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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 3RD DECEMBER 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 receive any announcements from the Chairman and/or Head of Paid Service**
4. **To receive any announcements from the Leader**
5. **To receive comments, questions or petitions from members of the public**

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.

6. **Urgent Decisions**
7. **To receive and consider a report from the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services** (Pages 7 - 14)

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.

8. **Recommendations from the Cabinet** (Pages 15 - 16)

To consider the recommendations from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 19th November 2025.

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

- (i) Medium Term Financial Plan Budget Update and Consultation Report 2026/2027 to 2028/29 (Pages 17 - 46)
- (ii) Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant (Pages 47 - 58)
- (iii) Quarter Two 2025/26 Finance and Performance Monitoring Report (including Financial Savings and Half Yearly Treasury Management Report) (Pages 59 - 98)

10. **To note the minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 19th November 2025** (Pages 99 - 116)

11. **Questions on Notice** (Pages 117 - 118)

To deal with any questions on notice from Members of the Council, in the order in which they have been received.

Each Councillor scheduled to ask a question may ask up to one supplementary question, which must be based on the original question or the answer provided 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.

12. **Motions on Notice** (Pages 119 - 120)

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.

13. **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**

J. Leach
Chief Executive

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

25th November 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.

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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Portfolio Holder Report

**Portfolio Holder Report – Planning, Licensing and Worcestershire
Regulatory Services (WRS)**

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:

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

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



Portfolio Holder Report

1. Update on Council Priorities

Cross Priority activities

Through the processing of planning applications, preparing a local plan, involvement with neighbourhood plans and managing conservation issues, the statutory planning service contributes to the following council priorities:

Environment

Housing

Economy

Town Centres

From a shared Regulatory service perspective, the council has numerous statutory enforcement duties across a range of legislation including food law, infectious diseases, health and safety at work, statutory nuisances and other environmental issues like air quality, contaminated land and environmental permitting. The service also runs the Council's dog warden service.

Licensing is a mix of national statutory and adoptive legislation, with Bromsgrove having decided historically to take on most discretionary areas available to councils. Key areas for the service and the licensing committee are taxis and private hire regimes, alcohol and gambling premises, street trading and pavement licensing, animal activities and many more. As with planning, regulatory services can contribute to all council priorities, albeit the shared service has little role in housing matters.

Some specific aspects are shared below.

Economic Growth:

Regulatory Services: All the work of the shared Regulatory Service, for which the portfolio holder leads, contributes to the success of the local economy. One of the key purposes of regulation, according to local businesses, is "Help me to trade well and ensure my competitors do the same". Ensuring a level playing field for all businesses is a key part of local authority regulation.

This approach is used in the service's approach to discharging the council's duties as a local food safety authority and as an enforcement authority under Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. Where possible officers will look to support businesses to achieve compliance and only where there are serious issues, or signs of unwillingness, will a formal approach be followed.

A range of regulatory work contributes to the safety of our local communities and thence the success of business. Licensing of business activities- whether taxis, alcohol and entertainment venues or gambling establishments, helps to ensure that those involved are fit and proper and



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that the businesses are run in a way that does not cause issues for individuals and communities, whilst offering space for those businesses to thrive. Tackling those who flout the law ensures those that want to operate in a fair, safe and equitable way can do so.

Environment

Planning: The Local Plan is about creating and protecting green spaces for visual amenity and various forms of play and recreation. The Development Management process ensures long term protection and management of open space via condition and the section 106 process.

Regulatory Services: A range of activities undertaken by the shared service discharge the council's duties around protecting the environment. The oldest is the long-standing duty to address potential issues of statutory nuisance. This can include diverse sources such as noise but also includes a range of specific issues created from business premises such as odour, dust, and various other effluvia. The service continues to discharge the councils now more limited role in relation to drains, tackling issues with failed or damaged private drainage systems (all controls of the mains drainage system having been in the hands of the statutory undertakings since 2012.)

Air quality is another area of WRS work that has come to the fore in recent years, with the launch of real-time monitoring at various locations in the county including Bromsgrove. Air Quality Action Plans have been updated, and monitoring continues in the remaining Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's) on Worcester Road, Bromsgrove and at the Lickey End Island. The service's Behaviour Change project, looking to help people to better understand the issues around air quality has mainly focused on working with young people. This year there has been significant work around community engagement, starting in schools; we held four school assemblies at Waseley Hills High School in Rubery, near the Gunner Lane air quality monitor. There was a great turnout, with participation from students in Years 7 to 12, more than 100 students per session. Two primary schools and How College Bromsgrove site have also been visited and taken part in activities.

The service has begun the review process for contaminated land strategies across the County with Bromsgrove's updated, approved and published earlier this year.

The service also continues to discharge the council's duties in relation to the Environmental Permitting regime that controls the outputs from industrial activities that are, by their nature, polluting. No significant issues have been identified with Bromsgrove outlets since the last report

Planning & Housing

The Local Plan process identifies housing sites in sustainable locations and develops policies about the securing of affordable housing. This follows through to the Development Management process where it is secured by legal agreement.



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Planning & Employment

The Local Plan is about identifying the amount and location of employment land and then its appropriate protection from development or change of use for other land uses. The implementation of this policy is worked out through the Development Management process.

Planning & Town Centres

The planning processes see town centres as sustainable locations and enhance sustainability by directing development where there can be access to our centres by many modes of transport. Local Plan policies aim to protect our core retail areas and protect and enhance conservation areas.

Key activities since last report:

Planning: There has been a review of the Local Development Scheme, a recent informal local plan consultation period and on-going local plan evidence gathering since the last report.

Currently there is a Planning Advisory Service (PAS) review of the planning committee function, local plan process and our enforcement procedures.

In Development Management there is a heavy workload with increasing numbers of queries about development on green belt land. That said decision-making targets continue to be on course.

Regulatory Services: Major works in default were undertaken to resolve a long-standing drainage issue in Barnt Green. An old septic tank system and soakaway at a residential property had failed, giving rise to discharges of sewage across the property and into the road. The remedial works included the installation of a modern packaged sewage treatment plant with consented discharge into the highway drainage system, avoiding the need for a new soakaway which would have been costly and disruptive and prone to future failure.

Pre-summer guidance was issued to premises where noise complaints had previously been reported advising of noise control measures to be taken to avoid problems. Its purpose was to reduce the number of complaints received and help support the smooth running of events for local businesses whilst maintaining a positive relationship with local communities. In nuisance work, Officers investigated nuisance arising from extensive development works and noise in respect of the fast-growing sport of Padel.

Council agreed to revoke Lickey End and Redditch Road, Bromsgrove AQMAs this year and Orders are currently being drafted to complete this process.

Several Licensing Policy reviews have taken place through the Committee process in the last 12 months. These have included the review of the Gambling Act Statement of Principles which was due for a review after three years.



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Elements of the Bromsgrove Taxi Policy were reviewed to ensure the implementation of the Statutory Taxi Standards that were introduced in 2022 were meeting the needs of the traveling public. In doing so there was an introduction of mandatory refresher training for all drivers on the renewal of their licence to undertake safeguarding training.

Mandatory CCTV in taxis was also reviewed but the Council agreed there was not a need to make this mandatory at present as intelligence shows that currently there is no evidence that points to a mandatory policy being required. Officers will continue to monitor intelligence.

The temporary pavement licensing regime that was introduced under the Business and Planning Act 2020 was made permanent. The policy was consulted on and introduced and has been welcomed by many businesses across Bromsgrove to allow them to use their outside spaces throughout the year.

Finally, Primate Licensing were new regulations that Local authorities were made aware of early this year and a new policy and process for submitting applications was approved by Licensing Committee for implementation in April 2026.

Anticipated Activities/Key Milestones For Next Period

Key activities since last report:

Planning: To progress with preparing for the next stage of plan making with the appropriate officer resource to manage circa 8,000 representations and continual member involvement through the Strategic Planning Steering Group (SPSG) process.

To continue to progress requests for planning consent and pre application advice in a timely manner against the backdrop of having about two years supply of housing land

To resource appropriately the conservation team so that the preparation of local lists for all areas can be progressed together with comments on applications and providing pre application advice.

Regulatory Services: The Licensing Committee work programme currently includes reviewing the current street trading policy. Consumer habits are changing, and businesses are trying to think of novel ideas to best work around regulation to meet these. By making the policy for flexible will allow businesses to trade differently within the boundaries of regulation.

Other areas for consideration on the work programme include Bromsgrove taxi rank provision review, taxi licensing application and renewal process and a pavement licensing policy review towards the end of the year.

Uber continues to be an issue raised by Members so the team have been engaging with Wolverhampton City Council to carry out evening and late night enforcement with WRS Licensing officers and West Mercia Police.



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There are still considerations by central government on how the regulation of cosmetic procedures will fit into local government and the licensing regime. Officers are engaged with the Institute of Licensing and will provide updates as and when required.

Proposals for enhanced air quality monitoring for particulate matter are currently being drawn up to be presented to Cabinet. This will provide greater clarity and additional information on the level of particulate matter pollution in the district.

Work will continue in the coming period on the food hygiene inspection programme for 2025/6. As part of this, the application of the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme provides consumers with an idea of the safest places to eat and helps drive improvements in business standards. More than 95% of local businesses achieve 3 stars or above, showing good compliance and limited risk.

We currently have 2 planning enforcement and one Enviro-crime enforcement files with legal for potential prosecution. An appeal against an abatement notice is also pending.

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.

1. Planning

The Planning Service runs an Agents' Forum. It must work closely with Worcestershire County Council, particularly from a highways perspective and also with other authorities in the same housing market area. An officer forum of all districts in Worcestershire is also attended.

2. Regulatory Services: Illicit Tobacco with Worcestershire County Council Trading Standards:

The WCC Trading Standards team discharges the County Councils duties in relation to illicit tobacco and leads on tackling this on our high streets. The district council has worked with its officers to utilise closure powers under the ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014 that are not available to WCC resulting in the closure of three premises. Kidderminster Magistrates issued closure orders for 3-months in relation to two outlets and a third remains closed ahead of a further court hearing in December.



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3. Regulatory Services: Support for project on high-risk mosquito species

In its infection control role, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) are also supporting the invasive mosquito surveillance efforts coordinated by the Medical Entomology and Zoonoses Ecology Team (MEZE) at UKHSA. This project has been crucial in detecting invasive mosquitoes (*Aedes albopictus*/tiger mosquito and *Aedes aegypti*) on seven occasions since 2016. This surveillance is significant given the rising number of Dengue virus cases in Europe, exemplified by the detection of three locally acquired cases in Paris last year, necessitating invasive mosquito control measures. WRS' role is in running and submitting mosquito traps as part of the surveillance effort. With rising temperatures, it is anticipated that detections are likely to become more frequent. Early detection and control of these mosquitoes will be increasingly crucial across England to mitigate public health risks associated with mosquito-borne diseases. The monitoring in Bromsgrove takes place at the motorway services, where vehicles pass through from the continent.

4. Regulatory Services: Funeral Directors survey

Since the last report, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) on behalf of its partner authorities initiated a proactive inspection programme of funeral directors across the county, including Bromsgrove. This was on request from the Ministry of Justice to all local authorities and was against the background of district councils having very few regulatory responsibilities or powers in this sector. The programme was proactive and designed as a preventative measure to ensure that Worcestershire's funeral directors were operating to the highest possible standards. It followed on from the reports from Humberside of the actions of one funeral director which caused great concern and a police investigation. The inspection programme successfully provided a comprehensive overview of the funeral services being provided, with businesses demonstrating good standards of care.

Key activities since last report:

Regulatory Services: Only Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils discharge their planning and some elements of environmental enforcement through the shared service. WRS has served 7 Community Protection Warnings which have led to 4 Community Protection Notices (CPNs) for untidy land and health & safety concerns; served one Section 215 Notice under Town and Country Planning Act (to clear junk from a site) and served 31 Fixed Penalty Notices for littering, fly-tipping and breach of CPNs this year in Bromsgrove District.

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Recommendations from the Cabinet meeting held on 19th November 2025

Medium Term Financial Plan Budget Update and Consultation Report

RECOMMENDED that

The Consultation on the Budget 2026/27 be noted.

Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) Subject to the final decision by central Government, that the proposed element of the Revenue Support Grant 2026/27 attributed to Temporary Accommodation is ring fenced to the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Grant.

Quarter Two 2025/26 Finance and Performance Monitoring Report (including Financial Savings and Half Yearly Treasury Management Report)

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) That the Balance Sheet Monitoring Position for Quarter Two be noted – which is the Treasury Monitoring Report and required to be reported to Council.
- 2) The Council's Treasury performance for Q2 of the financial year 25/26 be noted.
- 3) The position in relation to the Council's Prudential indicators be noted.

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CABINET 19 November 2026

Medium Term Financial Plan Budget Update and Consultation Report

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Sue Baxter Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Debra Goodall
Report Author	Debra Goodall – Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services debra.goodall@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact telephone:
Wards Affected	N/A
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
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

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update on the processes the Council will follow to set the annual budget for 2026/27 and for the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) up to financial year 2028/29.
- 1.2 The Council will set its budget in two stages this year. The initial stage will be published in the Autumn as part of this report. A second stage will be considered in January once final settlement figures are known with final budget approval sought in February.
- 1.3 The report also sets out the Consultation being carried out on the Budget 2026/27.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet are asked to Resolve that:

- The updated budget position for the Council is noted in respect of the 2026/27 annual budget and for the Medium-Term Financial Plan up to 2028/29.
- The key assumptions listed in this document are confirmed as accurate for the purpose of projecting an initial budget position.
- A further report in February will include additional information from the Local Government Settlement to give a final financial position for the Council.

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Cabinet is asked to Recommend to Council that:

- The Consultation on the Budget 2026/27 is noted.

3. KEY ISSUES

Introduction

- 3.1 The Council sets a 3-year Medium Term Financial Plan every year, with the final Council Tax Resolution being approved by Council in February. This year's process takes account of the following factors:
- The starting point from the 2026/27 MTFP is deficit positions of £1.030m and £399k respectively as the starting points for 2026/27 and 2027/28.
 - The cost-of-living crisis continues and this is still impacting our most vulnerable residents.
 - Five years accounts (2020/21 to 2024/25) where the Council has/will receive a disclaimer opinion (like many other Councils). In plain terms, a disclaimer means that we have been unable to form an opinion. In this instance, the reason for this will be the limitation of scope imposed by statute (not by the local authority). A disclaimer due to the backstop does not of itself indicate a local authority failing.
 - Business Rates and Council Tax Income – The impact of the introduction of Fairer Funding on the Council.
 - Inflation still not reducing towards the Government target of 2%. Despite reducing in early 2024, it has started to increase again and recently has been at a level of around 3.8%.
 - Core Spending Power assessment by the government assumes no councils will be worse off in real terms, but previously the assumption of a maximum allowable increase in Council Tax was offset by reductions in formula grant, meaning that the spending power of the Council remained flat, even though there was an increase in Council Tax. It is assumed that this will be the situation going forward.
 - Government Grants and New Homes Bonus – it is anticipated that these will either be abolished under FF2.0 or rolled into the funding-formula revenue support grant (RSG) and it is assumed that unless notified differently, these grants will not be separate items from next year onwards.
 - Due to an impending business rates reset, it is prudent to assume no growth in the base funding for business rates.

As such, it is prudent to split the budget process into two stages.

- Having an initial stage which seeks to close as much of the deficit as possible using information known at the end of December.

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- Having a second stage after the Christmas break, for which approval will be sought in February, that takes account of the Local Government Settlement whose final detail will not be known until early January.

3.2 This report will set out:

- The starting position for the 2026/27 MTFP
- The emerging national picture including expected settlement dates.
- Council Priorities
- Strategic Approach
- The Council's Base Assumptions including Inflation and Grants
- Fees and Charges update
- Impact on Reserves and Balances
- Capital Programme update
- Robustness Statement

The Starting Position for the 2026/27 MTFP

3.3 The Council set a three-year MTFP 2025/26 to 2027/28 in February 2025. The position reflected a balanced budget for 2025/26 with a deficit position of £1.030m in 2026/27 and deficit of £399k in 2027/28.

