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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 8TH OCTOBER 2025

AT 6.00 P.M.

PARKSIDE SUITE - PARKSIDE

MEMBERS: 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, D. Hopkins, R. J. Hunter, H. J. Jones, R. E. Lambert, M. Marshall, K.J. May, P. M. McDonald, B. McEldowney, S. T. Nock, D. J. Nicholl, S. R. Peters, J. Robinson, S. A. Robinson, J. D. Stanley, K. Taylor, H. D. N. Warren-Clarke, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

AGENDA

WELCOME

- 1. To receive apologies for absence**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**

To invite Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Disclosable Interests they may have in items on the agenda, and to confirm the nature of those interests.

3. **To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 16th July and 3rd September 2025** (Pages 7 - 30)
4. **To receive any announcements from the Chairman and/or Head of Paid Service**
5. **To receive any announcements from the Leader**
6. **To receive comments, questions or petitions from members of the public** (Pages 31 - 32)

A period of up to 15 minutes is allowed for members of the public to make a comment, ask questions or present petitions. Each member of the public has up to 3 minutes to do this. A councillor may also present a petition on behalf of a member of the public.

7. **Urgent Decisions** (Pages 33 - 58)

There have been two Urgent Decisions taken since the last ordinary meeting of the Council.

8. **Changes to Committee Membership**

To receive a verbal update from relevant Group Leaders on changes to the following:

- Substitutes of the Licensing Committee.
- Membership of Overview and Scrutiny Board.
- Any other Committees (as relevant).

9. **To receive and consider a report from the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Community Safety** (Pages 59 - 78)

Up to 30 minutes is allowed for this item; no longer than 10 minutes for presentation of the report and then up to 3 minutes for each question to be put and answered.

10. **Recommendations from the Cabinet** (Pages 79 - 80)

To consider the recommendations from the meetings of the Cabinet held on 23rd July 2025 and 10th September 2025.

Members are asked to note that there was one further recommendation made at the Cabinet meeting held on 10th September 2025 in respect of Urgent Business (as detailed at Minute Number 38/25). This recommendation has already been agreed as an urgent decision on 16th September 2025. A copy of the urgent decision can be viewed at item 7 on this agenda.

11. **Background Information on the recommendations from the Cabinet**

- (i) Revocation of the Bromsgrove Road and Lickey End Air Quality Management Area (Pages 81 - 88)
- (ii) Treasury Management Outturn Report 2024/2025 (Pages 89 - 104)
- (iii) Adoption of Fixed Penalty Charge for Breach of Community Protection Notice (Pages 105 - 110)
- (iv) Quarter 1 2025/26 Finance and Performance Monitoring Report (Pages 111 - 150)
- (v) Expansion of Commercial Waste Collection Service (Pages 151 - 162)

12. **To note the minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 23rd July and 10th September 2025** (Pages 163 - 186)

13. **Questions on Notice** (Pages 187 - 188)

To deal with any questions on notice from Members of the Council, in the order in which they have been received. Each Member asking a question may ask up to one supplementary question which must be based on the original question or based on the answer to that question.

A period of up to 15 minutes is allocated for the asking and answering of questions. This may be extended at the discretion of the Chairman with the agreement of the majority of those present.

14. **Motions on Notice** (Pages 189 - 192)

A period of up to one hour is allocated to consider the motions on notice. This may only be extended with the agreement of the Council.

15. **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**

16. **To consider, and if considered appropriate, to pass the following resolution to exclude the public from the meeting during the consideration of item(s) of business containing exempt information:-**

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

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Paragraph(s)</u>
17 (including 17a)	3

17. **Background Information on the recommendations from the Cabinet**

(i) Expansion of Commercial Waste Collection Service (Pages 193 - 194)

J. Leach
Chief Executive

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

30th September 2025

**If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact
Jo Gresham**

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You are able to see and hear the livestream of the meeting from the Committee Pages of the website, alongside the agenda for the meeting.

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

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

Notes:

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



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

at www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 16TH JULY 2025, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors S. M. Evans (Chairman), B. Kumar (Vice-Chairman), R. Bailes, S. J. Baxter, J. Clarke, A. M. Dale, D. J. A. Forsythe, E. M. S. Gray, C.A. Hotham, D. Hopkins, R. J. Hunter, H. J. Jones, R. E. Lambert, M. Marshall, K.J. May, P. M. McDonald, 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

Observers:

Officers: Mr J. Leach, Mr. G. Revans, Mrs. C. Felton, D Goodall, Mrs. J. Bayley-Hill and Mrs J. Gresham

25\25

TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors S. Ammar, A. Bailes, S. Colella, J. Elledge and S. Robinson.

26\25

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

27\25

TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 14TH MAY AND 19TH JUNE 2025

The minutes of the Council meetings held on 14th May and 19th June 2025 were submitted.

During consideration of this item, Councillor P. McDonald advised that there had been some changes to his group's membership of two committees previously reported at the meeting held on 19th June 2025. Councillor E. Gray was now a Member of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee, replacing Councillor H. Warren-Clarke and Councillor H. Warren-Clarke was now a Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, replacing Councillor E. Gray.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of Council held on 14th May and 19th June 2025 be approved as true and correct records.

28\25

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

Chairman

The Chairman announced his Chairman's Charity for the ensuing municipal year was The Basement Project. The Basement Project was a local, independent charity that played a vital role in supporting some of the most vulnerable young people within the community.

On 19th September 2025 a charity fundraising event was to be held to raise funds for The Basement Project. All Members were invited to attend this event.

Head of Paid Service

There were no announcements from the Head of Paid Service.

29\25

TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER

The Leader announced that from the next ordinary meeting of the Council, due to be held in October 2025, Portfolio Holder reports would be reintroduced for the consideration of Council.

During consideration of this item, Councillor K. May was thanked for her support in agreeing to postpone consideration of the Constitution Review – Recommendations report, which had been due to be considered at the meeting.

30\25

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

The Chairman informed Council that no questions, comments or petitions had been received from members of the public on this occasion.

31\25

URGENT DECISIONS

Members were advised that no Urgent Decisions had been taken since the previous meeting of Council.

32\25

AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

Members were informed that the previous Chairman of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee, Councillor H. Warren-Clarke would present the Audit, Standards and Governance Annual Report 2024/25 for Council's consideration.

In doing so, it was noted that the Statement of Accounts for the financial years 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 had been made available for public consultation and had received disclaimer opinions from the external auditors as per the backstop legislation.

The draft Statement of Accounts had also been produced for the financial year 2023/24 and was now out for public consultation. This was also in line with the backstop requirements. There had been no audit opinion received in respect of these accounts at the time of the meeting, due to the recent onboarding of new external auditors.

Councillor H. Warren-Clarke explained it had been a monumental year for the Council in terms of production of the Statement of Accounts. Thanks were extended to the Democratic Services team, the previous Section 151 Officer and the Assistant Director for Finance and Customer Services. Councillor R. Bailes was also thanked for her role as Risk Champion for the Committee during the 2024/25 municipal year.

Following the presentation of the report, Councillor H. Warren-Clarke was thanked for his work over the 2024/25 municipal year.

There was a question raised in respect of the onboarding of the new external auditors. The Assistant Director for Finance and Customer Services and Deputy Section 151 Officer provided further information in respect of the new external auditors, Ernst & Young. It was reported that the new auditors had been onboarded in June 2025 and that assurance and value for money work was currently underway on the 2023/24 draft accounts. Discussions had taken place on the 2024/25 Statement of Accounts which was due in February 2026, as per the backstop legislation. The external auditors had also attended the recent Audit, Standards and Governance Committee meeting on 14th July 2025.

33\25

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

Councillor P. McDonald presented the Overview and Scrutiny Board Annual Report 2024/25 in his role as Chairman of the Board.

It was reported that several task group investigations had taken place over the municipal year, and a number of reports had been pre-scrutinised prior to their consideration by Cabinet. This pre-scrutiny had resulted in a number of recommendations being made, most of which had been agreed by Cabinet.

One extra meeting had been convened during the municipal year due to the significant workload. Councillor P. McDonald took the opportunity to thank Officers for their hard work and commitment to the scrutiny process, sometimes at very long meetings.

The Leader thanked the Chairman and Members of the Board for the detailed scrutiny carried out throughout the year. The recommendations made by the Board were welcomed and it was noted that this had resulted in greater involvement from Members in the decision-making process.

34\25

CONSTITUTION REVIEW - RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chairman announced that prior to the meeting, at the agreement of Group Leaders, this item had been withdrawn from the agenda and would not be debated at this meeting.

35\25

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET

Council considered the recommendations arising from the meeting of Cabinet held on 18th June 2025.

Contaminated Land Strategy

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Licensing and Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) presented the Contaminated Land Strategy report for Members' consideration. In doing so, it was noted that there was no contaminated land in Bromsgrove. However, it was important to understand what had been situated on land within the District previously to ascertain whether sites were suitable for development or not.

Following the presentation of the report, there was a detailed discussion regarding the proposed Contaminated Land Strategy. Several areas were raised by Members, including whether it was accurate to state that there was no contaminated land within the District. Members commented that recently there had been a significant amount of work

carried out at the Windsor Street site in order to remediate the contamination found at this location.

Members were informed that if there was no liable party for contaminated land, the responsibility for clearing the site would fall to Bromsgrove District Council and ultimately the taxpayer. This would result in a reactive approach being taken on any area identified as contaminated, which might not be the most appropriate way to deal with this type of land in the future. Clarification was provided that there would be environmental tests carried out prior to any building within a specific site in the District, to see if the land was contaminated and what the costs of remediation of such sites would be.

The report had been considered previously at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting that took place on 17th June 2025. There was a suggestion that this report could be referred back to the Board in order to provide further clarity. Some Members explained that the pre-scrutiny of the report had been detailed during the meeting of the Board and did not feel that this would be necessary and that the Strategy had been devised using a prioritisation methodology. Members commented that it was likely there was contaminated land across the District, however, it was suggested that there was not the resource within the Council to clear these areas. The remediation of these sites would be picked up through the Planning process as and when any contamination was identified.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor K. Taylor and seconded by Councillor K. May.

RESOLVED that

The Council adopt the revised Contaminated Land Strategy to be published on the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) website.

Warm Homes Local Grants Funding and Resources

The Cabinet Member for Leisure and Climate Change presented the Warm Homes Local Grants Funding and Resources for the consideration of Council.

It was noted that the funding awarded by Central Government for this project had not been a significant amount. The funding would cover the cost of works being carried out on approximately nineteen to twenty private homes at the average cost of fifteen thousand pounds. There

would be further funding available for social housing properties at a later date.

The Council would work alongside Act on Energy to allocate the funding to appropriate homeowners based on the specific criteria for the funding.

During consideration of the report, it was noted that fuel poverty continued to be an issue for residents across the District and although this was not a significant sum of money to carry out the proposed work, it was important for residents to be able to access this type of funding.

Members raised concerns in terms of risks identified within the report. It was noted that one of the risks was that the project would be undersubscribed. Members questioned what measures would be put in place to ensure that this was not the case? It was explained that it was unlikely that this would happen and no real problems were anticipated in this area. Another potential risk was oversubscription to the projects and that there needed to be a delicate balance when allocating the funding. It was explained that, by working with Act on Energy to identify homeowners who met the specific criteria for the funding, the risk would be mitigated. The matter of signposting was raised by Members and whether there was the opportunity for agencies such as the Citizens' Advice Bureau or Age UK to signpost homeowners to Act on Energy to access the funding. It was reported that Act on Energy worked alongside various other organisations that would provide information to those households that met the criteria, whilst continuing to be mindful of the limitations of the funding. It was also questioned whether Act on Energy had sufficient resources to facilitate the allocation of the funding.

Clarification was provided that there was the potential opportunity, as a result of the Local Government Reorganisation, that some Capital funding could be allocated to cover further works such as this in the future. It was suggested that residents who lived in park homes could be approached as potential recipients of this funding, as they had not been included in a previous round of similar funding.

Concerns had been raised regarding the scale of the proposed works and the lack of ambition in the associated timelines. It was explained that the phasing of the funding was prescriptive and there was no ability to change the way the funding was allocated within the project timeframe.

Members welcomed the news that the Council's targets for net zero were still being met. However, it was requested that the Council continue to lobby the Government in respect of these matters in the future.

Councillor B. McEldowney proposed the recommendation, and it was seconded by Councillor S. Baxter.

RESOLVED that Authority be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer to reflect in the Capital Programme the grant funding in 2025/26 and to include the 2026/27 and 2027/28 funding into the Medium-Term Financial Plan for the Warm Homes Local Grant (WHLG) (as shown below).

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
£31,423.08	£129,000	£124,700

Appointments to the Shareholders Committee

The Leader presented the Appointments to the Shareholders Committee for Spadesbourne Homes Limited, a sub-committee of the Cabinet. The proposed membership required for four Members of the Cabinet to sit on the Shareholders Committee, rather than the five Members who had been appointed in 2024/25. This excluded the Cabinet Member for Planning and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing and Strategic Housing. All Group Leaders would continue to be invited to attend meetings, and relevant training had been provided for Members of the committee. It was reported that a Shareholders Committee Annual Report would be presented to Council on a yearly basis in the future.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor K. May and seconded by Councillor S. Baxter.

RESOLVED that the updated Terms of Reference for the Shareholders Committee be approved.

36\25

TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON 18TH JUNE 2025

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 18th June 2025 were noted.

37\25

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The Chairman explained that five Questions on Notice had been submitted for this meeting.

Question submitted by Councillor J. Robinson

“It is vital we ensure residents across the Bromsgrove District continue to have access to activities that can help them stay healthy. Can the Cabinet Member confirm if the Cabinet would consider supporting the introduction of a park run in Bromsgrove?”

The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing and Strategic Housing provided a response and in doing so informed Members that there was currently a Junior Park Run held in Sanders Park on Sundays. In addition to this, there was the opportunity for residents to take part in Couch to 5K programmes throughout the year and a Bumble Bimble event organised on a yearly basis.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing and Strategic Housing suggested that she would be happy to meet with Councillor J. Robinson along with the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Climate Change to discuss the potential for further opportunities in the future.

Question submitted by Councillor D. Nicholl

“Will the Cabinet consider supporting South Bromsgrove High School with a new surface for their 3G pitch that is used for both students and the wider community?”

The Cabinet Member for Leisure and Climate Change provided a response and stated that, in line with the Council’s Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy, Officers would be working with third party providers to determine the very best use of public money in the context of dual use and other agreements in communities.

The value of outdoor pitch facilities was recognised, and South Bromsgrove High School were encouraged to meet with Officers so that any community use agreements might be explored. Councillor D. Nicholl asked a supplementary question, enquiring as to which Officer was best placed to be contacted regarding this matter. Members were informed that the Assistant Director for Planning and Leisure Services would be the most appropriate Officer to be contacted.

Question submitted by Councillor J. Clarke

“With plans to decommission Churchfields, Stourbridge Road and School Drive car parks alongside ambitious growth plans, are you confident the town will have enough car parking capacity at peak times?”

The Leader provided a response and explained that as detailed in the Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategic Framework, this matter would be considered by Cabinet on 23rd July 2025. Future car parking needs would be reviewed in line with the Council's growth plans to ensure that sufficient capacity could be maintained. In addition to this and, building on the Strategic Car Parking Review carried out in 2024, the Council was to review Town Centre parking policies to ensure they supported local economic needs and attracted visitors. In this way, the use of each car park was to be considered, which included that a positive user experience be included.

Question submitted by Councillor S. Robinson (as Councillor S. Robinson had submitted her apologies for this meeting, the question was asked by Councillor R. Hunter).

“How many bus shelters, owned by Bromsgrove District Council, have been replaced in each of the last three financial years?”

The Cabinet Member for Environmental Services provided the response to this question. In doing so, Members were informed that the Council owned sixty-one bus shelters. The number of bus shelters replaced in each of the last three financial years was as follows:

- In 2022-2023 – one bus shelter replaced
- In 2023-2024 – two bus shelters replaced
- In 2024-2025 – seven bus shelters replaced

In addition to these, it was reported there were plans to replace six bus shelters in the financial year 2025/26.

Councillor R. Hunter asked a supplementary question in respect of this matter.

“Eighteen thousand pounds was allocated by the Council for the replacement of bus shelters on an annual basis. How much of this budget had been spent?”.

The Cabinet Member for Environmental Services reported that the Revenue expenditure was as follows:

Financial Year	Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Variance
2022/23	£3,779	£1,375	-£2,404
2023/24	£3,805	£2,205	-£1,600
2024/25	£3,805	£6,115	+£2,310

It was further reported that the Capital expenditure was as follows:

Financial Year	Annual Budget	Actual Spend
2022/23	£0	£0
2023/24	£18,000	£0 (rolled onto 2024/25)
2024/25	£36,000	£19,655
2025/26	£18,000	tbc

Question submitted by Councillor S. Colella (as Councillor S. Colella had submitted his apologies for this meeting the question was asked by Councillor C. Hotham).

“At the meeting of 17th October 2022, the following question was asked and the following response provided in public:

This Council asks for reassurance that the transport assessment work, which has been lacking to date, will be completed to the satisfaction of BDC for the Issues and Options consultation, along with a stated time plan that can be adhered to?

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services responded by explaining that additional transport assessment work was being progressed with Worcestershire County Council (WCC). This work would support the preferred option of the District Plan Review. In due course, a new timetable for the plan production would be published which would fully take into account the time it would take to complete the additional transport assessment work.

The Question now is: What has happened to the Transport assessment and transport modelling in relation to the District Plan One Option Consultation launched on Monday 30th June 2025?”

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services provided a response to this question and stated that in accordance with the timeline, a partial transport assessment had been produced and published to support the Draft Development Strategy Consultation. The Bromsgrove Plan was not yet at preferred options stage, and plan making was an iterative process. The level of information currently

available was sufficient and appropriate in support of the choices that had been made at this draft stage. The outcome of the current consultation process would inform the next stage of transport assessment and infrastructure planning, which was why it was key that the public and key stakeholders responded to the consultation to highlight the specific detail of the transport issues the District faced. Bromsgrove District Council Officers continued to work with Worcestershire County Council to seek assurances and clarity on the approach for the more detailed assessment of transport impacts required for further iterations of the plan.

A supplementary question was asked by Councillor C. Hotham who queried how the public were able to comment on the Draft Development Strategy, currently out for public consultation, if transport data was not available and whether this lack of information negated the validity of the consultation?

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services stated that this was not the case.

38\25

MOTIONS ON NOTICE

The Chairman advised Members that two Motions on Notice had been submitted for consideration at this meeting.

Council considered the following Motion on Notice that was submitted by Councillor D. Nicholl:

“The Office of the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) aimed to create sustainable communities. Given the proposal in our draft Development Strategy to build nine thousand extra homes by 2043 across BDC, Bromsgrove District, Council resolves to request that the Leader write to the Deputy Prime Minister to highlight how these figures contradict those which are compatible with a sustainable community and ask for the affordability multiplier under the National Planning Policy Framework be reviewed urgently.”

Prior to consideration of the Motion on Notice, Councillor D. Nicholl explained that he was proposing the original Motion included in the main agenda for this meeting in a slightly altered form of wording. The wording would now read as follows:

“The Office of the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) aimed to create sustainable communities. Given the proposal in our draft Development Strategy to build nine thousand extra homes by 2043 across Bromsgrove District, Council resolves to ask the **Group Leaders** to write to the Deputy Prime Minister to highlight how these figures contradict those which are compatible with a sustainable community and ask for the affordability multiplier under the National Planning Policy Framework be reviewed urgently.”

In proposing the Motion, Councillor D. Nicholl explained that the proposal to build nine thousand extra homes within the District was not in line with a sustainable community and would be catastrophic to the residents of Bromsgrove and destroy much of the District.

It was stated that the affordability multiplier used in order to ascertain the number of homes needed to be built by 2043 in the District was flawed. Therefore, it was requested that a letter be sent to the Deputy Prime Minister to request clarification on the affordability multiplier and that a review of the multiplier be undertaken urgently.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor R. Hunter.

Prior to the debate on this Motion, an amendment was suggested by Councillor K. Taylor. The proposal was that the wording be amended as follows:

“The Office of the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) aimed to create sustainable communities. Given the proposal in our draft Development Strategy to build nine thousand extra homes by 2043 across Bromsgrove District, Council resolves to ask **all Members** to write to the Deputy Prime Minister to highlight how these figures contradict those which are compatible with a sustainable community and ask for the affordability multiplier under the National Planning Policy Framework be reviewed urgently.”

The amendment was seconded by Councillor S. Webb.

Members commented that ensuring all Members sign a letter to Government might prove difficult to facilitate, particularly with the tight timeframes involved.

During a detailed and robust debate, the following areas were highlighted by Members:

- The matter of the affordability multiplier had already been discussed during consideration of the Local Plan consultation in June 2025. After robust debate at this meeting, the public consultation had been approved by Members, thus ensuring that decisions would not need to be made centrally by Government.
- The Council's responsibility was to ensure that residents had access to good quality housing within the District and the public consultation process was an essential part of Local Plan development to ensure residents' feedback was taken into account, prior to any final decisions being made. There were currently four thousand people on the housing list, highlighting a pressing need for increased provision of social housing within the District.
- Members commented that it was difficult for young people who had grown up in Bromsgrove to afford homes within the District and therefore housing developments on Green Belt land were required to ensure that housing was available to those who most needed homes. Some Members expressed the view that this was an unfair representation of the discussions at the Extraordinary Council meeting held in June 2025. The proposed small numbers of houses in certain areas would not affect these areas greatly and impact on residents would be minimal. However, in other areas there would be a greater impact on residents due to the larger numbers of proposed homes to be built.

At this point in the meeting, it was requested that a vote be taken on the amendment to the Motion received from Councillor K. Taylor. On being put to the vote the amendment to the Motion was lost.

In continuing the debate on the substantive Motion, the following areas were discussed in detail:

- Some Members expressed the view that the narrative around the Draft Development Strategy should be that residents should be encouraged to participate in the consultation process and reminded that no decisions had to date been made. It was the responsibility of Members to communicate this to residents in their Wards.
- It was accepted that homes needed to be built across Bromsgrove, but at the correct level for the District and the public consultation process would provide this detail. Collaborative

working was key to this consultation process, and this could be done through Members working with residents, local organisations and Parish Councils to provide constructive feedback through the consultation process.

- Some Members confirmed that they were encouraging residents to make a thoughtful submission, including detailed information about transport links, education and health provision, through the public consultation and not through petitions or any other means. However, there was some frustration expressed that there was only one option to be consulted on as part of the Draft Development Strategy.
- There was a discussion as to whether it was appropriate to debate this Motion whilst the public consultation was still underway. However, Officers advised that this Motion was deemed permissible. In terms of the content of the Motion, it was stated that the matter of the affordability multiplier had already been addressed in the Council's 'Response to the Proposed Reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework to Government', submitted following the Extraordinary Council meeting in September 2024. As part of the Council's response at Questions seventeen and nineteen in that consultation paper, it was clearly stated that the Council was opposed to increasing the affordability multiplier from zero point two five per cent to zero point six per cent.
- Members commented that when this response was submitted, the numbers of homes to be built per annum was seven hundred and three. However, following the receipt of the feedback from the Council, appealing the decision on the number, an increase in numbers had been applied by the Government to seven hundred and thirteen homes to be built per annum. Therefore, there were concerns raised that if this Motion was agreed and a letter written to the Deputy Prime Minister, it might result in a further increase rather than a decrease in numbers of homes to be built across the District.

In concluding the debate on this Motion, it was noted that the housing list data on the GOV.UK website currently showed that there were two thousand, three hundred and seventy-five names on the housing list and not four thousand as detailed earlier at the meeting. It was accepted that this figure was too high and that more homes were needed within the District. However, Members expressed the view that a requirement to build nine thousand additional homes was a disproportionate response versus need.

Some Members were disappointed that there had only been one option included in the Draft Development Strategy for public consultation and suggested that a number of options would have been preferable. There were also concerns raised that it was part of the political process to continue to lobby against issues that were not satisfactory for the residents and that this Motion had been designed to do that.

On being put to the vote the Motion was lost.

The Chairman announced that there was seven minutes remaining of the time allocated for consideration of Motions.

A proposal to extend the time limit for half an hour was received from Councillor J. Robinson and seconded by Councillor R. Hunter.

On being put to the vote, the request for an extension for the time to consider the second Motion was lost.

There was a query raised as to whether there would be the opportunity to debate the Motion at the Extraordinary Council meeting due to be held on September 2025. Officers advised that this would not be possible and therefore the Motion would be deferred to the next ordinary meeting of the Council in October 2025.

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TO CONSIDER ANY URGENT BUSINESS, DETAILS OF WHICH HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED TO THE HEAD 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 8.00 p.m.

Chairman

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 3RD SEPTEMBER 2025, AT 6.00 P.M.

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

Observers:

Officers: Mr J. Leach, Mr B. Watson, Mrs. C. Felton,
Mr. G. Revans and Mrs J. Gresham

40\25

TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors J. Elledge, S. Evans, D. Forsythe and J. Stanley for this meeting.

A Standards matter was raised during consideration of this item. The Vice-Chairman in the Chair suggested this matter be discussed with the Monitoring Officer outside of the meeting.

41\25

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

42\25

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION REPORT - MUTUAL VENTURES

The Leader presented Local Government Reorganisation Report - Mutual Ventures for Members' consideration. In doing so, it was noted that the purpose of the report was to provide the outcome of an options appraisal carried out by Mutual Ventures on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

The report and associated appendices considered two main options for LGR in Worcestershire.

Option A: One unitary authority for the whole of Worcestershire.

Option B: presented as options B1 and B2 considered the creation of two unitary authorities made up of North Worcestershire (covering Bromsgrove District, Redditch Borough and Wyre Forest District) and South Worcestershire (covering Malvern Hills District, Worcester City and Wychavon District).

It was reported that option B consisted of two variants, detailed as follows:

Option B1 provided for two unitary councils to be established across Worcestershire; North Worcestershire and South Worcestershire. It involved the disaggregation and transferring of all statutory and non-statutory services, functions and operating model from Worcestershire County Council to the new unitary councils and the aggregation and transfer of all statutory and non-statutory services, functions and operating models from district Councils to their respective new (north or south) unitary Council.

Option B2 provided two unitary Councils established across Worcestershire; North Worcestershire and South Worcestershire. This option offered a shared service/hybrid model across both new unitary Councils, with specific services (i.e. Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Education, Adult Education and Transport) jointly delivered and commissioned. All other services would be delivered and commissioned by each new unitary Council, including prevention and early help. It was noted that the exact arrangement would be determined during the development of any future full LGR proposal.

Members were reminded that on 5th February 2025 the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution, wrote to all the Worcestershire authorities inviting Council leaders in the area to develop a proposal for single tier reorganisation in exercise of powers under Part 1 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The timetable imposed by the Government required interim proposals to be submitted by 21st March 2025 and final proposals by 28th November 2025.

An extraordinary Council meeting was held on 12th March 2025 when an interim plan was agreed that covered two main options for unitarisation. One of the options considered at this meeting was for a single unitary authority for the county of Worcestershire with the alternative option being two unitary authorities covering north and south Worcestershire.

At the extraordinary Council meeting it was determined to agree the interim plan for submission and to further explore the options. On that basis Bromsgrove District Council along with the Councils of Redditch Borough, Worcester City, Malvern Hills District and Wychavon District agreed to commission consultants to carry out an options appraisal. The company, Mutual Ventures, secured the commission to undertake the options appraisal.

Members were informed that there were six criteria under which the Government would assess LGR proposals. These were as follows:

1. The establishment of a single tier of local government.
2. That unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improved capacity and withstand financial shocks.
3. Prioritisation of the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.
4. How Councils in the area had sought to work together in coming to a view that met local needs and was informed by local views.
5. The support of devolution arrangements.
6. How new unitary structures enabled stronger community engagement and delivered genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.

The approach taken in appraising each option was to consider against the Government's six LGR criteria qualitative and quantitative information. The qualitative information was acquired through thirty-two engagement sessions, a County-wide public survey and staff surveys.

The Leader explained that the Local Government Reorganisation Report - Mutual Ventures provided design principles based on the outputs from the engagement sessions for what good might look like in terms of local government in Worcestershire in the future. In addition to this, the report provided feedback on the public survey entitled "Shape Worcestershire", which noted a preference for two authorities covering the north and south of the County. Members were informed that the preference for two authorities was also the view provided by staff who completed the staff survey at Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils.

A summary of performance for each of the options against the Government's six LGR criteria was contained within the report. The Leader reported that as set out by the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution, in his letter of 5th February 2025, the six criteria were further divided into twenty-one other elements. The

summary looked at the probability, with scores of high, medium and low or unclear of each option meeting the individual criteria.

During the presentation of the report the headlines were outlined as followed: -

- All options delivered a single tier of Local Government. Options A and B2 had a high probability of prioritising the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens. Option B2 offered the dynamic of operating at size and scale for large services such as adults and children services whilst being able to also deliver place based services at the locality level. Both options B1 and B2 offered a higher probability than option A of being able to deliver to meet local needs as informed by local views.
- Option A achieved significant savings but was believed to perform less well in terms of empowering local communities and meeting people's expectations/views in terms of what kind of local authority they wanted to serve them and their local area.
- Whilst Option B1 with Option B2 gave a higher probability of providing stronger local community engagement/neighbourhood empowerment than Option A it delivered the least efficiencies of all of the options and included the risks and costs of disaggregating adults and children's services.
- Under Option B2, adults and children services were not disaggregated, and place services remained focussed on localities and prevention. This option whilst making more savings than Option B1 did not perform as well as Option A in respect of efficiencies. However, it performed better than Option A in respect of the probability of empowering local communities and meeting people's expectations/views in terms of what kind of local authority they wanted to serve them and their local area.

