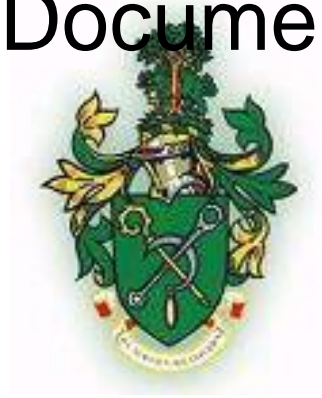


Public Document Pack



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY 7TH JANUARY 2026

AT 6.00 P.M.

PARKSIDE SUITE - PARKSIDE

MEMBERS: Councillors K.J. May (Leader), S. J. Baxter (Deputy Leader),
S. T. Nock, 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. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 19th November 2025 (Pages 7 - 24)

4. Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 18th November 2025 (Pages 25 - 34)

Any recommendations contained within the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 18th November 2025 were considered at the Cabinet meeting held on 19th November 2025. Therefore, there are no outstanding minutes contained in the minutes included in this agenda pack.

If there are any recommendations as a result of the pre-scrutiny of any Cabinet reports due to be considered at the Boards's meeting on 6th January 2026, these will be published in a supplementary papers pack to this agenda.

5. **Appointments to the Shareholders Committee** (Pages 35 - 38)
6. **Housing Task Group Final Report** (Pages 39 - 74)
7. **Cyber Security Update - including WhatsApp Policy and AI Policy** (Pages 75 - 110)
8. **Biodiversity First Duty** (Pages 111 - 120)
9. **Particulate Monitoring** (Pages 121 - 140)
10. **Homelessness Prevention, Rough Sleeper and Domestic Abuse Grants Funding 2027/28 and 2028/29** (Pages 141 - 148)
11. **Pay Policy 2026/27** (Pages 149 - 160)
12. **Business Rates Discretionary Rates Relief Policy 2026-2027** (Pages 161 - 174)
13. **Council Tax Base Report 2026/27** (Pages 175 - 178)
14. **Council Tax Empty Homes Discounts and Premiums 2026-27** (Pages 179 - 188)
15. **Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27** (Pages 189 - 192)
16. **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**
17. **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>
18	3

18. **Medium Term Financial Plan 2026/27 to 2028/29 including fees and charges, WRS budget recommendations and outcome of budget consultation (Pages 193 - 248)**

J. Leach
Chief Executive

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

29th December 2025

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

**Parkside, Market Street, Bromsgrove, B61 8DA
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 and for any such items.**



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- A reasonable number of copies of agendas and reports relating to items to be considered in public will be made available to the public attending meetings of the Council, Cabinet and its Committees/Boards.
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- Meeting Agendas
- Meeting Minutes
- The Council's Constitution

at www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

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

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

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

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

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

44/25

TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S. Baxter.

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

45/25

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

46/25

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

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

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) Capital Funding of £489,760 be added to the Capital Programme for 2026/27 to purchase two Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCV's).
- 2) The Council allocates Capital funding of £35,000 annually in the Medium-Term Financial Plan from the 2025/26 financial year to fund wheeled bins for Commercial Services.
- 3) The Council allocate £334,342 Revenue Funding in the Medium-Term Financial Plan to fund operational costs of providing the expanded service from 2025/26.
- 4) The Council allocate £100,000 Revenue Funding in the Medium-Term Financial Plan across 2025/26 and 2026/27 for interim vehicle hire.

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

47/25

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

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

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

RECOMMENDED that

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

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

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

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

48/25

BEREAVEMENT SERVICES - BURIAL STRATEGY

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

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

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

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

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

Following the presentation of the report, the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Community Safety welcomed such a

comprehensive Strategy. It was noted that as burial provision was a statutory function for the Council it was important for this Strategy be approved and implemented.

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

RESOLVED that

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

RESOLVED to note that

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

49/25

BUSINESS RATES RETENTION (BRR) POOL 2026-2027

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

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

Therefore, the report was withdrawn.

50/25

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

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

- As in previous years, the budget-setting process was split into two stages as follows:
 - Stage 1: Based on known data up to December 2025.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Policy Manager presented Cabinet with details regarding the public consultation to be undertaken as part of the Budget setting process. It was proposed that a public consultation exercise be undertaken from

20th November 2025 to 2nd January 2026. The consultation this year would include a wider number of areas for the public to consider not just specific budget bids which had been the focus on the previous year's consultation. Following the consultation, analysis of the responses would be undertaken to understand what the residents of Bromsgrove had highlighted as priority areas.

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

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

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

RESOLVED that

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

51/25

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION GRANT AND DOMESTIC ABUSE GRANT

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

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

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

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

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

RECOMMENDED that

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

RESOLVED that (subject to agreement of recommendation 1 above)

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

Agenda Item 3

Cabinet
19th November 2025

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

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

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

52/25

HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY CONSULTATION AND SYSTEM UPDATE

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

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

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

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

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

RESOLVED that

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

53/25

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

These pressures had been partially offset by:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

RECOMMENDED that

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

RESOLVED that the following be noted

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

54/25

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.

55/25

WINDSOR STREET SITE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

RESOLVED that

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

The meeting closed at 1.35 p.m.

Chairman

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

18TH NOVEMBER 2025, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors P. M. McDonald (Chairman), S. T. Nock (Vice-Chairman), S. Ammar, A. Bailes, R. Bailes, J. Clarke, D. J. A. Forsythe, B. Kumar, R. E. Lambert, B. McEldowney and H. D. N. Warren-Clarke

Observers: Councillor K. May – Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development and Enabling
Councillor S.J. Baxter – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

Councillor S.A. Webb - Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing and Strategic Housing

Officers: Mr. G. Revans, R Egan, Ms J. Willis, Mr. M. Bough, Ms R. McElliott, Ms. A. Delahunty, Mr D. Whitney and Mrs S. Woodfield.

Other Parties: Mr G. Anderson and Mr J. Whitman
(Representatives of Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT))

58/25

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor A.M. Dale, with confirmation provided that Councillor D.J.A. Forsythe was attending as her named substitute, Councillor S. Robinson with confirmation that Councillor J. Clarke was attending as her named substitute and Councillor J.D. Stanley with confirmation that Councillor R.E. Lambert would be in attendance as his named substitute.

59/25

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS

There were no declarations of interest nor of whipping arrangements.

60/25

TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 2ND AND 28TH OCTOBER 2025

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meetings held on 2nd and 28th October 2025 were considered.

RESOLVED that, subject to the amendments detailed in the preamble above, the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 2nd and 28th October 2025 be approved as a correct record.

61/25

STRATEGIC OVERVIEW OF BDHT SERVICES

The Chief Executive of Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) presented to the Board with the key points discussed as follows:

- BDHT's objectives included being an excellent landlord, employer, and a community-based Housing Association.
- Stock levels had grown to over four thousand homes, with a strong focus on the Bromsgrove District.
- Financial viability remained critical with all expenditure funded through rental income.
- Compliance and safety were highlighted as top priorities following national regulatory changes.
- Recruitment and retention of skilled staff were proving challenging.
- Complaints were increasing, partly due to external claims companies and rising customer expectations.

Member comments and questions were as follows:

- How could a tenant continue to pay their rent monthly which had been initially agreed and preferred option? BDHT advised that although it was stated and suggested in the tenancy agreement to pay rent weekly, individual cases could be assessed and it was advised for individuals to contact BDHT for further advice.
- Did BDHT hold a land banking and development strategy? In response BDHT confirmed that they did not hold any land bank developments and relied mainly on Section 106 agreements for new developments.
- Concerns were raised about the potential impact of rent caps and inflation on affordable housing supply. BDHT acknowledged that there were pressures and confirmed development targets had reduced from five hundred to three hundred and fifty units annually.
- Members were informed that over a thousand properties were built under the S106 option. Nationally housing developers struggled to source providers for affordable homes which ensured that BDHT were a suitable and often successful bidder.
- Were there any potential future government funding opportunities? In response it was confirmed that bids were possible but it was noted that grants required match funding from BDHT to secure the bids and compliance imposed a strict criteria regime.
- Concerns were raised on the lack of some estate maintenance improvements within the district, in particular, with regards to footpaths and garages. It was agreed that these areas would be

reviewed as a priority and allocation of funds for communal area provision would be looked at.

- A request for contact details of Housing Officers which were allocated to specific ward areas was agreed by BDHT to provide to Members.
- The Board also requested access to the asset register for footpaths owned by BDHT. In response it was agreed that this would be reviewed to have available for Members.
- Was there a prevention plan to ensure the homeless was housed and remained in employment and if there was relevant data to demonstrate this? It was advised that it wasn't within the contract agreement to provide a plan but BDHT did assist where possible. The necessary data was shown on returns to Central Government which included employment status.
- Parking issues within the district was discussed with Members, suggesting that repossessed land, formerly for garages could assist with the problem. BDHT explained that selling the land was less costly than maintaining the specific areas, however, there were some areas of land within the district which had been made into parking spaces.
- Clarity on complaints handling procedures was requested. In response BDHT outlined the two-stage process and confirmed the Housing Ombudsman involvement where necessary. BDHT also discussed Members' involvement as an advocate between BDHT and residents. It was suggested that to ensure complaints were dealt with effectively, all Members should contact via email (as discussed during the presentation) to ensure that complaints were processed in one isolated area. Members suggested a unique complaints reference numbering system could be devised. In response, BDHT agreed to review the complaints procedure further.

The portfolio holder for Health and Wellbeing and Strategic Housing added her thanks to BDHT for giving up their time and attending the Board meeting. She also expressed her gratitude to the Homelessness and Domestic Abuse teams for their efforts when dealing with individual cases for the Council.

RESOLVED that the Strategic Overview of BDHT briefing paper and presentation be noted.

62/25

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION GRANT AND DOMESTIC ABUSE GRANT - PRE-SCRUTINY

The Strategic Housing Officer presented the Cabinet report on proposed allocations for 2026/27.

A summary of proposals were highlighted as follows:

- Total grant funding available was £531,661 (including Homelessness Prevention, Rough Sleeping, and Domestic Abuse grants).
- Key allocations included:
 - BDHT Housing Agency Agreement top-up of £52,475
 - Additional temporary accommodation units of £30,688
 - Young Persons Pathway Worker of £41,116
 - Rough Sleeper outreach (Maggs) of £35,607
 - Domestic Abuse support services of £35,744

Member comments and discussions were as follows:

- The Severe Emergency Weather Provision was discussed with Members being informed that the provision was not utilised regularly but was required to ensure the people are kept safe during extreme weather.
- Members welcomed the ringfencing of funds for prevention and relief activities.
- Members were informed that domestic abuse was on the rise with requests for accommodation out of area being a huge burden on services, in areas such as Birmingham and Dudley.
- Further clarity on the role of the Empty Homes Officer was requested. Members were informed that the grant and role targeted homes which had been emptied for longer than a six month period.
- Clarity on performance monitoring and outcomes was requested with Officers explaining that there were quarterly monitoring and compliance requirements from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).
- The sustainability of voluntary sector services if grant funding ceased? Officers stressed the importance of continued support to avoid increased homelessness pressures.
- NewStarts and GreenSquare Accord worked collaboratively, particularly for volunteering and tenancy sustainability.
- Members expressed concerns regarding rough sleeper numbers and monitoring. Officers reported three had been verified as rough sleepers at the last count which is a snapshot and explained that this figure changes frequently as people move from rough sleeping into accommodation.

RECOMMENDED that

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

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

63/25

HOUSING TASK GROUP - FINAL REPORT

The Chairman of the Housing Task Group was pleased and proud to present the Housing Task Group's final report to the Board.

Members were informed that the group had covered a wide range of subject areas, guided by the terms of reference, with key recommendations to be noted by the Board. The Chairman of the task group expressed his thanks for the contributions from group Members for their valuable cross-party debates and also to the Democratic Services Officers who facilitated the meetings.

Members of the Housing Task Group also provided their gratitude for being part of the group and thanked the Chairman for his contributions and leadership.

Members discussed content within the report which highlighted a suggestion of residents downsizing to smaller properties which could assist with the pressures of council tax payment demands. In response the Chairman of the Housing Task Group highlighted a recommendation within the report which requested that relevant Officers should monitor the number of residents claiming council tax in housing bands F, G and H.

Members supported the recommendations but noted legal complexities around fleecing and the need to align with forthcoming government reforms. In response the Chairman of the Board informed Members that during recent discussions with the Legal Department, it was proposed to amend recommendation 6 a) as follows:

From:

"As part of the Local Government Reorganisation process, the Council:

Includes the proposal that a process be investigated whereby a future unitary authority pursues and seeks to manage contracts in new developments that are causing fleecing issues within the District".

To:

“As part of the Local Government Reorganisation process, the Council:

Notes that the Government is currently analysing the feedback from the consultation which sought views on proposals to implement aspects of the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024 and further reform related to the charges leaseholders, and homeowners on freehold estates, pay and services they receive, which closed on 26th September 2025”.

After consideration Members agreed to the recommendations within the Housing Task Group Final Report and suggested recommendation amendment.

RESOLVED that the Housing Task Group Final Report be noted.

RECOMMENDED that

Recommendation 1 – Housing Allocations

Officers approach Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) and jointly explore a startup crisis package for residents living in social housing including the potential of an increase in housing benefit payment to cover the costs of the crisis package. The findings to be completed in three months and reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

Recommendation 2 – Housing Allocations

Bromsgrove District Council's preference is for the mix of affordable housing contained within a new development be made up of social rent and shared ownership properties only and exclude outright sales of affordable homes.

Recommendation 3 – Asset Rich and Potentially Revenue Poor

Officers provide Members with costings of bad debt owed to the Council as a result of non – payment of Council tax by residents.

Recommendation 4 – Asset Rich and Potentially Revenue Poor

Officers monitor the number of residents claiming Council Tax Support in housing Bands F, G and H (with metrics built into the performance reporting framework).

Recommendation 5 – Section (S) 106 Contributions

Where a planning application has a material impact on the local community and there is a consideration for S106 contribution allocation, the Ward Member (and neighbouring Ward Member(s)) should be informed and consulted with prior to consideration of the application. A

follow up consultation with the Ward Member (and neighbouring Ward Member(s)) should also take place.

Recommendation 6 - Fleeceholding

As part of the Local Government Reorganisation process, the Council:

- a) Notes that the Government is currently analysing the feedback from the consultation which sought views on proposals to implement aspects of the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024 and further reform related to the charges leaseholders, and homeowners on freehold estates, pay and services they receive, which closed on 26th September 2025.
- b) Suggests that a new unitary authority continues to lobby Government on the matter of fleeceholding within Bromsgrove District.

64/25

WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - UPDATE

The Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) representative, Councillor B. Kumar updated the Board on its recent meetings held on 8th September and 10th October 2025.

At the HOSC meeting held on 8th September 2025, Engaging Neighbourhoods and Community in Health Improvements were considered and the Board were informed that generally community health improvement projects were reducing emergency admissions.

The following key points discussed:

- Priority Neighbourhood Development (PND)
- Empowering School Communities
- Wider Community Development
- Harnessing Assets – Green Spaces, Libraries, Volunteering
- Community Voice and Partnerships
- Volunteering in Healthwatch & Hospitals
- Innovative Models of Integrated Care

At the meeting held on 10th October 2025 Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) and Winter Planning were considered with Members informed that Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment highlighted reduced pharmacy hours and rural access issues.

The following key points were discussed during the meeting:

- Pharmacy Landscape & Access
- Gaps, Barriers & Inequalities
- Service Opportunities & Health Needs

- Winter Planning & Key Priorities
- System-Level Interventions & Capacity Measures
- Demand Trends, Challenges & Targets
- Communications & Public Engagement

Members also discussed the Pharmacy First, with a Member discussing his own personal experiences with the scheme. Concerns about capacity and public awareness were also discussed.

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

65/25

FINANCE AND BUDGET WORKING GROUP - MEMBERSHIP REPORT AND UPDATE

After consideration of the Finance and Budget Working Group Membership Report and terms of reference the Board agreed to maintain six Members on the Working Group.

The Chairman explained that should the three current vacancies as reflected in the report remain after the Board had been approached, Members who did not sit on the scrutiny board and were also not a Cabinet Member may be appointed to fill the vacancies.

RESOLVED that the Finance and Budget Working Group Membership Report be noted.

66/25

CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Cabinet Work Programme was presented for Members' consideration.

The Chairman suggested and the Board agreed that the following items were to be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme:

- Biodiversity First Consideration Report
- Permission to Revoke the First Homes Policy

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

67/25

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme was considered by Members. The following items were requested by Members and agreed by the Board should be added to the Overview and Scrutiny's work programme:

- Town Centre Parking and Automatic Number Plate Recognition Update (ANPR)
- Police and Crime Commissioner (Grant Funding)

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

68/25

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ACTION SHEET

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

The Chairman raised concerns regarding Electric Vehicle charger revenue arrangements and requested a further review of profit-sharing agreements. It was agreed that this would be raised with the relevant Officers and reported back to the Board accordingly.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Action Sheet be noted.

69/25

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

There was no urgent business for consideration.

70/25

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

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

<u>Minute Item</u>	<u>Paragraph</u>
71/25	3

71/25

WINDSOR STREET SITE - PRE-SCRUTINY

The Regeneration Project Delivery Manager presented to the Board.

The Board considered delivery options for the Windsor Street redevelopment with the key points discussed as follows:

- Homes would be considered sustainable in design.
- Site remediation was underway.

- Phase 2 was expected to be completed by May 2026 which was not critical as planning permission was required and would take time to complete.
- There would be no cost implications due to delay as there were no contractors present on site, however, when Phase 2 commenced, there could be costs to the Council.
- The requirement for affordable housing on site was 30%.
- Town Centre Living requirements was requested as a consideration.
- Detailed risk assessments were also requested by Members.
- The procurement selection process for a RSL should be considered for their creative vision.
- The chosen RSL should be located close to the district area.
- Members were assured that Homes England funding opportunities would be explored.
- Concerns were raised about parking provision and sustainability.

During consideration of comments received by the Board the Assistant Director Generation and Property explained that the purpose of reporting, as stated in the recommendations, were to gain approval for residential use, to seek delegated authority to review the procurement rules process and to review contractual requirements which could then be considered at Cabinet.

Following consideration and discussions, Members expressed their concerns that some of the recommendations were not clear regarding the delegated authority and contractual details. It was therefore agreed that the recommendations would be reviewed and reworded accordingly.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) The Windsor Street site be redeveloped for residential use.
- 2) Subject to a further report to Cabinet outlining the detail of the collaboration agreement arrangements, the Council seek to enter into partnership with a Registered Social Landlord to develop the site.
- 3) The Assistant Director for Regeneration and Property and the Assistant Director for Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services be delegated authority to progress the preferred option, including reviewing administrative and contractual requirements, following consultation with the Leader, and to report back to Cabinet on the outcomes at a later date.

The meeting closed at 8.23 p.m.

Chairman

Cabinet 2026

Wednesday 7 January

Appointments to the Shareholders Committee 2025/26

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor K. J. May
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services
Report Author: Jess Bayley-Hill	Job Title: Principal Democratic Services Officer Contact email: jess.bayley-hill@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Tel: 01527 64252
Wards Affected	(All Wards);
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Council Priority	Sustainability;
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet RESOLVE that:-

- 1) An additional member of the Cabinet, to be identified at the Cabinet meeting, to be appointed to serve on the Shareholders Committee for the remainder of the 2025/26 municipal year.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This report invites Members to consider and approve an appointment to the Shareholders Committee for the remainder of the 2025/26 municipal year.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 The Shareholders Committee is a key part of the governance structure for the Council company, Spadesbourne Homes Limited.
- 3.2 In line with national best practice, the Shareholders Committee has been established as a sub-committee of the Cabinet.
- 3.3 As a sub-Committee of the Cabinet, it is a responsibility of the Cabinet, rather than Council, to appoint Members to serve on the Shareholders Committee.

Cabinet 2026

Wednesday 7 January

- 3.4 Members appointed to the Shareholders Committee are required to attend training in respect of their roles and responsibilities on this Committee if they have not previously attended training on this subject. Returning members of the committee are strongly encouraged to attend refresher training.
- 3.5 At a meeting of the Cabinet held on 18th June 2025, four members of Cabinet were appointed to serve on the Shareholders Committee for the 2025/26 municipal year. The terms of reference for the Committee were also updated at that meeting, to specify that there should be a total of four Councillors appointed to the Shareholders Committee and that the quorum for the Committee should three.
- 3.6 Since that meeting, changes have been made to the membership of the Cabinet and a vacancy has consequently arisen on the Shareholders Committee. As a result, there are currently only three Members appointed to the Shareholders Committee.
- 3.7 The last scheduled meeting of the Shareholders Committee was due to take place in November. However, one of the Members of the Committee needed to give apologies due to unforeseen circumstances which meant that the meeting could not go ahead on the scheduled date as it would not have been quorate.
- 3.8 To ensure that meetings can proceed smoothly for the rest of the 2025/26 municipal year, it is proposed that an additional Member of the Cabinet should be appointed to serve on the Shareholders Committee.
- 3.9 In line with the terms of reference for the Shareholders Committee, political group leaders are invited to attend meetings of the Committee to participate in the debate, although they cannot vote on matters unless they are also members of the Committee. This arrangement will continue should an additional member be appointed to serve on the Shareholders Committee for the remainder of the 2025/26 municipal year.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from the proposals detailed in this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Cabinet 2026

Wednesday 7 January

- 5.1 The Council is the only Shareholder in Spadesbourne Homes Limited.
- 5.2 The powers of the Council as Shareholder are vested in the Cabinet assisted by the Shareholders Committee.

6. OTHER – IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 There are no specific implications for Local Government Reorganisation or devolution.

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 This report supports the Council's priority of sustainability.
- 6.3 The appointment of an Member to the Shareholders Committee will help to ensure that meetings of the Committee can take place consistently during the year and address any matters reserved to the authority as shareholder.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.4 There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.5 There are no equalities or diversity implications.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 There is a risk that, should there remain a vacant seat on the Shareholders Committee for the rest of the 2025/26 municipal year, it could be difficult to convene meetings of the Committee that are quorate.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

'Appointments to the Shareholders Committee', report to the Cabinet meeting held on 18th June 2025: [Cabinet Agenda - 18th June 2025](#)

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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD

HOUSING TASK GROUP

FINAL REPORT

NOVEMBER 2025



Bromsgrove
District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

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MEMBERSHIP OF THE TASK GROUP



Councillor Harrison Warren-Clarke
Chairman of the Task Group



Councillor Alan Bailes



Councillor Anita Dale



Councillor R. J. Hunter



Councillor Bakul Kumar



Councillor Peter McDonald

Supporting Officer Details

Sarah Woodfield – Democratic Services Officer – Lead Officer

Jess Bayley-Hill – Principal Democratic Services Officer

Jo Gresham – Senior Democratic Services Officer

Gavin Day - Democratic Services Officer

FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I am incredibly proud to present this report, outlining the findings and recommendations of the Housing Task Group.

From the offset the group had covered a wide range of topics, based upon the concerns of local people, whilst also remaining focused on what we can affect as a Local Authority.

Members of the group, who come from all political parties and none, have all worked together, making contributions and reaching consensus on the contents of this report, its findings and recommendations. We have thoroughly scrutinised the policies of Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) and its partners on topics such as access to social rented housing, 'Fleeceholding', examples of hidden housing need/poverty and more!

I implore the intended recipients of this report to carefully consider the evidence, comments and recommendations from the Task Group and work with us to secure necessary improvements for the people of Bromsgrove.

Councillor Harrison Warren-Clarke
Chairman of the Housing Task Group

Summary of Recommendations

After consideration of the evidence available and interviewing relevant officers the Task Group have proposed the following recommendation(s) (supporting evidence can be found under the relevant chapters within the main body of this report).

Recommendation 1 – Housing Allocations
Officers approach Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) and jointly explore a startup crisis package for residents living in social housing including the potential of an increase in housing benefit payment to cover the costs of the crisis package. The findings to be completed in three months and reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.
Financial Implications for recommendations:
There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation.
Legal Implications for recommendations:
There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.
Resource Implications:
Officer time in preparing the report.
Recommendation 2 – Housing Allocations
Bromsgrove District Council's preference is for the mix of affordable housing contained within a new development be made up of social rent and shared ownership properties only and exclude outright sales of affordable homes.
Financial Implications for recommendations:
There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation.
Legal Implications for recommendations:
There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.
Resource Implications:
Officer time in preparing the report.
Recommendation 3 – Asset Rich and Potentially Revenue Poor
Officers provide Members with costings of bad debt owed to the Council as a result of non – payment of Council tax by residents.
Financial Implications for recommendations:
There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation.
Legal Implications for recommendations:

There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.
Resource Implications:
Officer time in preparing the report.

Recommendation 4 – Asset Rich and Potentially Revenue Poor
Officers monitor the number of residents claiming Council Tax Support in housing Bands F, G and H (with metrics built into the performance reporting framework).
Financial Implications for recommendations:
There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation.
Legal Implications for recommendations:
There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.
Resource Implications:
Officer time in preparing the report.

Recommendation 5 – Section (S) 106 Contributions
Where a planning application has a material impact on the local community and there is a consideration for S106 contribution allocation, the Ward Member (and neighbouring Ward Member(s)) should be informed and consulted with prior to consideration of the application. A follow up consultation with the Ward Member (and neighbouring Ward Member(s)) should also take place.
Financial Implications for recommendations:
There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation.
Legal Implications for recommendations:
There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.
Resource Implications:
Officer time in preparing the report.

Recommendation - Fleeceholding
As part of the Local Government Reorganisation process, the Council:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Notes that the Government is currently analysing the feedback from the consultation which sought views on proposals to implement aspects of the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024 and further reform related to the charges leaseholders, and homeowners on freehold estates, pay and services they receive, which closed on 26th September 2025.

b. Suggests that a new unitary authority continues to lobby Government on the matter of fleecing within Bromsgrove District.
Financial Implications for recommendations: There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation.
Legal Implications for recommendations: There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.
Resource Implications: Officer time in preparing the report.

Background Information

The potential to review housing was discussed by Members at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 11th July 2024. This subject was suggested as a topic which was possibly suitable for further investigation when Members discussed key lines of enquiry for a scheduled review of affordable housing.

A report was considered at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 23rd July 2024 and was presented by Councillor Warren-Clarke. During consideration, it was outlined that the review would be a Task Group, consisting of a small group of Members for a scheduled review of affordable housing in Bromsgrove. Following consideration of the report, it was agreed by the Board to establish the task group and the terms of reference was approved.

The key objectives of the proposed task group review and included in the terms of reference were agreed to scrutinise the following areas:

Key Objectives

Fleeceholding - Members “to address and influence” to assist residents.

Section 106 monies to support infrastructure rules – Members located in town centres/urban areas could add significant value.

To investigate “asset rich” but “revenue poor” residents and the support available locally to residents - This could involve the task group exploring potential gaps that could be addressed by the Council and partner organisations.

During the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 10th September 2025 the membership report was discussed, with the purpose of the report to formalise the membership of the Task Group which was agreed at this meeting as Councillors H. D. N. Warren-Clarke, P. M. McDonald, A. Bailes, B.A. Dale, B. Kumar and R. Hunter. It was also agreed that the Chairman would be appointed at the first task group meeting. Councillor Warren-Clarke was subsequently appointed as the Chairman of the review at the first meeting of the Task Group on 31st October 2024.

Following the task’s groups initial meeting held on 31st October 2024, Members agreed an additional item to the terms of reference. The agreed wording for this additional key objective was endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting on 19th November 2024.

Additional Key Objective

To scrutinise the allocations policy and housing register regarding eligibility, qualification and allocations and explore standards of housing let under the policy.

Chapter 1

Housing Allocations – Policy and Process

During the initial Task Group meeting, Members discussed the potential to have an additional objective added to the review. This was in respect of the housing needs for residents currently on the housing waiting list and for officers to provide information on what was driving the need for social housing.

Members were clear that, in terms of housing allocations, residents living locally should have priority for social housing and for this to also be explored further. The Strategic Housing Services Manager explained to Members that the housing register was used as part of the allocations policy and would need to be reviewed.

Mr. John Whitwam, Director of Housing and Communities, Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT), was invited to the task group meeting held on 13th January 2025.

During the presentation, it was outlined that the strapline for BDHT was “Building Vibrant Communities Together”. Over four thousand homes were owned by BDHT with a mix of social rented, market rent, shared ownership and leaseholders (right to buy properties). Stock transfer was initiated in 2004 and tendered for a five-year period. BDHT was based locally in Bromsgrove with one hundred and sixty employees which focused on the community. It was also explained that BDHT held housing stock for Redditch Borough Council, Wyre Forest District Council and Pershore Town Council. Partnership working such as contractors, were also sourced locally, where possible and support services networks such as 360 Services aided residents, ranging from budgetary advice to complex family support.

Allocations Policy

BDHT adhered to the Home Choice Plus allocations policy, which were approved by the relevant Local Authorities. Housing priority decisions were made by the relevant Local Authority with statutory guidance and legislation in place to assist with the prioritisation process. Most Local Authorities did not own their own housing stock and were usually run by Housing Associations.

Eligibility And Qualification

Local connections to the partnership area (person had lived in the area for at least five years) were a key consideration for the eligibility and qualification process. However, there were some exceptions i.e. if a person was fleeing domestic abuse, part of the armed forces, a care leaver or if there was a genuine housing request and adhered to the relevant threshold requirements. Applicants were required to be over 16, with some special approvals on those under 18, however, the policy was in the process of being reviewed. If applicants had the right to live in the UK and were entitled to claim public funds i.e. if they had the required immigration status. A person was not to cause unacceptable behaviour to the extent that they would get an outright possession order, however, the offence must be serious. If

a person had an Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) case against them, this would be considered as a serious offence and less likely to be given housing entitlement.

Prioritisation

Banding structures ranged from Priority, Gold Plus, Gold, Silver Plus, Silver, Reduced Banding, Bronze Plus and Bronze and were set by the Local Authority's constituency when the initial policies were agreed. When a property became vacant, BDHT advertised the void property for a period of a week. Interested parties then had the opportunity to bid for the relevant property, followed by an automated selection process, based on the highest band structure and who had been on the waiting list the longest.

Reduced Preference

Reduced preference assessments were determined by the Local Authority; however, exemptions were made in exceptional circumstances. Reduced preference assessments could be determined if there was a housing related debt i.e. a possession order or ASB offence. However, these were assessed and after further review, penalisations could be withdrawn.

Letting Standard

All Housing Associations had their own letting standards which were used as a guide for inspecting void properties. As part of the Decent Homes Standard, there was no requirement for carpets (only flooring in the kitchen and bathroom) and no white goods. However, carpets or flooring could remain in properties from a previous tenant but only offered if in an acceptable condition and were considered safe, to avoid any possible liability claims.

BDHT Letting Standard

Health and Safety checks were carried out which included damp and mould, properties cleaned and cleared, repairs completed, if decorating was required and outdoor spaces were checked for any safety issues including trip hazards. A hardship grant funding pot of £30,000 was available for tenants who required carpets, flooring and white goods, subject to an assessment. There were other funding options available such as The Salvation Army and Newstarts, providing free furniture and household supplies.

Following the presentation, Members questioned some areas in further detail which were as follows:

- **Would there be any exceptions if a person was not on the priority list but at risk?**
If a person was at risk, they should already be on the Gold Plus banding structure and would also have the right to appeal through the Local Authority.
- **How was the banding structure formally assessed?**

A signed tenancy agreement determined the number of bedrooms required i.e. if the tenant had dependants and claimed child benefit. A signed declaration was also required as part of the tenancy agreement, which should deter a fraudulent claim. If there was a medical requirement, a general practice letter would be requested.

- **How were local connection determined, if it would be safer for a person to be in another district area?**

There were discretions i.e. if someone was fleeing domestic abuse, or in a witness protection programme, however, a high percentage of claims were normally connected to the local area. The Housing Act 1996, Part 6 statutory guidance rules would also be incorporated into the assessment. The Local Authority within the preferred district area would be required to make a referral on behalf of the claimant to the Council.

- **How was an application assessed if a claimant had a local connection within a specific District area?**

The agreed policy did not apply to specific ward areas, only at a district level. However, there was also a right to appeal the initial decision made.

- **Were there any indicative timescales for banding structures?**

It was difficult to evaluate if the applicant was not on the list as a priority and specific time guidelines were not guaranteed but people were positioned through the bandings depending on their circumstances. The increased high demands were mainly due to the poor turnaround of void properties and new build supply demands were not meeting the estimated proposed targets, also resulting in a higher demand for housing.

- **Could BDHT consider further housing stock i.e. accommodation above units?**

BDHT were unable to pursue the purchase of further housing stock due to increased demands such as rent caps, inflation increases and further legislation commitments for health and safety requirements. Further housing stock requirements were dependant on grant funding through the Affordable Homes Programme.

- **Were assessments carried out to ensure the claimants understood the banding structure requirements necessary, particularly if banding had been assessed and was due to be reduced?**

Claimants were informed prior to their banding being reduced. Also, checks were carried out to ensure the person understood the reasons for the reduction and the requirements necessary for the bidding process. There was always the right to appeal a decision, which could be made through the Strategic Housing Department.

- **If an assessment could be prioritised if a person preferred a particular area and if that person was happy to free up a larger than necessary property?**

BDHT would not generally advise to leave a house as this would be lessening the persons security. However, BDHT were in the process of launching a downsizing project to try and free up larger properties for families. There was also a mutual exchange option whereby tenants could swap properties, providing the option was suitable for both parties. The task group were advised that the scheme was increasing as an option for tenants.

- **If the Hardship grant funding was adequate to assist tenants with the necessary required household items?**

Grant funding did not provide the adequate support necessary to assist all the needs required within the District. However, there were other household support grants available through Central Government and local charities. It was noted that furniture poverty had become an increasing countrywide issue.

- **Had service charges been explored to assist with the necessary household good requirements?**

The option had been utilised in the past but tenants that had benefit privileges withdrawn were sometimes unable to pay the charges necessary. Mutual exchange was an alternative option, however, sometimes caused difficulties if a property was furnished and the other was unfurnished.

- **Was there a communication platform available for donating free of charge household goods?**

Social media platforms were available such as Facebook Market Place for free items to collect. However, such a scheme would be costly to administer and cause possible liability claims to the Council.