The emerging national picture including expected Settlement Dates

3.4 The settlement will be underpinned by the outcomes of the **Fair Funding Review**, which aims to redistribute resources more equitably based on assessed local need. Key elements of the new funding framework include:

- **Revised Needs-Based Formula:** Incorporating updated demographic and service demand data across areas such as adult social care, children's services, and housing.
- **Resource Adjustment Mechanism:** Reflecting councils' ability to raise income locally, particularly through council tax and retained business rates.
- **Area Cost Adjustments:** Accounting for regional variations in service delivery costs.

3.5 The Government has also signalled its intention to implement **transitional protections**, although not all councils will benefit from these. Some authorities may experience reductions in their Core Spending Power, particularly where previous funding levels were above the newly assessed need.

3.6 In parallel, the **English Devolution White Paper**, published in late 2024, sets out a roadmap for local government reorganisation. This includes the creation of **Strategic Authorities** and a move towards **universal coverage** of devolved governance structures across England. Councils in two-tier areas

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and smaller unitaries are expected to engage in reorganisation discussions, with elections for new governance models anticipated in May 2027.

- 3.7 Bromsgrove has 3 years of accounts that have a Disclaimer Opinion issued by the External Auditor and a further 2 that are expected to be given a Disclaimer Opinion by February 2026. Although issues highlighted in previous years MTFP reports have been resolved, it is unclear how these “Disclaimer Opinions” will impact on Councils and indeed upon the 2024/25 Audit process. There is a backstop date for Accounts for 2024/25 to be signed off by the Auditors by 27th February 2026.
- 3.8 The Chancellors Statement is expected on 26 November 2025 which is later than in previous years. The provisional Local Government Finance Settlement is still anticipated in mid-December. This will set out the detail of funding allocations for individual councils.
- 3.9 This gives the following timetable for the 2026/27 process:
- 5 November – Consultation proposal report to Cabinet Working Group
 - 5 November – MTFP Budget Update to Cabinet Working Group
 - 11 November – Publication of Agenda including Consultation
 - 14 November – MTFP Budget and Consultation to Finance and Budget Working Group
 - 14 November – Submission of Departmental pressures and savings to Finance
 - 19 November – MTFP Budget Update to Cabinet
 - 19 November – Consultation proposal report to Cabinet
 - 20 November – Consultation launches
 - 21 November – Submission of Fees and Charges to Finance
 - **26 November – Chancellors Statement**
 - 24 & 26 November – Stage 1a Departmental pressures and savings to SLT & CLT
 - 1 & 3 December – Draft Budget and Fees and Charges to SLT & CLT
 - 3 December – Stage 1 MTFP Budget Update Council Report
 - 10 December – Stage 1a MTFP Budget and Fees and Charges to Cabinet Working Group
 - **w/e 19 December – Provisional Local Government Settlement**
 - 31 December – Consultation finishes
 - 5 January – Final Budget approved by SLT
 - 7 January – Stage 1a MTFP Budget and Fees and Charges to Cabinet
 - 7 January – Consultation outcome to Cabinet
 - 28 January – Stage 2 MTFP approved by Cabinet Working Group
 - **w/c 2 Feb or 9 Feb – Local Government Finance Settlement**
 - 11 Feb – Updated Stage 2 MTFP approved by Cabinet
 - 18 Feb – Final Budget and Council Tax Resolution approved by Council

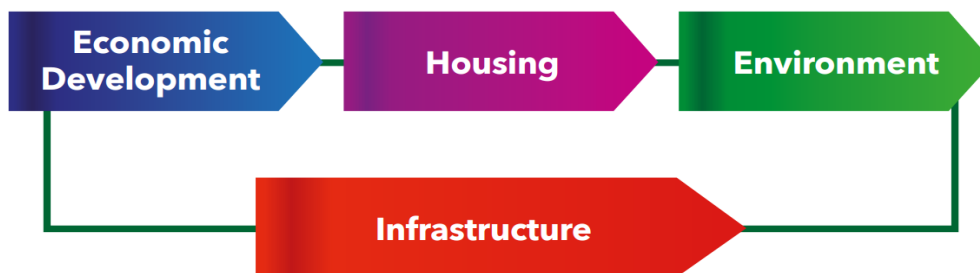
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Council Strategic Priorities

3.10 The Council Plan provides an overarching vision for the District with the four priorities as follows:

- Economic Development
- Housing
- Environment
- Infrastructure

'We aspire to create a welcoming environment that prioritises quality of life, where residents and businesses feel a deep sense of belonging and connection.'



3.11 The council's vision, priorities and themes are connected using a 'green' thread:

"A green thread runs through the Council plan. Climate change and carbon reduction are key issues within the plan and the relevant measures identified to evaluate performance will help the Council to understand both activities and progress in this area".

3.12 Opportunities and Challenges highlighted in the plan include:

The opportunities include:

- The location of Bromsgrove for business; with Worcestershire, regionally and beyond.
- The entrepreneurial and community spirit within Bromsgrove District.
- Keeping businesses in the district when they grow.
- The amazing natural environment of the district.
- The creative options provided through new technologies to enhance our services and our customers experiences.

The challenges include:

- The ongoing financial challenge- to both the organisation but also our communities and residents through the real pressures presented by cost of living and the housing market.
- Continuing to support those who are most vulnerable, and manage the increasing costs.
- Keeping businesses in the District when they grow.

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- Understanding the different community needs across the district
- The need for enhanced digital and physical connectivity.

3.13 The council cannot deliver all priorities on its own. In some cases, it can support, influence, or work collaboratively with other partner agencies to persuade them to take a particular course of action/undertake a particular project. Considerable support and input from partner organisations will be needed for priorities to be successfully achieved.

Strategic Approach

3.14 The Council has come into the 2026/27 budget process with a number of issues it needs to manage. These include:

- A deficit balance of £1.030m in 2026/27 budget as a start-point position.
- An expected reduction in funding from the Fairer Funding Review, although this is yet to be confirmed – or yet whether there will be any phasing in of this.
- The requirement to fund the 2025/26 pay award even though it was over the 3% assumed in the Council's budget.
- Increases in Council Tax are limited at 2.99% or £5, which is lower than the present rates of inflation.

3.15 As set out later in the Robustness Statement, in compiling Stage 1 of the budget, assumptions have been made based on the best information held now. Issues the Council is facing are not unique, they are being faced by almost all Councils. A further update will be given later once the departmental pressures have been received and assessed and the Chancellor's Statement has been received. Stage 2 of the budget will adjust for any funding that the Government will provide and also look at other options to close any deficit should the Government settlement not bridge any resultant gap. Initiatives that will be assessed in Stage 2 (as more time is required to analyse these individual options) include:

- Ensuring Grants are maximised.
- Ensuring Agency work reflects the income provided for its delivery.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the Council's largest Contracts.
- Reviewing recharging mechanisms between the Councils for appropriateness
- Reviewing services for any potential savings opportunities without impacting on service delivery
- Review of vacant posts
- Maximising service income opportunities
- Further capitalisation of salaries
- Review of specific reserves to see whether these are still required
- Rationalisation of support services as we embrace technology
- Positioning our services ready for Local Government Reorganisation

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The Council's Base Assumptions including Inflation and Grants

- 3.16 It is important to set out the base assumptions under which the budget is constructed. These assumptions can then be stress tested for various scenarios to test the robustness of the overall budget.
- 3.17 Tax Base and Corporate Financing underlying assumptions are as follows:
- Council Tax – Figures assume the full 2.99% allowable increase in year one and 1.99% over the following years of the 3-year MTFP and no increase in numbers of properties.
 - Business Rates Increases – business rates have previously assumed growth in the base based on the combined Herefordshire pooling figures. Figures are currently being reviewed for the impact of the fairer funding review and the business rates reset – at present it is prudent to assume no increase / growth.
 - Government Grants and New Homes Bonus – it is anticipated that these will either be abolished under FF2.0 or rolled into the funding-formula revenue support grant (RSG) and it is assumed that unless notified differently, these grants will not be separate items from next year onwards. It is anticipated that any increase in Council Tax will be offset by a corresponding reduction in grants as in 2024/25.
- 3.18 The Council has £14.5m of Levelling Up Funding to be spent which is match funded by £1.6m of Council funding. There is also a contribution of £2.425m which has been requested from monies held in trust by Birmingham City Council on behalf of the former Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP). The Council has £0.9m of UK Shared Prosperity Fund to spend by April 2026. This is both revenue and capital in nature.
- 3.19 There are significant pressures mounting on the Council. At Quarter 2 the overall revenue financial position is a £336k overspend position with savings of £1.213m of which £319k is yet to be delivered.
- 3.20 The total savings target for the year is £1.213m. This is made up of £250k of Departmental Efficiencies from the 2025/26 MTFP, £511k staff turnover rate (based on 5% of staffing budgets) and an ongoing savings budget pressure of £400k.
- 3.21 There has been an announcement that Councillors will be able to rejoin the Local Government Pension Scheme at some point in the future. It has not been made clear when this will come into effect, but it has been confirmed

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that this will be an additional pressure on Councils going forward and no additional funding will be provided.

3.22 Corporate changes to be included in Stage 1 2026/27 are:

- The additional 0.2% Pay Award increase from 2025/26 which was above the assumed increase in the budget of 3%, amounting to £28k going forward.
- The Pay Award is assumed at 2% at a cost of £389k
- A further 1% Cost of Living of £195k
- Cost of Councillors rejoining the LGPS. The date of this has yet to be confirmed.
- Until more information is understood in the detailed Local Government Settlement in December, it is assumed that Grant levels will remain at present levels but with a reduction down to offset any increase from council tax or business rates (excluding the adjustments for fairer funding). Therefore, no assumptions have been made for any increase on Council Tax at this stage.
- No allowance will be made for inflation on contracts.
- The Capital Programme at the moment is unchanged. Work is currently ongoing to prioritise the Departmental and Member bids received earlier in the year.
- Initial outcome from the Fairer Funding Review of a reduction in support grant and retained business rates of £620k with assumed dampening over three years.
- Analysis will be undertaken on Benchmarking data as well – as this will inform areas where further savings, if required, will be initially looked at.

3.23 Departmental pressures are due to be returned by the 14th November. Whilst departments have been instructed to manage pressures in the first place internally, it is likely that there will still be a number of pressures that will be required to be considered from a whole Council viewpoint. There are also likely to be political pressures as well.

3.24 To meet strategic priorities, it is likely that the Council will require more funding. For stage 2 it needs to review a number of areas as set out in 3.15.

Fees and Charges update

3.25 For 2026/27 detailed work will be undertaken as part of the budget setting process to maximise income from Fees and Charges where appropriate.

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Impact on Reserves

- 3.26 The Council currently holds General Fund Balances of £13.38m and Earmarked Reserves of £11.27m. The forecast position for reserves as outlined in the position presented to Council in February is attached as per **Appendix B**.
- 3.27 The level of reserves and balances presently held suggest that although significantly more is held than the suggested 5% recommended level for the General Fund, that any calls on this amount for a significant emergency situation would reduce levels by possibly 50%.
- 3.28 As such, the strategy must be to continue to keep the Council financial sustainability in the medium and long term by setting balanced ongoing budgets. To remain in this position there may be the need for investment, efficiencies and possibly the requirement to fund redundancy (both from reserves and balances). These requirements will be outputs from the Council having to implement changes to the way it operates to continue to be a viable entity going forward and in the context of a future potential North Worcestershire Unitary.

Capital Programme

- 3.29 The Council over the past number of years has not spent its capital programme allocations in year. As in previous years, a review will be carried out of
- All schemes that have not started
 - Schemes that have started
 - To assess deliverability and links to strategic priorities.
- 3.30 Carry forward positions as set out in the Q2 Monitoring Report are £14.891m for the Council. Significant amounts of this relate to Grant Funded schemes
- 3.31 **Appendix A** sets out the present capital programme as agreed at Council in February. Spend to date at Q2 is £4.873m.
- 3.32 The table below highlights the present Capital programme position to 2029/30 rolling forward the “Rolling Budgets” for an additional year.

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

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- 3.33 Over the summer, work was undertaken to identify additional capital bids for the period 2026/27 – 2027/28. The assumption is that any capital work undertaken would need to have been completed by 2028/29, in line with Local Government Reorganisation deadlines. Work is currently being undertaken to assess the submissions in line with Council priorities.

An Initial Risk Assessment

- 3.34 As set out the Strategic Approach and Robustness Statement sections we are budgeting in a time of extreme uncertainty.
- 3.35 As per the Risk Reports that are reported to both Cabinet and Audit, Standards and Governance Committees these are:
- Resolution of the approved budget position.
 - Financial stabilisation position
 - Decisions made to address financial pressures and implementing new projects that are not informed by robust data and evidence.
 - Adequate workforce planning.
- 3.36 The core risks of implementation
- Any savings proposal must pass the S151 Officers tests for robustness and delivery. If items are not deliverable or amounts not obtainable, they cannot be included.
 - Implementation of savings to time and budget – there must be full implementation processes documented to ensure implementation within timescales.
 - Non delivery is a high risk - Savings tracking and ensuring implementation happens based on the plans and the assumptions will become part of the Council's core processes
 - Loss of key personnel will be crucial in a number of proposals and mitigation plans will need to be drawn up
 - Capacity to deliver plans
 - Change of corporate direction/priorities
 - As per the of the explanatory note issued by Government on 24 July 2025, Government intends to issue planned directions under section 24 of the 2007 Act. These are anticipated to require written consent from successor councils for land disposals worth more than £100,000, entering of contracts of more than £1,000,000 for capital and entering of contracts of more than £100,000 for non-capital (whole life costs). While these directions have not yet been issued, Government have been clear that they expect councillors and statutory officers to be mindful of their responsibilities.

Robustness Statement

- 3.37 For stage 1, the opinion of the Section 151 Officer is that the 2026/27 budget estimates to date contain considerable risk due to the level of uncertainty in

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the Council's operating environment, making it problematic to develop meaningful assumptions.

- 3.38 The budget assumptions have been formulated having regard to several factors including:
- Funding available and savings delivery targets
 - Inflation
 - Risks and Uncertainties
 - Priorities
 - Service Pressures not yet being available to include within the figures
 - The Chancellors Statement not yet having taken place
 - Assumptions around the Fairer Funding being unclear at this point in time
 - Commercial Opportunities
 - Local Government Review and impact / restrictions
- 3.39 The MTFP highlights that the current financial position is challenging and will potentially require some form of intervention or further substantial savings and this will become clearer with the Provisional Local Government Settlement in December. Whilst a balanced budget for 2025/26 was approved in February 2025, the Council is currently forecasting a £0.330m overspend in 2025/26 and also has savings at risk of £1.213m as at Quarter 1 of which £319k has yet to be delivered.
- 3.40 Given all the uncertainty which encapsulates this MTFP, the assumptions have been based on the best available information to the Council at this time. Work will continue in validating all assumptions, robustly challenging estimates, ensuring the delivery of existing saving plans. Updates continue to be provided as additional information is received and also included in Stage 2 of the MTFS and balanced budget setting process.

Consultation on the Budget

- 3.41 It is proposed that we run a budget consultation exercise from 20th November, closing at 9am 2nd January 2026. The results would then be fed into the January Cabinet meeting to aid decision making on the budget setting process.
- 3.42 The survey will be primarily online, utilising the SmartSurvey platform, which will be accessible via our website and a QR code on promotional materials. A paper version will be made available on request and from Customer Services. We will promote the survey widely, through an official press release, emails to Councillors and partners and direct contact with our Community Panel. We will also promote at the Bromsgrove Market, which was effective during the recent LGR consultation exercise. We will also share with specific internal services that have community contacts, including the Partnership Team, Community Safety and Events. We are also proposing a focus group in early December to allow greater community engagement with the budget setting

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process and enable deeper discussion of the survey questions and the budget bids.

4. Financial Implications

These are included in Section 3 of the report.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.2 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 Council's statutory function.