Following the presentation of the report it was suggested that all options be debated, prior to the proposal of the recommendations contained within the report. However, Members suggested that a recommendation be proposed and debated accordingly. Therefore, Councillor K. May proposed Option B along with the other recommendations as written in the report. This was seconded by Councillor S. Baxter.

During the consideration of the report the following areas were discussed in detail by Members:

- If Option A were to be agreed, although it might provide financial savings, local democracy might be compromised resulting in the loss of localism for residents of Bromsgrove. It was suggested that Bromsgrove had little in common with the south of the County and therefore Option B, and specifically Option B2, would be the preferred option for LGR. It was noted that the majority of the responses received as part of the consultation process had indicated that it was the preference to establish two unitary authorities: one in the North and one in the South of the County. Further exploration of this option would provide more detailed information on the efficiency and savings of Option B including shared services whilst delivering best value for the local residents and taxpayers. It was also noted that two unitary authorities would provide the scale to deliver the necessary services whilst still providing the close proximity to residents and a deep understanding of local needs. Each area within the County had distinct communities with different pressures and priorities. The numbers of residents per elected Member within a one unitary model would be significantly higher than that of two unitary authorities, which again could result in a lesser connection between residents and elected Members.
- Members noted that there was no support for joining with Birmingham City Council as part of the LGR process. If, in the future, there was a necessity to establish a Strategic Authority, there were several Councils that could be combined, such as Hereford or Warwickshire who shared similar demographics to a North and South Worcestershire model.
- It was noted that there was a lack of support for two unitary Authorities by at least one of the Councils within Worcestershire. Would this affect how Bromsgrove could move forward with its investigation into Option B, if this was the option agreed by Full Council at this meeting? It was reported that this would not limit the investigation of Option B as ultimately the decision for LGR lay with central Government following its consideration of all of the evidence provided Bromsgrove District Council, and any other Council within Worcestershire who were in agreement with pursuing Option B.
- It was noted that, according to the Government guidelines, the population within a new unitary authority should be approximately five hundred thousand residents. If Option B were to be agreed this would result in approximately two hundred and ninety thousand residents within a North Worcestershire unitary authority. It was reported that there was precedence of this size of

unitary authority currently, such as Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and the City of Wolverhampton Council.

- It was key to look at the provision of Adult Social Care, Children's and SEND Services for any option of local government for the future. Particularly as these areas would have a significant financial impact on any structure of local government. Members suggested that pressure would need to be placed on the Government in order to find a suitable outcome for these services for the future.
- Members were keen to recognise that there was the potential for some services to suffer as a result of LGR, such as homelessness services. It was imperative that the most vulnerable residents within the County be provided with adequate services following the implementation of LGR.
- It was raised how transformation would be included in the continuing work of the consultants involved in looking into future options for LGR. Members were informed that once all decisions had been made by Councils within the County in terms of the preferred option going forward, the Councils in agreement would meet to discuss the plans for the future. Alongside the work undertaken by Mutual Ventures there was the need to carry out further investigations from an accountancy perspective to provide a deeper financial understanding of what any potential option might look like. Members raised whether there would be a specific Cabinet role implemented whose responsibility was to oversee LGR. It was noted that there was already work underway to look at the potential of establishing a sub-committee of the Cabinet to oversee this area of responsibility for the duration of LGR.
- The potential for Community Committees to be explored as part of LGR and the possibility that this might enable residents to be closer to the process of local democracy. Some Members felt that this was an exciting prospect. It was also noted that Parish Councils had a part to play in LGR and that support for them during this time should be ongoing.

Members thanked the Officers and Mutual Ventures for the hard work that had gone into the preparation of the evidence driven report and detailed consultation that had taken place.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **The matters set out in the report and the findings of the Options Appraisal carried out by Mutual Ventures; and appendices associated with the Mutual Ventures report**

listed within their report as Appendix A - Financial modelling and assumptions, Appendix B – Shape Worcestershire: outputs from public engagement, staff surveys and focus groups and Appendix C – Place profiles be noted:

- 2) The following model of Local Government re-organisation be selected as the Council's preferred option to be progressed to be developed into the final proposals for submission to the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government by the deadline of 28th November 2025:

OPTION B: Two Unitary Authorities made up of North Worcestershire (covering Bromsgrove District, Redditch Borough and Wyre Forest District) and South Worcestershire (covering Malvern Hills District, Worcester City and Wychavon District) providing the former district/borough and county council local government services for each area;

- 3) having selected Option B, that Members instruct officers:-
 - a) to undertake further analysis and development of the option selected under Recommendation 2 above;
 - b) to bring back to Members at an extraordinary Council meeting in November a set of final proposals for their consideration representing the Council's draft submission on Local Government Reorganisation; and
 - c) In recognition of the requirement to collaborate with other authorities when putting forward plans for Local Government Reorganisation, to work with the Leader of this Council and Leader or Leaders of any other authorities which have chosen the same option to develop joint final proposals for consideration at the meeting referred to in recommendation 3(b);

- 4) To delegate authority to the Chief Executive following consultation with the Leader to work with other councils and consultants as necessary; and
- 5) to agree a supplementary budget estimate of up to £100,000 to allow further work on the Council's proposal for Local Government Reorganisation. This is in two tranches of firstly £50,000 with a second tranche of £50,000 to be drawn only if required, under authority delegated to the Chief Executive following consultation with the Leader of the Council.

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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

Councillor C. Hotham raised that a £1.4million overspend had been identified at the Nailer's Yard site and queried why this matter could not be discussed under this item during this meeting.

The Monitoring Officer explained that the decision in respect of the funding for this site had been taken in line with the Council's urgency procedure rules and that this matter would be reported retrospectively to Full Council at its next ordinary meeting in line with standard process.

The meeting closed at 6.49 p.m.

Chairman

Bromsgrove District Council – 8th October 2025
Public Questions

1. From Ms G. Crosby-Read
Question for the Chairman:

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

2. From Ms K. Crosby-Read
Question for the Chairman:

"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?"

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN UNDER URGENCY PROCEDURES

Subject: Levelling Up Programme funding

Brief Statement of Subject Matter:

A request for additional funding for the Levelling Up Programme due to increased costs for undertaking works to open the culvert on the Nailers Yard site. Please see associated report for detail.

Decision: To recommend that Bromsgrove District Council approve an increase in the Council's contribution to the Levelling Up Programme by £500,000 (from £1.6m already approved).

Date: 21st August 2025

RESOLVED:

RESOLVED to agree that:

The Council's contribution to the Levelling Up Programme increases by £500,000 and this sum is to be added to the capital programme in year.

Grounds for Urgency:

The construction programme is already underway, and the culvert works have been programmed in to the existing programme with an extension of approximately fifteen weeks to complete the works. The main contractor (Kier) requires an instruction from Bromsgrove District Council (the client) to undertake works to the culvert including pre-commencement ground works. A delay to this instruction will incur prelim costs of approximately £50,000 per week if they are not instructed by 21st August 2025.

DECISION APPROVED BY:

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Chief Executive

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Dated

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Section 151 Officer

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Dated

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Monitoring Officer

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Dated

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Leader

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Dated

Agenda Item 7

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Chairman, Overview & Scrutiny Board

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Dated

.....
Chairman

.....
Dated

Council Decision 2025

21st August

Levelling Up Programme

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Karen May
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Assistant Director Regeneration & Property
Report Author	Job Title: Regeneration Programme Manager Contact email: Rebecca.mcelllott@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 07484 546750
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Council Priority	Economic Development and Regeneration
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council RESOLVE that:-

- 1) The Council's contribution to the Levelling Up Programme increases by £500,000 and this sum is to be added to the capital programme in year.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Bromsgrove District Council was awarded £14.5m of Levelling Up funding in 2021, with the Council agreeing to contribute £1.6m towards the overall programme costs. The three projects within the Levelling Up Programme include Windsor Street, Nailers Yard (Former Market Hall) and public realm improvements. These projects would not have been viable were it not for the funding and the sites would have remained derelict. The original budget for the programme in 2021 of £16.103m which was allocated as follows:

Project	Funding allocated
Windsor Street	£3,471,000
Nailers Yard (former Market Hall)	£10,399,000
Public Realm	£2,233,000

The Council has the ability to reallocate funding between the projects within the programme.

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- 2.2 The revitalisation of Nailers Yard is at the heart of the town's Levelling Up Programme and represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform the high street. The site, vacant for years and long seen as a symbol of lost potential, will be redeveloped into a dynamic multi-use hub. Plans include high quality offices, food and beverage units, and community event space, creating a blend of culture, commerce, and creativity that will attract visitors, businesses, and investment into the town centre.
- 2.3 For the Council, delivering the Nailers Yard transformation demonstrates a clear commitment to both preserving Bromsgrove's character and embracing its future. Once complete, the buildings will serve as a catalyst for wider regeneration, raising the profile of the town and giving residents a renewed sense of pride in their local area. The Council's leadership in securing and delivering this programme will be remembered as a defining step in Bromsgrove's ongoing renewal.

3. PROGRAMME UPDATE

- 3.1 The public realm project was completed in early 2025 with an underspend of approximately £927,000.
- 3.2 The Windsor Street project (demolition and remediation of the site) is ongoing and expected to be completed by January 2026. The project remains on time and within the allocated budget.
- 3.3 The Nailers Yard project is ongoing with Kier undertaking construction works on site. Construction costs have risen significantly from the original estimate due to a combination of factors including increased material prices, labour shortages, and supply chain disruptions. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these issues, leading to reduced production and increased demand as the economy recovered. The project cost estimate of £13,474,000 as of March 2025 was made up of the following sums –

Contract sum/Pre-construction Service Agreement (PCSA) with Kier	£11.859m
Client contingency	£0.450m
Fees and surveys	£1.165m

- 3.4 Since March 2025, there have been several issues encountered with the project that have created budget pressures. The first key issue on

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site was underground obstructions from previous developments. These obstructions which have now been addressed caused a six-week delay to the programme. This resulted in a loss and expense claim submitted by Kier, and costs associated with the additional work. Initially, a provisional sum of £10,000 was allocated for underground obstructions within the contract. However, the total cost was approximately £305,000. This used a large proportion of the client contingency (0.450m).

- 3.5 Following advice from local agents, GJS Dillon, a design review of the commercial building was undertaken in April/May 2025. It was agreed that the building would be more attractive to potential tenants if the offices were smaller units. These design changes have resulted in costs of £83,000 which includes redesign of the mechanical and engineering elements (M&E) and fire protection.
- 3.6 Currently the greatest project risk is the culvert works. An indicative design for the culvert was submitted as part of the Nailers Yard planning application prior to any works commencing on site. No civil/structural or detailed surveys were feasible during the Pre-construction services agreement (PCSA) stage due to accessibility issues whilst other ground condition and utility surveys were being undertaken. Therefore, a provisional sum of £220,256 was allowed for in the contract and it was envisaged that the works to the culvert would be able to be delivered within this budget. When this provisional sum was agreed, the design was only costed to RIBA stage 3. It was not possible to undertake detailed, intrusive surveys and it was only once the project had commenced that works could be fully designed and costed.
- 3.7 However, following a full, detailed survey of the culvert commencing in January 2025 which is the earliest that this could be carried out following initial groundworks, measurement drawings were received in early April 2025 which uncovered the exact direction and size of culvert, plus additional gullies that feed into the culvert from outside the site boundary. Following this survey, flood remodelling was carried out based on actual measurements, and the redesign of culvert and landscaping area in conjunction with flood remodelling was undertaken which took a further two months. Kier then costed the works which were reviewed by the cost consultant from Arcadis. A detailed timeline is outlined below.

Date	Action	Comment
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February 2025	Survey and measurement of culvert	This was an intrusive survey to identify the condition, structural integrity and direction of culvert plus gullies feeding into culvert
28/4/25	Flood modelling work	JBA instructed to undertake flood modelling of revised culvert design
June 2025	One Creative design work	OC design changes based on flood modelling data from JBA
04/07/2025	Kier issued drawings to discharge planning condition relating to culvert works	Planning condition – 12 weeks to determine planning application (23 rd September)
16/7/2025	Kier issue costs to Arcadis	Kier and Arcadis QS – clarifications and checks on costs
22/07/25	Overview & Scrutiny Board	Officers reported: "Currently the greatest project risk is the culvert works. Intrusive surveys could not be undertaken prior to signing the contract with Kier due to the requirement for ground works to be undertaken first. Therefore, while designs had been progressed to RIBA Stage 2, we were not able to confirm the extent of the works required prior to starting on site. Kier completed detailed design works in May 2025. A provisional sum of £220,256 was included within the original project budget. Both Kier and Arcadis have advised that this figure will increase. We are expected to have final costs for the culvert works within the next four weeks."
8/8/2025	Arcadis review of Kier costings	Presented to project manager – costs and programme implications known for culvert
14/08/25	Discussion with Senior Leadership Team	To update on status of the culvert and explore alternative options.

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15/08/25	Meeting with Leader of the Council.	To advise on situation and officer recommendation.
19/08/25	Meeting with Group Leaders	To advise on situation and requirement for an urgent decision.

- 3.8 The fully designed solution to open up the culvert has been costed at over £1.6m by Kier and reviewed by Arcadis QS (who considered the costs to be reasonable).

Description	Price	Total
Building works	£757,851.84	£757,851.84
M&E works	£5,000	£5,000
Design/fees	£68,085	£68,085
Prolongation	£525,207	£525,207
Change specific prelims	£160,465.24	£160,465.24
Risk and fixed price allowance	£55,151.08	£55,151.08
Insurance, overhead and profit	£85,606.20	£85,606.20
		£1,660,366.36

- 3.9 Taking into account the current agreed funding envelope and assuming that we are successful in securing LEP funds, the Nailers Yard project costs would increase the overall Levelling Up Fund programme budget beyond the funding envelope by approximately £165,000.
- 3.10 The agents have already received a significant level of enquiries for the office space and food and beverage units in the commercial building. There has been more interest in the office units than there is space available and the agents are confident that all office units will be let due to the lack of good quality office space in the town centre. The commercial building will provide an ongoing revenue stream to the Council and the expected return on investment of the Council's contribution to the Levelling Up Programme will be realised within five years of operation.

4. OPTIONS

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- 4.1 The project team have considered options which include not undertaking works to the culvert, postponing the works to a later phase and requesting additional funds from Council.

Option 1

- 4.2 **Complete construction of commercial and pavilion Building and commence with culvert works in a later phase.**

Whilst this option would enable the Council to tender the works separately and test the market regarding costs, Planning would need to approve this approach. There is a high risk that works would cost more if the work was tendered at a later date as any incoming contractor would need to set up the site and incur prelim costs. This option is not considered feasible because of the heavy machinery and crane required to undertake the works whilst the buildings are occupied. We would likely receive complaints from tenants relating to noise and vibration. There is also a risk of flooding on site and downstream from the site until the works have been completed. Leaving the buildings unoccupied whilst works are undertaken would carry a security risk and also loss of potential rental income.

Option 2

- 4.3 **Further design works to determine if culvert could remain closed permanently and other works carried out to resolve the potential risk of flood within site boundary and downstream.**

This option could present cost savings but is high risk and if an acceptable alternative cannot be agreed with Planning it could result in the overall cost increasing by over £400,000 in addition to the £1.6m required to carry out the works in line with the current design. It is also likely to add additional time to the programme given that the redesign process is estimated to take around 9 weeks with a further 12 weeks to be allowed to take the new design through planning. It would be a full application considered by planning committee. This will extend the programme by a minimum of just over 5 months. Following pre-application discussions with the planning officers, it is unlikely that a planning application would be approved.

Option 3

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- 4.4 **Commence with opening up the culvert as per design and programme provided by Kier. Works to commence upon condition discharged and scheduled to take 22 weeks. Attenuation works to be carried out post Culvert works.**

This option would take the project above its current funding envelope, assuming that we are successful in securing LEP funds. If this option is recommended, the total request to Council is for £500,000 which includes contingency for any unforeseen issues as the existing project contingency has now been spent. Any underspend could be returned upon completion of the Levelling Up programme.

- 4.5 **Option three is recommended for the following reasons –**

- a) The opening of the culvert reduces risk of flooding onsite and downstream.
- b) The current design has taken on board feedback from the Local Planning Authority and planning policy is being adhered to opening waterways.
- c) Though there are currently no local species/organisms that are endangered, opening the culvert is likely to encourage species to flourish.
- d) This option increases chance of rental income if works completed prior to Pavilion and Commercial building opening.
- e) Structural issues were identified with concrete beams in the culvert during the survey. Opening of the culvert removes this risk and reduces the future costs of undertaking work in the future as BDC is responsible for the upkeep of the culvert through the site. If it were to fail, the Council would have to repair it.
- f) The in situ concrete approach reduces risks of existing sheet metal piling and with a tight site constraint, the in situ concrete approach is more feasible. The pre-cast option is unlikely due to size of plant equipment and crane required.
- g) Opening of the culvert reduces risks associated with any alternative design of installing underground pipework or blockages.
- h) Not opening the culvert would mean that the site remains unfinished and occupation of the buildings could not happen.

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5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Further to the LUF money (£14.5m) being awarded to Bromsgrove District Council, some additional funding has also been awarded to the projects in Bromsgrove. These sums total £1.08m and are as follows –

Funding source	£ total received
UK Share Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) - Nailers Yard	222,364
Brownfield Land Release Fund	722,748
UKSPF - Windsor Street	84,000
Levelling Up Fund	50,000
Total	1,079,112

- 4.2 Thus the overall funding secured of £16.103 million (£14.5m plus £1.6m) was increased by £1.08m to a total of £17.183 million.

- 4.3 The final cost of the Levelling Up Programme, including works to the culvert is currently estimated to be £19,730m. This is made up of the following amounts per project –

Project	Total (£)
Nailers Yard	14,934,325
Windsor Street	3,490,000
Public Realm	1,305,665

- 4.4 The total amount of funding available to the projects, including the GBS LEP funding is £19.605m. This is made up of the following amounts:

Funding source	Total funding
Levelling Up Fund	£14.5m
Bromsgrove District Council	£1.6m
Additional funding sources (secured)	£1.08m
GBSLEP funding (not secured)	£2.425m

- 4.5 Therefore, the programme is estimated to exceed the funding envelope by £165,000.

- 4.6 As there is still approximately 7 months left to deliver the project, it is recommended that a further £335k is allocated to the programme for the Nailers Yard project contingency which will only be drawn down if required. Any unspent contingency will be returned.

Council Decision 2025

21st August

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are legal implications arising from the contracts between the Council and various third parties (consultants and contractors). They are specific to each contract and assessed by the Council's legal team.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation Implications

- 6.1 The project will leave a legacy for the town and an ongoing revenue income for years to come.

Relevant Council Priorities

- 6.2 This project supports the following Council Priorities: Economic Development.
- 6.3 The work on this project supports economic development and regeneration.
- 6.4 The regeneration project at Nailers Yard provides workspace and will enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre with the extra food and beverage offer and the community space.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.5 Through the redevelopment of the Nailers Yard site, energy efficiency measures and Low and Zero Carbon technologies will be introduced with a view to reduce operational energy consumption and the associated carbon emissions targets. These include introducing U values better than Building Regulations Part L, mechanical ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR), natural ventilation where possible, utilising building thermal mass, high efficiency air source heat pumps and low energy LED lighting. The Nailers Yard site commits to achieving a

Council Decision 2025

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minimum Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methodology (BREEAM) 'very good' rating on this site.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.6 There are no specific equalities and diversity implications.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 As part of the governance and reporting requirements, a risk register has been produced for each sub project. The key risks for each project are as follows:

Project	Risk	Comments
Nailers Yard	Culvert works	Potential impact on project budget and programme
Nailers Yard	Incoming electrics	Potential impact on project budget and programme
Nailers Yard	Commercial building layout	Potential impact on project budget and programme
Windsor Street	Remediation strategy	Environment Agency need to sign off prior to any development on site
Windsor Street	Redevelopment options	Bromsgrove District Council to agree future delivery option for site prior to any works

- 7.2 The costs of Kier being on site (prelims) per week total approximately £50,000. For every week that the project is delayed, these costs are incurred by the Council. The prelims for the culvert works total £525,000 for a 15 week prolongation period. If an urgent decision is not made, then this will increase each week.

Council Decision **2025**

21st August

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Council Decision 2025

21st August

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Karen May	
Lead Assistant Director	Rachel Egan	20/08/25
Financial Services	Bob Watson	20/08/25
Legal Services	Nicola Cummings	20/08/25
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	Rebecca Green	N/A
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	Matthew Eccles	N/A

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN UNDER URGENCY PROCEDURES

Subject: Bromsgrove District Plan – Draft Development Strategy consultation extensions

Brief Statement of Subject Matter:

At a meeting of Cabinet held on 10th September, Members recommended that the consultation on the Bromsgrove District Plan – Draft Development Strategy be extended by another 4 weeks. This was recommended, following a request from the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 9th September 2025 for Cabinet to consider discussing as urgent business whether to recommend that the consultation process should be extended to allow more time for consultees to comment on the proposal. This would extend the consultation deadline to 20th October 2025.

A copy of the report that was presented for the consideration of Cabinet at their meeting held on 10th September 2025 together with an extract from the minutes has been attached as background information.

Extending the consultation will likely have an impact on the overall timetable for the local plan, the exact implications are unknown at the moment. The current timetable in the Local Development Scheme can be accessed from the following link:

<https://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/council/policy/planning-policies-and-other-information/local-development-scheme-lds/>

Decision: To extend the public consultation on the Local Plan.

Date: 15th September

RESOLVED: The deadline for public consultation on the local plan be extended by 4 weeks to 5pm on 20th October 2025.

Grounds for Urgency: An urgent decision has been requested in respect of this matter because there is not due to be another Council meeting prior to the current deadline for the consultation, which is 22nd September 2025. A decision on extending this consultation period requires an urgent decision because this is a Council function and therefore an extension to the deadline could not be determined by Cabinet.

DECISION APPROVED BY:

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Chief Executive

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Dated

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Section 151 Officer

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Dated

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Monitoring Officer

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Dated

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Leader

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Dated

.....
Chairman, Overview & Scrutiny Board

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Dated

.....
Chairman

.....
Dated

Approach to consultation.

The consultation has been carried out inline with the process outlined in the report to Council on the 19th June 2025

Since the consultation was launched on the 30th June extensive consultation has been carried out.

The websites bromsgrove.gov.uk/bromsgroveplan and <https://bromsgroveplan.commonplace.is/> were both launched at 12.01 am

A series of 19 public consultation events have been held representing over 1000 hours of officer time for people to engage to planners.

Adverts have been placed in the local press, and a series of press release have taken place, alongside a comprehensive social media campaign.

Ward members and Parish Councils have also been encouraged to help spread the word with many leaflets and posters provided when requested.

Whilst the commonplace platform is the preferred method for people to feedback, we have also made it clear that emails to bromsgroveplan@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk and post to Parkside are also equally valuable ways of people responding to the consultation.

As its stands we have had

23137 visitors to the commonplace website

1901 different respondents

4377 individual responses

Over the last month the numbers of people visiting the website who then contribute has risen to 12% which we are informed by commonplace represents a very good response rate in this setting.

We have also had 842 emails to bromsgroveplan@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

We have had approx. 30-40 hard copy letters

There is still just under two weeks to run on the consultation we are expecting a big spike in the number of responses over this period.

Current timetable

The Current timetable for the local plan envisages the next stage of consultation happening in summer 2026

Feedback from O & S

‘Consideration of whether to make a recommendation that Council extend the period of consultation for the Local Plan.’

Consequences of extending

Any extension to the current consultation would most likely would result in an overall delay to the process and require the Local Plan timetable to be reviewed and amended. It is uncertain how this would be considered at MHCLG who have made it clear local planning needs to continue at pace.

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Any further delay would most likely not be looked on positively by some elements of the Development sector, their response to this delay is unknown at this stage.

Cabinet to consider

Whether or not to extend the consultation period and if so the length of any extension.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

10TH SEPTEMBER 2025, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors K.J. May (Leader), S. J. Baxter (Deputy Leader), B. McEldowney, K. Taylor, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

Officers: Mr J. Leach, Mr B. Watson, Mrs. C. Felton, Mrs. R. Bamford, Mr S. Parry, Mrs. R. Green, Ms. T. Ainscough, Mr M. Cox and Mrs. P. Ross

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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

With regards to the consideration of urgent business it was recorded that at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 9th September 2025, the Board had voted to agree that the Chairman of the Board should submit a request on behalf of the Board that Cabinet consider, as an item of urgent business, whether to extend the current public consultation period for the Local Plan. This item had been considered necessary to raise as urgent business because the consultation period was due to end on 22nd September 2025 and there were not due to be any further meetings of either the Cabinet or Council prior to the end of the consultation period nor was there sufficient time to schedule any further meetings prior to the end of this consultation period.

The Leader stated, that as detailed in the Supplementary Documentation 2 - "Consideration of whether to make a recommendation that Council extend the period of consultation for the Local Plan. The Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services had agreed that this could be added as an urgent item of business for consideration at the meeting, following receipt of a form from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board on behalf of the Board requesting that Cabinet discuss this matter as an item of urgent business. This request had been approved by the Leader, as Chairman of the Cabinet.

The item has been added in accordance with requirements set out in paragraph 5.2 of the Access to Information Rules, at Part 9 of the Council's constitution".

It had not been possible to include this item in the Cabinet agenda when that was published because the request had only been received from the

Overview and Scrutiny Board after the agenda for the Cabinet meeting had been published.

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CONSIDERATION OF WHETHER TO MAKE A RECOMMENDATION THAT COUNCIL EXTEND THE PERIOD OF CONSULTATION FOR THE LOCAL PLAN

The Leader made the following announcement –

“As Members will be aware the consultation process provides several ways for our residents to engage with the local planning consultation process.

Members of the public can;

- Write in
- Email in
- Use the commonplace platform
- There is a phone number manned between 10 and 4 Monday to Friday to support any local planning queries

Members will appreciate that some councils indeed our council did not historically use a platform. This is an additional step that we have introduced to promote greater accessibility and engagement and is proving to be our residents preferred form of engagement.

Recognising that this is a hugely important topic and the tremendous response that we have received to date. I think we should respond to our residents requests to extend the time by 4 weeks to maximise public engagement”

Clarification was provided that should Members be in agreement then additional communications would commence in order to inform residents that the consultation period was being extended by 4 weeks.

In response Councillors S. J. Baxter and P. J. Whittaker both commented that they were also in attendance at the Overview and Scrutiny meeting and were in agreement with extending the consultation period by 4 weeks.

Members subsequently discussed the consultation and commented that they had found the commonplace platform easy to use but it was very cumbersome. Some had therefore submitted a response to the consultation via email.

Members questioned if there would be any concerns or response from the Government should Members agree to extending the consultation period.

In response the Assistant Director for Planning, Leisure and Culture Services informed Members that the Government was extensively promoting Local Plan making, seeking significant building developments.

The Government might not comment on an extension to the consultation period by 4 weeks. However, going forward, each time the Council changed the Local Development Plan (LDP), the Council could be challenged.

The Assistant Director for Planning, Leisure and Culture Services further stated that there were two elements to consider, the Council's Website and the commonplace platform. Officers could change the information on the Council's website, but not on the commonplace platform. The Council's website included a section on 'Frequently asked questions' and could more prominently place and promote the phone number that was manned between 10:00am and 4:00pm, Monday to Friday.

Members added that there had been mixed reviews from residents. Some had found the commonplace platform 'clunky' whilst others had not. Residents in one ward area had produced a 'user' video to assist other residents.

Members suggested that having a 'step by step' guide on the Council's website would be helpful.

The Leader commented that she would welcome anything that helped to make the commonplace platform easy to use and encouraged residents to respond.

Members questioned if an extension to the consultation period would affect the confidence of developers.

In response the Assistant Director for Planning, Leisure and Culture Services commented that a 4 week extension could be viewed differently by different people. The Council could be seen as 'dragging our feet'. The pragmatic response to residents was that the Council was progressing and trying to adhere to the Council's LDP timelines and that any further re-jigging would be as tight as possible. To date Officers had not received any significant comments from developers, however, Officers were expecting comments to be received later.

As highlighted by the Leader, there were a number of ways for residents to respond to the consultation.

Cabinet then discussed the information with regards to the number of visitors to the commonplace platform (23137), the different respondents (1901) and the individual respondents (4377).

Members commented that this should not reflect on the effort made by Officers who had organised and attended 19 different events to inform and engage with residents on the LDP.

The Leader then invited Councillor S. R. Colella to address the Cabinet.

Councillor Colella thanked Members for being given the opportunity to raise his concerns.

He explained that he had been informed that the commonplace platform software issues were raised at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting on 9th September 2025, and that Board Members had discussed an extension to the consultation period.

As a District Councillor he had raised his concerns and the concerns of his residents about the commonplace platform with the Councils' Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager. Two of his residents had looked at the commonplace software and had found it to be 'clunky' and full of bugs. They had also carried out analytical and output performance checks.

Concerns were raised that the commonplace platform was too complicated to complete a response. Ultimately, this needed to be looked into. Some Cabinet Members had commented that they had found it 'clunky' and difficult to navigate. Residents had lost information on their responses and information submitted was not always saved.

Cabinet was urged not to extend the consultation period, but instead to look at the issues / concerns raised. Residents had encouraged other residents to respond. Members should focus on the consultation ending on 22nd September 2025. Concerns were raised that extending the consultation period would be received negatively. Instead, it was suggested that Members should close the consultation on the agreed date, pause and then take stock of the whole consultation. Questions were raised about whether the consultation had reached everyone and whether people returning from holiday were not aware of the consultation.

The suggestion was made that the Council should close the consultation and go through the analytical and statistical data.

In response the Assistant Director for Planning, Leisure and Culture Services, highlighted that whole Local Plan process was complicated, and there was a high level of scrutiny. People would have to invest time in what would be a long process and then be invited to sit before the Planning Inspectorate. It was positive that the Council had enabled residents to have their say via a range of forums and to put forward their views, in what was a complicated process. The commonplace platform was introduced to give people another choice to respond.