- **Could the use of a depot be explored as an option to store free of charge, unwanted household goods?**

The option would be a cause for concern as goods should meet the Health and Safety and British Standard requirements to avoid any liability claims. Also, to administer, would cause financial pressures to Council funding.

- **Had there been difficulties with clashes of BDHT and national policy requirements?**

Most of the policies worked well, however, the reduced preference threshold of a gross household income (including benefits) of more than £38k per annum did cause difficulties but were under review.

- **Was the household income threshold of £38k a BDHT or Council policy?**

The threshold had been agreed by Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) but was under review to assist with the social housing demand.

- **Could BDHT suggest any suitable recommendations to improve social housing difficulties within the District?**

An increase in supply for social housing within the District would assist with the increased demand for temporary accommodation. The Council was working with BDHT to ensure the best use of the housing stock availability, by reviewing that tenants were suitably housed to accommodate the resident to number of bedrooms ratio.

Members also discussed a report that went to Cabinet on 10th December 2024 which revealed a significant increase in demand for temporary accommodation in the Bromsgrove District. In response, it was agreed that the report did highlight the consequence of low social housing stock availability, with people being housed in temporary accommodation for long periods. Members were advised that BDHT assisted with supplying temporary accommodation where possible, with demands increasing in some instances, however, there was an option to source accommodation outside the District

area. Members were also informed that suitable temporary accommodation options were available for people fleeing domestic abuse, with bed and breakfast being an alternative.

After considering all the evidence, Members concluded that an area for improvement for residents allocated social housing was ensuring the provision of essential items for those who did not have them when moving into a new property. Additionally, it was suggested that payments for this kind of package could be offset against any housing benefits claimed by the resident. Members understood that this would need to be investigated further.

After all discussions in respect of the evidence, Members made the following recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Board:

Recommendation – Housing Allocations
Officers approach Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) and jointly explore a startup crisis package for residents living in social housing including the potential of an increase in housing benefit payment to cover the costs of the crisis package. The findings to be completed in three months and reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.
Financial Implications for recommendations:
There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation.
Legal Implications for recommendations:
There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.
Resource Implications:
Officer time in preparing the report.

Recommendation – Housing Allocations
Bromsgrove District Council's preference is for the mix of affordable housing contained within a new development be made up of social rent and shared ownership properties only and exclude outright sales of affordable homes.
Financial Implications for recommendations:
There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation.
Legal Implications for recommendations:
There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.
Resource Implications:
Officer time in preparing the report.

Chapter 2

Asset Rich and Potentially Revenue Poor

One of the key objectives of the Task Group investigation was to gather evidence on the topic of residents considered to be 'asset rich' however potentially 'revenue poor'. Some of this had been considered at a previous Task group investigation into Fuel Poverty. It was therefore included in the Topic Proposal that the work of the Task Group would not be duplicated during investigations. Members reviewed the findings of the Fuel Poverty Task Group and invited the Strategic Housing Services Manager to address any relevant questions. It was agreed that Social Housing sustainability should be discussed in more detail, with the group expressing concerns that some social housing was provided to tenants which were ill-equipped, lacking basic household items such as curtains, carpets and white goods, as detailed in the previous chapter of this report. It was felt that the Council should be seeking to better promote where tenants could source affordable second-hand goods and where the public could donate and recycle relevant items for tenants. The Strategic Housing Services Manager advised Members that the Council did work in partnership with NewStarts to assist tenants to source furniture packs and that a report was due to go to Cabinet regarding the Homelessness Prevention Grant Funding, with NewStarts included within the funding provision.

During the task group meeting held on 6th February 2025 the Strategic Housing Services Manager was invited to a meeting to discuss the Asset Rich and Potentially Revenue Poor item in more detail and provide evidence in respect of the current situation within the District.

In presenting the evidence to Members, they were advised that the terminology "Assets" (wealth a person owned) and "Cash" (wealth a person had available to spend) were typically used to describe older adults and retirees who owned valuable assets, mainly a property but had limited income in the form of cash readily available. There was limited data available to provide on the subject, however, the Council Tax Support data system had been utilised to assist with reporting. From the data produced, it was estimated that over 4,000 residents were receiving Council Tax support within the District. Various Council Tax Bands ranging from A - H were discussed and considered, showing the rise in property value from 1st April 1991 to December 2024 in the West Midlands Region. The average and median house price ranging from one to five bedroomed houses was also discussed. It was reported that a higher percentage of homeowners within the lower Council Tax Bands A – C were receiving Council Tax support. When reviewing the pensionable age, statistics showed that a high percentage were receiving Council Tax support and an average of 50 per cent of homeowners at pensionable age were receiving Guaranteed Pension Credit.

Member Discussions

Following consideration of the presentation it was discussed whether neighbouring Local Authorities experienced similar concerns within their local areas. Although it was suggested by Members that the Task Group could

investigate what measures were being carried out within other areas to address the issues the Strategic Housing Manager advised that Local Authorities did not generally provide statistical information on Council Tax Support claims within their area and that individual Local Authorities would be required to agree to the information being provided.

Members also discussed the potential for the Council to consider providing information to residents in respect of renting a room within their property. Members were advised that information was available on the internet providing advice for homeowners to consider Equity Release or Lifetime Mortgages as available options, however, they were not considered favourable as they could affect inheritance considerations. It was also advised that the Council did not provide formal advice on Equity Release and Lifetime Mortgages but advised individuals to seek independent financial advice.

The group also discussed options available for a person at a pensionable age, owning a larger property, to consider downsizing and were advised that there were limited alternative housing options available. BDC had considered working in partnership with BDHT to make best use of the housing stock available, however, a credible housing option would need to be offered to homeowners before this option were considered. Members suggested that downsizing could be explored through the Local Plan to assist with addressing the lack of social housing within the District. It was explained that housing stock was in limited supply, due to a large population of residents within the District being at a pensionable age. Members were advised that due to the lack of alternative housing options, downsizing a person's property was not a favourable option for consideration from a Council's perspective.

After all discussions in respect of the evidence, Members made the following recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Board:

Recommendation – Asset Rich and Potentially Revenue Poor
Officers provide Members with costings of bad debt owed to the Council as a result of non – payment of Council tax by residents.
Financial Implications for recommendations:
There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation.
Legal Implications for recommendations:
There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.
Resource Implications:
Officer time in preparing the report.

Recommendation – Asset Rich and Potentially Revenue Poor
Officers monitor the number of residents claiming Council Tax Support in housing Bands F, G and H (with metrics built into the performance reporting framework).
Financial Implications for recommendations:

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There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation.
Legal Implications for recommendations:
There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.
Resource Implications:
Officer time in preparing the report.

Chapter 3

Section (S) 106 Contributions

During the initial task group meeting held on 31st October 2024 the group discussed S106 contributions to support infrastructure for housing and communities within the District.¹ Members expressed frustrations that amenities were not being replaced and it was suggested that a meeting to discuss what powers the Council had at a District Council level to ensure S106 contributions were made, would be helpful. It was also suggested that a list of S106 contribution funds which had been formally agreed and if monies were spent, should be explored at a future task group meeting. The Chairman agreed that the Assistant Director of Planning and Leisure Services should be invited to a meeting.

At a task group meeting held on 27th February 2025 the Assistant Director of Planning, Leisure and Culture Services informed Members that S106 monies were not usually received for affordable housing but was generally provided by the developer or the procured registered social landlord. However, there was a S106 legal agreement between the Council and property developers stating that affordable housing would be provided on a housing development and houses built were registered through a social landlord.

Information previously circulated to Members was also discussed which detailed S106 contributions received from 2019 to 2024 through various planning applications providing infrastructure such as Waste and Recycling, Healthcare, Open Space, Play Areas and Sports Facilities.

Several areas of interest were discussed as a result of the evidence provided by the Assistant Director of Planning, Leisure and Culture Services. These were as follows:

- **If developers had not fulfilled their obligation of affordable housing on a development, were the monies provided elsewhere?**
It was predominately housing developers who dealt with the affordable housing element, however, if affordable housing could not be provided on site for a particular reason, the Council would ensure the monies were used off site for the specified purpose.
- **Was there an audit trail of monies spent for S106 contributions?**
The S106 legal agreement between the Council and the property developer demonstrated how the monies were spent.
- **Was it common that housing developers did not always fulfil their obligations to build the required affordable housing?**
The group were advised that if there was a legal agreement via the Viability Assessment, then the necessary housing must be provided.
- **What was the Council's current situation regarding Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) agreements?**
The Council had carried out a levy assessment in the past which revealed that S106 contributions resulted in better mitigation and fund raising than CIL contributions and that there no CIL regime within the District.

- **How significant was it for affordable housing to be provided through S106 contributions?**

Information on the Council's website provided a yearly report of how many affordable houses were built through S106 contributions. However, forty percent must be achieved, as agreed by the planning policy, unless there was scrutinised evidence to the contrary.

- **Had Local Authorities discussed with Government the need for S106 monies to be provided in advance of works carried out?**

Legally the contributions were required to be based on necessity and proportionality. Monies were not necessarily required to be paid until a housing development was completed, depending on the nature of the S106 monies requested.

- **If a development was unfinished and the five-year timeframe for S106 contributions had expired, what happened to the monies owed to the Council?**

If the developer had signed an agreement to build affordable housing with proposals also agreed at Planning Committee the Council monitored all sites and ensured monies were collected and spent in a timely manner.

- **What happened to unspent S106 contribution monies? Was there residual money which could be attributed to BDHT for affordable housing?**

Details were included in the S106 Agreement legal document; therefore, funds could not be spent in other areas outside of that agreement. It was explained that no S106 monies had been lost in the past few years due to the five-year time expiration and that all monies were index linked.

- **What happened to monies if a project had varied, an extension was required and the five-year period had expired?**

The developer could choose to vary the planning application but may be reluctant to pay the fee necessary. However, if there was only a short period before expiration, developers may agree to an extension. Members were advised that participation during Planning Committee meetings was encouraged to discuss the proposed planning harm and necessary mitigation for proposals.

- **Were S106 contributions restricted geographically?**

If the issue was specified at Planning Committee that there was a planning harm identified in terms of a cause and effect, then mitigation via S106 was an option.

- **As part of the adopted Local Plan, forty percent of houses built within housing developments on greenfield sites should be affordable housing. Did S106 contributions form part of the agreement?**

The golden thread requirement for affordable housing was fifty percent (including green and brown belt areas).

- **Could Members be informed of S106 contributions being considered or spent in their area?**

S106 monies received were distributed and reported through the Finance system but would be explored further by Officers.

Following the discussions the Chairman expressed the view that Members should be provided with the details of how and where S106 contribution monies were

being spent in their ward areas. The Chairman also considered the importance of Member participation to ensure housing developments were acceptable i.e. street lighting, which was an important element of a housing development for residents. The Assistant Director of Planning, Leisure and Culture Services agreed that Member participation at the early stages, during the pre-application discussions and at Planning Committees to communicate the specifics required for a site were advisable.

After all discussions in respect of the evidence, Members made the following recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Board:

Recommendation – Section (S) 106 Contributions
Where a planning application has a material impact on the local community and there is a consideration for S106 contribution allocation, the Ward Member (and neighbouring Ward Member(s)) should be informed and consulted with prior to consideration of the application. A follow up consultation with the Ward Member (and neighbouring Ward Member(s)) should also take place.
Financial Implications for recommendations:
There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation.
Legal Implications for recommendations:
There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.
Resource Implications:
Officer time in consulting with relevant ward Members.

¹ Planning obligations are legal obligations entered into to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal. This can be via a planning agreement entered into under [section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#) by a person with an interest in the land and the local planning authority; or via a unilateral undertaking entered into by a person with an interest in the land without the local planning authority. Planning obligations run with the land, are legally binding and enforceable. A unilateral undertaking cannot bind the local planning authority because they are not party to it. Planning obligations are also commonly referred to as ‘section 106’, ‘s106’, as well as ‘developer contributions’ when considered alongside highways contributions and the Community Infrastructure Levy. **Source:** [Planning obligations - GOV.UK](#)

Chapter 4

Fleeceholding (Land in new developments not adopted by the Council)

During the initial meeting held on 31st October 2024, Members discussed fleeceholding. Specific locations across the District where residents had raised issues in respect of fleeceholding were discussed and that an investigation would be welcomed by residents in these locations. Members reported that there had been issues raised by residents concerned with repairs and maintenance and management fees. The group also noted that costs were not fixed, with some residents being charged differing amounts. Members requested a presentation for fleeceholding to better understand this area as part of the investigation and to include Council policies regarding the issue. The presentation was also to include if the policy had any impact for residents and if not, how the Council could better promote the specific policies in place. (Following the request, details of the Open Spaces Policy, including the standards and cost calculator were included as part of the agenda for Members' consideration at a meeting held on 16th December 2024).

The Assistant Director of Planning and Leisure Services provided further information on the matter to the group. It was explained that the formal planning process was to determine planning applications received to approve, refuse or approve with conditions. As part of the submissions process for larger planning applications, it was the requirement to agree the amount of open space, with policies agreed to the acceptable standards of the open space. However, it was not within the planning process to determine the management of open space when granting planning permissions or in seeking if unadopted land was available.

Members were informed that a formal document had been produced which included, subject to the appropriate fees, that the Council could be given the rights to adopt certain land. The group were also advised that the Council had also formally written to Central Government, urging that the situation be reviewed at a national level.

Several residents had submitted their concerns, frustrations and issues to the Council and that several meetings had been arranged along with relevant Council Members who had sympathised with the issues residents experienced.

At a subsequent meeting Members queried the definition of fleeceholding and it was explained that the terminology was used in the popular press over the years. Residents with a freehold property could have the option of private management arrangements, however, leasehold properties would be required to discuss issues through a formal Tribunal process. It was noted that a formal Committee paper had been considered previously and outlined the Council's approach to the adoption of land.

Discussions with the East Works Residents

A task group meeting was held on 16th December 2024 with representatives from the East Works Residents Group to discuss their shared experiences and issues with unadopted land on the Cofton Estate housing development. Several areas were highlighted including fees, management of the land and the requirement for residents to pay both Council Tax and management fees.

Following all discussions in respect of the evidence, Members made the following recommendation to the Overview and Scrutiny Board:

Recommendation - Fleeceholding
As part of the Local Government Reorganisation process, the Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Notes that the Government is currently analysing the feedback from the consultation which sought views on proposals to implement aspects of the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024 and further reform related to the charges leaseholders, and homeowners on freehold estates, pay and services they receive, which closed on 26th September 2025.b. Suggests that a new unitary authority continues to lobby Government on the matter of fleeceholding within Bromsgrove District.
Financial Implications for recommendations:
There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation.
Legal Implications for recommendations:
There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.
Resource Implications:
Officer time in preparing the report.

Chapter 5

Outcomes

Recommendations

As detailed in this report, once all evidence had been received from witnesses the discussions in respect of the recommendations took place. It was noted that any recommendations should be evidence-based and in line with the usual process, would be shared with Council Officers, so they could provide further details on the suggested recommendations.

The considerations and discussions were carried out with particular focus on the four key aims and objectives as detailed in the task group's terms of reference. These were:

**Housing
Allocations
Policy,
Process and
Standards**

**'Asset rich'
but potentially
'revenue poor'**

**Section 106
monies to
support
infrastructure
rules**

Fleeceholding

Housing Allocations Policy

As detailed earlier in this report, Members discussed in detail the housing allocation policy. As a result of these discussions, a recommendation was suggested; *Officers approach Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) and jointly explore a startup crisis package for residents living in social housing including the potential of an increase in housing benefit payment to cover the costs of the crisis package. The findings to be completed in three months and reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.* Following consideration, the Strategic Housing Services Manager commented; *Officers can explore the suggestion of a crisis packaged jointly with BDHT. However, Housing Benefit will not cover the cost of furniture as this is not eligible as part of the Housing Benefit criteria.* A timeframe of three to six months was suggested for this investigation to be completed.

The Housing Benefit allocation process was also discussed to explore the increase of housing benefit support as a means of purchasing household essentials which were sometimes unaffordable items but necessary for new tenants in social housing. It was also suggested that the crisis package should only be allocated and applicable to residents living in social housing.

A Council webpage was discussed as a means of promoting donatable goods. However, it was pointed out that this was discussed in previous Housing Task Group discussions with officers advising that the Council would need to consider

the administrative costs to facilitate the webpage and possible concerns of liability claims to the Council.

The suggested recommendation to explore a crisis start up package with BDHT was agreed by the task group; *Planning Officers explore and report back on a new definition of affordable housing for the District, which is limited to rent and shared ownership.* Following deliberation, the Strategic Housing Services Manager commented; *the definition of affordable housing from a planning point of view is set nationally in the NPPF. Options can be explored via the production of the Local Plan but it is extremely unlikely that the outcome will be to locally define affordable housing as per the recommendation.*

Following the recommendation suggested and the points raised by Officers the group expressed the view that some housing developments considered as affordable were inconsistent. It was agreed that a clear definition of the term “affordable housing” should be provided in the planning policy, however, properties discounted for outright sale should be excluded from the affordable homes policy. It was also agreed that band structures should be considered when allocating affordable housing within the District.

Asset Rich, Revenue Poor

During the Housing Task Group meeting held in February, which discussed Asset Rich and Revenue Poor in detail, a recommendation was suggested by Members; *Officers monitor the number of residents claiming Council Tax Support in housing Bands F, G and H (with metrics built into the performance reporting framework).* After consideration of the recommendation the Customer Support Manager responded; *yes happy with the CTS measure.*

During discussions the following was also suggested by the Task Group; *Officers provide Members with costings of bad debt owed to the Council as a result of non – payment of Council tax by residents.* After deliberation of the suggested recommendation by Members the Revenue Services Manager commented; *the Finance Department would need more structure around what is expected in terms of the bad debt reporting. We have limited capacity to produce the reports – so the time implication was a factor.*

After considering the proposed recommendations and Officer comments the task group discussed the following:

- Council Tax Band thresholds should be monitored closely when Council Tax support was calculated, particularly in the higher band thresholds, with the view that households could utilise the release of equity in their homes or move to a lower band valued property to meet the additional Council Tax liability. However, the Chairman expressed the view that the Council should not be viewed as encouraging householders to sell their homes and be left vulnerable with possibly running the risk of increasing the need for individuals to be on the housing waiting list.

- The Council Tax support scheme seemed unbalanced, with some householders living in cramped housing conditions compared to others living in larger properties but could equally claim Council Tax Support.
- The view received from Officers stating that the relative reductions in the total costs of Council Tax would be less than 0.5 percent of the total costs of Council Tax within the higher tax bracket was discussed further by the group, with some Members expressing the view that cost savings would be minimal. However, other Members urged that there could be a possible increase in Council Tax support claims, due to the Government's aim to increase social and affordable housing.
- Additional support could be concentrated to households claiming Council Tax support in the lower band bracket. It was also suggested that the Council Tax banding could be evaluated on a band-by-band basis and the task group should seek further analysis from Officers of how banding for F, G and H were individually calculated (to exclude any residents with ill health implications).
- Alternative support to Council Tax benefit could be explored for Bands F, G, and H.
- Larger families should be a consideration, who could only claim limited Council Tax support (for up to two children), with the additional penalty charges of bedroom tax.
- The Council should explore bad debt owed to the Council for non-payment of Council Tax.

Section (S) 106 Contributions

S106 contributions discussions were considered further by the group and Members reiterated, as discussed in previous task groups, that Members should be informed of S106 contribution considerations early in the Planning Application process. It was also agreed that Members should be consulted on S106 contribution considerations in their ward areas and neighbouring areas to enable Members to advise Planning Officer of the potential use of the monies to be utilised effectively. It was therefore agreed that the discussed considerations were to be included as a recommendation in the Housing Task Group Final report.

The recommendation suggested was; *where a planning application has a material impact on the local community and there is a consideration for S106 contribution allocation, the Ward Member (and neighbouring Ward Member(s)) should be informed and consulted with prior to consideration of the application. A follow up consultation with the Ward Member (and neighbouring Ward Member(s)) should also take place.* Following consideration of the suggested recommendation the Assistant Director of Planning, Leisure and Culture Services responded; *The weekly list of all applications received into Planning Services is already sent to all members and is on the website. Officers can provide an additional list so that members can identify major residential applications anticipated to trigger section 106 agreements. S106 are uploaded to public records. Once a decision is issued on a planning application, a legal agreement is uploaded to public access and visible for all parties.*

Fleeceholding

Members revisited discussions held during the Housing Task Group meeting on 16th December 2024 with the East Works Residents, where fleeceholding issues were considered. It was agreed that the Council had a duty of care to Council Taxpayers within the District who experienced fleeceholding issues and should be actively approaching individuals to assist and provide further advice.

The suggested recommendation was; therefore, the Council should actively pursue and seek to take over contracts that are causing fleeceholding issues within the District. In response the Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services commented; the cost to the Council of setting up a separate trading company would require consideration of upfront costs (such as legal costs to ensure compliance with company registration and other costs such governance, IT systems etc). It would also require an initial cash injection to cover initial staffing and operational costs during the period before it was able to trade successfully. There are several key financial risks that would need to be considered carefully before undertaking this, such as whether the company would generate enough revenue to cover costs, whether the council would underwrite any losses, procurement issues and market uncertainty. A full business case should be undertaken to consider the options available and review the risks and costs that could impact on the Council. The MTFP for 2025/26 currently does not reflect any budget for the costs identified above. A further consideration is the long lead in time which would be required and whether such a process could be completed before the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

The Legal Department's Solicitor commented, in conclusion that; *Members can take some assurance from the fact that legislation is due to be introduced to bring in regulation of estate management fees/ companies, and it is hoped that this will assist affected homeowners. In the meantime the advice of Officers regarding the legal implications of competing for maintenance contracts is that to do so would not be possible without complex work to set up a company for which there is no budget or business case. Further, even if set up there is no guarantee that such a company would be able to take over the maintenance contracts as this would be down to market forces.*

Further Considerations

Following officer's responses to the recommendations, it was agreed by Members to hold a further meeting which was held on 17th September 2025 to consider the recommendations.

Members were particularly keen to look at the allocation of affordable homes on new developments in the future. It was suggested that a preferable allocation would include opportunity to access to social rented housing and shared ownership properties on these new developments rather than properties for outright purchase. Officers advised that this approach could potentially limit housing developments in the District and that the Council's current approach of offering more options of affordable housing provided greater flexibility.

However, following the discussions Members suggested that the recommendation be amended from:

Recommendation 2 - Planning Officers explore and report back on a new definition of affordable housing for the District, which is limited to rent and shared ownership and amended to:

Recommendation 2 - Bromsgrove District Council's preference is for the mix of affordable housing contained within a new development be made up of social rent and shared ownership properties only and exclude outright sales of affordable homes.

During this meeting Officers also presented detailed advice in respect of fleecing. Members were advised that there were legal complications in respect of competing for maintenance contracts on private land by the Council and it was a complex legal process to establish an arm's length company in order to do this. It would also require a significant amount of time and budget to investigate this option as a possibility due to the requirement of a business case and legal investigations. Local Government Reorganisation was currently underway, and the timelines were extremely tight. Therefore, to carry out these detailed investigations at this time would put significant pressures on officer time and Council finances.

Members were reassured that legislation was to be introduced by Government to bring in regulation of estate management fees and companies in the future.

Therefore, following the discussions, Members suggested a new recommendation from:

Recommendation 6 - The Council should actively pursue and seek to take over contracts that are causing fleecing issues within the District and amended to:

Recommendation 6 - As part of the Local Government Reorganisation process, the Council:

- a) Includes the proposal that a process be investigated whereby a future unitary authority pursues and seeks to manage contracts in new developments that are causing fleecing issues within the District; and**
- b) Suggests that a new unitary authority continues to lobby Government on the matter of fleecing within Bromsgrove District.**

The remainder of the recommendations were unchanged.

Areas to Note

During the investigation there were several areas to note. These were as follows:

Recommendation Suggestion

During discussions in various housing task group meetings concerning the housing allocation policy and procedures process, a recommendation was suggested by Councillor Dale, *Local connections to the area are to be a key consideration for the eligibility and qualification process for housing allocation.*

However, during the course of task group discussions, it was explained that local connections to the partnership area (person had lived in the area for at least five years) were a key consideration for the eligibility and qualification process for housing allocations.

Appendix 1

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY TOPIC PROPOSAL

This form can be used for either a Task Group or a Short Sharp Review topic proposal.

Completed forms should be returned to scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk – Democratic Services, Bromsgrove District Council.

Name of Proposer: Councillor H. Rone-Clarke	
Tel No:	Email: h.rone-clarke@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Date: 11.07.24	

Title of Proposed Topic (including specific subject areas to be investigate)	Housing Task Group
Background to the Proposal (Including reasons why this topic should be investigated and evidence to support the need for the investigation.)	<p>The potential to review housing was discussed by Members at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 11th July 2024. This subject was suggested as a topic that was possibly suitable for further investigation when Members discussed key lines of enquiry for a scheduled review of affordable housing, due to be considered at the meeting of the Board scheduled to take place on 23rd July 2024.</p> <p>There are particular areas relating to housing that would be of interest to Members. Some of these subjects may just involve sharing information whilst other aspects may benefit from a more detailed review.</p> <p>For this review, it is suggested that the following should be noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Fleeceholding' – in terms of the definitions of fleeceholding and the local context in respect of this national matter. • The report in respect of affordable housing due to be considered at the

	<p>Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting on 23rd July 2024 will provide useful background information for Members of a Task Group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisiting the findings of the Fuel Poverty Task Group, for information, to avoid duplicating the work of that earlier investigation. • Infrastructure considerations, in respect of Section 106 agreements. This should not duplicate the work of the Strategic Planning Steering Group and it is noted that Members cannot scrutinise specific planning applications. • The difficulties experienced by residents who are asset rich but are struggling financially and the extent to which this is a particular issue in Bromsgrove District.
<p>Links to national, regional and local priorities</p> <p>(including the Council's strategic purposes)</p>	<p>Housing has been agreed as a Council priority in the Council Plan 2024 – 2027.</p>
<p>Possible Key Objectives</p> <p>(these should be SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Based on background information provided to the group, to identify the extent to which “fleeceholding” is a challenge in Bromsgrove District and whether there are any actions to address or influence this locally. 2. To scrutinise information about the rules with respect to providing Section 106 monies to support infrastructure for housing and communities in the District. 3. To investigate the extent to which there is an issue locally for residents who are considered to be “asset rich” but potentially “revenue poor” and the support available locally to residents in this position. This should involve the group exploring whether there are any gaps in provision that could be addressed by the Council or partner organisations.

Anticipated Timescale for completion of the work.				
Would it be appropriate to hold a Short Sharp Inquiry or a Task Group? (please tick relevant box)	Task Group	X	Short Sharp Inquiry	

OFFICE USE ONLY - TO BE COMPLETED WHEN THE TOPIC PROPOSAL IS ACCEPTED

Evidence	
Key documents, data, reports	
Possible Site Visits	
Is a general press release required asking for general comments/suggestions from the public?	
Is a period of public consultation required?	
Witnesses	
Officers	
Councillors (including Portfolio Holder)	
Any External Witnesses	

Appendix 2

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD

Housing Task Group

Terms of Reference as at September 2024

Looking at Housing Provision within Bromsgrove District Council's Operations Task Group has been set up by the Overview and Scrutiny Board to carry out detailed scrutiny/pre-scrutiny of the above topic.

1. The Task Group be made up of 5 Members with a quorum of 3. The Task Group will meet throughout the next six months at intervals to be decided by the Group.
2. Meetings will be restricted to 1.5 hours in order for the Group to remain focused (with the option to extend should it be deemed necessary).
3. The Task Group agreed that if Members missed more than 2 meetings then they would no longer be on the Task Group.
4. The Task Group will be a standing item on the agenda of the Overview and Scrutiny Board and either a verbal or written report will be provided at each of the Board's meetings.
5. The Task Group is able to make recommendations to the Overview & Scrutiny Board who will then put forward its recommendations for consideration by Cabinet or directly to Cabinet/Council.
6. The Task group is expected to complete the investigation in six months and provide its findings and recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Board in a written report at that time.
7. Should the Task Group not complete its work within that timescale, then an interim report will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Board with a request for further time to complete the investigations.

Aims and Objectives of the Task Group

The Task Group will undertake a scrutiny investigation into Housing Provision within Bromsgrove District Council's Operations and will cover the following areas:

- 1 Based on background information provided to the group, to identify the extent to which "fleeceholding" is a challenge in Bromsgrove District and whether there are any actions to address or influence this locally.
- 2 To scrutinise information about the rules with respect to providing Section 106 monies to support infrastructure for housing and communities in the District (*this should not duplicate the work of the Strategic Planning Steering Group and it is noted that Members cannot scrutinise specific planning applications*).
- 3 To investigate the extent to which there is an issue locally for residents who are considered to be "asset rich" but potentially "revenue poor" and the support available locally to residents in this position. This should involve the group exploring whether there are any gaps in provision that could be addressed by the Council or partner organisations (*Members to revisit the findings of the Fuel Poverty Task Group, for information, to avoid duplicating the work of that earlier investigation*).
- 4 To scrutinise the allocations policy and housing register regarding eligibility, qualification and allocations and explore standards of housing let under the policy.

Appendix 3

WITNESSES

The Task Group considered evidence from the following sources before making its recommendations:

Internal Witnesses:

Ruth Bamford, Assistant Director for Planning, Leisure and Culture Services

Debra Goodall, Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services

Matthew Bough, Strategic Housing Services Manager

Nicola Cummings, Principal Solicitor (Governance)

External Witnesses:

John Whitwam, Director of Housing and Communities, Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT)

Mike Pattison, East Works Residents

David Dixon, East Works Residents

Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services

Bromsgrove District Council, Parkside Offices, Market Street
Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B61 8DA
Email: democratic@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

**Cabinet
2026**

7th January

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy, WhatsApp Policy and Cyber Meeting Notes

Relevant Portfolio Holders	Councillor Karen May
Portfolio Holders Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Debra Goodall
Report Author: Mark Hanwell	Job Title: ICT Transformation Manager Contact: mark.hanwell@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 881248
Wards Affected	None
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Council Priority	Governance
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE to;

- 1) Adopt the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Acceptable Use Policy (Appendix 1) as a formal policy document.
- 2) Adopt the WhatsApp Policy (Appendix 2) as a formal policy document.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Artificial Intelligence (AI) Acceptable Use Policy has been developed to ensure the ethical, transparent, and responsible use of AI technologies across Bromsgrove District Council. The policy outlines the principles, governance, and operational expectations for AI use, including transparency in automated decision-making, data protection, and human oversight. It also addresses the use of third-party tools and the importance of training and education for staff.
- 2.2 The WhatsApp policy has been developed to provide staff guidance in use of the social media application and sets out when it is, and is not, acceptable to use WhatsApp, and how to reduce the risks of using it.

**Cabinet
2026**

7th January

-
- 2.3 Adoption of the policies will be accompanied by a communications campaign to both Members and Council staff to ensure successful adoption.
 - 2.4 Training on the effective and ethical use of AI technology to be made available for both Members and Council staff.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 The AI policy mandates that all AI tools used within the Council must be approved and listed in the Information Asset Register. Automated decision-making must comply with UK GDPR and include human oversight. Staff must not input confidential or personal data into public AI tools. Procurement processes must include clauses prohibiting unauthorized AI use. Training programs will be developed to ensure staff understand responsible AI use.
- 3.2 The WhatsApp Policy states WhatsApp is only permitted for the narrow band of uses as set out in the document, where it helps to meet a particular need to communicate. In general, WhatsApp should be considered a last resort for work purposes, to be used when there is no viable alternative across the systems the councils provide for work purposes. WhatsApp is a social media application, and is therefore also covered by our Social Media Policy.
- 3.3 ICT will keep a list of permitted AI tools to be used by the Authority and will ensure these are upgraded where possible (some will be based solely in the cloud and upgraded by the vendor).
- 3.4 WhatsApp will not be updated by ICT where it is used on peoples own devices and will require the staff member to keep their apps up to date.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The AI policy aligns with UK GDPR and ICO guidance, particularly in relation to automated decision-making and data protection.
- 5.2 The WhatsApp policy tries to mitigate the potential for data breaches that could involve the authority being fined by the Information Commissioners Office.

**Cabinet
2026**

7th January

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 There are no implications regarding Local Government Reorganisation or Devolution for either policy.

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 Both policies may help the council to deliver on all its priorities.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 The use of AI has raised questions about the amount of water used to cool cloud-based servers, however, the use of AI is now embedded into many computer systems and the AI policy sets out to ensure its correct usage and therefore limit any unnecessary use where possible.

- 6.4 There are no climate change implications for the use of WhatsApp.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.5 The policies attached apply to all staff.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 Risks include misuse of AI tools, data breaches, and reputational damage. Mitigations include policy enforcement, training, DPIAs, and oversight mechanisms. The policy provides a framework to manage these risks effectively.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 - AI Policy
Appendix 2 - WhatsApp Policy

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Staff Policy Document

AI Acceptable Use Policy

Version 1.2



Document Control

Organisation	Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils
Owner	ICT Transformation Manager
Protective Marking	Not protected
Review date	One year from last approval

Version History

Revision Date	Reviser	Version	Description of Revision
20250321	Mark Hanwell	0.1	Policy drafted
20250521	Julie Hemming-Smout	1.0	Policy finalised
20250724	Julie Hemming-Smout	1.1	Slight amendment after going to members (BDC)
20251210	Julie Hemming-Smout	1.2	Slight amendment after going to members (RBC)

Document Approvals

Sponsor Approval	Name	Date	Version Approved

Policy Governance

The following table identifies who within the Council is Accountable, Responsible, Informed or Consulted with regards to this policy. The following definitions apply:

- **Responsible** – the person(s) responsible for developing and implementing the policy.
- **Accountable** – the person who has ultimate accountability and authority for the policy.
- **Consulted** – the person(s) or groups to be consulted prior to final policy implementation or amendment.
- **Informed** – the person(s) or groups to be informed after policy implementation or amendment.