6. Strategic Purpose Implications

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 The survey directly covers the existing priorities and explores what other areas respondents feel should be prioritised by the Council

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 The green thread runs through the Council plan. The budget 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.

7. Other Implications

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 7.1 The implementation of the revised fees and charges will be notified in advance to the customer to ensure that all users are aware of the new charges and any concessions available to them.
- 7.2 Initial Equalities Impact Assessments will be taken where required.
- 7.3 In order to ensure that the survey is as accessible as possible, the survey will be delivered both using the SmartSurvey online platform and through a paper version. The Policy Team will respond to any requests for support. We will also promote the survey through our community partners to ensure the

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greatest reach and directly contact Sixth Forms and youth groups to encourage young people to engage with the survey.

Operational Implications

- 7.4 Monitoring will be undertaken to ensure that income targets are achieved.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 There is a risk that if fees and charges are increased that income levels will not be achieved, and the cost of services will increase. This is mitigated by managers reviewing their fees and charges annually. The Council must deliver a balanced budget and items impacting on distinct groups require and equalities review to be undertaken.

9. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Capital Programme
Appendix B – Reserves
Appendix C – Budget Consultation

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Appendix A – Capital Programme

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Cap Proj	Description	Department	Funding detail	Caried Fwd to 24/5	2024/25 Budget £	2024/25 Total £	Spend 24/5	2025/26 Total £	2026/27 Total £	2027/28 Total £	2028/29 Total £	2029/30 Total £	Council 24/25 £	Council 25/26 £	Council 26/27 £	Council 27/28 £	Council 28/29 £	Council 29/30 £	3rd Party 24/25 £	3rd Party 25/26 £	3rd Party 26/27 £	3rd Party 27/28 £	3rd Party 28/29 £	3rd Party 29/30 £
	Large Schemes																							
	Levelling Up Fund Fund - Government Funded	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Grant Funding					0	0	0	0	0												
200072	Market Hall (LUF)	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure	Levelling Up Fund	12,337,104		6,109,104	1,921,799	9,228,000	0	0	0	0		3,000,000						6,109,104	6,228,000			
200073	Ef - Fire Station	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure	Levelling Up Fund	1,209,674		1,209,674	77,300	0	0	0	0	0								1,209,674				
	- Council Funded		Borrowing					0	0	0	0	0												
	UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Capital Element	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Grant Funding					0	0	0	0	0												
	- Revenue Element	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Grant Funding					0	0	0	0	0								0	0			
	- Remainder (to be allocated)	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Grant Funding	627,001	1,784,215	2,411,216		918,000	0	0	0	0								0	0			
								0	0	0	0	0								1,784,215	918,000			
								0	0	0	0	0												
200006	Schemes Agreed to Continue Burcot Lane	Financial & Customer Services	Public works loan board and grant homes england	0	0	0	-915,914	0	0	0	0	0		0	0									
200007		Community & Housing GF Services	Capital ReceiptsBorrowi		0	0		0	0	0	0	0		0	0									
200008	CCTV Funding for DFGs	Community & Housing GF Services	Grant income wDC	13,432	1,130,316	1,143,748	567,033	1,285,847	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000								1,130,316	1,285,847	800000	800,000	800,000
200009	Home Repairs Assistance	Community & Housing GF Services	Long Term Debtors	115,602	50,000	165,602		50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000		50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000						
200010	Energy Efficiency Installation	Community & Housing GF Services	Capital ReceiptsBorrowi	102,190	110,000	212,190		0	0	0	0	0		110,000	0									
200016	New Finance Enterprise system	Financial & Customer Services	Capital Receipts		20,000	20,000		20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000		20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000						
200019	Fleet Replacemnet new line			0	2,180,000	2,180,000	13,860	1,265,000	820,000	0	0	0		2,180,000	1,265,000	820,000	0	0						
200022	Replacement Parking machines and Upkeep of Sites	Environmental Services	Capital ReceiptsBorrowi	12,745	125,000	137,745	85,003	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000		125,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000						
200030	Wheelie Bin Purchase	Environmental Services	Capital ReceiptsBorrowi na	0	60,000	60,000	88,272	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000		60,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000						

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Cap Proj	Description	Department	Funding detail	Caried Fwd to 24/5	2024/25 Budget £	2024/25 Total £	Spend 24/5	2025/26 Total £	2026/27 Total £	2027/28 Total £	2028/29 Total £	2029/30 Total £	Council 24/25 £	Council 25/26 £	Council 26/27 £	Council 27/28 £	Council 28/29 £	Council 29/30 £	3rd Party 24/25 £	3rd Party 25/26 £	3rd Party 26/27 £	3rd Party 27/28 £	3rd Party 28/29 £	3rd Party 29/30 £	
New	Buildings	Legal and Property	Borrowing	100,000	100,000	200,000	780	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000		100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000						
200045	Greener Homes	Community & Housing GF Services	Grants & Contributions	0	0	0	6,125	0	0	0	0	0													
200026	Rubery Redevelopment works					0	821		0	0	0	0								0	0				
200082	New Digital Service	Community & Housing GF Services	Borrowing	33,668	0	33,668		0	0	0	0	0		0	0										
200033	Bus Shelters	Environmental Services	Borrowing	18,000	18,000	36,000	19,190	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000		18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000						
200069	Cisco Network Update	Business transformation & Organisational Development	Borrowing	0	0	0		34,877	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000		0	34,877	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000						
200070	Server Replacement Est(Exact known Q2 2022)	Business transformation & Organisational	Borrowing	-7,951	177,500	169,549		18,500	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000		177,500	18,500	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000						
200071	Laptop Refresh	Business transformation & Organisational	Borrowing	13,458	150,000	163,458	18,152	5,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000		150,000	5,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000						
200075	Sanders Park	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	S106	0	0	0	8,550	0	0	0	0	0		0	0										
	Fleet Replacement Costs			9,400	0	9,400		15,000	0	0	0	0			15,000										
	Wheely Bin Increases			85,000	0	85,000		0	0	0	0	0													
	Wild Flower Machinery			62,000	0	62,000		0	0	0	0	0													
2000105	Initial Play Audit Requirements			87,000	364,000	451,000		0	0	0	0	0		364,000											
	Updated Play Audit Requirements (Dec 24)							166,242	159,841	226,459	67,531	155,749			166,242	159,841	226,459	67,531	155,749						
	Movement of ICT Cyber Capital Works Forward			50,000	-50,000	0		0	0	0	0	0		-50,000											
	New ongoing Cyber security budget				25,000	25,000		25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000		25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000						
	Play Area, POS and Sport improvements at Lickey End Recreation Ground in accordance with the S106 Agreement	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	S106 19/0137/FUL	22,626	37,956	60,582	30,000	0	0	0	0	0													

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Cap Proj	Description	Department	Funding detail	Carried Fwd to 24/5	2024/25 Budget £	2024/25 Total £	Spend 24/5	2025/26 Total £	2026/27 Total £	2027/28 Total £	2028/29 Total £	2029/30 Total £	Council 24/25 £	Council 25/26 £	Council 26/27 £	Council 27/28 £	Council 28/29 £	Council 29/30 £	3rd Party 24/25 £	3rd Party 25/26 £	3rd Party 26/27 £	3rd Party 27/28 £	3rd Party 28/29 £	3rd Party 29/30 £
	Food Waste Collection - fund for Vechicles and containers							902,511	0	0	0	0												
	Replacement Wheeled Bins							2,200,000	0	0	0	0								902,511				
	Parkside - Requirement for a firewall							9,750	0	0	0	0		2,200,000										
	Laptops for new Starters							25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	0		9,750										
	Salary Capitalisation							750,000	750,000	750,000	750,000	750,000		25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000							
	ANPR Machines in 3 Car							100,000						750,000	750,000	750,000	750,000	750,000						
	Artrix - Landlord Obligations				20,000	20,000	17,587	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000						
	Total			14,890,949	6,376,987	15,039,936	1,993,474	17,451,727	3,222,841	2,469,459	2,310,531	2,373,749	3,424,500	8,117,369	2,422,841	1,669,459	1,510,531	1,573,749	10,271,265	9,334,358	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000

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Appendix B – Reserves Position

	Balance as at 31 March 2022 £000	Transfers In 2022/23 £000	Transfers Out 2022/23 £000	Balance as at 31 March 2023 £000	Transfers In 2023/24 £000	Transfers Out 2023/24 £000	Balance as at 31 March 2024 £000	Prior Yr Bud Prior year Changes	Transfers In 2024/25 £000	Transfers Out 2024/25 £000	Balance as at 31 March 2024 £000	Transfers In 2025/26 £000	Transfers Out 2025/26 £000	Balance as at 31 March 2024 £000	Transfers In 2026/27 £000	Transfers Out 2026/27 £000	Balance as at 31 March 2024 £000	Transfers In 2027/28 £000	Transfers Out 2027/28 £000	Balance as at 31 March 2024 £000
General Fund Balances	14,235	7,881	(9,012)	13,104	1,747	(1,330)	13,521	1,200		(344)	14,377		(252)	14,125		(1,115)	13,010		(484)	12,526
General Fund:																				
Building Control Other	7	0	0	7	0	0	7	0	0	0	7	0	0	7	0	0	7	0	0	7
Building Control Partnerships	82	0	0	82	0	0	82	0	0	0	82	0	0	82	0	0	82	0	0	82
Community Services	271	50	0	321	0	(125)	196	0	0	0	196	0	0	196	0	0	196	0	0	196
Economic Regeneration	1,348	0	0	1,348	50	0	1,398	(600)	0	0	798	0	0	798	0	0	798	0	0	798
Election Services	51	34	0	85	0	0	85	0	0	0	85	0	0	85	0	0	85	0	0	85
Environmental Services	27	0	0	27	0	0	27	0	0	0	27	0	0	27	0	0	27	0	0	27
Financial Services	4,705	0	0	4,705	430	(500)	4,635	(750)	0	0	3,885	0	(334)	3,551	0	0	3,551	0	0	3,551
HR Backlog Funding								75	0	0	75	0	0	75	0	0	75	0	0	75
ICT Backlog Funding								75	0	0	75	0	0	75	0	0	75	0	0	75
Housing Schemes	864	0	0	864	0	0	864	0	0	0	864	0	0	864	0	0	864	0	0	864
ICT/Systems	197	0	0	197	0	0	197	0	0	0	197	0	0	197	0	0	197	0	0	197
Leisure/Community Safety	151	0	(36)	115	0	0	115	0	0	0	115	0	0	115	0	0	115	0	0	115
Local Neighbourhood Partnerships	16	0	0	16	0	0	16	0	0	0	16	0	0	16	0	0	16	0	0	16
Other	67	0	0	67	0	0	67	0	0	0	67	0	0	67	0	0	67	0	0	67
Planning & Regeneration	133	330	0	463	0	0	463	0	0	0	463	0	0	463	0	0	463	0	0	463
Regulatory Services (Partner Share)	73	12	0	85	0	0	85	0	0	0	85	0	0	85	0	0	85	0	0	85
Replacement Reserve (Inc. Recycling)	0	0		0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shared Services (Severance Costs)	311	0	0	311	0	0	311	0	0	0	311	0	0	311	0	0	311	0	0	311
Covid-19 (General Covid Grant)	766	0	0	766	0	0	766	0	0	0	766	0	0	766	0	0	766	0	0	766
Covid-19 (Collection Fund)	4,789	0	(3,185)	1,604	0	0	1,604	0	0	0	1,604	0	0	1,604	0	0	1,604	0	0	1,604
Utilities				0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ward Budgets				0			0	0	234	(78)	156	0	(78)	78		(78)	0			0
Council Tax Hardship Fund	0	79	0	79	0	0	79	0	0	0	79	0	0	79	0	0	79	0	0	79
Property Services Review											0	100	(100)	0			0			0
EPR Funding Allocation											0	1,004	(100)	904		(450)	454		(450)	4
Artrix Holding Trust	0	17	0	17	0	0	17	0	0	0	17	0	0	17	0	0	17	0	0	17
Total General Fund	13,858	522	(3,221)	11,159	480	(625)	11,014	(1,200)	234	(78)	9,970	1,104	(612)	10,462	0	(528)	9,934	0	(450)	9,484

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Bromsgrove District Council Budget Consultation for 2026-27

Every year Bromsgrove District Council must agree a budget that balances the money we spend on services with the money we have available to us. The council gets all its income from council tax, business rates, money it can raise itself and specific grants it can bid for. All the time demand for services is increasing.

Bromsgrove District Council is facing financial pressures across many of its services. This is due to continued uncertainty over government funding and the cost of living crisis. The Council will support the District through these challenging times and will continue to deliver its plans for change and use your views to help us balance our budget.

The information from this survey will be used by Councillors as they set the budget and council tax for 2026/27.

The survey is open to anyone who is a resident of Bromsgrove District or who has a business based here.

The survey should take approximately 5 minutes to complete. The closing date for responses is 9:00am on Friday 2 January 2026.

Thank you in advance for your taking your time to complete this survey.

Our Engagement Privacy Statement it is at the end of the survey.

1. Are you a resident of Bromsgrove District and/or have a business based here?

Please tick all that applies

☐ Resident of Bromsgrove District

☐ Have a business based here

2. Please tell us where you live, or your business is based.

Please note if you live and have a business in the district, please only tell us where you live.

Alvechurch South	☐	Cofton	☐	Perryfields	☐
Alvechurch Village	☐	Drakes Cross	☐	Rock Hill	☐
Aston Fields	☐	Hagley East	☐	Rubery North	☐
Avoncroft	☐	Hagley West	☐	Rubery South	☐
Barnt Green & Hopwood	☐	Hill Top	☐	Sanders Park	☐
Bromsgrove Central	☐	Hollywood	☐	Sidemoor	☐
Belbroughton & Romsley	☐	Lickey Hills	☐	Slideslow	☐
Catshill North	☐	Lowes Hill	☐	Tardebigge	☐
Catshill South	☐	Marlbrook	☐	Wythall East	☐
Charford	☐	Norton	☐	Wythall West	☐

3. How important are the current Bromsgrove District Council priorities to you?

Economic Development – Developing the local economy, supporting businesses, skills, town & district centres

Environment – Waste & recycling, environmental enforcement, biodiversity & wildlife habitats, climate change mitigation & carbon reduction, air quality

Housing – Affordable & balanced housing provision, supporting vulnerable residents & those at risk of homelessness, environmentally sustainable and efficient homes

Infrastructure – Delivering the Local Plan, parks & open spaces, active travel

Further information can be found in the Bromsgrove District Council Plan found on the council's website.

	Extremely important	Very important	Somewhat important	Not so important	Not at all important
Economic Development	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Environment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Housing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Infrastructure	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comment:

4. Which services do you think it is important for the Council to invest in?

Please note that Highways are not included as this is a Worcestershire County Council function

Please pick your top 3 most important.