If people were experiencing problems, there was a team of Officers who were ready to serve residents. Officers kept a log of issues received and Officers were happy to speak with residents directly. Officers expressed hopes that people would think that shaping the district up to 2024 was an important process to engage in.

Cabinet was informed that people were put off by the complexities of the system and questions were raised about how much the software cost? The suggestion was made that the Council had invested heavily, and it was not a good use of public money. In this context, it was suggested that it would not increase the response rate by extending the consultation period. The diagnostic data needed to be looked at.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor S. T. Nock also addressed the Cabinet.

Councillor Nock stated that he would emphasise that at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting on 9th September 2025, Board Members had unanimously voted in favour of taking action that would extend the consultation period.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor J. W. Robinson subsequently addressed the Cabinet.

Councillor Robinson took the opportunity to express his thanks to the Assistant Director for Planning, Leisure and Culture Services and her team, and also to the Councils' Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager, and his team.

Councillor Robinson stated that he had attended four consultation events over a period of ten weeks. He would ask Members as to why they wanted to extend the consultation period. A problem with the commonplace platform had been identified by residents, the system needed to be sound, and the Council needed to be open. Cabinet Members were looking to go out with further communications about extending the consultation period, with a system that was 'clunky.' Instead, it suggested that the Council needed to give residents assurances that the system was working.

In response the Leader explained that Members were looking to extend the consultation period as there had been a tremendous response and Members wanted to enable residents that had experienced issues to be helped and assisted by Officers. The additional communications would show residents that their voices should be heard and that Members wanted to ensure that everyone had had a chance to respond. For transparency the Council wanted people to be fully engaged and encouraged to respond / assisted to respond.

Cabinet Members added that for the number of hits received, the response rate to the consultation was good, the Council had achieved 10%, which was a good conversion rate.

Questions were raised again regarding the reasons given for extending the consultation period.

The Leader emphasised, that as highlighted during the course of the meeting, there were a number of ways for residents to respond to the

consultation. Future communications would detail this, and also useful information / guidance should people choose to use the commonplace platform.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor C. A. Hotham also addressed the Cabinet.

Councillor Hotham explained that he clearly understood the issues raised, but he had some questions with regards to the constitution, the urgent decision and what would happen if Members decided not to go ahead with extending the consultation period.

The Assistant Director Legal Democratic and Procurement Services (and Monitoring Officer), reassured Members that the correct process had and would be followed. As this was a Council decision, ultimately Cabinet could not determine the matter but could make a recommendation to Council. Should Members conclude that an extension was required, this would need to be determined as a Council function through an urgent decision.

The Assistant Director for Planning, Leisure and Culture Services took the opportunity to respond to questions raised by Members on the number of new dwellings to meet the Council's housing land supply by 2043 (12,000), the number of dwellings included in current developments (3,000), with 9,000 dwellings left to be provided. Between now and the adoption of the LDP, any large windfall sites would be taken off the 9,000.

Further questions and debate followed on the Council's 5 year housing land supply.

Members commented that it needed to be made clear in any communications, how to use the commonplace platform and other ways to respond. People may have been looking at gathering information and were now ready to respond.

The Assistant Director for Planning, Leisure and Culture Services assured Members that a well prepared press release / messages would be generated, also taking into account the comments and suggestions made by Members during the course of the meeting. Officers were there to help and it was noted that very few Members had passed on information with regards to residents experiencing issues or needing help with replying to the consultation.

The Leader thanked all Members in attendance for their input.

RECOMMENDED that the Local Plan consultation period be extended by four weeks.

The meeting closed at 7.50 p.m.

Agenda Item 7

Cabinet
10th September 2025

Chairman

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Portfolio Holder Report

Portfolio Holder Report – Environmental Services and Community Safety

Introduction and Overview:

At Bromsgrove District Council Portfolio Holders provide an annual update to Council on services within their portfolio remit. These services are delivered in accordance with the Council's Priorities, as detailed in the Bromsgrove District Council Plan 2024 - 2027.

This report provides an outline of services and activities within the remit of this particular Portfolio Holder. Information is included in relation to the Council's Priorities, relevant key activities, partnership working, projects and programmes and news stories.

A version of this report, focusing on each Portfolio Holder's remit in turn, will be considered at each meeting of Council (except for the Annual Council meeting).

Whilst services will be contributing information into this report it is worth noting that not all sections of the report will be relevant to all service areas. In this circumstance, some sections may not be completed by all services.

The report will be structured as follows:

Community Safety

- 1) Update on Council Priorities
- 2) Partnership working
- 3) Key activities and priorities
- 4) Good news stories and awards (if applicable)

Environmental Services

- 5) Update on Council Priorities
- 6) Partnership working
- 7) Key activities and priorities
- 8) Good news stories and awards (if applicable)

The Council has the following Priorities:

Council Priorities	Organisational priorities
Economic Development	Financial stability
Housing	Sustainability
Environment	Partnerships
Infrastructure	Organisational Culture – the 4Ps
	Budget & Resources



Community Safety

1. Update on Council Priorities

Relevant Council Priority – Environment:

The Community Safety service, including the Council's Public Space CCTV Scheme, supports Bromsgrove District Council's corporate commitment to *"keep Bromsgrove safe and contribute to improved quality of life and well-being...by working in partnership to reduce ASB and neighbourhood crime and protect vulnerable communities"* [BDC Council Plan 2024-27 Pg. 6]

The team works with partners, other service areas and local communities to fulfil the councils' statutory duties under the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 and all subsequent community safety legislation. The team provides information and guidance about crime prevention and delivers projects and interventions to reduce crime and disorder, ASB and the fear of crime in local neighbourhoods. Reducing Crime & Disorder is a corporate priority and the team uses its considerable expertise and experience to help other council services embed crime and ASB prevention into mainstream corporate service delivery.

The CCTV service sits within the Council's 24/7 team. The Council owns 66 Public Space CCTV cameras. The team keep people safe, proactively monitoring cameras for crime prevention and detection and reducing anti-social behaviour. The team review footage when an incident has occurred, and produce evidence for use in court and police investigations.

The Council has 5 re-deployable cameras that are used to temporarily and overtly monitor areas with emerging community safety issues.

The cameras are used in accordance with the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice.

Key activities since last report:

NWCSP has an agreed 3-year action plan for 2024 to 2027 identifying the Partnership's priorities based on a strategic assessment of a range of data and information about crime & disorder and ASB. NWCSP's agreed priorities for 2025/26 are: -

- Reducing Public Place Violence & Serious Violence
- Reducing ASB, Nuisance and Environmental Issues
- Reducing Shoplifting and Neighbourhood Crime: defined as domestic burglary, robbery (against the individual/household), theft from a person and vehicle crime.
- Protecting Vulnerable Communities including Hate Crime & Targeted Harassment, Domestic Abuse & DHRs, Sexual Violence
- Joint action against Serious Organised Crime (SOCJAG)



Portfolio Holder Report

Reducing the harm caused by drugs & alcohol and reducing re-offending are cross-cutting priorities for Worcestershire which impact across all district areas.

In Bromsgrove District during the last 12 months the CCTV team have:

- Logged 348 CCTV incidents
- Completed 234 footage reviews
- Produced 81 videos for evidence
- Added one new camera to Bromsgrove scheme, which is an additional camera in the bus station, following a successful “Hot Spot” Funding Application through West Mercia Police.

Anticipated Activities/Key Milestones For Next Period:

Community Safety Partnership Funding 2025-26

Provided by the West Mercia PCC was allocated in April 2025 as follows:

Contribution to West Mercia Police Partnership Analyst Team	£20,000	PCC Top Sliced Amount
Contribution to West Mercia IOM Programme	£1,000	PCC Top Sliced Amount
Contribution to West Mercia Hate Crime Project – Victim Support	£10,383	PCC Top Sliced Amount
NW DHR and Domestic Abuse Support	£48,000	
Bromsgrove Allocation	£10,340	Agreed (For review in Sept 25)
Redditch Allocation	£12,330	Agreed (For review in Sept 25)
Wyre Forest Allocation	£15,330	Agreed (For review in Sept 25)
Total District Allocations	£86,000	
Total NWCSP Funding	£117,838	

2025/26 saw a 20% cut in funding allocated to the partnership and an increase in the amount of funding allocated to the completion of Domestic Homicide Reviews which are a statutory responsibility of a CSP. End of year monitoring and evaluation reports will be prepared to detail the community safety outcomes achieved with the allocated funding.

Continuation of the Community Safety Respect Programme

The Respect Programme is a therapeutic mentoring scheme which provides weekly support and guidance sessions to young people at risk of becoming victims and/or perpetrators of crime. Referrals into the programme continue to increase in complexity with support being provided to young people who are at significant risk of being affected by criminality, both as victims or potential perpetrators. The programme also provides community safety awareness sessions as part of school PHSE drop down days and bespoke classroom sessions on several subjects such as recognising and reporting hate crime, understanding healthy relationships/domestic abuse, the dangers of substance misuse and promoting respect and community responsibility.

Development of the Older and Vulnerable Persons Project



Portfolio Holder Report

A Safer Bromsgrove project focused on the intensive delivery of the Nominated Neighbour scheme in Alvechurch was progressing well. Two events were held in Alvechurch to promote the scheme:

25th May – a Community Safety stand at the Picnic in the Park event

10th June – A bespoke event at the Alvechurch Village Hall, supported by Ward Members and other partners. Both events went well and 15 sign-ups to the scheme were secured. Also, number of people offered to become Nominated Neighbours for those who may need them.

Digital Evidence Management Project

A project providing a technology solution for the digital evidence management system, enabling Partners to access, review and capture evidence from CCTV footage remotely. This will save hours of Police Officer physical travel time in collected footage and support reduction of the West Mercia carbon footprint. It will also save time for the CCTV operatives who can pass lengthy footage reviews directly to Police. The system will provide added security and audit to the data sharing arrangements.

2. Partnership Working:

The Council works with a range of partner organisations to meet the needs of residents and businesses in the District. The following section details work delivered within the remit of this Portfolio Holder.

Partnership working examples:

Through NWCSP, the Safer Bromsgrove CSP sub-group and other crime prevention sub-groups, the team co-ordinates support for residents and communities who are victims of crime or are more susceptible to crime and disorder to help them to move toward a better quality of life, free from the fear of crime. The team works with partners and voluntary sector services to provide support to those who have experienced crime and disorder; for example, providing security assessments for Domestic Abuse survivors, encouraging and supporting victims of hate incidents to report and seek help and co-ordinating a problem-solving approach for areas experiencing anti-social behaviour. The team also co-ordinates activity and interventions to help protect young people who are at more risk of becoming victims of crime and providing interventions for young people at risk of falling into criminality and anti-social behaviour.

Safer Bromsgrove, Town Centre Management Group and Pub Watch are partnership sub-groups that work together to address several issues affecting Bromsgrove residents such as ASB, crime and disorder in neighbourhood areas and affecting the Town Centre and the night-time economy. The CCTV team are represented at each of these meetings and actively support the group's priorities to tackle the arising and ongoing issues.



Portfolio Holder Report

Multi-Agency Targeted Enforcement (MATEs) is a restricted officer's group that discusses and identifies areas at risk of being targeted by organised criminals. The group shares data and intelligence to co-ordinate enforcement operations at locations that are potential hubs for criminality and cause significant harm to local communities. Partners, including a CCTV representative, work together to collate and share reports of suspicious activity and signs of concern, feeding this back to enforcement agencies to support joint action.

Re-deployable CCTV

This CCTV initiative relies upon cameras that were initially purchased through PCC funding. WCC Highways are key, allowing permission for the use of their lighting columns. Community Safety budget supports the installation and decommissioning costs. The CCTV team assess the suitability of the site and arrange the installation and consultation. The Police ensure their staff are aware of the camera installation and to pass on incident reports to the CCTV team, and the CCTV team to proactively monitor and report suspicious incidents.

Key activities since last report:

Delivery of the Right Path Project

Using Serious Violence Duty funding allocated to Worcestershire, and working with South Worcestershire, NWCSF has commissioned a youth support organisation "The Right Path" to deliver intensive 1:1 mentoring that is specifically designed to support and guide young people who are at greater risk of criminalisation through use of violence, including those not accessing education and those at risk of permanent exclusion. The Right Path project was hugely successful in 2024/25 to the point of being oversubscribed. Reasons for young people being referred included physical aggression and violence, verbal abuse, use of weapons, sexualised behaviour, robbery, assault, harassment, use of drugs and alcohol and shoplifting. Currently 15 of the 20 programme spaces available in 2025/26 have been allocated.

Re-deployable CCTV Installation

There have been 8 Bromsgrove District installations requested by West Mercia, 5 installations completed. 2 sites were unsuitable, and one site is pending.

Anticipated Activities/Key Milestones and Priorities For Next Period

Review of re-deployable camera scheme to evaluate and amend the process, look at successes and required improvements.



Portfolio Holder Report

3. Good News Stories and Awards

Older and Vulnerable Persons Project

As part of the development of the Older and Vulnerable Persons Project, the Community Safety Team have created a bespoke webpage on the Council's website - [Older and Vulnerable Residents](#) to direct residents, support workers, carers and relatives to a range of crime prevention and community support information.

MATEs group

Activity from the MATEs group forms part of the NWCSP Serious Organised Crime action plan and where possible the group's targeted enforcement successes are promoted - [West Mercia Police arrest three after drug raid at Rubery shop - BBC News](#)

Environmental Services

4. Update on council priorities

Relevant Council priority – Environment, Infrastructure and Economic Development:

Environmental Services is a key operational arm of Bromsgrove District Council, playing a central role in supporting the strategic purpose of safeguarding the natural environment. This is undertaken by a range of services including domestic & commercial waste, bulky waste collections, fleet management, street cleansing, (road sweeping and litter picking), landscape and grounds maintenance, tree management including TPOs and advice, land drainage via shared NWWM, Bereavement services, all of which is coordinated through our Environmental Services Business Support team.

Key Activities since last report

1. Strengthening Environmental Enforcement

- Enhanced collaboration with Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) to tackle Fly-Tipping and abandoned vehicles.
- Deployment of warning protocols, evidence collection, and remote surveillance technology
- Aim: Improve public space cleanliness, deter environmental crime, and support legal enforcement

As of 1st June 2024, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) assumed responsibility for Fly-Tipping enforcement within Bromsgrove District.

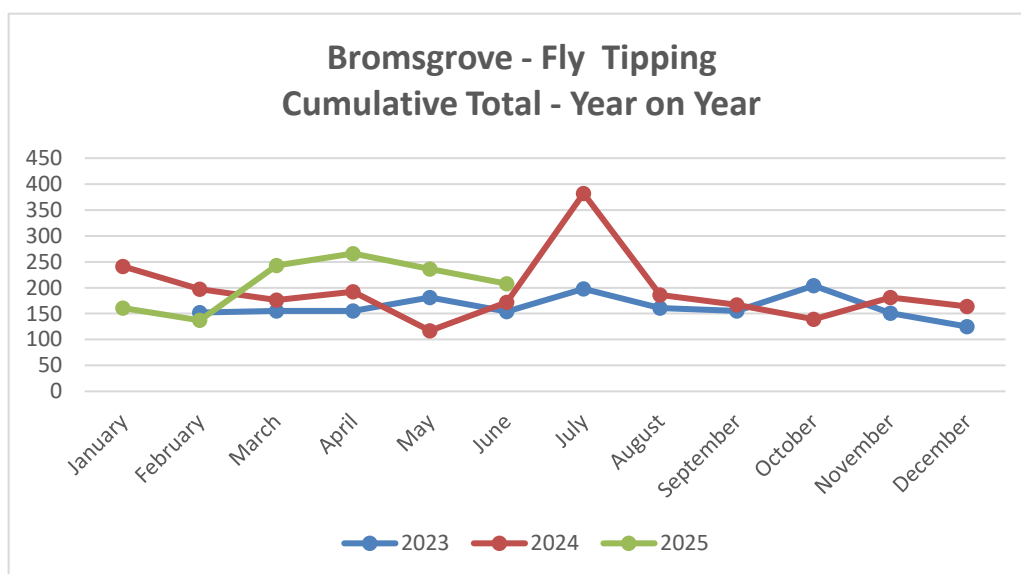
Management of abandoned vehicles remains under the remit of the Place Team, ensuring continued local oversight and swift response.



Portfolio Holder Report

While WRS now leads investigations into Fly-Tipping incidents, Bromsgrove's Environmental Place Teams continue to remove all waste. To support evidence gathering, waste may be left in situ for 2–5 days to allow WRS time to inspect and identify potential offenders. Despite this, most items are removed within 48 hours, and the Place Teams actively assist in collecting evidence to maintain efficiency and minimise disruption to the public.

Over the past 12 months, WRS has strengthened its enforcement capabilities by recruiting additional staff and deploying new remote clandestine cameras. These investments enhance surveillance, improve detection rates, and support more effective prosecution of environmental offences.



Aside from the spike in July 2024 created by a surge in crew-based identification along with the public (creating duplicates) the numbers are within a threshold of 120-280 per month. From March 2025 onwards we are also seeing the impact of the Birmingham bins strikes creating a surge in cross border fly tipping in northern areas of Bromsgrove District.

Enforcement in action

The following highlights a small sample of the actions taken by WRS in 2025:

12297061- Malthouse Lane- £120 paid for failing duty of care

12266237- Linthurst Road- £120 paid for failing duty of care





Portfolio Holder Report

11809892- Crabmill Lane- £120 paid for failing duty of care

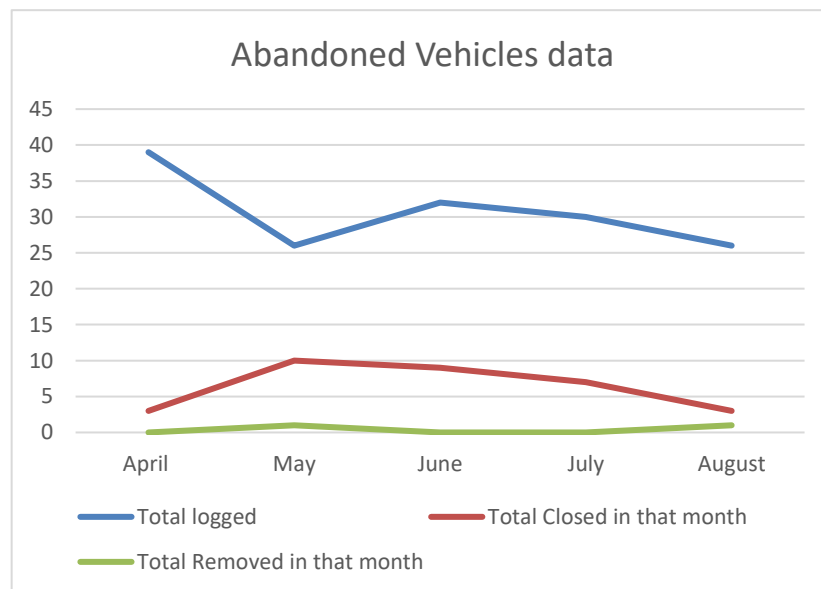
11843303- Grimpits Lane- £120 paid for failing duty of care



Abandoned Vehicles

As of January 2025, responsibility for managing abandoned vehicles was formally transferred to the Place Team Coordinator.

However, due to changes in DVLA software requirements, the council was required to secure a third-party provider to assist with vehicle ownership identification—an essential step in the legal removal process. This partnership was successfully established in April 2025, marking the official start of the updated procedure.



Since implementation, the use of warning stickers and the clear threat of removal has led to a noticeable decline in abandoned vehicle numbers. This proactive approach is helping to maintain cleaner public spaces, reduce environmental hazards, and improve community satisfaction.



Portfolio Holder Report

2. Waste Services Development in Line with the Environmental Act 2021

- Standardisation of Recycling materials across Domestic and Commercial properties in England placing additional requirements on our services.
- Renewed focus on recycling performance and the Circular economy, as well as application of the “producer pays” approach to encourage packaging producers to reduce waste entering the waste stream.
- New requirement for a dedicated weekly food waste collection for Businesses from 2025, and Domestic households from 2026.
- On-going partnership with neighbouring Local Authorities to maintain consistency for residents.
- Supports environmental sustainability and legal compliance for residents and businesses.

Simpler recycling

In 2025, Bromsgrove District Council—working closely with the Environmental Services team—undertook a strategic review of bin placement and design across its main town centres.

This decision was driven by data revealing that a significant portion of collected waste was unsuitable for recycling due to cross-contamination from materials such as broken glass and grease-soaked food packaging.

To address this, a new generation of recycling bins will be introduced in late 2025.

These bins will feature clearly separated compartments for Glass, Plastic, Cans, and General Waste, making it easier for the public to dispose of items correctly and for teams to manage collections efficiently.

This initiative is expected to:

- Significantly increase the volume of recyclable waste
- Reduce contamination levels, improving the quality of recycled materials.
- Enhance public engagement through clearer signage and user-friendly design.
- Support operational efficiency for waste collection teams.

This marks a key milestone in Bromsgrove’s commitment to smarter, cleaner waste management and environmental stewardship.

Town centre waste recycling project - improving choice

The Environment Act 2021 has placed additional requirements on Councils regarding how we manage waste, under the label of “Simpler Recycling”.

This aims to standardise the range of recyclable materials collected across all Local Authority areas and has a number of elements that will affect our services to residents and businesses.



Portfolio Holder Report

Working in partnership with Worcestershire County Council, our current domestic and commercial dry recycling services are able to meet these requirements already and will be able to accommodate new materials (plastic film and tinfoil) from the target date of 2027.

Food waste collection

The most challenging service to provide is a new weekly Food Waste collection, which is due for implementation in 2026 for residential properties, and has already started for commercial businesses this year.

Government have supplied Capital funding to support the purchase of food caddies and vehicles for operation of this service, and has pledged to provide ongoing Revenue funding, but the latter has still not been confirmed, and leaves uncertainty over our future costs.

Having modelled the resources needed to provide this service in addition to our existing rounds, we do not have sufficient physical space at our depot to operate this service ourselves and so are looking for external partners to support us in this.

Working with Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC) and Redditch Borough Council, we have completed market engagement with the private sector and have interest from a number of providers, so are finalising our specification for a joint food waste collection contract to carry out the full procurement with an expected completion in December 2025. We will then finalise the start date for the service and are liaising with DEFRA regarding the targets contained within the Environment Act.

Extended producer responsibilities

In addition to these pressures, the Environment Act has also implemented Extended Producer Responsibilities, which is specifically intended to make packaging producers financially responsible for end-of-life management of their products and encourage them to proactively reduce waste, promote recycling, and encourage innovations in product design.

It does this through financial pressure, which aims to provide Local Authorities with on-going funding to offset the cost of managing this material, and help ensure that their products are managed in the most environmentally effective way possible, and the funds received from this will be used to support future Communication and Education of our residents.

Bin replacement

In addition to these projects, we are currently in the process of replacing our 20-year-old non-standard wheeled bins with new industry standard ones, which will safeguard the future collection of waste from our residents, increase our service resilience by opening up access to hire vehicles, support us with future integration with our neighbouring authorities under Local Government Reorganisation, and reduce future replacement costs with an increased lifespan.



Portfolio Holder Report

Vehicle replacement

The replacement of our wheeled bins is timed to coincide with the receipt of 14 new Refuse Collection Vehicles, which will replace our existing fleet which has been kept beyond the end of its operational life as a result of the need to support the non-standard bins.

3. Carbon Reduction

- Investing in the fleet
- Introducing HVO
- Driver compliance
- Battery hand tools
- Tree management and planting policies.
- Soil Carbon Sequestration
- Alternative weed suppressant technology

Investing in the fleet

An upgraded bin lorry fleet is set to be delivered by the end of 2025, featuring more efficient diesel engines paired with the use of HVO (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil) fuel.

This dual improvement supports the council's commitment to reducing emissions and enhancing operational performance. The new engines offer better fuel economy and lower pollutant output, while HVO—a renewable diesel alternative—cuts up to 90% of net CO₂ emissions compared to traditional fossil fuels.

This investment marks a significant step toward cleaner, more sustainable waste collection services across Bromsgrove District.

Introducing HVO

In 2025, Bromsgrove District Council introduced HVO (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil) as a renewable diesel alternative across its fleet and machinery.

Also known as HVO100, this fuel is a direct replacement for traditional red and white diesel and is suitable for both on- and off-road use. Derived from certified sustainable raw materials, HVO delivers an immediate and substantial environmental benefit—cutting up to 90% of net CO₂ emissions compared to fossil diesel.

This transition marks a significant step in the council's journey toward low-carbon operations, supporting cleaner air, climate resilience, and responsible resource use.

Driver compliance



Portfolio Holder Report

Improved monitoring and targeted training have led to noticeable enhancements in driving styles across the service—paving the way for greater fuel efficiency and reduced environmental impact.

To support this progress, a comprehensive Driver Handbook has been developed and formally signed off by union representatives. This document establishes a clear baseline for best practice and sets consistent expectations for all drivers.

This initiative reinforces the council's commitment to safety, sustainability, and professional standards—ensuring every driver is equipped with the guidance needed to operate responsibly and efficiently.

Battery hand tools

The Place Team has begun phasing in battery-powered hand tools as part of its commitment to cleaner, safer, and more sustainable working practices.

This transition eliminates the use of two-stroke fuel—known for its high pollutant output—and significantly reduces tool vibration, helping to protect staff from hand-arm vibration injuries.

This shift not only supports environmental goals but also enhances staff wellbeing and operational efficiency, reinforcing the council's dedication to responsible service delivery.

Tree management and planting policies.

New council policies, set to be presented to Full Council, establish a strong foundation for the protection and enhancement of Bromsgrove's woodlands.

These policies outline a clear and forward-thinking strategy for increasing tree stock, with a focus on improving carbon capture and supporting long-term environmental sustainability.

By integrating woodland conservation with proactive planting initiatives, the council aims to strengthen biodiversity, mitigate climate impact, and preserve green spaces for future generations.

4. Economic Development

- Commercial waste
- Bulky Collections
- Burial strategy
- Fees and charges

Commercial waste

The Council has operated a Commercial Waste Collection Service since 2015, which has grown significantly from 547 to over 1,200 contracted customers, supporting the collection of over 5,000 tons of residual waste in



Portfolio Holder Report

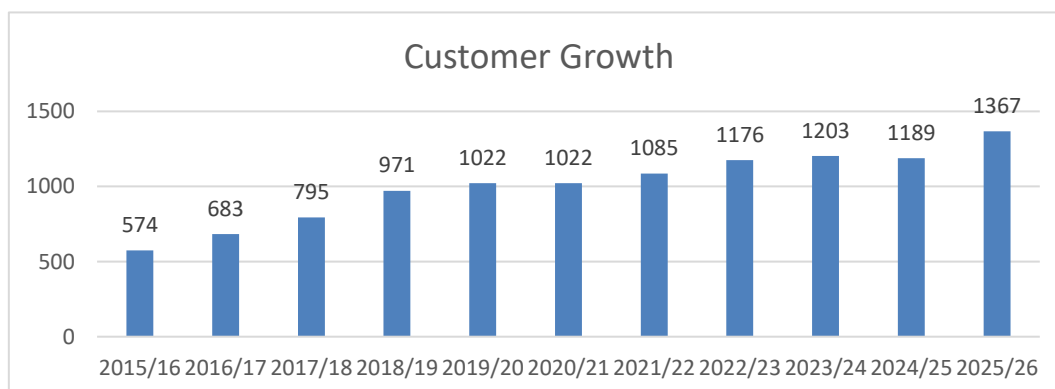
2024/25, and nearly 1,000 tons of dry recycling, as well as supporting local businesses to manage waste at local events such as the Belbroughton Scarecrow Festival, Bromsgrove Sporting Community events, Astwood Bank Carnival, the Hanbury Show, and The Bromsgrove Green Fair.

With a customer retention rate of 97% for 2024/25, and over 200 new customers since April 24, the service has had an average increase in customers of 12.18% per year since 2015, and consistently high praise by existing customers – so much so that when Dudley Council's Commercial Service ended in April 2025, many of those customers sought us out to continue their service and keep their money local.

Our service has also been the subject of a Local Government Association Case Study on delivering successful Commercial Waste Collection services and been asked by other Local Authorities to share details on our service, and how we engage with residents. We have also been featured by the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce for our partnership work with one of our customers to improve their sustainability profile.

Whilst wider operational pressures arising from an aging fleet and staffing for maintenance of vehicles have increased our costs in 2024 and 2025, the service remains a strong local provider operating at maximum capacity, and will be expanding during 2025/26 to improve service resilience and increase capacity to support more local businesses within Bromsgrove and surrounding areas.

Under the Simpler Recycling reforms, Commercial businesses now need to ensure they are recycling their dry materials as well as food waste, and this will support further growth as we work with businesses to expand their waste arrangements to both support the environment and their legal compliance.



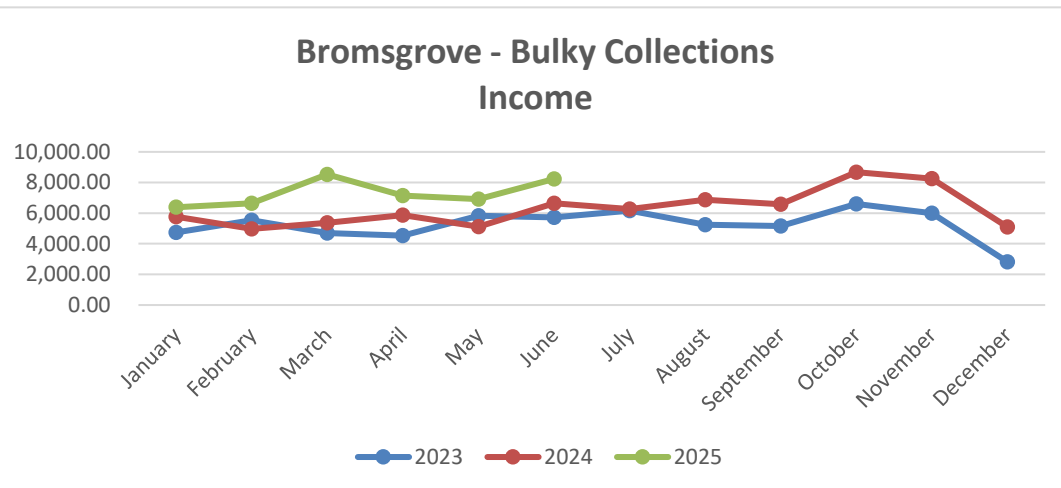
Bulky Collections

An essential tool in tackling Fly-Tipping across the district is our Bulky Waste Service.



