

Public Document Pack



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY 23RD JULY 2025

AT 6.00 P.M.

PARKSIDE SUITE - PARKSIDE

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

AGENDA

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. **Revocation of the Bromsgrove Road and Lickey End Air Quality Management Area (Pages 7 - 14)**
4. **Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategic Framework (Pages 15 - 26)**
5. **Financial Outturn Report and Q4 Performance Monitoring Report 2024/2025 (Pages 27 - 50)**

6. **Treasury Management Outturn Report 2024/2025** (Pages 51 - 66)
7. **Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 17th June 2025** (Pages 67 - 78)

(a) To receive and note the minutes.

There are no outstanding recommendations contained within the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 17th June 2025.

The Board are due to pre-scrutinise the Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategic Framework report at its meeting on 22nd July 2025. Any recommendations as a result of this pre-scrutiny will be published in a supplementary papers pack to this agenda.

8. **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**
9. **To consider, and if considered appropriate, to pass the following resolution to exclude the public from the meeting during the consideration of item(s) of business containing exempt information:-**

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

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Paragraph(s)</u>
10	3 & 4

10. **To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 18th June 2025** (Pages 79 - 90)

J. Leach
Chief Executive

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

15th July 2025

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

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Tel: (01527) 64252 Ext: 3031

Email: joanne.gresham@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

GUIDANCE ON FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS

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

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.



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- Meeting Agendas
- Meeting Minutes
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Revocation of Lickey End and Redditch Road Air Quality Management Areas in Bromsgrove

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

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is asked to **RECOMMEND** that

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

2. BACKGROUND

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

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

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications in making this revocation.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

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

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

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

6. OTHER – IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation Implications

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

Relevant Council Priority

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

Climate Change Implications

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

Equalities and Diversity Implications

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

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

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

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

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

Background papers

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

August 2022

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

August 2022

Appendices

AQMA Order No.3 Redditch Road

Lickey End Air Quality Management Area Order

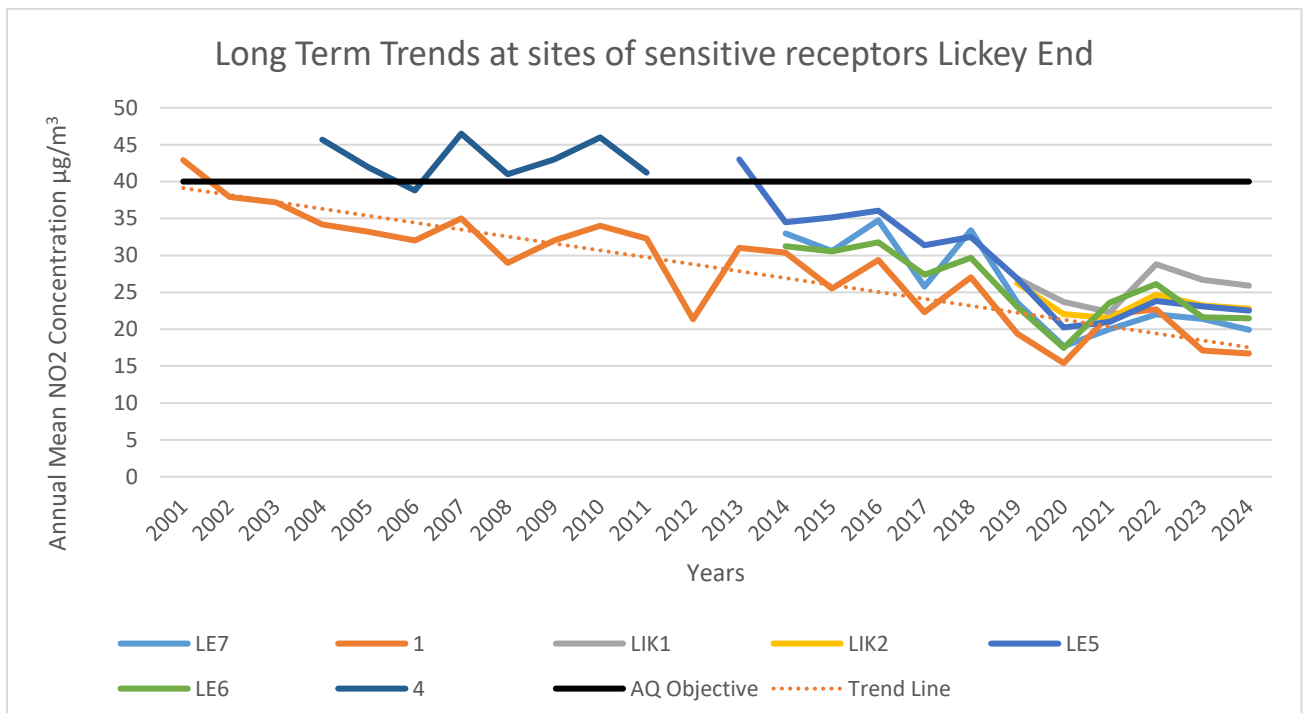
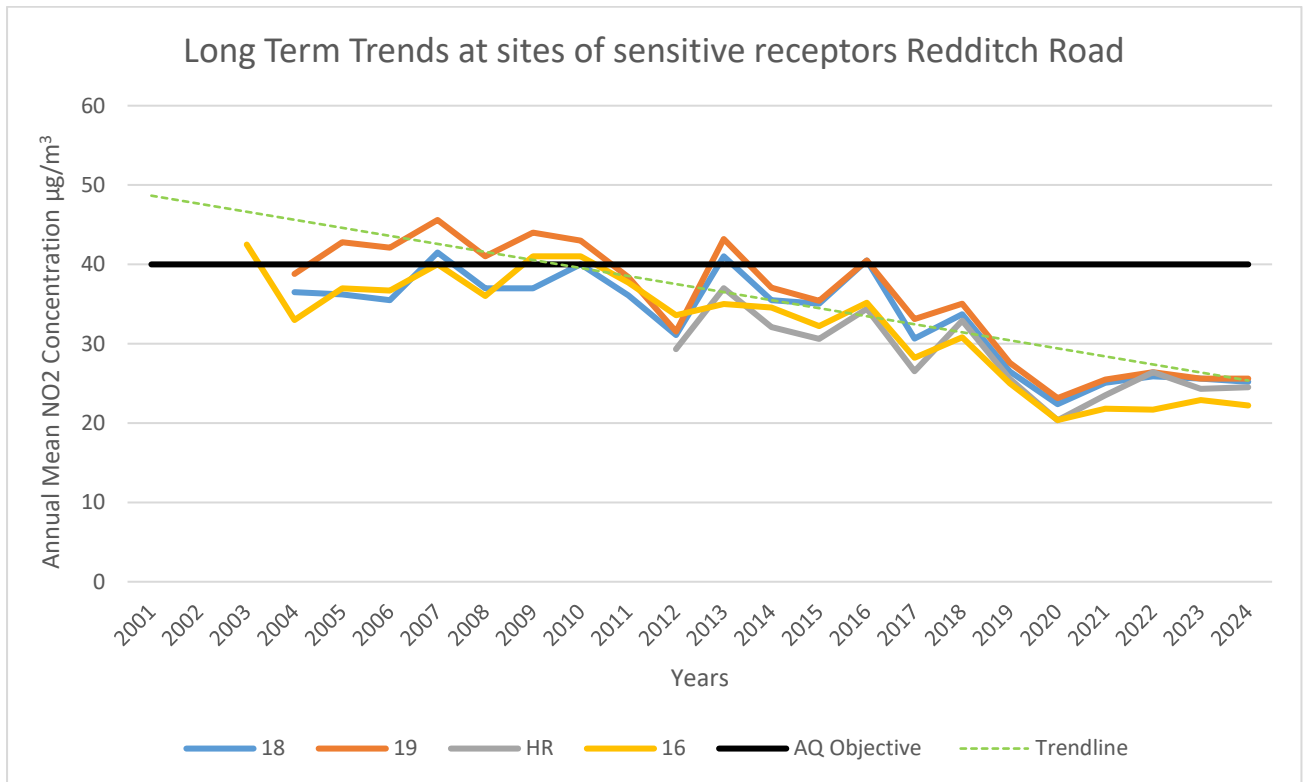
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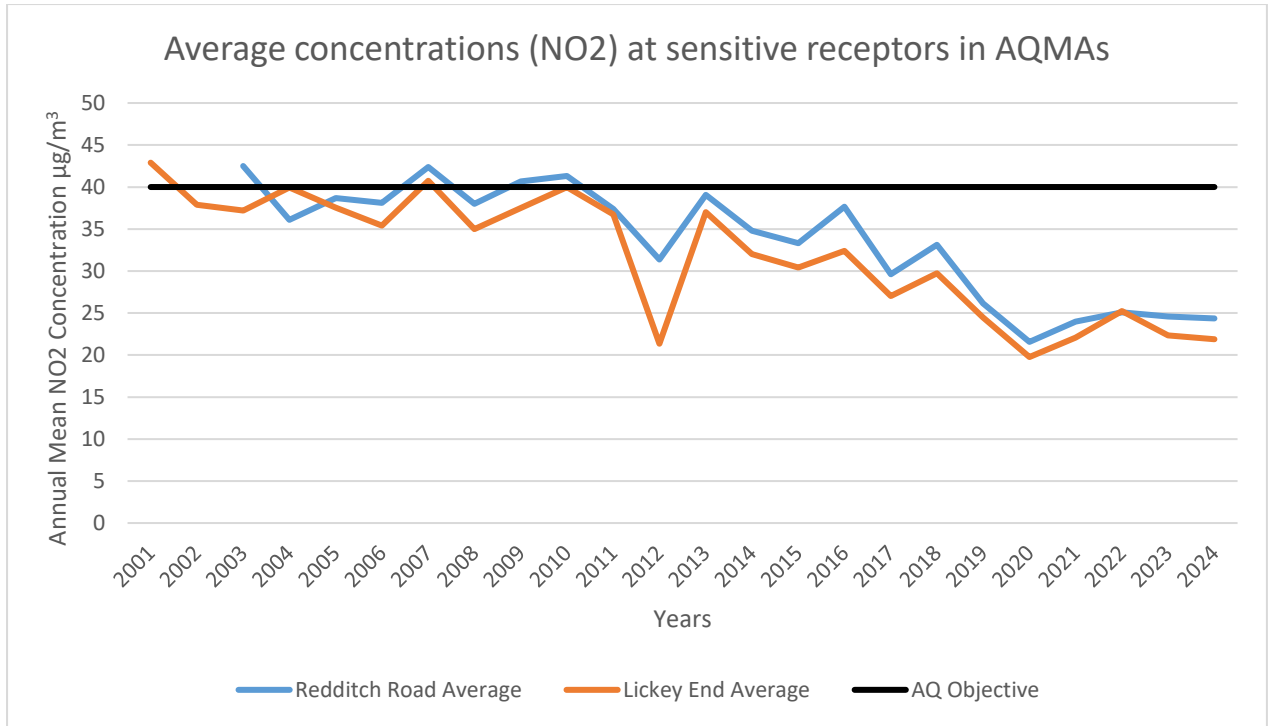
23rd July