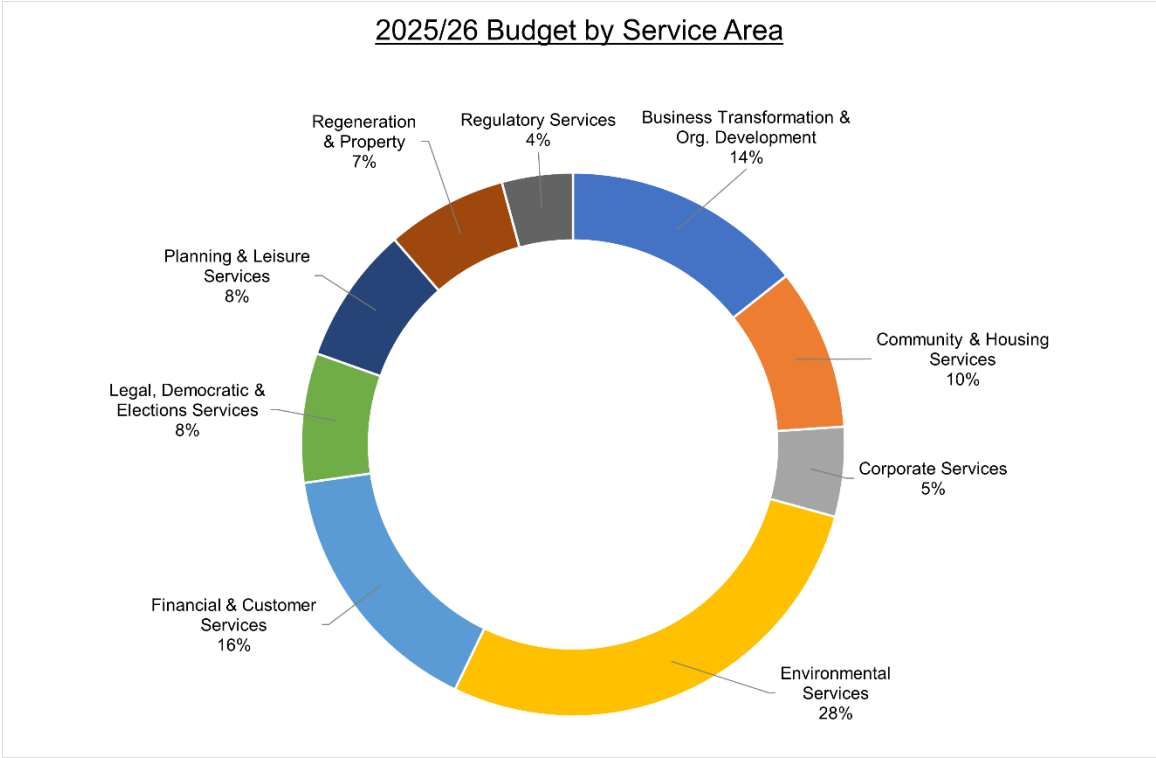
- ☐ Community and Voluntary Sector
- ☐ Community Parks and Open Spaces
- ☐ Community Safety
- ☐ Environmental Sustainability
- ☐ Events and Arts Activities
- ☐ Local Economic Development and Employment
- ☐ Maintenance of the Landscape and Environment
- ☐ Strategic Housing
- ☐ Waste and Recycling
- ☐ Welfare and Financial Support

☐ Other (please specify):

Budget Management

Please use the following list when considering the next section:

- **Business Transformation & Org. Development** – includes: ICT, human resources, corporate policy, equalities, transformation and training
- **Community & Housing** - includes: homelessness, community safety, shopmobility, community transport and CCTV
- **Corporate Services** - includes: Communications, marketing, graphic design and reprographics
- **Environmental Services** - includes: Grounds maintenance, bereavement services, waste & recycling and street cleansing
- **Financial & Customer Services** - includes: Financial monitoring, budgeting, accounts, housing benefit, council tax, business rates and customer services
- **Legal, Democratic & Election Services** - includes: Legal services, land charges, democratic services, member support and elections
- **Planning & Leisure Services** - includes: Building control, planning, tourism, recreation grounds (incl. play areas, playing fields etc.), allotments, events, art projects and sports development
- **Regeneration & Property** - includes: Business development, public toilets, economic development, street lighting, car parking, public building maintenance
- **Regulatory Services** - includes: Licensing, taxis, dog wardens and pest control



5. How important are the following council services to you when considering how Bromsgrove District Council manages its budget?

	Extremely important	Very important	Somewhat important	Not so important	Not at all important
Business Transformation & Org. Development	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Community & Housing Services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Corporate Services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Environmental Services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Financial & Customer Services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Legal, Democratic & Elections Services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Planning & Leisure Services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Regeneration & Property	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Regulatory Services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

6. Do you support fees and charges (this excludes parking) rising by 4% to keep them in line with inflation and rising staffing costs?

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

7. In order to maintain services, what level of increase to Bromsgrove District Council's proportion of Council Tax do you support?

For reference, the proportion of Council Tax that Bromsgrove retains for a band D property is approximately 12% of the total bill.

	1.99% increase	2.99% increase
Strongly agree	☐	☐
Agree	☐	☐
Neither agree nor disagree	☐	☐
Disagree	☐	☐
Strongly disagree	☐	☐

8. Please let us know your suggestions for investing in the District to increase prosperity and enhance appeal for residents and businesses alike.

9. Please let us know any other comments on the budget or ideas for reducing costs or increasing income to ensure Council services remain sustainable.

About you

Answering these questions is optional.

Any answers are completely anonymous and confidential.

The reason why we ask you these questions is so we can:

- Make our council services open to everyone in the district
- Treat everyone fairly and appropriately when they use our services
- In consultations, make sure that we have views from all across the district

The Equality Act 2010 makes these aims part of our legal duties. Your answers help us check that we have met the law and help improve our services.

10. What is your current housing status?

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Owner | ☐ Mortgaged |
| ☐ Part rent/part buy | ☐ Private renting |
| ☐ Council tenant | ☐ Social housing |
| ☐ Living with relatives | ☐ Prefer not to say |
| ☐ Other (please specify): | |

11. Which of the following best describes your age?

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| ☐ 16-19yrs | ☐ 20-29yrs |
| ☐ 30-39yrs | ☐ 40-49yrs |
| ☐ 50-59yrs | ☐ 60-69yrs |
| ☐ 70-79yrs | ☐ 80+ years |
| ☐ Prefer not to say | |

12. The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as ‘a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’.

Do you have any long-standing health condition or disability?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Prefer not to say

13. Which of the following best describes your gender?

☐ Female ☐ Male
☐ Prefer not to say ☐ Other (please specify):

14. Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Prefer not to say

15. Which best describes your ethnicity?

☐ White English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British ☐ Any other White background
☐ Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups ☐ Asian or Asian British
☐ Black, African, Caribbean or Black British Arab ☐ Prefer not to say
☐ Other ethnic group (please specify):

16. Which of the following best describes your religion or belief?

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| ☐ Atheist | ☐ Buddhist | ☐ Christian (incl. Catholic) |
| ☐ Humanist | ☐ Hindu | ☐ Jewish |
| ☐ Muslim | ☐ Pagan | ☐ Sikh |
| ☐ No religion/belief | ☐ Prefer not to say | |
| ☐ Other (please specify): | | |

17. Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Bisexual | ☐ Heterosexual |
| ☐ Lesbian or Gay | ☐ Prefer not to say |
| ☐ Other (please specify): | |

Thank you for taking the time to complete our Budget Survey. The information from this survey will be used by Councillors as they set the budget and council tax for 2026/27.

Please return your survey by 9am on Tuesday 2 January 2025 to:

**Policy and Performance
Parkside
Market Street
Bromsgrove
Worcestershire
B61 8DA**

Bromsgrove District Council Engagement Privacy Statement

What information do we collect?

We collect some or all the following information for us to understand the demographics of our customers.

- Age
- Gender
- Disability
- Race
- Religion/Belief
- Sexual orientation
- Postcode

Why we collect your data

We want to deliver the best service to our customers; therefore, we need to use information to manage the quality of our services. The information we collect will be used to understand the demographics of our customers and to improve customer satisfaction and to improve services.

How we collect your data

We are collecting your information via the use of a customer satisfaction survey. This will be used to improve services, however as this is an anonymous survey, it will not be linked back to you as an individual.

When we'll share your data

We will share this data with the Team responsible for delivering the service. However, due to the anonymity of the survey, no personal data will be submitted, therefore it will not be linked back to you as an individual.

Know your rights

No personal data is submitted as part of this customer satisfaction survey that can be linked back to you as an individual. However, if you have any queries or concerns regarding data protection matters, please email information.manage@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Information regarding all your rights can be found [here](#)

How long do we keep your information for?

We will retain the survey responses for 5 years from when the survey closes, unless we have stated it will be earlier.

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Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Shirley Webb
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Judith Willis Assistant Director Community and Housing Services
Report Author	Job Title: Amanda Delahunty Contact email: a.delahunty@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 881269
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	Not Applicable
Relevant Strategic Priorities(s)	Housing
Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is asked to RECOMMEND that:-

- 1.1 Subject to the final decision by central Government, that the proposed element of the Revenue Support Grant 2026/27 attributed to Temporary Accommodation is ring fenced to the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Grant.**

The Cabinet RESOLVE that subject to agreement of 1.1:-

- 1.2 the initiatives in 4.6 be approved to receive the Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant allocations of funding for 2026/27.**
- 1.3 delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing to use any unallocated Grant during the year or make further adjustments and uplifts as necessary to ensure full utilisation of the Grants for 2026/27 in support of existing or new schemes;**

1. BACKGROUND

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- 1.1 From 2026/27, the government plans to consolidate several existing grants into a single Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Grant. This new grant will encompass funding for prevention and relief activities currently funded through the Homelessness Prevention Grant, as well as the Rough Sleeping Prevention and Recovery Grant. It is expected that this will be a three year award.
- 1.2 Officers propose that the grants given under this funding are for a three year period with any uplift of grant allocation aligned with any MHCLG grant uplift year on year. Grant funding will be subject to satisfactory performance of the service with targets set for continual improvement.
- 1.3 The Government's recent consultation has made changes to the provision of Homelessness Prevention Grant in relation to its use towards Temporary accommodation. It is proposed that a proportion of Homelessness Prevention Grant will be transferred to the Revenue Support Grant from 2026–27. This funding will be allocated using the new Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA), which will include a dedicated Temporary Accommodation formula.
- 1.4 The percentage of Homelessness Prevention Grant allocation, removed for temporary accommodation is anticipated to be approximately 51% of the usual grant, and provided through Revenue Support Grant in the Local Government Finance Settlement.
- 1.5 This report seeks Council's approval for the temporary accommodation element of the Revenue Support Grant to be ringfenced to homeless prevention activities set out in 4.6.
- 1.6 This report seeks Members approval to award the MHCLG Homelessness Prevention Grant including Rough Sleeping Prevention and Recovery Grant and Domestic Abuse New Burdens Grant in addition to the Council's own Homelessness Grant to specific schemes recommended by the Development and Enabling Manager. Additionally, it seeks to delegate authority to the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing, to allocate any underspend of grant during 2026/27 on schemes to prevent homelessness and assist those who become homeless.
- 1.7 The purpose of the ringfenced Homelessness Prevention Grant fund is to give local authorities control and flexibility in managing homelessness pressures and supporting those who are at risk of homelessness. The Government expects local authorities to use it to deliver the following priorities:

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- To fully enforce the Homelessness Reduction Act and contribute to ending rough sleeping by increasing activity to prevent single homelessness.
- Reduce family temporary accommodation numbers through maximising family homelessness prevention
- Eliminate the use of unsuitable bed and breakfast accommodation for families for longer than the statutory six week limit.
- The Government requires that at least 49% of the grant is spent on prevention and relief activities and staffing.

1.8 The council received a number of applications for this funding and the above criteria was used to support the award of this grant.

2.9 Domestic Abuse New Burdens Grant funding has been allocated to ensure that councils can comply with the requirements to provide safe and supported accommodation for those fleeing domestic abuse and provide monitoring of services to central government via Worcestershire County Council who are responsible for the overall duties set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The grant will contribute to a specialist County co-ordinator post and a specialist County Research and Intelligence Officer post and will also be used to support existing services that meet the needs of this cohort.

2. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

3.1 The management and administration of grant forms part of the Strategic Housing day to day operations.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 In addition to the annual Homelessness Grant £112,000, the Council is expecting to be awarded by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHCLG), Homelessness Prevention Grant £349,018, £34,899 Rough Sleeping and Prevention Grant and £35,774 Domestic Abuse New Burdens funding. This report sets out how the Council intends to utilise this funding to create a package of support and services to prevent homelessness and support those who become homeless.

3.2 It is anticipated that 51% of this the £349,018 MHCLG Homelessness Prevention Grant and £34,899 Rough Sleeping and Prevention Grant

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will form part of the Revenue Support Grant in the Local Government Finance Settlement which would equate to £195,798

- 4.3 The Homelessness Prevention Grant and Rough Sleeping will be ring fenced by MHCLG for activities that prevent and deal with homelessness.
- 4.4 The Council has a budget of £112,000 for the 2026/27 Homelessness Grant allocation in addition to the MHCLG grant award.
- 4.5 The Council therefore has the following for Homelessness Prevention and Domestic Abuse Services and Housing Options in 2026/27 as follows:

Grant	2026/27
Homelessness Grant	£112,000
Homelessness Prevention Grant (including Temp Accom element)	£349,018
Rough Sleeping Prevention and Recovery Grant	£34,899
Sub Total	£495,917
Domestic Abuse Grant	£35,744
Grant Total Grant Available	£531,661

- 4.6 It is recommended that the funding is allocated as follows:

Homelessness Grant Allocation	2026/27 £ (up to £495,917)
The Council is committed to maintain the spend below to meet its statutory duties under homelessness legislation	
BDHT Housing Agency Agreement Top Up Staffing Costs	52,475
Static Temporary Accommodation for an additional 4 units of accommodation	30,688
Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership Co-ordinator – contribution towards county-wide development and delivery of housing initiatives in partnership with other agencies	10,500
Severe Emergency Weather Provision	18,347
St Basils Foyer – provides stable accommodation/support for young people - 14 units – fully occupied during last financial year	50,203

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St Basils Crash pad – provides emergency temporary accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds	19,711
Bromsgrove Home Choice CBL and Homelessness Module	14,600
Sub Total	£196,524
The services support the delivery of the Council's Homelessness Service.	
St Basils Young Persons Pathway Worker – support to prevent homelessness for under 25's and Crash Pad to provide a unit of emergency accommodation for young people.	41,116
NewStarts - Provide Furniture and Volunteering Opportunities for Ex-Offenders – supports tenancy sustainment and provides future employment opportunities/reduces risk of reoffending	10,000
GreenSquare Accord Housing Related Support – helping ex-offenders remain housed/seek employment	31,172
Maggs Rough Sleeper outreach and prevention service targeting rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping.	35,607
North Worcestershire Basement Project - Support for young people at risk of homelessness	30,000
BDHT - Sunrise Project intensive support	46,886
Mental Health Link Worker (part funded)	21,554
CAB – Debt Advice for Home Owners and Private Renters	27,611
CAB – Affordability Assessments	6,021
Housing First/Housing Led Service	29,563
Part time Empty Homes Officer	7,680
Spend to Save Top Up	5,683
County Rough Sleeper Coordinator	5,500
Rough Sleeper Access to Accommodation Fund and NFNO/NSNO	1,000
Sub Total	299,393
Total committed expenditure	£495,917
Underspend	£0

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Domestic Abuse Grant Allocation	2026/27 Up to £35,744
County Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator	5,112
County Domestic Abuse Research and Intelligence Officer	4,573
Top up to DA Housing Options Officer	6,059
NewStarts Furniture Project	5,000
Basement Project	15,000
Total committed expenditure	£35,744
Underspend	0

- 4.7 With the exception of BDHT, the majority of the above are voluntary sector organisations and without this funding the support provided would cease which will lead to an increase homelessness pressures and have a negative impact on council finances and reputation. Performance monitoring of these services is available in Appendix 1
- 4.8 Their prevention role is crucial in helping people remain in their existing accommodation wherever possible. This is even more relevant due to affordability issues in all sectors. In addition, there has been less churn in social housing, so fewer properties are becoming available and social housing options are very limited.
- 4.9 An element of the grant supplements the cost of the Housing Agency Agreement 5 year contract with BDHT which ends on 31st March 2028.
- 4.10 The Citizens Advice have submitted bid for a new service £27,611 for targeted Debt Intervention for home owners and private renters who are facing repossession or eviction with an aim to intervene and provide advice to prevent homelessness.
- 4.11 Officers are proposing £29,563 for a Housing First/Housing Led service. This is currently provided by St Pauls Hostel which is a county initiative but likely to come to an end on 31st March 2026, however, the intensive support service is still required locally.
- 4.12 The Council is proposing to provide funding for additional officer hours to support bringing empty properties back into use.
- 4.13 Officers are requesting delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services following consultation with

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the Portfolio Holder for Health and Well Being and Strategic Housing to use any unallocated Grant during the year or make further adjustments to current initiatives as necessary to ensure full utilisation of the Grant for 2026/27.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council has statutory duty under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) to assist those who are threatened with homelessness or experiencing actual homelessness and has placed additional duties on the Council regarding preventing and relieving homelessness.
- 5.2 The Homelessness Prevention Grant has been ring fenced to homelessness prevention and tackling homelessness by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.
- 5.3 The Domestic Abuse New Burdens Grant has been provided to ensure that councils comply with the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 The new unitary authority/authorities will be required as a local housing authority to provide duties under Homelessness legislation. The 3 year funding allocation to organisations would include a clause that it is subject to any implications arising from Local Government Reorganisation.