Portfolio Holder Report

This affordable and accessible service offers residents a convenient solution for disposing of large household items—such as white goods, sofas, and other bulky waste—without resorting to illegal dumping.



By providing a legitimate and low-cost alternative, the service helps reduce environmental harm, supports cleaner public spaces, and promotes responsible waste management within the community. Recent data shows a positive trend in income, but more significantly, a marked increase in service usage—despite minimal changes to charges over the past few years.

This reflects strong public engagement and reinforces the value of maintaining accessible pricing.

To build on this momentum, a targeted communication campaign will launch in October 2025.

The campaign will include:

- Monthly reminders running for 8 months of the year.
- Four themed campaigns, beginning with a pre-Christmas clear-out message to encourage early participation and raise awareness.

This proactive approach aims to sustain high usage levels, reinforce the benefits of the service, and ensure continued value for residents.

Burial strategy

A new strategy has been commissioned to provide the necessary guidelines and impetus to maintain a suitable amount of space for full earth burials. As an important statutory service and income generator it is imperative that provision is constantly reviewed and wherever possible existing sites are expanded on to adjacent land to minimize too many managed sites across the district which reduces bereavement services ability to offer as many options as possible due to splitting their team further.



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Fees and charges

2025 marks the second year of the council's ongoing review of fees and charges—a process designed to ensure fair, competitive, and cost-effective pricing across services.

By benchmarking against similar providers and selectively freezing certain charges, the council continues to offer excellent value for money. This is particularly evident in Bereavement Services, where pricing remains significantly lower than commercial alternatives—highlighting a key advantage available to public sector bodies.

In addition, Bereavement Services have expanded their range of memorial options to better reflect the diverse needs and preferences of the community. This enhancement ensures families have access to meaningful, personalised choices while maintaining affordability and dignity in remembrance.

5. Operational Investment

- Software
- Equipment

Software

Over the past year, Abavus—our in-house Environmental Service Management tool—has undergone significant enhancements, moving steadily toward full integration across the service.

This powerful platform now offers streamlined functionality for multiple user groups:

- Business Support Teams benefit from an intuitive interface that simplifies job tracking and administrative processes.
- Members of the public can easily raise service requests through the website portal, ensuring transparency and accessibility.
- Front-line teams use the mobile tool to identify tasks, allocate work efficiently, capture completion evidence, and generate real-time reports.

These improvements have strengthened operational efficiency, improved service responsiveness, and enhanced communication between teams and the community.

2025 marked the launch of a dedicated Tree Management section within our environmental service platform, developed in close collaboration between the Tree Team and the Abavus development team.

Now live, this new functionality enables teams to actively map tree locations, species, and health status across the district. By building a comprehensive and dynamic inventory of our tree stock, we gain deeper insight into its volume, condition, and distribution.



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This data-driven approach lays the foundation for a more strategic and sustainable tree planting programme—ensuring the right trees are planted in the right places, with long-term benefits for biodiversity, landscape resilience, and public amenity.

Equipment

Bromsgrove's rural landscape presents unique challenges, and to manage it effectively while boosting team productivity, the service is committed to embracing innovation and investing in modern equipment.

Historically, equipment replacement followed a like-for-like model, often with minimal team input and long after the tools had exceeded their useful life. This approach limited efficiency and missed opportunities for improvement.

In 2025, a new strategy was adopted—placing frontline teams at the heart of the decision-making process. Staff are now actively involved in trialling new equipment before purchase, giving them time to assess functionality, provide feedback, and take ownership of the tools they use. This shift has led to smarter investments and greater engagement across the service.

This year, the teams have been equipped with a range of new kit, including:

- High-performance mowers for varied terrain
- Compact utility loaders like the Toro Dingo for multi-functional tasks
- Battery-powered hand tools to reduce noise and emissions.
- Advanced sweepers for improved street cleansing
- GPS-enabled inspection devices for real-time monitoring

This proactive approach ensures Bromsgrove remains at the forefront of environmental service delivery, with empowered teams and equipment that meets the demands of a dynamic rural area.

The Toro Dingo, pictured to the right, enables our teams to efficiently scrape back pathways with precision and a clean finish.

Its versatile functionality supports a wide range of tasks, including:

- Path and verge clearance
- Soil preparation
- Transporting heavy materials using forks and buckets
- Land clearing with grapples.
- Digging holes and trenches with augers
- Demolition work
- Stump grinding

This compact yet powerful machine has become an invaluable asset in delivering high-quality environmental maintenance services.



Portfolio Holder Report

Anticipated Activities/Key Milestones for Next Period:

- Town Centre recycling bin replacement – March 2026
- Food waste service implementation – April 2026
- Refuse vehicle fleet replacement – November 2025
- New Tree management policies – March 2026
- Burial Strategy – March 2026
- Domestic refuse bin replacements – December 2025
- Commerical waste expansion – October 2025

5. Partnership Working:

Partnership working examples:

The Council works with a range of partner organisations to meet the needs of residents in the district. Following details examples of work being delivered through these partnerships.

King's Trust

In 2025, we were delighted to collaborate with The King's Trust to offer work experience opportunities within our Environmental Services Place Team.

During September and October, several placements were successfully filled, providing young people with valuable hands-on experience in the sector. The team found the mentoring process deeply rewarding, and the initiative brought the added benefit of extra support during those months—strengthening both service delivery and community engagement.

Our partners

- Worcestershire Regulatory Authority (WRS) – Environmental enforcement.
- Hereford and Worcester Strategic Waste Management Board – Intergrated waste management services.
- North Worcestershire Water Management (NWWM) – Land drainage, watercourses and flooding services.
- Parish Lengths man scheme – A range of place based activities.
- Wyre Forest District Council – Food waste collection tender.
- APSE – Measuring performance and benchmarking.



Portfolio Holder Report

Measuring Performance

In 2025, we proudly introduced the Land Audit Management System (LAMS) through our strategic partnership with the Association for Public Excellence (APSE).

LAMS is a robust quality inspection tool designed to monitor standards in ground maintenance and street cleansing. Under APSE's expert management, service scores are systematically benchmarked against those of comparable councils. This collaborative approach not only promotes transparency and accountability but also drives continuous improvement in service delivery across the sector.

6. Good News Stories and Awards

The following are examples of compliments received.

Hagley

A resident had some furniture collected on the Bulky Waste Collection Service. They said our operatives were very kind, helpful, professional and delivered a fantastic service.

Hollywood

Compliment for operatives in the place team. They attended to complete a job to cut back a hedge that was over growing the pavement. The resident feedback that they had done a fantastic job

Marlbrook

A big thank you to the hedge cutting, footpath clearing and road sweeping team!

You have all done an excellent job of cutting the hedges, removing litter, clearing, and sweeping the footpaths and sweeping the road. It is very much appreciated and now looks so tidy! Please thank everyone involved.

Oakalls estate

Thank you very much for the detailed and insight approach. I am grateful to hear that your team are doing good work on improving the duck pond.

King George Recreation ground

The team were complimented for the excellent work at the recreation ground. The imagery and the condition exactly represent, what I know that the team achieves on a day-to-day basis to maintain and improve the environment in which the people of Bromsgrove work and play.

Marlbrook

Hi, spoke to the guys yesterday & saw the Toro machine - very nice. Excellent job on the pavement - back to full width!



Portfolio Holder Report

Pear Tree Centre

Just wanted to say a big thank you to your team for coming to Pear Tree today to cut down the bush in the car park, we are so grateful, it was a surprise to look out and see they were here cutting it down for us!

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Recommendations from the Cabinet meetings held on 23rd July 2025 and 10th September 2025

Cabinet Meeting Date - 23rd July 2025

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

RECOMMENDED that

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

Treasury Management Outturn Report 2024/2025

RECOMMENDED that

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

Cabinet Meeting Date – 10th September 2025

Adoption of Fixed Penalty Charge for Breach of Community Protection Notice

RECOMMENDED that

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

Quarter 1 2025/26 Finance and Performance Monitoring Report

RECOMMENDED that,

the Balance Sheet Monitoring Position for Quarter 1 be noted – which was the Treasury Monitoring Report and was required to be reported to Council.

Expansion of Commercial Waste Collection Service

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) Capital Funding of £489,760 be added to the Capital Programme for 2026/27 to purchase two Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCV's)
- 2) the Council allocate Capital funding of £35,000 annually in the Medium Term Financial Plan from the 2025/26 financial year to fund wheeled bins for Commercial Services.
- 3) the Council allocate £334,342 Revenue Funding in the Medium-Term Financial Plan to fund operational costs of providing the expanded service from 2025/26.

- 4) The Council allocate £100,000 Revenue Funding in the Medium-Term Financial Plan across 2025/26 and 2026/27 for interim vehicle hire.

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Revocation of Lickey End and Redditch Road Air Quality Management Areas in Bromsgrove

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Kit Taylor
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Simon Wilkes, Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services
Report Author: Chris Poole	Job Title: Specialist Lead Officer (Air Quality) Contact email: chris.poole@worcsregservices.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01562 738069
Wards Affected	Redditch Road Avoncroft Ward Rock Hill Ward Lickey End Norton District Ward Marlbrook Ward Catshill South Ward Lowes Hill Ward
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	Yes
Relevant Council Priority	Environment
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is asked to **RECOMMEND** that

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

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Local Air Quality Management Framework, underpinned by Part IV of the Environment Act 1995, places an obligation upon all local authorities to regularly review and assess air quality in their areas, and to determine whether relevant concentration limits are being achieved. If exceedances of national air quality standards and objectives are

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identified, or considered likely, the local authority must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

2.2 Currently there are 3 AQMAs declared within the Bromsgrove District:

- Worcester Road, AQMA declared 24th October 2011
- Redditch Road, AQMA declared 17th February 2010
- Lickey End, AQMA declared 26th July 2001

2.3 Following the Environment Act 2021, the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have updated national policy on revocation of AQMAs. Local Air Quality Management Policy Guidance (LAQM.PG22) and Technical Guidance (LAQM.TG22) states the following on the revocation of an AQMA:

The revocation of an AQMA should be considered following three consecutive years of compliance with the relevant objective as evidenced through monitoring. Where NO₂ monitoring is completed using diffusion tubes, to account for the inherent uncertainty associated with the monitoring method, it is recommended that revocation of an AQMA should be considered following three consecutive years of annual mean NO₂ concentrations being lower than 36µg/m³ (i.e. within 10% of the annual mean NO₂ objective). There should not be any declared AQMAs for which compliance with the relevant objective has been achieved for a consecutive five-year period.' (Section 3.57 of TG22).

2.4 An AQMA Revocation Order is required to officially revoke an AQMA.

2.5 Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) has observed that annual average concentrations of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) measured at monitoring locations within the Lickey End and Redditch Road AQMAs have been compliant with national objectives and standards for a significant period of time. There have been no measured exceedances of the annual mean objective and standard for NO₂ of 40µg/m³ for over 5 years and no measured concentrations within -10% of the objective at either AQMA.

2.6 Monitoring records demonstrate the last exceedance of NO₂ in Lickey End AQMA (at relevant exposure) was recorded in 2014 and the last exceedance of NO₂ in Redditch Road was recorded in 2016.

2.7 Consequently, Bromsgrove District Council are required to revoke the Lickey End AQMA and Redditch Road AQMA in compliance with national policy and guidance.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

Air Quality will remain an important high profile issue in the area, therefore monitoring will continue to ensure air quality objectives continue to be met.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications in making this revocation.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Part IV of the Environment Act 1995, the Local Air Quality Management process (LAQM) and subsequent Policy Guidance (LAQM.PG22) and Technical Guidance (LAQM.TG22) documents set out the duty of local authorities to review and assess local air quality within their areas against a set of health-based objectives and work to improving poor air quality identified. The objective of most importance to the Council is the annual mean nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) objective which should not exceed 40 microgrammes per cubic metre of air at the façade of a residential property, schools, hospitals, care homes.

5.2 Poor air quality in general can affect peoples' health, playing a role in many chronic conditions such as cancer, asthma, heart disease and neurological changes linked to dementia. Air pollution contributes to about 38,000 deaths per year in England (Chief Medical Officers Report, 2022). Nitrogen Dioxide in particular is known to cause respiratory illnesses and possibly increase the risk of lung infections. Young children and asthma sufferers are most sensitive to this pollutant.

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- 5.3 Where there is robust evidence to demonstrate that the objective is being met and will continue to be met, an AQMA can be revoked (LAQM.TG22). The decision to revoke an AQMA can be taken either following a detailed study or following a screening assessment based on robust monitoring evidence.

In this regard WRS consider there is sufficient data to support revocation of the AQMAs.

6. OTHER – IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct implications for Local Government Reorganisation.

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 Improving Air Quality leads to improved health and wellbeing of the population by breathing cleaner air. This results in a safer environment and quality of life for all.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 The revocation of these AQMAs has no climate implications. However it supports a reduction in harmful emissions to combat climate change and deliver more immediate local health benefits that come from improved air quality.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.4 The ongoing monitoring of proposed air quality objectives continue to be met with help to improve equality amongst Bromsgrove residents, including tackling areas of poorer air quality for example, that have fuel poverty and/or active travel measures.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

The risks of undertaking the proposed actions are considered to be low – robust monitoring data indicates that air quality objectives within the area are being met.

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The reputational risks of not undertaking the proposed actions are considered to be high as the council would not be acting in compliance with national guidance as detailed in paragraph 2.7.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1: Graphical representations of NO₂ concentrations at sensitive receptors within the AQMAs

Background papers

DEFRA's Local Air Quality Management Policy Guidance (PG22)

August 2022

DEFRA's Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance (TG22)

August 2022

Appendices

AQMA Order No.3 Redditch Road

Lickey End Air Quality Management Area Order

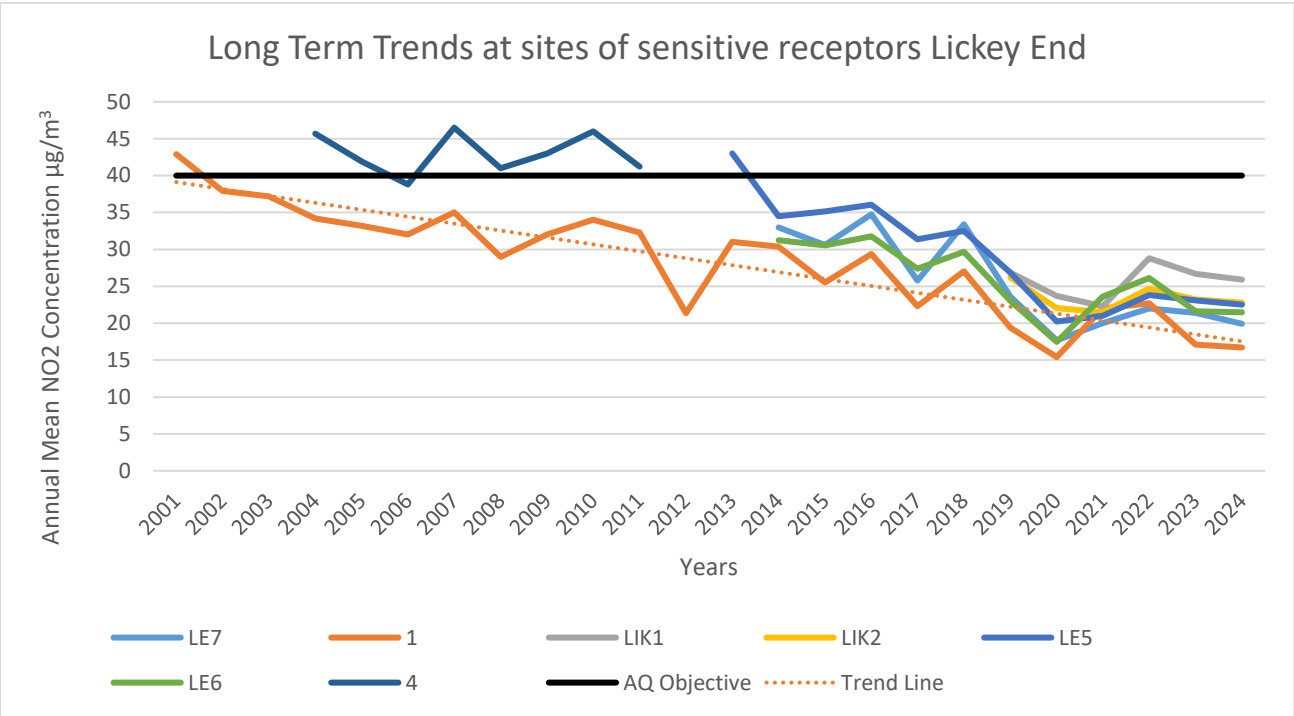
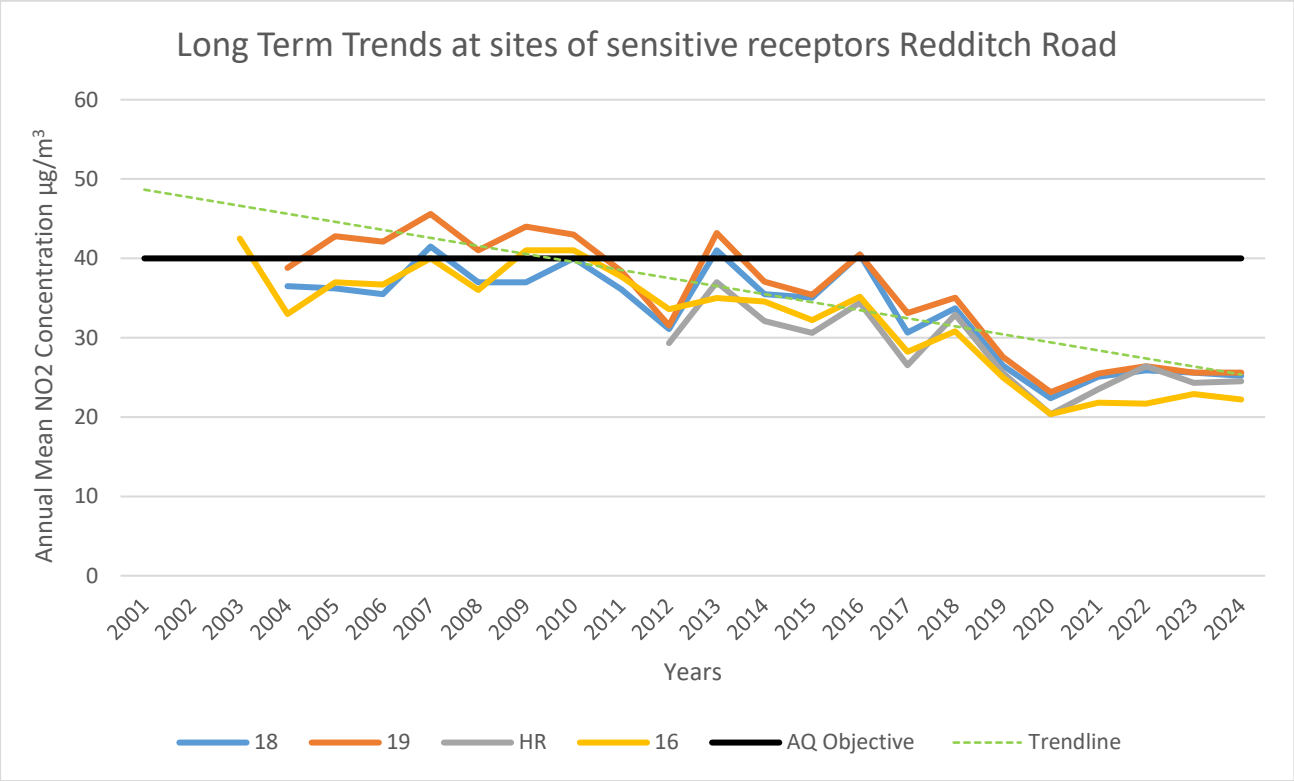
Cabinet **2025**

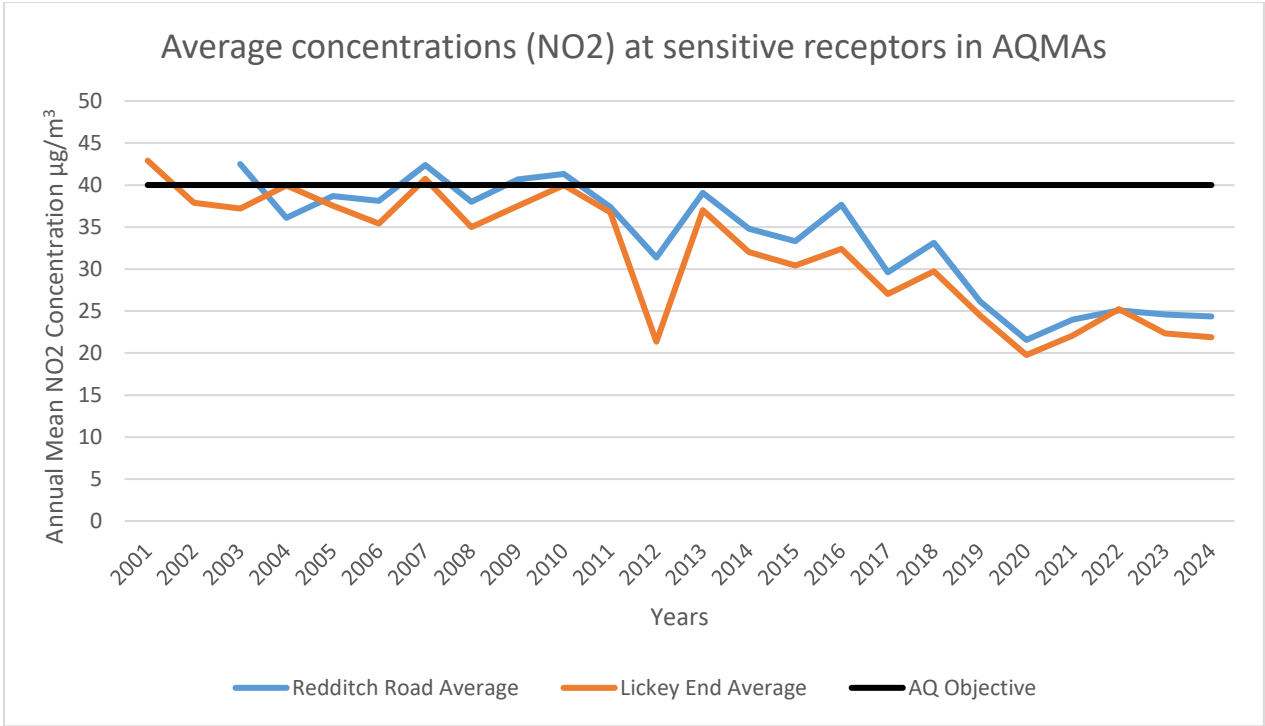
23rd July

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Kit Taylor, Portfolio Holder	9 July 2025
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Judith Wills, Assistant Director Community and Housing	1 July 2025
Financial Services	Debra Goodall, Assistant Director Finance & Customer Services	30 June 2025
Legal Services	Nicola Cummings, Principal Solicitor	1 July 2025
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	N/A	N/A
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	Matt Eccles, Climate Change Manager	30 June 2025

Appendix 1





BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

23rd July 2025

Treasury Management Strategy Outturn Report 2024/25

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Baxter – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Debra Goodall
Report Authors	Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services Debra.Goodall@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	All
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. **SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to set out the annual outturn for 2024/25 on the Council's Capital and Treasury Management Strategies, including all prudential indicators.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cabinet are asked to RECOMMEND that:

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

3. **BACKGROUND**

Introduction

- 3.1 The Authority has adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice* (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Authority to approve, as a minimum, treasury management semi-annual and annual outturn reports.
- 3.2 This report includes the requirement in the 2021 Code, mandatory from 1st April 2023, of reporting the treasury management prudential indicators. The non-treasury prudential indicators are incorporated in the Authority's normal quarterly revenue report.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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- 3.3 The Authority's treasury management strategy for 2024/25 was approved in February 2024. The Authority has invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk remains central to the Authority's treasury management strategy.

External Context

- 3.4 **Economic background:** Both the UK and US elected new governments during the period, whose policy decisions impacted the economic outlook. The Chancellor of the Exchequer delivered her Spring Statement in March 2025, following her Budget in October 2024. Based on the plans announced, the Office for Budget Responsibility downgraded its predictions for UK growth in 2025 to 1% from 2%. However, it upgraded its predictions for the four subsequent years. Inflation predictions for 2025 were pushed up, to 3.2% from 2.6%, before seen as falling back to target in 2027. The market reaction to the Spring Statement was more muted compared to the Budget, with very recent market turbulence being driven more by US trade policy decisions and President Trump.
- 3.5 After revising its interest rate forecast in November following the Budget, the council's treasury management advisor, Arlingclose, maintained its stance that Bank Rate will fall to 3.75% in 2025.
- 3.6 UK annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation continued to stay above the 2% Bank of England (BoE) target in the later part of the period. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported headline consumer prices at 2.8% in February 2025, down from 3.0% in the previous month and below expectations. Core CPI also remained elevated, falling slightly in February to 3.5% from 3.7% in January, just below expectations for 3.6% but higher than the last three months of the calendar year.
- 3.7 The UK economy Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 0.1% between October and December 2024, unrevised from the initial estimate. This was an improvement on the zero growth in the previous quarter, but down from the 0.4% growth between April and June 2024. Of the monthly GDP figures, the economy was estimated to have contracted by 0.1% in January, worse than expectations for a 0.1% gain.
- 3.8 The labour market continued to cool, but the ONS data still require treating with caution. Recent data showed the unemployment rate rose to 4.4% (3mth/year) in the three months to January 2025 while the economic inactivity rate fell again to 21.5%. The ONS reported pay growth over the same three-month period at 5.9% for regular earnings (excluding bonuses) and 5.8% for total earnings.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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- 3.9 The BoE's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) held Bank Rate at 4.5% at its March 2025 meeting, having reduced it in February. This follows earlier 0.25% cuts in November and August 2024 from the 5.25% peak. At the March MPC meeting, members voted 8-1 to maintain Bank Rate at 4.5%, with the one dissenter preferring another 25 basis points cut. The meeting minutes implied a slightly more hawkish tilt compared to February when two MPC members wanted a 50bps cut. In the minutes, the Bank also upgraded its Q1 2025 GDP forecast to around 0.25% from the previous estimate of 0.1%.
- 3.10 The February Monetary Policy Report (MPR) showed the BoE expected GDP growth in 2025 to be significantly weaker compared to the November MPR. GDP is forecast to rise by 0.1% in Q1 2025, less than the previous estimate of 0.4%. Four-quarter GDP growth is expected to pick up from the middle of 2025, to over 1.5% by the end of the forecast period. The outlook for CPI inflation showed it remaining above the MPC's 2% target throughout 2025. It is expected to hit around 3.5% by June before peaking at 3.7% in Q3 and then easing towards the end of the year, but staying above the 2% target. The unemployment rate was expected to rise steadily to around 4.75% by the end of the forecast horizon, above the assumed medium-term equilibrium unemployment rate of 4.5%.
- 3.11 Arlingclose, the authority's treasury adviser, maintained its central view that Bank Rate would continue to fall throughout 2025. From the cuts in August and November 2024 and February and May 2025, which took Bank Rate to 4.25%, August is considered the likely month for the next reduction, with other cuts following in line with MPR months to take Bank Rate down to around 3.75% by the end of 2025.
- 3.12 The US Federal Reserve paused its cutting cycle in the first three months of 2025, having reduced the Fed Funds Rate by 0.25% to a range of 4.25%-4.50% in December, the third cut in succession. Fed policymakers noted uncertainty around the economic outlook but were anticipating around 0.50% of further cuts in the policy rate in 2025. Economic growth continued to rise at a reasonable pace, expanding at an annualised rate of 2.4% in Q4 2024 while inflation remained elevated over the period. However, growth is now expected to weaken by more than previously expected in 2025, to 1.7% from 2.1%. The uncertainty that President Trump has brought both before and since his inauguration in January is expected to continue.
- 3.13 The European Central Bank (ECB) continued its rate cutting cycle over the period, reducing its three key policy rates by another 0.25% in March, acknowledging that monetary policy is becoming meaningfully less restrictive. Euro zone inflation has decreased steadily in 2025, falling to 2.2% in March, the lowest level since November 2024. Over the current calendar year, inflation is expected to average 2.3%. GDP growth stagnated in the last quarter of the 2024 calendar year, after expanding by 0.4% in the previous quarter. For 2025, economic growth forecasts were revised downwards to 0.9%.