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

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

Appendix 1





Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategic Framework

Relevant Portfolio Holder		Councillor Karen May
Portfolio Holder Consulted		Yes
Relevant Head of Service		Rachel Egan Assistant Director – Property and Regeneration
Report Author	Job Title: Lyndsey Berry Contact email: Lyndsey.berry@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 881221	
Wards Affected		Bromsgrove Central, Sanders Park,
Ward Councillor(s) consulted		Yes
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)		Economic Development
Key Decision		
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet RESOLVE that:

- 1) The Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategic Framework be approved.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 There are a number of strategies and plans that relate to Bromsgrove Town Centre including the Bromsgrove Centres’ Strategy, the Bromsgrove 2040 Vision, the Local Plan, Strategic Car Parking review, and the regeneration projects funded through the levelling up fund. While there has been much focus on the town centre over recent years there is no single strategy that brings all these elements together.
- 2.2 In order to address this, a strategic framework has been developed to provide an anchor for future decisions relating to the town centre. The aims of the framework are to:
 - a) Develop a vision and narrative describing the future ambitions for Bromsgrove Town Centre and what this means for residents, businesses and visitors
 - b) Provide a framework within which the Council can take a strategic view of sites within the town centre and how they work together in support of the vision

- c) Consider the needs of residents, businesses and visitors in relation to transport and access and the impact on air quality
 - d) Inform the Local Plan
 - e) Reflect on the findings of the strategic car parking review in light of the vision and possible future land uses and further develop the recommendations
 - f) Clarify the approach to conservation
 - g) Inform the investment plan for the Town Centre
- 2.3 Two multi-stakeholder workshops were held to inform the development of the framework. The first workshop was based on a method called 'Future Search' which aims to get whole systems in the room to develop vision, commitment and action. This involved looking at the past, present and desired future for the town centre through a series of exercises including the use of personas to understand what the town centre looks and feels like now for different types of people or businesses and what those people would want it to look like in the future.
- 2.3 The second workshop focused on developing a vision for Bromsgrove Town Centre, relating that vision to possible future developments in the town centre and developing shared actions.
- 2.4 A dedicated workshop session was also held with the Cabinet Advisory Group to provide all elected members with the opportunity to share views on what the vision for Bromsgrove Town Centre should be and the actions required to deliver this vision.
- 3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES**
- 3.1 The Strategic Framework includes a comprehensive delivery structure, to be overseen by a new Town Centre Steering Group (TCSG). The group will coordinate partners, monitor progress, and develop a detailed action plan with timescales, budgets, and delivery responsibilities.
- 3.2 The TCSG will also oversee feasibility work relating to the formation of a Business Improvement District (BID) for the town centre. Should this progress to ballot and approval, the BID board will take over delivery of relevant actions, with the TCSG operating in a transitional capacity.
- 3.3 In support of implementation, the Steering Group may establish specialist umbrella groups—such as a Landlord Forum, Youth Focus Group, and Culture and Events Group—to ensure stakeholder representation and thematic delivery.

- 3.4 A set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will underpin delivery, with reporting to be provided quarterly and through an annual "State of the Town Centre" report.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The implementation of actions arising from the Framework will draw on existing Council resources. It will also draw upon the resources of partner organisations to deliver shared actions.
- 4.2 Further external funding opportunities will be pursued, including grants to support ongoing delivery and programme expansion.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. The Framework is a non-statutory document that provides strategic direction.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 The Strategic Framework was developed and will be delivered with a wide range of stakeholders and it is envisaged that the Town Centre Steering Group will continue to deliver the strategy and action plan following local government reorganisation.

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 The Strategic Framework supports the Council's priority of economic development, by creating the conditions for a vibrant town centre economy.
- 6.3 It also complements and supports the work of business associations, community groups, and stakeholders through a coordinated approach to regeneration and town centre management.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.4 The Framework supports sustainable development through promotion of active travel, enhanced public transport access, and an emphasis on town centre living and environmentally conscious design.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.5 The Framework’s delivery will be informed by inclusive engagement and impact assessments where necessary to ensure the needs of all community members are considered.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 Project-specific risks will be managed through the action planning process and overseen by the Bromsgrove Centres Manager in collaboration with the Assistant Director of Property and Regeneration.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategic Framework 2024–2027

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Karen May	30 June 25
Lead Director / Head of Service	Rachel Egan Assistant Director Property and Regeneration	30 June 25
Financial Services	Debra Goodall Assistant Director Finance	27 June 25
Legal Services	Claire Green Principal Solicitor	27 June 25
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	Rebecca Green Policy Manager	01 July 25
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	Matthew Eccles Climate Change Manager	01 July 25

Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategic Framework

Forward

As Leader of Bromsgrove District Council, I am proud to present the Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategic Framework. This document was developed collaboratively with local stakeholders and represents our collective vision for a vibrant, inclusive, and resilient town centre that reflects the pride of our community and meets the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors alike.

Bromsgrove is a town with a rich heritage and a strong sense of community. Our strategic location in north Worcestershire, coupled with excellent transport links and natural assets, makes Bromsgrove a desirable place to live, work, and visit. However, like many towns across the UK, we have faced significant challenges in recent years, including changes in consumer behaviour and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite these challenges, Bromsgrove has a solid foundation for renewal. Our town is well-positioned to adapt to changing retail habits and evolving high street expectations. With high levels of entrepreneurial activity, a strong local economy, and connectivity, we have the conditions needed for growth and transformation. The £14.5 million awarded through the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund is enabling us to deliver major regeneration projects that will bring renewed vibrancy to key town centre locations.

This Strategic Framework charts a course for a town centre that embraces change while celebrating local identity. It lays the foundations for inclusive, long-term prosperity and positions Bromsgrove to respond confidently to future challenges and opportunities. By aligning investment, guiding development, and fostering collaboration, we will deliver a future-ready town centre that people are proud to live in, work in, and visit.

I invite everyone with an interest in our town to support the ongoing development of the Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan. Together, we can create a town centre that we are all proud of—a place where people of all ages can live, work, and enjoy leisure time.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to Bromsgrove's future.

Cllr Karen May, Leader of Bromsgrove District Council

Introduction

Grounded in placemaking principles, the Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategic Framework has been developed to support the creation of a town centre that is vibrant, inclusive, and resilient—one that reflects community pride and meets the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors alike. It provides a clear vision for Bromsgrove, developed with local stakeholders, and will guide investment, prioritise action, and encourage collaborative efforts to enhance the town centre.

Bromsgrove is the largest town centre in the district and benefits from a strategic location in north Worcestershire, midway between Birmingham and Worcester. Excellent transport links—including the M5 and M42 motorways and a modernised railway station—make the town highly accessible. Surrounded by natural assets like the Lickey Hills, Bromsgrove is also a desirable place to live, work, and visit.

The town's heritage as a historic market centre, once known for its wool and nail-making industries, remains visible in its architecture and street pattern. Today, Bromsgrove continues to host a traditional street market and offers a mix of independent and national retailers, along with cultural and leisure venues such as The Artrix, the Library, and the Sports and Leisure Centre.

However, like many towns across the UK, Bromsgrove has faced significant challenges in recent years. The rise of online shopping, changes in consumer behaviour, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have affected footfall, retail occupancy, and public perception. Key areas such as Windsor Street remain underused, and there is concern over the lack of variety in the town's retail and leisure offer.

Despite these challenges, Bromsgrove has a solid foundation for renewal. With deep historical roots, a strong sense of community, and untapped potential, the town is well-positioned to adapt to changing retail habits and evolving high street expectations. Its high levels of entrepreneurial activity, strong local economy, and connectivity provide the conditions needed for growth and transformation. These strengths were recognised in November 2021, when the town was awarded £14.5 million through the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund.

This funding is enabling two major regeneration projects. The first is the redevelopment of the former Market Hall site, now known as Nailers Yard. This site will be transformed into a hub for enterprise and community life, featuring flexible office and co-working spaces, food and beverage units, and a multi-use Pavilion designed to host exhibitions, events, and markets. With construction underway, Nailers Yard is set to bring renewed vibrancy to a key town centre location.

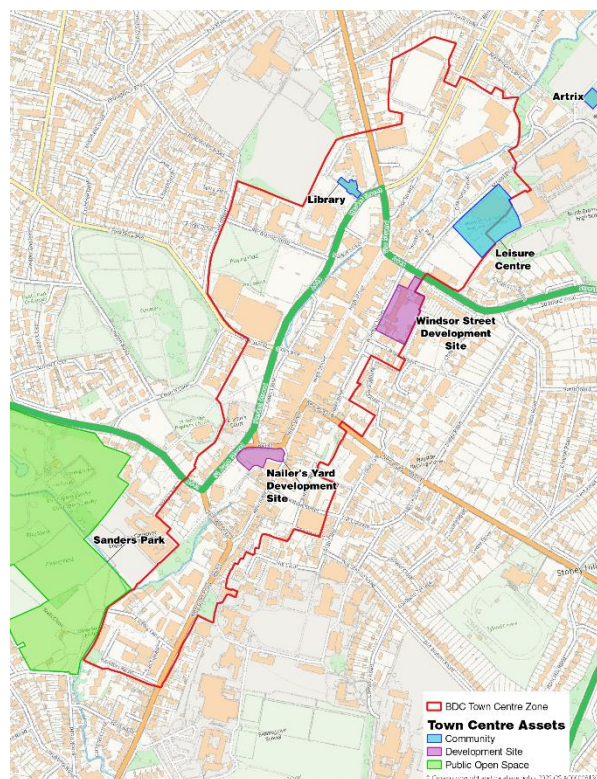
The second project focuses on the Windsor Street site, where demolition and remediation of the site will unlock its potential for future development and support wider regeneration. This funding has also been used to deliver improvements to the public realm within the town centre.

There are opportunities for further regeneration projects to be delivered in the town centre including the potential redevelopment of Churchfields multistorey car park, the Stourbridge Road car park and the former Dolphin Centre site.

Encouraging more people to live in the heart of the town is central to Bromsgrove's regeneration. A growing residential population will support local businesses, boost town centre activity throughout the day and evening, and foster a greater sense of safety and vibrancy. By promoting high-quality housing, accessible services, and enhanced cultural and leisure provision, the town can develop a more liveable, people-friendly centre.