Policy Compliance

- 1.1 Non-compliance with this policy could have a significant effect on the efficient operation of the Council and may result in financial penalties, damage to our reputation, failure to meet our legal obligations, and an inability to provide necessary services to our customers. Contravening or failing to act within the spirit of the policy, might be seen as a breach of discipline and may lead to disciplinary procedure.
- 1.2 If you do not understand the implications of this policy, seek advice from your line manager who, if concerned, may contact ICT for further advice.

Acknowledgement

- 1.3 This policy has been developed based on guidance prepared by Socitm (UK):
 - www.socitm.net
- 1.4 Disclosure: Sections of this policy were generated with the assistance of an Artificial Intelligence (AI) based system to augment the effort. AI generated content has been reviewed by the author for accuracy and edited/revised where necessary. The author takes responsibility for this content.

Document Distribution

This document will be distributed via NetConsent to all Council employees, all temporary staff and all contractors. For those without access to NetConsent the Policy can be signed and returned to the Information Management Team.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Artificial Intelligence (AI) is several different technologies working together to enable machines to sense, comprehend, act, and learn with human-like levels of intelligence. AI is a transformative technology, which is already revolutionising many areas of our lives. Whether we know it or not, we all interact with AI every day - whether it's in our social media feeds and smart speakers, or on our online banking. AI, and the data that fuels our algorithms, help protect us from fraud and diagnose serious illness and this technology is evolving every day.
- 1.2 Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI), such as ChatGPT and CoPilot, augments human capabilities and possibilities. Based on public data-trained models, GenAI algorithms can generate new and creative information/data like the original content produced by humans. GenAI is a type of AI that, as this name suggests, generates new content. This contrasts with other types of AI, like discriminative AI, which focuses on classifying or identifying content that is based on pre-existing data.
- 1.3 AI-based technologies, can now be used to create pictures, write papers, write application code, draft articles and social media posts, and generate videos and audio recordings simply by writing a few sentences. However, while these capabilities help accelerate the creation of knowledge-based content, there are risks. For example, AI-generated results could deceive or mislead readers because of bias, data quality issues, malicious intent, lack of diverse thoughts, and a simple lack of ethics in disclosing the source of the content. Therefore, while the results may be excellent, the information generated must be weighted cautiously, as AI output is based on available data at the time and how it was trained. This is no different than information received from a human and should be treated as another source of information that should be weighed in with other viewpoints and sources.
- 1.4 AI has the potential to transform Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils (the Council) by improving efficiency, increasing citizen engagement, and providing data-driven insights.
- 1.5 This policy is designed to establish guidelines and best practices for the responsible and ethical use of AI within the Council. It ensures that our employees are using AI systems and platforms in a manner that aligns with the authority's values, adheres to legal and regulatory standards, the Council's existing information governance and security policies, and promotes the safety and well-being of our stakeholders.

2. Policy Statement

- 2.1 Use of AI must be in a manner that is responsible and ethical, avoiding any actions that could harm others, violate privacy, or facilitate malicious activities. Use of AI should promote fairness and avoids bias to prevent discrimination and promote equal treatment and be in such a way as to contribute positively to the Council's goals and values.
- 2.2 Users may use AI for work-related purposes subject to adherence to the following guidelines. This includes tasks such as generating text or content for reports, emails, presentations, images and communications.
- 2.3 Particular attention should be given to transparency, governance, vendor

practices, copyright, accuracy, confidentiality, disclosure and integration with other tools.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all employees, elected members, contractors, agents and representatives and temporary staff working for or on behalf of the Council, hereinafter referred to as “users”.
- 3.2 This policy applies to all users with access to AI, whether through Council-owned devices or BYOD (bring your own device) in pursuit of Council activities.
- 3.3 There are multiple AI systems available to purchase. However, ICT maintain a list of approved systems. To receive an up-to-date list, please contact ICT.

4. Transparency and Accountability

- 4.1 Users must be transparent about the use of AI in their work, ensuring that stakeholders are aware of the technology's involvement in decision-making processes.
- 4.2 **Information Asset Register (IAR):** The IAR is a list of personal and non-personal information assets held by the Council. Where systems, services and platforms utilise AI technology, this should be included in the IAR, for AI governance and compliance efforts.
- 4.3 **Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA)s:** The use of AI to process personal data will, in the vast majority of cases, likely result in a high risk to individuals' rights and freedoms, and will therefore trigger the legal requirement for the undertaking or updating of a DPIA. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. If the result of an assessment indicates residual high risk to individuals that cannot be sufficiently reduced, the Council must consult with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) prior to starting the processing.
- 4.4 **Privacy Notices:** A privacy notice should provide clear and transparent information to individuals about how personal data is collected, used or otherwise processed, and to what extent personal data are, or will be, processed. Where systems, services and platforms utilise AI technology, this should be disclosed in the relevant privacy notice.
- 4.5 **Publication Scheme:** The aim of a publication scheme is to foster openness in government and increase transparency and improves public access to the information the Council holds, this includes AI systems.
- 4.6 **Content Disclosure:** For content produced solely via AI, (for example CoPilot and ChatGPT), disclosures are critical for people to know and understand how to interpret, analyse, and respond to the information they consume. Employees are responsible for the outcomes generated by AI systems and should be prepared to explain and justify those outcomes.

For example, here is a high level disclosure that could be used and associated with written content so the person consuming the content knows how to best handle the information they are consuming:

Disclosure: The following content was generated entirely by an Artificial Intelligence (AI) based system based on specific requests asked of the AI system. AI generated content has been reviewed by the author for accuracy and edited/revised where necessary. The author takes responsibility for this content.

5. Automated Decision Making

- 5.1 AI can make decisions more quickly and accurately than humans by automating certain processes. The right to explanation and human review of algorithmic decision-making is an important part of the UK GDPR.
- 5.2 Legally you can only carry out this type of processing if you can rely on one of the three exceptions:
 - a. Explicit consent of the individual (Article 6(1)(a) of Regulation (EU) 2016/679 legislation - this must be a positive indication (and therefore there must be an alternative option)
 - b. Performance of a contract with the individual (Article 6(1)(b) of Regulation (EU) 2016/679 - e.g. credit checks or recruitment shortlisting)
 - c. Authorised by law i.e. there is a law enabling us to make automatic decisions about whatever it is we're trying to decide.

Or there is human involvement in the decision making i.e. the decision is reviewed by a human to sense check (please consult with Information Management if processing special category data).

- 5.3 Automated decision-making should not be used without prior information being provided to the user (e.g. through use of a Privacy Notice). A detailed disclosure is therefore required that alerts consumers to the fact that they are being subjected to an automated decision, explains the basic logic the algorithm employs and lists the personal data that flow into the automated decision-making process and explains any right to appeal. Examples of where this disclosure should be provided include:
 - a. Online forms
 - b. Online portals
 - c. Applications

6. Procurement

- 6.1 A question(s) of AI must be included in the Invitation to Tender (ITT)
- 6.2 A clause will be included in the contract to state we prohibit suppliers from using artificial intelligence technologies without express consent.

7. Third-party Services

- 7.1 When utilising third-party AI services, systems or platforms, users must ensure that the providers adhere to the same ethical standards and legal requirements as outlined in this policy.

Staff should not participate in meetings where AI tools are in use, for example ReadAI and Otter. Those who are attending external meetings hosted by someone else, should ask whether AI tools are in use. If they are, you should ask the host to have the tool switched off for the duration of the meeting. If they decline, remove yourself from the meeting, or if this is not an option, ensure you do not discuss anything confidential and that you do not mind sharing with unknown companies/agencies in any country.

Some of these tools are not UK GDPR compliant and have not been approved by the Cyber Security Board or the System & Data Group.

The only approved tool currently, is the transcription and recording option provided by MS Teams.

- 7.2 Any use of AI technology in pursuit of Council activities should be done with full acknowledgement of the policies, practices, terms and conditions of developers and vendors.
- 7.3 Vendors will be required to inform the council of all use of AI technology in their systems and services.

8. Confidentiality and Data Protection

- 8.1 Employees must adhere to the Council's Information security policies and Systems & Data Guidelines when using AI systems. They must ensure that any personal or sensitive data used by AI systems is anonymised and stored securely.
- 8.2 Confidential and personal information must not be entered into an AI tool such as ChatGPT, where information may enter the public domain. Users must follow all applicable data privacy laws and organisational policies when using AI. If a user has any doubt about the confidentiality of information, they should not use AI.
- 8.3 Users should consult the [ICO's Guidance on AI and Data Protection](#) and use [the ICO's AI and DP Risk Toolkit](#) which provides further practical support to organisations to reduce the risks to individuals' rights and freedoms caused by AI systems.

9. Copyright

- 9.1 Users must adhere to copyright laws when utilising AI. It is prohibited to use AI to generate content that infringes upon the intellectual property rights of others, including but not limited to copyrighted material. If a user is unsure whether a particular use of AI constitutes copyright infringement, they should contact the legal advisor or the Information Management Team before using AI.

10. Ethical Use

- 10.1 AI must be used ethically and in compliance with all applicable legislation, regulations and organisational policies. Users must not use AI to generate content that is discriminatory, offensive, or inappropriate. If there are any doubts about the appropriateness of using AI in a particular situation, users should consult with their supervisor or ICT.

11. Equality, Bias and Fairness

- 11.1 Users must actively work to identify and mitigate biases in AI systems. They should ensure that these systems are fair, inclusive, and do not discriminate against any individuals or groups.
- 11.2 An Equality Impact Assessment ([Equality and Diversity - Equality Impact Assessments - All Documents](#)) must be completed to ensure, and be able to show, that the use of AI systems will not result in discrimination that:
- causes an individual subject to the decision to be treated worse than someone else because of one of these protected characteristics; or
 - results in a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one.

12. Human-AI Collaboration

- 12.1 Users should recognise the limitations of AI and always use their judgment when interpreting and acting on AI-generated recommendations. AI systems should be used as a tool to augment human decision-making, not replace it.
- 12.2 A human review of decisions made by AI systems can be an important step to validate the decision proposed by the AI system.

13. Integration with other tools

- 13.1 API (Application Programming interfaces) and plugin tools enable access to AI and extended functionality for other services to improve automation and productivity outputs. Users should follow OpenAI's [Safety Best Practices](#) guidelines:
- Adversarial testing
 - Human in the loop (HITL)
 - Prompt engineering
 - "Know your customer" (KYC)

- Constrain user input and limit output tokens
- Allow users to report issues
- Understand and communicate limitations
- End-user IDs.

13.2 API and plugin tools must be rigorously tested for:

- Moderation – to ensure the model properly handles hate, discriminatory, threatening, etc. inputs appropriately.
- Factual responses – provide a ground of truth for the API and review responses accordingly.

14. Ensuring data quality for AI and checking outputs

14.1 AI is dependent on good quality data and accurate algorithms. It is important to implement auditing of the datasets used by AI, both for accuracy and consistency, by reviewing and spot-checking of the results generated.

15. Accuracy


15.1 All information generated by AI must be reviewed and edited for accuracy prior to use. Users of AI are responsible for reviewing output and are accountable for ensuring the accuracy of AI generated output before use/release. If a user has any doubt about the accuracy of information generated by AI, they should not use AI.

16. Training and Education

16.1 Users who use AI systems should receive appropriate training on how to use them responsibly and effectively. They should also stay informed about advances in AI technology and potential ethical concerns.


17. Guidelines for content produced by AI


17.1 Content solely produced via AI, such as ChatGPT and CoPilot, must be identified and disclosed as containing AI generated information.



Do use

- Do use AI for presentations
- Do use AI for analysing public data
- Do use a footnote advertising AI has been used to generate information for this document
- Do use AI responsibly and ethically






Don't use


- Don't use AI for confidential information
- Don't use AI to store public records
- Don't use AI for private customer records

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Be

- Be careful when analysing data that the AI is only using the data you have provided / specified
- Be careful the use of AI does not breach copyright or intellectual property rights
- Be aware of AI risks around confidentiality, accuracy, bias and security



18. Risks – link risks and DPIA together above

18.1 Legal compliance

Data entered into AI may enter the public domain. This can release non-public information and breach regulatory requirements, customer or vendor contracts, or compromise intellectual property. Any release of private/personal information without the authorisation of the information's owner could result in a breach of the UK GDPR and the amended version of the Data Protection Act 2018. Use of AI to compile content may also infringe on regulations for the protection of intellectual property rights including the Copyright Act 1956. Users should ensure that their use of any AI complies with all applicable laws and regulations and with Council policies.

18.2 Bias and discrimination

AI may make use of and generate biased, discriminatory or offensive content. Users should use AI responsibly and ethically, in compliance with Council policies and applicable laws and regulations.

18.3 Security

AI may store sensitive data and information, which could be at risk of being breached or hacked. The Council must assess technical protections and security certification of AI before use. If a user has any doubt about the security of information input into AI, they should not use AI.

18.4 Data sovereignty and protection

While an AI platform may be hosted internationally, information created or collected in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK), under data sovereignty rules, is still under jurisdiction of UK laws. The reverse also applies. If information is sourced from AI hosted overseas for use in the UK, the laws of the source country regarding its use and access may apply. AI service providers should be assessed for data sovereignty practice by any organisation wishing to use their AI.

Appendix A: Example Staff Privacy Notice AI Statement

Purpose for processing

The Council's Human Resources (HR) and Organisational Development (OD) Service collects and processes personal data relating to our employees to manage our working relationship with you both directly and through our commissioned private sector processors.

This includes employment law and standards, administration of employee benefits, and all aspects of recruitment and employee management, staff engagement, feedback and compliance. We are committed to being transparent about how we collect and use your personal data and to meeting our obligations under data protection legislation.

These processing activities undertaken include:

- manage the HR and payroll functions so you receive correct remuneration and benefits and in order to administer your HR employment records
- monitoring and reporting of workforce statistics
- compliance with regulatory and inspection regimes (e.g. Local Government Ombudsman), including providing statistics
- prevention and detection of crime
- protection of the public funds we administer, including prevention and detection of fraud
- monitoring and reporting of access to and use of Council owned/rented buildings and car parks and ensure compliance to associated policies

We may also use automated decision-making or profiling techniques, including AI algorithms, to assess certain aspects of your employment, such as performance evaluations or training needs. These automated processes are designed to support fair and objective decision-making.

Your information rights

You are entitled to a copy, or a description, of the personal data we hold that relates to you, subject to lawful restrictions. Please go to our [Make a Data Protection Request](#) page to find out how to make a request or contact the Information Management Team information.management@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

You may also be entitled to have incorrect or incomplete data amended, object to the processing (in some circumstances), the right to obtain human intervention with regards to automated processing (including profiling), and the restriction or erasure of your personal data where the data is no longer necessary for the purposes of processing depending on the service and legal basis. Please contact Information Management to exercise these Information Rights.

Please see our overarching [Privacy Notice](#) for further contact details and if you have a complaint about your information rights.

Appendix B: Example transparency information about use of AI

This information is to be included on the website and referenced in the Publication Scheme.

As part of our commitment to transparency and openness, we provide information about our systems that utilise artificial intelligence (AI). This information aims to promote understanding and awareness of the AI systems we employ, their purpose, and their potential impact.

Purpose of AI Systems

Our AI systems are designed to enhance and automate various processes within our organisation. These systems utilise advanced algorithms and machine learning techniques to analyse data, make predictions, or assist in decision-making.

Categories of AI Systems

1. Intelligent Process Automation: These AI systems automate repetitive and rule-based tasks, improving efficiency and reducing manual effort across various departments.
2. Data Analytics and Insights: These AI systems analyse large volumes of data to derive meaningful insights, identify patterns, and support data-driven decision-making.
3. Natural Language Processing (NLP): These AI systems process and understand human language, enabling intelligent text analysis, sentiment analysis, and language translation.
4. Image and Video Analysis: These AI systems employ computer vision techniques to analyse images and videos, facilitating object recognition, facial recognition, and content classification.
5. Recommendation Systems: These AI systems utilise machine learning algorithms to provide personalised recommendations to users based on their preferences and behaviour.

Impact of use of AI systems

1. General Description: A high-level overview of the purpose, functionalities, and intended use of each AI system category mentioned above.
2. Data Sources and Processing: Information about the data sources used by AI systems, data processing methodologies, and data security measures implemented to protect sensitive information.
3. Ethical Considerations: Explanation of the ethical considerations taken into account during the development and deployment of AI systems, including fairness, bias mitigation, and privacy protection.
4. Human Oversight and Intervention: Details on how human oversight is integrated into the AI systems, including validation, monitoring, and intervention protocols to ensure system performance and address potential risks.



5. Impact Assessment: Reports or summaries assessing the impact of AI systems on various aspects such as productivity, efficiency, quality, and potential societal implications.

Disclaimer

The information provided is subject to change and is accurate to the best of our knowledge at the time of publication. We reserve the right to update or modify the information as necessary.



Appendix C: Example Privacy Notice text for systems using automated decision-making

This information is required to be inserted at the start of any process that includes automated decision-making affecting individuals that is not always reviewed or checked by a human:

- a. ensure that this text is added at the front of any system using automated decision making (this could be done by a box that expands when the user hovers over it - privacy info on demand) **and**
- b. add in a consent box at the end of this text for the individual to tick to say they agree **and**
- c. understand what the alternative option is for individuals who don't want to rely on an automated decision - this could be to make sure that the processing performed without consent is subject to a human review before finalising the decision.

The appeal right for someone to review the fully automated decision will still be needed regardless of the option to go down the fully-automated route.

Automated Decision-Making

Certain aspects of the decision-making process are automated, based on algorithms and artificial intelligence technologies. The following information is intended to provide transparency about the process and ensure you have an understanding of how the automated decision is made.

1. Purpose: The automated decision-making process is employed to [*state the purpose of the decision-making process, e.g., assess applications, determine eligibility for a service, etc.*].
 2. Logic: The algorithm utilises [*describe the basic logic or factors considered by the algorithm, such as historical data, statistical analysis, or specific criteria*] to evaluate the information provided and generate a decision.
 3. Personal Data: The following personal data are used in the automated decision-making process: [*list the types of personal data that flow into the decision-making process, such as name, age, address, employment history, credit score, etc.*].
 4. Data Sources: The personal data used in the decision-making process may be obtained from [*describe the sources of data, such as user-provided information, public records, credit bureaus, etc.*].
 5. Accuracy and Reliability: We take utmost care to ensure that the data used in the automated decision-making process is accurate and reliable. We regularly update our data sources and employ data quality measures to minimise errors.
- ☐ I understand part of this process will include automated decision making and consent to this.
- ☐ I understand that I have the right to appeal or object to the decision, and the right to obtain human intervention in the decision.

Right to Appeal

Details of the Right to Appeal should be provided on a webpage providing information on our use of AI/automated decision-making as it will be the same for all systems. A hyperlink should be provided to the text from the declaration statement above.



1. Review Mechanism: We understand the importance of fair and transparent decision-making. If you disagree with the outcome of the automated decision, you have the right to request a review or reconsideration of the decision.
2. Appeal Process: To exercise your right to appeal, please [*provide instructions on how consumers can initiate the appeal process, including any contact details, forms, or procedures*].
3. Human Intervention: Our appeal process involves human intervention to reassess the decision and take into account any additional information or circumstances that may have an impact on the outcome.

Please note that the right to appeal is subject to [*state any limitations or conditions, such as specific timeframes for initiating an appeal, eligibility criteria, or any applicable legal requirements*].

We are committed to ensuring fairness, transparency, and accountability in our automated decision-making processes. If you have any questions, concerns, or require further information about the automated decision-making process or your right to appeal, please contact [*provide contact details for further assistance*]."

Please customise this statement to fit your specific context, taking into account any legal requirements and ensuring that the information provided accurately the automated decision-making processes and appeals mechanism.

Appendix D: Example ITT / SQ Question regarding use of AI

Example questions for use in the Invitation to Tender (ITT) / Selection Questionnaire (SQ) regarding the use of AI in products and services.

1. **AI Utilisation:** Does your application or solution incorporate any artificial intelligence (AI) technologies or features? Please provide details regarding the specific AI functionalities, algorithms, or techniques used within your application.
2. **AI Capabilities and Benefits:** How does the integration of AI within your application enhance its capabilities and deliver value to users? Please describe the specific benefits or advantages that AI brings to your solution, such as improved accuracy, automation, predictive capabilities, personalised experiences, or any other relevant aspects.
3. **Data Requirements:** Specify the data inputs required for your AI-powered functionalities to operate effectively. Describe the nature of the data sources, including data formats, volume, and any dependencies or prerequisites for successful AI processing.
4. **Training and Model Updates:** Explain how the AI models or algorithms within your application are trained and updated over time. Provide information on the frequency and process of model updates or retraining to ensure optimal performance and accuracy. Clarify whether user data is utilised for ongoing model improvement and outline any privacy considerations related to this aspect.
5. **Explainability and Transparency:** Detail the steps taken to ensure transparency and explainability in the AI-driven decisions or outcomes generated by your application. Describe how users can understand the rationale behind AI recommendations, predictions, or actions, and any mechanisms in place to provide relevant explanations or context.
6. **Ethical Considerations:** Outline the ethical considerations and safeguards implemented within your application's AI functionalities. Discuss how your solution addresses potential biases, fairness, privacy, or any other ethical challenges associated with AI utilisation. Provide details on any third-party audits, certifications, or guidelines adhered to in ensuring ethical AI practices.
7. **Integration and Compatibility:** Specify the compatibility of your application's AI features with existing systems, infrastructure, or platforms within our organisation. Describe any potential integration requirements, dependencies, or limitations that need to be considered for seamless adoption and usage.
8. **Support and Maintenance:** Describe the support and maintenance services provided for the AI components of your application. Outline the availability of technical assistance, updates, bug fixes, and any ongoing support to ensure the smooth operation and performance of the AI features.

Note: The above question serves as a starting point to ascertain whether the tendered applications incorporate AI technologies. It should be customised to suit the specific requirements and objectives of the tender, aligning with the desired information about the AI

utilisation within the applications being evaluated.



Appendix E: Example clause for use in contracts regarding use of AI in products and services

Example clause for use in the contracts:

"Prohibition of Supplier's Use of Artificial Intelligence Technologies without Express Consent

1. The supplier acknowledges and agrees that, without obtaining the express written consent of the Council, they shall not use any artificial intelligence (AI) technologies within the products, services, or solutions delivered under this contract.
2. "Artificial intelligence technologies" refer to any algorithms, machine learning models, or automated decision-making systems that utilise AI methodologies to analyse data, make predictions, automate tasks, or perform other AI-related functionalities.
3. The supplier shall not deploy or integrate AI technologies within their deliverables or services without the explicit written permission of the Council. This includes, but is not limited to, incorporating AI into software applications, utilising AI-powered analytics, or employing AI- driven automation.
4. If the supplier intends to use AI technologies within the scope of this contract, they must submit a formal request to the Council detailing the purpose, functionality, data requirements, and potential impact of the proposed AI utilisation. The Council reserves the right to review, evaluate, and grant or deny permission for such AI usage at its sole discretion.
5. Any unauthorised use of AI technologies by the supplier, including accidental or incidental use, without the express consent of the Council shall be deemed a material breach of this contract.
6. In the event that the supplier receives consent for the use of AI technologies, they shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and ethical considerations governing the use of AI, including but not limited to data protection, privacy, fairness, and transparency.
7. The Council reserves the right to monitor and audit the supplier's use of AI technologies to verify compliance with the terms and conditions outlined in this clause. The supplier shall cooperate fully with any such monitoring or auditing activities.
8. This clause shall survive the termination or expiration of the contract and shall remain in effect until otherwise agreed upon in writing by the Council.

By entering into this contract, the supplier acknowledges that they have read, understood, and agreed to comply with the terms and conditions outlined in this clause regarding the use of artificial intelligence technologies without express consent."

Please note that this example clause should be reviewed and customised to align with the

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specific requirements and legal framework of the Council. It is advisable to seek legal advice to ensure compliance with relevant laws and regulations related to the use of AI technologies.



Appendix F: Areas that training on the use of AI could cover

1. Understanding AI Fundamentals

Users should receive training on the fundamental concepts of artificial intelligence, including machine learning, algorithms, and automated decision-making. This training should provide an overview of how AI systems work, their limitations, and potential biases that may arise.

2. Responsible Use of AI

Training should emphasise the importance of using AI systems responsibly and ethically. Users should be educated on the potential impact of their actions when utilising AI technologies and be aware of the ethical considerations involved, such as fairness, transparency, privacy, and bias mitigation.

3. Effective Utilisation of AI Systems

Users should be trained on how to effectively utilise AI systems to achieve their intended goals. This training may include instruction on how to input data correctly, interpret AI-generated outputs, and leverage the capabilities of the AI system to improve decision-making or automate tasks.

4. Evaluating AI Results

Users should learn how to critically evaluate the outputs and results generated by AI systems. Training should cover methods to verify the accuracy and reliability of AI-generated information, validate predictions or recommendations, and identify potential errors or inconsistencies.

5. Staying Informed on AI Advances

Users should be encouraged to stay up-to-date with advancements in AI technology. This can be achieved through ongoing training, webinars, conferences, or access to educational resources that highlight the latest developments, best practices, and emerging ethical concerns related to AI.

6. Ethical Considerations and Social Impact

Training should address the broader societal impact of AI and the ethical considerations associated with its use. Users should be educated about the potential consequences of biased or discriminatory AI systems and the importance of promoting fairness, inclusivity, and accountability in AI applications.

7. Privacy and Data Protection

Users should receive training on the privacy and data protection aspects related to AI systems. This includes understanding the types of personal data being processed, data storage and security measures, and compliance with relevant privacy regulations. Users should also be aware of their responsibilities in handling sensitive data when interacting with AI systems.

8. Reporting and Feedback

Users should be educated on how to report issues or concerns related to AI systems. Training should provide clear channels for users to provide feedback, report biases, or highlight potential ethical issues they encounter while using AI systems.

It is essential to provide periodic refresher training sessions and resources to ensure that users stay well-informed about responsible and effective AI system usage. The training

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program should be tailored to the specific AI systems in use and the needs of the user community.



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Appendix 2

WhatsApp Policy Draft v0.2

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WhatsApp draft v0.2

Introduction and aims

This guidance aims to:

1. Facilitate efficient and modern day-to-day communication
2. Manage risks to the security of information
3. Aid compliance with the principles of record-keeping, accountability and transparency

Adopting evolving modern technology means we can support our operation to stay effective over time. As a result, the councils have approved WhatsApp for use under the specific circumstances as set out in this document.

This guidance sets out when it is and is not acceptable to use WhatsApp, and how to reduce the risks of using it. Staff must follow this guidance.

WhatsApp is the market leading messaging app people use to share information. Any channel that allows us to communicate effectively offers significant opportunities. The risks to mitigate are also significant, as inappropriate or in non-compliant use could lead to:

- **Legal risks** of penalties to staff and the councils
- **Reputational risks** for the councils
- **Data breaches.**

For these reasons, WhatsApp is only permitted for the narrow band of uses as set out in this document, where it helps to meet a particular need to communicate. In general, WhatsApp should be considered a last resort for work purposes, to be used when there is no viable alternative across the systems the councils provide for work purposes.

Please remember that WhatsApp is a social media application, and is therefore also covered by our Social Media Policy.

Any deviation from this guidance must be backed up by a risk assessment with a strong justification or rationale.

Summary

You can use WhatsApp at work for non sensitive information only and with care. See below for a guide to what is non sensitive information.

When talking to	About	Use WhatsApp
Internal colleagues	Sensitive information	Never
	Non-sensitive information	With care
Official partners	Sensitive information	Never
	Non-sensitive information	With care
Customers	Sensitive information	Never
	Non-sensitive information	Never
The public	Sensitive information	Never
	Non-sensitive information	Via corporate Communications

'With care' means with due care, attention, and forethought to the contents of your conversation, particularly the risk of committing a data breach by including sensitive information including through unexpected data in the background of shared photos.

When information is 'sensitive'

As council employees, our data at work is automatically classified under government security rules as OFFICIAL. This means you can never just share work data, and rules will always apply to it. However under OFFICIAL there are two levels of 'sensitivity': OFFICIAL SENSITIVE and OFFICIAL NON SENSITIVE.

Here are examples:

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE	OFFICIAL NON SENSITIVE
Anything with recordkeeping requirements including under the GDPR and FOI, i.e. most data and normal business of the council.	Logistical communications, office admin, service info (e.g times, locations), info for public release (e.g news, photos, PR), promotional

E.g. customer service interactions, personal data, aggregated data, internal council data, decisions, transactions.	info (e.g. adverts, offers), dataless information.
---	--

These lists are not exhaustive.

In general, you must treat all council information as sensitive unless and until you exercise your professional judgement that it is non sensitive. You should expect to be able to defend your judgement on this if challenged. If in doubt, always treat information as sensitive.

Ask yourself

1. Do I really have to use WhatsApp for this? Is there any way I can avoid it?
2. Is there already a corporate system I could use for this, like Email or Teams?
3. Is this data definitely non-sensitive?
4. Would I be happy for this to be made public?

Examples

Example A: team group chat

WhatsApp can be helpful to share information within a team, for example, to alert to a change in venue for a meeting, arrange cover if someone is running late / off work / at late notice, or alert a team to information shared on another channel that they need to be aware of. All this kind of information would be non sensitive, and therefore permitted with care.

Such a chat must not however be used for any personal or confidential information relating to staff, customers, or the business of the council – all of which would be sensitive information, and never permitted. That business would have to be conducted via council systems.

Example B: “I’ve sent you an email that needs action”

WhatsApp can be helpful to alert someone, for example a partner, councillor, or someone you know is out in the field, to urgent information you have sent via another channel.

For example, you might need to say “I’ve sent you an important work email that needs attention by midday”. That is non sensitive information. The sensitive contents of that email, however, would never be OK to share on WhatsApp.

Remember

- You are subject to work policies at work, including the Code of Conduct and Social Media Policy.
- If you become aware of misconduct at work, it is your responsibility to report it.
- Remember to remove leavers from your team chats, as they have become external customers!
- Stay cyber savvy and be vigilant to the ever-present threat of scams and phishing.
- WhatsApp is not secure: once sent, content is out in the public domain and cannot be removed and there are no deletion guarantees anywhere.

- Even with 'disappearing messages' turned on – i.e. when messages are removed from the sender and receiver's phones after a certain period – you have no way to know what has happened to the data once you press send.
- WhatsApp's operator, Meta, stores data on the sender and receiver: their location, phone numbers, contact lists. Meta cannot see or access the content of messages.

If you accidentally share sensitive data on WhatsApp

If you think you have accidentally shared sensitive information on WhatsApp, it could be a data breach.

1. Don't panic
2. Delete the suspect message(s)
3. Delete any related media from your phone
4. Delete any cloud backups of that media your phone may have performed
5. Inform your line manager that you have done the above and what happened, so our processes around a potential data breach can be followed.

Photos via WhatsApp

In general, you should not include anything of a confidential or sensitive nature in shared images on WhatsApp.

Images of people are sensitive by default. They contain personal data with significant implications, including under the GDPR. There is a simple process to achieve compliance for sharing images. That includes completing an online photo consent form at www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/photo or www.redditchbc.gov.uk/photo. Contact Communications for further advice on this.

Using your own device? Know the risk

If you are using your own phone for WhatsApp, for example if you don't have a compatible work phone, understand that any device you use for sensitive council data could become subject to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.

Calls and video calls via WhatsApp

In general, avoid using these. But in an emergency when there is no mobile signal but there is Wi-Fi, you can use this feature. Be aware of the usual risks of data breaches around audio and video calls (e.g. having sensitive data overheard by people who should not have access to it, or having sensitive data shared on screen or visible in the background),

Emergency Response: WhatsApp usage

The following has been provided by Applied Resilience and applies specifically to the use of an Emergency Response WhatsApp group.

Purpose

If action is required in a civil emergency, a message will be posted in the Emergency Response WhatsApp group. This allows the initial rapid notification of users in the group. Following the notification, the relevant group members will then be contacted by Applied Resilience via phone to ensure notification has been received. Ongoing general updates may be posted on the group in line with the guidance below.

Information that can be shared

The sharing of non-identifying, non-sensitive information can be shared within the group relating to the emergency. The primary purpose of the group is for initial notification and general updates.

Information that cannot be shared

Any identifying or sensitive information cannot be shared in this group. This includes personal details of affected residents. Adherence to GDPR policy must take place. If sensitive data needs to be shared, this should be done either via the phone or through email.

Data retention

Data in the group is retained for # years after which point it is deleted. The responsibility will be on the message sender to delete messages after the # year time limit is reached. If there are any changes to this timeframe you will be informed by one of the group administrators. If an incident is going to enquiry, then messages will be retained for the duration of the enquiry.

Group administration

The group administration will be undertaken by NAMED OFFICERS and Applied Resilience. If you no longer require access to the group for reasons such as, leaving the council, change in job role, or no longer forming a part of the response, please contact one of the above to be removed unless you have already been removed. Contact details will be updated upon the review of the Emergency Contacts Directory, however, if you have a change in details, please contact one of the administrators.

If you have any questions or queries, please contact the group administrators listed above.

Sources

1. West Mercia Police - internal WhatsApp policy
2. Cabinet Office [Cabinet Office guidance for the use of Non Corporate Communications Channels](#) (March 2023)
3. Cabinet Office [Guidance 1.1: Working at OFFICIAL](#) (Aug 2024)
4. West Mercia LRF - Rebecca Pritchett
5. Applied Resilience - Nick Moon and Robin Churchill

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

24TH NOVEMBER 2025, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors E. M. S. Gray (Chairman), S. T. Nock (Vice-Chairman), S. Ammar, R. Bailes, J. Clarke, S. R. Colella, D. J. A. Forsythe, D. Hopkins, B. Kumar, B. McEldowney and J. D. Stanley

Observers:

Officers: Mr J. Leach, D Goodall, Ms. N Cummings, Mrs. R. Green, Mrs B. Talbot, Mr P. Bailey and Mrs S. Woodfield

33/25

CYBER SECURITY UPDATE (INCLUDING WHATSAPP AND AI POLICY)

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented the report and provided a verbal update that members were not being asked to consider the minutes of the Cyber Security Board meeting because this was a private meeting.

The Board were introduced to two policies for recommendation to Cabinet as follows:

- The Artificial Intelligence (AI) Acceptable Use Policy set principles for ethical, transparent AI use, GDPR compliance and training requirements.
- The WhatsApp Policy restricted use to non-sensitive information. It also set out risk mitigation and compliance steps.