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant supports the Council's priority of Housing. It allows the Council to support a range of holistic services to help prevent or tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in the district.
- 6.3 The combination of practical support such as furniture, compliments those services that provide outreach support to help clients access accommodation, sustain tenancies, manage budgets, engage in positive activities and access employment.

Climate Change Implications

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- 6.4 The recycling of furniture supports the Council's green thread as it minimises waste and provides reuse and recycling of household items wherever possible.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.5 The Homelessness Grant and Homelessness Prevention Grant will benefit customers by offering household's more options to prevent their homelessness, support them to remain in their own homes or help the Council to manage and support households in Temporary Accommodation.
- 6.6 The grant will also benefit the larger community as opportunities to prevent homelessness will be maximised.
- 6.7 Domestic Abuse New Burdens Grant will ensure that there are resources to support the provision of a range of services available to meet the needs of those victims/survivors of domestic abuse who become homeless and need support to set up a new home and recover from their experience, many of whom are women.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 If the recommended schemes are not approved there is a risk that more households who are threatened with homelessness, or who are in housing need, will have limited alternative options. There is also therefore the risk that they may have to make a homeless approach and this could consequently lead to the following negative outcomes:
- Increased B&B costs with 80% having to be picked up by the local authority.
 - Increased rough sleeping in the district
 - Impacts on physical and mental health, educational achievement, ability to work and similar through increased homelessness.
- 7.2 All recipients of Grant will enter into a grant agreement and have regular monitoring with officers on the delivery of the service.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 Outcomes Monitoring Table

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

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19th November 2025

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Shirley Webb Portfolio Holder Strategic Housing	28/10/25
Lead Director / Head of Service	Judith Willis Assistant Director Community and Housing Services	28/10/25
Financial Services	Deb Goodall, Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services	28/10/25
Legal Services	Nicola Cummings, Principal Solicitor Governance	28/10/25
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)	Matt Bough, Strategic Housing and Business Support Manager	28/10/25

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**GRANT MONITORING OUTCOMES
SUMMARY
2025 - 2026**

		Basement	CABR	Maggs	GSA	Crash Pad	YPPW	Foyer
Clients	B/F CASES	120	3	0	11	0	21	14
	NEW APPLICATIONS	38	3	8	2	2	42	3
	APPLICATIONS CLOSED	50	5	1	4	1	43	4
	C/F CASES	108	1	7	9	1	20	13
Support to access	Benefits	15		2	2	2	7	3
	ID/Bank Acc/etc	28		7	0	1	21	0
	Mental health	15		0	0	0	0	0
	Substance Misuse	0		0	0	0	0	0
	GP	3		2	0	0	0	0
	Voluntary	18		2	1	0	0	0

GRANT MONITORING OUTCOMES

2025 - 2026

QUARTER 1

CATEGORY		Basement	CABR	Maggs	GSA	Crash Pad	YPPW	Foyer	
Clients	B/F CASES	120	3	0	11	0	21	14	169
	NEW APPLICATIONS	13	1	3	1	2	26	3	49
	APPLICATIONS CLOSED	0	3	0	3	1	24	3	34
	C/F CASES	133	1	3	9	1	23	14	184
Support to access	Benefits	6		1	1	2	6	3	19
	ID/Bank Acc/etc	13		3	0	1	21	0	38
	Mental health services	7		0	0	0	0	0	7
	Substance Misuse services	0		0	0	0	0	0	0
	GP services	1		0	0	0	0	0	1
	Voluntary Services	7		1	1	0	0	0	9

QUARTER 2

CATEGORY		Basement	CABR	Maggs	GSA	Crash Pad	YPPW	Foyer	
Clients	B/F CASES	133	1	3	9	1	23	14	184
	NEW APPLICATIONS	25	2	5	1	0	16	0	49
	APPLICATIONS CLOSED	50	2	1	1	0	19	1	74
	C/F CASES	108	1	7	9	1	20	13	159
Support to access	Benefits	9		1	1	0	1	0	12
	ID/Bank Acc/etc	15		4	0	0	0	0	19
	Mental health services	8		0	0	0	0	0	8
	Substance Misuse services	0		0	0	0	0	0	0
	GP services	2		2	0	0	0	0	4
	Voluntary Services	11		1	0	0	0	0	12

QUARTER 3

CATEGORY		Basement	CABR	Maggs	GSA	Crash Pad	YPPW	Foyer	
Clients	B/F CASES	108	1	7	9	1	20	13	159
	NEW APPLICATIONS								0
	APPLICATIONS CLOSED								0
	C/F CASES	108	1	7	9	1	20	13	159
Support to access	Benefits								0
	ID/Bank Acc/etc								0
	Mental health services								0
	Substance Misuse services								0
	GP services								0
	Voluntary Services								0

QUARTER 4

CATEGORY		Basement	CABR	Maggs	GSA	Crash Pad	YPPW	Foyer	
Clients	B/F CASES	108	1	7	9	1	20	13	159
	NEW APPLICATIONS								0
	APPLICATIONS CLOSED								0
	C/F CASES	108	1	7	9	1	20	13	159
Support to access	Benefits								0
	ID/Bank Acc/etc								0
	Mental health services								0
	Substance Misuse services								0
	GP services								0
	Voluntary Services								0

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

19th November 2025

Quarter 2 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	Debra Goodall – 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.	

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 £336k forecast overspend position.
- 2) The current Capital spending of £4.872m against a revised budget of £21.876m.
- 3) The current savings delivery is £894k against an annual target of £1.213m for 2025/26. (This is included in the above Revenue position in 1).
- 4) The Earmarked Reserves balances of £11.266m.
- 5) The Ward Budget allocation position to date is 18 approved allocations at £15,968.80, leaving a balance of £46,031.20 to be allocated before year end.
- 6) There is an updated procurements position, with any new items over £200,000 to be included on the forward plan.
- 7) The position on Council Tax and Business Rates be noted.
- 8) The position on benefits processing be noted.
- 9) The Quarter 2 position on Corporate Performance Indicators be noted.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

19th November 2025

The Cabinet is asked to RECOMMEND that:

- 10) The Balance Sheet Monitoring Position for Quarter 2 be noted – which is the Treasury Monitoring Report and required to be reported to Council.
- 11) The Council's Treasury performance for Quarter 2 of the financial year 2025/26 be noted.
- 12) The position in relation to the Council's Prudential indicators be noted.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 This Quarter 2 Financial and Performance Monitoring Report provides a comprehensive overview of Bromsgrove District Council's finance and performance for the period April to September 2025. It outlines the Council's revenue and capital positions, savings delivery, procurement pipeline, and progress on key strategic projects, along with performance against key indicators.
- 2.2 As of the end of Quarter 2, the Council is forecasting a **£336k revenue overspend** for the full financial year. This compares to a £344k revenue overspend forecast in 2024/25 at Quarter 2. The £336k is primarily driven by costs relating to Waste Management due to the aging fleet and associated agency costs, offset by increased income in waste services and additional costs within Finance relating to agency cover for vacancies and consultancy costs for VAT support. There have also been increased costs relating to BT Services and a shortfall in parking income. These costs have been offset by vacancy management and underspends in Corporate Financing.
- 2.3 Since Quarter 1, there has been an adverse movement of £163k relating to an increase in fleet costs (Environmental Services) of £184k, increased agency staff costs and external professional fees (Finance and Customer Services) of £124k offset by increased street naming and numbering income (Business Transformation and Organisational Development) of £73k, increased UKSPF grant funding of £23k and lower fees and charges than budgeted for in Parks and Events and Planning Policy (Planning and Leisure Services) of £42k and a reduction in other variations of £7k.
- 2.4 The Council has delivered **£894k of its £1.213m savings target**, leaving a balance of £319k to deliver. Further work is ongoing to meet the full-year goal. Capital expenditure to date stands at **£4.872m** against a revised budget of **£21.876m** proposed to support ongoing commitments. This budget includes £14.891m of carry forwards from 2024/25.
- 2.5 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

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required remediation works under phase two. The Nailers' Yard scheme construction stage is now progressing with a revised completion date of 6th May 2026.

- 2.6 The Council's **collection rates** for Council Tax and Business Rates remain strong, with Q2 performance close to or exceeding national averages. Benefits processing times are within expected parameters, despite increased complexity in cases retained by the Council.
- 2.7 The report also includes updates on **ward budget allocations, earmarked reserves, and treasury management performance**, with no new borrowing undertaken and **£7m in short-term investments** held at quarter-end.
- 2.8 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 half of the financial year (April – September 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 2 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 Q2 of Ward Budget Funds.
 - The updated procurement pipeline of Council projects to be delivered over the next 12 months in order to properly resource plans 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.

Agenda Item 9c

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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 2, the projected revenue outturn position for the full 2025/26 financial year and explains key variances against budget.
- 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 Q2 Budget	Q2 Adjusted Spend	Full Year Projected Forecast	Full Year Projected Variance Q1	Full Year Projected Variance Q2
Business Transformation and Organisational Development	2,197,136	2,052,948	954,380	952,766	2,010,663	30,996	-42,285
Community and Housing GF Services	1,471,273	1,398,392	672,398	601,340	1,547,078	217,223	148,686
Corporate Services	817,413	1,409,860	1,001,154	524,196	803,734	-616,735	-606,126
Environmental Services	4,266,050	4,266,050	2,133,025	2,178,082	4,626,495	175,970	360,445
Financial and Customer Services	2,387,557	2,338,838	1,218,481	1,241,829	2,656,001	192,996	317,163
Legal, Democratic and Elections Services	1,178,898	1,152,334	560,814	605,798	1,246,713	78,161	94,379
Planning and Leisure Services	1,250,320	1,107,643	482,483	527,136	1,156,462	90,723	48,819
Regeneration & Property	1,099,949	942,531	417,555	507,219	1,112,233	192,533	169,702
Regulatory Client	646,139	646,139	323,070	376,901	722,838	42,759	76,699
Starting Well	0	0	0	202	0	0	0
Grand Total	15,314,735	15,314,735	7,763,360	7,515,469	15,882,217	404,626	567,482
Service Description	2025-26 Approved Budget	2025-26 Revised Budget	2025-26 Revised Q2 Budget	Q2 Adjusted Spend	Full Year Projected Forecast	Full Year Projected Variance Q1	Full Year Projected Variance Q2
Corporate Financing	-15,314,735	-15,314,735	-7,657,368	-2,591,642	-15,546,000	-231,265	-231,265
Grand Total	-15,314,735	-15,314,735	-7,657,368	-2,591,642	-15,546,000	-231,265	-231,265
TOTALS	0	0	105,992	4,923,827	336,217	173,361	336,217
						Change	162,856

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 £336k at Quarter 2 as explained in the Executive Summary. This position will continue to be reviewed and further updates will be provided to Councillors throughout 2025/26. This includes service projections as follows:

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Business Transformation £42k underspend

- 4.4.1 Business Transformation & Organisational Development are forecasting a net underspend of £42k.

This is due to increased street naming and numbering income of £53k and salary savings of £17k. These are offset by an overspend of £28k for Apprenticeship Levy due to increased Apprenticeship Levy requirements.

Community and Housing GF Services £149k overspend

- 4.4.2 Community & Housing Services are forecasting a £149k net overspend.

There are £153k increased charges from BT which is an uncontrollable charge. There is also £50k in additional Bed & Breakfast costs in line with national trends offset by £27k underspend related to CCTV and a reduction in other net variations of £27k.

There are additional charges relating to equipment in Lifeline Services of which at least £60k income will be offset in the next six months – a clearer picture will be available at Q3.

Corporate Services £606k underspend

- 4.4.3 Corporate Services is forecasting a £606k net underspend.

There has been a £639k on vacancy management and savings efficiency targets across the whole council offset by 7k of communication costs relating to Local Government Reorganisation, by £21k additional Postage costs across the whole council other and an increase in other net variations of £5k.

Environmental Services £360k overspend

- 4.4.4 Environmental Services are forecasting a £360k net variance above budget.

The variance is largely due to a net overspend on Waste Management of £414k. There is £495k additional costs on maintenance of the aging fleet – these costs should reduce with the introduction of the new fleet. There are also agency costs of £156k, the cesspool service of £35k, and other additional costs of generating extra income and other charges relating to staffing from Redditch of £339k in total.

All of these costs were offset by increased income of £516k largely due to commercial and garden waste collection services where there has been an increased customer base and other net movements of £95k.

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Aside from waste management there were a reduction in other net variations representing a £54k underspend.

Financial and Customer Services £317k overspend

- 4.4.5 Finance & Customer Services are forecasting an overspend of £317k due to £90k on VAT support from Lavat Consulting on the VAT returns to HMRC, £50k to Bruton Knowles for Insurance Property valuations for the Statement of Accounts, £179k on Agency staff due to cover for vacancies, offset by other net variations of £2k.

A review of resourcing arrangements is taking place.

Legal, Democratic and Elections Services £94k overspend*

- 4.4.6 Legal, Democratic and Property Services are forecasting a £94k overspend due to miscoding of £31k Landlord costs on the Artrix charged to Legal and £50k Ward Budget miscoded to Democratic Services. This will be corrected as part of the budget setting process. There are also increased Civica license costs of £13k which are expected to be reimbursed.

* Adjusting for the above, the actual uncontrollable overspend for the service is £1k.

Planning and Leisure Services £49k overspend

- 4.4.7 Planning and Leisure Services are forecasting a net £49k overspend.

This is due to £85k additional staffing costs as a result of increased costs of agency staff due to maternity cover. There has also been £68k underachieved income in Development Control and Arts and Development as the income target is higher than can be achieved – this will be addressed as part of the 2026/27 budget setting process. There have also been additional salary costs of £23k in Building Control.

This is offset by savings in salary on Parks and Events of £63k and Planning Policy of £67k due to a planned review on Leisure services. There are other additional net variations of £3k.

Regeneration & Property £170k overspend

- 4.4.8 Regeneration and Property are forecasting a £170k above budget due to an overspend on the carpark service which analyses as a shortfall in car parking revenue of £82k as a result of the first half hour being free, £27k due to unforeseen rental costs, £27k of additional MiPermit charges, £43k overspend on recharges to Wychavon DC due to

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higher shared service costs, £3k overspend on enforcement and £4k on other minor expenses offset by a £9k underspend on multi-storey car parks.

Other overspends include £20k on utility costs and overtime in Public Conveniences, additional fleet costs of £49k and other additional net variances of £7k.

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 £51k and savings within Property Services of £32k due to lower than anticipated staff costs.

Regulatory Client £77k overspend

4.4.9 Regulatory Client are forecasting a £77k overspend due to £47k underachieved income in Taxi Licensing as a result of lower than anticipated licencing volumes and default works overspend of £27k. This is a re-occurring year on year pattern and will be addressed in the 2026/27 budget setting process.

There have also been other additional net variations of £3k.

Corporate Financing £231k underspend

4.4.10 Corporate Financing is showing additional income of £231k due to £170k Grant Income, £150k Investment Interest Income, £36k savings on Interest Payable offset by £125k in underachieved Fees & Charges Income which will be addressed in the budget setting process.