Vision

'Bromsgrove Town Centre will be a thriving and distinctive hub, rooted in its rich heritage and strong sense of community. It will support independent businesses and enhance its vibrant market, offering a dynamic mix of retail, culture, food, and entertainment—day and night. As a welcoming, safe, and socially inclusive destination, Bromsgrove will encourage town centre living and attract people of all ages. With strong digital and physical connectivity, sustainable development, and inviting public spaces, Bromsgrove will be a future-ready town centre that people are proud to live in, work in, and visit.'



The strategic framework focuses on the town centre while acknowledging the vital connections with assets beyond its traditional boundaries. By enhancing and leveraging these connections, we aim to strengthen Bromsgrove Town Centre's unique identity, attracting more visitors and encouraging them to spend more time in the area.

Through collaboration with local stakeholders a number of key strengths and challenges for the town centre were identified:

Strengths:

- **Excellent connectivity:** Strong road and rail links connect Bromsgrove to Birmingham, Worcester, and beyond.
- **Strategic centrality:** Its central location enhances its role within the wider region.
- **Entrepreneurial spirit:** High levels of business start-ups and strong survival rates reflect a dynamic local economy.
- **Quality of life:** High household incomes, proximity to countryside, and recent investments in leisure, library, and transport infrastructure contribute to an attractive living and working environment.

Challenges:

- **Retail and leisure diversification:** The town centre must broaden its offer to include more varied shopping, entertainment, and residential experiences.
- **Access and navigation:** Improvements are needed for walking, cycling, and public transport access.
- **Perception and appeal:** There remains a persistent perception of high vacancy rates and limited retail quality.
- **Business retention:** Ensuring Bromsgrove remains competitive for businesses is critical, particularly as some continue to relocate elsewhere.
- **Inclusive growth:** Targeted interventions are needed to address pockets of unemployment, especially among younger people.
- **Sustainable development:** As the town grows, ensuring infrastructure, public services, and environmental sustainability keep pace is essential.

In order to build upon these strengths and seek to address the challenges, we will focus on the following strategic aims:

1. Transform Public Spaces and Connectivity within the Town Centre and celebrating its unique identity
2. Enhance Town Centre Links and Visitor Access
3. Build a safe and inclusive Town Centre community
4. Cultivate a Thriving Local Business Ecosystem
5. Create a Buzz and Attract More Visitors

Strategic Aims and Key Actions

1. Transform Public Spaces and Connectivity within the Town Centre and celebrating its unique identify

We will unlock the potential of public spaces, improve wayfinding, and boost connectivity to create a lively town centre while preserving and enhancing its unique character, heritage, and townscape.

- Develop the new Pavillion Building at Nailers Yard to become a vibrant community hub within the town centre.
- Consideration of any suitable interventions, including the introduction of a banking hub in the town that might assist with changes in the town centre offer.
- Support public art, cultural, and heritage projects that reflect Bromsgrove's unique story and draw visitors to the town centre.
- Upgrade signage and wayfinding, including digital tools, to help people to more easily navigate in and around the town centre.
- Seek opportunities to secure funding to further enhance the public realm (e.g. Church Street), including streetscapes, lighting, and street furniture.
- We will develop a more proactive approach to enforcement to ensure that the conservation area is consistently protected and maintained and that issues are dealt with promptly.
- Building on the 2040 vision for Bromsgrove, we will review and bring forward development plans for the key sites identified, including Windsor Street, Churchfields Car Park, Stourbridge Road Car Park and the former Dolphin Centre.

2. Enhance Town Centre Links and Visitor Access

Building an interconnected, walkable town centre that effortlessly links people and places.

- We will explore opportunities to improve connections between the town centre and key locations such as the train station, the Artrix and Avoncroft Museum. This will include looking at opportunities to expand demand responsive transport (DRT) to include shuttles from the Train Station to the Town Centre and park and ride solutions.
- We will seek to enhance walking, cycling and wheeling infrastructure via the development of a Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan (LCWIP) that will include the development of pedestrian-friendly routes, cycling facilities and exploring a cycle hire scheme.
- Building on the strategic car park review carried out in 2024, we will review our town centre parking policies to ensure that they support local economic needs and attract visitors, that the use of each car park is considered and that they provide a positive user experience.
- We will analyse data on travel patterns to inform better transport planning.

3. Build a safe and inclusive Town Centre community

Ensuring a clean, safe, and welcoming environment where everyone feels comfortable and secure.

- We will explore opportunities to implement hostile vehicle mitigation measures in key public spaces.
- We will review the approach to keeping the town centre clean and explore opportunities for improvement.
- Explore opportunities to expand CCTV coverage, addressing blind spots and priority locations.
- Develop a clear approach to tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) by clarifying responsibilities and improving coordination
- Support diversionary activities and spaces for young people to deter ASB and build positive engagement.
- Explore opportunities to introduce roles such as Town Centre Champions or Street Wardens.
- Promote wider use of Business Watch and Pub Watch schemes to engage businesses and the public in community safety.

4. Cultivate a Thriving Local Business Ecosystem

Providing the tools, space, and support for businesses to grow, stay, and succeed in the town centre.

- We will undertake a feasibility study to establish a Business Improvement District (BID) in Bromsgrove Town Centre
- We will carry out an annual audit of available Commercial Spaces and assess options for promoting and bringing them back into use. This may include working with landlords to develop pop up shops or other opportunities for new entrepreneurs.
- Create a Business Support Pathway tailored to the development of current and future town centre based businesses. This may include targeted support for sectors such as food and beverage, retail and leisure/entertainment.
- Develop opportunities to support new start up businesses with tailored support for young entrepreneurs.
- Grow the 'Taste of Bromsgrove' brand through initiatives to celebrate local food and drink businesses such as a dedicated food festival and food month. As part of Taste Bromsgrove explore the prospect of a 'Meet the buyer' event to connect local producers and suppliers with larger buyers to encourage local sourcing.
- Develop a Town Centre Business Welcome Pack for businesses that move to or start a business in the town centre. This will include useful information on business rates, planning, environmental and regulatory services, Town Centre business groups and networks and other agencies positioning Bromsgrove as a business-friendly Town Centre.
- Engage with businesses to understand their strengths and challenges and use this intelligence to promote the existing business support offer, shape the future offer and to develop opportunities for networking and mutual support.

5. Create a Buzz and Attract More Visitors

Attracting more visitors by implementing a comprehensive marketing strategy to make the town centre a welcoming, thriving, and vibrant place for everyone

- Develop and deliver a comprehensive marketing strategy for the town centre.
- Use social media, digital platforms, and local media to raise awareness and promote activities.
- Engage the public through consultations, co-design sessions, and events.
- Support and promote local initiatives that encourage pride in keeping the town centre clean, safe, and welcoming.
- Host events and experiences to draw footfall and celebrate community identity.
- Promote local businesses through dedicated campaigns.

From Vision to Reality: Implementing our Strategic Aims

In order to bring the strategy to life and deliver the long-term vision for the town centre, a three year Town Centre Action Plan will be developed under the guidance of a new Town Centre Steering Group (TCSG). The TCSG will provide strategic coordination and foster collaboration across partners. Its membership will include representatives from the local authority, business community, community organisations, police, transport agencies, and other key stakeholders.

One of the TCSG's first tasks will be to develop the detailed 3-year action plan, that will sit beneath the strategic framework. This document will set out clear timelines, delivery responsibilities, budgets, and funding sources for each action as well as identifying the quick wins and longer term plans. It will ensure that all activities are scoped, costed, and scheduled, allowing the Steering Group to monitor delivery.

In addition, the Steering Group will oversee the feasibility study for a Business Improvement District (BID) for Bromsgrove. Should the establishment of a BID be supported through a successful ballot, the Steering Group will provide interim governance and support during the transition period, ensuring that BID arrangements are implemented effectively.

Once the BID is formally in place and operational, it is anticipated that the BID board would assume responsibility for delivering relevant aspects of the implementation plan, at which point the terms of reference for the Steering Group will be reviewed.

To support delivery as required, umbrella groups may be established to provide specialist insight, operational input, and wider stakeholder engagement. These may include:

Agenda Item 4

- a Public Realm and Access Group, focused on street scene, lighting, accessibility, and open space maintenance.
- a Landlord and Property Forum, aimed at working with property owners to address vacancies, improve building quality, and attract investment.
- a Youth Focus Group, to involve young people in shaping a town centre that reflects their needs and aspirations.
- a Culture & Events Group, to co-design and deliver events, public art, and seasonal activity.

A set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be used to evaluate impact. These may include but are not limited to footfall data, annual vacancy rates (excluding exempt use classes), and start-up data, the volume and reach of cultural events, youth engagement participation, and satisfaction levels from users and businesses. Data will be supported by qualitative insight, including perception surveys, youth forums, and an annual town centre health check. KPI's against each action will be included in the action plan.

The delivery process will be underpinned by a commitment to transparency and shared ownership. Progress updates will be reported on a quarterly basis and an annual "State of the Town Centre" report will be published to summarise achievements, challenges, and learning.

This structure will ensure that the Town Centre Action Plan is underpinned by strong local governance, inclusive engagement, and a focused delivery programme that is both measurable and adaptable to changing needs.

The Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategic Framework charts a course for a town centre that embraces change while celebrating local identity. It lays the foundations for inclusive, long-term prosperity and positions Bromsgrove to respond confidently to future challenges and opportunities, including Local Government Reform. By aligning investment, guiding development, and fostering collaboration, the Framework will help deliver a future-ready town centre that people are proud to live in, work in, and visit.

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Financial Outturn Report 2024/25

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

1. SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to set out the Council’s Revenue and Capital Outturn position for the financial year April 2024 – March 2025 (subject to final accounts closedown procedures and audit).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is asked to resolve that:

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

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TOTALS	0	-128,953	-128,953
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3.5 The following paragraphs set out the variances for each service area against the 2024/25 revenue budget:

Business Transformation & Organisational Development – outturn position £98k underspend

Within Business Transformation & Organisational Development the underspend of £98k is due to:

- Head of Business Transformation underspent by £41k due to reduced Salaries.
- Equalities showed an underspend of £37k due to reduced Salaries.
- Human Resources underspent by £20k due to Salaries & Training savings of £70k offset by additional Shared Service charges of £50k.

Community and Housing General Fund Services - outturn position £298k overspend

Within the Community and Housing General Fund Services the overspend of £298k is due to a number of factors:

- Community Safety overspent by £311k due to additional costs of £93k on Salaries and £218k on additional Shared Services.
- Housing & Enabling overspent by £160k due to additional Salary costs of £43k, Property charges of £56k and Shared Service recharges amounting to £61k.
- Lifeline underspent by £173k due to reduced Shared Service costs.