After consideration of the report, Members raised the following key points:

- The specific restrictions which applied to the use of AI within the Council were requested with Members being informed that the policies within the report provided the necessary guidelines.
- The Council's current usage of AI by individuals within the Council? In response it was advised that usage was minimal at the time reporting.
- If there were intentions to utilise AI for the evaluation of Local Plan consultations? Officers agreed that this would be investigated further with the relevant Officers to understand if AI would be incorporated to assist with data analysis.
- Members were encouraged that policies and reassurance steps were in place to ensure Officers and Members would be receiving the training necessary to ensure the correct use of AI.
- The most effective use of AI within the workplace? In response Members were advised that assistance with meetings and key

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Audit, Standards and Governance Committee
24th November 2025

areas in information management were reported as effective use of AI. The Chief Executive added that the Committee would be advised if any significant usage of AI within working practices was being considered.

- A typographical error for policy compliance within the presented document was highlighted and it was agreed would be rectified accordingly.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) That Cabinet adopts the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Acceptable Use Policy (Appendix 2) as a formal policy document and
- 2) That Cabinet adopts the WhatsApp Policy (Appendix 3) as a formal policy document.

The meeting closed at 8.08 p.m.

Chairman

Cabinet 2026

7th January

Biodiversity First Consideration Report

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Sue Baxter
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Judith Wills, Assistant Director of Community and Housing Service
Report Author	Job Title: Climate Change Manager Contact email: matthew.eccles@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 07816112073
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Council Priority	
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is asked to resolve **RESOLVE** that:-

- 1) the findings of the Biodiversity Duty First Consideration Report be noted; and
- 2) Members agree to publish the full Biodiversity Duty First Consideration Report to the Council's website.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Environment Act 2021 places a legal duty on public authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Bromsgrove District Council must publish a Biodiversity Duty Report covering the period up to 1st January 2026 and publish this by 26th March 2026. The Biodiversity Duty Report reviews current activity, identifies gaps, and sets out recommended actions across all service areas.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 The council is taking active steps to enhance biodiversity across the district. Recent initiatives include planting over a dozen fruit trees in Brook Road Park, Rubery, in partnership with local schools to create a mini orchard and boost pollinator habitats. The council is also implementing Biodiversity Net Gain requirements in planning, ensuring all qualifying developments deliver at least a 10% improvement in biodiversity value through on-site enhancements or off-site habitat

creation. Additionally, schemes such as leaving selected grass verges uncut throughout the growing season in areas like Alvechurch are providing vital habitats for pollinators, invertebrates, and small mammals, supporting ecological connectivity across the district.

- 3.2 Follow consultation with relevant departments the report identifies existing policies and actions across Planning, Leisure, Environmental Services, Housing, and Regeneration. It highlights opportunities for improvement, including:
- Continued engagement with the Worcestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
 - Monitoring and implementing Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) through planning.
 - Enhancing biodiversity on council-owned land.
 - Promoting citizen science and community engagement
- 3.3 A new biodiversity report is required every 5 years

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Some actions may require capital investment, e.g., new mowing equipment for grass verge management and individual departments will bring forward to Cabinet any capital/revenue requirements.
- 4.2 Officers will explore funding opportunities (e.g., Defra grants) if available and where required.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council is legally required to publish a Biodiversity Duty Report covering the period up to 1st January 2026 by 26th March 2026.
- 5.2 The biodiversity report has the following mandatory elements that it must cover.
- Policies, Objectives and Actions
 - How Other Strategies Were Considered
 - Future Actions
 - Biodiversity Net Gain Information

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

Cabinet 2026

7th January

- 6.1 No direct implications identified at this stage. Any new authority as a result of LGR will also have this legal duty to produce a biodiversity report.

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 Supports the Council's Environment and infrastructure priorities.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 Biodiversity actions contribute to climate resilience, carbon sequestration, and nature-based solutions.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.4 The report and associated documents will be made accessible. Equality impact assessments will be undertaken where relevant.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 Risks include non-compliance with statutory deadlines and insufficient monitoring of biodiversity outcomes. Mitigation includes establishing a central reporting mechanism and appointing a lead officer.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix A: Biodiversity First Duty Report

Cabinet
2026

7th January

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Sue Baxter	18/12/2025
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Judith Wills, Assistant Director Community and Housing Services	17/12/2025.
Financial Services	Deb Goodall, Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services	17/12/2025
Legal Services	Claire Felton, Assistant Director Legal Democratic and Procurement Services	17/12/2025
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	Matthew Eccles	28/11/2025

Bromsgrove District Council Biodiversity First Duty Report

Executive Summary

This Biodiversity First Duty Report complies with Section 40 and 40A of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended by the Environment Act 2021). It includes mandatory and optional sections recommended by DEFRA guidance, providing a comprehensive overview of Bromsgrove District Council's biodiversity actions, achievements, and future plans.

1. Policies, Objectives and Actions

The Council has adopted multiple strategies embedding biodiversity considerations:

- Bromsgrove District Plan 2011-2030 (Policies BDP5A and BDP21)
- Leisure and Culture Strategy (2022)
- Open Space Study (2022)
- Parks and Open Space Strategy (2022)
- Green Infrastructure Baseline Report (2013)
- BNG Supply and Demand Assessment (2024)

Key actions completed include:

- Green Flag Awards for Sanders Park and Lickey End Recreation Ground (2025)
- Citizen Science biodiversity monitoring via iNaturalist
- Grass verge biodiversity initiative (70% verges managed for pollinators)
- Tree planting and species diversification
- Pesticide reduction and alternative weed control methods

2. How Other Strategies Were Considered

The Council actively engaged with Worcestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and will integrate its priorities into planning and land management operations.

3. Future Actions

Planned actions for 2026-2031 include:

Action	Timescale	Responsibility
Continue LNRS engagement and integrate priorities	2025 onwards	Planning & Leisure
Implement Parks and Open Space biodiversity recommendations	2025/26 onwards	Parks Team
Submit additional Green Flag applications	2025/26 onwards	Parks Team
Develop BNG policies in emerging Local Plan	2025/26	Planning Policy
Prepare and publish Biodiversity Duty Report	By 26/03/26	Climate Change Manager
Include in the council's climate change strategy monitoring and reporting on Biodiversity	February 2026	Climate Change Manager

4. Biodiversity Net Gain Information

BNG became mandatory on 12 February 2024. Bromsgrove District Council has:

- Monitored planning applications subject to BNG requirements
- Commissioned BNG Supply and Demand Assessment (2024)
- Identified challenges in offsite BNG delivery due to limited suitable land
- Explored policy options for a local hierarchy for offsite BNG delivery

5. Information about the Authority

Bromsgrove District Council serves approximately 101,685 residents across 217 km² (83.8 sq mi). Functions include planning, leisure, housing, environmental services, and community engagement. The Council manages parks, open spaces, and influences biodiversity through planning decisions, operational practices, and partnerships.

Land holdings include major parks (Sanders Park, Lickey End Recreation Ground), recreation grounds, and highway verges. Planning decisions shape biodiversity outcomes through Local Plan policies and development management.

6. Top Achievements

- Green Flag Awards for Sanders Park and Lickey End Recreation Ground (2025)
- Citizen Science biodiversity monitoring via iNaturalist
- Grass verge biodiversity initiative (70% verges managed for pollinators)
- Tree planting and species diversification
- Pesticide reduction and alternative weed control methods

7. How Policies and Actions Have Helped

The council has introduced a number of policies and actions that have contributed to improved biodiversity in parks, enhanced pollinator habitats through verge management, and reduced pesticide use. Working in partnerships such as with LNRS engagement have enabled the council to strengthen its landscape recovery.

8. Awareness and Education

The council has led a number of community engagement initiatives including Citizen Science projects using iNaturalist, signage on biodiversity-friendly verge management, and partnership communications through Bromsgrove Partnership Better Environment Working Group.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring includes ecological surveys for verge management, Citizen Science data collection, and Green Flag Award criteria compliance. The council will include in its new climate change strategy biodiversity as one of its key actions and performance monitoring requirements.

10. Highlights and Challenges

Highlights: Green Flag Awards, successful community engagement, partnership working. Challenges: limited land for offsite BNG, resource constraints for monitoring, balancing biodiversity with development.

Case Study: Managing Tree Health and Biodiversity Resilience – Ash Dieback Strategy

Context

Ash Dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) is a serious fungal disease affecting native European ash trees, leading to crown dieback and eventual tree death. Nearly **1,000**

species are associated with ash, including **69 species highly dependent on ash** (fungi, bryophytes, invertebrates, lichens). The loss of ash trees poses a significant biodiversity risk and impacts ecosystem functions such as nutrient cycling and carbon storage.

Council Response

Bromsgrove District Council has operational tree management practices and biodiversity duties in place, consistent with national guidance and British Standards. Ash Dieback actions are integrated into wider tree safety and biodiversity policies. Key actions include:

- **Risk-Based Tree Inspections**
 - High-risk zones (busy parks, roads): inspected every 12–18 months.
 - Medium-risk zones: every 2 years.
 - Low-risk zones: every 4 years.
- **Habitat Retention**
 - Retain standing deadwood and habitat piles where safe to support fungi, bats, and invertebrates.
 - Identify and preserve disease-tolerant ash for future propagation.
- **Replanting and Recovery**
 - Target: up to **100,000 trees over 15 years** using diverse species for resilience.
 - Apply **canopy volume approach** and **2:1 replacement ratio** to restore ecological function.
- **Community Engagement**
 - Public awareness campaigns: signage in parks, local media, and nature walks.
 - Citizen involvement: tree census, seed collection, propagation, and planting events.
- **Standards and Best Practice**
 - All works comply with **BS3998:2010 Tree Work – Recommendations** and **BS5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction**.

Biodiversity Benefits

- Maintains habitat for specialist species during decline phase.
- Builds long-term resilience through species diversification.
- Enhances carbon sequestration and climate adaptation.

Future Commitments

- Annual ash dieback surveys and monitoring using Visual Tree Assessment (VTA).
- Integration of tree health data into GIS for strategic planning.
- Continued engagement with stakeholders (Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, Friends Groups, Parish Councils).

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Particulate Monitoring

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Kit Taylor
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Simon Wilkes, Director - Worcestershire Regulatory Services
Report Author	Chris Poole Job Title: Specialist Lead Officer (Air Quality), WRS Contact email: chris.poole@worcestershire.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01562 738069
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Council Priority	Infrastructure & Environment
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet **RECOMMEND** that:-

- 1.1 **additional monitoring of Particulate Matter (air pollution) be delivered as set out in Option E below (3.5); and**
- 1.2 **A further report be brought back to Cabinet once final costs have been identified.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) have been asked by Council to prepare an options paper for additional Particulate Matter Monitoring within Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) area.
- 2.2 **Particulate Matter (PM)**
- 2.3 Poor air quality is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK. The mortality burden of air pollution in England is estimated to be between 26,000 and 38,000 a year, but in addition many people suffer avoidable chronic ill health as a result of it.
- 2.4 Particulate Matter (PM) is considered to be the most important air pollutant in terms of health impacts. Long-term exposure to PM increases mortality and morbidity from cardiovascular and respiratory

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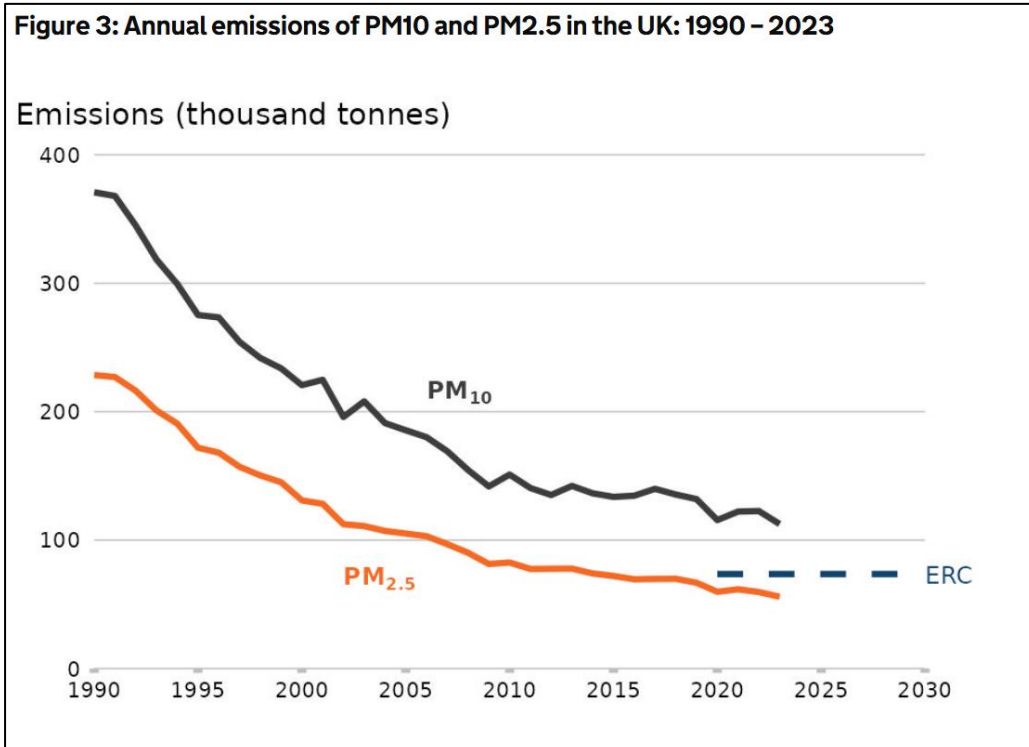
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diseases and can cause cancer. Effects are amplified in vulnerable groups including young children, the elderly, and those suffering from breathing problems like asthma. It is also causally linked to dementia and decline in cognitive function. There is growing evidence for associations with adverse birth outcomes and diabetes.

- 2.5 PM is not a single air pollutant; the composition of particles is in practice very complex, comprising variable amounts of organic and inorganic chemicals derived from direct emissions or from atmospheric processing.
- 2.6 PM is classified according to aerodynamic size in microns (one-thousandth of a millimetre):
 - coarse particles, PM₁₀ (particles that are between 10 and 2.5 microns (µm) in diameter)
 - fine particles, PM_{2.5} (particles that are less than 2.5 µm in diameter)
- 2.7 Both PM and the gases that can form it are capable of being transported over large distances, so impacts may occur far from the original source.
- 2.8 Around **15% of UK PM** comes from naturally occurring sources, up to a **third** from other European countries and around **half from UK human-made sources** (Clean Air Strategy, 2019)
- 2.9 Appendix 1 demonstrates the various primary sources of PM in the UK (NAEI, 2025). NB this does not include secondary sources as a result of chemical mixing in the atmosphere.

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[Emissions of air pollutants in the UK – Particulate matter \(PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}\) - GOV.UK](#)

- 2.10 Reduction in burning of coal and improved emission standards for transport and industrial processes were major drivers for significant decreases of PM in the UK between 1990 and the early 2000's. Since the late 2000s annual emissions of PM have continued to fall at a reduced rate.
- 2.11 Considerable decreases in emissions from some sources (e.g. road transport and energy industries) have been partly offset by increases in emissions from other activities, such as wood burning in domestic settings and the burning of biomass-based fuels in industry.
- 2.12 Emissions from road transport are expected to continue to decline with electrification of the vehicle fleet eliminating exhaust emissions which contribute 4% PM_{2.5} and 2% PM₁₀ of primary emissions (NAEI, 2025).
- 2.13 PM impacts from road sources are dominated by Non-Exhaust Emissions (Brake, Tyre and Road wear) 17% PM_{2.5} and 16% PM₁₀. Brake wear (40%PM_{2.5}) is the largest source of NEE with 40% becoming airborne, tyre wear (70%PM_{2.5}) is second largest but only 1-5% becomes airborne.

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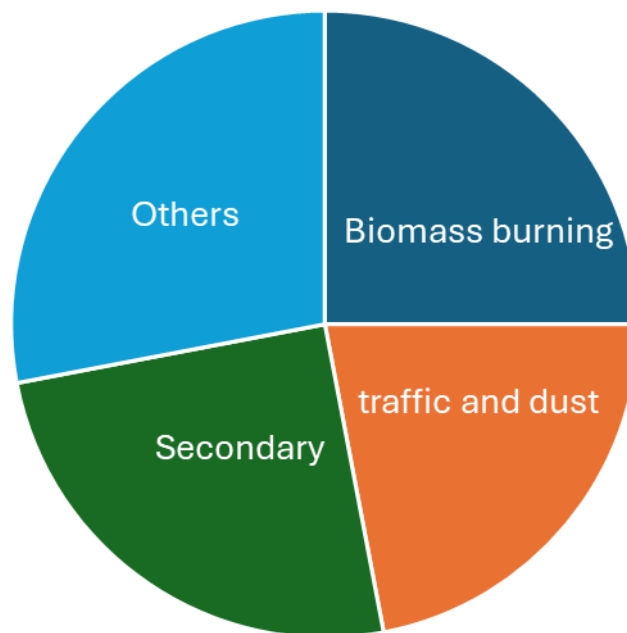
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- 2.14 Electrification will see brake emissions fall, albeit to a lesser degree than exhaust emissions, while tyre emission are expected to rise.
- 2.15 The upcoming Euro 7 regulations, starting in late 2026, will introduce limits on brake wear emissions, with tyre wear limits following in 2028.
- 2.16 **Local PM Monitoring and Data**
- 2.17 Following a successful bid to Defra's Air Quality Grant Scheme 2022-23, 26 low-cost Air Quality sensors were installed across Worcestershire for a period of 3 years between January and May 2024.
- 2.18 The sensors measure a range of pollutants including PM in real time and monitoring data is accessible via a public portal on [WRS website](#).
- 2.19 Sensor locations have been chosen to maximise data capture within locations proximal to vulnerable communities, opportunities to encourage behavioural change and/or from a range of sources of air pollution including transport, solid fuel burning, industry and agriculture.
- 2.20 Three of the twenty-six sensors were installed in the Bromsgrove District, located at:
- Hanover Street, Bromsgrove
 - Gunner Lane, Rubery
 - Station Road, Hagley
- 2.21 Appendix 2 provides a graphical representation of PM data recorded by a selection of the sensors in 2024. The sensor data demonstrate similar peak profiles recorded across the County at all locations irrespective of proximity to strategic road or other local sources. This indicates that regional sources of PM from beyond the county borders are significant.
- 2.22 Appendix 3 provides a summary of averages of the data measured in Bromsgrove and across the county in the context of national air quality objectives and WHO guidelines. Summary:
- UK Annual Mean PM₁₀ objective: 40µg/m³
 - Bromsgrove average: 10.86µg/m³
 - WHO Air Quality Guidelines PM₁₀ Annual Mean is 15 µg/m³
 - UK Annual Mean PM_{2.5} 2040 target: 10µg/m³
 - UK Annual Mean PM_{2.5} 2028 target: 12µg/m³
 - Bromsgrove average: 6.99µg/m³
 - WHO Air Quality Guidelines PM_{2.5} Annual Mean is 5 µg/m³

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- 2.23 No specific sources of PM or exceedances of national objectives have been identified in Worcestershire from 2024 sensor data requiring detailed assessment for Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) purposes at this time.
- 2.24 It should be noted that low-cost sensors, as well as other standard continuous monitors used in LAQM work, only measure total PM (mass) concentration and do not provide any chemical characterisation which is required to determine sources of PM.
- 2.25 **Source Apportionment of PM_{2.5} opportunity**
- 2.26 A summary of a source apportionment of a PM_{2.5} study undertaken by University of Birmingham (UoB) is provided in Appendix 4. This chemical characterisation includes primary and secondary sources of PM_{2.5} pollution.



Contribution of different air pollution sources to PM_{2.5} in Birmingham. Produced from data by Srivastava et al., 2015. This figure shows that biomass burning contributed to a quarter of the PM_{2.5} mass, becoming the most important primary emitted PM_{2.5}.

- 2.27 The study utilised the [Birmingham Air Quality Supersite \(BAQS\)](#), monitoring equipment at another site in Birmingham and sophisticated lab analysis and expertise at the University to undertake the study.
- 2.28 The study has highlighted the increase of domestic wood burning and biomass burning as sources of PM over the last few decades.

- 2.29 UoB have recently embarked upon monitoring in Worcestershire to ascertain air quality upwind of Birmingham. A fixed supersite replicating the BAQS facility located at a Malvern Hills location for a period of 12 to 24 months from November 2025. This will be supported by a mobile supersite, mounted either within a van or temporary fixed sites each season over one year. This will provide invaluable insight into PM air pollution in Worcestershire culminating in a published paper in 2 - 3 years' time.
- 2.30 WRS have approached UoB to assist in the design and implementation of a local source apportionment study of PM in Worcestershire. The study will provide a characterisation of the sources of PM, similar to the UoB study outlined above, utilising the specialist monitoring equipment and expertise available from UoB at this time.
- 2.31 This is an exciting and unique opportunity unavailable to any other local authorities outside of Worcestershire now or at any other time.
- 2.32 We may anticipate higher levels of biomass and domestic wood burning, secondary aerosols driven by proximal agricultural sources and biogenic aerosols due to the more rural nature of Worcestershire, and regions upwind of the county, and a lower proportion of traffic related emissions than observed in the Birmingham study.

3. Additional Monitoring Options

- 3.1 **Low-cost sensors – increased units [Option A].** This option would include purchase and installation of between 1 and 5 additional low-cost sensors in locations to be determined by BDC.
- Costs: c.£11k (1 unit) to £44.5k (5 units)
 - Timeline for delivery: 9 – 12 months following Council approval
 - Data: PM₁, PM_{2.5}, PM₁₀, NO, NO₂ Monitoring Total only
- 3.2 **Low-cost sensors – extension [Option B].** Current contract for 3 sensors expires in December 2026. This option would extend life of existing sensors for a further defined period, e.g. 1 – 3 years.
- Costs: c.£ 16.5k (3 units for 3 years, service and subscription) + 10% contingency for 2026 increase
 - Timeline for delivery: January 2027 to provide continuous monitoring
 - Data: PM₁, PM_{2.5}, PM₁₀, NO, NO₂ Monitoring Total only.

-
- 3.3 **Low-cost sensors – extension and relocation [Option C].** As option B. but with additional costs and implementation time for relocation of units to new locations.
- Costs: c.£ 16.5k (3 units for 3 years, service and subscription) + £3k - £4k (relocate 1 – 3 units) + 10% contingency for 2026 increase
 - Timeline for delivery: 6 – 9 months following expiry of existing contract or Council approval,
 - Data: PM₁, PM_{2.5}, PM₁₀, NO, NO₂ Monitoring Total only.
- 3.4 **Source apportionment study with UoB – mobile supersite [Option D].** This option would utilise state of the art air quality monitoring equipment at a fixed location for one month in summer and one in winter providing a comprehensive set of PM observations. Data analysis and written report provided by experienced academic researcher.
- Costs (rough): c.£ 115,000 + 10% contingency
 - Timeline for delivery: approximately 18 months
 - Data: Chemical analyses and source apportionment of PM
- 3.5 **Combination [Option E].** Option B (or C) and D combined.
- Costs: depending on final solutions
 - Timeline for delivery: 6 – 9 months following expiry of existing contract or Council approval for option b (or c) aspect, timeline for option d approximately 18 months.
 - Data: Continued automatic monitoring of a range of pollutants for a further period of 3 years and chemical analyses providing source apportionment assessment of PM
- 3.6 NB all timelines are indicative with consideration for required BDC procurement requirements: source suppliers and quotes, bid process, awarding contracts, and obtaining permissions from Worcestershire County Council for streetlight mounting, structural assessments of streetlights, civil engineering works and licenses as required, installation and power connections, availability of academic researcher and equipment, plus WRS officer time for project.
- 3.7 **Discussion of options**
- 3.8 Option A) provides least benefit in respect of PM data obtained of all the options and is the most expensive of the low-cost sensor options. From the data gathered in 2024, as seen in Appendix 2, and noted in section 2.22 above, similar profiles in PM data are recorded at all

locations across the County indicating regional sources of PM from beyond the county borders are significant. At this time, it is anticipated additional monitors will follow the same profile as recorded PM at existing locations and therefore provide minimal value in additional measured data. NB both options A and B will require implementation to increase the current network beyond 2026.

- 3.9 Option B) is the most beneficial of the low-cost sensor options from perspective of PM data obtained and the least expensive. This option provides data collection at existing locations for a longer period of time enabling continued assessment of concentrations in fixed locations and tracking of reductions or increases in ambient PM over time. Additionally, two of the current sensors are located near schools enabling opportunities to undertake behavioural change activities and the third is located in the one remaining Air Quality Management Area within the Bromsgrove district. Discounted service costs are anticipated through renewal and extension of the existing contract. Please note costings above could increase in 2026.
- 3.10 Option C) is considered to be the next best cost-effective sensor solution as it utilises existing units and it is anticipated will also benefit from discounted service costs through renewal of the contract. However, some additional costs would occur to relocate any of the units and there could be a period of no data collection between ending of current contract and actual installation at new location. Secondly, relocation of any units would end continued assessment capabilities as described in Option B) above. The benefits are the opportunity to obtain data at a new location, identified source and/or sensitive receptor.
- 3.11 Option D) provides a unique opportunity not available to any other local authority at any other time to gain insight into sources of PM in Worcestershire. This has greatest benefits in enhancing understanding of pollutant sources and utilising the data gathered and academic expertise available to inform future local, and potentially regional or national, strategies to address PM and other pollution. The mobile air quality supersite will be located at a single urban background location (such as a school) during two seasons (this could be extended to four seasons but doubles researcher staff costs). A constant power supply is required for the supersite and site needs to be secure. Locating at a school also provides an educational opportunity. Considering the EV range of the mobile supersite which is based at UoB campus, Bromsgrove district is an ideal location in the county for such a study.
- 3.12 Option E) provides ultimate benefit of combination of option B, maintaining current sensors and extending monitoring life for a further

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period of time, and option D) providing unique insight into PM profile in Worcestershire utilising state of the art air quality monitoring equipment and supported by academic expertise.

3.13 WRS recommendation is Option E comprising a combination of Option B and D.

3.14 Low-cost sensors – extension [Option B]. This option would extend life of existing sensors for a further defined period, e.g. 1 – 3 years beyond expiration of current service and maintenance contract due December 2026.

- Costs: c.£ 16.5k (3 units for 3 years, service and subscription) + 10% contingency for 2026 price increases
- Timeline for delivery: January 2027 to provide continuous monitoring
- Data: PM₁, PM_{2.5}, PM₁₀, NO, NO₂ Monitoring Total only.

3.15 Source apportionment study with UoB – mobile supersite [Option D]. This option would utilise state of the art air quality monitoring equipment at a fixed location for one month in summer and one in winter providing a comprehensive set of PM observations. Data analysis and written report provided by experienced academic researcher.

- Costs (rough): c.£ 115,000 + 10% contingency
- Timeline for delivery: approximately 18 months
- Data: Chemical analyses and source apportionment of PM

4. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

4.1 Please outline the reasons for the recommendations or resolutions listed in your report. Outlined above

4.2 Please discuss any operational implications with your Assistant Director. No further operational issues identified

4.3 Please refer to any system upgrades in this section, including for new IT software. No IT systems implications anticipated, will be provided by 3rd parties and incorporated into existing MyAir software (low cost sensors portal) depending on preferred option.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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- 5.1 The table below shows the estimated costs by each of the options outlined within this report:

	One-off
Option A	£11 – 44.4k
Option B	£16.5 - 18.1k
Option C	£16.5 - 23k
Option D	£115 - 126.5k
Option E	£131.5 – 149.5k

- 5.2 With any option, it is proposed that expenditure would in year 2026/27.
- 5.3 There is currently no assigned budget available for this project. Any agreement to the proposal would need to be considered alongside other competing bids for funding from reserves.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 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. Local Authorities in England are expected to report on nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), PM₁₀ and sulphur dioxide (SO₂) as standard within their Annual Status Reports. Under the Environment Act 2021, the UK government have set 2 legally-binding long-term targets to reduce concentrations of fine particulate matter, PM_{2.5}. Whilst the responsibility for meeting the PM_{2.5} targets sits with national government; local authorities have a role to play in delivering reductions in PM_{2.5}. and are also required to report on actions taken within their ASR. The proposal supports the council's obligations to assess local air quality within its boundaries in accordance with LAQM regulations.
- 6.2 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 is estimated to contribute to between 26,000 to 38,000 deaths per year in England (Chief Medical Officer's Report, 2022). Particulate Matter is considered to be the most important air pollutant in terms of health impacts. PM can have short-term health impacts over a single day when concentrations are elevated. Long-term exposure to PM increases mortality and morbidity from cardiovascular and respiratory diseases and can cause cancer. Effects are amplified in vulnerable groups including young children, the elderly, and those suffering from

breathing problems like asthma. It is also causally linked to dementia and decline in cognitive function. There is growing evidence for associations with adverse birth outcomes and diabetes. The World Health Organization (WHO) advises there is no safe exposure level to PM.

7. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Local Government Reorganisation

7.2 No impacts on LGR because it is anticipated the proposed schemes will be implemented before 1st May 2028.

7.3 Climate Change Implications

7.4 No impacts on climate change.

7.5 Equalities and Diversity Implications

7.6 No equality and diversification implications.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1 Risk from not taking proposed action is limiting understanding of PM_{2.5} within the district's boundaries. Risks from implementing proposed action is that additional monitoring may identify an exceedance of an objective that is a national issue and the local authority is limited in powers to resolve.

9. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1. PM sources (National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory)
Appendix 2. Low-cost sensor PM graphs 2024
Appendix 3. Low-cost sensor PM averages & National AQ Objectives
Appendix 4. WM-Air PM_{2.5} sources briefing note

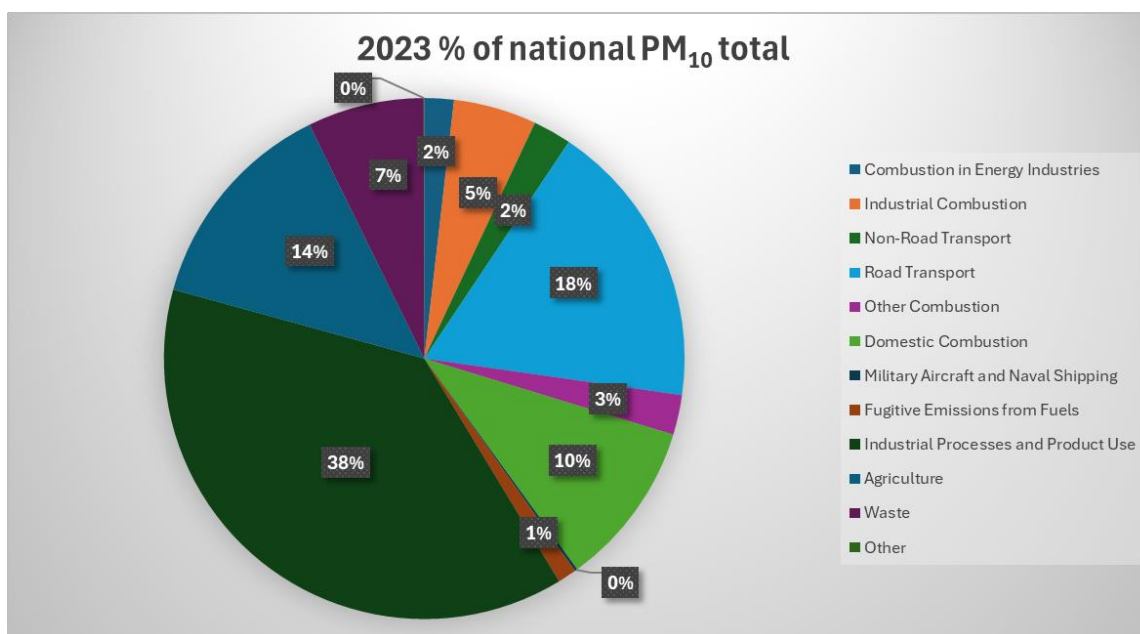
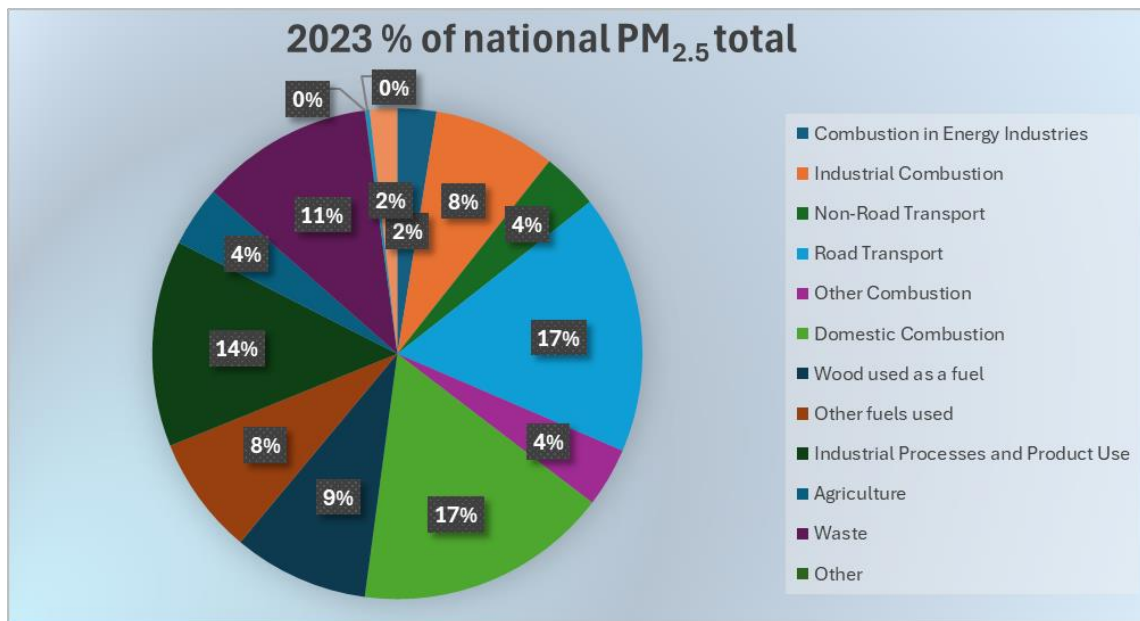
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9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Kit Taylor.	Advised by email 09.12.2025
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Simon Wilkes	10.12.2025
Financial Services	Debra Goodall	09.12.2025
Legal Services	Nicola Cummings	11.12.2025
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	N/A	N/A
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	N/A	N/A

Appendix 1: National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory – Primary UK Sources of PM, 2023



No single activity dominating:

- Domestic combustion = 20 % PM_{2.5} & 10 % PM₁₀
- Non-exhaust emissions (NEE) from road transport (road wear, brake wear, tyre wear) = 17% PM_{2.5} & 16% PM₁₀
- Exhaust emissions = 4% PM_{2.5} & 2% PM₁₀
- Industrial processes = 16% PM_{2.5} & 38% PM₁₀
- Industrial combustion (manufacturing and construction sites) = 10% PM_{2.5} & 5 % PM₁₀
- Emissions from construction activity (mostly roads and non-residential buildings) = 22% PM₁₀ & 4% PM_{2.5}
- Quarrying activity = 7% PM₁₀ and 1 % PM_{2.5}

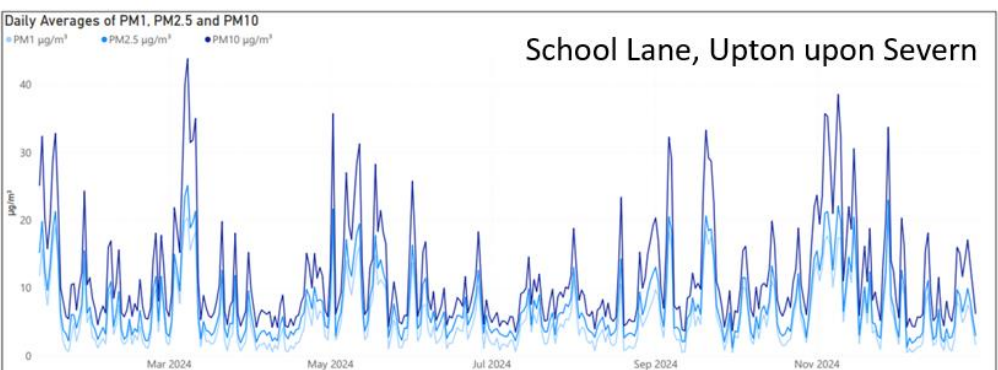
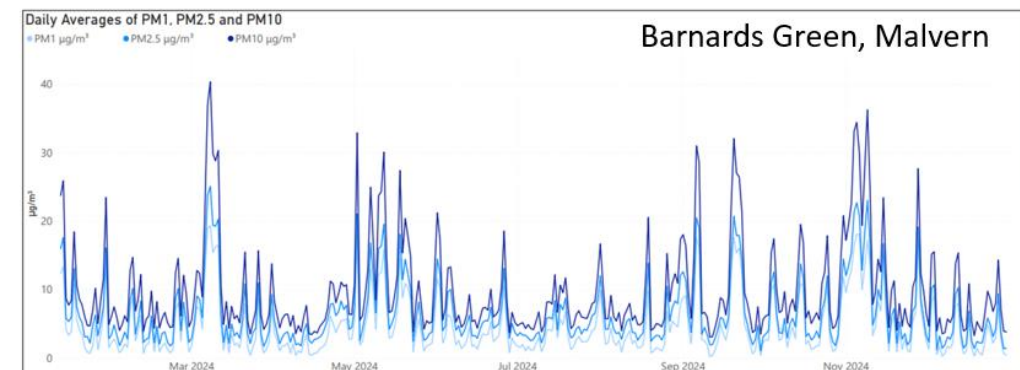
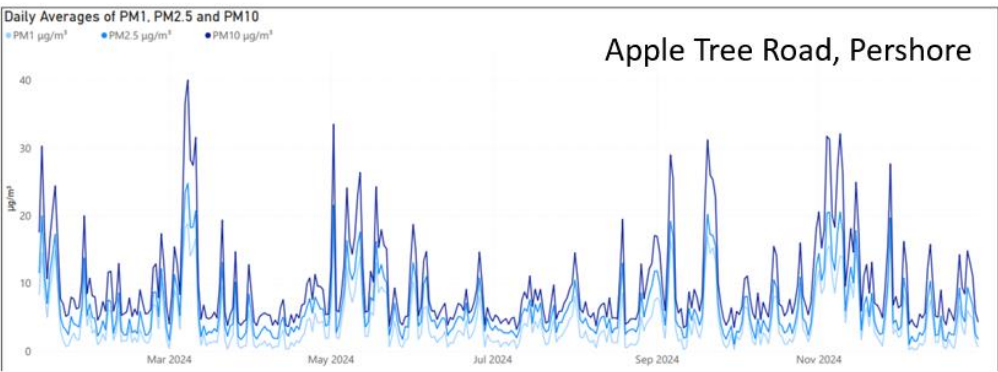
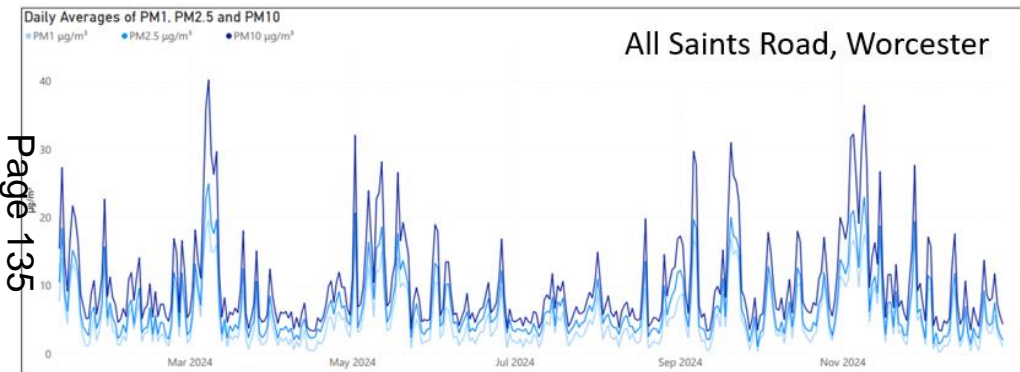
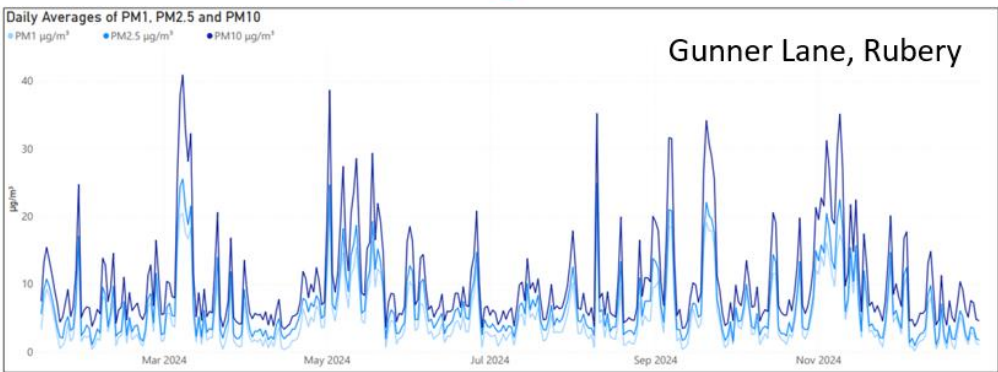
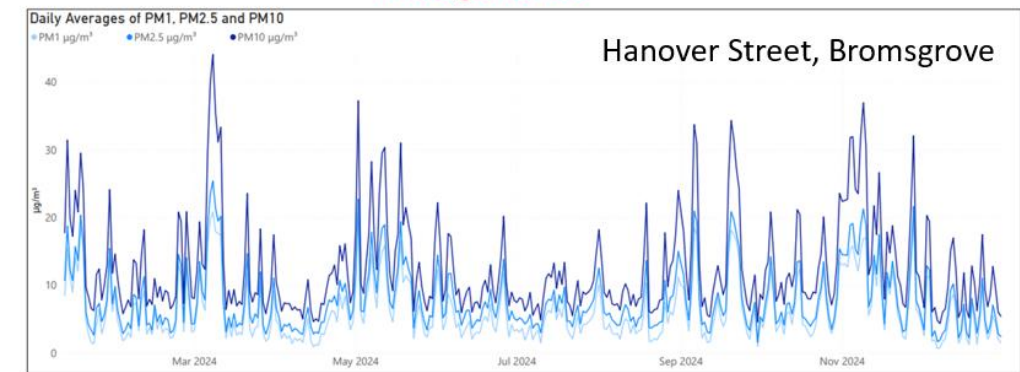
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Appendix 2: Low-Cost Sensor PM Graphical Data, Worcestershire 2024

Strategic Roads

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Non-Strategic Roads



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Appendix 3: PM Data, 2024 and National Air Quality Objectives

Low-cost sensors PM ₁₀ µg/m ³ 2024	
Worcestershire High	12.69
Worcestershire Low	8.53
Worcestershire Average	10.47
Bromsgrove High (Hanover Street)	12.69
Bromsgrove Low (Hagley)	9.41
Bromsgrove Average	10.86
Defra Background Maps (BDC) Average	12.31
Low-cost sensors PM _{2.5} µg/m ³ 2024	
Worcestershire High	7.96
Worcestershire Low	5.42
Worcestershire Average	6.90
Bromsgrove High (Hanover Street)	7.96
Bromsgrove Low (Hagley)	6.23
Bromsgrove Average	6.99
Defra Background Maps (BDC) Average	6.57

Also Worcester Road, Wychbold PM₁₀ analyser 15.2 µg/m³ in 2024

6.1 Local Air Quality Management Framework		
The Air Quality (England) Regulations 2000 (2002 as amended)		
These pollutant limits apply locally under the Air Quality Management framework.		
Pollutant	Objective	Averaging Period
Fine and coarse particulate matter - PM10	50 µg/m ³ not to be exceeded more than 35 times/ year	24-hour mean
Fine and coarse particulate matter - PM10	40 µg/m ³	Annual mean

WHO Air Quality Guidelines PM₁₀ Annual Mean is 15 µg/m³

6.2 Environment Act PM2.5		
The Environmental Targets (Fine Particulate Matter) (England) Regulations 2023		
Pollutant and metric	Target	Target year
PM2.5 annual mean concentration	Interim target: 12 µg/m ³	2028
PM2.5 annual mean concentration	Legally binding target: 10 µg/m ³	2040
PM2.5 population exposure	Interim target: 22% reduction in exposure compared to 2018	2028
PM2.5 population exposure	Legally binding target: 35% reduction in exposure compared to 2018	2040

WHO Air Quality guidelines PM_{2.5} Annual Mean is 5 µg/m³

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Sources of fine particles (PM_{2.5}) in the West Midlands

A report from the WM-Air project team

Contact: <https://wm-air.org.uk>; @WMAir_UoB; wmair@contacts.bham.ac.uk

Microscopic airborne particles (PM_{2.5}) are the air pollutants with the greatest impact upon health in the West Midlands, responsible for up to 2070 early deaths each year. PM_{2.5} concentrations are 2-3 times higher than World Health Organisation guideline levels. Identifying the sources of PM_{2.5} is key to designing effective policies for cleaner air. Through the application of state-of-the-science methods, the major sources of PM_{2.5} in the West Midlands have been identified as: biomass burning (25%), secondary inorganic aerosol (25%), primary traffic related emissions (22%), secondary biogenic aerosol (10%), industrial activity (9%) and sea salt (9%). Reducing emissions from biomass (wood) burning and road traffic exhaust, should be policy priorities for local, regional and national government to reduce the health impacts of air pollution.

Air quality in the West Midlands

Air quality is the largest environmental threat to human health in the UK¹ with the burden of long-term exposure to air pollution equivalent to 29,000 – 43,000 early deaths a year². In the West Midlands the ambient pollutants of greatest concern are nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}; particles with a diameter of 2.5 µm or below). Of these pollutants, PM_{2.5} has the greatest impact on health with up to 2,070 early deaths attributable to long term PM_{2.5} exposure³ each year in the region.

Following the Environment Act, 2021, an annual average PM_{2.5} target level for England of 10 µg m⁻³ was set, to be achieved by 2040, with an interim target of 12 µg m⁻³ to be achieved by January 2028. The World Health Organisation issues non-binding guideline levels of air pollutants for the protection of human health with a guideline level for PM_{2.5} of 5 µg m⁻³.

Unlike NO_x which is primarily emitted by road traffic, PM_{2.5} has a broad range of both primary (particles emitted directly into the atmosphere) and secondary

(particles formed in the atmosphere) sources of natural and human origin. PM_{2.5} also has a long atmospheric lifetime, meaning that local concentrations are impacted both by local emission sources and a regional background. The impact of this background on PM_{2.5} concentrations is dependent on the prevailing weather conditions and pollution sources in the surrounding region. Understanding the contribution of both primary and secondary sources to total PM_{2.5} concentrations is necessary when designing policy interventions to control concentrations of PM_{2.5}.

Sources of PM_{2.5} in the West Midlands

In order to identify the factors contributing to PM_{2.5} concentrations in the West Midlands region, filter samples were collected from January 2021 to February 2022 at two urban background sites: Birmingham Air Quality Supersite (BAQS) and the AURN sampling site at Birmingham Ladywood (LW)⁴.

Filters were analysed for Organic Carbon (OC), Elemental Carbon (EC), Ions, Metals and Organic compounds. These species were then used to

¹ Public Health England: Health matters: air pollution. Guidance. London: PHE, 2018.

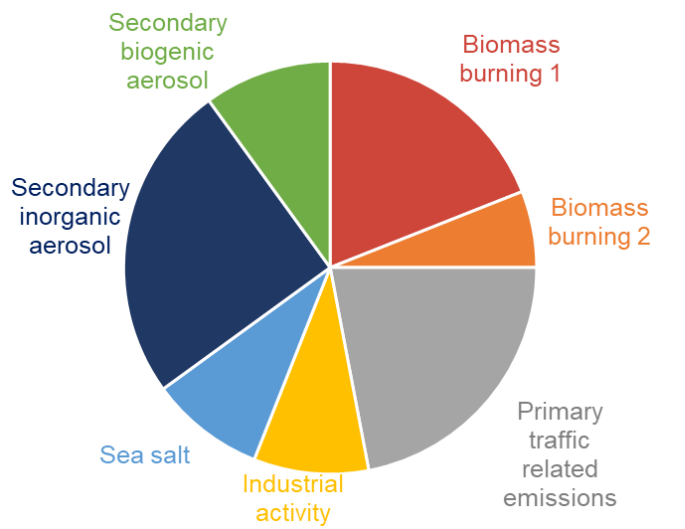
² Mitsakou C., et al.: Updated mortality burden estimates attributable to air pollution. Chemical Hazards and Poisons Report, 28, 2022

³ Hall J., et al.: Regional impact assessment of air quality improvement: The air quality lifecourse assessment tool (AQ-LAT) for the West Midlands combined authority (WMCA) area. Environ Pollut., 356, 2024

⁴ Srivastava D., et al.: Comparative receptor modelling for the sources of fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) at urban sites in the UK. Atmos. Environ., 343, 2025

identify the factors contributing to total PM_{2.5} concentrations using positive matrix factorisation, an extensively used receptor modelling approach. For a full method description see Srivastava et al., 2025⁴.

Seven factors were identified: two Biomass burning factors, primary traffic related emissions, industrial activity, sea salt, secondary inorganic aerosol and secondary biogenic aerosol.



Biomass burning

The first biomass burning factor, Biomass burning 1, accounted for 19% of PM_{2.5}. This factor followed the profile expected of wood burning for heating with concentrations higher in the winter than in the summer. The contribution of this source to total PM_{2.5} mass was higher at BAQS than at LW which is consistent with the older houses present in Selly Oak and Edgbaston being more likely to have chimneys and fireplaces than the more modern estates around the Ladywood site.

A second biomass burning factor, Biomass burning 2, did not show a seasonal pattern and the contribution of this factor to total PM_{2.5} mass was similar at both sites. This suggests that this source could be linked to other activities such as garden waste burning, barbecues or commercial biomass combustion. This factor accounted for 6% of annual average PM_{2.5} mass across the two sites.

Primary traffic related emissions

Primary traffic related emissions are made up of tyre and brake abrasion as well as resuspension of road dust and particles emitted from the exhaust (many of the gases emitted from vehicle exhausts react in the atmosphere to form secondary inorganic aerosol). This factor made up 22% of PM_{2.5} mass annually.

Industrial activity

Industrial activity, characterised by sulfate (SO₄²⁻) and metal ions made up 9% of total PM_{2.5} annual average mass concentration.

Sea salt

Sea salt is emitted from the sea as salt spray and from road de-icing salt and is observed throughout the UK. This factor accounted for 9% of total PM_{2.5} mass which is consistent with other sites in the central UK.

Secondary inorganic aerosol

Secondary inorganic aerosol is dominated by nitrate (NO₃⁻), sulphate (SO₄²⁻) and ammonium (NH₄⁺) ions. These species are formed in the atmosphere from the emission of gaseous pollutants from traffic, industrial and agricultural sources. This factor accounted for 25% of PM_{2.5} mass across the 2 sites.

Secondary biogenic aerosol

Biogenic volatile organic compounds are emitted from plants; many of these are familiar, for example, pine scent and the smell of cut grass. In polluted environments these compounds can be oxidised to form particulates. This factor contributed to 10% of PM_{2.5} mass concentration at both sites.

Table 1. Sources of PM_{2.5} averaged across the Birmingham Air Quality Supersite (BAQS) and the Ladywood AURN sampling (LW) in 2021/2022.

Identified Sources	Contribution to PM mass (%)	Concentration (µg m ⁻³)
Biomass burning 1	19	1.5
Biomass burning 2	6	0.5
Primary traffic related emissions	22	1.7
Industrial activity	9	0.7
Sea salt	9	0.7
Secondary inorganic aerosol	25	1.9
Secondary biogenic aerosol	10	0.7

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Homelessness Prevention, Rough Sleeper and Domestic Abuse Grants Funding 2027/28 and 2028/29

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

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that:-

- 1) The initiatives in 4.5 be approved to receive the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant allocations of funding for 2027/28 and 2028/29, subject to satisfactory performance; with any uplift and additional initiatives being implemented prior to that period to be the subject of a further report to the Cabinet; and**
- 2) Delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing, to use any unallocated grant from this source of grant funding during the year or make further adjustments and uplifts as necessary to ensure full utilisation of the grants, including any mid year Homelessness Prevention Grant top up, for 2027/28 and 2028/29 in support of existing or new schemes.**

BACKGROUND

- 2.1 From 2026/27, the government has consolidated existing Rough Sleeper and Domestic Abuse grants into a single Homelessness Prevention Grant. This new grant encompasses funding for prevention and relief activities and is being awarded for three-years.

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- 2.2 Officers propose that the grants awarded to partners utilising this funding are for a three-year period. Any uplift (cost of living or service expansion) in advance of each year's award will be brought to members to approve. Grant funding will be subject to satisfactory performance of the services with targets set for continual improvement.
- 2.4 The grant award is sufficient to meet all spend commitments within this report and there is no requirement for the temporary accommodation element in the Revenue Support Grant in the Local Government Finance Settlement to be utilised to fund these schemes for the period April 2026- March 2029.
- 2.5 Further to the Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant report of the 19th November 2025 where Council approved for the temporary accommodation element of the Revenue Support Grant to be ringfenced to homeless prevention activities for 2026/27, this report advises that this element of Revenue Support Grant is no longer required.
- 2.6 The purpose of ringfencing the Homelessness Prevention Grant fund is to give the Council control and flexibility in managing homelessness pressures and supporting those who are at risk of homelessness. The Government expects local authorities to use it to deliver the following priorities
- To fully enforce the Homelessness Reduction Act and contribute to ending rough sleeping by increasing activity to prevent single homelessness.
 - Reduce family temporary accommodation numbers through maximising family homelessness prevention
 - Eliminate the use of unsuitable bed and breakfast accommodation for families for longer than the statutory six week limit.
 - The Government requires that at least 49% of the grant is spent on prevention and relief activities and staffing.

2 OPERATIONAL ISSUES

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

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 In addition to the annual Homelessness Grant £112,000, the Council has been awarded by (MHCLG), Homelessness Prevention Grant of £508,380 for 2027/28 and £571,063 for 2028/29.

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- 4.3 The new Homelessness Prevention Grant is ring fenced by MHCLG for activities that prevent and deal with homelessness.
- 4.4 The Council therefore has the following for Homelessness Prevention and Domestic Abuse Services and Housing Options in 2027/28 and 2028/29 as follows:

Grant	Expected 2027/28	Expected 2028/29
BDC Homelessness Prevention Grant	£112,000	£112,000
Homelessness Prevention Grant (including Temp Accom element)	£508,380	£571,063
Grant Total Grant Available	£620,380	£683,063

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

Homelessness Grant Allocation	2027/28 £ (up to £620,380)	2028/29 £ (up to £683,063)
Housing Options Service Top Up Staffing Costs	52,475	52,475
Static Temporary Accommodation for an additional 4 units of accommodation	30,688	30,688
Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership Co-ordinator – contribution towards county-wide development and delivery of housing initiatives in partnership with other agencies	10,500	10,500
Severe Emergency Weather Provision	18,347	18,347
St Basils Foyer – provides stable accommodation/support for young people - 14 units – fully occupied during last financial year	50,203	50,203
St Basils Crash pad – provides emergency temporary accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds	19,711	19,711
Bromsgrove Home Choice CBL and Homelessness Module	14,600	14,600
St Basils Young Persons Pathway Worker – support to prevent homelessness for under 25's and Crash Pad to provide a unit of emergency accommodation for young people.	41,116	41,116
NewStarts - Provide Furniture and Volunteering Opportunities for Ex-Offenders – supports tenancy sustainment and provides	15,000	15,000

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future employment opportunities/reduces risk of reoffending		
GreenSquare Accord Housing Related Support – helping ex-offenders remain housed/seek employment	31,172	31,172
Maggs Rough Sleeper outreach and prevention service targeting rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping.	35,607	35,607
North Worcestershire Basement Project - Support for young people at risk of homelessness	45,000	45,000
BDHT - Sunrise Project intensive support	46,886	46,886
Mental Health Link Worker (part funded)	21,554	21,554
CAB – Debt Advice for Home Owners and Private Renters	27,611	27,611
CAB – Affordability Assessments	6,021	6,021
Housing First/Housing Led Service	29,563	29,563
Part time Empty Homes Officer	7,680	7,680
Spend to Save Top Up	5,683	5,683
County Rough Sleeper Coordinator	5,500	5,500
Rough Sleeper Access to Accommodation Fund and NFNO/NSNO	1,000	1,000
County Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator	5,112	5,112
County Domestic Abuse Research and Intelligence Officer	4,573	4,573
Top up to DA Housing Options Officer	6,059	6,059
Total committed expenditure	£531,66	£531,661
Underspend	£88,719	151,402

- 4.6 The Housing Options Service Top Up will be awarded to BDHT during 2027/28 and then will be earmarked for funding for the service subject to a contract extension for 2028/29.
- 4.7 The funding provided supports the Council in its' prevention role and is crucial in helping people remain in their existing accommodation wherever possible. Where homelessness cannot be avoided, services provide support to ensure that it is a brief as possible and non recurring. Affordability issues in all sectors and less churn in social housing, mean that fewer properties are becoming available and resolving homelessness is increasingly challenging.

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5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 The new unitary authority/authorities will be required as (a) local housing authority(ies) to provide duties under Homelessness legislation. The three-year funding allocation to organisations would be subject to any implications arising from Local Government Reorganisation.

Relevant Council Priority

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

Climate Change Implications

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

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.5 The Homelessness Grant and Homelessness Prevention Grant will benefit customers by offering household's more options to prevent their homelessness, support them to remain in their own homes or help the

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Council to manage and support households in Temporary Accommodation.

- 6.6 The grant will also benefit the larger community as opportunities to prevent homelessness will be maximised.
- 6.7 Domestic Abuse New Burdens Grant will ensure that there are resources to support the provision of a range of services available to meet the needs of those victims/survivors of domestic abuse who become homeless and need support to set up a new home and recover from their experience, many of whom are women.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 If the recommended schemes are not approved there is a risk that more households who are threatened with homelessness, or who are in housing need, will have limited alternative options. There is also therefore the risk that they may have to make a homeless approach and this could consequently lead to the following negative outcomes:

- Increased B&B costs with 80% having to be picked up by the local authority.
 - Increased rough sleeping in the district
 - Impacts on physical and mental health, educational achievement, ability to work and similar through increased homelessness.

- 7.2 All recipients of grant funding will enter into a grant agreement and have regular monitoring with officers on the delivery of the service and a monitoring report will be taken to Cabinet annually.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Kit Taylor Portfolio Holder Strategic Housing	3.12.25
Lead Director / Head of Service	Judith Willis Assistant Director Community and Housing Services	3.12.25
Financial Services	Deb Goodall, Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services	3.12.25
Legal Services	Nicola Cummings, Principal Solicitor Governance	3.12.25
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)	Matt Bough, Strategic Housing and Business Support Manager	3.12.25

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PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2026/27

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor May
Portfolio Holder Consulted	
Relevant Assistant Director	Hannah Corredor, Assistant Director of Transformation and Corporate Services
Report Author Becky Talbot	Job Title: Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager Contact email: becky.talbot@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 64252 ext:3385
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Council Priority	Sustainability
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to **RECOMMEND** to Council that

1) the Pay Policy 2026/27 be approved.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Localism Act 2011 requires English local authorities to produce a Pay Policy Statement ('the statement'). The Act requires the statement to be approved by Full Council and to be adopted by 31st March each year for the subsequent financial year.

The proposed Pay Policy Statement 2026/27 for the Council is included at Appendix 1.

The Statement must set out policies relating to-

- (a) The remuneration of its chief officers,
- (b) The remuneration of its lowest-paid employees, and
- (c) The relationship between-
 - (i) The remuneration of its chief officers, and
 - (ii) The remuneration of its employees who are not chief officers.

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The provisions within the Localism Act 2011 bring together the strands of increasing accountability, transparency and fairness in the setting of local pay.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 The Pay Policy Statement is in place to ensure that employees receive the appropriate remuneration during the financial year.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 All financial implications will be addressed as part of the budget setting process and posts are fully budgeted for.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Localism Act 2011 requires English local authorities to produce a Pay Policy Statement. The Act requires the statement to be approved by Full Council and to be adopted by 31st March each year for the subsequent financial year.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Local Government Reorganisation

There are no specific implications for local government reorganisation.

6.2 Climate Change Implications

There are no specific climate change implications.

6.3 Equalities and Diversity Implications

There are no implications in relation to this report.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 There is a risk that if Members do not approve the Pay Policy Statement, then the Council will not be compliant with legal requirements.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 Appendix A – Pay Policy 2026/27

APPENDIX 1

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL PAY POLICY STATEMENT

Introduction and Purpose

1. Under section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the “power to appoint officers on such reasonable terms and conditions as authority thinks fit”. This pay policy statement sets out the Council’s approach to pay policy in accordance with the requirements of Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011. It shall apply for the financial year 2026/27 and each subsequent financial year, until amended.
2. The purpose of the statement is to provide transparency with regard to the Council’s approach to setting the pay of its employees by identifying;
 - a. the methods by which salaries of all employees are determined;
 - b. the detail and level of remuneration of its most senior staff i.e. chief officers’, as defined by the relevant legislation;
 - c. the Committee(s) responsible for ensuring the provisions set out in this statement are applied consistently throughout the Council and for recommending any amendments to the full Council.
3. Once approved by the full Council, this policy statement will come into immediate effect and will be subject to review on a minimum of an annual basis, in accordance with the relevant legislation prevailing at that time.

Legislative Framework

4. In determining the pay and remuneration of all of its employees, the Council will comply with all relevant employment legislation. This includes the Equality Act 2010, Part Time Employment (Prevention of Less Favorable Treatment) Regulations 2000, The Agency Workers Regulations 2010 and where relevant, the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Earnings) Regulations. With regard to the equal pay requirements contained within the Equality Act, the Council ensures there is no pay discrimination within its pay structures and that all pay differentials can be objectively justified through the use of equality proofed Job Evaluation mechanisms. These directly relate salaries to the requirements, demands and responsibilities of the role.

Pay Structure

5. The Council’s pay and grading structure comprises grades 1 – 11. These are followed by grades for Managers, Assistant Director 1, Assistant Director 2, Director WRS, Executive Director, Deputy Chief Executive and then Chief Executive; all of which arose following the introduction of shared services with Redditch Borough Council (RBC).

6. Within each grade there are a number of salary / pay points. Up to and including grade 11 scale, at spinal column point 43, the Council uses the nationally negotiated pay spine. Salary points above this are locally determined. The Council's Pay structure is set out below.

Grade	Spinal Column Points		Nationally determined rates	
			Minimum £	Maximum £
1	2	2	24,413	24,413
2	2	5	24,796	25,583
3	5	9	25,583	27,254
4	9	14	27,254	29,540
5	14	19	29,540	32,061
6	19	24	32,061	35,412
7	25	30	36,363	40,777
8	30	34	40,777	45,091
9	34	37	45,091	48,226
10	37	40	48,226	51,356
11	40	43	51,356	54,495
Manager Hay	Hay Evaluated	38%	57,180	59,490
Manager Hay Grade 1	Hay evaluated	43%	66,163	68,772
Manager Hay Grade 2	Hay evaluated	45%	68,772	71,510
Assistant Director 1	Hay evaluated	51%	78,510	81,203
Assistant Director 2	Hay evaluated	61%	92,956	96,665
Director of WRS	Hay evaluated	68%	103,842	107,566
Executive Director	Hay evaluated	74%	114,282	118,694
Director of Finance S151	Hay evaluated	74%	114,282	118,694
Chief Executive	Hay evaluated	100%	150,472	154,572

7. All Council posts are allocated to a grade within this pay structure, based on the application of a Job Evaluation process. Posts at Managers and above are evaluated by an external assessor using the Hay Job Evaluation scheme. Where posts are introduced as part of a shared service, and where these posts are identified as being potentially too 'large' and 'complex' for this majority scheme, they will be double tested under the Hay scheme, and where appropriate, will be taken into the Hay scheme to identify levels of pay. This scheme identifies the salary for these posts based on a percentage of Chief Executive Salary (for ease of presentation these are shown to the nearest whole % in the table above). Posts below this level (which are the majority of employees) are evaluated under the "Gauge" Job Evaluation process.
8. In common with the majority of authorities the Council is committed to the Local Government Employers national pay bargaining framework in respect of the national pay spine and annual cost of living increases negotiated with the trade unions.
9. All other pay related allowances are the subject of either nationally or locally negotiated rates, having been determined from time to time in accordance with collective bargaining machinery and/or as determined by Council policy. In determining its grading structure and setting remuneration levels for all posts, the Council takes account of the need to ensure value for money in respect of the use of public expenditure, balanced against the need to recruit and retain employees who are able to meet the requirements of providing high quality services to the community; delivered effectively and efficiently and at all times those services are required.
10. New appointments will normally be made at the minimum of the relevant grade, although this can be varied where necessary to secure the best candidate. From time to time it may be necessary to take account of the external pay market in order to attract and retain employees with particular experience, skills and capacity. Where necessary, the Council will ensure the requirement for such is objectively justified by reference to clear and transparent evidence of relevant market comparators, using appropriate data sources available from within and outside the local government sector.
11. For staff not on the highest point within the salary scale there is a system of annual progression to the next point on the band.

Senior Management Remuneration

12. For the purposes of this statement, senior management means 'chief officers' as defined within S43 of the Localism Act. The posts falling within the statutory definition are set out below, with details of their basic salary as at 1st April 2025 (assuming no inflationary increase for these posts).
13. Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) is managed by a senior management team who manage shared services across both BDC and RBC.

Councils. All of the posts listed below have been job evaluated on this basis, with the salary costs for these posts split equally between both Councils.

a) Chief Executive

Employed by RBC and shared with BDC.

John Leach is in post with a current salary of £154,572.

b) Deputy Chief Executive

Employed by BDC and shared with RBC.