Savings Targets

4.4.11 The Council had £1.213m of savings targets in 2025/26. The Council has delivered £894k of these savings in Q2. A review is currently being undertaken of vacant posts. Savings against target are shown in the table below:

	2025/26 £m	Adjusted 2025/26 £m	Total 2025/26 £m	Savings identified as at Quarter 2 £m	
Service Reviews	(0.405)	0.405	0		Consolidated corporately
Finance Vacancies	(0.100)	0.100	0		Consolidated corporately
Environmental Services Partnership	(0.050)		(0.050)	0	Work ongoing
2023/24 Items	(0.555)	0.505	(0.050)	0	
In year corporate target		(0.913)	(0.913)	(0.668)	£0.343m from vacancy management and £0.055m from efficiencies.

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					Expected to be met in full.
Directorate savings		(0.250)	(0.250)	(0.226)	There is an expected outturn of £226k in savings.
2025/26 Items	0	(1.163)	(1.163)	(0.894)	
Total Savings	(0.555)	(0.658)	(1.213)	(0.894)	

4.5 Cash Management

Borrowing

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

Investments

- On 30th September 2025 there were £7m 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. At this stage, additional grants of £3.916m had been received, resulting in a total capital budget of £21.268m. At Quarter 2, additional grants of £4.524m have 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

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4.8 Included in this funding the Council also have the following Grant Funded Schemes which are being delivered in 2025/26:

- 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 £2.425m 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. Pavilion – Main roofing installation is now complete and rooflights are being installed with PV panels. Commercial building – Steel Frame System is now complete, roofing hot melt works complete with slab/gravel done to main roof. Cladding well underway to gable end and 3rd floor areas, windows and curtain wall being installed on 3 elevations and 1st fix dry lining plus M&E commenced on 2nd and 3rd floors.
 - The revised completion date is 6th May 2026 (previously 26th January 2026) due to culvert works. The cost of the scheme has increased as a result of this. An urgent decision was made on 21st August 2025 whereby BDC committed a further £500k to the Levelling Up Programme.
 - GJS Dillon have received several enquiries for office space and two enquiries for the GF food and beverage unit. They have prepared the service charge schedules for the commercial building. Heads of terms are due to be issued to an incoming tenant that wishes to let one and a half floors. The next stage will be to instruct Bruton Knowles to undertake the property management role of the commercial building.
- For the Windsor Street Scheme
 - Brownfield Solutions have completed phase one 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 May 2026.
 - The project is slightly delayed due to waiting for feedback from the Environment Agency. By May 2026, the Council will have a clean site that is ready to be redeveloped.
 - Cabinet will agree the delivery option for residential use on the site in November. Following this, the regeneration team will progress this option whilst phase 2 remediation is ongoing.

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- Public Realm work is now fully completed, and the underspend is approximately £925k

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 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 total £917,878 (although it should be noted that these grants funded schemes are a mix of capital - £286,083 and revenue - £631,795) need to be completely spend by the end of the 2025/26 financial year.

- 4.9 The outturn spend is £4.872m 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 30th September 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 half year 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 September there have been applications from 18 Members approved totalling £15,968.80. There are still 13 Members who have not allocated any funding and overall, £46,031.20 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.

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- 4.13 This initial balance sheet reporting is set out as the Q2 Treasury Report which is attached as **Appendix D**. This report sets out the Councils debt and borrowing position for Q2 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

- 4.14 The Procurement pipeline is shown in **Appendix E**. The Council's Procurement Pipeline includes details of contracts expected to be repocured and new procurement projects expected to be undertaken in the future. Those happening in the next 12 months and over £200k 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 £200k
 - There are 5 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 Tax receipts (national average is 95.8%) which equates to a total sum of £87.505 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	57.78	56.58	50.261
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).

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- 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 £31.132m.. 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	25.84	28.34	9.082
Quarter 2	51.68	56.82	18.051
Quarter 3			
Quarter 4	98.0		

Benefits

- 4.19 Benefit claim statistics are summarised in the table below:

New claims	Qtr 1	Qtr 2		Qtr 1	Qtr 2
Average processing time	20 days	16 days	Number processed this quarter	95	83
Changes to claims					
Average processing time	10 days	9 days	Number processed this quarter	1215	1095

- 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

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- 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.

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

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Appendix F – Quarter 2 Corporate Performance Indicators

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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	3,782,273
200073	- Ex-Fire Station/Windsor Street	0	-54,247	113,508
	UK Shared Prosperity Fund			
200086	(UKSPF Funding BDC 2024/2025)	918,000	938,000	0
200082	CCTV Digital Upgrade (UKSPF)	0	33,668	0
200084	Shop Frontage Improvement & Empty Shop Grants (UKSPF)	0	-53,605	0
200026	Rubery Redvelopment Works	0	-1,504	0
	Other Schemes			
200006	Burcot Lane	0	-927,642	0
200008	Funding for DFGs	1,285,847	1,442,899	631,200
200009	Home Repairs Assistance	50,000	215,602	0
200010	Energy Efficiency Installation	0	212,190	0
200019	Fleet Replacement new line	1,265,000	3,173,318	114,356
200022	Replacement Parking Machines	100,000	94,134	5,000
200030	Wheelie Bin Purchase	120,000	-48,671	108,403
200033	Bus Shelters	18,000	34,345	0
200045	Greener Homes	0	-6,125	0
200069	Cisco Network Update	34,877	34,877	0
200070	Server Replacement	18,500	188,049	67,038
200071	Laptop Refresh	5,000	36,249	20,263
200075	Sanders Park	0	-103,763	24,727
200102	Fleet Replacement cost	15,000	24,400	0
200103	Wheelie Bin Increases	0	85,000	0
200076	Play Area, POS and Sport improvements at Lickey End Recreation Ground in accordance with	0	30,582	0
200079	Footpaths	75,000	32,020	3,274
200104	Buildings	100,000	262,426	2,945
	Updated Pay Audit Requirements	166,242	166,242	0
200105	Initial Play Audit Requirements	0	451,000	0
200106	New ongoing Cyber security budget	25,000	50,000	0
200107	Artrix - Landlord Obligations	20,000	22,414	0
200101	Wild Flower Machinery	0	62,000	0
200001	Barnt Green Millenium Park - Toilet	0	0	0
Project codes are being set up	Replacement Wheeled Bins	2,200,000	2,200,000	0
	Parkside - Requirement for a firewall	902,511	902,511	0
	Laptops for new Starters	9,750	9,750	0
	Laptops for new Starters	25,000	25,000	0
	Salary Capitalisation	750,000	750,000	0
200016	New Finance Enterprise system	20,000	40,000	0
		17,351,727	21,876,441	4,872,987

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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 Q2 - Funds Allocated to 30 September

Councillor Ward Fund Balances – 25/26

Activity	Spend	Balance £2,000
Cllr A. Bailes	300.00	1,700.00
Cllr R. Lambert	1,978.80	21.20
Cllr S. Ammar	1,300.00	700.00
Cllr E. Gray	800.00	1,200.00
Cllr P. McDonald	1,450.00	550.00
Cllr H. Warren-Clarke	0	2,000.00
Cllr A. Dale	0	2,000.00
Cllr S. Webb	2,000.00	0
Cllr R. Hunter	0	2,000.00
Cllr R. Bailes	0	2,000.00
Cllr S. Baxter	500.00	1,500.00
Cllr J Clarke	0	2,000.00
Cllr S. Colella	0	2,000.00
Cllr J. Elledge	0	2,000.00
Cllr D. Forsythe	500.00	1,500.00
Cllr D. Hopkins	683.00	1,317.00
Cllr C. Hotham	750.00	1,250.00
Cllr H. Jones	0	2,000.00
Cllr B. Kumar	1,200.00	800.00
Cllr M. Marshall	1,000.00	1,000.00
Cllr K. May	657.00	1,343.00
Cllr B. McEldowney	1,350.00	650.00

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Activity	Spend	Balance £2,000
Cllr D. Nicholl	250.00	1,750.00
Cllr S. Nock	250.00	1,750.00
Cllr S. Peters	500.00	1,500.00
Cllr J. Robinson	0	2,000.00
Cllr S. Robinson	0	2,000.00
Cllr J. Stanley	500.00	1,500.00
Cllr K. Taylor	0	2,000.00
Cllr P. Whittaker	0	2,000.00
Cllr S. Evans	0	2,000.00
Overall Totals	15,968.80	46,031.20

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Appendix D - Q2 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 Q2 of the financial year 25/26.**
- **Note the position in relation to the Council's Prudential indicators.**

(These recommendations are also listed at the start of the covering report.)

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 first quarter was dominated by the fallout from the US trade tariffs and their impact on equity and bond markets. The second quarter, still rife with uncertainty, saw equity markets making gains and a divergence in US and UK government bond yields, which had been moving relatively closely together.
- 3.4 From late June, amid a UK backdrop of economic uncertainty, concerns around the government's fiscal position and speculation around the autumn Budget, yields on medium and longer-term gilts pushed higher, including the 30-year which hit its highest level for almost 30 years.
- 3.5 UK headline annual consumer price inflation (CPI) increased over the period, rising from 2.6% in March to 3.8% in August, still well above the Bank of England's 2% target. Core inflation also rose, from 3.4% to 3.6% over the same period, albeit the August reading was

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down % from 3.8% the previous month. Services inflation also fell from July to August, to 4.7% from 5.0%.

- 3.6 The UK economy expanded by 0.7% in the first quarter of the calendar year and by 0.3% in the second quarter. In the final version of the Q2 2025 GDP report, annual growth was revised upwards to 1.4% y/y. However, monthly figures showed zero growth in July, in line with expectations, indicating a sluggish start to Q3.
- 3.7 Labour market data continued to soften throughout the period, with the unemployment rate rising and earnings growth easing, but probably not to an extent that would make the more hawkish MPC members comfortable with further rate cuts. In addition, the employment rate rose while the economic inactivity rate and number of vacancies fell.
- 3.8 The BoE's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) cut Bank Rate from 4.5% to 4.25% in May and to 4.0% in August after an unprecedented second round of voting. The final 5-4 vote was for a 25bps cut, with the minority wanting no change. In September, seven MPC members voted to hold rates while two preferred a 25bps cut. The Committee's views still differ on whether the upside risks from inflation expectations and wage setting outweigh downside risks from weaker demand and growth.
- 3.9 The August BoE Monetary Policy Report highlighted that after peaking in Q3 2025, inflation is projected to fall back to target by mid-2027, helped by increasing spare capacity in the economy and the ongoing effects from past tighter policy rates. GDP is expected to remain weak in the near-term while over the medium-term outlook will be influenced by domestic and global developments.
- 3.10 Arlingclose, the authority's treasury adviser, maintained its central view that Bank Rate would be cut further as the BoE focused on weak GDP growth more than higher inflation. One more cut is currently expected during 2025/26, taking Bank Rate to 3.75%. The risks to the forecast are balanced in the near-term but weighted to the downside further out as weak consumer sentiment and business confidence and investment continue to constrain growth. There is also considerable uncertainty around the autumn Budget and the impact this will have on the outlook.
- 3.11 Against a backdrop of uncertain US trade policy and pressure from President Trump, the US Federal Reserve held interest rates steady for most of the period, before cutting the Fed Funds Rate to 4.00%-4.25% in September. Fed policymakers also published their new economic projections at the same time. These pointed to a 0.50% lower Fed Funds Rate by the end of 2025 and 0.25% lower in 2026, alongside GDP growth of 1.6% in 2025, inflation of 3%, and an unemployment rate of 4.5%.
- 3.12 The European Central Bank cut rates in June, reducing its main refinancing rate from 2.25% to 2.0%, before keeping it on hold through to the end of the period. New ECB

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projections predicted inflation averaging 2.1% in 2025, before falling below target in 2026, alongside improving GDP growth, for which the risks are deemed more balanced and the disinflationary process over.

- 3.13 **Financial markets:** After the sharp declines seen early in the period, sentiment in financial markets improved, but risky assets have generally remained volatile. Early in the period bond yields fell, but ongoing uncertainty, particularly in the UK, has seen medium and longer yields rise with bond investors requiring an increasingly higher return against the perceived elevated risk of UK plc. Since the sell-off in April, equity markets have gained back the previous declines, with investors continuing to remain bullish in the face of ongoing uncertainty.
- 3.14 Over the period, the 10-year UK benchmark gilt yield started at 4.65% and ended at 4.70%. However, these six months saw significant volatility with the 10-year yield hitting a low of 4.45% and a high of 4.82%. It was a broadly similar picture for the 20-year gilt which started at 5.18% and ended at 5.39% with a low and high of 5.10% and 5.55% respectively. The Sterling Overnight Rate (SONIA) averaged 4.19% over the six months to 30th September.
- 3.15 **Credit review:** Arlingclose maintained its 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 Early in the period, Fitch upgraded NatWest Group and related entities to AA- from A+ and placed Clydesdale Bank's long-term A- rating on Rating Watch Positive. While 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.
- 3.17 Then in the second quarter, Fitch upgraded Clydesdale Bank and also HSBC, downgraded Lancashire CC and Close Brothers while Moody's upgraded Transport for London, Allied Irish Banks, Bank of Ireland and Toronto-Dominion Bank.
- 3.18 After spiking in early April following the US trade tariff announcements, UK credit default swap prices have since generally trended downwards and ended the period 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 has followed a fairly similar pattern to the UK, as have Singaporean and Australian lenders while Canadian bank CDS prices remain modestly elevated compared to earlier in 2025 and in 2024.
- 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.

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- 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 30th June 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

	31.6.25	31.9.26
	Actual	Actual
	£m	£m
General Fund CFR	31.26	31.26
Total CFR	31.26	31.26
Less: External borrowing**	0	0
Internal borrowing	31.26	31.26
Less: Usable reserves	-11.27	-11.27
Less: Working capital	-3.10	-3.10
Net borrowing	16.89	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

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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

	30.6.25 Balance £m	Movement £m	30.9.25 Balance £m	30.9.25 Rate %
Long-term borrowing				
Short-term borrowing	0	0	0	
Total borrowing	0	0	0	
Short-term investments				
Cash and cash equivalents	3.5	3.5	7.0	
Total investments	3.5	3.5	7.0	
Net investments	3.5	3.5	7.0	

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 5.10% at the beginning of the period and 4.80% at the end. The lowest available 10-year maturity rate was 4.70% and the highest was 5.10%. Rates for 20-year maturity loans ranged from 5.30% to 5.50% during the period, and 50-year maturity loans from 5.10% to 5.30%. 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 30th June 2025 as per table 3 below, as part of its strategy for funding previous and current years' capital programmes.

Table 3: Borrowing Position

	31.6.25 Balance £m	Net Movement £m	30.9.25 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 £3.5 and £11.5 million due to timing differences between income and expenditure. The investment position is shown in table 4 below.

Table 4: Treasury Investment Position

	31.6.25 Balance £m	Net Movement £m	31.9.25 Balance £m	31.9.25 Income Return %	31.9.25 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	3.5	3.5	7.0	2.9%	30
	3.5	3.5	7.0		

- 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 services.
- 3.33 Bank Rate was reduced to 4.00% in August 2025 and remained at that level through the

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rest of the quarter. Short-term interest rates largely followed this trend, staying close to the Bank Rate. 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	7.0	0.0	7.0			
				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 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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- 3.38 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	30.9.25 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	7.0m		Yes
Foreign countries	£5m per country			
Real Estate Investment Trusts	£2.5m in total			

- 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	30.9.25 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	

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- 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	31.3.26	31.3.27	31.3.28
	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	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
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

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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	30.9.25 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
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.