Corporate Services – outturn position £118k overspend

Within Corporate Services, there is an overspend of £118k due to:

- Communications & Printing overspent by £50k additional Salaries offset by Shared Service Arrangements. £13k is for unachieved Efficiency Savings.
- Corporate showed an overspend of £80k due to additional Audit Fees
- PA & Directorate Support overspent by £25k due to additional Shared Service costs

Environmental Services – outturn position £1.835m overspend

Within Environmental Services, the overspend of £1.835m is due to:

- Bereavement Services overspent by £80k due to lower income of £64k, additional spend on Grounds Maintenance of £10k and Insurance costs of £6k.
- Car Parks/Civil Enforcement showed an overspend of £164k due to due to loss of income in the amount of £174k offset by Utilities savings of £10k.

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- Core Environmental overspent by £103k due to loss of SLA income in the amount of £25k, Fleet Maintenance of £13k, additional fees from Wyre Forest for Watercourse Management in the amount of £50k and a loss of Shared Service income of £15k.
- Depot overspent by £80k due to Buildings Maintenance of £62k, Equipment Maintenance of £15k and Agency Costs of £30k offset by Insurance savings of £23k and additional Income of £4k.
- Place Teams overspent by £257k due to £106k on Fleet Costs, Insurance costs of £32k and Agency Costs of £205k offset by additional Shared Service income of £86k.
- Waste Operations overspent by £1.231m of which £1.193m is due to an aging fleet (Fleet Fuel of £80k, Fleet Maintenance of £631k and Fleet Hire of £482k). While generating additional income of £749k, there were overspends on Salaries & Agency Costs of £723k, increased Water costs of £26k and additional Insurance costs of £38k.

Financial & Customer Services - outturn position £637k overspend

Within Financial & Customer Services, the overspend of £637k is due to:

- Audit Services overspent by £10k due to additional Internal Audit costs.
- Benefits Subsidy underspent by £365k due to additional Grants received.
- Finance overspent by £660k due to the recruitment of agency staff to clear the backlog of Statement of Accounts which is now complete. There are also mitigating factors insofar as there are difficulties countrywide in the recruitment of staff which has now been made more difficult due to Local Government Reform. There were also additional ICT charges and therefore there were additional Shared Service charges.
- Revenues overspent by £332k including £62k on Shared Services and £270k on Civica System.

Legal, Democratic and Property Services – outturn position £13k overspend

Within Legal, Democratic and Property Services there was an overspend of £13k due to:

- Business Development had an overspend of £125k due to additional spend on Building Maintenance of £78k, Insurance costs of £14k, General Fees of £19k, Shared Service recharges of £38k offset by savings on Utilities of £24k.
- Democratic Services overspent by £93k due to additional Salary costs of £51k, insufficient budget for Councillor allowances of £38k and additional Shared Service recharges of 34k.
- Legal Advice and Services underspent by £205k due to additional income of £65k, salary savings of £86k due to vacant posts, General savings of £44k and additional Shared Service Income of £10k.

Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services – outturn position £246k overspend

Within Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services there is an overspend of £246k due to:

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- Development Control overspent by £157k due to a drop in Planning Income against budget.
- Economic Development overspend of £28k is due to recruitment costs.
- Building Control overspent by £40k due to a loss of income.
- Town Centre overspent by £21k due to additional Business Rates at Windsor Street.

Regulatory Client – outturn position £211k overspend

Within Regulatory Client, the overspend of £211k is due to additional management costs of WRS amounting to £170k and a loss of Licensing income of £41k.

3.6 Cash Management

Borrowing

- As of the 31st of March 2025, there were no short-term or long-term borrowings.

Investments

- As at the 31st March 2025 there were £4.2m of short-term investments held.

Capital Monitoring

- 3.7 A capital programme of £7.07m was approved in the Budget for 2024/25 in February 2024. Many of these schemes were already in partial delivery in the 2023/24 financial year. By approving this list, the Council also agreed sums not spent in 2023/24 (and 2022/23 by default if schemes originated earlier than 2023/24 as sums have been carried forward through to the 2022/23 MTFS Report) to be carried forward into 2024/25. The table also splits amounts by funding source, Council or third party.
- 3.8 Many of these schemes are already in partial delivery in the 2024/25 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 2023/24 MTFS Report) to be carried forward into 2025/26. The table also splits amounts by funding source, Council or third party.

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Year	Total Programme	Council Funded	Grant Funded
2024/5	7,069,671	4,334,500	2,735,171
2025/6	4,516,377	3,716,377	800,000
2026/7	2,558,000	1,758,000	800,000
2027/8	6,658,000	5,858,000	800,000
2028/9	1,879,000	1,079,000	800,000

3.9 Included in this funding the Council also have the following Grant Funded Schemes which were delivered in 2024/25:

- The two Levelling Up schemes – Old Fire Station and Market Hall which are funded via £14.5m of Government Funding, and the Council is funding £1.6m of works.
 - For the Market Hall Scheme
 - Construction is progressing on site. Piling is completed and groundworks are underway. The costs are covered by contingency and provisional sums so there is no increase to the budget.
 - Arcadis have been appointed as employer’s agent and Quantity Surveyor for RIBA Stage 5 of the project.
 - GJS Dillon have been appointed to develop the marketing strategy for the commercial building and will manage letting enquiries.
 - For the Windsor Street Scheme
 - The site has been demolished and fencing is securing the site.
 - Soilfix are on site carrying out remediation work including testing two zones for contaminated material.
 - The Site Investigation indicated Zone 2 had the highest concentrations of PFAS, and they had excavated below the depth initially identified by Brownfield as the potential contamination layer (into the underlying sands). This means there is a possibility that the resampling may produce additional failures.
 - Thomas Lister have been appointed to support with the development appraisal that will inform the options paper.

It is still expected that there will be an overspend position on the overall projects. The Section 151 Officer is currently undertaking a Gateway Review of the projects including options to mitigate this position to the Council.

One of these is the former GBSLEP funding. The Council can claim up to £2.45m, although this will require the final costs as a complete application process needs to be followed. Birmingham City Council have informed all Councils wanting to access money from GBSLEP fund in 2025/26 that funds will not be available until

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the 2026/2027 financial year. Therefore, BDC may have to use short-term borrowing until the funding is available.

- 3.10 The outturn spend is £9.534m against the overall 2024/25 capital budget totalling £7.07m is detailed in Appendix B. It should be noted that as per the budget decision carry forwards of £7.166m has been rolled forward from 2023/24 into 2024/25 to take account of slippage from 2023/24.

Earmarked Reserves

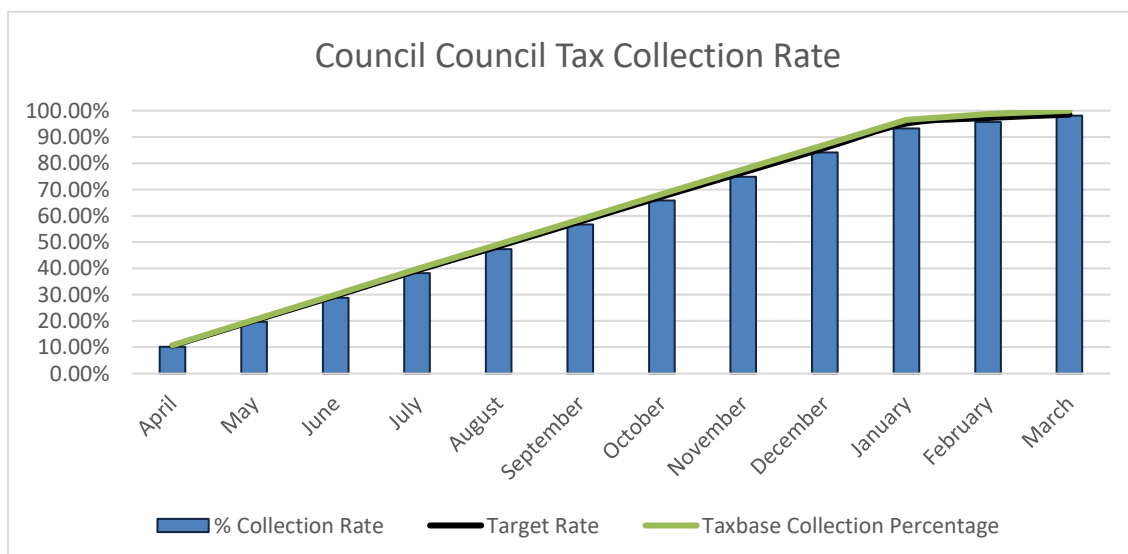
- 3.11 The position as reported to Council in February 2024 as per the 2024/25 – 2026/27 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) is shown in Appendix C. This has been adjusted for the actual 2023/24 Outturn position, which was only estimated based on Q3 monitoring information at the time of the MTFP. As part of the MTFP, all reserves were thoroughly reviewed for their requirement and additional reserves set up for inflationary pressures such as utility increases. At the 31st March 2025 the Council holds £10.02m of Earmarked Reserves.

General Fund Position

- 3.12 The General Fund Balance as at the 31st March 2025 is £14.299m and is projected to move in the MTFP to £14.047m at the 31st March 2026.

Financial Performance

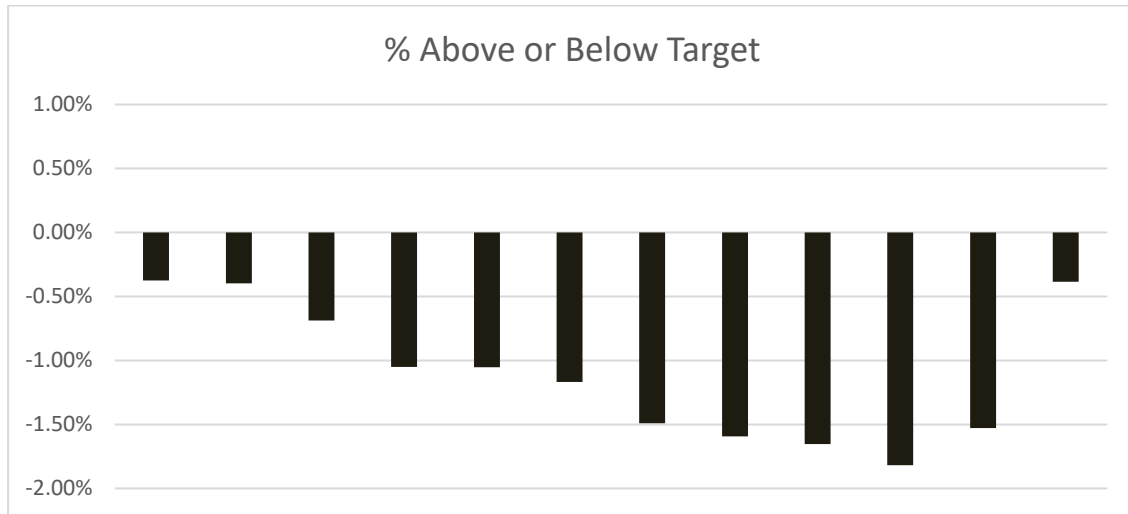
- 3.13 Council Tax collection rate data for the financial year 2024/25 is set out in the following tables. Overall, collection was below 0.5% below target.