This post is currently vacant.

c) Executive Director

Employed by RBC and shared with BDC.

d) WRS Director

Employed by BDC. This is a shared post across 6 District authorities.

e) Assistant Directors

Employed by RBC and shared with BDC

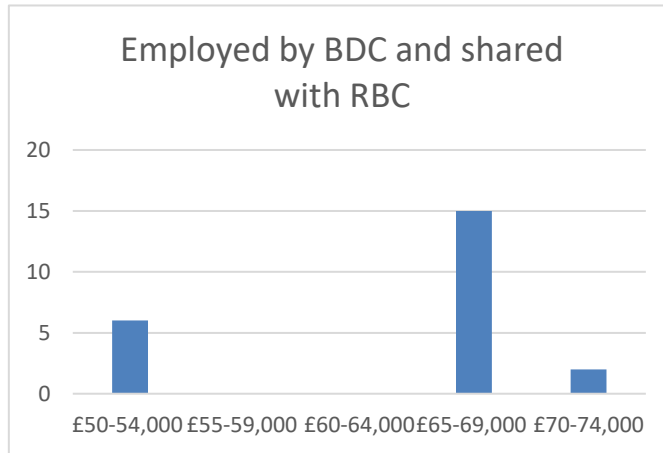
4 x Assistant Director 2

Employed by BDC and shared with RBC

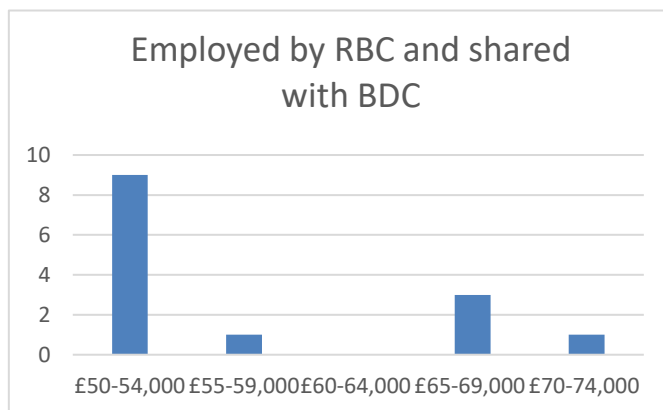
3 x Assistant Director 2

Employees below Assistant Directors with a salary above £50,000 based on FTE

Employed by BDC and shared with RBC



Employed by RBC and shared with BDC



Agenda Item 11

Title	% of Chief executive salary	Pay range (minimum) £	Pay range (maximum) £	Incremental points	Cost to Bromsgrove District Council £
Chief Executive	100%	150,472	154,572	3	50%
Deputy Chief Executive & S151	80%	121,059	125,712	3	50%
Executive Director Environment and Communities	74%	114,282	118,694	3	35%
Director Worcestershire Regulatory Services	68%	103,842	107,566	3	<i>This is a shared post across 6 district Authorities. Bromsgrove equates to 14.45%</i>
Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services	61%	92,956	96,665	3	50%
Assistant Director Planning and Leisure Services	61%	92,956	96,665	3	50%
Assistant Director Transformation and Corporate Services	61%	92,956	96,665	3	50%
Assistant Director Legal, Democratic & Election Services	61%	92,956	96,665	3	50%
Assistant Director Environmental and Housing Property Services	61%	92,956	96,665	3	35%
Assistant Director Community and Housing Services	61%	92,956	96,665	3	35%
Assistant Director Regeneration & Property Services	61%	92,956	96,665	3	50%

Recruitment of Chief Officers

14. The Council's policy and procedures with regard to recruitment of chief officers is set out within the Officer Employment Procedure Rules as set out in the Council's Constitution. When recruiting to all posts the Council will take full and proper account of its own equal opportunities, recruitment and redeployment Policies. The determination of the remuneration to be offered to any newly appointed chief officer will be in accordance with the pay structure and relevant policies in place at the time of recruitment. Where the Council is unable to recruit to a post at the designated grade, it will consider the use of temporary market forces supplements in accordance with its relevant policies.
15. Where the Council remains unable to recruit chief officers under a contract of service, or there is a need for interim support to provide cover for a vacant substantive chief officer post, the Council will, where necessary, consider and utilise engaging individuals under 'contracts for service'. These will be sourced through a relevant procurement process ensuring the council is able to demonstrate the maximum value for money benefits from competition in securing the relevant service. The Council does not currently have any Chief Officers under such arrangements.

Performance-Related Pay and Bonuses – Chief Officers

16. The Council does not apply any bonuses or performance-related pay to its chief officers. Any progression through the incremental scale of the relevant grade is subject to satisfactory performance which is assessed on an annual basis.

Additions to Salary of Chief Officers (applicable to all staff)

17. In addition to the basic salary for the post, all staff may be eligible for other payments under the Council's existing policies. Some of these payments are chargeable to UK Income Tax and do not solely constitute reimbursement of expenses incurred in the fulfilment of duties. The list below shows some of the kinds of payments made.
 - a. reimbursement of mileage. At the time of preparation of this statement, the Council pays an allowance of 45p per mile for all staff, with additional or alternative payments for carrying passengers or using a bicycle.
 - b. professional fees. The Council pays for or reimburses the cost of one practicing certificate fee or membership of a professional organisation provided it is relevant to the post that an employee occupies within the Council.
 - c. long service awards. The Council pays staff an additional amount if they have completed 25 years of service and having completed 40 years' service.
 - d. honoraria, in accordance with the Council's policy on salary and grading. Generally, these may be paid only where a member of staff has performed a role at a higher grade;
 - e. fees for returning officer and other electoral duties, such as acting as a presiding officer of a polling station. These are fees which are identified and paid separately for local government elections, elections to the UK Parliament and EU Parliament and other electoral processes such as referenda;

- f. pay protection – where a member of staff is placed in a new post and the grade is below that of their previous post, for example as a result of a restructuring, pay protection at the level of their previous post is paid for the first 12 months. In exceptional circumstance pay protection can be applied for greater than 12 months with the prior approval of the Chief Executive.
- g. market forces supplements in addition to basic salary where identified and paid separately;
- h. salary supplements or additional payments for undertaking additional responsibilities such as shared service provision with another local authority or in respect of joint bodies, where identified and paid separately;
- i. attendance allowances.

Payments on Termination

- 18. The Council's approach to discretionary payments on termination of employment of chief officers prior to reaching normal retirement age is set out within its policy statement in accordance with Regulations 5 and 6 of the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) Regulations 2006 and Regulations 12 and 13 of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Benefits, Membership and Contribution) Regulations 2007.
- 19. Any other payments falling outside the provisions or the relevant periods of contractual notice shall be subject to a formal decision made by the full Council or relevant elected members, committee or panel of elected members with delegated authority to approve such payments.
- 20. Redundancy payments are based upon an employee's actual weekly salary and, in accordance with the Employee Relations Act 1996, will be up to 30 weeks, depending upon length of service and age.

Publication

- 21. Upon approval by the full Council, this statement will be published on the Council's website. In addition, for posts where the full time equivalent salary is at least £50,000, the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts will include a note on Officers Remuneration setting out the total amount of:
 - a. Salary, fees or allowances paid to or receivable by the person in the current and previous year;
 - b. Any bonuses so paid or receivable by the person in the current and previous year;
 - c. Any sums payable by way of expenses allowance that are chargeable to UK income tax;
 - d. Any compensation for loss of employment and any other payments connected with termination;
 - e. Any benefits received that do not fall within the above.

Lowest Paid Employees

- 22. The Council's definition of lowest paid employees is persons employed under a contract of employment with the Council on full time (37 hours) equivalent salaries in accordance with the minimum spinal column point currently in use within the Council's grading structure. As at 1st April 2025 this is £24,413 per annum.

23. The Council also employs apprentices (or other such categories of workers) who are not included within the definition of 'lowest paid employees' (as they are employed under a special form of employment contract; which is a contract for training rather than actual employment).
24. The relationship between the rate of pay for the lowest paid and chief officers is determined by the processes used for determining pay and grading structures as set out earlier in this policy statement.
25. The statutory guidance under the Localism Act recommends the use of pay multiples as a means of measuring the relationship between pay rates across the workforce and that of senior managers, as included within the Hutton 'Review of Fair Pay in the Public Sector' (2010). The Hutton report was asked by Government to explore the case for a fixed limit on dispersion of pay through a requirement that no public sector manager can earn more than 20 times the lowestpaid person in the organisation. The report concluded that "it would not be fair or wise for the Government to impose a single maximum pay multiple across the public sector". The Council accepts the view that the relationship to median earnings is a more relevant measure and the Government's Code of Recommended Practice on Data Transparency recommends the publication of the ratio between highest paid salary and the median average salary of the whole of the authority's workforce.
26. As part of its overall and ongoing monitoring of alignment with external pay markets, both within and outside the sector, the Council will use available benchmark information as appropriate.

Accountability and Decision Making

28. In accordance with the Constitution of the Council, the Council is responsible for setting the policy relating to the recruitment, pay, terms and conditions and severance arrangements for employees of the Council. Decisions about individual employees are delegated to the Chief Executive.
29. The Appointments Committee is responsible for recommending to Council matters relating to the appointment of the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive), Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and Chief Officers as defined in the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations 2001 (as amended);
30. For the Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and the Chief Finance Officer, the Statutory Officers Disciplinary Action Panel considers and decides on matters relating to disciplinary action.

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Business Rates - Discretionary Rates Relief Policy 2026/27

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor S Nock
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes / No
Relevant Assistant Director	Debra Goodall Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services
Report Author	Revenue Services Manager david.riley@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk 01527 548 418
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Council Priority	
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet RECOMMEND that:-

- 1) A non-domestic rates discretionary relief policy is approved and adopted from 1st April 2026
- 2) The rural settlement list as set out in Appendix A of the policy is approved and adopted for use from 1st April 2026

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Section 47 of The Local Government Finance Act 1988 [the act] provides billing authorities with the power to award discretionary rate relief to ratepayers.
- 2.2 Discretionary rate relief was - in the past - restricted to charities, not for profit organisations, and the occupiers of small premises within rural settlements. The period for which relief could be awarded was also restricted to the current rate year, or to the current and previous rate year if the determination to award relief was made before 30th September.
- 2.3 The Localism Act 2011 and the Non-Domestic Rating Act 2023 removed some of the restrictions on the award of relief and, except in the case of charities and non-profit organisations, the council can only award relief to any ratepayer where it would be reasonable to do so having regard to the interest of the council's council taxpayers. Relief

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can be backdated to 1st April 2023, though the draft policy includes a local restriction allowing for backdating to be limited to the start of the previous rate year.

- 2.5 The condition requiring the award of relief to be in the interest of local taxpayers does not apply in the cases of charities and some not-for-profit organisations. In these cases, charities in receipt of 80% mandatory charitable relief can receive a further 20% discretionary relief, and not-for-profit organisations can receive relief of up to 100%. The policy sets out how we will determine application from charities and not-for-profit organisations.
- 2.6 Certain types of property situated within a rural settlement and with a rateable value below specific thresholds are entitled to rural rate relief, the properties eligible for rural rate relief are:
 - The only post office within a rural settlement
 - The only general store within a rural settlement
 - The only public house within a rural settlement
 - The only petrol filling station within a rural settlement
 - A rural food shop
- 2.7 Rural rate relief was limited to 50%, an additional discretionary 50% relief could then be awarded. The Non-Domestic Rating Act 2023 increased the mandatory relief to 100%.
- 2.8 The 'rural rate condition' allowed billing authorities a further discretion to grant relief to any business within a rural settlement provided that the rateable value of the property occupied was less than £16,500, that the use of the property was of a benefit to the local community, and it was in the interest of taxpayers for relief to be provided.
- 2.9 The rural rate condition was removed by the Localism Act 2011; the act gave the council greater powers to award discretionary rate relief and the council's policy retains the discretion to award relief to businesses within rural settlements, in line with the original rural condition.
- 2.10 To enable rural rate relief to be determined the council is required to compile and maintain a rural settlement list. The list identifies rural settlements that are situated within designated rural areas and have a population of less than 3,000. The rural settlement list is included at appendix a of the proposed policy.
- 2.11 When awarding discretionary rate relief, the council must follow guidance set by Government. Government has used this requirement

to make temporary government funded schemes of discretionary relief. The policy sets out that where such schemes are made the council will implement them in accordance with the published guidance.

- 2.12 The revised policy aims to modernise the framework for awarding relief, improve flexibility and ensure alignment with current legislation and the council's priorities. The key changes are:

Principles based approach

The revised policy moves away from the rigid criteria and fixed percentages to a flexible approach guided by the principles.

- Community benefit,
- Strategic alignment
- Financial need
- Sustainability.

Clear alignment to council priorities

Organisations must demonstrate how their activities support council priorities and deliver measurable local benefits.

Applicants are encouraged to develop and show plans for financial independence and outline how they can operate without ongoing rate relief.

Compliance with current legislation

References within the policy have been updated to incorporate the UK Subsidy Control Act.

Hardship and Rural Relief

Clarification added that hardship is not limited to financial hardship.

Requirements for applicants to evidence viability and community benefits when seeking relief.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 The council awards discretionary relief for each rate year separately and notifies ratepayers of the awards of relief. Existing awards will end on 31st March 2026, and, on approval of the policy, ratepayers will be

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contacted to advice that their relief will end and the requirement for a new application to be made.

- 3.2 All new applications will be determined in accordance with the approved policy.
- 3.3 There are forty-seven properties receiving a 20% top-up discretionary relief, and ten not-for-profit organisations receiving a discretionary relief of between 1% and 100%. These organisations will be required to make a fresh application for relief from 1st April 2026.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The costs of discretionary rate relief are usually shared between central government and major precepting authorities. 50% of the costs of relief are met by central government, 40% by the district council, 9% by county council and 1% by fire and rescue authority.
- 4.2 The costs of Government funded discretionary relief are met in full through section 31 funding.
- 4.3 The changes to the policy retain general limits on backdating of relief for reliefs where the costs are in part met locally and allow full backdating of relief where funding will be provided by central government. The changes to the policy will have limited financial impact.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The power to grant discretionary relief is contained within section 47 of The Local Government Finance Act 1988.
- 5.2 The council should not adopt a blanket policy that allows discretionary relief to be refused without full consideration and the proposed policy allows each application to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 The discretionary relief policy will be reviewed every year to ensure that it remains fair and effective. While the current proposal does not take account of local government reorganisation, future reviews should aim to align discretionary relief policies across any reorganised billing authorities. These reviews should also include transitional arrangements for organisations that might lose some or all the relief

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they currently receive so that changes are introduced gradually and fairly.

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 The strategic purposes are included in the council's corporate plan and this guides the council's approach to budget making, ensuring we focus on the issues that are most important to the borough and our communities.
- 6.3 Awards of discretionary relief will be reflect the council's priorities at the time of award or review.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 Climate change implications will be considered when applications for relief are determined.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.4 None

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 No Specific risk identified.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix A – Discretionary Rate Relief Policy.

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Bromsgrove District Council Discretionary Rate Relief Policy and Guidance

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out Bromsgrove District Council's approach to awarding Discretionary Rate Relief (DRR). It applies to all non-domestic ratepayers who may be eligible for discretionary relief and outlines the criteria, process and governance for awarding such relief.

The council aims to:

- Support organisations that contribute to the social, economic, and environmental wellbeing of Bromsgrove.
- Promote fairness, transparency, and consistency in decision making.
- Align relief awards with the strategic priorities of the council and available budgets.

2. Legislative Framework

The award of Discretionary Rate Relief governed by a range of statutory provisions that define both mandatory and discretionary powers. The following legislative references form the basis of this policy and guide the Council's approach to assessing and granting relief:

Schedule 4ZA of the Local Government Finance Act 1988: This schedule outlines the conditions under which mandatory relief is granted for occupied hereditaments. It sets out that premises used wholly or mainly for charitable purposes, or by community amateur sports clubs will be entitled to relief of 80%.

Schedule 4ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1988: This schedule sets out the mandatory relief for unoccupied hereditaments and allows for full relief for property that was last used for charitable purposes or by a CASC.

Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988: This section provides the discretionary power for billing authorities to award rate relief to a charity or CASC that already receives mandatory rate relief or to award relief to certain not for profit organisations. The Localism Act 2011 expanded this power to allow relief to any ratepayer provided it is reasonable and in the interests of local council taxpayers.

Section 44A of the Local Government Finance Act 1988: Section 44A allows for relief on partly occupied premises. If part of a property is temporarily unoccupied the council may request the Valuation Office Agency to apportion the rateable value between the occupied and unoccupied areas, enabling relief on the unoccupied portion.

Section 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988: Section 49 enables councils to award relief where a ratepayer is experiencing hardship providing it is in the interests of local council taxpayers for relief to be given.

Subsidy Control Act 2022: The Subsidy Control Act 2022 replaced EU State Aid rules and requires public authorities to ensure that any financial assistance (including rate relief) complies with UK subsidy control principles.

3. Principles for Awarding Discretionary Relief

When awarding discretionary rate relief, the council will apply general principles and consider relief where:

- The organisation delivers a clear local community benefit.
- The award of relief supports the council's priorities.
- The financial impact is proportionate and justified.
- The organisation demonstrates financial need and transparency.
- The business provides a clear plan and evidence as to how it will become self-reliant.
- The award complies with subsidy control rules.

4. Explanation of Key Principles

The principles are intended to ensure that relief is awarded fairly and responsibly:

Clear local community benefit: Services, activities or support directly improves the wellbeing or provision of services to residents of Bromsgrove. Examples include:

- Supporting vulnerable residents
- Promoting health, education or inclusion
- Enhancing local culture or recreation.

The benefit should be clear and definite; it should be inclusive; and locally focussed.

Supporting council priorities: The award of relief should align with the council's strategic goals.

Financial impact is proportionate and justified: Relief should match the organisation's need and the scale of benefit. A charity with limited income and high community impact may justify a 100% relief, where as a charity with significant reserves, or with a low impact may only justify a partial award.

Financial need and transparency: Applicants must show limited income or reserves and a requirement on relief to develop or maintain services. There must be clear and open financial reporting to help to ensure that relief is awarded to organisations that genuinely need support.

Plan for self-reliance: Organisations should not rely indefinitely on relief and should outline steps to reduce dependency on relief e.g. through providing a business or sustainability plan; outlining income generation strategies; or setting out an

explanation of the steps toward financial independence. This encourages long-term sustainability and responsible use of relief.

Compliance with subsidy control: Relief should meet requirements of Subsidy Control Act including MFA thresholds and reporting requirements.

5. Discretionary Relief Exclusions

Relief will not generally be provided where:

The ratepayer is a national organisation or regional organisation: Large international, national or regional organisations will not automatically receive discretionary relief unless exceptional local benefit is demonstrated. The policy prioritises local organisations that directly provide services to Bromsgrove residents.

Relevant unrestricted reserves or income: If an organisation has adequate financial resources, especially unrestricted reserves, it is expected to pay its business rates without assistance. Bromsgrove's awards of discretionary relief are intended for organisations that genuinely need financial assistance to continue delivering local services.

Relief will distort competition or provide an advantage: Relief will not usually be awarded where the application of relief will distort competition or provide an advantage to charitable or non-profit organizations over ordinary ratepayers. While charitable and non-profit organisations often provide valuable community services some may also engage in commercial activities such as operating cafes, gyms or the provision of event spaces that compete directly with local businesses.

Duplication of services: Where the ratepayer would duplicate existing services and no additional local need has been identified relief may be withheld.

6. Hardship Relief

In cases of hardship and where it would be reasonable to do so having regard to the interest of the council taxpayers the council may grant either partial or full hardship relief under section 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

Hardship relief will be the exception rather than the rule. The council will consider hardship relief where:

- The business is facing exceptional short-term hardship that threatens its ability to continue trading.
- The business provides a significant benefit to the local community through the provision of essential services, local employment or social value.
- The award of relief represents a fair and proportionate use of funds.
- There is evidence of the future viability of the business and a clear plan for business recovery.

Hardship is not strictly limited to financial hardship and that of itself will not be a deciding factor. Where the business has the ability to pay their liability at the time, or

in future through deferment of payment then hardship relief will not usually be considered.

7. Discretionary Relief for Rural Settlements

Under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, as amended by the Localism Act 2011, Bromsgrove District Council has the power to grant discretionary rate relief to premises within rural settlements. Although the statutory “rural condition” was removed in 2012 councils retain full discretion to support rural businesses where it is reasonable and in the interests of local council taxpayers.

Eligibility Criteria

We will continue to consider discretionary rate relief for rural businesses where:

- The property is situated within a designated rural settlement as defined by the council's rural settlement list
- The business demonstrates a clear community benefit such as:
 - Providing essential goods or services
 - Supporting local employment
- The rateable value of the property is £16,500 or less (local policy threshold)
- The applicant demonstrates financial need and transparency
- The financial impact is proportionate and justified
- The award complies with subsidy control requirements

The discretionary relief aims to retain the discretionary rural relief provisions that existed prior to the 2012 changes and to support businesses that sustain vital services in rural communities.

8. Localism Act Relief

Under Section 47 LGFA 1988 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011), the Council may grant discretionary relief to any ratepayer where it is reasonable and in the interests of council taxpayers. This power allows flexibility to support local economic development, regeneration, and community benefit beyond traditional charitable and non-profit categories. Applications will be considered where:

- The business contributes to local employment or regeneration.
- The award supports strategic objectives.
- The financial impact is proportionate and justified.

Relief under this section will normally be time-limited and subject to annual review.

9. Government Funded Discretionary Relief

From time to time, the Government introduces temporary relief schemes (e.g. Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Relief, Supporting Small Business Relief, and Discretionary Transitional Relief). These schemes are delivered using the expanded section 47 powers inserted by the Localism Act.

The Government publishes full guidance on the administration of temporary relief schemes and the council has a general requirement to consider Government guidance before awarding any discretionary relief. To enable delivery of the relief in-line with national policy objectives the council will administer Government funded schemes in accordance with the published guidance.

10. Relief for Part-Occupied Properties

If part of a property is empty for a short time, the council can ask the Valuation Office Agency to split the rateable value between the occupied and unoccupied parts. This means the business only pays rates on the part it is using.

We will consider relief where:

- The empty part will be used again soon.
- The occupation pattern is temporary and unavoidable, for example phased occupation of premises, or damage to property from fire or flood.
- The part occupation is not the result of normal maintenance, refurbishment, seasonal shutdowns or reduction in capacity due to normal business risks.

11. Applications and Appeals

Applications for relief must be made in writing and be signed by the ratepayer, or an appropriately authorised representative of the applicant. Applications may be made electronically, or a form supplied by the council. The council will set out the evidence required to support an application and this may include:

- Audited accounts and certified financial statements
- Evidence of community benefit
- Supporting documents required for specific relief types, e.g. business plan demonstrating future income streams for the organisation.

Incomplete applications, or applications that do not provide sufficient supporting information will not be considered.

Applications will be assessed against this policy and decisions will be notified in writing stating the amount of relief, duration and any conditions relating to the award of relief.

Applicants may request a review within 28 days of the decision and reviews will be completed by an officer not involved in the original decision.

If the original decision is upheld, then the applicant will be informed in writing and advised of the final internal appeal to the Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services, who will consider the appeal in consultation with the relevant portfolio holder.

There will be no further internal appeal process, however, ultimately the ratepayer may appeal through Judicial Review.

Ratepayers must inform the council immediately of any change in circumstances that may affect their eligibility for relief, examples include:

- Changes in the use of the property.
- Significant increases in income or reserves.
- Closure or relocation of the business.

12. Backdating Relief

Application for discretionary relief will normally be backdated to the start of the current rate year or the date the ratepayer became liable, whichever is later.

Backdating to earlier years may be allowed if:

- The application is made and decided within six months of the end of the relevant rate year; or
- The property is added to the rating list for the first time and the application is made within three months of that date.

Government funded relief can also be backdated provided funding is still available under the relevant government scheme.

13. Delegation

The council's scheme of delegation allows for the Revenue Services Manager, and Assistant Financial Support Manager to determine awards of:

- Mandatory relief
- Discretionary rate relief for charities, community amateur sports clubs, and charity shops.
- Discretionary rate relief for non-profit making organisations
- Discretionary rural rate relief
- Relief for part-occupied premises
- Hardship relief
- Government funded discretionary rate relief

Individual awards of discretionary rate relief made using the expanded powers under the Localism Act 2011 are delegated to the Head of Finance and Customer Services in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder and Leader of the Council.

14. Subsidy Control

Any discretionary relief awarded under this policy constitutes a subsidy within the meaning of the UK Subsidy Control Act 2022. The council must ensure that all awards comply with the statutory principles and obligations.

A subsidy exists where all four conditions apply:

1. **Public resources** – assistance is provided from public funds by a public authority.

2. **Economic advantage** – the assistance confers an economic advantage on one or more enterprise.
3. **Specificity** – The assistance is selective and not generally available to all enterprises.
4. **Effect on competition or investment** – The assistance can affect competition or investment.

Discretionary rate relief will normally fall under the Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) threshold which allows an economic actor to receive up to £315,000 over a rolling three-year period.

Applicants must declare any subsidies received from other public authorities to ensure compliance.

Relief will not be granted where it would cause the recipient to exceed the MFA threshold or breach other subsidy control requirements.

Subsidies exceeding £100,000 must be uploaded to the UK subsidy database.

Appendix A – Rural Settlement List

The areas below have been designated as rural settlement

Parish	Settlement
Clent	Adams Hill
Belbroughton and Fairfield	Belbroughton
Beoley	Beoley
Lickey & Blackwell	Blackwell
Bournheath	Bournheath
Lickey & Blackwell	Burcot
Clent	Clent
Cofton Hackett	Cofton Hackett
Dodford with Grafton	Dodford
Belbroughton	Fairfield
Alvechurch	Hopwood
Clent	Holy Cross
Clent	Lower Clent
Wythall	Major's Green
Hunnington	Romsley
Alvechurch	Rowney Green
Stoke Prior	Stoke Prior

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Council Tax Base Report 2026/27

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Nock
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Debra Goodall Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services
Report Author	Job Title: Revenue Services Manager Contact email:david.riley@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 548 418
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Council Priority	
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet RESOLVE that:-

The amount calculated by Bromsgrove District Council as the council tax base for the whole area for 2026/27 is approved at 38,409.8 as detailed in appendix A to include the individual parish elements.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This report sets out the calculation of the council tax base for 2026/27. The tax base calculation is required as part of determining the council tax for the forthcoming financial year.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 The council tax base is calculated using data held by the authority as of 30th November 2025. This data reflects the number of dwellings in each valuation band and accounts for exemptions, discount and reductions.
- 3.2 The figure is then adjusted for anticipated changes in dwelling numbers, discounts, and exemptions, and further adjusted to reflect expected collection rates. An allowance of 1.00% has been made for non-collection.
- 3.3 The council is required to set the council tax base annually as part of the budget-setting process for the following financial year.

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4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The council tax base calculation forms the basis for determining council tax for the new financial year.
- 4.2 The calculation uses a prescribed formula to generate the equivalent number of Band D dwellings in the district and incorporates the cost of council tax support provided to residents.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) set out the process for calculating the council tax base for the forthcoming financial year.
- 5.2 The tax base information is required by Worcestershire County Council, West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner, and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service to calculate and notify their precept requirements.
- 5.3 Legislation requires the billing authority to calculate the tax base for any “special areas” within its boundary. There are no such areas in Bromsgrove District.

6. **OTHER - IMPLICATIONS**

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 None

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 The tax base calculation is required as part of determining the council tax for the forthcoming tax year and supports the council’s priority of Financial Stability.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 None

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.4 None

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7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 No new risks identified.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix A – Council Tax Base Calculations

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Appendix A - Council Tax Base Calculations

	Parish Name	Net
	Whole Area	38,409.8
101/107	Unparished	14,285.3
111	Alvechurch	2,383.1
102	Barnt Green	1,044.8
116	Belbroughton and Fairfield	1,255.8
118	Bentley Pauncefoot	258.9
119	Beoley	474.0
103	Bournheath	222.3
104	Catshill and North Marlbrook	2,352.6
120	Clent	574.6
121	Cofton Hackett	1,280.1
122	Dodford with Grafton	411.6
105	Finstall	320.3
123	Frankley	50.4
124	Hagley	3,237.9
106	Lickey and Blackwell	2,141.1
125	Hunnington	271.8
126	Romsley	667.6
127/131	Parish of Stoke	1,941.3
129	Tutnall and Cobley	407.0
130	Wythall	4,829.3
		38,409.8
	Trent Flood Defence Area	7,102.2
	Severn Flood Defence Area	31,307.7

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Council Tax - Empty Homes Discounts and Premiums 2026/27

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor S Nock
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Debra Goodall Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services
Report Author	Revenue Services Manager david.riley@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk 01527 548 418
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Council Priority	
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet RECOMMEND that:-

- i) the determinations set out in Appendix A be adopted with effect from 1st April 2026.
- ii) The Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services be authorised to consider, on a case-by-case basis, a reduction to the long-term empty premium under Section 13A(1)(C) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
- iii) the council retains the existing discounts for unoccupied and furnished homes, as set out in Appendix A and does not implement additional council tax premiums for unoccupied and substantially furnished homes.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 From the introduction of council tax in 1993 until March 2004 unoccupied homes in England were eligible for a council tax discount of 50%. From 1st April 2004 the Local Government Act 2003 gave councils in England the power to decide locally the level of discount for unoccupied homes.
- 2.2 These powers were expanded by later legislation including the Local Government Finance Act 2012, The Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018 and The Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023. The expanded powers provided greater discretion to councils and allowed additional council

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tax, in the of form premiums, to be added to long-term empty and unoccupied furnished homes.

- 2.3 The powers are discretionary, and billing authorities decide whether to remove the standard 50% discount, and whether to apply premiums.
- 2.4 Bromsgrove District Council has used the discretionary powers, and the current levels of discount are:

Second Homes: There is statutory definition for second homes, in simple terms they are furnished dwellings which are not occupied as a person's main residence. The council can remove the discount and charge 100% of the council tax. There are two classes of second home, those with a planning restriction that prevents occupancy for part of the year, and those without a planning restriction. This distinction allows different levels of discount to be applied to holiday homes and normal homes. The council has removed the discount for both types of dwelling and charges the full 100% council tax.

Empty Homes: Empty homes are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished dwellings. When removing setting the level of discount for empty homes we can apply the same level of discount to all empty homes, or we can set different levels of discount based on a description of the dwelling. The council applies a graduated discount for empty homes. Homes that are empty for 30 days or less received a 100% discount, homes empty for more than 30 days are charged the full council tax.

The council also applies a 100% discount to empty local authority housing which will be used for housing purposes.

Long-Term Empty Homes: When a home has been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for 12 months or more the council may apply additional council tax, referred to as a premium. The level of premium can increase the longer the home is empty. We apply the maximum level of long-term empty premium.

Second Home Premium: From 1st April 2025 councils have been able to apply additional council tax for dwellings that are substantially furnished and are no one's sole or main residence. The council does not currently apply premiums to second homes.

- 2.5 Some types of homes are excepted from changes to discount or the application of premiums, and these homes include caravan pitches and boat moorings; homes that would be the main residence of a member

of the armed forces; and homes that are on the market for sale or let. Full details of the excepted classes are included in Appendix B.

- 2.6 The council reviews discounts and premiums annually. When considering whether to apply premiums we are required to consider guidance issued by Government. The guidance sets out that Government expects councils to use the premiums to encourage owners to bring empty homes back into use, and not to penalise owners who are genuinely trying to sell or let their property. Guidance asks councils to carefully consider whether to charge a premium and to assess possible impacts. Examples of factors to consider are:
- The numbers and proportion of long-term empty dwellings and/or second homes in the local area
 - Circumstances which may affect whether the dwelling can be used as a main residence.
 - Impact on local economies and the tourism industry.
 - The impact of large numbers of empty homes, or a non-permanent second home owning cohort, on the provision and availability of local services.
 - Other measures that the council could take to bring homes back into use.
- 2.7 The Government guidance expresses the view that a council's determination can include local exceptions to the premium. Local exceptions could be used to extend the national so that at a local level additional time is given for a house to be sold before premiums apply or to create local exceptions to exclude dwellings which due to restrictions on use, or specific locality factors may be difficult to sell or bring back into use e.g. retirement homes which have a restriction on who may be resident in the property. The council has not created any local exceptions to premium; but consideration could be given to introducing exceptions in future years.
- 2.8 Long-term empty home premiums were introduced within the Bromsgrove District from 1st April 2022 and reviewed effective from 1st April 2024. The guidance in place at the time of both decisions was considered by Cabinet and Council and determinations were made to apply premiums.
- 2.9 There have been no significant changes to the factors considered when determinations were first made, or to those which the Government's revised 2024 guidance directs the council to consider. The premium continues to operate as an effective incentive for homeowners to bring

long-term empty homes back into use, and there are no specific local housing market issues that prevent sales of long-term empty homes.

- 2.10 The use of section 13A(1)(C) powers to reduce council tax, including council tax premium, on a case-by-case basis provides protection to taxpayers in cases where the imposition of a premium would cause hardship, and the new national exceptions to premium applicable from 1st April 2025 provide appropriate protection from premium for houses for sale or let, and in other specific cases. There is sufficient protection for taxpayers provided by the 13A(1)(C) power and the national exceptions.
- 2.11 The impacts of premium will continue to be monitored and where specific local issues are identified then consideration will be given to the introduction of local premiums for future years.
- 2.12 The decision to apply premiums cannot be amended during the financial year; and any changes to exception can only be introduced from the beginning of a financial year. The second home premium requires one year's notice before it can be applied, and the decision to apply a premium would take effect from the start of a financial year. The earliest date that the council could introduce a second home premium is 1st April 2027.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 Long-term empty home premiums were introduced in Bromsgrove from 1st April 2022. The administration of the levy has been successful and no requirements for local exceptions have been identified. If a broad class of dwelling – for example retirement complexes – become eligible for premium because of specific restrictions on sale then we could consider a local exception; significant numbers of such dwellings are not being identified, and any individual issues can be considered under section 13A(1)(C) discretionary reductions.
- 3.2 The introduction of national exceptions to premium from 1st April 2025 has provided protection for taxpayers whose homes are on the market for sale, or where the dwelling is part of the estate of person who has died. The national exception classes delay the implementation of premium and have reduced the need to consider any local exceptions.
- 3.3 The council has the option to implement premiums for unoccupied and substantially furnished dwellings (second homes). Government guidance set out that premiums should be considered where there is evidence that the number of second homes is detrimental to the local area. There is no evidence that second homes are impacting the

provision of local services within the district and there is no operational objective to recommending the introduction of second home premium.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Additional council tax income from premiums is shared between the precepting authorities and Bromsgrove retains approximately 12% of the additional council tax.
- 4.2 For the 2025/26 tax year the additional council tax levied on long-term empty homes is estimated to be £476,000, with Bromsgrove retaining £57,000.
- 4.3 There are approximately 124 unoccupied and furnished homes within the Bromsgrove district. The imposition of a second home premium, applied to these homes, would lead to an additional council tax premium of £300,000 and Bromsgrove Council would retain £36,000 in additional council tax from second home premium. The actual level of premium would likely be reduced due to the application of exceptions to premium and changes in behaviour, for example the intermittent removal of furniture and refurbishing of homes can change the classification of the dwelling and prevent consistent application of premiums.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The legislative framework for amendment to discounts and imposition of empty home premiums is set out in Sections 11A to 11D of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, and The Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (England) Regulations 2003.
- 5.2 The council is required by sections 11B(1D) and 11C(4) of the LGFA '92 to have regard to any guidance issued by the secretary of state before deciding to apply a premium.
- 5.3 Guidance was considered when premiums were adopted from April 2022 and reviewed effective from April 2024. Consideration of the guidance has been included within sections 2.6 to 2.12 of this report

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 Second home premiums require one year's notice before coming into effect and the earliest date from which they council apply would be 1st

April 2027. Local Government reorganisation could lead to the abolition of Bromsgrove Council and replacement with a new unitary authority on 1st April 2028.

- 6.2 Reorganisation may mean that Bromsgrove Council would levy the second home premium for a period of one tax year, which reduces any benefits available to the council from the introduction of premium.