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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	30.9.25 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	30.9.25 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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3.52 For context, the changes in interest rates during the quarter were:

	<u>30/06/25</u>	<u>30/09/25</u>
Bank Rate	4.25%	4.00%
1-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	4.50%	4.58%
5-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	4.70%	4.95%
10-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	5.27%	5.53%
20-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	5.88%	6.14%
50-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	5.71%	5.98%

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

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- 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.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Appendix E - Procurement Pipeline

Title	Council	Contract Value £
Fleet Replacement	Bromsgrove	2,846,000
Wheeled Bin Purchase, Delivery and Collection for Recycling of Existing V	Bromsgrove	2,200,000
Refuse and Recycling Products	Bromsgrove	700,000
Replacement Parking Machines	Bromsgrove	517,000
Microsoft Licenses	Bromsgrove	483,000
PROVIDE Kennelling of Dogs	Bromsgrove	450,000
Planning/GIS/Gazeteer	Bromsgrove	400,000
Supply of HVO Fuel	Bromsgrove	300,000
Air Quality Analysers	Bromsgrove	250,000
Data Access Services	Bromsgrove	200,000
Domestic Food Waste Collection Contract	Joint	23,000,000
Hybrid Mail Solution - Sending Letters	Joint	2,500,000
Corporate Building Electrical Contract	Joint	2,500,000
Food Caddy Purchase and Delivery	Joint	1,300,000
Public Space CCTV Maintenance	Joint	400,000
Lifeline Call Handling	Joint	200,000
eFinancials RTU Extension	Joint	208,598

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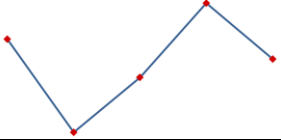
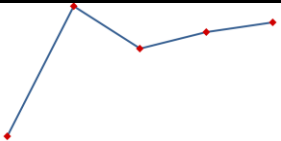
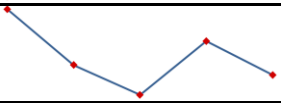
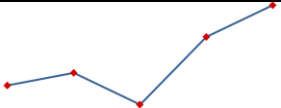
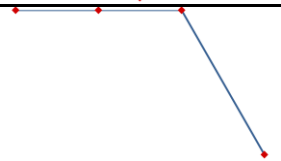
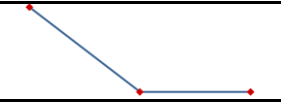
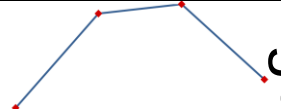
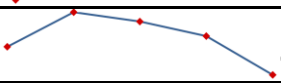
Economic Development

Measure name	Type	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Target	Average	Aim	Trend
Business grant funding awarded	£	£86,574.86	£92,420.66	£175,836.56	£0.00	£2,599.39			⬆️	
Business grant funding- % spent	%	32.20%	37%	70.30%	0%	2.20%			⬆️	
There were no grants awarded during Q1; this is common at the start of funding periods as new programmes are launched. At Q2, 28% of the total grant pot has been committed. A new grant will be launched in Q3 (Innovation Lighthouse) which accounts for 33.5% of the total funding.										

Environment

Measure name	Type	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Target	Average	Aim	Trend
% household waste recycled or composted	%	45.83	41.34	36.79	53.36	44.79%		44%	⬆️	
# of flytips	#	545	484	568	635	668			⬇️	
Continued issues with Birmingham bin strikes increasing fly tips on northern borders										
Average time taken to remove fly-tipping reported	# days	3	5.7	4	3	3	5		⬇️	
No. of households supported by energy advice service (AoE)	#	291	320	240	377	382			⬆️	

Housing

Measure name	Type	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Target	Average	Aim	Trend
% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks (or agreed extension)	%	88.8	78.5	84.6	92.8	86.6	60%		⬆️	
% of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks (or agreed extension)	%	84.5	88.5	87.2	87.7	88	70%		⬆️	
No. of planning enforcement actions taken- cases opened	#	57	29	14	41	24				
No. of planning enforcement actions taken- cases closed	#	25	31	16	48	63				
% of Building Control applications determined within 5 weeks (or 8 weeks on agreement)	%		100	100	100	97	85		⬆️	
Number of threatened with homelessness preventions	#	9	8	8	12	7				
No. of households in temporary accommodation- snapshot	#		23	33	34	26			⬇️	
Cost of B & B placements	£	£22,468.14	£50,241.62	£42,711.24	£31,132.64	Not available			⬇️	

Infrastructure

Measure name	Type	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Target	Average	Aim	Trend
% of green flags awarded	%		50	50	50	50	75		⬆️	

Community Safety

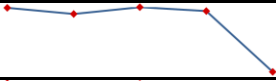
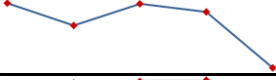
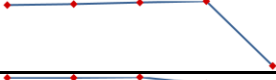
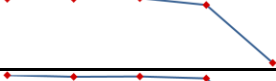
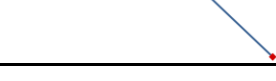
Measure name	Type	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Target	Average	Aim	Trend
# crimes recorded (excluding ASB)	#	1346	1329	1275	1396	Not available*			⬇️	
ASB	#	342	208	238	301	Not available*			⬇️	

*there is a lag with this date as it is obtained using verified figures from Police.uk and they are not currently available.

Organisational Priorities

Measure name	Type	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Target	Average	Aim	Trend
% of media enquiries responded to within agreed timescales	#		100	100	100	100	100		⬆️	
Council Tax Collection Rate	%	56.65%	84.14%	98.12%	28.80%	56.58%	56.63%		⬆️	
Business Rates Collection Rate	%	53.13%	81.06%	98.18%	28.34%	56.82%	55.32%		⬆️	
Housing Benefit: Speed of processing new claims	# days	18.3	17	11.7	19.7	12		20	⬇️	
Housing Benefit: Speed of processing change of circumstances	# days	10.7	9.3	4.7	9.7	8.3		8	⬇️	
Housing Benefit: Local Authority error rate	%	0.32	0.31	0.26	0.48	0.16	0.48		⬇️	
# complaints received	#	12	11	17	11	33				
Average working days to respond to complaints	# days	6.25	6.6	16.6	18.2	4.7	10			
% complaints answered within 10 days	%	83.3	72.7	68.8	75	96.8	95%		⬆️	
Staff turnover rates	%	9.40%	8.50%	9.80%	10.20%	9.10%		13.40%	⬇️	
Sickness absence- long term	# days per FTE	3.24	5.03	6.4	2.88	3.19		7.8	⬇️	

SLM Leisure Data

Measure name	Type	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Target	Average	Aim	Trend
Total no. of visits including EA cards and non-card holders	#	101,511	92,060	102,739	96,589	Not available			⬆️	
EA cards added this period	#	1,970	1,292	1,951	1,709	Not available			⬆️	
Total EA cards to date	#	76,661	77,953	79,904	81,613	Not available			⬆️	
No. gym members	#	2,723	2,716	2,749	2,460	Not available			⬆️	
Swimming lessons - children enrolled on scheme	#	1,270	1,236	1,242	1,206	Not available			⬆️	
Swim lesson occupancy	%	74	74	73	72	Not available			⬆️	
RIDDOR reportable events	#	0	0	0	0	Not available			⬇️	

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY 19TH NOVEMBER 2025, AT 12.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors K.J. May (Leader), K. Taylor, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker (arrived at 12.10pm)

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

Officers: Mr J. Leach, Mr. G. Revans, Mrs. C. Felton, Mrs. D. Goodall, Mrs. R. Bamford, Mrs. R. Egan, Mr M. Cox, Ms. A. Delahunty, Mrs. R. Green, Mr. D. Henderson and Mrs J. Gresham

Due to Officer availability and at the discretion of the Leader, the order of the agenda at this Cabinet meeting was amended and the reports were considered in the order they appear in these minutes.

44/25

TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S. Baxter.

Cabinet was informed that Councillor P. Whittaker was late for the meeting however, he would be in attendance.

45/25

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

46/25

TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON 10TH SEPTEMBER 2025

Prior to consideration of the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 10th September 2025, the Leader announced that there was a typographical error contained within the minutes. The fourth recommendation in respect of the Expansion of the Commercial Waste report had been omitted in the published minutes. However, it was confirmed that the vote was taken on all four of the recommendations included in the report as follows:

“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 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.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 10th September 2025 be approved and signed as a true and accurate record.”

47/25

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 9TH SEPTEMBER, 2ND OCTOBER AND 28TH OCTOBER 2025

Members considered the contents of the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meetings held on 9th September, 2nd October and 28th October 2025.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board highlighted there was only one recommendation contained within the minutes submitted, from the meeting held on 9th September 2025. This was in respect of Planning Enforcement, as follows:

“RECOMMENDED that

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) be introduced to measure Worcestershire Regulatory Services' (WRS) planning enforcement performance in Bromsgrove and that the KPIs be incorporated into monthly reporting to Members together with enhanced information on live enforcement cases data.”

Cabinet was informed that during the discussions at this meeting the Board expressed that in terms of enforcement the Planning team and Officers from Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) seemed to be working in isolation and more needed to be done in order to work in a more efficient and joined-up way.

The Leader thanked the Board for considering this matter and explained that currently there was a Planning Advisory Service (PAS) review underway at the Council, and this could be raised as part of this review and the recommendation revisited at a later date once the review had taken place and outcomes received.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meetings held on 9th September, 2nd October and 28th October 2025 be noted

48/25

BEREAVEMENT SERVICES - BURIAL STRATEGY

[Councillor P. Whittaker arrived at the meeting prior to the consideration of this item at 12.10pm].

The Environmental Services Manager – Bereavement Services presented the Bereavement Services - Burial Strategy report for Members' consideration. In doing so, it was highlighted that in 2014 a proposal had been prepared to expand the Council's burial provision at Catshill Cemetery into the adjoining land. This would have resulted in the extension of burial space in Bromsgrove for an additional sixty-five years. However, this proposal had not been implemented and currently the land was identified as a potential site for housing. Presently there was only five years of future burial provision within Bromsgrove and therefore it was necessary to produce this Strategy identifying the plan for the District going forward in terms of burial provision.

It was noted that this was an important Strategy which ensured respectful, inclusive, and sustainable burial provision for the future in order to prevent any distress at a later date in terms of lack of burial plots. The Strategy aimed to accommodate diverse religious and cultural practices and ensured compliance with burial and public health legislation.

The overarching vision for the Strategy was to provide dignified burial options for all residents in order to avoid their loved ones having to be buried outside the area.

Several key themes were identified during consideration of this report. These included remaining capacity, reclaiming rights, fees and charges, grounds maintenance, memorial safety and new ICT systems.

Following the presentation of the report, the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Community Safety welcomed such a comprehensive Strategy. It was noted that as burial provision was a statutory function for the Council it was important for this Strategy be approved and implemented.

Officers reported that an options appraisal report would be submitted for Members' consideration as soon as possible in 2026.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The Bromsgrove District Council Burial Strategy be approved.

RESOLVED to note that

- 2) A further report would be prepared for Cabinet's consideration in due to course in respect of burial provision in Bromsgrove.

49/25

BUSINESS RATES RETENTION (BRR) POOL 2026-2027

Prior to the consideration of this report the Leader announced that this report was no longer due to be considered at this meeting.

The Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services explained that, based on guidance received from the Council's advisers, LG Futures, that following the business rates reset there was now no financial reason to pool Business Rates. It was noted that the risk of being below baseline was the same as being above the baseline. Even if a Local Authority was above baseline, with a ten per cent levy applying to all Councils for one hundred per cent of baseline need growth, no Local Authority would exceed this.

Therefore, the report was withdrawn.

50/25

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN BUDGET UPDATE AND CONSULTATION REPORT 2026/2027 TO 2028/29

The Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services presented the Medium-Term Financial Plan Budget Update and Consultation Report 2026/2027 to 2028/29 for the consideration of Cabinet. In doing so the following was highlighted:

- As in previous years, the budget-setting process was split into two stages as follows:

- Stage 1: Based on known data up to December 2025.
 - Stage 2: To be finalised in January 2026 and approved by full Council in February 2026, following the Local Government Finance Settlement.
-
- A public consultation in respect of the 2026/27 budget was due to take place from 20th November 2025 to 2nd January 2026, with results informing Stage 2 of the budget process.
 - Currently a £1.030 million deficit was forecast for 2026-2027 and a £399,000 deficit forecast for 2027-2028. It was noted that these figures reflected inflationary pressures, pay awards, and anticipated reductions in grant funding and pressures from previous years.
 - Several Budget assumptions had been made in preparing this report. These included:
 - 1) Council Tax – it was assumed that the full 2.99 per cent allowable increase in 2026/27 and 1.99 per cent increases in subsequent years would be included. In addition, it was assumed that there would be no growth in the number of properties. Any increase in Council Tax was expected to be offset by a reduction in grant funding, maintaining flat Core Spending Power.
 - 2) Business Rates – it was assumed that there would be no growth in the base due to the anticipated business rates reset. The Fairer Funding Review may reduce retained business rates by an estimated £620,000, with assumed dampening over three years.
 - 3) Government Grants - New Homes Bonus and other grants expected to be abolished or merged into the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) under Fairer Funding. Therefore, no increase could be assumed. Any increase in local income (Council Tax or Business Rates) was expected to be offset by grant reductions.
 - 4) Pay Awards and Staffing Costs - The 2025/26 pay award exceeded the budgeted 3 per cent by 0.2 per cent adding £28,000 to future costs. A 2 per cent pay award was assumed for 2026/27, costing £389,000. It was noted that an additional 1 per cent cost-of-living uplift was assumed, costing £195,000.
 - 5) Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) - Councillors were expected to be permitted to rejoin the LGPS. This would result in an additional cost pressure with no

additional funding provided. It was noted that at this time no further information was available on this matter.

Information in respect of savings targets for the Council was outlined for Members' consideration. These were as follows:

- 1) The Council had a £1.213 million savings target for 2025/26, comprising of the following:
 - £250,000 in departmental efficiencies.
 - £511,000 in staff turnover savings (which amounted to 5 per cent of staffing budgets).
 - £400,000 in ongoing savings pressure.

It was noted that £319,000 of this target remained to be delivered.

Members were informed there were currently no changes to the Capital Programme at this stage in the Budget setting process. It was noted there was £14.891 million to be carried forward from 2024/25 and the spend to date was £4.873 million. It was reported that a review was underway to assess deliverability and alignment with the Council's strategic priorities.

In terms of Reserves, it was reported that currently there was £13.38 million in General Fund Balances and £11.27 million in Earmarked Reserves. While these levels exceeded the recommended 5 per cent, any significant event could have a major impact on these. The amount of Reserves also needed to be considered within the context of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). In addition, the Council needed to be mindful that any significant event could have a major impact on the levels of Reserves and Balances the Council holds.

It was highlighted that no further assumptions had been made for additional income from Council Tax or Business Rates. This would not take place until the Local Government Settlement was confirmed. In addition, no assumptions had been made for inflationary increases in contracts.

The next step of the Budget setting process was that Fees and Charges submissions would be received from Officers by 21st November 2025. Following that, the Stage 2 Budget would be finalised in January 2026, with full Council approval sought in February 2026.

The Policy Manager presented Cabinet with details regarding the public consultation to be undertaken as part of the Budget setting process. It was proposed that a public consultation exercise be undertaken from 20th November 2025 to 2nd January 2026. The consultation this year would include a wider number of areas for the public to consider not just specific budget bids which had been the focus on the previous year's consultation. Following the consultation, analysis of the responses would be undertaken to understand what the residents of Bromsgrove had highlighted as priority areas.

The consultation survey would be available through a number of Council communication channels including the Bromsgrove District Council website and social media accounts. The survey could be accessed via a QR code through these sites which meant that data collected would be more easily accessible. In addition, paper versions would also be available on request and in libraries across the District. Increased engagement with young people living in the District was planned and local school sixth forms and colleges would be invited to submit ideas as part of the consultation process. This would ensure that a wider demographic of residents was involved as part of this year's process. Members were also keen to utilise other channels to engage young people, such as Tik Tok.

Members raised that Parish Councils may have had their final Parish Council meeting of the year, and it may be difficult to contact them to ensure their views are included in the consultation. It was noted that Parish Councils would be emailed and a link to the survey provided to ensure their views could also be included.

It was hoped that the extra engagement for this consultation process would result in a greater number of responses.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The updated budget position for the Council be noted in respect of the 2026/27 annual budget and for the Medium-Term Financial Plan up to 2028/29.
- 2) The key assumptions listed in the report were confirmed as accurate for the purpose of projecting an initial budget position.
- 3) A further report in February 2026 would include additional information from the Local Government Settlement to give a final financial position for the Council.