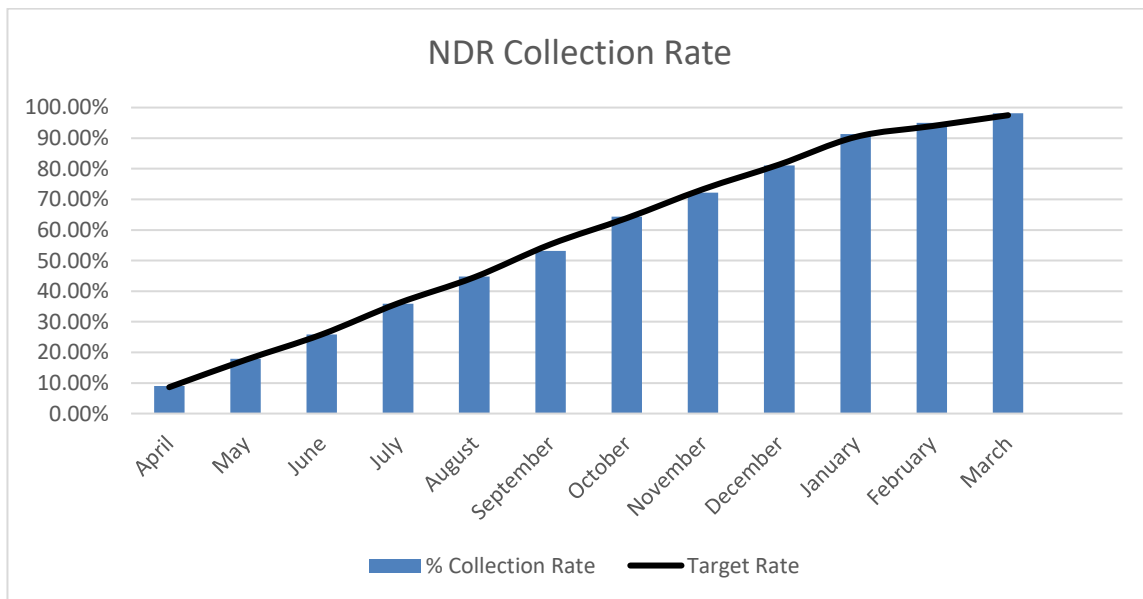
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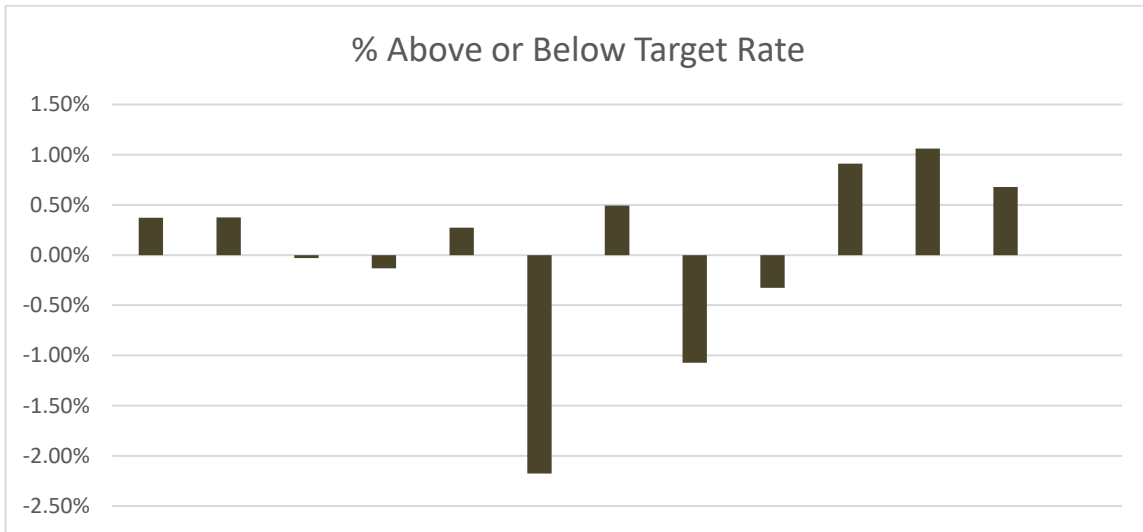
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3.14 The National Non-Domestic Rates collection rate data for the financial year 2024/25 is set out in the following tables. Overall, collection was just over 0.5% above target.





4. Legal Implications

4.1 No Legal implications have been identified.

5. Strategic Purpose Implications

Relevant Strategic Purpose

5.1 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

5.2 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.

6. Other Implications

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.1 None as a direct result of this report.

Operational Implications

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

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 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 4 Report is reported to Audit, Standards and Governance 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

8. APPENDENCES

Appendix A – Capital Outturn

Appendix B – Reserves Position

Appendix C – Ward Budgets

Appendix D – Procurement Pipeline

Appendix E – Performance Indicators

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Debra Goodall – Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services
(Deputy S151)

E Mail: Debra.Goodall@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

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Appendix A - 2024/25 Capital Outturn

Cap Proj	Description	2023/24 Total £	23/24 Spend £	c/f	2024/25 Total (Original) £	2024/25 Total (Incl C/F's) £	24/25 Spend £
	Large Schemes						
	Levelling Up Fund						
200072	- Market Hall	7,563,360	428,395	7,134,965	0	7,134,965	2,780,979
200073	- Ex-Fire Station/Windsor Street	805,133	15,592	789,541	0	789,541	2,264,724
	UK Shared Prosperity Fund						
200086	- Remainder (to be allocated)	680,988	73,987	607,001	1,784,215	2,391,216	2,391,216
	Other Schemes						
200008	Funding for DFGs	913,000	842,776	70,224	913,000	983,224	986,697
200009	Home Repairs Assistance	50,000	-19,690	69,690	50,000	119,690	0
200010	Energy Efficiency Installation	0	0	0	110,000	110,000	0
200016	New Finance Enterprise system	0	0	0	20,000	20,000	0
200019	Fleet Replacemnet new line	0	0	9,400	3,090,000	3,099,400	271,682

Cap Proj	Description	2023/24 Total £	23/24 Spend £	c/f	2024/25 Total (Original) £	2024/25 Total (Incl C/F's) £	24/25 Spend £
200019	Fleet Replacemnet new line	0	0	9,400	3,090,000	3,099,400	271,682
200022	Replacement Parking Machines	96,000	212,270	-116,270	125,000	8,730	143,611
200026	Rubery Redevelopment Works	0	0	0	0	0	1,504
200030	Wheelie Bin Purchase	55,000	188,195	-48,195	60,000	11,805	228,672
200033	Bus Shelters	0	0	0	18,000	0	19,655
200045	Greener Homes	0	197,505	-197,505	0	-197,505	6,125
200069	Cisco Network Update	11,574	0	11,574	0	11,574	0
200070	Server Replacement	2,000	93,201	-91,201	177,500	86,299	0
200071	Laptop Refresh	25,000	11,542	13,458	150,000	163,458	132,209
200075	Sanders Park	0	33,027	-33,027	0	-33,027	103,763
200076	Play Area, POS and Sport Improvements at Lickey End Recreation Ground in accordance with the S106 Agreement	0	8,842	-8,842	37,956	29,114	30,000

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Cap Proj	Description	2023/24 Total £	23/24 Spend £	c/f	2024/25 Total (Original) £	2024/25 Total (Incl C/F's) £	24/25 Spend £
200079	Footpaths	75,000	75,408	-408	75,000	74,592	117,981
200082	New Digital Service	33,668	0	33,668	0	33,668	0
200104	Buildings	100,000	0	100,000	100,000	200,000	37,575
200105	Initial Play Audit Requirements	87,000	0	87,000	364,000	451,000	0
200106	New ongoing Cyber security budget	0	0	0	25,000	25,000	0
200107	Artrix - Landlord Obligations	0	0	0	20,000	20,000	17,587
n/a	Wild Flower Machinery	62,000	0	62,000	0	62,000	0
	Total	11,050,723	3,978,960	7,166,163	7,069,671	14,667,102	9,533,980

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Appendix B - Earmarked Reserves

	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 31-Mar-25 £000	Transfers In 2025/26 £000	Transfers Out 2025/26 £000	Balance as at 31 March 2024 31-Mar-26 £000	Transfers In 2026/27 £000	Transfers Out 2026/27 £000	Balance as at 31 March 2024 31-Mar-27 £000	Transfers In 2027/28 £000	Transfers Out 2027/28 £000	Balance as at 31 March 2024 31-Mar-28 £000
General Fund Balances	13,104	1,747	(1,330)	13,521	1,200	53	(50)	14,724		(252)	14,472		(1,115)	13,357		(484)	12,873
General Fund:																	
Building Control Other	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	0	82	0	0	82	0	0	82	0	0	82
Community Services	321	0	(125)	196	0	0	0	196	0	0	196	0	0	196	0	0	196
Economic Regeneration	1,348	50	0	1,398	(600)	0	0	798	0	0	798	0	0	798	0	0	798
Election Services	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	0	27	0	0	27	0	0	27	0	0	27
Financial Services	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	0	864	0	0	864	0	0	864	0	0	864
ICT Systems	197	0	0	197	0	0	0	197	0	0	197	0	0	197	0	0	197
Leisure/Community Safety	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	0	16	0	0	16	0	0	16	0	0	16
Other	67	0	0	67	0	0	0	67	0	0	67	0	0	67	0	0	67
Planning & Regeneration	463	0	0	463	0	50		513	0	0	513	0	0	513	0	0	513
Regulatory Services (Partner Share)	85	0	0	85	0	0	0	85	0	0	85	0	0	85	0	0	85
Replacement Reserve (Inc. Recycl)	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	0	311	0	0	311	0	0	311	0	0	311
Covid-19 (General Covid Grant)	766	0	0	766	0	0	0	766	0	0	766	0	0	766	0	0	766
Covid-19 (Collection Fund)	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	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
Arrix Holding Trust	17	0	0	17	0	0	0	17	0	0	17	0	0	17	0	0	17
Total General Fund	11,159	480	(625)	11,014	(1,200)	284	(78)	10,020	1,104	(612)	10,512	0	(528)	9,984	0	(450)	9,534