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 The council's financial stability priority is supported by the appropriate use of the council's discretionary powers to amend discounts and apply premiums.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 None

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.4 None

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The table below identifies specific risks and mitigations in relation to the administration of tax liability for unoccupied homes. The table is not exhaustive and provides information on the main identified risks.

Risks	Mitigation
Taxpayers subject to premiums may be dissatisfied with the decision of the authority.	Clear communications to be issued with Council Tax demand notices setting out the reasons for the changes. Establish links with internal Housing Strategy team to help to publicise methods by which empty homes can be brought back into use
Manipulation of council tax system to avoid empty home premium	Homeowners may provide false information to evade the application of the empty home premium. Briefings to teams will include information on steps that should be taken to validate changes to liability on long-term empty homes.

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8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix A – Council Tax Discounts, and Premiums Determination

Appendix B – Classes Excepted from premiums

Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government (2024)

Guidance on the implementation of the council tax premiums on long-term empty and second homes.

Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/long-term-empty-homes-and-second-homes-council-tax-premiums-and-exceptions/guidance-on-the-implementation-of-the-council-tax-premiums-on-long-term-empty-homes-and-second-homes>

Appendix A – Council Tax Determinations

1. Discounts under section 11A(4) and 11(A)(4A) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992

Effective from 1st April 2026 the level of Council Tax discount for each class of dwellings (as defined by *The Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings (England) Regulations 2003* as amended), or where applicable description of dwellings within that class shall be:

Class	Description	Discount
A	Furnished homes which are no one's sole or main residence and where a planning restriction prevents occupancy.	0%
B	Furnished homes which are no one's sole or main residence and where occupancy is not restricted by a planning condition	0%
C	Dwellings which are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for a continuous period of less than 31 days.	100%
C	Dwellings which are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for a continuous period of 31 days or more	0%
C	Dwellings which are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The owner is a local housing authority; and ii) When next in use the dwelling will be occupied under the Housing Act 1985 	100%
D	Dwellings requiring or undergoing major repair works to render them habitable as defined within the prescribed classes of dwellings regulations	100%

Owner is defined by Section 6(5) and 6(6) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Any period of occupation not exceeding 6 weeks shall be disregarded when considering Class C and D.

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2. Long-Term Empty Dwelling Premiums Under Section 11B(1)

From 1st April 2026 for all dwellings except those excepted from premium by the Prescribed Classes of Dwellings regulations, the discount under section 11(2)(a) shall not apply and the following premiums will be charged:

Period Unoccupied and Unfurnished	Premium Applied
Less than 5 years	100% premium (total charge 200%)
5 years or more, but less than 10 years	200% premium (total charge 300%)
10 years or more	300% premium (total charge 400%)

Appendix B – Discount and Premium Exception Classes

Class	Description	Exception
E	Dwelling which is or would be someone's sole or main residence if they were not residing in job-related armed forces accommodation.	Long-term empty and second home premiums.
F	Annexes forming part of or being treated as part of the main dwelling.	Long-term empty and second home premiums.
G	Dwelling which are being actively marketed for sale – time limited to 12 months.	Long-term empty and second home premiums.
H	Dwellings which are being actively marketed for let – time limited to 12 months.	Long-term empty and second home premiums.
I	Unoccupied dwellings which fell within the exempt class F (left empty by a deceased person) and where probate has been granted. Time limited to 12 months from probate.	Long-term empty and second home premiums.
J	Dwellings where the liable person is resident in a job-related dwelling provided by their employer, or for the liable person is a job-related dwelling.	Second home premiums and adjustment to discount for unoccupied furnished homes
K	Caravan pitches occupied by a caravan, or boat moorings occupied by a boat.	Second home premiums and adjustment to discount for unoccupied furnished homes
L	Seasonal homes where year-round occupation is prohibited.	Second home premiums.
M	Vacant homes which require or are undergoing major repair works to render them habitable, or vacant homes undergoing a structural alteration.	Long-term empty homes premium.

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Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor S Nock
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Debra Goodall Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services
Report Author	Revenue Services Manager david.riley@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk 01527 548 418
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Council Priority	
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet RECOMMEND that:-

- i) The council tax reduction scheme is retained for 2026-27 tax year, subject to uprating of income bands by 3.8% in-line with increases to national benefits as set out in the table at appendix a.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The council is required under section 13A(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (LGFA '92) to make a council tax reduction (CTR) scheme. The scheme must specify the reductions in council tax available to individuals in financial need, or to defined classes of people considered to be in financial need.
- 2.2 Each tax year, the council must review its CTR scheme and decide whether to revise or replace it. If revisions or replacement are proposed, the council is required to carry out formal consultation before adopting a new scheme.
- 2.3 On 1st April 2021 the council introduced an income-banded scheme for working age applicants. The rationale was to future proof the scheme, reduce administrative burdens and align more closely with universal credit.
- 2.4 Since 2022 the council has amended the scheme to:

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- adjust support levels in line with available funding
- revise income bands and tapers to reflect inflation; and
- to simplify elements of the scheme to aid administration.

2.5 The current scheme includes a provision to uprate income bands by an inflation factor determined by the council, typically aligned with increases in national welfare benefits.

2.6 Benefit rates for 2027 are set to increase by 3.8% It is recommended that the income bands be raised by the same percentage. Any uprated amount that is not a whole pound will be rounded up to the next whole pound.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

3.1 Retaining the existing scheme and uprating the income bands will have no additional operational implication.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Adjusting income bands will affect the level of Council Tax Reduction (CTR) provided to claimants and may increase the overall cost of the scheme.

4.2 Uprating income bands is intended to protect claimants from inflation and ensure that increases in Universal Credit or wages for not remove eligibility for CTR. This adjustment is essential to maintain support for residents in financial need.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Under paragraph 5 of Schedule 1A to the LGFA '92, the council must consider annually whether to revise or replace its CTR scheme. Any revision or replacement requires formal consultation, which must include:

- Consultation with major precepting authorities
- Publication of a draft scheme; and
- Consultation with persons likely to have an interest in the scheme.

5.2 If a revised scheme reduces or removes a reduction, it must include appropriate transitional provisions. The current scheme allows for uprating of income bands by inflation without consultation. However, any changes that reduce income bands or discount percentages would

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constitute a revision and require full consultation and approval by full council.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 No immediate implications. However, the new authority will need to adopt its own CTR scheme and consider transitional arrangements for current claimants.

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 The administration of the CTR scheme support the council's Economic Development and Housing priorities by assisting vulnerable residents.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 None.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.4 A full equalities impact assessment was completed when the income-banded scheme was introduced. Uprating income bands has no further equalities implications.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 No new identified risks.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix A – Income Band Table

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Appendix A – Income Bands 2026/27

Discount Band	Discount	Single Person	Single Person with One Child	Single Person with two or more children	Couple	Couple with one child	Couple with two or more children
Income Band 1	100.00%	£0 to £130	£0 to £203	£0 to £277	£0 to £186	£0 to £260	£0 to £333
Income Band 2	80.00%	£130.01 to £159	£203.01 to £243	£277.01 to £316	£186.01 to £214	£260.01 to £299	£333.01 to £372
Income Band 3	55.00%	£159.01 to £186	£243.01 to £283	£316.01 to £355	£214.01 to £243	£299.01 to £338	£372.01 to £413
Income Band 4	30.00%	£186.01 to £214	£283.01 to £321	£355.01 to £395	£243.01 to £270	£338.01 to £378	£413.01 to £451
Nil Award	0.00%	Over £214	Over £321	Over £395	Over £270	Over £378	Over £451

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CABINET 7 January 2026

Medium Term Financial Plan 2026-27 to 2028-29 Fees and Charges and Consultation Outcomes including Worcestershire Regulatory Services Budget Recommendations

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Simon Nock Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Debra Goodall
Report Author	Debra Goodall – Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services debra.goodall@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact telephone:
Wards Affected	N/A
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	All
Non-Key Decision	
An appendix to this report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report updates Members on the 2026/27 budget process and the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to 2028/29, incorporating consultation feedback and fees and charges proposals. Final approval will follow the Local Government Settlement in February 2026.
- 1.2 The Council will set its budget in two stages this year. The initial stage was published in the Autumn. This second report is considered in January 2026 following the Chancellors Autumn Statement and once the Provisional Settlement is known. Final budget approval will be sought at the end of February 2026 following the Final Budget Settlement.
- 1.3 This report also sets out the outcome of the Consultation being carried out on the Budget 2026/27.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is asked to Resolve that:

- The updated budget position for the Council is noted in respect of the 2026/27 annual budget and for the Medium-Term Financial Plan up to 2028/29.

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- The current projected gap to be closed in terms of the Medium-Term Financial Plan.
- A further report in February 2026 will include additional information from the Local Government Settlement to give a final financial position for the Council.

Cabinet is asked to Recommend to Council that:

- Members take account of any feedback from the Consultation on the Budget 2026/27.
- Members endorse the further work / proposals being undertaken on the Medium-Term Financial Plan to produce a balanced position for 2026/27 – 2028/29 including the initial set of savings proposals and pressures including fees and charges increases.
- The recommended increases relating to Worcestershire Regulatory Services of £25k for 2027/28 and £59k for 2028/29 are approved as outlined in paragraph 3.23 of the report.
- The updated three-year capital programme 2026/27 – 2028/29 along with available funding for further capital projects to be undertaken going forward and the proposed projects for funding along with revenue implications.

3. KEY ISSUES

Introduction

- 3.1 The Council sets a 3-year Medium Term Financial Plan every year, with the final Council Tax Resolution being approved by Council in February.

On 19 November 2025, a report was presented to Cabinet for consultation. That budget proposed a number of base assumptions around inflation and grants.

The Chancellors Autumn Budget on 26 November 2025 confirmed a number of key points as set out later in this report.

The report that was presented to Council on 3 December 2025, confirmed the following;

- The starting point from the 2026/27 MTFP is deficit positions of £1.03m and £399k respectively as the starting points for 2026/27 and 2027/28.
- The cost-of-living crisis continues.
- Inflation still not reducing towards the Government target of 2%. The latest level is 3.8% as at October 2025.
- Due to the business rates reset, no growth is assumed in the base funding for business rates.

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

- Having an initial stage which seeks to close as much of the deficit as possible using information known at the end of December 2025.
- Having a second stage after the Christmas break, for which approval will be sought in February 2026, which takes account of the Local Government Settlement whose final detail will not be known until early January 2026.

3.2 This report will set out:

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

The Starting Position for the 2026/27 MTFP

3.3 The Council set a three-year MTFP 2025/26 to 2027/28 in February 2025. The position reflected a balanced budget for 2025/26 with a deficit position of £1.03m in 2026/27 and deficit of £399k in 2027/28.

The national picture including Settlement Dates

3.4 The Chancellors Statement was announced on 26 November 2025 which was later than in previous years. This is a multi-year settlement covering 2026/27 to 2028/29.

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

- **Revised Needs-Based Formula:** Incorporating updated demographic and service demand data across areas such as adult social care, children's services, housing, and other local services.
- **Resource Adjustment Mechanism:** Reflecting councils' ability to raise income locally, particularly through council tax and retained business rates.
- **Area Cost Adjustments:** Accounting for regional variations in service delivery costs.
- **Grant Consolidation:** Multiple small grants will be merged into larger ring-fenced grants to reduce complexity.
 - New Homes Bonus will be scrapped and returned to the core settlement.

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- Homelessness Prevention Grants, Rough Sleeping Initiatives and Temporary Accommodation Support will be merged into a single housing related grant.
- Discretionary Housing Payments and Household Support Fund – proposed for consolidation.

3.5 Changes will be phased in over three years to avoid sudden financial shocks. Some councils may see reductions in Core Spending Power where historic allocations exceed assessed need, but transitional funding will help manage the impact.

In addition to the changes relating to the Fairer Funding Review and Grant Consolidation above, the following should be noted:

- High-value Property Surcharge from April 2028.
Properties worth £2m+ will pay an annual surcharge but revenue will be directed to central government.
- Council Tax Flexibility
District Councils retain ability to increase council tax within referendum limits, but no new blanket powers announced.
- No new additional core funding uplift beyond inflation for district councils.
- £18m for the upgrade and refurbishment of 200 children's play areas across England was announced, with priority given to the most deprived communities. This investment is part of the Government's "Pride in Place" programme.
- Rent Convergence will be reintroduced for social housing rent from 2026. This will allow councils and housing associations to increase rents for properties below 'formula rent' by an additional weekly amount, on top of the standard CPI + 1% annual increase.

3.6 In parallel, the **English Devolution White Paper**, published in late 2024, sets out a roadmap for local government reorganisation. This includes the creation of **Strategic Authorities** and a move towards **universal coverage** of devolved governance structures across England. Councils in two-tier areas and smaller unitaries are expected to engage in reorganisation discussions, with elections for new governance models anticipated in May 2027.

3.7 The provisional Local Government Finance Settlement was announced on 17 December 2025. This set out the detail of funding allocations for individual councils including details of the new funding distribution model (Fairer Funding Review 2.0).

3.8 Overall, District Councils Core Spending Power (CSP) within the Provisional Settlement was lower than other Councils, coming out at an estimated 3.4% increase in CSP over the next three years. Bromsgrove District Council was impacted significantly and is one of several Councils that falls into protection of 95% of income rather than 100% of income in 2026/27.

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3.9 Overall, compared to 2025/26, the Council had a net reduction in CSP of £0.1m in 2026/27, £0.5m in 2027/28 and £0.9m in 2028/29. However, the 2028/29 position was offset by £0.5m additional funding floor transitional funding, resulting in a net reduction of £0.4m. Any transitional safeguards are temporary and Bromsgrove may face further reductions as protections taper.

3.10 The remaining timetable for the 2026/27 process is as follows:

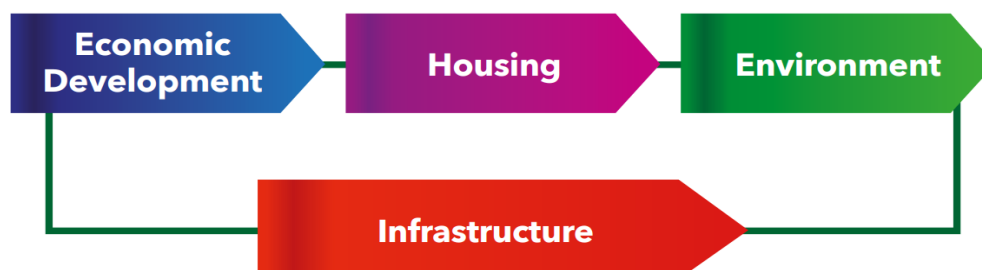
- 5 January 2026 – Stage 1 MTFP Budget and Fees and Charges to Finance and Budget Working Group
- 6 January 2026 – Stage 1 MTFP Budget and Fees and Charges to Overview and Scrutiny
- **7 January 2026 – Stage 1 MTFP Budget and Fees and Charges to Cabinet**
- **7 January 2026 – Consultation outcome to Cabinet**
- 28 January 2026 – Stage 2 MTFP approved by Cabinet Working Group
- w/c 2 Feb or 9 Feb 2026 – Local Government Finance Settlement
- 6 Feb 2026 – Updated Stage 2 MTFP to Finance and Budget Working Group
- **11 Feb 2026 – Updated Stage 2 MTFP approved by Cabinet.**
- **Final Budget and Council Tax Resolution approved by Council - TBC**

Council Strategic Priorities

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

- Economic Development
- Housing
- Environment
- Infrastructure

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



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

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

3.13 Opportunities and Challenges highlighted in the plan include:

The opportunities include:

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

The challenges include:

- The ongoing financial challenge- to both the organisation but also our communities and residents through the real pressures presented by cost of living and the housing market.
- Continuing to support those who are most vulnerable and manage the increasing costs.
- Keeping businesses in the District when they grow.
- Understanding the different community needs across the district.
- The need for enhanced digital and physical connectivity.

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

Strategic Approach

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

- A deficit balance of £1.03m in 2026/27 budget as a start-point position.
- An expected reduction in funding from the Fairer Funding Review of around £2m phased in over three years.
- The requirement to fund the 2025/26 pay award even though it was over the 3% assumed in the Council's budget at a cost of £28k.
- Increases in Council Tax are limited at 2.99% or £5, which is lower than the present rates of inflation.

3.16 The Council is facing a number of significant pressures. However, the issues the Council is facing are not unique, all Councils are facing them. Stage 2 of the budget will adjust for any funding that the Government will provide and also look at other options to close any deficit should the Government

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settlement not bridge any resultant gap. Initiatives that will be assessed in Stage 2 (as more time is required to analyse these individual options) include:

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

The Council's Base Assumptions including Inflation and Grants

- 3.17 It is important to set out the base assumptions under which the budget is constructed. These assumptions can then be stress tested for various scenarios to test the robustness of the overall budget.
- 3.18 Tax Base and Corporate Financing underlying assumptions are as follows:
- Council Tax – Figures assume the full 2.99% allowable increase in year one (increase of c£300k) and 1.99% over the following years (c£200k) of the 3-year MTFP and an increase of 35 properties at £13k.
 - Business Rates Increases – business rates have previously assumed growth in the base based on the combined Herefordshire pooling figures. Due to the Fairer Funding review no increase / growth has been built in as no pooling will take place and no growth is expected above the 10% levy applying to all councils for 100% of baseline need growth. MHCLG have confirmed that any business rates growth realised after the reset will be retained for the duration of the future reset period and will not be considered in calculating transitional protections. Work is ongoing to assess the impact of this, and conversations will be ongoing with MHCLG.
 - Government Grants and New Homes Bonus – Government Grants and New Homes Bonus will be merged into larger ring-fenced grants to reduce complexity.
 - The Council has received the following revenue grant funding which is not part of the above ring-fenced grants:
 - Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging of £1,766,905.34. EPR has to be spent on waste related services in line with the PACKUK guidance. The Council is currently reviewing how it can maximise use of the grant to relieve pressure on core budgets.

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- 3.19 The Council has £14.5m of Levelling Up Funding to be spent which is match funded by £1.6m of Council funding. There is also a contribution of £2.425m which has been requested from monies held in trust by Birmingham City Council on behalf of the former Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP). The Council has £0.9m of UK Shared Prosperity Fund to spend by April 2026. This is both revenue and capital in nature.
- 3.20 There are significant pressures mounting on the Council. At Quarter 2 the overall revenue financial position is a £336k overspend position with savings of £1.213m of which £319k is yet to be delivered.
- 3.21 The total savings target for the year is £1.213m. This is made up of £250k of Departmental Efficiencies from the 2025/26 MTFP, £511k staff turnover rate (based on 5% of staffing budgets) and an ongoing savings budget pressure of £400k.
- 3.22 There has been an announcement that Councillors will be able to rejoin the Local Government Pension Scheme at some point in the future. It has not been made clear when this will come into effect, but it has been confirmed that this will be an additional pressure on Councils going forward and no additional funding will be provided. Councils are currently lobbying the Government on this. It has currently been assumed that this will impact from 1 April 2026.
- 3.23 Corporate changes included in Stage 1 2026/27 are outlined below.
- The additional 0.2% Pay Award increase from 2025/26 which was above the assumed increase in the budget of 3%, amounting to £28k going forward.
 - The Pay Award is assumed at 2% at a cost of £389k.
 - A further 1% Cost of Living of £195k.
 - Cost of Councillors rejoining the LGPS at a cost of £54k.
 - No blanket allowance has been made for inflation on contracts. This is being reviewed individually under Directorate pressures.
 - The Capital Programme at the moment is unchanged. Work is ongoing to prioritise the Departmental and Member bids received earlier in the year.
 - The report presented to Cabinet on 19 November 2025, estimated a reduction in support grant and retained business rates from the Fairer Funding Review of £620k with assumed dampening over three years. The outcome from the Provisional Local Government Settlement was a reduction is £2m phased in over the three years as follows; 2026/27 £500k; 2027/28 £900k; 2028/29 £2m.
 - A contingency of £250k has been built into the MTFP for the next two years to support preparatory work in relation to Local Government Re-organisation.

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- There are also additional costs for proposed increases for Members allowances of £12k and increases for Members National Insurance of £12k.
- Additional costs relating to Worcestershire Regulatory Services are £25k for 2027/28 and £59k for 2028/29. These pressures are the salary related increases and inflation increases from partner authorities applied to Worcestershire Regulatory Services budget. WRS are unable to cover these increases by generating more income. Due to the reduction in the forward pension rate for WRS Service a pressure for 2026/27 is not required. These pressures were approved at WRS Board on 20 November 2025. A further paper on the Food Standards Agency will be presented to the February 2026 Cabinet meeting.
- Extended Producer Responsibility Grant of £1.733m has been received by the Council in 2026/27. It is assumed the grant continues on an ongoing basis.
- This has been offset by savings of £230k from an ongoing utilities inflation budget no longer required and £250k of Corporate Budget savings.
- Further savings have been generated from a change in forward funding rates for pensions of £358k in 2026/27 rising to £380k in 2028/29.
- Grant funding of £441k in 2026/27, £508k in 2027/28 and £571k in 2028/29 has been received for Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse.
- Work is ongoing to review the Service pressures and savings that have been submitted.

Fees and Charges update

- 3.24 Fees and Charges were originally assumed at an increase of 2% reflecting an increase of £100k. A more robust forecast has been reflected in the figures now that fees and charges have been provided by each Service and this will result in further income of £152k in 2026/27, with £153k from 2027/28 onwards.

Impact on Reserves

- 3.25 The Council currently holds General Fund Balances of £13.38m and Earmarked Reserves of £11.27m. The forecast position for reserves is attached as per **Appendix B**.
- 3.26 The level of reserves and balances presently held suggest that although significantly more is held than the suggested 5% recommended level for the General Fund, that any calls on this amount for a significant emergency situation could substantially reduce levels.
- 3.27 The strategic priority must be to safeguard financial sustainability in the medium and long term by continuing to set balanced budgets. Achieving this

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may require targeted investment, efficiency measures, and funding for redundancy costs, whilst protecting reserves. These actions will support the Council in adapting its operating model to remain viable and resilient, particularly in the context of a potential future North Worcestershire Unitary arrangement.

- 3.28 A full review of reserves is currently being undertaken.

Capital Programme

- 3.29 The Council over the past number of years has not spent its capital programme allocations in year. As in previous years, a review has been carried out of
- All schemes that have not started
 - Schemes that have started
 - To assess deliverability and links to strategic priorities.
- 3.30 Carry forward positions as set out in the Q2 Monitoring Report are £14.891m for the Council. Significant amounts of this relate to Grant Funded schemes.
- 3.31 **Appendix A** sets out the current capital programme for 2026/27 – 2029/30.
- 3.32 Work is currently being undertaken to assess the capital submissions for 2026/27 and 2027/28 against prioritisation criteria, including strategic fit, deliverability, and impact on statutory and other services against available funding.

Financial Overview

- 3.33 We are currently budgeting in a time of extreme uncertainty and challenge. Key risks include delivery of savings, workforce capacity, and governance compliance. Mitigation will involve savings tracking, governance checkpoints, and contingency planning for workforce changes. Key issues include:
- Resolution of the approved budget position.
 - Financial stabilisation position
 - Decisions made to address financial pressures and implementing new projects that are not informed by robust data and evidence.
 - Adequate workforce planning.
- 3.34 The core risks of implementation
- Any savings proposal must pass the S151 Officers tests for robustness and delivery. If items are not deliverable or amounts not obtainable, they cannot be included.
 - Implementation of savings to time and budget – there must be full implementation processes documented to ensure implementation within timescales.

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- Non delivery is a high risk - Savings tracking and ensuring implementation happens based on the plans and the assumptions will become part of the Council's core processes.
- Loss of key personnel will be crucial in a number of proposals and mitigation plans will need to be drawn up.
- Capacity to deliver plans.
- Change of corporate direction/priorities
- As per the of the explanatory note issued by Government on 24 July 2025, Government intends to issue planned directions under section 24 of the 2007 Act. These are anticipated to require written consent from successor councils for land disposals worth more than £100,000, entering of contracts of more than £1,000,000 for capital and entering of contracts of more than £100,000 for non-capital (whole life costs). While these directions have not yet been issued, Government have been clear that they expect councillors and statutory officers to be mindful of their responsibilities.

3.35 Work will continue in validating all assumptions, robustly challenging estimates and ensuring the delivery of existing saving plans. Updates continue to be provided as additional information is received and also included in Stage 2 of the MTFs and balanced budget setting process.

3.36 The budget consultation exercise began on 20 November, closing at 9am 2 January 2026. The results will be fed into the January 2026 Cabinet meeting to aid decision making on the budget setting process.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 These are included in Section 3 of the report.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 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 Council's statutory function.

6. Strategic Purpose Implications

Relevant Strategic Purpose

6.1 The Strategic purposes are included in the Council's corporate plan and guides the Council's approach to budget making ensuring we focus on the issues and what are most important for the borough and our communities.

Climate Change Implications

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

7. Other Implications

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

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

Operational Implications

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

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

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

9. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Initial Capital Programme – 2026/27 – 2030/31
Appendix B – Reserves 2024/25 – 2028/29
Appendix C – Fees and Charges (non-commercial)
Appendix D – Fees and Charges (commercial) - **Exempt**
Appendix E – Consultation responses

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10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

<http://svmodgov2019/documents/g4569/Printed%20minutes%2020th-Nov-2025%2016.30%20Worcestershire%20Regulatory%20Services%20Board.pdf?T=1>

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Appendix A – Capital Programme

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Cap Proj	Description	Department	Funding detail	Caried Fwd to 24/5	2024/25 Budget £	2024/25 Total £	Spend 24/5	2025/26 Total £	2026/27 Total £	2027/28 Total £	2028/29 Total £	2029/30 Total £	Council 24/25 £	Council 25/26 £	Council 26/27 £	Council 27/28 £	Council 28/29 £	Council 29/30 £	3rd Party 24/25 £	3rd Party 25/26 £	3rd Party 26/27 £	3rd Party 27/28 £	3rd Party 28/29 £	3rd Party 29/30 £	
	Large Schemes																								
	Levelling Up Fund Fund - Government Funded	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Grant Funding					0	0	0	0	0													
200072	Market Hall (LUF)	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure	Levelling Up Fund	12,337,104		6,109,104	1,921,799	9,228,000	0	0	0	0		3,000,000						6,109,104	6,228,000				
200073	Ef - Fire Station	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure	Levelling Up Fund	1,209,674		1,209,674	77,300	0	0	0	0	0								1,209,674					
	- Council Funded		Borrowing					0	0	0	0	0													
	UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Capital Element	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Grant Funding					0	0	0	0	0													
	- Revenue Element	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Grant Funding					0	0	0	0	0								0	0				
	- Remainder (to be allocated)	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Grant Funding	627,001	1,784,215	2,411,216		918,000	0	0	0	0								0	0				
								0	0	0	0	0								1,784,215	918,000				
								0	0	0	0	0													
200006	Schemes Agreed to Continue	Financial & Customer Services	Public works loan board and grant homes england	0	0	0	-915,914	0	0	0	0	0		0	0										
200007		Community & Housing GF Services	Capital ReceiptsBorrowi		0	0		0	0	0	0	0		0	0										
200008	CCTV	Community & Housing GF Services	Grant income wDC	13,432	1,130,316	1,143,748	567,033	1,285,847	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000								1,130,316	1,285,847	800000	800,000		800,000
200009	Funding for DFGs	Community & Housing GF Services																							
200009	Home Repairs Assistance	Community & Housing GF Services	Long Term Debtors	115,602	50,000	165,602		50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000		50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000							
200010	Energy Efficiency Installation	Community & Housing GF Services	Capital ReceiptsBorrowi	102,190	110,000	212,190		0	0	0	0	0		110,000	0										
200016	New Finance Enterprise system	Financial & Customer Services	Capital Receipts		20,000	20,000		20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000		20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000							
200018	Fleet Replacemnet new line			0	2,180,000	2,180,000	13,860	1,265,000	820,000	0	0	0		2,180,000	1,265,000	820,000	0	0							
200022	Replacement Parking machines and Upkeep of Sites	Environmental Services	Capital ReceiptsBorrowi	12,745	125,000	137,745	85,003	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000		125,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000							
200030	Wheelie Bin Purchase	Environmental Services	Capital ReceiptsBorrowi na	0	60,000	60,000	88,272	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000		60,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000							

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

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

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Appendix B – Reserves Position

	Balance at 31/3/24	2024/25	2024/25	Balance at 31/3/25	2025/26	2025/26	Balance at 31/3/26	2026/27	2026/27	2026/27	Balance at 31/3/27	2027/28	2027/28	Balance at 31/3/28	2028/29	2028/29	Balance at 31/3/29
General Fund Reserve	13,521		139	13,660			13,660	1,350			15,010			15,010			15,010
General Fund Earmarked Reserves:																	
Building Control Other	7			7			7				7			7			7
Building Control Partnerships	82			82			82				82			82			82
Community Services	196			196			196				196			196			196
Economic Regeneration	1,398			1,398			1,398	(600)			798			798			798
Election Services	85			85			85				85			85			85
Environmental Services	27			27			27				27			27			27
Financial Services	4,635	103		4,738		(334)	4,404	(750)		(181)	3,473		(200)	3,273			3,273
Housing Schemes	864			864			864				864			864			864
ICT/Systems	197			197			197				197			197			197
Leisure/Community Safety	115			115			115				115			115			115
Local Neighbourhood Partnerships	16			16			16				16			16			16
Other	67			67			67				67			67			67
Planning & Regeneration	463	137		600			600			(100)	500		(100)	400			400
Regulatory Services (Partner Share)	85			85			85				85			85			85
Shared Services (Severance Costs)	311			311			311				311			311			311
Ward Budget Initiative	0			0	234	(78)	156			(78)	78			78			78
Council Tax Hardship Fund	79			79			79				79			79			79
Matrix Holding Trust	17	12		29			29				29			29			29
Property Services Review				0	100	(100)	0				0			0			0
EPR Funding Allocation				0	1,004		1,004				1,004			1,004			1,004
Covid-19 (General Covid Grant)	766			766			766				766			766			766
Financial Resilience Reserve - LGR								1,370			1,370			1,370			1,370
Covid-19 (Collection Fund)	1,604			1,604	(234)		1,370	(1,370)			0			0			0
Total General Fund	11,014	252	0	11,266	1,104	(512)	11,858	(1,350)	0	(359)	10,149	0	(300)	9,849	0	0	9,849

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Appendix C – Fees and Charges (non-commercial)

Chief Executive

Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.

Service Category	Actual Charge 24/25 £	Actual Increase 25/26	Actual Charge 25/26 £	Charge Increase 26/27	Proposed Charge 26/27 £
<u>Venue hire additional services</u>					
Feature on official social media & website	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Place your promotional material in reception	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Print your materials	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
<u>Full design & print services</u>					
Luxury roll-up banner - Flat rate	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
- any additional	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Vinyl banner	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
- any additional	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Posters (10)	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
- any additional	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Leaflets (500)	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
- any additional	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Printing up to A0 size, with a range of finishing options on papers and cards. Tiny labels to large banners, binding and laminating, booklets, copies, reports, posters, duplicate pads, brochures, leaflets, flyers, & more. Integrated in-house Design team services also available.	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Your bespoke requirements	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery

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Chief Executive

Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.

