:

Councillors R. Bailes, S. Peters and P. Whittaker (3).

Therefore, the vote on the amendment was lost.

A further amendment was subsequently proposed to the wording of this Motion by Councillor C. Hotham. The amendment was detailed as follows:

“The Council calls on the Bromsgrove representative on the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel to actively address the issue of cross-border crime and anti-social behaviour affecting Bromsgrove. It is requested that our representative formally raises the matter with the Police Crime Commissioner (PCC), emphasising the need for improved collaboration between West Mercia Police and West Midlands Police. At the end of this, the Bromsgrove District Council representative bring back a report to this Council on the Police and Crime Commissioner’s response.”

Councillor E. Gray, as the proposer of the original Motion, confirmed that she was happy to incorporate this amendment into the wording of the Motion and this therefore became part of the Substantive Motion for debate.

Members asked whether, if the Motion was agreed, the report would be provided verbally or in written form. It was confirmed that this information would be provided at a later date.

On being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED that

“The Council calls on the Bromsgrove representative on the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel to actively address the issue of cross-

border crime and anti-social behaviour affecting Bromsgrove. It is requested that our representative formally raises the matter with the Police Crime Commissioner (PCC), emphasising the need for improved collaboration between West Mercia Police and West Midlands Police. At the end of this, the Bromsgrove District Council representative bring back a report to this Council on the Police and Crime Commissioner's response."

Inclusivity of Play Areas with the District

Council considered the following Motion on Notice, submitted by Councillor S. Robinson (as Councillor S. Robinson had submitted her apologies for this meeting the Motion on Notice was proposed by Councillor J. Robinson):

"This Council resolves to ask Cabinet if they can ensure that all new and refurbished playgrounds are inclusive by design, with an aspiration that all children are able to access a majority of features."

Prior to the consideration of this Motion on Notice it was announced by Councillor R. Hunter that an alteration to the proposed Motion had been accepted. The alteration was as follows:

"This Council resolves to ask Cabinet if they can undertake to always consider from the outset, inclusivity as part of the planning and design process of new and refurbished playgrounds."

In presenting the updated Motion, it was noted that play areas were vital for the residents of Bromsgrove and in implementing the Play Audit earlier in the year, there had been a missed opportunity in terms of including accessibility and inclusivity for play areas in the decisions made. It was hoped that this Motion would serve to rectify this for all those who utilised the play areas within the District.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor K. May stated it was important that play areas achieved a range of purposes including being as inclusive as possible for as many children as possible. The importance of consulting with children who used the play areas would be helpful in understanding needs for these locations in the future.

There was a programme for providing new and enhanced play areas across the District. This programme included the provision of accessibility features and some accessible equipment.

Members had been debating the play provision for some time indicating several key areas that they would like to be considered.

It was important to manage this in a context that considered the District's priorities for play and the actions that had already been taken to meet these.

Detailed knowledge in relation to Council sites was available, and the Council was working to acquire knowledge regarding other non-council sites, to ensure that a strategic approach was taken in the delivery of the enhancement programme.

Members had all been clear that play provision was a priority for the remainder of the life of the Council prior to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). To achieve this for the benefit of all residents, the current capital programme for play needed to be revisited to understand what further funding would be required to meet aspirations and accelerate delivery overall.

During the discussion of this Motion, the following was highlighted:

- Play areas were vital for the District and needed to be accessible for all.
- Several examples of consultation had taken place at play areas where refurbishment was underway. This had been extremely valuable in understanding the needs of the residents and particularly the children, who used these spaces. It was important that the changes and inclusion of equipment was evidence based, and this could only occur if the correct users of the equipment were consulted.
- The consideration of equality and diversity needs for those users of the play areas was extremely important.
- It was necessary to separate the design process for these play spaces and the ongoing implementation of the Play Strategy to leave a legacy for the residents of the District.

In summing up, Councillor J. Robinson thanked Ms G. and Ms K. Crosby-Reed for highlighting this issue for the consideration of Council and for attending the meeting to ask questions regarding this matter.

On being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED that

This Council resolves to ask Cabinet if they can undertake to always consider from the outset, inclusivity as part of the planning and design process of new and refurbished playgrounds.

57\25

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

There was no Urgent Business on this occasion.

The meeting closed at 9.12 p.m.

Chairman