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Appendix C - Ward Budgets

Activity	Spend	Balance £2,000
Cllr Alan Bailes	2,000.00	0
Cllr Ruth Lambert	400.00	1,600.00
Cllr Sam Ammar	2,000.00	0
Cllr Ester Gray	2,000.00	0
Cllr Peter McDonald	2,000.00	0
Cllr Harrison Rone-Clarke	1,150.00	850.00
Cllr Anita Dale	2,000.00	0
Cllr Webb	2,000.00	0
Cllr Hunter	1970.00	30.00
Cllr Rachel Bailes	2,000.00	0
Cllr Sue Baxter	1,200.00	800.00
Cllr J Clarke	1999.00	1.00
Cllr Stephen Colella	2,000.00	0
Cllr J Elledge	2,000.00	0
Cllr Derek Forsythe	2,000.00	0
Cllr D Hopkins	1,093.00	907.00
Cllr Charlie Hotham	2,000.00	0
Cllr Helen Jones	2,000.00	0
Cllr B Kumar	2,000.00	0
Cllr M Marshall	2,000.00	0
Cllr Karen May	2,000.00	0
Cllr Bernard McEldowney	2,000.00	0
Cllr D Nicholl	2,000.00	0

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Activity	Spend	Balance £2,000
Cllr Simon Nock	2,000.00	0
Cllr S Peters	2,000.00	0
Cllr J Robinson	2,000.00	0
Cllr S Robinson	2,000.00	0
Cllr J Stanley	0	2,000.00
Cllr Kit Taylor	2,000.00	0
Cllr Peter Whittaker	2,000.00	0
Cllr S Evans	2,000.00	0

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Appendix D - Procurement Pipeline

Council	Contract Title	Department
	Over £200,000	
Bromsgrove	Fleet Replacement	Environmental Services
Bromsgrove	Replacement Parking Machines	Engineering & Design
Bromsgrove	Refuse and Recycling products	Supplies
Bromsgrove	Microsoft Licenses	ICT
Bromsgrove	PROVIDE Kennelling of Dogs	WRS
Bromsgrove	Planning/GIS/Gazetteer	ICT
Bromsgrove	Supply of HVO fuel	Supplies
Bromsgrove	Air Quality Analysers	WRS
Bromsgrove	Data Access Services	ICT
	£50,000 to £200,000	
Bromsgrove	Idox Support & Maintenance	ICT
Bromsgrove	Server/SAN Replacement	ICT
Bromsgrove	Network Equipment Maintenance Contract via Framework RM6116-	ICT
Bromsgrove	Vehicle Hire	Environmental - Fleet
Bromsgrove	Automation/Robotics	ICT
Bromsgrove	Web security subscription (Ironport)	ICT
Bromsgrove	GIS System	ICT
Bromsgrove	Web Filter	ICT
Bromsgrove	Community Transport	Community Services
Bromsgrove	VMware License & Support	ICT
Bromsgrove	Digital Forms	WRS
Bromsgrove	IDOX Software	WRS
Bromsgrove	Street Naming and Numbering	ICT
Bromsgrove	LogPoint SIEM	ICT
Bromsgrove	Cloud Storage	ICT
	Over £200,000 Purchased by Partner	
Joint	Corporate Building Electrical contract	Property Services
Joint	Fire alarm, Extinguisher contract service contract	Property Services
Joint	Public Space CCTV Maintenance	CCTV and Lifeline
Joint	Lifeline Call handling	CCTV and Lifeline

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Economic Development

Measure name	Type	Q4 23/24	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Target	Aim	Trend
Business grant funding being taken up- start up	£	£5,000	£38,307.06	£13,486.53	£2,954.90	£11,406.55		⬆️	
Business grant funding being taken up- growth	£	£10,000	£13,594.67	£21,561.60	£14,102.87	£93,706.60		⬆️	

Environment

Measure name	Type	Q4 23/24	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Target	Aim	Trend
% household waste recycled or composted	%	35.11	55.98	45.83	41.34	36.79		⬆️	
# of flytips	#	622	483	545	484	568		⬇️	
Average time taken to remove fly-tipping reported	# days	6.7	6.3	3	5.7	4		⬇️	
No. of households supported by energy advice service (AoE)	#	162		291	320	240		⬆️	

Housing

Measure name	Type	Q4 23/24	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Target	Aim	Trend
% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks or agreed extension	%	89.5	89.2	88.8	78.5	84.6	60%	⬆️	
% of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks or agreed extension	%	85.5	84.6	84.5	88.5	87.2	70%	⬆️	
No. of planning enforcement actions taken- cases opened	#		23	36	37	28			
No. of planning enforcement actions taken- cases closed	#		44	30	34	38			
% of Building Control applications determined within 5 weeks (or 8 weeks on agreement with customer)	%				100	100	85	⬆️	
Number of threatened with homelessness preventions	#	11	18	9	8	8			
No. of households in temporary accommodation- snapshot	#				23	33			
Cost of B & B placements	£	£32,404.56	£24,621.29	£22,468.14	£50,241.62	£42,711.24		⬇️	
<p>The cost of temporary accommodation continues to increase in line with the national picture with 20 households paced in B&B over the quarter. This is due to periods in temporary accommodation being longer due to the lack of suitable affordable housing being available. We are working to increase number of temporary accommodation units with bdht.</p>									

Infrastructure

Measure name	Type	Q4 23/24	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Target	Aim	Trend
% of green flags awarded	%				50	50		⬆️	

Community Safety

Measure name	Type	Q4 23/24	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Target	Aim	Trend
# crimes recorded (excluding ASB)	#	1190	1317	1346	1329	1275		⬇️	
ASB	#	205	327	342	208	238		⬇️	

Organisational Priorities

Measure name	Type	Q4 23/24	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Target	Aim	Trend
% of media enquiries responded to within agreed timescales	#				100	100	100	⬆️	
Council Tax Collection Rate	%		28.85%	56.65%	84.14%	98.12%	98.50%	⬆️	
Business Rates Collection Rate	%		25.82%	53.13%	81.06%	98.18%	97.50%	⬆️	
Housing Benefit: Speed of processing new claims	# days	19.3	24	18.3	17	11.7		⬇️	
Housing Benefit: Speed of processing change of circumstances	# days	5.7	10.3	10.7	9.3	4.7		⬇️	
Housing Benefit: Local Authority error rate	%	0.29	0.45	0.32	0.31	0.26	0.48	⬇️	
% complaints answered within agreed timescales	%	75	75.5	88.9	66.7	72.7	100%	⬆️	
Staff turnover rates	%	8.60%	8.90%	9.40%	8.50%	9.80%	15.60%	⬇️	
Sickness absence- long term	# days	286.09	203.15	244.49	208.38	179.53		⬇️	
Sickness absence- short term	# days	237.36	202.12	148.08	246.55	192.51		⬇️	

Category	Quarter Total	Same Quarter Previous Year	Difference
Total no. of visits including EA cards and non-card holders	92060	97764	-5,704
EA Cards added in this period	1292	930	362
Total EA Cards to date	77953	71340	6,613
No. of Gym members	2716	2818	-102
Swimming Lessons – children enrolled on scheme	1236	1447	-211
Swim Lesson Occupancy	74%	84%	-10%
RIDDOR Reportable Events	0	0	0

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Treasury Management Strategy Outturn Report 2024/25

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

1. SUMMARY

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

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet are asked to RECOMMEND that:

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

3. BACKGROUND

Introduction

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

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

External Context

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

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

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

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

Local Context

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

Table 1: Balance Sheet Summary

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

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

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

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

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Table 2: Treasury Management Summary

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

Borrowing Strategy and Activity

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

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

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

Table 3: Borrowing Position

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

Treasury Investment Activity

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

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Table 4: Treasury Investment Position

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

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

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Non-Treasury Investments

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

Treasury Performance

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

Table 5: Performance

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

MRP Regulations

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

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

Compliance

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

Table 6: Investment Limits

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

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

Table 7: Debt and the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary

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

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

Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

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

Liability Benchmark

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

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

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

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Maturity Structure of Borrowing

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

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

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

Long-term Treasury Management Investments

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

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

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

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Additional indicators

Security:

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

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

Liquidity:

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

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

Interest Rate Exposures:

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

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

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

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

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

4. IMPLICATIONS

Legal Implications

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

Service / Operational Implications

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

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

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

5. RISK MANAGEMENT

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

Cabinet

23rd July 2025

6. **APPENDICES**

None

7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

17TH JUNE 2025, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors P. M. McDonald (Chairman), S. T. Nock (Vice-Chairman), S. Ammar, S. J. Baxter, S. R. Colella (Substitute), D. J. A. Forsythe (Substitute), E. M. S. Gray, C.A. Hotham (Substitute), R. J. Hunter, B. Kumar, K.J. May, B. McEldowney, S. A. Robinson, J. D. Stanley, K. Taylor, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

Officers: Mr J. Leach, Mr B. Watson, Mr. G. Revans, Mr S. Parry, Mr M. Cox, Mrs. J. Bayley-Hill and Mrs S. Woodfield

Other parties: Professor D. Hall CBE and Ms S. Dickens

1/25

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

A nomination for the position of Chairman was received in respect of Councillor P.M. McDonald.

RESOLVED that Councillor P. M. McDonald be appointed as Chairman of the Board for the ensuing municipal year.

2/25

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

A nomination for the position of Vice Chairman was received in respect of Councillor S. T. Nock.

RESOLVED that Councillor S.T. Nock be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Board for the ensuing municipal year.

3/25

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor A. Bailes with Councillor C.A. Hotham in attendance as his named substitute, Councillor R. Bailes with Councillor S.R. Colella in attendance as her named substitute and A.M. Dale with Councillor D.J.A. Forsythe in attendance as her named substitute.

4/25

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS

Councillor B. Kumar and Councillor S.T Nock both declared disclosable interests in Minute Item no. 6/25 – Local Government Reorganisation All Member Engagement Session Supported by Mutual Ventures – in their capacity as Parish Councillors. They remained present during the debate in respect of this item and voted thereon.

5/25

TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 15TH APRIL 2025

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 15th April 2025 were considered.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 15th April 2025 be agreed as a true and correct record.

6/25

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION ALL MEMBER ENGAGEMENT SESSION SUPPORTED BY MUTUAL VENTURES

The Chief Executive commenced the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) item by introducing Professor Donna Hall, CBE and Sally Dickens from Mutual Ventures (MV) who were supporting an appraisal of the options under consideration in Worcestershire for LGR. It was explained to the Board that the purpose of the briefing was to have an engagement session to ensure that all Members had an opportunity to input and provide their views. It was on this basis that all Members of Bromsgrove District Council had been invited to the session. All Members could also send their views using the response form provided by Mutual Ventures or by emailing their views in whatever format they chose.

A presentation was delivered in respect of this subject for Members' consideration (Appendix 1). The following key points were discussed for Members' consideration:

The options appraisal process was to assess the performance of two options for a unitary structure in Worcestershire:

- A unitary council for the whole county of Worcestershire.
- Two unitary councils in Worcestershire:
 - North Worcestershire: Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest.
 - South Worcestershire: Malvern Hills, Worcester City and Wychavon.