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- 3.14 **Financial markets:** Financial market sentiment was reasonably positive over most of the period, but economic, financial and geopolitical issues meant the trend of market volatility remained. In the latter part of the period, volatility increased and bond yields started to fall following a January peak, as the economic uncertainty around likely US trade policy impacted financial markets. Yields in the UK and US started to diverge in the last month of the period, with the former rising around concerns over the fiscal implications on the UK government from weaker growth, business sentiment and higher rates, while the latter started falling on potential recession fears due to the unpredictable nature of policy announcements by the US President and their potential impact.
- 3.15 The 10-year UK benchmark gilt yield started the period at 3.94% and ended at 4.69%, having reached a low of 3.76% in September and a high of 4.90% in January in between. While the 20-year gilt started at 4.40% and ended at 5.22%, hitting a low of 4.27% in September and a high of 5.40% in January. The Sterling Overnight Rate (SONIA) averaged 4.90% over the period.
- 3.16 The period in question ended shortly before US President Donald Trump announced his package of 'reciprocal tariffs', the immediate aftermath of which saw stock prices and government bond yields falling and introduced further uncertainty over the economic outlook.
- 3.17 **Credit review:** In October, Arlingclose revised its advised recommended maximum unsecured duration limit on most banks on its counterparty list to six months. Duration advice for the remaining five institutions, including the newly added Lloyds Bank Corporate Markets, was kept to a maximum of 100 days. This advice remained in place at the end of the period.
- 3.18 Fitch revised the outlook on Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA) to positive from stable while affirming its long-term rating at AA-, citing its consistent strong earnings and profitability.
- 3.19 Other than CBA, the last three months of the period were relatively quiet on the bank credit rating front, with a small number of updates issued for a number of lenders not on the Arlingclose recommended counterparty list.
- 3.20 On local authorities, S&P assigned a BBB+ to Warrington Council, having previously withdrawn its rating earlier in 2024, and also withdrew its rating for Lancashire County Council due to the council deciding to stop maintaining a credit rating. However, it still holds a rating with Fitch and Moody's. Moody's withdrew its rating of Cornwall Council after it chose to no longer maintain a rating.

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- 3.21 Credit default swap prices generally trended lower over the period but did start to rise modestly in March, but not to any levels considered concerning. Once again, price volatility over the period remained generally more muted compared to previous periods.
- 3.22 Financial market volatility is expected to remain a feature, at least in the near term and, credit default swap levels will be monitored for signs of ongoing credit stress. As ever, the institutions and durations on the Authority's counterparty list recommended by Arlingclose remain under constant review.

Local Context

- 3.23 On 31st March 2025, the Authority had net borrowing of £16.89m arising from its revenue and capital income and expenditure. The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while balance sheet resources are the underlying resources available for investment. These factors are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Balance Sheet Summary

	31.3.24	31.3.25
	Actual	Actual
	£m	£m
General Fund & Regeneration CFR	32.65	31.26
Total CFR	32.65	31.26
External borrowing**	-7.50	0
Internal borrowing	25.15	31.26
Less: Usable reserves	-11.96	-11.27
Less: Working capital	-3.10	-3.10
Net borrowing	10.09	16.89

* finance leases, PFI liabilities and transferred debt that form part of the Authority's total debt

** shows only loans to which the Authority is committed and excludes optional refinancing

- 3.24 The treasury management position at 31st March and the change during the year is shown in Table 2 below.

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Table 2: Treasury Management Summary

	31.3.24 Balance £m	Movement £m	31.3.25 Balance £m	31.3.25 Rate %
Long-term borrowing				
- PWLB				
- LOBOs				
- Other				
Short-term borrowing	-7.50	7.50	0	
Total borrowing	-7.50	7.50	0	0%
Long-term investments				
Short-term investments	0.00	4.20	0.00	5.00%
Cash and cash equivalents				
Total investments	0.00	4.20	4.20	
Net borrowing	-7.50	11.70	4.20	

Borrowing Strategy and Activity

- 3.25 After substantial rises in interest rates since 2021 many central banks have now begun to reduce their policy rates, albeit slowly. Gilt yields were volatile but have increased overall during the period. Much of the increase has been in response to market concerns that policies introduced by the Labour government will be inflationary and lead to higher levels of government borrowing. The election of Donald Trump in the US in November is also expected to lead to inflationary trade policies.
- 3.26 The PWLB certainty rate for 10-year maturity loans was 4.80% at the beginning of the period and 5.42% at the end. The lowest available 10-year maturity rate was 4.52% and the highest was 5.71%. Rates for 20-year maturity loans ranged from 5.01% to 6.14% during the period, and 50-year maturity loans from 4.88% to 5.88%.
- 3.27 For the majority of the year the cost of short-term borrowing from other local authorities closely tracked Base Rate at around 5.00% - 5.25%. However, from late 2024 rates began to rise, peaking at around 6% in February and March 2025.
- 3.28 CIPFA's 2021 Prudential Code is clear that local authorities must not borrow to invest primarily for financial return and that it is not prudent for local authorities to make any

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investment or spending decision that will increase the capital financing requirement and so may lead to new borrowing, unless directly and primarily related to the functions of the Authority. PWLB loans are no longer available to local authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield unless these loans are for refinancing purposes. The Authority has no new plans to borrow to invest primarily for financial return.

- 3.29 **Loans Portfolio:** At 31st March the Authority held £0m of loans, as part of its strategy for funding previous and current years' capital programmes. Outstanding loans on 31st March 2025 are summarised in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Borrowing Position

	31.3.24 Balance £m	Net Movement £m	31.3.25 Balance £m	31.3.25 Weighted Average Rate %	31.4.25 Weighted Average Maturity (years)
Public Works Loan Board					
Banks (LOBO)					
Banks (fixed-term)					
Local authorities (long-term)					
Local authorities (short-term)	-7.50	7.50	0	0%	0
Total borrowing	-7.50	7.50	0		

Treasury Investment Activity

- 3.30 The CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes (revised in 2021) defines treasury management investments as investments that arise from the organisation's cash flows or treasury risk management activity that ultimately represents balances that need to be invested until the cash is required for use in the course of business.
- 3.31 The Authority does not hold any invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. During the period, the Authority's investment balances ranged between £1.0 and £10.5 million due to timing differences between income and expenditure. The investment position is shown in table 4 below.

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Table 4: Treasury Investment Position

	31.3.24	Net	31.3.25	31.3.25	31.3.25
	Balance	Movement	Balance	Income Return	Weighted Average Maturity
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%	days
Banks & building societies (unsecured)					
Banks & building societies (secured deposits)					
Covered bonds (secured)					
Government	0.00	0.00	0.00		
Local authorities and other govt entities					
Corporate bonds and loans					
Money Market Funds	0.00	4.20	4.20		13 days
Total investments	0.00	4.20	4.20		

- 3.32 Both the CIPFA Code and government guidance require the Authority to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its treasury investments before seeking the optimum rate of return, or yield. The Authority's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income.
- 3.33 As demonstrated by the liability benchmark in this report, the Authority expects to be a long-term investor and treasury investments therefore include both short-term low risk instruments to manage day-to-day cash flows and longer-term instruments where limited additional risk is accepted in return for higher investment income to support local public services.
- 3.34 Bank Rate reduced from 5.25% to 5.00% in August 2024, again to 4.75% in November 2024 and again to 4.5% in February 2025 with short term interest rates largely being around these levels. The rates on DMADF deposits ranged between 4.70% and 5.19%.

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Non-Treasury Investments

- 3.35 The definition of investments in the Treasury Management Code now covers all the financial assets of the Authority as well as other non-financial assets which the Authority holds primarily for financial return. Investments that do not meet the definition of treasury management investments (i.e. management of surplus cash) are categorised as either for service purposes (made explicitly to further service objectives) and or for commercial purposes (made primarily for financial return).
- 3.36 Investment Guidance issued by the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and Welsh Government also includes within the definition of investments all such assets held partially or wholly for financial return.

Treasury Performance

- 3.37 The Authority measures the financial performance of its treasury management activities both in terms of its impact on the revenue budget and its relationship to benchmark interest rates, as shown in table 5 below.

Table 5: Performance

	Actual £m	Budget £m	Over/ under
<i>Government (incl. local authorities)</i>	0.00	10.00	10.00
Total borrowing	0.00	10.00	10.00
<i>Short-term Investments</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total treasury borrowing	0.00	10.00	10.00

MRP Regulations

- 3.38 On 10th April 2024 amended legislation and revised statutory guidance were published on Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). The majority of the changes take effect from the 2025/26 financial year, although there is a requirement that for capital loans given on or after 7th May 2024 sufficient MRP must be charged so that the outstanding Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) in respect of the loan is no higher than the principal outstanding less the Expected Credit Loss (ECL) charge for that loan.

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- 3.39 The regulations also require that local authorities cannot exclude any amount of their CFR from their MRP calculation unless by an exception set out in law. Capital receipts cannot be used to directly replace, in whole or part, the prudent charge to revenue for MRP (there are specific exceptions for capital loans and leased assets).

Compliance

- 3.40 The Director of Resources and Section 151 officer reports that all treasury management activities undertaken during the year complied fully with the principles in the Treasury Management Code and the Authority's approved Treasury Management Strategy. Compliance with specific investment limits is demonstrated in table 6 below.

Table 6: Investment Limits

	2024/25 Maximum	31.3.25 Actual	2024/25 Limit	Complied? Yes/No
Any single organisation, except the UK Government	£4m each	£0m		Yes
UK Central Government	Unlimited	£0m		Yes
Unsecured investments with banks and building societies	£2.5m in total	£0m		Yes
Loans to unrated corporates	£1m in total	£0m		Yes
Money Market Funds	£20m in total	£4.2m		Yes
Foreign countries	£5m per country	£0m		Yes
Real Estate Investment Trusts	£2.5m in total	£0m		Yes

- 3.41 Compliance with the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary for external debt is demonstrated in table 7 below.

Table 7: Debt and the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary

	2024/25 Maximum	31.3.25 Actual	2024/25 Operational Boundary	2024/25 Authorised Limit	Complied? Yes/No
Borrowing	50.00	0	50.00	55.00	Yes
PFI and Finance Leases	1.50	0	1.50	1.50	Yes
Total debt	51.50	0	51.50	56.50	

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- 3.42 Since the operational boundary is a management tool for in-year monitoring it is not significant if the operational boundary is breached on occasions due to variations in cash flow, and this is not counted as a compliance failure

Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

- 3.43 As required by the 2021 CIPFA Treasury Management Code, the Authority monitors and measures the following treasury management prudential indicators.

Liability Benchmark

- 3.44 This indicator compares the Authority's actual existing borrowing against a liability benchmark that has been calculated to show the lowest risk level of borrowing. The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term investor in the future, and so shape its strategic focus and decision making. It represents an estimate of the cumulative amount of external borrowing the Council must hold to fund its current capital and revenue plans while keeping treasury investments at the minimum level of £2m required to manage day-to-day cash flow.

	31.3.24	31.3.25	31.3.26	31.3.27
	Actual	Actual	Forecast	Forecast
Loans CFR	32.65	31.26	34.54	36.26
Less: Usable Reserves	-11.96	-11.27	-11.14	-10.42
Less: Working Capital	-3.10	-3.10	-3.10	-3.10
Net loans requirement	17.59	16.89	20.30	22.74
Plus: Liquidity allowance	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20
Liability benchmark	17.79	17.09	20.50	22.94
Existing borrowing	7.50	0	6.20	11.10

- 3.45 Following on from the medium-term forecast above, the long-term liability benchmark assumes capital expenditure funded by borrowing of £11.10m, minimum revenue provision on new capital expenditure based on a 40 year asset life and income, expenditure and reserves all increasing by inflation of 2% p.a. This is shown in the chart below together with the maturity profile of the Authority's existing borrowing.

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Maturity Structure of Borrowing

- 3.46 This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of all borrowing were:

	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	31.3.25 Actual	Complied?
Under 12 months	100%	0%	100%	Yes
12 months and within 24 months	100%	0%	0%	Yes
24 months and within 5 years	100%	0%	0%	Yes
5 years and within 10 years	100%	0%	0%	Yes
10 years and above	100%	0%	0%	Yes

- 3.47 Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment.

Long-term Treasury Management Investments

- 3.48 The purpose of this indicator is to control the Authority's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The prudential limits on the long-term treasury management limits are:

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	No fixed date
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£1.0m	£0.5m	£0m	
Actual principal invested beyond year end	0	0	0	
Complied?	Yes	Yes	Yes	

- 3.49 Long-term investments with no fixed maturity date include strategic pooled funds, real estate investment trusts and directly held equity but exclude money market funds and bank accounts with no fixed maturity date as these are considered short-term.

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Additional indicators

Security:

- 3.50 The Authority has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to credit risk by monitoring the value-weighted average credit rating of its investment portfolio. This is calculated by applying a score to each investment (AAA=1, AA+=2, etc.) and taking the arithmetic average, weighted by the size of each investment. Unrated investments are assigned a score based on their perceived risk.

	2024/25 Target	31.3.25 Actual	Complied?
Portfolio average credit rating	A	-	Yes

Liquidity:

- 3.51 The Authority has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to liquidity risk by monitoring the amount of cash available to meet unexpected payments within a rolling three-month period, without additional borrowing.

	2024/25 Target	31.3.25 Actual	Complied?
Total cash available within 3 months	£2.5m	£2.5m	Yes
Total sum borrowed in past 3 months without prior notice	Nil	Nil	Yes

Interest Rate Exposures:

- 3.52 This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to interest rate risk.

Interest rate risk indicator	2024/25 Target	31.3.25 Actual	Complied?
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>rise</u> in interest rates	500,000	0	Yes
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>fall</u> in interest rates	500,000	0	Yes

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3.53 For context, the changes in interest rates during the year were:

	31/3/24	31/3/25
Bank Rate	5.25%	4.50%
1-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	5.36%	4.82%
5-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	4.68%	4.97%
10-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	4.74%	5.42%
20-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	5.18%	5.91%
50-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	5.01%	5.67%

3.54 The impact of a change in interest rates is calculated on the assumption that maturing loans and investment will be replaced at new market rates.

4. IMPLICATIONS

Legal Implications

4.1 A number of statutes governing the provision of services covered by this report contain express powers or duties to charge for services. Where an express power to charge does not exist the Council has the power under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 to charge where the activity is incidental or conducive to or calculated to facilitate the Councils statutory function.

Service / Operational Implications

4.2 Monitoring is undertaken to ensure that income targets are achieved, with Treasury Management activities taking place on a daily basis.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

4.3 The only impact of treasury transactions is in respect of ethical investment linked to the Councils investment counterparties. Presently the Council has a limited counterparty list based on financial risk to the Authority.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT

5.1 There is always significant risk in relation to treasury transactions, this is why Councils appoint Treasury advisors, which in the case of Bromsgrove is Arlingclose. In addition, there is the requirement in this area to provide an Annual Strategy report containing indicators/limits that must be met, a quarterly update and closure report all of which must be reported to full Council.

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6. APPENDICES

None

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

MTFP 2024/25 – February 2024 which contains the years Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy and MRP Policy.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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10th September

Adoption of Fixed Penalty Charge for breach of Community Protection Notice

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Kit Taylor Councillor Peter Whittaker
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Simon Wilkes, Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services
Report Author	Job Title: Toni Ainscough, Principal Officer (Environmental Enforcement) Contact email: toni.ainscough@worcestershire.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01562 738035
Wards Affected	ALL
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Council Priority	Housing & Environment
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet RECOMMEND that:-

- 1) That the Council adopt a Fixed Penalty Notice Charge of £100 for failure to comply with a Community Protection Notice.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In June 2024 responsibility for enforcement of Planning Enforcement, Fly-tipping, littering, duty of care of waste offences and dog fouling was passed to Worcestershire Regulatory Services. One of the tools for dealing with some of these issues is service of a Community Protection Notice (CPN) under Part 4 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 which came into effect in England and Wales on 20 October 2014.
- 2.2 Whilst WRS have a remit to undertake enforcement of Planning Enforcement related matters, Fly-tipping, littering, duty of care of waste offences and dog fouling, CPNs can be used for a wider range of anti-social behaviours by the Police or other Council departments.
- 2.3 CPNs are intended to stop a person or business continuing with conduct which unacceptably affects victims and the community. They

can only be served where there are reasonable grounds to believe the offender's conduct is having a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality, and it is unreasonable and the behaviour is of a persistent or continuing nature. Before one can be served, the offender must be given a writing warning (Community Protection Warning) stating that a CPN will be issued unless their conduct ceases to have the detrimental effect.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 Failure to comply with a CPN is a summary offence under Section 48. The offence is punishable on conviction in the case of an individual by a fine not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale (currently £2,500) or in the case of a body/business an unlimited fine.
- 3.2 However, in accordance with the Council's enforcement policy, there are alternatives to prosecution which should also be considered for use where appropriate. Simple Cautions for example could also be considered and may be appropriate in the case of a first or a merely technical breach of a CPN. Section 52 of the act provides that an authorised person may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) as an alternative to prosecution for breach of a CPN. Payment of the FPN within 14 days from the date of issue has the effect of discharging any liability to convict for the offence but allows for action to be taken for subsequent offences.
- 3.3 A fixed penalty cannot be for more than £100.
- 3.4 There is currently no charge adopted by the Council for any FPN served in the event of failure to comply with a CPN.
- 3.5 Adoption of a charge would allow FPNs to be considered as an alternative method of discharging any liability alongside simple Cautions and prosecution.
- 3.6 Any charge level adopted would apply to all FPNs served following a breach of a CPN served by the Council regardless of the department undertaking the enforcement action. Any charge would be reviewed in line with the usual fees and charges setting process the Council undertakes annually.
- 3.7 This report is being brought forward at this point as Community Protection Warnings and Notices have been served or are currently being prepared for service by WRS on behalf of the Council and there is the strong likelihood that we will benefit from the ability to offer fixed

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penalty notices prior to the annual fees and charges paper in February 2026.

- 3.8 There is no recommended change to the reporting mechanisms for reporting on activity associated with CPNs or FPNs through this report. For all Council areas CPN and FPN numbers are reported through the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership Scrutiny reports. Any served for waste related issues are also reported to Defra and for subject areas for which such may be served by WRS matters are reported to the WRS Joint Board in accordance with the shared service governance arrangements.

- 3.9 FPN are one of several tools that may be used where a CPN has been breached. For significant breaches it may be appropriate to seek a prosecution or move to seizure of equipment if applicable, rather than offer a FPN. Similarly should a FPN not be paid, or breaches continue following payment of a FPN, enforcement action can still be taken if appropriate.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None. Any penalties are payable to the Council and would be collected in line with those from other forms of FPN served by Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS).
- 4.2 Any FPN charges should be approved and published by the local authority.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The addition of an FPN option for offences under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 is in line with the Council's and WRS' enforcement policy. WRS have robust procedures in place to ensure CPNs and FPNs are only used where appropriate and the evidential test has been met.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 None.

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 CPNs are used to enforce action against a variety of anti-social behaviours which would otherwise have an impact on the community,

including the ability of residents to feel safe in their homes. CPNs can be used for waste related matters which are a priority for the Council and their ability to maintain a clean environment. They meet the Council's specific corporate commitment to '*keep Bromsgrove safe and contribute to improved quality of life and well-being. A key objective in the plan is "increased environmental enforcement"*'.

Climate Change Implications

6.3 None.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.4 None.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 None.

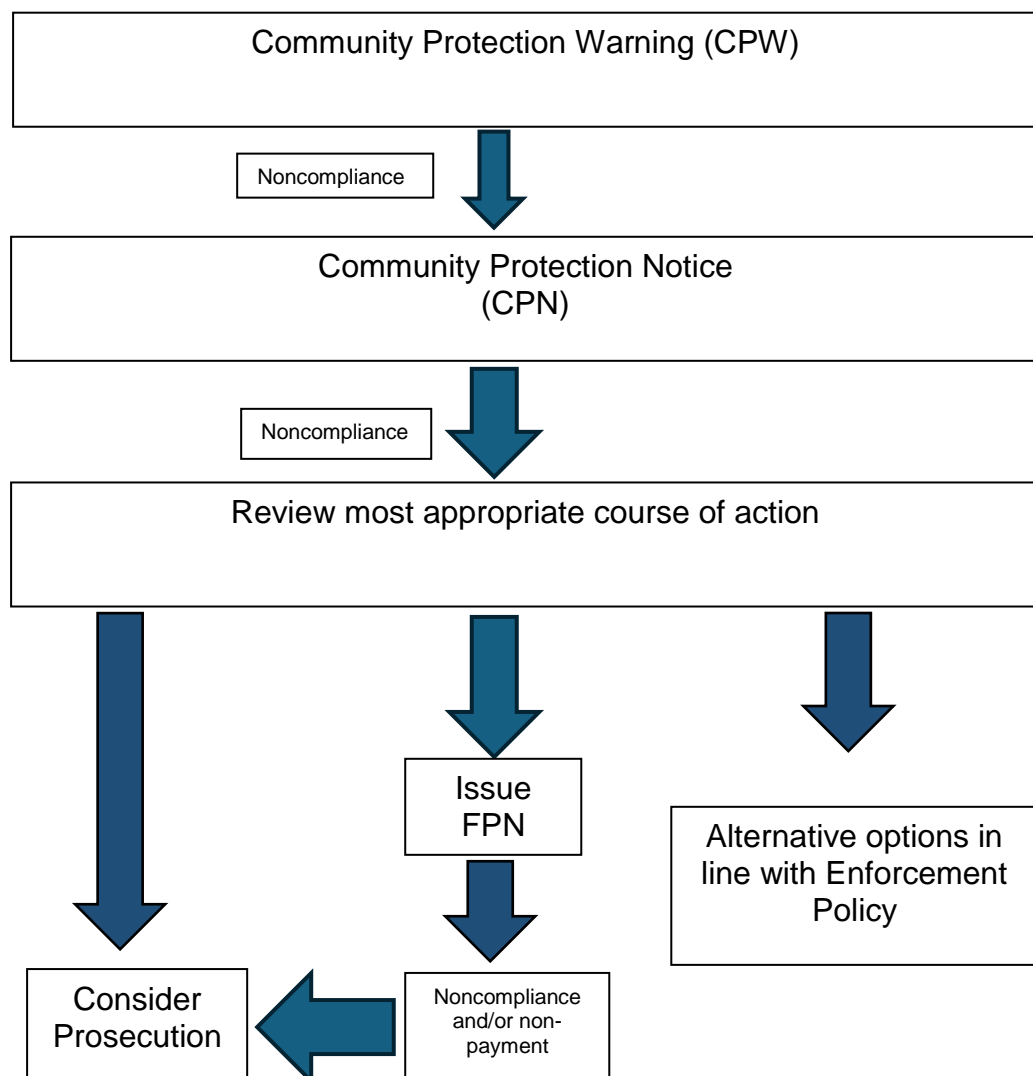
8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 Appendix 1: Indicative legal process flow

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Appendix 1 - Indicative legal process flow



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9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Kit Taylor PFH WRS Peter Whittaker PFH Env Serv	Consulted 11/08/2025
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Simon Wilkes	Consulted 01/08/25
Financial Services	Debra Goodall	Consulted 01/08/25
Legal Services	Nicola Cummings, Principal Solicitor - Governance	06/08/25
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	Rebecca Green	Consulted 01/08/25
	Bev Houghton, Community Safety Manager	12/08/25
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	Matt Eccles	Consulted 01/08/25

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10th September 2025

Q1 Finance and Performance Report 2025/26

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Baxter – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Debra Goodall
Report Authors	Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer debra.goodall@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	All
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	
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) of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended	

SUMMARY

Regular budget monitoring, reporting forms the basis of good governance and best practice in budget management. Councillors and committees should be able to rely on the information provided to assist in sound decision making around budgets and spending plans for the Council.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that the following are noted:

- 1) The current Revenue position of £0.173 million unfavourable variance.
- 2) The current Capital spending of £3.326 million against a revised budget of £21.876 million as set out in Appendix A.
- 3) The current savings delivery is £0.398 million against an annual target of £1.733 million for 2025/26. This is included in the above Revenue position
- 4) The Earmarked Reserves balances of £11.266 million as set out in Appendix B.
- 5) The Ward Budget allocation position to date is 6 approved allocations at £5,450, leaving a balance of £56,550 to be allocated before year end as set out in Appendix C.
- 6) There is an updated procurements position set out in appendix D, with any new items over £200,000 to be included on the forward plan.
- 7) The position on Council Tax and Business Rates.

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- 8) The position on benefits processing.
- 9) The Performance data for the period April to June 2025 (Quarter 1) shown at Appendix F.

The Cabinet is asked to **RECOMMEND** that:

- 10) That the Balance Sheet Monitoring Position for Q1 is noted – which is the Treasury Monitoring Report and required to be reported to Council.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 This Quarter 1 Financial and Performance Monitoring Report provides a comprehensive overview of Bromsgrove District Council's finance and performance for the period April to June 2025. It outlines the Council's revenue and capital positions, savings delivery, procurement pipeline, and progress on key strategic projects.
- 2.2 As of the end of Q1, the Council is forecasting a **£0.173 million revenue overspend** for the full financial year. This is primarily driven by cost pressures in Community and Housing Services, Environmental Services, Regeneration and Property and Finance and Customer Services, partially offset by significant underspends in Corporate Services and Corporate Financing.
- 2.3 The Council has delivered **£0.398 million of its £0.913 million savings target**, with further work ongoing to meet the full-year goal. Capital expenditure to date stands at **£3.326 million** against a revised budget of **£21.876 million** proposed to support ongoing commitments. This budget includes £4.524m of carry forwards from 2024/25.
- 2.4 Key capital projects include the **Levelling Up-funded Windsor Street and Nailers Yard schemes**. The Windsor Street scheme is nearing completion of phase one remediation works, and discussions are being held with the Environment Agency regarding any required remediation works under phase two. The Nailers' Yard scheme is progressing. A detailed survey of the culvert has uncovered that there is more work required to deliver the scheme to its full potential and this has led to a projected increase in the culvert element to £1,660,476.71 against a budgeted sum of £220,256; this is due to a clearer picture of the requirement now that the initial works on the culvert have commenced. This was always highlighted as a major project risk because the culvert works were only designed to RIBA stage 3. This has pushed the project over-budget by £165,000 and a supplement estimate has been agreed as an **'Urgent Decision'** for £500,000 which includes contingency. The urgent decision was required to avoid having the contractor on site at a cost to the project but not work being carried out on site.
- 2.5 The Council's **collection rates** for Council Tax and Business Rates remain strong, with Q1 performance close to or exceeding national averages. Benefits processing times are

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within expected parameters, despite increased complexity in cases retained by the Council.

- 2.6 The report also includes updates on **ward budget allocations, earmarked reserves, and treasury management performance**, with no new borrowing undertaken and **£3.5 million in short-term investments** held at quarter-end.
- 2.7 The Council continues to monitor its financial position closely, with regular engagement between service managers and finance officers to address emerging risks and ensure delivery of strategic priorities.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the Council's draft Revenue and Capital Outturn position for the first quarter of the financial year (April – June 2025) and associated performance data. This report presents:
- The Council's forecast yearly outturn revenue monitoring position for 2025/26 based on data to the end of Quarter 1 including delivery of the savings targets and fees and charges income as set out in the MTFP.
 - The position in respect of balance sheet monitoring as requested by the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee including the Treasury Management Report.
 - The spending as of Q1 of Ward Budget Funds.
 - The updated procurement pipeline of Council projects to be delivered over the next 12 months in order to properly resource plan for the delivery of these projects.
 - The Council's performance against the strategic priorities outlined in the Council Plan Addendum, including operational measures to demonstrate how the council is delivering its services to customers is the subject of separate report elsewhere on the agenda.

4. DETAILED PERFORMANCE

Financial Performance

- 4.1 As part of the monitoring process a detailed review has been undertaken to ensure that issues are considered, and significant savings and cost pressures are addressed. This report sets out, based on the position at the end of Quarter 1, the projected revenue outturn position for the full 2025/26 financial year and explains key variances against budget.

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- 4.2 The £15.3m full year revenue budget included in the table below is the budget that was approved by Council in February 2025.

Service Description	2025-26 Approved Budget	2025-26 Revised Budget	2025-26 Revised Q1 Budget	Q1 Adjusted Spend	Full Year Projected Forecast	Full Year Projected Variance
Business Transformation and Organisational Development	2,197,136	2,133,071	485,219	488,459	2,164,067	30,996
Community and Housing GF Services	1,471,273	1,455,819	372,622	244,895	1,673,042	217,223
Corporate Services	817,413	1,139,602	464,017	265,339	1,037,867	-616,735
Environmental Services	4,266,050	4,266,050	-690,867	-1,005,517	4,442,020	175,970
Financial and Customer Services	2,387,557	2,347,370	658,990	802,208	2,540,366	192,996
Legal, Democratic and Elections Services	1,178,898	1,158,315	260,244	309,282	1,196,476	78,161
Planning and Leisure Services	1,248,863	1,199,381	262,734	256,085	1,291,561	92,180
Regeneration & Property	1,101,406	968,988	154,866	165,538	1,099,063	191,076
Regulatory Client	646,139	646,139	161,535	182,091	688,898	42,759
Starting Well	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grand Total	15,314,735	15,314,735	2,129,360	1,708,380	16,133,360	404,626
Service Description	2025-26 Approved Budget	2025-26 Revised Budget	2025-26 Revised Q1 Budget	Q1 Adjusted Spend	Full Year Projected Forecast	Full Year Projected Variance
Corporate Financing	-15,314,735	-15,314,735	-3,828,684	-933,027	-15,546,000	-231,265
Grand Total	-15,314,735	-15,314,735	-3,828,684	-933,027	-15,546,000	-231,265
TOTALS	0	0	-1,699,324	775,353	587,360	173,361

Table 1 – Approved and working budget by service area

Budget Variances

- 4.3 The draft position is set out in the above table.
- 4.4 Overall, the Council is currently forecasting a full year revenue overspend of £0.173m at Quarter 1 as explained in the Executive Summary. This position will continue to be reviewed particularly given the impact of the increasing costs linked to inflation and further updates will be provided to Councillors throughout 2025/26. This includes service projections as follows:

Business Transformation £0.031m overspend

- 4.4.1 Business Transformation & Organisational Development are forecasting an overspend of £0.031m for Apprenticeship Levy due to increased planned training requirements across the Council.

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Community and Housing GF Services £0.217m overspend

- 4.4.2 Community & Housing Services are forecasting a £0.217m overspend due to £0.101m increased charges from BT and additional equipment in Lifeline Services, £0.142m in additional Bed & Breakfast costs in line with national trends offset by £0.026m other net variations.