51/25

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION GRANT AND DOMESTIC ABUSE GRANT

The Strategic Housing Officer presented the Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant report for Members' consideration. In doing so it was highlighted the grant funding allocation was different from previous years. The Government planned to consolidate several existing grants into a single Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Grant.

The Government's recent consultation made changes to the provision of Homelessness Prevention Grant in relation to its use towards temporary accommodation. It was proposed that a proportion of Homelessness Prevention Grant would be transferred to the Revenue Support Grant from 2026–27. This funding would be allocated using the new Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA), which included a dedicated Temporary Accommodation formula.

The percentage of Homelessness Prevention Grant allocation, removed for temporary accommodation was anticipated to be approximately 51 per cent and at least 49 per cent of the new grant must be spent on prevention and relief activities and staffing.

The projects due to receive funding were included within the report along with details of services and activities they covered.

Members thanked the Officers for all the hard work they provided in this important area. It was noted that this report had been pre-scrutinised at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting the previous evening, no further recommendations had been made.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) Subject to the final decision by central Government, that the proposed element of the Revenue Support Grant 2026/27 attributed to Temporary Accommodation is ring fenced to the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Grant.

RESOLVED that (subject to agreement of recommendation 1 above)

- 2) the initiatives in the table below be approved to receive the Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant allocations of funding for 2026/27.

Agenda Item 10

Cabinet
19th November 2025

Homelessness Grant Allocation	2026/27 £ (up to £495,917)
The Council is committed to maintain the spend below to meet its statutory duties under homelessness legislation	
BDHT Housing Agency Agreement Top Up Staffing Costs	52,475
Static Temporary Accommodation for an additional 4 units of accommodation	30,688
Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership Co-ordinator – contribution towards county-wide development and delivery of housing initiatives in partnership with other agencies	10,500
Severe Emergency Weather Provision	18,347
St Basils Foyer – provides stable accommodation/support for young people - 14 units – fully occupied during last financial year	50,203
St Basils Crash pad – provides emergency temporary accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds	19,711
Bromsgrove Home Choice CBL and Homelessness Module	14,600
Sub Total	£196,524
The services support the delivery of the Council's Homelessness Service.	
St Basils Young Persons Pathway Worker – support to prevent homelessness for under 25's and Crash Pad to provide a unit of emergency accommodation for young people.	41,116
NewStarts - Provide Furniture and Volunteering Opportunities for Ex-Offenders – supports tenancy sustainment and provides future employment opportunities/reduces risk of reoffending	10,000
GreenSquare Accord Housing Related Support – helping ex-offenders remain housed/seek employment	31,172
Maggs Rough Sleeper outreach and prevention service targeting rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping.	35,607
North Worcestershire Basement Project - Support for young people at risk of homelessness	30,000

BDHT - Sunrise Project intensive support	46,886
Mental Health Link Worker (part funded)	21,554
CAB – Debt Advice for Home Owners and Private Renters	27,611
CAB – Affordability Assessments	6,021
Housing First/Housing Led Service	29,563
Part time Empty Homes Officer	7,680
Spend to Save Top Up	5,683
County Rough Sleeper Coordinator	5,500
Rough Sleeper Access to Accommodation Fund and NFNO/NSNO	1,000
Sub Total	299,393
Total committed expenditure	£495,917
Underspend	£0

- 3) delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing to use any unallocated Grant during the year or make further adjustments and uplifts as necessary to ensure full utilisation of the Grants for 2026/27 in support of existing or new schemes.

52/25

HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY CONSULTATION AND SYSTEM UPDATE

The Strategic Housing Manager presented the Housing Allocations Policy Consultation and System Update for the consideration of Cabinet.

It was reported that the Home Choice Plus Partnership was coming to an end in March 2026. The reasons for this were an ageing IT system which required an expensive upgrade for it to be secure and the current Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

As a result of this change, it would be necessary for the Council to procure its own IT system to manage the allocations going forward. It was hoped that these changes to the Allocations Policy would result in a more targeted service for local residents.

Members raised whether there would be any difficulties in implementing such a change to the Allocations Policy. It was noted that there would need to be additional training undertaken by Council Officers in respect of the legislation for Section 21 evictions. In terms of working with landlords there was likely to be additional work needed in order to

ensure they were acting lawfully in respect of their tenants and to hold them to account if necessary. It may also result in a reduction in the number of landlords with smaller numbers of rental properties due to the increase in legislation in this area.

RESOLVED that

- 1) To consult on the draft Housing Allocations Policy for a period of seven weeks commencing 27th November 2025.
- 2) the Council's Housing Register be referred to as 'Bromsgrove Home Choice'.
- 3) authority be delegated to the Assistant Director for Community and Housing Services and the Assistant Director for Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services to agree final changes and make any future amendments to the Council's Housing Allocations Policy that are deemed to be necessary to comply with Government guidance and which do not trigger the statutory obligation to consult the persons affected by the changes pursuant to section 168(3) of the Housing Act 1996.

53/25

QUARTER 2 2025/26 FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT (INCLUDING FINANCIAL SAVINGS AND HALF YEARLY TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT)

The Assistant Director for Finance and Customer Services explained that alongside the preparation of the Quarter Two 2025/26 Finance and Performance Monitoring Report (including Financial Savings and Half Yearly Treasury Management Report) work was undertaken on the Quarter One 2025/26 Finance and Performance Monitoring Report following the request for it to be reconsidered at the Council meeting held on 8th October 2025.

This would ensure that the information at Quarter Two was up to date and accurate. Information on the Quarter One report was as follows:

- The Full Year Variance of £173,361 on the Totals Line remained the same.
- The Full Year Projected Forecast had been amended from £587,360 to £173,361 on the Totals Line.

- The Narrative within the report had been reviewed and improved, with a view to ensuring that full explanations were given for all variances.
- There were two areas where the narrative had been materially adjusted:
 - Paragraph 4.4.6 which stated that Artrix costs were unbudgeted. These were budgeted as part of the 2025/26 MTFP but the budget was not within Legal, Democratic and Election Services.
 - Paragraph 4.4.8 which stated that there was a shortfall in income of £220,000 relating to carparking revenue as a result of the **first two hours** being free. This should have actually stated that £82,000 of the £220,000 related to carparking and was the result of the **first half hour** being free.
 - The first sentence of paragraph 4.4.8 should have referred to £0.191m overspend rather than £0.170m overspend.
- Rent revenue relating to Nailers Yard - Several enquiries for office space and two enquiries for the food and beverage unit had been received and the service charge schedules prepared for the commercial building by GJS Dillon. Heads of terms were due to be issued to an incoming tenant who wished to let one and a half floors of the building. The next stage was to instruct Bruton Knowles to undertake the property management role of the commercial building.

The information included in the preamble above was provided to Members to reassure them the current status at Quarter Two was accurate following the queries made in respect of Quarter One previously. This information would be reported to full Council at its meeting that evening.

In considering the Quarter 2 2025/26 Finance and Performance Monitoring Report (including Financial Savings and Half Yearly Treasury Management Report) it was reported that there were two minor discrepancies highlighted to Members as follows:

- The Communities, Housing and General Fund narrative explanations added up to £145,000 rather than £149,000. Other net variations had been amended from £31,000 to £27,000.
- The Planning and Leisure narrative added up to £46,000 rather than £49,000. Therefore, further comments had been included to state that there were other net variations of £3,000.

At the end of Quarter Two, the Council was forecasting a £336,000 revenue overspend for the full financial year. This was primarily driven by:

- Increased costs in Waste Management, due to the ageing fleet and agency staffing.
- Additional costs in Finance, including agency cover and VAT consultancy.
- Shortfalls in parking income and increased costs in Lifeline Services.

These pressures had been partially offset by:

- Vacancy management savings.
- Increased income in waste services.
- Underspends in Corporate Financing.

At Quarter Two £894,000 of the Council's £1.213 million savings target had been delivered, leaving £319,000 to be achieved. Work was ongoing to meet this target by year-end.

Capital expenditure to date stood at £4.872 million against a revised budget of £21.876 million, which included £14.891 million of carry forwards from 2024/25.

Information was provided in respect of key Council projects which included:

- Windsor Street - Phase One remediation was complete; the Council was still awaiting Environment Agency feedback on PFAS levels before Phase Two works commenced.
- Nailers Yard - Construction was progressing well, with a revised completion date of 6th May 2026. A further £500,000 had been committed to this scheme.

In terms of Reserves and Treasury Management it was reported that Earmarked Reserves currently stood at £11.266 million. No new

borrowing had been undertaken and £7 million was held in short-term investments. Performance and prudential indicators were compliant and stable.

An update on Members' Ward Budgets was provided. It was reported that eighteen Members had allocated a total of £15,968.80 to projects. There was some unallocated funding which amounted to £46,031.20. Members were reminded this must be spent by 31st March 2026.

Council Tax collection was slightly below target at 56.58 per cent for Quarter Two. However, Business Rates collection was strong at 56.82 per cent. This exceeded the national average.

In terms of processing of Benefits payments, it was reported that new claims were processed in 16 days on average and changes to claims were processed in 9 days. These were both well within the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) expectations.

The Procurement Pipeline had been included within the report for Members' information. It noted that currently there were ten contracts that exceeded the £200,000 key decision threshold and five contracts were being procured by Redditch Borough Council on behalf of Bromsgrove District Council.

Finally, it was reported that the Council's financial monitoring was fully aligned with the Council's strategic purposes and that Managers continue to work closely with Finance to mitigate risks and ensure delivery of priorities.

Members thanked Officers for their hard work in preparation of the Quarter Two 2025/26 Finance and Performance Monitoring Report (including Financial Savings and Half Yearly Treasury Management Report), particularly in light of the additional work that had been undertaken in revisiting the contents of the Quarter One report.

It was noted that the Finance and Budget Working Group had pre-scrutinised both the Quarter One and Quarter Two reports and had understood that the work on increased narrative within these kinds of report was still underway. The only area of concern that had been raised during these discussions was the use of agency staff, particularly in Environmental Services. It was noted that the use of agency staff in this area was necessary to ensure that the waste collections were carried out in an efficient and timely manner if staff were not available due to sickness.

The Performance data contained within the report was presented and areas that could not be provided at the time of publication of the agenda were provided as follows:

- **Housing** - Cost of B & B Placements – this was £46,503 at Quarter Two. This was an increase from Quarter One and more in line with totals at Quarters Three and Four in the previous financial year.
- **Community Safety** – Number of crimes reported – 1,418 (an increase of 22 on the previous Quarter).
- **Community Safety** – Anti-Social Behaviour – 267 incidents reported (a decrease of 34 on the previous Quarter).

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) The Balance Sheet Monitoring Position for Quarter Two be noted – which is the Treasury Monitoring Report and required to be reported to Council.
- 2) The Council's Treasury performance for Q2 of the financial year 2025/26 be noted.
- 3) The position in relation to the Council's Prudential indicators be noted.

RESOLVED that the following be noted

- 4) The current Revenue position of £336,000 unfavourable variance.
- 5) The current Capital spending of £4.872 million against a revised budget of £21.876m.
- 6) The current savings delivery is £894,000 against an annual target of £1.213 million for 2025/26. This is included in the above Revenue position.
- 7) The Earmarked Reserves balances of £11.266 million.
- 8) The Ward Budget allocation position to date was 18 approved allocations at £15,968.80, leaving a balance of £46,031.20 to be allocated before year end.
- 9) There was an updated procurements position, with any new items over £200,000 to be included on the forward plan.
- 10) The position on Council Tax and Business Rates.
- 11) The position on benefits processing.
- 12) The Quarter Two position on Corporate Performance Indicators.

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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

There was no Urgent Business on this occasion.

55/25

WINDSOR STREET SITE

The Assistant Director for Regeneration and Property Services presented the Windsor Street Site report for the consideration of Cabinet.

It was reported that the Windsor Street site had been vacant since 2014 and purchased by Bromsgrove District Council following a successful application for Levelling Up Funding.

Members were advised that Phase One of the remediation works had been completed. The Council was awaiting feedback from the Environment Agency on PFAS levels prior to the commencement of Phase Two works. As a result of the delay in receiving the feedback from the Environment Agency there would be a delay in completion of the Phase Two remediation works. The completion date was reported as May 2026. It was reported that this would not impact on the delivery of housing on the site as the Council needed to secure Outline Planning Permission prior to any building taking place.

It was reported that the Overview and Scrutiny Board had pre-scrutinised this report prior to its consideration at this Cabinet meeting and had suggested that the wording for the recommendations contained within the report be amended to provide more clarity in respect of the delegations. This had been undertaken by Officers and a copy of the updated recommendations tabled at this meeting.

Members raised whether the affordable housing allocation was in line with Planning Policy. It was confirmed that this was the case. The affordable housing allocation would be tailored specifically in order to meet the shortages of local housing needs. It was also noted that the Conservation Officer at the Council had been consulted, as the site was located within the Town Centre Conservation Area. Members were

informed that the site design included in the report as an appendix was an indicative layout and subject to change.

In terms of identifying the Registered Social Landlord (RSL) to work in partnership with the Council, Members were advised that a procurement exercise would be undertaken and an RSL appointed through the appropriate framework.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The Windsor Street site be redeveloped for residential use.
- 2) The preferred option is to work in partnership with a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) to develop the site.
- 3) The Assistant Director for Regeneration and Property and the Assistant Director for Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services be given delegated authority to explore this option further and to report back to Cabinet on the outcomes at a later date.

The meeting closed at 1.35 p.m.

Chairman

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1. 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 taxpayers of Bromsgrove. What actions is the Cabinet Member responsible taking to control this 51% cost increase?”

2. From Councillor J. Clarke

Question to the to the Leader of Bromsgrove District Council

“The national advocacy charity Disabled Motoring UK has highlighted the serious impact that misuse of disabled bays is having on disabled people who face additional daily challenges in accessing local amenities. What action is this Council taking to enforce Blue Badge parking and prevent the misuse of disabled bays?”

3. From Councillor S. Robinson

Question to the to the Leader of Bromsgrove District Council

“As part of local efforts to tackle climate change, we welcome this Council’s ongoing commitment to delivering a Bromsgrove Zero Carbon District Heat Network, working in partnership with other organisations in the community. In light of imminent local government reorganisation, what are the next steps this Council needs to take to ensure this project is seen through to fruition?”

4. From Councillor D. Nicholl

Question to the to the Leader of Bromsgrove District Council

“We note with concern the reduction in membership numbers at Bromsgrove Sport and Leisure Centre. What actions is this Council taking to support the ongoing success of this vital community facility and to protect much needed future income streams for the Council?”

5. From Councillor J. Robinson

Question to the to the Leader of Bromsgrove District Council

In October this Council passed a motion to ensure all new and refurbished playgrounds are inclusive by design. What actions are being taken to make this vision a reality?

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NOTICE OF MOTION

The following Notice of Motion has been submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 10 by Councillor S. Ammar:

Christmas Light Switch on

“Timely and effective planning is essential for the success of community events that support our local economy. Council expresses concern about the planning process for this year's Bromsgrove Christmas light switch on event, where insufficient notice meant some hospitality businesses missed out on vital opportunities to generate additional income.

Council calls on the Cabinet to ensure that officers set a definitive cut-off date of 30 April 2026 to announce the Christmas lights switch-on date for 2026. This timeline is critical for aligning with hospitality businesses' needs and ensuring they can prepare adequately for the Christmas season.

A proactive approach will enable all our restaurants, cafes, pubs, and shops to participate fully, thus creating a vibrant festive atmosphere while giving local businesses a much-needed boost.”

NOTICE OF MOTION

The following Notice of Motion has been submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 10 by Councillor J. Clarke:

Additional Licensing of HMOs

"This council calls on officers to explore the introduction of a local additional licensing scheme for HMOs in Bromsgrove, using powers under the Housing Act 2004. This would help ensure HMOs in Bromsgrove that are not subject to mandatory licensing are still well managed and meet all fundamental basic standards of accommodation."