A stakeholder engagement process was being carried out to inform the appraisal process which included a public engagement exercise being undertaken online, until 29th June 2025 and local stakeholder engagement

sessions being held during June and July.

Key lines of enquiry would be discussed as part of the stakeholder engagement process to establish the performance of these options in comparison to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) criteria for LGR. The criteria had been detailed in correspondence to the Leader and Chief Executive in respect of LGR and included the following:

- The establishment of a single tier of local government.
- The right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.
- Must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.
- Demonstrate how councils in the area had sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.
- Must support devolution arrangements.
- Should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.

The approach to be utilised included considering:-

- What good looks like in ten years' time.
- To consider what needs to be kept/improved/created to achieve the above.
- Identifying local characteristics.
- Consideration of community engagement and neighbourhood empowerment.

Members were advised to consider structural reform from a public service perspective and to review changes to current arrangements. The Board also considered the demographic and economic comparisons within the Worcestershire area and in relation to Bromsgrove specifically.

The key lines of enquiry, which had been presented to Members, were subsequently discussed with the following points raised by the Board:

Health and Wellbeing

- Preventative measures should be a key consideration.
- Building and maintaining health and wellbeing was important.
- People were living longer. Patient to doctor ratios required improvements.

Agenda Item 7

Overview and Scrutiny Board
17th June 2025

- Additional surgical facilities were required.
- Some people had lower expectations than in previous generations but were striving and aspiring to achieve better.
- There were difficulties predicting future efficiencies due to the need for more data. The Chief Executive explained that the data in the slide deck (by way of context) was to help fuel discussion, and it was Members' feedback from their experience and knowledge as democratically elected representatives of their communities, that was being sought from the session. This was to provide important qualitative information, alongside quantitative information that was also being gathered to help inform the options appraisal.

Education and Opportunity

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) support, currently available through Worcestershire County Council (WCC), would continue to be needed in the District.
- There were good examples of effective partnership working with WCC to promote and enhance health and wellbeing within the community i.e. the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), which included organisations from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors.
- There were difficulties predicting future efficiencies due to a lack of funding from Central Government.

Social Cohesion

- Local identity was seen as important.

Transport and Connectivity

- Required better connectivity between the outer parishes and the town centre to support the elderly.
- There was a lack of connectivity to the town centre which had an impact on people's mental health.
- Examples of best practice suggested by Members were as follows; Tourist Information Centre (closed), Avoncroft Museum, The Transport Museum and Chapel Lane Caravan Motorhome Club Campsite.
- Members suggested that the Council should be building on the strong tourist opportunities available i.e. The National Exhibition Centre (NEC) and the proposed 8 Hills Regional Park.

Economic Growth

- Economic growth was key to address all the suggested key lines of enquiry.

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- A cohesive approach to generate wealth was a priority.
- A unitary structure could assist to provide effective business support to startup businesses.
- Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) had one of the highest achieving business starts ups in the County with assistance from BetaDen; a locally funded organisation aiming to benefit businesses and entrepreneurs by providing resources, mentorship and access to a network of support.
- To start from the grass roots and upskill the younger generation was a key priority.
- BDC offered good public service engagement. Retaining the town centre's local community feel was important, which could diminish if the unitary structure was too large.
- To retain the town centres and areas local heritage should be a consideration.
- Encouraging people to live and work locally, rather than commute to work, was considered to be important.
- Working cohesively should assist the agricultural sector.
- Discouraging shop units which had a negative impact on the reputation of Bromsgrove Town Centre was considered important.

Safety and Security

- A unitary structure should assist with providing effective police engagement.
- The Police needed to provide effective face to face public engagement and a physical presence.

Environment

- Bromsgrove's agriculture and local environment were noted as important features of relevance to the character of the area. This was seen as important to retain and champion.

Members were also encouraged to consider and discuss community engagement with the following points provided by the Board:

- Being able to engage effectively with communities was seen as important.
- Public/stakeholder engagement should incorporate face to face opportunities where possible in addition to online to help gather evidence.
- Set boundaries needed to be balanced democratically for ease of

Member engagement.

- Parish Councils played a key role in public engagement in their own right. The Chief Executive reassured Members that Parish Councils would remain under a unitary council.
- Concerns were raised that having larger divisional boundaries could have a detrimental effect on public engagement.

The Chief Executive encouraged Members to complete and return the response forms which had been issued during the session and confirmed that the deadline for submission of completed forms was Tuesday 8th July 2025. Members were also informed that Group Leaders would have the opportunity to meet with Mutual Ventures for further discussions, so they could pass on views to their Group Leaders if they wished and if Members simply wanted to email in any feedback, then that was also welcomed.

The Chief Executive concluded the briefing by thanking Members for their participation in discussions and Mutual Ventures for their presentation and engagement session.

The Board were also reminded of the LGR timeline as follows:

- 28th November 2025 – Deadline for final proposals to MHCLG.
- First part of 2026 – Government public consultation on LGR.
- Summer 2026 – Government anticipated decision on the proposals.

RESOLVED that the Local Government Reorganisation All Member Engagement Session Supported by Mutual Ventures be noted.

7/25

CONTAMINATED LAND STRATEGY - PRE-SCRUTINY

A presentation was provided to Members by the Technical Services Manager of Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS).

Key points raised during the presentation were as follows:

- The new inspection strategy aimed to replace the previous version and meet the requirements of the statutory guidance which was issued in 2012.
- The strategy outlined the process for the review of potential contaminated land sites within the District and the prioritisation methodology used.
- The report aimed to provide an overview of the framework that existed in respect of contaminated land.
- Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 placed a duty on Local Authorities to review and assess the significant possibility of harm to human health arising from contaminated land.

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- Contaminated land legislation should only be used when there were no other alternative mechanisms available. However, the framework was predominately reviewed through the planning and development control process.
- The revised report reflected the gradual reduction and withdrawal of funding from Central Government.
- To date no sites had been declared as “Contaminated Land” by BDC. However, several sites of concern had been subject to detailed inspection.
- Planning policies encouraged the reuse of Brownfield land.

After consideration of the presentation, Members raised the following:

- The protocol to be followed if a member of the public had concerns that a plot of land was contaminated. Members were reminded that the strategy only reported on sites where contamination might be present and had the potential to pose a significant possibility of significant harm to human health. It was also explained that the Council focused on addressing sites where contamination might exist predominately through the planning and development control process. However, if a member of the public did have a concern, they could contact Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) to review.
- Members noted in the report that approximately 2,020 sites, which had been identified as potential sites of contaminated land within the District, largely related to historic land use, with some sites to potentially be identified as Brownfield sites. However, Members expressed the view that the District did not have a significant amount of Brownfield sites and requested clarification on this point. Members were informed that inspections involved reviewing land for suitable usage which could involve further scrutiny beneath the surface land layer.
- Members were reassured that the Council did not have any contaminated land sites. It was also explained that there was a specific criterion for land inspection including sites categorised in the order of priority.
- The Leader requested the outcome of two sites following any review undertaken. It was agreed that the appropriate information would be provided accordingly by the necessary Officers.
- It was queried how a member of the public would be informed if land they owned was contaminated land. The Board were informed that any remediation to address potential contaminated land should be revealed in the title deeds to a property. However, Members were reassured that in the event that any land, which posed a concern when being developed, would have remediation action carried out accordingly.
- Members enquired if there was a comprehensive list of potentially contaminated land sites available for public viewing. In response it was explained that some, but not all were listed in the strategy document, available to view online.

- The Board raised concerns and sought reassurance regarding the absence of external funding mechanisms and that this would not result in BDC failing to proactively undertake detailed inspections of Sites of Potential Concern. Members were reassured that potential sites of contamination had been prioritised, and risks had been mitigated where necessary.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that:

- 1) The Council adopt the revised strategy which should be published on the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) website.

8/25

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT PLAN CONSULTATION (REPORT TO FOLLOW)

The Chairman confirmed that this agenda item had been **withdrawn** with the agreement of the Chairman and Vice Chairman, prior to the meeting. The decision had been taken as the item was no longer due to be considered at the forthcoming Cabinet meeting but would be debated by all Members at the Council meeting on 19th June 2025.

9/25

INSTALLATION OF EV CHARGERS

A presentation on the Installation of Electric Vehicle (EV) chargers was provided to the Board by the Assistant Director Environmental Housing Property Services.

The purpose of the report was to outline the Implementation of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure across BDC's owned car parks and land. Key objectives of the project were to increase the availability of EV charging points in public spaces whilst supporting the Council's Carbon Reduction Strategy.

After consideration of the report, the Board provided the following points of discussion:

- Members queried if the Council were satisfied that when providing Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) across Council owned land, that disabled access would be a key priority. In response Members were informed that an appropriate update would be sought from the current contractor Zest Eco Limited and would be reported back to Members accordingly.
- A point was raised concerning the existing agreement in place with the contractor Equans regarding revenue share arrangements. Members sought clarification on how much revenue the Council could achieve. Members were advised that the relevant information would be sought from the contractor Equans and would be reported back to Members accordingly.
- The Board sought clarification as to whether the Council was required to pay for vandalism damages to EVCI's concerning an incident which involved wires cut on BDC owned land. It was

explained, as stated in the report, that the supplier was required to provide fully funded EVCI at no cost to the Council. The contract allowed for the supply, installation, maintenance and ongoing operational management of the EVCI across the various agreed sites.

- Members expressed their disappointment that the outer village areas had not been part of the EVCI criteria. The Board was informed that the key objectives were focused on Council owned car parks and land.

The Chairman concluded discussions on the topic and requested that the Board be provided with the specifics of the revenue share arrangement in place with the current contractor. In addition, the Chairman expressed disappointment that, unlike in other areas, the Council would not be in receipt of an immediate revenue income. In response it was explained that the arrangement was part of the contract Terms and Conditions agreement, however, it was agreed that the matter would be discussed with the contractor.

RESOLVED that the update on the Installation of EV Chargers be noted.

10/25

FINANCE AND BUDGET WORKING GROUP - MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Members received a report requesting for the Chairman and Members to be appointed to the Finance and Budget Working Group for the 2025/26 municipal year.

It was noted that the Chairman of the Group had traditionally been the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board. Members agreed that this arrangement should continue for 2025/26. It was explained that as per the terms of reference, the Working Group would comprise seven members which would include the Chairman of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee, once appointed, and six Overview and Scrutiny Members. Priority would be given to appointing Overview and Scrutiny Board members to the group, in line with the terms of reference, but membership could be offered to other scrutiny pool members should there be any vacancies.

Members that expressed an interest in joining the group were Councillors S. Ammar, R.J. Hunter, S.T. Nock and P.M. McDonald. The Board noted that Councillor C.A. Hotham also expressed an interest, should there be a relevant vacancy available.