Corporate Services £0.617m underspend

- 4.4.3 Corporate Services is forecasting a £0.617m underspend due to £0.640m on vacancy management and savings efficiency targets offset by £0.023m additional Postage costs.

Environmental Services £0.176m overspend

- 4.4.4 Environmental Services are forecasting a £0.176m overspend due to £0.041m on Tiger Cat purchase for Cemeteries, £0.100m on Agency Costs in the Vehicle Workshop due to continuing pressures on the team and £0.035m due to other net variations.

Financial and Customer Services £0.193m overspend

- 4.4.5 Finance & Customer Services are forecasting an overspend of £0.193m due to £0.028m on VAT support from Lavat Consulting on the VAT returns to HMRC, £0.050m to Bruton Knowles for Insurance Property valuations for the Statement of Accounts, £0.012m on General Grants and £0.103m on Agency staff due to cover for vacancies within the Finance Team.

Legal, Democratic and Elections Services £0.078m overspend

- 4.4.6 Legal, Democratic and Property Services are forecasting a £0.078m overspend due to £0.030m unbudgeted Landlord costs on the Artrix, £0.040m Ward Budget was included in Democratic Services in error which now changes recharges to Redditch Council and £0.008m other net variations.

Planning and Leisure Services £0.092m overspend

- 4.4.7 Planning and Leisure Services are forecasting a £0.092m overspend due to £0.019m additional staffing costs as a result of increased costs of agency staff, £0.075m underachieved income in Development Control and £0.030m on Consultancy fees for the Play Areas Review offset by £0.032m on small various underspends.

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Regeneration & Property £0.191m overspend

- 4.4.8 Regeneration & Property are forecasting a £0.191m overspend due to £0.220m shortfall in Parking Income as a result of the introduction of the 2-hour free parking, £0.021m on utility costs and overtime in Public Conveniences and other net variances of £0.008m. This has been offset by a reduction in establishment costs due to a number of posts being funded from the use of additional UK Shared Prosperity Fund Administration Grant income of £0.038m and savings within Property Services of £0.020m due to lower than anticipated staff costs.

Regulatory Client £0.043m overspend

- 4.4.9 Regulatory Client are forecasting a £0.043m overspend due to £0.039m underachieved income in Taxi Licensing as a result of lower than anticipated licencing volumes. This is a re-occurring year on year pattern. There have also been other net variations of £0.004m.

Corporate Financing £0.231m underspend

- 4.4.10 Corporate Financing is showing additional income of £0.231m due to £0.170m Grant Income, £0.150m Investment Interest Income, £0.036m savings on Interest Payable offset by £0.125m in underachieved Fees & Charges Income.

Savings Targets

- 4.4.11 The Council had £1.733m of savings targets in 2025/26. The Council has delivered 0.398m of these savings in Q1. These are shown in the table below:

	2025/26 £m	Adjusted 2025/26 £m	Total 2025/26 £m	Savings YTD	
Service Reviews	(0.405)	0.405	0		Consolidated corporately
Finance Vacancies	(0.100)	0.100	0		Consolidated corporately
Environmental Service Partnerships	(0.050)	0.050	0		Consolidated corporately
Move to all out elections	(0.170)		(0.170)	0	Unlikely to be met
Town Hall	(0.400)		(0.400)	0	Work ongoing
2023/24 Items	(1.125)	0.555	(0.570)	0	
In year corporate target		(0.913)	(0.913)	(0.398)	£0.343m from vacancy management and £0.55 from efficiencies.

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					Expected to be met in full.
Directorate savings		(0.250)	(0.250)	In progress	Expected to be met
2025/26 Items	0	(1.163)	(1.163)	(0.398)	
Total Savings	(1.125)	(0.608)	(1.733)	(0.398)	

4.5 Cash Management

Borrowing

- As of the 30th June 2025, there were no short-term borrowings. The Council has no long-term borrowings.

Investments

- On 30th June 2025 there were £3.5m short-term investments held.

Capital Monitoring

4.6 A capital programme of £17.352m was approved in the Budget for 2025/26 in February 2025. This has been fully reviewed as part of the MTFP using actual data as at the end of December 2024. The table below and detail in **Appendix A** set out the Capital Programme schemes that are approved for the MTFP time horizon. Additional grants of £4.524m have also been received in year revising the total capital budget for 2025/26 to £21.876m.

4.7 Many of these schemes are already in partial delivery in the 2025/26 financial year. By approving this list, the Council also agreed sums not spent in 2024/25 (and 2023/24 by default if schemes originated earlier than 2024/25 as sums have been carried forward through to the 2024/25 MTFS Report) to be carried forward into 2025/26. The table also splits amounts by funding source, Council or third party.

Year	Total Programme	Revised Total	Council Funded	Grant Funded
2024/5	6,376,987	21,267,936	10,996,671	10,271,265
Carry Fwd	14,890,949			
2025/6	17,351,727		8,017,369	9,334,358
2026/7	3,222,841		2,422,841	800,000
2027/8	2,469,459		1,669,459	800,000
2028/9	2,310,531		1,510,531	800,000
2029/30	2,373,749		1,573,749	800,000

4.8 Included in this funding the Council also have the following Grant Funded Schemes which are being delivered in 2024/25:

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- The two Levelling Up schemes – Windsor Street (formerly project titled as ‘Old Fire Station’) and Nailers’ Yard (formerly known as ‘Market Hall’) which are funded via £14.5m of Government Funding, and the Council is funding £1.6m of works. A contribution of £2,425,000 has also been requested from the monies held in trust by Birmingham City Council on behalf of the former Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP)
- For the Nailers’ Yard Scheme:
 - Construction is progressing on site. The steel structures for both buildings are now complete with the precast lift shaft and stairs installed on the commercial building. The next stage will see the installation of rooflight steelwork and complete purlins to the Pavilion building and the reinforcement and concrete to all floors and fire boxing of steelwork which commenced in late June. There is a six-week delay to the programme due to unforeseen ground conditions. The costs for this delay are covered by project contingency and provisional sums so there is no increase to the budget.
 - Arcadis have been appointed as employer’s agent and Quantity Surveyor for RIBA Stage 5 of the project.
 - GJS Dillon have been appointed to develop the marketing strategy for the commercial building and will manage letting enquiries. They have received significant interest from potential tenants.
- For the Windsor Street Scheme
 - Brownfield Solutions are continuing to undertake ground water monitoring on site. There are six wells in total, with monthly testing taking place. The results have been submitted to the Environment Agency. They will advise the Council if the presence of PFAS/PFOS chemicals (per and polyfluorinated alkyl substances) across the site within the soils and groundwater are at an acceptable level and the site can be redeveloped. If they are not, a further six-month remediation strategy will be undertaken through to January 2026.
 - The access road has been reinstated for the property to the north of the site and the Wendron Centre. No issues have been reported to date by either party.
 - The project is continuing to progress in line with timescales and remains to be on track to be delivered by January 2026. This is due to time saved during phase 2 of the project. By early 2026, the Council will have a clean site that is ready to be redeveloped.
 - Thomas Lister were commissioned appointed to support with the development appraisal that will inform the options paper.
- Public Realm work is now fully completed and the underspend is approximately £925,000

The Council can claim up to £2.425m from the monies held in trust by Birmingham City Council (BCC) on behalf of the former Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) and an application has now been submitted to BCC. Birmingham City Council have informed all Councils wanting to access

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money from GBSLEP fund in 2025/26 that funds will not be available until the 2026/2027 financial year. Therefore, BDC may have to use short-term borrowing until the funding is available.

- UK Shared Prosperity Schemes totalling £917,878 (although it should be noted that these grants funded schemes are a mix of capital - £300,000 and revenue - £617,878) need to be completely spend by the end of the 2024/5 financial year.

- 4.9 The outturn spend is £3.326m against the revised capital budget totals £21.876m and is detailed in **Appendix A**. It should be noted that as per the budget decision carry forwards of £14.891m will be rolled forward from 2024/25 into 2025/26 to take account of slippage from 2024/25.

Earmarked Reserves

- 4.10 The updated position, taking account of the now submitted draft accounts for 2024/25, are set out in **Appendix B**. As part of the MTFP all reserves were thoroughly reviewed for their requirement and additional reserves set up as per that report. At the 30 June 2025, based on the present MTFP that was approved by Council on the 19th February, the Council holds £11.266 million of General Fund Reserves.

Ward Budgets

- 4.11 This report is the quarterly report to show what has been spent to date on Ward budgets. Each Ward Member has £2,000 to spend on Ward Initiatives subject to the rules of the Scheme which were approved by Council. As of the 30th June there have been applications from 6 Members approved totalling £5,450. There are still 25 Members who have not allocated any funding and overall, £56,550 is still to be allocated. This year's funding allocations must be spent by the 31st March. Full detail is set out in **Appendix C**.

Balance Sheet Monitoring Position

- 4.12 There has been the request from Audit Committee that the Council include Balance Sheet Monitoring as part of this report.
- 4.13 This initial balance sheet reporting is set out as the Q1 Treasury Report which is attached as **Appendix D**. This report sets out the Councils debt and borrowing position for Q1 2025/26. Included in this is how the Council is using its working capital as well as measurement of the Councils Prudential Indicators, this appendix will need to be noted and approved that Council note the position.

Procurement Pipeline

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4.14 The Procurement pipeline is shown in **Appendix E**. The Council's Procurement Pipeline includes details of contracts expected to be reprocured and new procurement projects expected to be undertaken in the future. Those happening in the next 12 months and over £0.200m will need to be put on the Forward Plan. The pipeline is refreshed quarterly.

- There are 10 contracts that are over the key decision threshold of £0.200m
- There are 4 contracts procured by Redditch Borough Council on behalf of Bromsgrove District Council.

Collection Fund

4.15 The Council acts as collecting authority for itself, other major preceptors and the parishes for Council Tax. The Council also collects business rates on behalf of central government, the County Council and for itself. The Council's own precept accounts for about 11% of monies collected from Council tax and about 40% of business rates collected after paying government levies, additional tariff to central government and 10% across to Worcestershire County Council.

4.16 The Council aims to collect 98.5% of Council receipts (national average is 95.8%) which equates to a total sum of £87.560 million. Performance against this target for this financial year is shown in the table below:

	Target %age (cumulative)	Actual %age (cumulative)	Amount collected (cumulative) £ millions
Quarter 1	28.89	28.80	25.605
Quarter 2			
Quarter 3			
Quarter 4	98.5		

4.17 Due to the use of ten monthly collections the percentage for each quarter is not a simple 25%. Government reforms are proposing enforcing a move to monthly collections (in twelfths).

4.18 The Council aims to collect 98.0% of business rate receipts (national average is 95.8%) which equates to a total sum of £31.399 million. Performance against this target for this financial year is shown in the table below:

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	Target %age (cumulative)	Actual %age (cumulative)	Amount collected (cumulative) £ millions
Quarter 1	25.84	28.34	9.082
Quarter 2			
Quarter 3			
Quarter 4	98.0		

Benefits

4.19 Benefit claim statistics are summarised in the table below:

New claims			
Average processing time	20 days	Number processed this quarter	95
Changes to claims			
Average processing time	10 days	Number processed this quarter	1215

4.20 Recent changes to benefits has meant that many of the simpler claims have been transferred to DWP, leaving the more complex cases with local authorities – this has impacted on average processing time. DWP expect new claims to be processed within a 30-day timeframe.

Performance

4.21 Corporate Performance Indicators are included as Appendix F to this report.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 These are contained in the main body of the report.

6. Legal Implications

6.1 No Legal implications have been identified.

7. Strategic Purpose Implications

Relevant Strategic Purpose

7.1 The Strategic purposes are included in the Council's corporate plan and guides the Council's approach to budget making ensuring we focus on the issues and what are most important for the borough and our communities. Our Financial monitoring and strategies are integrated within all of our Strategic Purposes.

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Climate Change Implications

- 7.2 The green thread runs through the Council plan. The Financial monitoring report has implications on climate change, and these will be addressed and reviewed when relevant by climate change officers to ensure the correct procedures have been followed to ensure any impacts on climate change are fully understood.

8. Other Implications

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 8.1 None as a direct result of this report.

Operational Implications

- 8.2 Managers meet with finance officers to consider the current financial position and to ensure actions are in place to mitigate any overspends.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 9.1 Items identified in the Finance and Performance monitoring is included in a number of the Corporate Risks. These are listed below. The mitigations to these risks are set out in the Risk Report, of which the Quarter 1 Report is reported to Audit, Governance and Standards Committee in July:

COR 10 - Decisions made to address financial pressures and implement new projects.

- COR16 – Management of Contracts.
- COR17 – Resolution of the Approved Budget Position.
- COR19 – Adequate Workforce Planning.
- COR20 – Financial Position Rectification.
- COR22 - Delivery of Levelling Up and UK SPF Initiatives
- COR23 – Cost of Living Crisis
- COR25 – The new Environment Bill

10. APPENDENCES

Appendix A – Capital Outturn
 Appendix B – Reserves Position
 Appendix C – Ward Budget Position
 Appendix D – Treasury Management Position
 Appendix E – Procurement Pipeline

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Appendix A - Capital Outturn

Capital Project	Description	2025/26 Total (Original)	2025/26 Total (Incl C/F's)	25/26 Spend
		£	£	£
	Large Schemes			
	Levelling Up Fund			
200072	- Market Hall	9,228,000	11,555,322	2,790,609
200073	- Ex-Fire Station/Windsor Street	0	-54,247	105,165
	UK Shared Prosperity Fund			
200086	(UKSPF Funding BDC 2024/2025)	918,000	938,000	
200082	CCTV Digital Upgrade (UKSPF)	0	33,668	
200083	Centres Public Realm Improvement Programme (UKSPF)			18,833
	Other Schemes			
200008	Funding for DFGs	1,285,847	1,442,899	234,930
200009	Home Repairs Assistance	50,000	215,602	
200010	Energy Efficiency Installation	0	212,190	
200019	Fleet Replacement new line	1,265,000	3,173,318	17,880
200022	Replacement Parking Machines	100,000	94,134	5,000
200030	Wheelie Bin Purchase	120,000	-48,671	48,229
200033	Bus Shelters	18,000	34,345	
200045	Greener Homes	0	-6,125	
200069	Cisco Network Update	34,877	34,877	
200070	Server Replacement	18,500	188,049	67,038

Capital Project	Description	2025/26 Total (Original)	2025/26 Total (Incl C/F's)	25/26 Spend
		£	£	£
200071	Laptop Refresh	5,000	36,249	10,600
200075	Sanders Park	0	-103,763	24,727
200102	Fleet Replacement cost	15,000	24,400	
200103	Wheelie Bin Increases		85,000	
200076	Play Area, POS and Sport improvements at Lickey End Recreation Ground in accordance with the S106 Agreement	0	30,582	
200079	Footpaths	75,000	32,020	
200104	Buildings	100,000	262,426	2,945
200105	Initial Play Audit Requirements	0	451,000	
	Updated Play Audit Requirements (Dec 24)	166,242	166,242	
200106	New ongoing Cyber security budget	25,000	50,000	
200107	Artrix - Landlord Obligations	20,000	22,414	
	Wild Flower Machinery	0	62,000	
	Food Waste Collection - fund for Vehicles and containers	902,511	902,511	
	Replacement Wheeled Bins	2,200,000	2,200,000	
	Parkside - Requirement for a firewall	9,750	9,750	
	Laptops for new Starters	25,000	25,000	
	Salary Capitalisation	750,000	750,000	
200016	New Finance Enterprise system	20,000	40,000	
		17,351,727	21,876,441	3,325,957

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Appendix B - Earmarked Reserves

		Transfers In	Transfers Out		Transfers In	Transfers Out	
	Balance as at 31 March 2023 £000	2023/24 £000	2023/24 £000	Balance as at 31 March 2024 £000	2024/25 £000	2024/25 £000	Balance as at 31 March 2025 £000
General Fund:							
Building Control Other	7	0	0	7	0	0	7
Building Control Partnerships	82	0	0	82	0	0	82
Commercialism	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Community Services	321	0	(125)	196	0	0	196
Economic Regeneration	1,348	50	0	1,398	0	0	1,398
Election Services	85	0	0	85	0	0	85
Environmental Services	27	0	0	27	0	0	27
Financial Services	4,705	430	(500)	4,635	89	0	4,724
Housing Schemes	864	0	0	864	0	0	864
ICT/Systems	197	0	0	197	0	0	197
Leisure/Community Safety	115	0	0	115	0	0	115
Local Neighbourhood Partnerships	16	0	0	16	0	0	16
Other	67	0	0	67	14	0	81
Planning & Regeneration	463	0	0	463	136	0	599
Regulatory Services (Partner Share)	85	0	0	85	1	0	86
Shared Services (Severance Costs)	311	0	0	311	0	0	311
Covid-19 (General Covid Grant)	766	0	0	766	0	0	766
Covid-19 (Collection Fund)	1,604	0	0	1,604	0	0	1,604
Shopmobility Donations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Council Tax Hardship Fund	79	0	0	79	0	0	79
Artrix Holding Trust	17	0	0	17	12	0	29
Total General Fund	11,159	480	(625)	11,014	252	0	11,266

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Appendix C - Ward Budget Spending Q1 - Funds Allocated to 31 July

Councillor Ward Fund Balances – 25/26

Activity	Spend	Balance £2,000
Cllr Alan Bailes	0	2,000.00
Cllr Ruth Lambert	0	2,000.00
Cllr Sam Ammar	1,300.00	700.00
Cllr Ester Gray	0	2,000.00
Cllr Peter McDonald	400.00	1,600.00
Cllr Harrison Rone-Clarke	0	2,000.00
Cllr Anita Dale	0	2,000.00
Cllr Webb	2,000.00	0
Cllr Hunter	0	2,000.00
Cllr Rachel Bailes	0	2,000.00
Cllr Sue Baxter	0	2,000.00
Cllr J Clarke	0	2,000.00
Cllr Stephen Colella	0	2,000.00
Cllr J Elledge	0	2,000.00
Cllr Derek Forsythe	0	2,000.00
Cllr D Hopkins	0	2,000.00
Cllr Charlie Hotham	0	2,000.00
Cllr Helen Jones	0	2,000.00
Cllr B Kumar	0	2,000.00
Cllr M Marshall	1,000.00	1,000.00
Cllr Karen May	0	2,000.00
Cllr Bernard McEldowney	500.00	1,500.00

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Activity	Spend	Balance £2,000
Cllr D Nicholl	250.00	1,750.00
Cllr Simon Nock	0	2,000.00
Cllr S Peters	0	2,000.00
Cllr J Robinson	0	2,000.00
Cllr S Robinson	0	2,000.00
Cllr J Stanley	0	2,000.00
Cllr Kit Taylor	0	2,000.00
Cllr Peter Whittaker	0	2,000.00
Cllr S Evans	0	2,000.00
Overall Totals	5,450	56,550

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Appendix D - Q1 Treasury Management Position

1. SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to set out a quarterly update on the Council's Capital and Treasury Management Strategies, including all prudential indicators.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet are asked to:

- Note the Council's Treasury performance for Q1 of the financial year 25/26.
- Note the position in relation to the Council's Prudential indicators.

3. BACKGROUND

Introduction

- 3.1 The Authority has adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice* (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Authority to approve, as a minimum, treasury management semi-annual and annual outturn reports.
- 3.2 This quarterly report provides an additional update and includes the requirement in the 2021 Code of quarterly reporting of the treasury management prudential indicators. The non-treasury prudential indicators are incorporated in the Authority's normal quarterly revenue report.

External Context

- 3.3 **Economic background:** The quarter started to significant financial market volatility as US President Donald Trump announced a wide range of 'reciprocal' trade tariffs in early April, causing equity markets to decline sharply which was subsequently followed by bond markets as investors were increasingly concerned about US fiscal policy. As the UK was included in these increased tariffs, equity and bond markets here were similarly affected by the uncertainty and investor concerns.
- 3.4 President Trump subsequently implemented a 90-day pause on most of the tariffs previously announced, which has been generally positive for both equity and bond markets since, but heightened uncertainty and volatility remained a feature over the period.
- 3.5 UK headline consumer price inflation (CPI) increased over the quarter, rising from an annual rate of 2.6% in March to 3.4% in May, well above the Bank of England's 2% target. The core measure of inflation also increased, from 3.4% to 3.5% over the same period. May's inflation figures were generally lower than in the previous month, however, when

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CPI was 3.5% and core CPI 3.8%. Services inflation was 4.7% in May, a decline from 5.4% in the previous month.

- 3.6 Data released during the period showed the UK economy expanded by 0.7% in the first quarter of the calendar year, following three previous quarters of weaker growth. However, monthly GDP data showed a contraction of 0.3% in April, suggesting growth in the second quarter of the calendar year is unlikely to be as strong as the first.
- 3.7 Labour market data appeared to show a softening in employment conditions as weaker earnings growth was reported for the period February to April 2025, in what would no doubt be welcome news to Bank of England (BoE) policymakers. Regular earnings (excluding bonuses) was 5.2% 3mth/yoy while total earnings was 5.3%. Both the employment and unemployment rates increased, while the economic inactivity rate and number of vacancies fell.
- 3.8 Having started the financial year at 4.5%, the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) cut Bank Rate to 4.25% in May. The 5-4 vote was split with the majority wanting a 25bps cut, two members voting to hold rates at 4.5% and two voting for a 50bps reduction. At the June MPC meeting, the committee voted by a majority of 6-3 to keep rates on hold. The three dissenters wanted an immediate reduction to 4%. This dovish tilt by the Committee is expected to continue and financial market expectations are that the next cut will be in August, in line with the publication of the next quarterly Monetary Policy Report (MPR).
- 3.9 The May version of the MPR highlighted the BoE's view that disinflation in domestic inflation and wage pressures were generally continuing and that a small margin of excess supply had opened in the UK economy, which would help inflation to fall to the Bank's 2% over the medium term. While near-term GDP growth was predicted to be higher than previously forecast in the second quarter of calendar 2025, growth in the same period the following year was trimmed back, partly due to ongoing global trade developments.
- 3.10 Arlingclose, the authority's treasury adviser, maintained its central view that Bank Rate would continue to fall, and that the BoE would focus more on weak GDP growth rather than stickier and above-target inflation. Two more cuts to Bank Rate are expected during 2025, taking the main policy rate to 3.75%, however the balance of risks is deemed to be to the downside as weak consumer sentiment and business confidence and investment impact economic growth.
- 3.11 Despite the uncertainty around US trade policy and repeated calls for action from the US President, the US Federal Reserve held interest rates steady the period, maintaining the Fed Funds Rate at 4.25%-4.50%. The decision in June was the fourth consecutive month where no changes were made to the main interest rate and came despite forecasts from

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Fed policymakers that compared to a few months ago they now expected lower growth, higher unemployment and higher inflation.

- 3.12 The European Central Bank cut rates in June, reducing its main refinancing rate from 2.25% to 2.0%, and representing the eighth cut in just over a year. ECB noted heightened uncertainty in the near-term from trade and that stronger economic growth in the first quarter of the calendar may weaken. Inflation in the region rose to 2.0% in June, up from an eight-month low of 1.9% in the previous month but in line with the ECB's target. Inflation is expected to stay broadly around the 2% target over the next year or so.
- 3.13 **Financial markets:** After the sharp declines seen early in the quarter, sentiment in financial markets showed signs of improvement during the period, but bond and equity markets remained volatile. Early in the period bond yields fell, but then uncertainty from the impact of US trade policy caused bonds to sell-off but from the middle of May onwards, yields have steadily declined, but volatility continues. Equity markets sold off sharply in April but have seen gained back most of the previous declines, with investors seemingly remaining bullish in the face of ongoing uncertainty.
- 3.14 Over the quarter, the 10-year UK benchmark gilt yield started at 4.65% and ended at 4.49% having hit 4.82% early in April and falling to 4.45% by the end of the same month. While the 20-year gilt started at 5.18%, fell to 5.02% a few days later before jumping to 5.31% within a week, and then ending the period at 5.16%. The Sterling Overnight Rate (SONIA) averaged 4.31% over the quarter to 30th June.
- 3.15 **Credit review:** Arlingclose maintained its advised recommended maximum unsecured duration limit on the majority of the banks on its counterparty list at 6 months. The other banks remain on 100 days.
- 3.16 During the quarter, Fitch upgraded NatWest Group and related entities to AA- from A+ due to the generally stronger business profile. Fitch also placed Clydesdale Bank's long-term A- rating on Rating Watch Positive
- 3.17 Moody's downgraded the long-term rating on the United States sovereign to Aa1 in May and also affirmed OP Corporate's rating at Aa3.
- 3.18 Credit default swap prices on UK banks spiked in early April following the US trade tariff announcements but have since generally trended downwards and ended the quarter at levels broadly in line with those in the first quarter of the calendar year and throughout most of 2024.
- 3.19 European banks' CDS prices followed a fairly similar pattern, albeit some German banks are modestly higher compared to the previous quarter. Trade tensions between Canada and the US caused Canadian bank CDS prices to rise over the quarter and remain elevated

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compared to earlier in 2025 and in 2024, while Singaporean and Australian lenders CDS rose initially in April but have since trended downwards, albeit are modestly higher than in previous recent periods.

- 3.20 Overall, at the end of the period CDS prices for all banks on Arlingclose's counterparty list remained within limits deemed satisfactory for maintaining credit advice at current durations.
- 3.21 Financial market volatility is expected to remain a feature, at least in the near term and, credit default swap levels will be monitored for signs of ongoing credit stress. As ever, the institutions and durations on the Authority's counterparty list recommended by Arlingclose remain under constant review.

Local Context

- 3.22 On 31st March 2025, the Authority had £16.89m net borrowing arising from its revenue and capital income and expenditure. The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while balance sheet resources are the underlying resources available for investment. These factors are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Balance Sheet Summary

	31.3.25 Actual £m	31.3.26 Forecast £m
General Fund CFR	31.26	33.94
Total CFR	31.26	33.94
Less: External borrowing**	0	-10.00
Internal borrowing	31.26	23.94
Less: Usable reserves	-11.27	-11.72
Less: Working capital	-3.10	-3.10
Net borrowing	16.89	9.12

* Finance leases, PFI liabilities and transferred debt that form part of the Authority's total debt

** shows only loans to which the Authority is committed and excludes optional refinancing

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- 3.23 The treasury management position at 30th June and the change over the quarter is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Treasury Management Summary

	31.3.25 Balance £m	Movement £m	30.6.25 Balance £m	30.6.25 Rate %
Long-term borrowing				
Short-term borrowing	0	0	0	
Total borrowing	0	0	0	
Short-term investments				
Cash and cash equivalents	4.2	-0.7	3.5	
Total investments	4.2	-0.7	3.5	
Net investments	4.2	-0.7	3.5	

Borrowing Strategy and Activity

- 3.24 As outlined in the treasury strategy, the Authority's chief objective when borrowing has been to strike an appropriately risk balance between securing lower interest costs and achieving cost certainty over the period for which funds are required, with flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Authority's long-term plans change being a secondary objective. The Authority's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio. At the present time short term interest rates are higher than long term interest rates.
- 3.25 Policy interest rates have risen substantially since 2021 although they have largely plateaued over the last year. Over the last quarter gilt yields have risen slightly overall, having had a number of peaks and troughs. There has been downward pressure from lower inflation figures, but also upward pressure from unexpectantly positive economic data. Data from the US continues to impact global markets including UK gilt yields.
- 3.26 The PWLB certainty rate for 10-year maturity loans was 5.38% at the beginning of the period and 5.27% at the end. The lowest available 10-year maturity rate was 5.17% and the highest was 5.56%. Rates for 20-year maturity loans ranged from 5.71% to 6.16% during the period, and 50-year maturity loans from 5.46% to 5.97%. The cost of short-term

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borrowing from other local authorities has been similar to Base Rate during the period at 4.0% to 4.5%.

3.27 CIPFA's 2021 Prudential Code is clear that local authorities must not borrow to invest primarily for financial return and that it is not prudent for local authorities to make any investment or spending decision that will increase the capital financing requirement and so may lead to new borrowing, unless directly and primarily related to the functions of the Authority. PWLB loans are no longer available to local authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield unless these loans are for refinancing purposes. The Authority has no new plans to borrow to invest primarily for financial return.

3.28 **Loans Portfolio:** At 30th June the Authority held no loans, with no movement from 31st March 2025 as per table 3 below, as part of its strategy for funding previous and current years' capital programmes.

Table 3: Borrowing Position

	31.3.25 Balance £m	Net Movement £m	30.6.25 Balance £m
Public Works Loan Board			
Banks (LOBO)			
Banks (fixed term)			
Local authorities (long-term)			
Local authorities (short-term)	0	0	0
Total borrowing	0	0	0

Treasury Investment Activity

3.29 The CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes (revised in 2021) defines treasury management investments as investments that arise from the organisation's cash flows or treasury risk management activity that ultimately represents balances that need to be invested until the cash is required for use in the course of business.

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- 3.30 The Authority does not hold any invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. During the period, the Authority's investment balances ranged between £1.0 and £13.2 million due to timing differences between income and expenditure. The investment position is shown in table 4 below.

Table 4: Treasury Investment Position

	31.3.25 Balance £m	Net Movement £m	31.6.25 Balance £m	31.6.25 Income Return %	31.6.25 Weighted Average Maturity days
Banks & building societies (unsecured)					
Banks & building societies (secured deposits)					
Covered bonds (secured)					
Government	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Local authorities and other govt entities					
Corporate bonds and loans					
Money Market Funds	4.2	-0.7	3.5	3.2%	29
Total investments	4.2	-0.7	3.5		

- 3.31 Both the CIPFA Code and government guidance require the Authority to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its treasury investments before seeking the optimum rate of return, or yield. The Authority's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income.
- 3.32 As demonstrated by the liability benchmark in this report, the Authority expects to be a long-term investor and treasury investments therefore include both short-term low risk instruments to manage day-to-day cash flows and longer-term instruments where limited additional risk is accepted in return for higher investment income to support local public

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services.

- 3.33 Bank Rate remained at 4.25% through the quarter with short term interest rates largely being around this level. The rates on DMADF deposits have been constant at 4.21%.

Non-Treasury Investments

- 3.34 The definition of investments in the Treasury Management Code now covers all the financial assets of the Authority as well as other non-financial assets which the Authority holds primarily for financial return. Investments that do not meet the definition of treasury management investments (i.e. management of surplus cash) are categorised as either for service purposes (made explicitly to further service objectives) and or for commercial purposes (made primarily for financial return).
- 3.35 Investment Guidance issued by the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and Welsh Government also includes within the definition of investments all such assets held partially or wholly for financial return.

Treasury Performance

- 3.36 The Authority measures the financial performance of its treasury management activities both in terms of its impact on the revenue budget and its relationship to benchmark interest rates, as shown in table 5 below.

Table 5: Performance

	Actual £m	Budget £m	Over/ under	Actual %	Benchmark %	Over/ under
Total borrowing	0.0	0.0	0.0			
PFI and Finance leases	0.0	0.0	0.0			
Total debt	0.0	0.0	0.0			
Total treasury investments	3.5	0.0	3.5			
				n/a	n/a	n/a

MRP Regulations

- 3.37 On 10th April 2024 amended legislation and revised statutory guidance were published on Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). The majority of the changes take effect from the

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2025/26 financial year, although there is a requirement that for capital loans given on or after 7th May 2024 sufficient MRP must be charged so that the outstanding Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) in respect of the loan is no higher than the principal outstanding less the Expected Credit Loss (ECL) charge for that loan.

- 3.38 The regulations also require that local authorities cannot exclude any amount of their CFR from their MRP calculation unless by an exception set out in law. Capital receipts cannot be used to directly replace, in whole or part, the prudent charge to revenue for MRP (there are specific exceptions for capital loans and leased assets).

Compliance

- 3.39 The Director of Resources and Section 151 officer reports that all treasury management activities undertaken during the quarter complied fully with the principles in the Treasury Management Code and the Authority's approved Treasury Management Strategy. Compliance with specific investment limits is demonstrated in table 6 below.

Table 6: Investment Limits

	2025/26 Maximum	30.6.25 Actual	2025/26 Limit	Complied? Yes/No
Any single organisation, except the UK Government	£4m each			
UK Central Government	Unlimited			
Unsecured investments with banks and building societies	£2.5m in total			
Loans to unrated corporates	£1m in total			
Money Market Funds	£20m in total	3.5m		Yes
Foreign countries	£5m per country			
Real Estate Investment Trusts	£2.5m in total			

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- 3.40 Compliance with the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary for external debt is demonstrated in table 7 below.

Table 7: Debt and the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary

	Q1 2025/26 Maximum	30.6.25 Actual	2025/26 Operational Boundary	2025/26 Authorised Limit	Complied? Yes/No
Borrowing	0m	0m	55,000	60,000	Yes
PFI and Finance Leases	Nil	Nil	1,000	1,000	Yes
Total debt	0m	0m	56,000	61,000	

- 3.41 Since the operational boundary is a management tool for in-year monitoring it is not significant if the operational boundary is breached on occasions due to variations in cash flow, and this is not counted as a compliance failure

Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

- 3.42 As required by the 2021 CIPFA Treasury Management Code, the Authority monitors and measures the following treasury management prudential indicators.

Liability Benchmark

- 3.43 This indicator compares the Authority's actual existing borrowing against a liability benchmark that has been calculated to show the lowest risk level of borrowing. The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term investor in the future, and so shape its strategic focus and decision making. It represents an estimate of the cumulative amount of external borrowing the Council must hold to fund its current capital and revenue plans while keeping treasury investments at the minimum level of £2m required to manage day-to-day cash flow

	31.3.25 Actual	31.3.26 Forecast	31.3.27 Forecast	31.3.28 Forecast
Loans CFR	31.26	34.54	36.26	38.12
Less: Usable Reserves	-11.27	-11.14	-10.42	-9.86
Less: Working Capital	-3.10	-3.10	-3.10	-3.10
Net loans requirement	16.89	20.30	22.74	25.16

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Plus: Liquidity allowance	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20
Liability benchmark	17.09	20.50	22.94	25.36
Existing borrowing	0	6.20	11.10	12.95

- 3.44 Following on from the medium-term forecast above, the long-term liability benchmark assumes capital expenditure funded by borrowing of £12.95m, minimum revenue provision on new capital expenditure based on a 40-year asset life and income, expenditure and reserves all increasing by inflation of 2.0% p.a. This is shown in the chart below together with the maturity profile of the Authority's existing borrowing. Presently borrowing has been delivered through the use of internal resources and the Council has no long-term borrowing.

Maturity Structure of Borrowing

- 3.45 This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of all borrowing were:

	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	30.6.25 Actual	Complied?
Under 12 months	50%	0%	0%	Yes
12 months and within 24 months	50%	0%	0%	Yes
24 months and within 5 years	50%	0%	0%	Yes

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5 years and within 10 years	50%	0%	0%	Yes
10 years and above	100%	0%	0%	Yes

- 3.46 Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment.

Long-term Treasury Management Investments

- 3.47 The purpose of this indicator is to control the Authority's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The prudential limits on the long-term treasury management limits are:

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	No fixed date
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£0.5m	£0.5m	£0.5m	£0.5m
Actual principal invested beyond year end	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Complied?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

- 3.48 Long-term investments with no fixed maturity date include strategic pooled funds, real estate investment trusts and directly held equity but exclude money market funds and bank accounts with no fixed maturity date as these are considered short-term.

Additional indicators

Security:

- 3.49 The Authority has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to credit risk by monitoring the value-weighted average credit rating of its investment portfolio. This is calculated by applying a score to each investment (AAA=1, AA+=2, etc.) and taking the arithmetic average, weighted by the size of each investment. Unrated investments are assigned a score based on their perceived risk.

	2025/26 Target	30.6.25 Actual	Complied?
Portfolio average credit rating	A	UK Govt	Yes

Liquidity:

- 3.50 The Authority has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to liquidity risk by monitoring the amount of cash available to meet unexpected payments within a rolling three-month period, without additional borrowing.

	30.6.25 Actual	2025/26 Target	Complied?
Total cash available within 3 months	Nil	Nil	Yes
Total sum borrowed in past 3 months without prior notice	Nil	Nil	Yes

Interest Rate Exposures:

- 3.51 This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to interest rate risk.

Interest rate risk indicator	2025/26 Target	30.6.25 Actual	Complied?
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>rise</u> in interest rates	500,000	0	Yes
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>fall</u> in interest rates	500,000	0	Yes

- 3.52 For context, the changes in interest rates during the quarter were:

	<u>01/04/25</u>	<u>30/06/25</u>
Bank Rate	4.50%	4.25%
1-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	4.82%	4.50%
5-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	4.94%	4.70%
10-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	5.38%	5.27%
20-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	5.88%	5.88%
50-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	5.63%	5.71%

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- 3.53 The impact of a change in interest rates is calculated on the assumption that maturing loans and investment will be replaced at new market rates.

4. IMPLICATIONS

Legal Implications

- 4.1 A number of statutes governing the provision of services covered by this report contain express powers or duties to charge for services. Where an express power to charge does not exist, the Council has the power under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 to charge where the activity is incidental or conducive to or calculated to facilitate the Councils statutory function.

Service / Operational Implications

- 4.2 Monitoring is undertaken to ensure that income targets are achieved, with Treasury Management activities taking place on a daily basis.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 4.3 The only impact of treasury transactions is in respect of ethical investment linked to the Councils investment counterparties. Presently the Council has a limited counterparty list based on financial risk to the Authority.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 There is always significant risk in relation to treasury transactions, this is why Councils appoint Treasury advisors, which in the case of Bromsgrove is Arlingclose. In addition, there is the requirement in this area to provide an Annual Strategy report containing indicators/limits that must be met, a quarterly update and closure report all of which must be reported to full Council.

6. APPENDICES

None

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

MTFP 2025/26 – February 2025 which contains this year's Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy and MRP Policy.

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AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Appendix E - Procurement Pipeline

Title	Council	Contract Value
Fleet Replacement	Bromsgrove	£2,846,000.00
Wheeled Bin Purchase, Delivery, and Collection for Recycling of existing wheeled bins.	Bromsgrove	£2,200,000.00
Refuse and Recycling products	Bromsgrove	£700,000.00
Replacement Parking Machines	Bromsgrove	£517,000.00
Microsoft Licenses	Bromsgrove	£483,000.00
PROVIDE Kennelling of Dogs	Bromsgrove	£450,000.00
Planning/ GIS/ Gazetteer	Bromsgrove	£400,000.00
Supply of HVO fuel	Bromsgrove	£300,000.00
Air Quality Analysers	Bromsgrove	£250,000.00
Data Access Services	Bromsgrove	£200,000.00
Domestic Food Waste Collection Contract	Joint	£23,000,000.00
Hybrid Mail Solution - sending letters	Joint	£2,500,000.00
Corporate Building Electrical contract	Joint	£2,500,000.00
Food Caddy Purchase & Delivery	Joint	£1,300,000.00
Public Space CCTV Maintenance	Joint	£400,000.00
Fire alarm, Extinguisher contract service contract	Joint	£380,000.00
Lifeline Call handling	Joint	£200,000.00

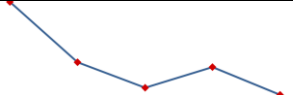

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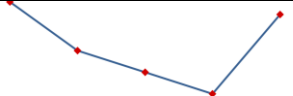
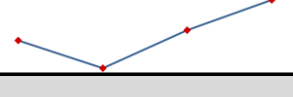
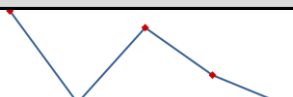
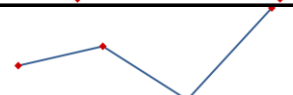
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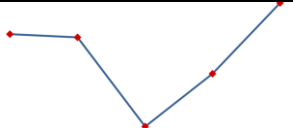
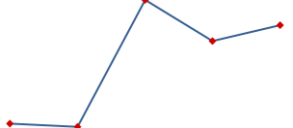
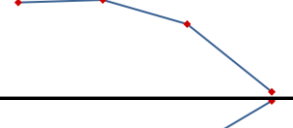
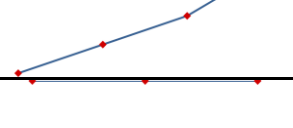
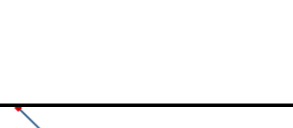
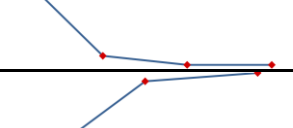
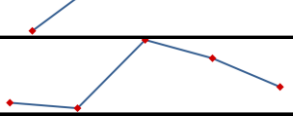

Economic Development

Measure name	Type	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Target	Average	Aim	Trend
Business grant funding being taken up- start up	£	£38,307.06	£13,486.53	£2,954.90	£11,406.55	£2,599.29			⬆️	
Business grant funding being taken up- growth	£	£13,594.67	£21,561.60	£14,102.87	£93,706.60	£3,487.60			⬆️	


Environment

Measure name	Type	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Target	Average	Aim	Trend
% household waste recycled or composted	%	55.98	45.83	41.34	36.79	53.36		44%	⬆️	
# of flytips	#	483	545	484	568	635			⬇️	
The increase in the number of flytips is believed to have been influenced by the bin strikes in Birmingham.										
Average time taken to remove fly-tipping reported	# days	6.3	3	5.7	4	3	5		⬇️	
No. of households supported by energy advice service (AoE)	#		291	320	240	377			⬆️	



Housing

Measure name	Type	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Target	Average	Aim	Trend
% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks (or agreed extension)	%	89.2	88.8	78.5	84.6	92.8	60%		⬆️	
% of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks (or agreed extension)	%	84.6	84.5	88.5	87.2	87.7	70%		⬆️	
No. of planning enforcement actions taken- cases opened	#	23	36	37	28	3				
No. of planning enforcement actions taken- cases closed	#	44	30	34	38	45				
% of Building Control applications determined within 5 weeks (or 8 weeks on agreement)	%			100	100	100	85		⬆️	
Number of threatened with homelessness preventions	#	18	9	8	8	12				
No. of households in temporary accommodation- snapshot	#			23	33	34			⬇️	
Cost of B & B placements	£	£24,621.29	£22,468.14	£50,241.62	£42,711.24	£31,132.64			⬇️	

Infrastructure

Measure name	Type	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Target	Average	Aim	Trend
% of green flags awarded	%			50	50	50	75		⬆️	
Sanders Park and Lickey End have green flags; unfortunately St Chads Park was not successful in 2025 but aspirations are to achieve the green flag for 2026.										

Community Safety

Measure name	Type	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Target	Average	Aim	Trend
# crimes recorded (excluding ASB)	#	1317	1346	1329	1275	Not available			⬆️	
ASB	#	327	342	208	238	Not available			⬆️	

Organisational Priorities

Measure name	Type	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Target	Average	Aim	Trend
% of media enquiries responded to within agreed timescales	#			100	100	100	100		⬆️	
Council Tax Collection Rate	%	28.85%	56.65%	84.14%	98.12%	28.80%	28.89%		⬆️	
Business Rates Collection Rate	%	25.82%	53.13%	81.06%	98.18%	28.34%	25.84%		⬆️	
Housing Benefit: Speed of processing new claims	# days	24	18.3	17	11.7	19.7		20	⬇️	
Housing Benefit: Speed of processing change of circumstances	# days	10.3	10.7	9.3	4.7	9.7		8	⬇️	
The national average for processing changes in circumstances on Housing Benefit claims has increased since the introduction of HBAA (Housing Benefit Award Accuracy) and also due to the migration of claims over to Universal Credit. It is recognised that LA's are being left with the more complex claims, and therefore processing times have increased nationally.										
Housing Benefit: Local Authority error rate	%	0.45	0.32	0.31	0.26	0.48	0.48		⬇️	
% complaints answered within agreed timescales	%	75	83.3	72.7	68.8	75	100%		⬆️	
Staff turnover rates	%	8.90%	9.40%	8.50%	9.80%	10.10%		13.40%	⬇️	
Sickness absence- long term	# days per FTE	1.65	3.24	5.03	6.4	2.88		7.8	⬇️	

Category	Quarter Total	Same Quarter Previous Year	Difference
Total no. of visits including EA cards and non-card holders	102739	109566	-6,827
EA Cards added in this period	1951	1862	89
Total EA Cards to date	79904	73202	6,702
No. of Gym members	2749	2838	-89
Swimming Lessons – children enrolled on scheme	1242	1357	-115
Swim Lesson Occupancy	73%	83%	-10%
RIDDOR Reportable Events	0	0	0

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Expansion of Commercial Waste Collection Service

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Whittaker
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Simon Parry
Report Author	Job Title: Environmental Services Manager Contact email: matthew.austin@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 548206
Wards Affected	N/A
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Council Priority	Economic Development Environment Financial Stability
Non-Key Decision	
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 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is asked to **RECOMMEND** that:

- 1) Capital Funding of £489,760 be added to the Capital Programme for 2026/27 to purchase two Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCV's)
- 2) The Council allocates Capital funding of £35,000 annually in the Medium-Term Financial Plan from the 2025/26 financial year to fund wheeled bins for Commercial Services.
- 3) The Council allocate £334,342 Revenue Funding in the Medium-Term Financial Plan to fund operational costs of providing the expanded service from 2025/26.

- 4) The Council allocate £100,000 Revenue Funding in the Medium-Term Financial Plan across 2025/26 and 2026/27 for interim vehicle hire.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The Council has operated a Commercial Waste Collection Service since 2015, which has grown significantly from 547 to 1,203 contracted customers.
- 2.2. From 31st March 2025, the Environment Act 2021 requires businesses with more than 10 employees to separate food waste. This will expand to micro-businesses (with fewer than 10 employees) by 2027. This statutory change will reshape the commercial waste landscape, driving demand for dedicated commercial food waste services.
- 2.3. If the Council cannot provide a compliant service, up to 80% of its current commercial customers may be forced to contract with alternative providers. This would place at risk up to £825,000 of annual income.
- 2.4. From April 2027, the exemption supporting micro businesses will end, and they will also be required to have food waste and the full range of recycling services in place.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1. Between 2021 and 2024, the Commercial Service delivered a surplus each year, but saw increased costs in 2023/24 as a result of wider fleet and maintenance issues that impacted on the resilience of the service and required increased use of hire vehicles.
- 3.2. In 2024/25, despite generating robust income, the service experienced an additional financial pressure and saw maintenance costs increase significantly, as the Council had to outsource repairs and maintenance that would normally be managed internally at a reduced cost as part of wider service arrangements across the Council's fleet.

-
- 3.3. With the recent successful recruitment to vacant positions within the workshop, and delivery of a new Domestic Waste Fleet in late 2025, these expenses are expected to reduce considerably and see a return to the Council's previous financial performance levels.
 - 3.4. However, the unexpected exit of Dudley Metropolitan Council from the commercial waste market in March 2025 has created an immediate opportunity as well as a pressure on the Council's service.
 - 3.5. Businesses in this area are keen to work with a Local Authority, and actively sought our support as a nearby LA waste provider, as they have a strong social responsibility that gives us the potential to further increase our customer base in this area to maximise the efficiency of operating the service in a high-density area for businesses.
 - 3.6. With over £135,000 of new enquiries.50+ new customers signed by April 2025, this has left the existing service with little to no capacity to take on additional customers and requires full availability of staff and vehicles to operate each week, as there is no surplus to give resilience to the service.
 - 3.7. Key issues include:
 - 3.7.1. Vehicle pressure: Overreliance on pool vehicles and hire vehicles due to breakdowns or servicing delays.
 - 3.7.2. Staffing constraints: Limited resilience due to reliance on spare "pool" staff shared with Domestic Waste, and agency workers.
 - 3.7.3. Limited recycling capacity: Only one recycling RCV restricts expansion and efficiency gains.
 - 3.7.4. Food waste capacity limitations: The current vehicle capacity is limited, and insufficient to support all of the Council's existing customers if they were to request the service.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1. By investing in additional vehicles and staff to support a dedicated food waste collection service and increase capacity on our existing residual

and recycling services, this will make the Commercial Services Team largely self-sufficient for staffing and vehicles, better able to manage staffing and vehicle shortages that can arise in day-to-day service, without the need for support from the Domestic Waste service or additional expensive agency staff or vehicle hire to maintain services.

- 4.2. Delivering a sustainable food waste collection service, and increasing capacity within our existing residual and recycling waste services, will support our customer base with a single contract for all their legally mandated waste needs; and safeguard current and future income.
- 4.3. By increasing capacity to support customers to recycle more, as well as benefitting the environment, we can also reduce the cost of disposal by approximately 50%, benefitting businesses and the Council alike as savings can be passed on.
- 4.4. Given the number of customers and size of the service, which will effectively double in staffing with this investment in the service, there is a need for more support in managing the service and communicating with both new and existing customers to continue providing a high-quality service.
- 4.5. Waste collection services are subject to strict environmental, health & safety, and waste disposal regulations, and require specific focus to manage these risks alongside the maintenance of a reliable, responsive service to customers.
- 4.6. With the increase in staff working across variable shifts each week to make best use of Council vehicles, there is an increased need to plan work, carry out training, performance monitoring, and support staff welfare in order to support the successful delivery of the service and manage issues that may impact on this such as sickness, performance, or disciplinary matters.
- 4.7. Service failures can quickly result in complaints or lost contracts, and compliance failures can result in significant penalties or even the loss of

our authority to operate a vehicle fleet, which would impact on all services.

4.8. Appointing a new Commercial Waste Coordinator will address these daily risks ensuring that services are delivered to schedule and any issues are identified quickly and acted upon, whilst the Commercial Services Manager develops new business opportunities and uses performance data to manage costs and maximise income whilst maintaining high standards of service.

4.9. New vehicles may take up to 12 months to arrive after ordering, and with minimal spare resource across our existing Commercial and Domestic Fleet, interim use of hire vehicles will support our existing services and allow for continued growth and new partnerships.

4.10. Expansion of services will require additional investment in wheeled bins for new customers, and whilst the cost of these is recouped as part of the first year of service, the additional capital funding will ensure that income and expenditure can be accurately monitored against each contract.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1. By 2027/28, the service is forecast to deliver a net surplus annually, with year-on-year growth driven by legislative compliance, customer retention, and operational efficiency. Any surplus is reinvested in service delivery.

6. FINANCIAL RISK

6.1. The forecasting shown here is based on the expected growth of the service using the additional capacity provided by more staff and vehicles.

6.2. Calculations on expected income linked to our existing residual and recycling service have been based on the rate of growth achieved from previous expansion of the service, as well as a review of areas that have

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already made enquiries when their existing contracted arrangements with other providers finish in March 2026, so come with a high level of confidence.

- 6.3. Forecasting on Food Waste income has been calculated based on analysis of our customer base, and the proportion of those customers that are now required to make dedicated food waste arrangements.
- 6.4. Having carried out trials with a proportion of our customer base in 2024, we have a good understanding of the operational and disposal costs associated with operating a dedicated food waste collection service, and have forecast our costs and income based on a 25% take up of the food waste service by existing customers in 2025/26, which we have already achieved, but which relies on availability of a suitable vehicle from our existing combined Commercial and Domestic fleet and so remains a pressure on services to maintain, and so needs the additional resource to give security to our wider services.
- 6.5. During 2026/27 and 2027/28 we have forecast conservative estimates on a proportional increase in take up of the new service that the new resources will support us to actively promote and transition customers across to, but we hope to exceed this forecasting through our engagement with customers, and expected pressure from DEFRA on businesses to evidence their compliance with their responsibilities under the Environment Act 2021 and Simpler Recycling requirements.
- 6.6. This remains the highest area of risk around income generation in 2026/27 and 2027/28, but will be offset by a reduction in operating costs if new business is not secured as forecast.
- 6.7. This will also be offset by continued income generation on our existing and well-established residual and recycling service, which has sufficient surplus to cover these costs in 2026/27 and 2027/28 based on current pricings.
- 6.8. As our fees and charges are set on an annual basis, we also have the ability to adjust our pricing to ensure that external factors such as fuel

prices and changes to disposal costs are factored in to our income generation, and this will be closely monitored and reviewed as part of managing this in the coming years to ensure the Council is not subsidising the service either directly or indirectly through use of assets from the Domestic Waste service.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. Under Section 45 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Local Authorities have a legal duty as the Waste Collection Authority to arrange for the collection of commercial waste from premises in its area if requested, for which a reasonable charge may be made. Surplus generated in this way is used to offset wider costs of providing services.
- 7.2. Under Section 57 of the Environment Act 2021, this duty is expanded to include all recyclable waste streams, including food waste.
- 7.3. The Local Government Act 2003, and the Local Government Power to Trade Order 2009 enables councils in England to trade in activities related to their ordinary functions on a commercial basis with a view to profit through a company.

8. OTHER – IMPLICATIONS

8.1. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

- 8.1.1. The duty to collect Commercial Waste will remain unaffected by Local Government Reorganisation, and similar expansion is being undertaken by Worcester City Council, Wyre Forest District Council, and Malvern District Council, with expanded Commercial services planned for 2026/27 to support the additional requirements on local businesses.
- 8.1.2. Under LGR, Commercial Services will be merged, transforming five independent Commercial Waste teams into either one or two considerably larger teams, with a much larger customer base that will give opportunities for efficiencies related to the scale of the new

service(s), as well as increased resilience as a result of a larger workforce and dedicated fleet.

8.1.3. To continue expanding and generate a true income for the Council, the service will need to operate under an alternate model in order to support generating business as a profit-making exercise, as the service is currently pushing the limits of what it can do under the Local Government Act 2003 and the duty under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, which is focused on cost recovery related to services rather than income.

8.1.4. There are a number of potential trading vehicles to undertake commercial ventures¹ and offer wider protection to the Local Authority in the future, and the resources available to the new authority/authorities will have greater self-sufficiency than is possible in smaller teams as operated by the existing District and Borough Councils, supporting greater income generation and profits.

8.1.5. Bromsgrove's Commercial Service operates across a wider geographic area and has a larger customer base than the other Worcestershire LA's, which will support a more commercial evolution of the service to support public finances with a sustainable income, and a trading arm was under consideration alongside future expansion of the service prior to LGR to maximise this potential as part of the service becoming fully self-sufficient.

8.1.6. This investment in the Bromsgrove Commercial Service will deliver a return on investment for Bromsgrove District Council during 2026/27 and 2027/28, and will support the service to take a

- ¹ Private Company Limited by Shares (CLS), Private Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG), Community Interest Company (CIC), Industrial & Provident Society (IPS) for Community Benefit (BenCom), Limited Liability Partnership (LLP), Shell/Hybrid Company

leading role in the development of a new combined service under whichever model of Local Government we are operating under moving forwards.

8.2. Relevant Council Priority

8.2.1. The Council Plan sets out the following priorities relevant to this proposal:

- Economic Development
- Supporting businesses
- Environment
- Implementing the Environment Act 2021 (Waste)
- Financial Stability
- Income Generation

8.3. Climate Change Implications

8.3.1. Businesses now have a legal duty to separate their waste to ensure that waste is recycled where possible, and provision of this service locally will reduce the environmental impact of national waste collection organisations servicing local businesses.

8.3.2. As part of the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration, engaging with businesses about their waste can help influence how they manage this locally, giving assurance that recycling will be processed effectively. This is co-ordinated through disposal arrangements within Worcestershire, involving Worcestershire County Council as the local Waste Disposal Authority. The Council can also work in partnership with customers to consider how they can reduce their waste and support the environment as well as meet their legal responsibilities.

9. Equalities and Diversity Implications

9.1. The Commercial Waste collection service is offered to businesses and commercial premises based on their needs, and requirements. As such

the Council does not discriminate against any existing or potential customers.

9.2. The addition of a Coordinator role to the Commercial Waste Team will give greater capacity to engage with customers and ensure that the Council is delivering services to the expected standard, and any requirements or issues linked to Equality and Diversity can be supported and taken into account where identified.

9.3. The Council offers a range of methods for communication to support customers in their dealings with the authority, including in-person, telephone and digital communication.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT

10.1. Below are the risks that this proposal seeks to mitigate, and may arise if action is not taken:

10.2. Loss of Customers – The current service will not be able to support all our existing customers to meet their legal responsibilities regarding separation of food waste, increasing the likelihood of them moving to a different waste contractor.

- Private Waste Contractors are constantly communicating with our customers seeking additional business and offering introductory discounts to transfer to their services.
- Over the next two years this would threaten up to £450,000 of annual income linked to our largest customers, with further losses arising from smaller customers.

10.3. Increased cost to local businesses in managing waste – The current service is reliant on all vehicles and staff being available at all times, with no capacity to accommodate standard operational pressures due to staff sickness and vehicle breakdowns or scheduled maintenance, and is unable to rely on the Domestic Waste team to provide contingency support due to pressures from new housing in the District.

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- This is already increasing our operational costs by approximately £60,000 in 2025/26, which will need to be passed on to our customers from 2026/27 if this cannot be offset against further business expansion, reducing our viability on a reduced service in comparison with the private sector.
 - Third party waste contractors typically offer competitive rates to attract new business, but lock them into longer term contracts with significant price increases during subsequent years, whereas we provide a more flexible service and balance our prices annually to ensure that we are supporting businesses and sharing benefits arising from reduced costs that can be achieved by recycling more, and reducing the volume of residual waste which is the most costly way to dispose of waste.
- 10.4. Reputational Damage – Without investment to support the development of the service, the current service will not be able to meet our customers needs, and existing resource pressures increase the likelihood of missed collections for customers.

11. Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Exempt Information

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REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Peter Whittaker	2/9/2025
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Simon Parry	2/9/2025
Financial Services	Bev Docherty Senior Finance Business Partner	21/8/25
Legal Services	Nicola Cummings	18/08/25
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	N/A	N/A
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	Matt Eccles	Circulated 7/8/25

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY 23RD JULY 2025, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors K.J. May (Leader), S. J. Baxter (Deputy Leader),
B. McEldowney, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

Observers: Councillor P. M. McDonald - Chairman of the Overview
and Scrutiny Board

Councillor S.T. Nock - Vice-Chairman of the Overview and
Scrutiny Board

Officers: Mr J. Leach, Mr B. Watson, Ms R. Egan, Mr M. Cox,
Mrs L. Berry, Mrs. R. Green, Mr. C. Poole, Ms. C. Hornblow and
Mrs J. Gresham.

24/25 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K. Taylor.

25/25 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

26/25 **REVOCATION OF THE BROMSGROVE ROAD AND LICKEY END AIR
QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA**

The Technical Services Manager from Worcestershire Regulatory
Services (WRS) presented the report for Members' consideration.

During the presentation of the report, it was noted that the Air Quality
Management Areas (AQMA) at Lickey End and Redditch Road,
Bromsgrove had been declared as AQMA for some time.

Following an update of national policy in respect of revocation of AQMA
by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) it
had been deemed necessary to revoke AQMA which had not seen
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO²) exceedances for over five consecutive years.
Officers explained that there had been no exceedance of NO² at both of
these sites for some time. With the last exceedance for Lickey End in
2014 and for Redditch Road, Bromsgrove in 2016.

Should these two AQMAs be revoked this would result in only one remaining AQMA within the District, at Worcester Road. This site was subject to an Air Quality Action Plan and continued monitoring would take place at this site. It was noted that monitoring would also continue to take place at other sites across the District.

Cabinet was informed that a Behaviour Change Officer at WRS was working within the District to educate and influence behaviour changes with residents across the area. This included schools and other organisations in order to educate young people in the importance of air quality for the future with a view for them to influence their parents' behaviour.