RESOLVED that

- a) Councillor P. McDonald be appointed as the Chairman of the Finance and Budget Working Group for the ensuing municipal year 2025/26.
- b) Councillors S. Ammar, R. J. Hunter, P. McDonald and S. T Nock be appointed as Members of the Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group for the municipal year 2025/26.

- c) Overview and Scrutiny Board Members not in attendance at this meeting of the Board to be contacted regarding their potential interest in being appointed as members of the Finance and Budget Working Group in 2025/26; and
- d) The Terms of Reference for the Finance and Budget Working be approved.

11/25

WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVE FOR 2025-26

Councillor B. Kumar was nominated to become the Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) for the municipal year 2025/26.

Members were informed that Councillor K. May had been appointed as by Worcestershire County Council as the Chairman of the HOSC for 2025/26. The Board was informed that the next meeting would be held in July 2025 with discussions to be reported back at the July Board meeting.

RESOLVED that Councillor B. Kumar be appointed as the Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2025/26 municipal year.

12/25

TASK GROUP UPDATES

An update on the Housing Task Group was provided to the Board on behalf of the Chairman. It was explained that the group's recommendations were in the process of being finalised and delays to the group's draft report had been largely caused by the summer recess. However, the Chairman was satisfied to proceed, finalise and present findings in the Autumn, upon the end of recess.

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

13/25

CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Cabinet Work Programme was presented for Members' consideration. Members were informed of additional items to the Cabinet Work Programme that had been added since the last meeting, which were as follows:

- Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategic Framework which was going to Cabinet on 23rd July 2025. It was explained that this item had been added to Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 22nd July 2025.
- Windsor Street Site which was going to Cabinet on 23rd July 2025.

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Members sought clarification as to why the Medium-Term Financial Plan Tranche 1 Budget Report 2026/27 had appeared twice on the Cabinet Work Programme. An explanation was provided to the Board by the Deputy Chief Executive, which highlighted that the budget would be reported in two tranches and there would be consultation on the first tranche prior to determination by Council.

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

14/25

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme was considered by Members.

The following items were requested for addition to the Board's work programme as follows:

- The Windsor Street Site for pre-scrutiny prior to Cabinet on 23rd July 2025.
- An overview of the work of Citizens Advice to explain the uses of grant funding.
- Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) to be invited to attend a meeting to deliver a presentation on the services provided within the District.

It was agreed that the items would be added to the Board's work programme accordingly.

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

15/25

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ACTION SHEET

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

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

16/25

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

There was no urgent business for consideration.

The meeting closed at 7.56 p.m.

Chairman

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

18TH JUNE 2025, AT 1.00 P.M.

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

Officers: Mr J. Leach, Mr B. Watson, Mr. M. Bough, Mrs. J. Bayley-Hill, Mr. S. Williams, Mr. M. Eccles and Mrs. J. Gresham

1/25 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

2/25 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor P. Whittaker declared an Other Disclosable Interest in respect of Minute Item 4/25 – Contaminated Land Strategy on the basis that he owned land previously used as a landfill site. Councillor Whittaker remained present for consideration of the report and took part on the vote thereon.

There were no other Declarations of Interest.

3/25 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON 26TH MARCH 2025**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 26th March 2025 were submitted for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 26th March 2025 be approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

4/25 **CONTAMINATED LAND STRATEGY**

The Specialist Lead Officer (Contaminated Land) from Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) presented the Contaminated Land Strategy report for Members' consideration.

During the presentation of the report, it was noted that this updated Strategy was a revision of the one published in May 2001.

The current version outlined the process for review of potential contaminated land sites and the strategic approach that was due to be taken in terms of contaminated land going forward. Contained within the new strategy was greater emphasis on the Planning process.

It was reported that there was no change to the statutory responsibilities contained within the Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 placed on the Local Authority.

Six Districts across Worcestershire were being looked at as part of the review, with Redditch Borough Council having been the first to agree its updated strategy in 2024.

It was noted that the report had been pre-scrutinised at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting the previous evening however no recommendations to Cabinet had been made as a result of the pre-scrutiny. The Leader noted that there had, however, been some queries raised at the meeting in respect of two sites within the District that might potentially be contaminated and may require remediation works in the future due to previous uses. Officers had undertaken to look into these sites further as part of the strategy.

RECOMMENDED that

The Council adopts the revised strategy which should be published on the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) website.

5/25

WARM HOMES LOCAL GRANTS FUNDING AND RESOURCES

The Climate Change Manager presented the Warm Homes Local Grants Funding and Resources report for the consideration of Cabinet. It was explained that this funding provided an opportunity to provide support to low-income families in private accommodation (not social housing) and those who were at risk of fuel poverty and to improve energy efficiency across the District. The Warm Homes Local Grant also aligned with the Government's objective to improve energy performance of homes.

Members were informed that Act on Energy were to provide customer engagement for the scheme and to work with residents. In addition, they would provide a list of properties that were in need of improved energy measures and were most likely to meet the eligibility criteria for the scheme. The eligibility criteria were outlined as follows:

- IMD:ID Eligible Postcodes – these were Households located in postcodes that fell within the most deprived 25 per cent according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).
- Households with a gross income below £36,000 per year or a net income of £20,000 or less after housing costs or Households classified as low-income, that could be demonstrated by receipt of specific means tested benefits.
- Properties that had an Energy Performance Certificate rating between D and G.

It was noted that there would need to be careful communications around this scheme in order to manage the expectations of residents in terms of whether or not they might be eligible for funding.

In terms of funding, there was likely to be approximately £15,000 allocated to each recipient of the funding. However, this could be flexible depending on the efficiency needs of the property. Therefore, the number of properties who might benefit from this funding were two homes in the first year of funding, nine in the second year and eight in the final year.

Members queried the number of properties within the District that had been identified by Act on Energy as potentially in need of energy efficiency measures. It was reported that this was likely to be around one hundred homes. However, there could be more as some of these properties might be located in communities that were hard to reach and did not always engage with these partner agencies. The available funding was not enough to cover funding for all of these properties.

Cabinet requested that more research be done on eligible postcodes and whether this was an effective way to identify recipients, particularly as there might be residents whose properties were eligible but not in an eligible postcode. The Climate Change Manager explained that there was a map available showing eligible postcodes. This would be circulated to all Members following the meeting.

Rural Poverty was also apparent in the District and this was an area that could be looked into as part of this funding. Councillor S. Webb suggested that there might be an opportunity for Act on Energy to work alongside the Citizens Advice Bureau who visited these more rural locations regularly to provide information on the scheme.

Members were keen to understand whether further retrofitting could be undertaken as a community investment project following Local

Government Reorganisation. The criteria could remain the same or could be modified to expand the numbers of homes who might be eligible for funding. There was some discussion regarding what the perception of residents who received funding to retrofit larger homes within the District might be. Members noted that there were instances within the District of residents who were asset rich, but cash poor and these residents also needed help in order not to slip into fuel poverty. There would need to be careful consideration of the possibility of setting up a further scheme and any specific criteria over the coming months. If this project roll-out was successful and efficient there might be the potential of further funding from Government to expand the scheme further.

RECOMMENDED that

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

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

RESOLVED that

- 2) **Authority be delegated to the Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change to administer the funding received in the WHLG in line with the grant conditions and any alterations to the delivery programme.**

6/25

CABINET APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Leader presented the Cabinet Appointments to Outside Bodies report and consideration was given to the list of appointments, as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report.

Members commented on the future of the appointment to the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP) and if this would be needed in the future given the Local Government Reorganisation.

RESOLVED that Cabinet nominates Members to outside bodies as detailed in Appendix 1 to the minutes.

7/25

APPOINTMENTS TO THE SHAREHOLDERS' COMMITTEE

The Leader presented the Appointments to the Shareholders' Committee. It was explained that this Committee formed part of the governance structure for Spadesbourne Homes Ltd. During consideration of the report, it was noted that there had been a reshuffle of Cabinet Members which had resulted in the numbers being reduced from seven Members to six for the ensuing municipal year. This had resulted in the need for a change to the Terms of Reference for the Committee to reflect the reduction in Members for this municipal year.

The nominations to the Shareholders' Committee must be Members of the Cabinet and it was reported that Councillors S. Webb and K. Taylor would not be included in the membership of the Committee as it was deemed that there might be a future conflict due to their positions as Portfolio Holders for Strategic Housing and Planning respectively.

The nominations were received as follows:

1. Councillor K. May
2. Councillor S. Baxter
3. Councillor B. McEldowney
4. Councillor P Whittaker

Councillor K. May was nominated as Chairman for the municipal year 2025/26 and Councillor S. Baxter was nominated as Vice-Chairman for the municipal year 2025/26.

On being put to the vote it was

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the updated Terms of Reference for the Shareholders Committee be approved;

RESOLVED that

- 2) The following four Members be appointed to the Shareholders' Committee for the municipal year 2025/26
 - Councillor K. May
 - Councillor S. Baxter
 - Councillor B. McEldowney

- Councillor P Whittaker

3) Councillor K. May be appointed as Chairman for the municipal year 2025/26.

4) Councillor S. Baxter be appointed as Chairman for the municipal year 2025/26.

8/25

RECOMMENDATION FROM AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Leader presented the recommendation from the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee meeting held on 20th March 2025.

Cabinet unanimously agreed that this was an appropriate recommendation and if any Member did not undertake the Know Be4 training by the given deadline, access to the Council's IT system would be removed.

RESOLVED that cyber security KnowBe4 training be made mandatory for all Members.

9/25

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 25TH MARCH AND 15TH APRIL 2025

The minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 25th March 2025 and 15th April 2025 were submitted for the Cabinet's consideration. It was noted that there were no outstanding recommendations contained within these minutes.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 25th March 2025 and 15th April 2025 be noted.

10/25

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

There was no Urgent Business on this occasion.

11/25

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

RESOLVED that

Under S100 A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matters on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 of the said act, as amended. Minute Item No. 12 – Promoting Independent Living Service.

12/25

PROMOTING INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICE CONTRACT PROPOSALS

The Strategic Housing and Business Support Manager presented the Promoting Independent Living Service Contract Proposals for Members consideration. In doing so the following was highlighted:

- The Promoting Independent Living Service was previously considered by Members in 2024. As a result of this consideration, it was agreed that the current provider continued to provide services for a further twelve months.
- The Council had a statutory duty to provide the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) through its Housing Assistance Policy.

On being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED that

Officers to work towards ensuring the continuation of the Promoting Independent Living Service.

(During consideration of this item, Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to move to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed which related to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matters arising between the

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authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority. However, there is no exempt information contained within this minute).

The meeting closed at 2.09 p.m.

Chairman

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3, 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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