Following the presentation of the report, concerns were raised by Members regarding the Lickey End AQMA and the revocation of this site. Of particular concern was the potential decrease in air quality following the closure of School Lane due to infrastructure changes and subsequent diversions now being in place. It was noted that there was significant congestion at this location which might increase NO² emissions in the future. Officers explained that congestion would not necessarily result in increased emissions that were an issue to air quality and that this site would still be subject to monitoring going forward.

It was suggested that a potential site for monitoring along the A38 where there had been recent changes to the road layout, resulting in the homes being closer to the road, which could mean a potential increase in poor air quality. Monitoring around this location would provide surety for the residents that this location was still a safe place in terms of air quality.

Some Members expressed that the revocation of these two AQMAs was positive for the District in that air quality was improving. It was reiterated that these sites would continue to be monitored closely to see if there were any future exceedances and to carry out any necessary work should this be the case. Officers reported that real time monitoring data for specific locations could be accessed on the WRS website.

There were also concerns raised in terms of the impact with current road closures within Bromsgrove by Worcestershire County Council (WCC). It was reported that these closures had not only greatly impacted on congestion, but they had also impacted on businesses located within the Town Centre.

The Chief Executive Officer proposed that a letter be written on behalf of the Council to WCC to express the concerns raised at this meeting in

respect of congestion and the impact the road closures had had on the Town Centre.

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

27/25

BROMSGROVE TOWN CENTRE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The Bromsgrove Centres Manager presented the Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategic Framework report for the consideration of Cabinet.

The Bromsgrove Town Centre Framework had been designed as a guiding document to anchor several Bromsgrove Town Centre strategies approved in recent years such as Bromsgrove Centres' Strategy, the Strategic Car Parking Review and Bromsgrove 2040 Vision.

Several engagement sessions had taken place for stakeholders to inform the development of the Framework. A dedicated Cabinet Advisory Group (CAG) meeting had also taken place for Cabinet in order to engage with all elected Members within the Council to understand their perspectives.

Contained within the Framework was a comprehensive delivery structure overseen by a Town Centre Steering Group (TCSG) to monitor milestones, evaluate resource implications and budgets, in addition to the formation of the Business Improvement District (BID) for the Town Centre.

Members welcomed the Framework and noted the inclusive process taken to develop the Framework document. During the discussion, timelines for the establishment of the TCSG and BID for the Town Centre were queried by Members. Officers confirmed the TCSG would be in place by the end of 2025. A feasibility study for the BID for the Town Centre would take place immediately with a view to it being in place as soon as possible.

During consideration of this item, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was invited to address the Cabinet on behalf of the Board. Members were advised that this report had been pre-scrutinised at a meeting of the Board held on 22nd July 2025. The Board had been pleased with the proposed Framework and had felt that it was a positive step forward for the Town Centre. It was confirmed that no

recommendations had been made by the Board as a result of the pre-scrutiny of the report.

The Assistant Director Regeneration & Property Services explained that the Communications team would be contacted to ensure that some communications were provided to residents and that the Framework would be placed on the Bromsgrove District Council's website.

RESOLVED that

The Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategic Framework be approved.

28/25

FINANCIAL OUTTURN REPORT AND Q4 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT 2024/2025

The Leader invited the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, to present to the discussions in respect of the pre-scrutiny of the Financial Outturn Report and Quarter Four Performance Monitoring Report 2024/2025, which had taken place at a Finance and Budget Working Group meeting on 17th July 2025 and at the Board meeting held on 22nd 2025.

In doing so, Members were informed that during consideration of the report, 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 needed was in the 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 be helpful to better understand the financial position of the Council. This pre-scrutiny had resulted in a recommendation being made by the Board as follows:

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet 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 of the action(s) being taken to address the issue and the officer(s) responsible

iii. information on recharge amounts.

The Cabinet Member for Finance welcomed the recommendation from the Board and felt that this was necessary in order for Members to 'drill down' into future information presented. It was noted that Cabinet Members would be required to take ownership and have a clear understanding of the spending across their specific portfolios in the future.

The Deputy Chief Executive informed the Cabinet that in the future there would be a need to present not only the 'approved' budget in these reports but also the 'working' budget which would provide a more accurate picture of any variances, carry forwards and burdens experienced within the financial year. These changes had been discussed with the Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services who understood that this would provide extra detail. It was further noted that the changes to these reports would be an iterative process, and that feedback was welcomed when considering these reports in the future, in order to ensure that useful and transparent data was provided to Members.

In terms of the performance monitoring data, significant improvements had been made. This data, however, would be provided in a separate report going forward. Although it was confirmed that both financial and performance monitoring reports would be considered within the same committee cycle, in order to provide a clear picture and highlight the links between what the Council was spending and what it was doing.

The Policy Manager presented the performance monitoring data contained within the report. The way in which performance data was monitored and presented had evolved which had resulted in data that was easier to interpret. This was an ongoing process and would continue to be developed.

Cabinet was informed that there were still gaps within some areas of the data and that Officers were working with managers to ensure these gaps were filled. The Power BI dashboard continued to be developed to ensure that real time data could be tracked by Members and, if appropriate for some performance measures, by members of the public on the Bromsgrove District Council website. In addition to this it was reported that a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rating model would continue to be used to monitor and investigate areas where performance was unsatisfactory. Any areas that were not 'green rated' would be investigated further by Officers.

There was a query in respect of the Members Ward Budget Funds and whether there was the possibility to carry forward funds to future years. Although it was stated that in some exceptional cases this might be possible this was a fund that was set up to be accessed within a specific financial year and any leftover monies would go back into the General Fund at the end of the relevant financial year.

Although reminders had been sent out to Members regarding the Members Ward Budget Funds throughout the year, financial reporting on the Members Ward Budget Funds including the levels of funding spent by Members so far within the year, would be included in future reports as it would be helpful to ensure that all Members were aware of any spent and remaining funding.

The criteria for allocation of Members' Ward funding was robust and if any projects had been rejected throughout the year, it was likely due to not meeting the criteria, such as a request being made for funding to an individual rather than to an organisation.

Members thanked Officers for their work on this report and were pleased with the dynamic approach being taken for future reports.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the 2024/25 outturn position in relation to revenue budgets was a revenue underspend of £129k and that this excluded the Balance Sheet Monitoring for the Treasury Monitoring Report as this was to be taken as a separate report.
- 2) the 2024/25 outturn position in relation to Capital expenditure was £9.53m against a total an approved programme of £7.07m.
- 3) to note the Members Ward Budget allocation position at the year ending 31 March 2025 was approved allocations at £55,812.
- 4) to note the outturn position in respect of the General Fund Reserves which was £14.299m on the 31 March 2025.
- 5) to note the outturn position in respect of Earmarked Reserves.
- 6) there was an updated procurements position set out in Appendix D, with any new items over £200k to be included on the forward plan.

- 7) the Quarter 4 Performance data for the period January to March 2025 be noted; and
- 8) future Quarterly Financial Outturn and Performance reports provided:
 - i. a detailed narrative in terms of variance for each specific service area
 - ii. for each area of high variance provide detail of the action(s) being taken to address the issue and the officer(s) responsible
 - iii. information on recharge amounts.

29/25

TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT 2024/2025

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the Treasury Management Outturn Report 2024/2025 for Members' consideration. This was a highly technical report and provided narrative including information from the Council's Treasury Management advisors, Arlingclose.

It was reported that the Authority was debt free and had not breached any prudential indicators throughout the year.

Members were reassured that the Council was in a strong position and had made considered and suitable investments as part of its Treasury Management Strategy.

RECOMMENDED that

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

30/25

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

Members considered the contents of the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 17th June 2025. It was noted that there were no outstanding recommendations contained within the minutes.

The Chairman of the Board took the opportunity to explain to Cabinet that at the Board meeting held on 22nd July 2025, there had been a recommendation made in respect of Bin Recycling facilities on Bromsgrove High Street and the potential for them to be replaced. It was noted that this recommendation would be considered by Cabinet at its next meeting in September.

It was also reported that there had been discussions at the Finance and Budget Working Group during consideration of the Financial Outturn and Quarter Four Performance Monitoring 2024/25 report, in that there was a variance as the result of an underspend in salary costs for the Assistant Director Business Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Services position. Some Members had been unaware that this position was currently vacant and that the previous Officer no longer worked for the Authority. Members were informed that the recruitment process would start shortly for this role. It was suggested that the organisation chart be updated to reflect this and that Members be kept informed of any staff that ceased to work for the Council.

The Chief Executive also reported that there were some up to date organisation charts and contact details available and undertook to circulate them to Members following the meeting.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 17th June 2025 be noted.

31/25

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.

32/25

TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON 18TH JUNE 2025

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 18th June 2025 were submitted for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 18th June 2025 be approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

Agenda Item 12

Cabinet
23rd July 2025

The meeting closed at 6.52 p.m.

Chairman

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY 10TH SEPTEMBER 2025, AT 6.06 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors K.J. May (Leader), S. J. Baxter (Deputy Leader), B. McEldowney, K. Taylor (during Minute No's 33/25 to 39/25 and 41/25 to 43/25), S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

Observers: Councillor S. T. Nock, Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Councillor S. R. Colella, Councillor C. A. Hotham and Councillor J. W. Robinson

Officers: Mr. J. Leach, Mr. B. Watson, Mrs. C. Felton, Mrs. R. Bamford, Mr. S. Parry, Mrs. R. Green, Ms. T. Ainscough, Mr. M. Cox and Mrs. P. Ross

It was noted that at the discretion of the Leader, that the running order of the agenda was altered. Minute number 37/25 – Urgent Business to be considered after Minute number 36/24 - Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 22nd July 2025.

33/25 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

However, it was noted that Councillor P. J. Whittaker had been delayed due to the traffic.

34/25 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

35/25 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON 23RD JULY 2025**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 23rd July were submitted for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 23rd July 2025 be approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

36/25 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 22ND JULY 2025**

The Leader invited Councillor S. T. Nock in his capacity as Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board to address Members on the recommendation within the minutes.

Councillor S. T. Nock further drew Members' attention to the recommendation in respect of the Bromsgrove Town Centre Recycling Bins.

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

Cabinet were in agreement with this recommendation.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Officers proceed with preparing a budget bid to Cabinet to invest in new (recycling) bins for installation in Bromsgrove Town Centre; and
- 2) the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 22nd July 2025 be noted.

37/25

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

With regards to the consideration of urgent business it was recorded that at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 9th September 2025, the Board had voted to agree that the Chairman of the Board should submit a request on behalf of the Board that Cabinet consider, as an item of urgent business, whether to extend the current public consultation period for the Local Plan. This item had been considered necessary to raise as urgent business because the consultation period was due to end on 22nd September 2025 and there were not due to be any further meetings of either the Cabinet or Council prior to the end of the consultation period nor was there sufficient time to schedule any further meetings prior to the end of this consultation period.

The Leader stated, that as detailed in the Supplementary Documentation 2 - "Consideration of whether to make a recommendation that Council extend the period of consultation for the Local Plan. The Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services had agreed that this could be added as an urgent item of business for consideration at the meeting, following receipt of a form from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board on behalf of the Board requesting that Cabinet discuss this matter as an item of urgent business. This request had been approved by the Leader, as Chairman of the Cabinet.

The item has been added in accordance with requirements set out in paragraph 5.2 of the Access to Information Rules, at Part 9 of the Council's constitution".

It had not been possible to include this item in the Cabinet agenda when that was published because the request had only been received from the Overview and Scrutiny Board after the agenda for the Cabinet meeting had been published.

38/25

CONSIDERATION OF WHETHER TO MAKE A RECOMMENDATION THAT COUNCIL EXTEND THE PERIOD OF CONSULTATION FOR THE LOCAL PLAN

The Leader made the following announcement –

"As Members will be aware the consultation process provides several ways for our residents to engage with the local planning consultation process.

Members of the public can;

- Write in
- Email in
- Use the commonplace platform
- There is a phone number manned between 10 and 4 Monday to Friday to support any local planning queries.

Members will appreciate that some councils indeed our council did not historically use a platform. This is an additional step that we have introduced to promote greater accessibility and engagement and is proving to be our residents preferred form of engagement.

Recognising that this is a hugely important topic and the tremendous response that we have received to date. I think we should respond to our residents requests to extend the time by 4 weeks to maximise public engagement"

Clarification was provided that should Members be in agreement then additional communications would commence in order to inform residents that the consultation period was being extended by 4 weeks.

In response Councillors S. J. Baxter and P. J. Whittaker both commented that they were also in attendance at the Overview and Scrutiny meeting and were in agreement with extending the consultation period by 4 weeks.

Members subsequently discussed the consultation and commented that they had found the commonplace platform easy to use but it was very cumbersome. Some had therefore submitted a response to the consultation via email.

Members questioned if there would be any concerns or response from the Government should Members agree to extending the consultation period.

In response the Assistant Director for Planning, Leisure and Culture Services informed Members that the Government was extensively promoting Local Plan making, seeking significant building developments. The Government might not comment on an extension to the consultation period by 4 weeks. However, going forward, each time the Council changed the Local Development Plan (LDP), the Council could be challenged.

The Assistant Director for Planning, Leisure and Culture Services further stated that there were two elements to consider, the Council's Website and the commonplace platform. Officers could change the information on the Council's website, but not on the commonplace platform. The Council's website included a section on 'Frequently asked questions' and could more prominently place and promote the phone number that was manned between 10:00am and 4:00pm, Monday to Friday.

Members added that there had been mixed reviews from residents. Some had found the commonplace platform 'clunky' whilst others had not. Residents in one ward area had produced a 'user' video to assist other residents.

Members suggested that having a 'step by step' guide on the Council's website would be helpful.

The Leader commented that she would welcome anything that helped to make the commonplace platform easy to use and encouraged residents to respond.

Members questioned if an extension to the consultation period would affect the confidence of developers.

In response the Assistant Director for Planning, Leisure and Culture Services commented that a 4 week extension could be viewed differently by different people. The Council could be seen as 'dragging our feet'. The pragmatic response to residents was that the Council was progressing and trying to adhere to the Council's LDP timelines and that any further re-jigging would be as tight as possible. To date Officers had not received any significant comments from developers, however, Officers were expecting comments to be received later.

As highlighted by the Leader, there were a number of ways for residents to respond to the consultation.

Cabinet then discussed the information with regards to the number of visitors to the commonplace platform (23137), the different respondents (1901) and the individual respondents (4377).

Members commented that this should not reflect on the effort made by Officers who had organised and attended 19 different events to inform and engage with residents on the LDP.

The Leader then invited Councillor S. R. Colella to address the Cabinet.

Councillor Colella thanked Members for being given the opportunity to raise his concerns.

He explained that he had been informed that the commonplace platform software issues were raised at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting on 9th September 2025, and that Board Members had discussed an extension to the consultation period.

As a District Councillor he had raised his concerns and the concerns of his residents about the commonplace platform with the Councils' Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager. Two of his residents had looked at the commonplace software and had found it to be 'clunky' and full of bugs. They had also carried out analytical and output performance checks.

Concerns were raised that the commonplace platform was too complicated to complete a response. Ultimately, this needed to be looked into. Some Cabinet Members had commented that they had found it 'clunky' and difficult to navigate. Residents had lost information on their responses and information submitted was not always saved.

Cabinet was urged not to extend the consultation period, but instead to look at the issues / concerns raised. Residents had encouraged other residents to respond. Members should focus on the consultation ending on 22nd September 2025. Concerns were raised that extending the consultation period would be received negatively. Instead, it was suggested that Members should close the consultation on the agreed date, pause and then take stock of the whole consultation. Questions were raised about whether the consultation had reached everyone and whether people returning from holiday were not aware of the consultation.

The suggestion was made that the Council should close the consultation and go through the analytical and statistical data.

In response the Assistant Director for Planning, Leisure and Culture Services, highlighted that whole Local Plan process was complicated, and there was a high level of scrutiny. People would have to invest time in what would be a long process and then be invited to sit before the Planning Inspectorate. It was positive that the Council had enabled residents to have their say via a range of forums and to put forward their views, in what was a complicated process. The commonplace platform was introduced to give people another choice to respond.

If people were experiencing problems, there was a team of Officers who were ready to serve residents. Officers kept a log of issues received and Officers were happy to speak with residents directly. Officers expressed hopes that people would think that shaping the district up to 2024 was an important process to engage in.

Cabinet was informed that people were put off by the complexities of the system and questions were raised about how much the software cost? The suggestion was made that the Council had invested heavily, and it was not a good use of public money. In this context, it was suggested that it would not increase the response rate by extending the consultation period. The diagnostic data needed to be looked at.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor S. T. Nock also addressed the Cabinet.

Councillor Nock stated that he would emphasise that at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting on 9th September 2025, Board Members had unanimously voted in favour of taking action that would extend the consultation period.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor J. W. Robinson subsequently addressed the Cabinet.

Councillor Robinson took the opportunity to express his thanks to the Assistant Director for Planning, Leisure and Culture Services and her team, and also to the Councils' Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager, and his team.

Councillor Robinson stated that he had attended four consultation events over a period of ten weeks. He would ask Members as to why they wanted to extend the consultation period. A problem with the commonplace platform had been identified by residents, the system needed to be sound, and the Council needed to be open. Cabinet Members were looking to go out with further communications about extending the consultation period, with a system that was 'clunky.' Instead, it suggested that the Council needed to give residents assurances that the system was working.

In response the Leader explained that Members were looking to extend the consultation period as there had been a tremendous response and Members wanted to enable residents that had experienced issues to be helped and assisted by Officers. The additional communications would show residents that their voices should be heard and that Members wanted to ensure that everyone had had a chance to respond. For transparency the Council wanted people to be fully engaged and encouraged to respond / assisted to respond.

Cabinet Members added that for the number of hits received, the response rate to the consultation was good, the Council had achieved 10%, which was a good conversion rate.

Questions were raised again regarding the reasons given for extending the consultation period.

The Leader emphasised, that as highlighted during the course of the meeting, there were a number of ways for residents to respond to the consultation. Future communications would detail this, and also useful information / guidance should people choose to use the commonplace platform.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor C. A. Hotham also addressed the Cabinet.

Councillor Hotham explained that he clearly understood the issues raised, but he had some questions with regards to the constitution, the urgent decision and what would happen if Members decided not to go ahead with extending the consultation period.

The Assistant Director Legal Democratic and Procurement Services (and Monitoring Officer), reassured Members that the correct process had and would be followed. As this was a Council decision, ultimately Cabinet could not determine the matter but could make a recommendation to Council. Should Members conclude that an extension was required, this would need to be determined as a Council function through an urgent decision.

The Assistant Director for Planning, Leisure and Culture Services took the opportunity to respond to questions raised by Members on the number of new dwellings to meet the Council's housing land supply by 2043 (12,000), the number of dwellings included in current developments (3,000), with 9,000 dwellings left to be provided. Between now and the adoption of the LDP, any large windfall sites would be taken off the 9,000.

Further questions and debate followed on the Council's 5 year housing land supply.

Members commented that it needed to be made clear in any communications, how to use the commonplace platform and other ways to respond. People may have been looking at gathering information and were now ready to respond.

The Assistant Director for Planning, Leisure and Culture Services assured Members that a well prepared press release / messages would be generated, also taking into account the comments and suggestions made by Members during the course of the meeting. Officers were there to help and it was noted that very few Members had passed on information with regards to residents experiencing issues or needing help with replying to the consultation.

The Leader thanked all Members in attendance for their input.

RECOMMENDED that the Local Plan consultation period be extended by four weeks.

39/25

ADOPTION OF FIXED PENALTY CHARGE FOR BREACH OF COMMUNITY PROTECTION NOTICE

The Principal Officer (Planning & Enviro- Crime Enforcement), Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS), presented the report for Members' consideration.

As detailed in the report, in June 2024 responsibility for enforcement of Planning Enforcement, such as fly-tipping, littering, duty of care of waste offences and dog fouling had been passed onto WRS. One of the tools for dealing with some of these issues was a Community Protection Notice (CPN) under Part 4 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

Whilst WRS had a remit to undertake enforcement of Planning Enforcement related matters, CPNs could be used to tackle a wider range on anti-social behaviours by the Police or other Council departments.

In accordance with the Council's enforcement policy, there were alternatives to prosecution which should also be considered for use where appropriate. Section 52 of the Act provided that an authorised person may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) as an alternative to prosecution for breach of a CPN.

Payment of the FPN within 14 days from the date of issue had the effect of discharging any liability to convict for the offence but allowed for action to be taken for any subsequent offences.

A fixed penalty could not be more than £100.

The use of FPNs would be an additional enforcement tool for WRS Officers to use.

In response to questions from Members, the Principal Officer (Planning & Enviro- Crime Enforcement), explained that the use of a CPN or FPN would be determined on a case by case basis. An FPN might not be appropriate. If there was a total disregard of a CPN or part compliance, this would be considered by Officers as to how best to proceed. It would also show the Courts, should it go for prosecution, that Officers had followed a process. The use of FPNs would provide Officers with an alternative option if necessary.

The Leader took the opportunity to thank the WRS Officers.

RECOMMENDED that Council adopt a Fixed Penalty Notice Charge of £100 for failure to comply with a Community Protection Notice.

40/25

QUARTER 1 2025/26 FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Deputy Chief Executive and Finance Officer presented the Quarter One Revenue and Performance Report 2025/26 for Members' consideration.

It was noted that this report had been pre-scrutinised by the Finance and Budget Working Group (FBWG) at the meeting held on 5th September 2025.

During consideration of this report, Members were informed of the following:

- As of the end of Quarter 1, the Council was forecasting a £0.173 million revenue overspend for the full financial year.
- The Council had delivered £0.398 million of its £0.913 million savings target.
- Treasury Management Position – the Council had no long term debt and had complied with all prudential indicators.
- Ward Budget Spending Quarter 1, which was running under 10%.

Members' attention was drawn to recommendation 3. There was some concern that the Council may not achieve all of the savings by the year-end. However, this would be closely monitored by Officers.

Members were further informed that the Quarter 2 Finance and Performance Report 2025/26 would be more detailed separate reports for further transparency.

Members referred to paragraph 4.4.8 of the report, which detailed '.... as a result of the introduction of the 2-hour free parking', which was incorrect. Officers agreed to amend the report prior to consideration at Council, as the free parking was for 30 minutes.

In response to Members, the Deputy Chief Executive and Finance Officer briefly explained external debt / borrowing compared to internal borrowing, using Capital expenditure.

The Policy Manager subsequently presented the performance monitoring information.

The Policy Manager stated that with regards to performance monitoring it was the responsibility of service areas to take ownership of their measures and to liaise with her.

The report had evolved further with more targets and more RAG rating. A lot of hard work was being carried out in order to achieve this. There were one or two measures that could be beneficial to Portfolio Holders. Work was also being carried out with Worcestershire Regulatory

Services (WRS) in respect of fly-tipping, and Economic Development to improve and include further context.

Freedom of Information (FOI) measures would be included in Quarter two and future reports. Going forward each Assistant Director would look at including data from any Corporate surveys for Members consideration.

The Leader took the opportunity to thank Officers.

RESOLVED Cabinet note

- 1) the current Revenue position of £0.173 million unfavourable variance.
- 2) the current Capital spending of £3.326 million against a revised budget of £21.876 million.
- 3) the current savings delivery was £0.398 million against an annual target of £1.733 million for 2025/26. This was included in the above Revenue position
- 4) the Earmarked Reserves balances of £11.266 million.
- 5) the Ward Budget allocation position to date with 6 approved allocations at £5,450, leaving a balance of £56,550 to be allocated before year end.
- 6) there was an updated procurements position set out in Appendix D, with any new items over £200,000 to be included on the forward plan.
- 7) the position on Council Tax and Business Rates.
- 8) the position on benefits processing.
- 9) the Performance data for the period April to June 2025 (Quarter 1).

RECOMMENDED following the amendment, in respect of the free car parking, as detailed in the preamble above, that

- 10) the Balance Sheet Monitoring Position for Quarter 1 be noted – which was the Treasury Monitoring Report and was required to be reported to Council.

(During consideration of this item, Councillor K. Taylor left the meeting.)

41/25

**MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN SCENE SETTING REPORT
2026/2027**

The Deputy Chief Executive and Finance Officer presented the Budget Setting proposal for Members' consideration.

It was noted that there was a typographical error on page 69 of the main agenda pack, as follows:-

- Final budget approved by CWG

It was agreed that this be amended to:

- Final budget reviewed by CWG

The Deputy Chief Executive and Finance Officer stated that he would like to clarify some points with Members, in that the Finance and Budget Working Group (FBWG) had expressed the view that, as previously, a two staged approach should be re-introduced. Members were reassured that for transparency that a two staged approach would be used in December 2025.

The FBWG had also suggested that an all Member budget briefing be held in January 2026. This suggestion was well received by the Cabinet.

Members were informed that with the Governments budget being announced late, that this would have a knock on effect on local Government Grants. It was anticipated that the Government Grants settlement would be announced in December.

Members were referred to the Government's fairer funding review; which would be in time for the provisional financial settlement in December.

Also, whilst considering the Fairer Funding review, the Government had indicated that it was considering reviewing how council tax was assessed and determined.

Included in the base assumptions to be used in developing the budget were:

- Pay Award for next year to be budgeted at 2% in line with the HMT inflationary targets.
- There would also be an additional 1% cost of living increment built in as contingency in the case of a higher than budgeted pay settlement.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Finance Officer commented that there was a good level of transparency and an opportunity for everyone to be involved in the budget setting process.

RESOLVED that the budget process outlined in the report, and as amended in the preamble above, be followed for the 2026/27 annual budget and for the Medium Term Financial Plan up to 2028/29.

(During consideration of this item, Councillor K. Taylor returned to the meeting.)

The Assistant Director of Environmental and Housing Property Services presented the Expansion of Commercial Waste Collection Service report for Members' consideration.

The report detailed the requirements of the Environment Act 2021 which required businesses with more than 10 employees to separate food waste. This would expand to micro-businesses (with fewer than 10 employees) by 2027.

As detailed in the report, during 2021 and 2024 the Commercial Waste Service had delivered a surplus each year but had seen increased costs in 2023/24 as a result of wider fleet and maintenance issues that had impacted on the resilience of the service and the need for the increased use of hire vehicles.

Having recently successfully recruited into vacant positions within the workshop, and delivery of a new Domestic Waste Fleet in late 2025, these expenses were expected to reduce considerably and see a return to the Council's previous financial performance levels. The Council was also now compliant with the Environment Act 2021.

With the unexpected exit of Dudley Metropolitan Council from the commercial waste market, this had created an immediate opportunity as well as a pressure on the Council's service. Businesses were keen to work with a Local Authority, and a number of the authority's peers had actively sought the Council's support as a nearby waste provider.

This was seen as a potential to further increase the Council's customer base in this area to maximise the efficiency of operating the service in a high-density area for businesses. With over £135,000 of new enquiries and 50+ new customers signed by April 2025, this had left the existing service with little to no capacity to take on additional customers.

The Assistant Director of Environmental and Housing Property Services highlighted that service failures could quickly result in complaints or lost contracts, and compliance failures could result in significant penalties or even the loss of the authority to operate a vehicle fleet, which would impact on all services.

By appointing a new Commercial Waste Coordinator this would address these daily risks ensuring that services were delivered to schedule and any issues were identified quickly and acted upon.

Members briefly discussed the recent communications on the Council's social media with regards to leaving bins out until 5pm and the letters that had been sent to all residents on the 'Changes to your wheeled bins'.

The Assistant Director of Environmental and Housing Property Services reassured Members that Officers were working with the Council's Communications Team in order to get the message out and to make

everyone aware of the new wheeled bins and the collection days / times in specific roads.

The Leader took the opportunity to thank the Assistant Director of Environmental and Housing Property Services.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) Capital Funding of £489,760 be added to the Capital Programme for 2026/27 to purchase two Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCV's)
- 2) the Council allocate Capital funding of £35,000 annually in the Medium-Term Financial Plan from the 2025/26 financial year to fund wheeled bins for Commercial Services.
- 3) the Council allocate £334,342 Revenue Funding in the Medium-Term Financial Plan to fund operational costs of providing the expanded service from 2025/26.

43/25

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 22ND JULY 2025

The Leader explained that the confidential minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 22nd July 2025 had been included for consideration at the end of the meeting and notice had been provided that the Cabinet might have needed to go into exempt session to consider the content of those minutes.

However, Members agreed to stay in public session for this item, as there were no recommendations to consider, the confidential minutes were for noting only.

RESOLVED that the confidential minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 22nd July 2025 be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.50 p.m.

Chairman

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Bromsgrove District Council – 8th October 2025

Member Questions

1. From Councillor A. Bailes
Question for the Leader of the Council

“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?”

2. From Councillor S. Colella
Question for the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Climate Change

“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.”

3. From Councillor D. Nicholl
Question for the Leader of the Council

‘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 12 months?’

4. From Councillor C. Hotham
Question for the Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development and Enabling

“The Market Hall (Nailers Yard) development appears to be turning into Bromsgrove’s HS2. A vanity project with a huge overspend. Originally, the cost was expected to be £10,399,000. In March 2025 this had risen to £13,474,000. In August 2025 we are told it will now cost around £15,742,000. This is a £5,343,000 funded by the council tax payers of Bromsgrove. What actions is the Cabinet Member responsible taking to control this 51% cost increase?”

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NOTICE OF MOTION

The following Notice of Motion has been submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 10 by Councillor J. Robinson:

“The A38 Bromsgrove Route Enhancement Programme has been an unmitigated disaster for our town.

Hundreds of trees have been felled and the project will not resolve the issues of traffic in our town.

The council resolves to ask the Leader of the council to urgently write to the Leader of Worcestershire County Council placing on record Bromsgrove District Council’s opposition to the project and call for schemes not started to be put on hold pending a full review and consultation with the community.”

NOTICE OF MOTION

The following Notice of Motion has been submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 10 by Councillor E. Gray:

"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."

COUNCIL

8th October 2025

NOTICE OF MOTION

The following Notice of Motion has been submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 10 by Councillor S. 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.’

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

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