Service Category	Actual Charge 24/25 £	Actual Increase 25/26	Actual Charge 25/26 £	Charge Increase 26/27	Proposed Charge 26/27 £
<p>PLUS Boost your event with our simple options:- • Promotional services - o Reach the local community with our official social media o Show up on Google with our special website options o Promote your event in our busy public spaces • Design services - o Stand out o Bespoke for you, from our professional design team • Printing services- o All your printing needs in one place o Signs, flyers, agendas, welcome banners, and more Packages available from as little as £30. To find out more contact 01527 881296 or venues@bromsgrove.gov.uk. www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/venues</p> <p>Beautiful wedding stationery to suit your budget The personal touch for all your guests, with bespoke packages from £25 • Choose beautiful invitations • Add table plans, place settings, & more • Photo displays & banners • Signs • Use your own designs, or our designers</p> <p>To find out more just contact 01527 881296 or weddings@bromsgrove.gov.uk. www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/weddings</p>					

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Bereavement Services					
Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.					
Service Category	Actual Charge 24/25 £	Actual Increase 25/26	Actual Charge 25/26 £	Charge Increase 26/27	Proposed Charge 26/27 £
CEMETERY					
The following charges would be subject to 25% plus or minus in year adjustment facility delegated to Bereavement Services Manager or Head of Service to allow for supplier increases such as utilities or memorial suppliers etc					
Interments in a grave					
- children aged under 1 year	No Charge	N/A	No Charge	N/A	No Charge
- children aged under 1 year (non resident)	140.90	4%	146.50	2%	149.40
- children aged 1 year - 17 years	No Charge	N/A	No Charge	N/A	No Charge
- children aged 1 year - 17 years (non resident)	205.20	4%	817.40	2%	833.70
- persons aged 18 and over	786.00	4%	817.40	2%	833.70
Interment in a bricked grave					
Interment of cremated remains	260.80	4%	271.20	2%	276.60
Interment of Cremated Remains (under 17 years non residents only)	96.40	4%	100.30	2%	102.30
Scattering cremated remains in grave					
	110.00	4%	114.40	2%	116.70
Exclusive rights of burial (75-year grants)					
- adult grave space	1,981.10	4%	2,060.30	2%	2,101.50
- child grave space	360.90	4%	375.30	2%	382.80
- cremated remains plot	756.30	4%	786.60	2%	802.30
Renewal of expired deed (single fee charged in all cases)					
-Burial	564.80	4%	587.40	2%	599.10
-Cremated remains	221.20	4%	230.00	2%	234.60
-Ashes grave purchased in reserve	905.90	4%	942.10	2%	960.90
- Full grave purchased in reserve	2,433.40	4%	2,530.70	2%	2,581.30
- Disinterment of Remains - Cremated Remains	688.40	4%	715.90	2%	730.20
- Wooden cremated remains casket	119.90	4%	124.70	2%	127.20

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Bereavement Services					
Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.					
Service Category	Actual Charge 24/25 £	Actual Increase 25/26	Actual Charge 25/26 £	Charge Increase 26/27	Proposed Charge 26/27 £
Motifs	145.90	4%	151.70	2%	154.70
Memorials					
Bench with 10 year lease & top rail engraving (max 40 letters) - £800.00	1,398.30	4%	1,454.20	2%	1,483.30
Bench with 10 year lease & standard silver plaque (max 60 letters) - £760.00	1,330.00	4%	1,383.20	2%	1,410.90
Bench replacement plaque - £110.00	192.30	4%	200.00	2%	204.00
-Assignment / Transfer of Exclusive Right of Burial	128.50	4%	133.60	2%	136.30
Exhumation Ground works	260.80	4%	271.20	2%	276.60
New Container	147.10	4%	153.00	2%	156.10
Officer time	266.90	4%	277.60	2%	283.20
Cremator usage	40.80	4%	42.40	2%	43.20
Certified copy of entry	28.40	4%	29.50	2%	30.10
Bird bath memorial					
5 Year Lease					
- size 1 (small)	262.00	4%	272.50	2%	278.00
- size 2	291.70	4%	303.40	2%	309.50
- size 3	321.30	4%	334.20	2%	340.90
- size 4	349.80	4%	363.80	2%	371.10
- size 5 (large)	379.50	4%	394.70	2%	402.60
10 Year Lease					
- size 1 (small)	407.80	4%	424.10	2%	432.60
- size 2	437.50	4%	455.00	2%	464.10
- size 3	467.20	4%	485.90	2%	495.60
- size 4	495.60	4%	515.40	2%	525.70
- size 5 (large)	522.80	4%	543.70	2%	554.60
20 Year Lease					
- size 1 (small)	553.70	4%	575.80	2%	587.30
- size 2	583.30	4%	606.60	2%	618.70
- size 3	613.00	4%	637.50	2%	650.30
- size 4	641.50	4%	667.20	2%	680.50
- size 5 (large)	671.10	4%	697.90	2%	711.90

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Bereavement Services					
Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.					
Service Category	Actual Charge 24/25 £	Actual Increase 25/26	Actual Charge 25/26 £	Charge Increase 26/27	Proposed Charge 26/27 £
Motif	145.90	4%	151.70	2%	154.70
Memorial Vaults					
Double unit - 20 year lease in first interment and casket	1,636.30	4%	1,701.80	2%	1,735.80
2nd interment of remains including casket	224.90	4%	233.90	2%	238.60
Inscribed tablet of upto 80 letters	182.90	4%	190.20	2%	194.00
Additional letters (per letter)	5.30	4%	5.50	2%	5.60
Standard Motif	131.00	4%	136.20	2%	138.90
Photo of 1 person	157.00	4%	163.30	2%	166.60
Photo of 2 people	248.50	4%	258.40	2%	263.60
Photo of 3 people	320.10	4%	332.90	2%	339.60
Other items are available but quoted individually	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Memorial Posts					
Memorial plaque - 3 year lease	313.9	4%	326.50	2%	333.00
Motif	59.30	4%	61.70	2%	62.90
Replacement Plaque	157.00	4%	163.30	2%	166.60
Private Memorial Garden					
Including memorial - 20 year lease	2,093.50	4%	2,177.20	2%	2,220.70
Additional Inscription on Plaque	181.70	4%	189.00	2%	192.80

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Environmental Services					
Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest £1					
Service Category	Actual Charge 24/25 £	Actual Increase 25/26	Actual Charge 25/26 £	Charge Increase 26/27	Proposed Charge 26/27 £
<u>REFUSE COLLECTION</u>					
<u>Bulky Household Waste</u>					
Proposed Charges					
The Bulky Service operates based on a standard unit price based on size and weight, with collection from the boundary of the property with the public highway. 1 Unit is equivalent to an under unit appliance, and this measure is multiplied up for multiple or larger items and items that cannot be lifted by two people will need to be quoted separately.					
Bulky collection - base price for a single unit*	Full Cost Recovery	12.00	12.00	8%	13.00
*Depending on size, items maybe charged for as a multiple of units					
Items that are classed by WCC as non domestic waste	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Items not on the boundary of the property	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Litter and Dog Bins (Yearly Charge)					
High Usage Site First Bin	1000.5	4%	1,040.50	2%	1,061.00
High Usage Site Additional Bins (each)	412.00	4%	428.50	2%	437.00
Medium Usage Site First Bin	500.20	4%	520.20	2%	531.00
Medium Usage Site Additional Bins (each)	206.00	4%	214.20	2%	219.00
Low Usage Site First Bin	247.20	4%	257.10	2%	262.00
Low Usage Site Additional Bins (each)	105.90	4%	110.10	2%	112.00
Parish Lengthsman Work					
Hourly Rate	18.50	4%	19.20	4%	20.00
High Hedge Complaints					
High Hedge Complaints	735.50	4%	764.90	2%	780.00
High Hedge Complaints - reduced for people on benefits	293.70	4%	305.40	2%	312.00
Investigation of Abandoned Vehicles on Private Land					
Per Vehicle	70.60	4%	73.40	2%	75.00
Mechanically Sweep Private Road / Car Park - Sweeper per Hour + disposal costs	58.90	4%	61.30	2%	63.00

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet 7 January 2026

Environmental Services					
Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest £1					
Service Category	Actual Charge 24/25 £	Actual Increase 25/26	Actual Charge 25/26 £	Charge Increase 26/27	Proposed Charge 26/27 £
Garden Waste Collection Service					
2026/27	54.10	4%	56.30	7%	60.00
2027/28					60.00
Garden waste set up fee - NEW charge					22.00
Road Closures					
New Charge - £80 per Road closure plus VAT	85.60	4%	89.00		60.00

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Regeneration Services					
Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.					
Service Category	Actual Charge 24/25 £	Actual Increase 25/26	Actual Charge 25/26 £	Charge Increase 26/27	Proposed Charge 26/27 £
CAR PARKS					
Churchfields Multi-storey					
Not exceeding 30 minutes	0.00	0%	0.00	0%	0.00
Not exceeding one hour	0.80	0%	0.80	0%	0.80
Not exceeding two hours	1.60	0%	1.60	0%	1.60
Not exceeding three hours	2.40	0%	2.40	0%	2.40
All day	3.00	0%	3.00	0%	3.00
New Road					
Not exceeding 30 minutes	0.00	0%	0.00	0%	0.00
Not exceeding one hour	1.00	0%	1.00	0%	1.00
Not exceeding two hours	1.90	0%	1.90	0%	1.90
Not exceeding three hours	2.90	0%	2.90	0%	2.90
All day	6.00	0%	6.00	0%	6.00
North Bromsgrove					
Not exceeding 30 minutes	0.00	0%	0.00	0%	0.00
Not exceeding one hour	1.00	0%	1.00	0%	1.00
Not exceeding two hours	1.90	0%	1.90	0%	1.90
Not exceeding three hours	2.90	0%	2.90	0%	2.90
All day	6.00	0%	6.00	0%	6.00
Parkside					
Not exceeding 30 minutes	0.00	0%	0.00	0%	0.00
Not exceeding one hour	1.00	0%	1.00	0%	1.00
Not exceeding two hours	1.90	0%	1.90	0%	1.90
Not exceeding three hours	2.90	0%	2.90	0%	2.90
All day	6.00	0%	6.00	0%	6.00
School Drive					
Not exceeding 30 minutes	0.00	0%	0.00	0%	0.00
Not exceeding one hour	1.00	0%	1.00	0%	1.00
Not exceeding two hours	1.90	0%	1.90	0%	1.90
Not exceeding three hours	2.90	0%	2.90	0%	2.90
All day	6.00	0%	6.00	0%	6.00
Stourbridge Road					
Not exceeding 30 minutes	0.00	0%	0.00	0%	0.00
Not exceeding one hour	1.00	0%	1.00	0%	1.00
Not exceeding two hours	1.90	0%	1.90	0%	1.90
Not exceeding three hours	2.90	0%	2.90	0%	2.90
All day	6.00	0%	6.00	0%	6.00

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Regeneration Services					
Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.					
Service Category	Actual Charge 24/25 £	Actual Increase 25/26	Actual Charge 25/26 £	Charge Increase 26/27	Proposed Charge 26/27 £
Recreation Road South					
Not exceeding 30 minutes	0.00	0%	0.00	0%	0.00
Not exceeding one hour	1.00	0%	1.00	0%	1.00
Not exceeding two hours	2.00	0%	2.00	0%	2.00
Not exceeding three hours	3.00	0%	3.00	0%	3.00
Not exceeding four hours	4.00	0%	4.00	0%	4.00
Not exceeding five hours	5.00	0%	5.00	0%	5.00
Not exceeding Six hours	8.00	0%	8.00	0%	8.00
Not exceeding Seven hours	10.60	0%	10.60	0%	10.60
all day	11.00	0%	11.00	0%	11.00
Windsor Street					
Not exceeding 30 minutes	0.00	0%	0.00	0%	0.00
Not exceeding one hour	1.30	0%	1.30	0%	1.30
Not exceeding two hours	2.50	0%	2.50	0%	2.50
Not exceeding three hours	3.80	0%	3.80	0%	3.80
St John Street					
Not exceeding 30 minutes	0.00	0%	0.00	0%	0.00
Not exceeding one hour	1.00	0%	1.00	0%	1.00
Not exceeding two hours	2.50	0%	2.50	0%	2.50
Not exceeding three hours	3.80	0%	3.80	0%	3.80
Season Tickets (valid at long stay car parks only)					
Annual	320.00	0%	320.00	0%	320.00
Quarterly	80.00	0%	80.00	0%	80.00
Season Tickets (valid at Churchfields Road car park only)					
Annual	215.00	0%	215.00	0%	215.00
Quarterly	53.75	0%	53.75	0%	53.75
Parking Fines PCN's On Street					
Certain Contraventions	70.00	N/A	70.00	N/A	70.00
If paid within fourteen days	35.00	N/A	35.00	N/A	35.00
Other contraventions	50.00	N/A	50.00	N/A	50.00
If paid within fourteen days	25.00	N/A	25.00	N/A	25.00
<i>These charges will increase if the charge remains unpaid after the 28 days given on the NTO (Notice to Owner)</i>					
Parking Fines PCN's Off Street					
Certain Contraventions	70.00	N/A	70.00	N/A	70.00
If paid within fourteen days	35.00	N/A	35.00	N/A	35.00
Other contraventions	50.00	N/A	50.00	N/A	50.00
If paid within fourteen days	25.00	N/A	25.00	N/A	25.00
<i>These charges will increase if the charge remains unpaid after the 28 days given on the NTO (Notice to Owner)</i>					
Car Park charges apply everyday					

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Financial and Customer Service

Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.

SERVICE CATEGORY	Actual Charge 24/25 £	Actual Increase 25/26	Actual Charge 25/26 £	Charge Increase 26/27	Proposed Charge 26/27 £
LOCAL TAX COLLECTION					
<u>Council Tax</u>					
Summons Costs (includes Magistrates Court fee of 50p)	79.40	4%	82.60	0.0%	55.80
Liability Order					30.00
<u>NNDR</u>					
Summons Costs (Includes Magistrates Court fee of 50p)	114.80	4%	119.40	0.0%	81.00
					43.00

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL LICENSING FEES AND CHARGES			
	Actual Charge 24/25	Actual Charge 25/26	Proposed Charge 26/27
TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE			
Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence	£278.60	£289.70	£298.00
Private Hire Vehicle Licence	£258.40	£268.70	£277.00
Temporary Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence	£209.00	£217.40	£224.00
Temporary Private Hire Vehicle Licence	£193.80	£201.60	£208.00
Private Hire Operator Licence (5 year)	£1,262.80	£1,313.30	£1,353.00
Hackney Carriage / Private Hire Driver Licence (3 year)	£261.80	£272.30	£280.00
Knowledge Test	£25.90	£26.90	£28.00
Replacement vehicle licence plate	£25.90	£26.90	£28.00
Replacement driver's licence	£23.60	£24.50	£25.00
Transfer of ownership of a licensed vehicle	£42.70	£44.40	£46.00
Criminal Record (DBS) Check	£62.90	£65.40	£67.00
ANIMAL ACTIVITY LICENCES			
Hiring out horses, breeding of dogs, providing or arranging the provision of boarding for cats or dogs and selling animals as pets			
Application fee	£355.00	£365.70	£377.00
Licence fee (1 year)	£199.00	£205.00	£211.00
Licence fee (2 years)	£393.00	£404.80	£417.00
Licence fee (3 years)	£590.00	£607.70	£626.00
Application to vary a licence	£259.00	£266.80	£275.00
Veterinary fees (if applicable)			Recovered at cost
Local authority inspection (on request of licence holder)	£177.00	£182.30	£187.00

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL LICENSING FEES AND CHARGES			
	Actual Charge 24/25	Actual Charge 25/26	Proposed Charge 26/27
ANIMAL ACTIVITY FRANCHISE			
Application fee			£377.00
Application to vary a licence			£275.00
Inspection Fee (per hour)			£187.00
Keeping or training animals for exhibition (only)			
Application fee	£237.00	£244.10	£251.00
Licence fee (3 years)	£324.00	£333.70	£344.00
Application to vary a licence	£170.00	£175.10	£180.00
Veterinary fees (if applicable)			Recovered at cost
Local authority inspection (on request of licence holder)	£177.00	£182.30	£187.00
Keeping of Primates			
Application for grant of a licence (3 years)			£366.00
Application for renewal of a licence			£300.00
Application for variation of a licence			£267.00
Inspection fees			£182.00
Vet inspection fees			Recovered at cost
ACUPUNCTURE, COSMETIC PIERCING, SEMI-PERMANENT SKIN COLOURING, TATTOOING, ELECTROLYSIS			
Fee to register a premises	£152.80	£158.90	£164.00
Fee to register a practitioner	£100.00	£104.00	£107.00
Application to vary a licence			£74.00
GAMBLING ACT 2005 (inc. SMALL LOTTERIES)			
Small society lotteries			
Fee to register a small society lottery	£40.00	£40.00	£40.00
Small society lottery annual maintenance fee	£20.00	£20.00	£20.00
Application for the grant of a premises licence			
Betting (excluding tracks)	£1,978.50	£2,057.60	£2,119.00
Betting Tracks	£1,650.50	£1,716.50	£1,768.00
Bingo	£2,371.80	£2,466.70	£2,541.00
Adult Gaming Centres	£1,354.90	£1,409.10	£1,451.00
Family Entertainment Centres	£1,354.90	£1,409.10	£1,451.00

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL LICENSING FEES AND CHARGES			
	Actual Charge 24/25	Actual Charge 25/26	Proposed Charge 26/27
Premises licence annual fees			
Betting (excluding tracks)	£407.90	£424.20	£437.00
Betting Tracks	£678.60	£705.70	£727.00
Bingo	£678.60	£705.70	£727.00
Adult Gaming Centres	£678.60	£705.70	£727.00
Family Entertainment Centres	£510.10	£530.50	£546.00
Application to vary a premises licence			
Betting (excluding tracks)	£1,017.90	£1,058.60	£1,090.00
Betting Tracks	£847.10	£881.00	£907.00
Bingo	£1,189.80	£1,237.40	£1,275.00
Adult Gaming Centres	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
Family Entertainment Centres	£786.50	£818.00	£843.00
Application to transfer a premises licence			
Betting (excluding tracks)	£811.20	£843.60	£869.00
Betting Tracks	£643.80	£669.60	£690.00
Bingo	£812.30	£844.80	£870.00
Adult Gaming Centres	£811.20	£843.60	£869.00
Family Entertainment Centres	£643.80	£669.60	£690.00
Application for a provisional statement			
Betting (excluding tracks)	£1,978.50	£2,057.60	£2,119.00
Betting Tracks	£1,650.50	£1,716.50	£1,768.00
Bingo	£2,371.80	£2,466.70	£2,541.00
Adult Gaming Centres	£1,354.90	£1,409.10	£1,451.00
Family Entertainment Centres	£1,354.90	£1,409.10	£1,451.00
Application for the grant of a premises licence (provisional statement holders)			
Betting (excluding tracks)	£833.60	£866.90	£893.00
Betting Tracks	£833.60	£866.90	£893.00
Bingo	£837.10	£870.60	£897.00
Adult Gaming Centres	£837.10	£870.60	£897.00
Family Entertainment Centres	£696.60	£724.50	£746.00

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL LICENSING FEES AND CHARGES			
	Actual Charge 24/25	Actual Charge 25/26	Proposed Charge 26/27
Application for reinstatement of a premises licence			
Betting (excluding tracks)	£790.90	£822.50	£847.00
Betting Tracks	£631.40	£656.70	£676.00
Bingo	£790.90	£822.50	£847.00
Adult Gaming Centres	£790.90	£822.50	£847.00
Family Entertainment Centres	£631.40	£656.70	£676.00
Premises licence fees (miscellaneous)			
Copy of a premises licence (all types)	£25.00	£25.00	£25.00
Notification of a change in respect of a premises licence (all types)	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00
Licensed Premises Gaming Machine Permits			
Application for grant of a permit	£150.00	£150.00	£150.00
Application for variation of a permit	£100.00	£100.00	£100.00
Application for the transfer of a permit	£25.00	£25.00	£25.00
Annual permit fee	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00
Change of name shown on a permit	£25.00	£25.00	£25.00
Request for a copy of a permit	£15.00	£15.00	£15.00
Licensed Premises Gaming Machines (Automatic Entitlement)			
Fee to serve notification	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00
Club Gaming Permits			
Application for grant of a permit	£200.00	£200.00	£200.00
Application for grant of a permit (Club premises certificate holders)	£100.00	£100.00	£100.00
Application for variation of a permit	£100.00	£100.00	£100.00
Application for renewal of a permit	£200.00	£200.00	£200.00
Application for renewal of a permit (club premises certificate holders)	£100.00	£100.00	£100.00
Annual permit fee	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00
Request for a copy of a permit	£15.00	£15.00	£15.00
Club Machine Permits			
Application for grant of a permit	£200.00	£200.00	£200.00
Application for grant of a permit (Club premises certificate holders)	£100.00	£100.00	£100.00
Application for variation of a permit	£100.00	£100.00	£100.00
Application for renewal of a permit	£200.00	£200.00	£200.00
Application for renewal of a permit (club premises certificate holders)	£100.00	£100.00	£100.00
Annual permit fee	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00
Request for a copy of a permit	£15.00	£15.00	£15.00

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL LICENSING FEES AND CHARGES

	Actual Charge 24/25	Actual Charge 25/26	Proposed Charge 26/27
Family Entertainment Centre Gaming Machine Permit			
Application for grant of a permit	£300.00	£300.00	£300.00
Application for renewal of a permit	£300.00	£300.00	£300.00
Change of name shown on a permit	£25.00	£25.00	£25.00
Request for a copy of a permit	£15.00	£15.00	£15.00
Prize Gaming Permits			
Application for grant of a permit	£300.00	£300.00	£300.00
Application for renewal of a permit	£300.00	£300.00	£300.00
Change of name shown on a permit	£25.00	£25.00	£25.00
Request for a copy of a permit	£15.00	£15.00	£15.00
Temporary Use Notices			
Fee to serve a Temporary Use Notice	£307.10	£319.40	£329.00
Request for a copy of a Temporary Use Notice	£25.00	£25.00	£25.00
STREET TRADING			
Annual street trading consent - food - initial	£1,625.80	£1,690.80	£1,742.00
Annual street trading consent - food - renewal	£1,490.90	£1,550.50	£1,597.00
Annual street trading consent - non-food - initial	£1,356.10	£1,410.30	£1,453.00
Annual street trading consent - non-food - renewal	£1,220.10	£1,268.90	£1,307.00
Day licence			£80.00
Consecutive day fee			£25.00
SCRAP METAL DEALERS LICENCES			
Application for a new site licence	£311.00	£320.30	£330.00
Fee per additional site	£160.00	£164.80	£170.00
Application for renewal of a site licence	£257.00	£264.70	£273.00
Fee per additional site	£170.00	£175.10	£180.00
Application for a new collectors licence	£155.00	£159.70	£165.00
Application for renewal of a collectors licence	£102.00	£105.10	£108.00
Variation of a licence	£70.00	£72.10	£74.00
Request for a copy of a licence (if lost or stolen)	£27.00	£27.80	£29.00

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL LICENSING FEES AND CHARGES			
	Actual Charge 24/25	Actual Charge 25/26	Proposed Charge 26/27
ZOO LICENCES			
Application for grant or renewal of a licence	£267.50	£278.20	£287.00
Secretary of state inspector and veterinary fees	Recovered at cost	Recovered at cost	Recovered at cost
DANGEROUS WILD ANIMALS (DWA)			
Application for grant or renewal of a licence	£251.50	£261.60	£269.00
Inspector and Vet's fees (for every inspection)	Recovered at cost	Recovered at cost	Recovered at cost
SEX ESTABLISHMENTS			
Application for grant or renewal of a licence	£1,091.40	£1,135.10	£1,169.00
Application for transfer of licence	£535.00	£556.40	£573.00
Application for variation of licence	£1,091.40	£1,135.10	£1,169.00
PAVEMENT LICENCES			
Application for a new pavement licence - 2 years		£500.00	£500.00
Application for a renewal pavement licence - 2 years		£350.00	£350.00
HYPNOTISM			
Application for authorisation	£53.50	£55.60	£57.00
An admin charge will be payable on receipt of refund request for any type of licence			£30.00

COUNCIL

Cabinet 7 January 2026

LICENSING ACT 2003 - FEES SET BY CENTRAL GOVERNMENT - SAME FOR ALL DISTRICT COUNCILS

Temporary Event Notices

Fee to serve a Temporary Event Notice (TEN)	£21.00
Copy of a TEN (if lost or stolen)	£10.50

Personal licences

Application for the grant of a personal licence	£37.00
Fee for a replacement personal licence (if lost or stolen)	£10.50
Fee to notify a change of name or address on a personal licence	£10.50

Applications for new premises licences or club premises certificates

Applications for the grant of a premises licence or club premises certificate	
Band A (NDRV 0 - 4300)	£100.00
Band B (NDRV 4301 - 33000)	£190.00
Band C (NDRV 33001 - 87000)	£315.00
Band D (NDRV 87001 - 125000)	£450.00
Band E (NDRV 125001 +)	£635.00

Applications for the grant of a premises licence or club premises certificate (where the premises is used exclusively or primarily for the supply of alcohol for consumption on the premises)

Band A (NDRV 0 - 4300)	£100.00
Band B (NDRV 4301 - 33000)	£190.00
Band C (NDRV 33001 - 87000)	£315.00
Band D (NDRV 87001 - 125000)	£900.00
Band E (NDRV 125001 +)	£1,905.00

Additional fees for grant of a premises licences (for large venues with capacities over 5000)

5000 - 9999	£1,000.00
10000 - 14999	£2,000.00
15000 - 19999	£4,000.00
20000 - 29999	£8,000.00
30000 - 39999	£16,000.00
40000 - 49999	£24,000.00
50000 - 59999	£32,000.00
60000 - 69999	£40,000.00
70000 - 79999	£48,000.00
80000 - 89999	£56,000.00

Applications to vary premises licences and club premises certificates

Applications to vary a premises licence or club premises certificate	
Band A (NDRV 0 - 4300)	£100.00
Band B (NDRV 4301 - 33000)	£190.00
Band C (NDRV 33001 - 87000)	£315.00
Band D (NDRV 87001 - 125000)	£450.00
Band E (NDRV 125001 +)	£635.00

Applications to vary a premises licence (where the premises is used exclusively or primarily for the supply of alcohol for consumption on the premises)

Band A (NDRV 0 - 4300)	£100.00
Band B (NDRV 4301 - 33000)	£190.00
Band C (NDRV 33001 - 87000)	£315.00
Band D (NDRV 87001 - 125000)	£900.00
Band E (NDRV 125001 +)	£1,905.00

Application for a minor variation of a premises licence or club premises certificate	£89.00
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Annual maintenance fees

Annual premises licence or club premises certificate fee	
Band A (NDRV 0 - 4300)	£70.00
Band B (NDRV 4301 - 33000)	£180.00
Band C (NDRV 33001 - 87000)	£295.00
Band D (NDRV 87001 - 125000)	£320.00
Band E (NDRV 125001 +)	£350.00

Annual premises licence (where the premises is used exclusively or primarily for the supply of alcohol for consumption on the premises)

Band A (NDRV 0 - 4300)	£70.00
Band B (NDRV 4301 - 33000)	£180.00
Band C (NDRV 33001 - 87000)	£295.00
Band D (NDRV 87001 - 125000)	£640.00
Band E (NDRV 125001 +)	£1,050.00

Additional annual fees premises licences (for large venues with capacities over 5000)

5000 - 9999	£500.00
10000 - 14999	£1,000.00
15000 - 19999	£2,000.00
20000 - 29999	£4,000.00
30000 - 39999	£8,000.00
40000 - 49999	£12,000.00
50000 - 59999	£16,000.00
60000 - 69999	£20,000.00
70000 - 79999	£24,000.00
80000 - 89999	£28,000.00

Other applications and notifications

Application to transfer a premises licence	£23.00
Application to vary a premises licence to nominate a premises supervisor	£23.00
Fee to change name or address of the holder of a premises licence	£10.50
Fee to change the name or address of a designated premises supervisor on a premises licence	£10.50
Fee for a replacement premises licence or club premises certificate (if lost or stolen)	£10.50
Fee to notify licensing authority of a property interest in a premises	£21.00
Notification of change or club name or alteration to club rules	£10.50
Notification of change of registered address of club	£10.50
Interim authority notice following death, incapacity or insolvency of licence holder	£23.00
Application for grant of a provisional statement	£315.00

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services					
Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.					
Service Category	Actual Charge 24/25 £	Actual Increase 25/26	Actual Charge 25/26	Charge Increase 26/27	Proposed Charge 26/27
Development Management					
Pre Application Fee					
Residential Development/ Development Site Area/Proposed Gross Floor Area					
Householder Development	128.29	4%	133.40	2%	136.10
1* Dwelling	275.42	4%	286.40	2%	292.10
2-4 Dwellings	411.95	4%	428.40	2%	437.00
5-9 Dwellings	823.90	4%	856.90	2%	874.00
10 - 49 Dwellings	1,647.80	4%	1,713.70	2%	1,748.00
50 - 99 Dwellings	3,020.18	4%	3,141.00	2%	3,203.80
100 - 199 Dwellings	4,119.50	4%	4,284.30	2%	4,370.00
200+ Dwellings	5,490.71	4%	5,710.30	4%	5,938.70
* includes one-for-one replacements					
Non-residential development (floor space)					
Floor area is measured externally					
Less than 500sqm	381.35	4%	396.60	2%	404.50
500 - 999sqm	687.37	4%	714.90	2%	729.20
1000 - 1999sqm	1,373.56	4%	1,428.50	2%	1,457.10
2000 - 4999sqm	2,744.76	4%	2,854.60	2%	2,911.70
5000 - 9999sqm	3,432.13	4%	3,569.40	2%	3,640.80
10,000sqm or greater	4,119.50	4%	4,284.30	2%	4,370.00
Non-residential development (site area) where no building operations are proposed					
Less than 0.5ha	413.13	4%	429.70	2%	438.30
0.5 - 0.99ha	823.90	4%	856.90	2%	874.00
1 - 1.25ha	1,373.56	4%	1,428.50	2%	1,457.10
1.26 - 2ha	2,744.76	4%	2,854.60	2%	2,911.70
2ha or greater	4,119.50	4%	4,284.30	4%	4,455.70
Variation/removal of conditions and engineering operations (flat fee)	254.23	4%	264.40	2%	269.70
Recovering Costs for seeking specialist advice in connection with Planning proposals	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Monitoring Fees to be applied to Planning Obligations					
Obligations where the Council is the recipient					
All contributions (financial or non-monetary) - PER OBLIGATION	368.40	4%	383.10	2%	390.80
Pre-commencement trigger - PER OBLIGATION	128.29	4%	133.40	2%	136.10
Other Triggers (Phased Payments/Provision of Infrastructure) - PER TRIGGER POINT	190.67	4%	198.30	2%	202.30
Other obligations (eg. Occupation restrictions or removal of Permitted Development rights) - PER CLAUSE	153.01	4%	159.10	2%	162.30
Obligations for another signatory (eg. Worcestershire County Council)					
All contributions (financial or non-monetary) - PER OBLIGATION	222.45	4%	231.40	2%	236.00
Pre-commencement trigger - PER OBLIGATION	77.68	4%	80.80	2%	82.40
Other Triggers (Phased Payments/Provision of Infrastructure) - PER TRIGGER POINT	114.17	4%	118.70	2%	121.10
Ongoing Monitoring of large sites	507.29	4%	527.60	2%	538.20
Fee Concessions					
Some pre-application advice will still be provided free of charge. For example where the development is for the direct benefit of a disabled person (and as such there would be no fee incurred to make the planning application) or where works relate to a listed building.					
Some advice is provided at a reduced or concessionary rate. If the proposal is being submitted by or is for the benefit of a Parish Council or other Local Authority, then the appropriate fee is reduced by 50%. In addition if the scheme relates to a solely affordable housing scheme, the Applicant is a Registered Social Landlord or Housing Association the fee for pre application advice would also be reduced by 50%.					

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services

Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.

Service Category	Actual Charge 24/25 £	Actual Increase 25/26	Actual Charge 25/26	Charge Increase 26/27	Proposed Charge 26/27
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BUILDING CONTROL - VAT AT 20%

Explanatory notes

1 Before you build, extend or convert a building to which the building regulations apply, you or your agent must submit a Building regulations application. The charge you have to pay depends on the type of work, the number of separate properties, or the total floor area. You can use the following tables with the current charges regulations to work out the charges. If you have any difficulties, please do not hesitate to call us.

2 The charges are as follows.

Category A: New domestic homes, flats or conversions etc.

Category B: Extending or altering existing homes

Category C: Any other project including commercial or industrial projects etc.

Individually determined fees are available for most projects. We would be happy to discuss these with you if you require.

In certain cases, we may agree that you can pay charges in instalments. Please contact us for further discussions.

3 Exemptions and reductions in charges.

a If your plans have been approved or rejected, you won't have to pay again if you resubmit plans for the same work which has not started, provided you resubmit with 3 years of the original application date.

b You don't have to pay charges if the work will provide access to a building or is an extension to store medical equipment or provide medical treatment facilities for a disabled person. In order to claim exemption, an application must be supported by appropriate evidence as to the nature of the disabled persons disability. In these regulations, a 'disabled person' is a person who is described under section 29(1) of the National Assistance Act 1948 (as extended by section 8(2) Mental Health Act 1959).

4 You have to pay VAT for all local authority Building Regulation charges, except for the regularisation charge. VAT is included in the attached fees.

5. Regularisation applications are available for cases where unauthorised building work was undertaken without an application. Such work can only be regularised where the work was undertaken after October 1985 and not within the last 6 months. The Authority is not obliged to accept Regularisation applications. Regularisation application fees are individually determined. Please contact us to discuss regularisation application fees.

6. Reversion applications. Where the control of a building project passes from a third party to the Council a reversion application will be required. Reversion application fees are individually determined.

7. The additional charge refers to electrical works undertaken by a non qualified person who is unable to certify their work to appropriate electrical regulations.

Other information

1 These notes are for guidance only and do not replace Statutory Instrument 2010 number 0404 which contains the full statement of the law, and the Scheme of Recovery of Fees dated April 2014.

2 These guidance notes refer to the charges that you have to pay for building control services within North Worcestershire.

Telephone payments are accepted. Please contact the relevant payment centre with your address and card details:

Bromsgrove 01527 881402

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Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services					
Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.					
Service Category	Actual Charge 24/25 £	Actual Increase 25/26	Actual Charge 25/26	Charge Increase 26/27	Proposed Charge 26/27
<u>TABLE A: Standard Charges for the Creation or Conversion to New Housing</u>					
Application Charge	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Regularisation Charge	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Additional Charge	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
<u>TABLE B: Domestic Extensions and alterations to a Single Building (please contact us)</u>					
Application Charge - New	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Regularisation Charge - New	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Additional Charge - New	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Garage Conversion to habitable room					
Application Charge	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Regularisation Charge	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Additional Charge	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Electrical works by non-qualified electrician					
Application Charge	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Regularisation Charge	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Renovation of thermal element					
Application Charge	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Regularisation Charge	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Installing steel beam(s) within an existing house					
Application Charge	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Regularisation Charge	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery

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Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services

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Service Category	Actual Charge 24/25 £	Actual Increase 25/26	Actual Charge 25/26	Charge Increase 26/27	Proposed Charge 26/27
Window replacement					
Application Charge	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Regularisation Charge	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Installing a new boiler or wood burner etc.					
Application Charge	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Regularisation Charge	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
<u>TABLE C: All Other works - Alterations and new build</u>					
Application Charge	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Regularisation Charge	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery

For Office or shop fit outs, installation of a mezzanine floor and all other work where the estimated cost exceeds £50,000, please contact the Building Control Office on 01527 881402 for a competitive quote

These charges have been set on the following basis:

1. That the building work does not consist of, or include innovative or high risk construction techniques and / or duration of the building work from commencement to completion does not exceed 12 months
2. That the design and building work is undertaken by a person or company that is competent to carry out the relevant design and building work. If they are not, the building control service may impose supplementary charges.

Building Control – Supplementary Charges

If you are selling a property that has been extended or altered, you need to provide evidence to prospective purchasers that any relevant building work has been inspected and approved by a Building Control Body. That evidence is in the form of a Building Regulations Completion / Final Certificate and / or an Approval or Initial Notice (called the 'authorised documents' in the Home Information Pack Regulations).

Legal entitlement to a Completion Certificate is subject to conditions. In cases where the Council is not told that building work is completed, or the building is occupied without addressing outstanding Building Regulation matters, a certificate is not issued. Despite the best efforts of the Council's Building Control Surveyors, many home owners who undertake building works fail to obtain a Completion Certificate and their application is archived. A fee is payable to re-open archived building regulations applications for the purposes of issuing a completion certificate.

Other charges are payable where we are asked to withdraw a Building Regulations application and refund fees, or asked to re-direct inspection fee invoices. Fees are payable in cleared funds before the release of any authorised documents or other actions listed below.

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Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.					
Service Category	Actual Charge 24/25 £	Actual Increase 25/26	Actual Charge 25/26	Charge Increase 26/27	Proposed Charge 26/27
ARCHIVED APPLICATIONS					
Process request to re-open archived building control file, resolve case and issue completion certificate (Administration Fee)	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Each visit to site in connection with resolving archived building control cases (Per Site Visit)	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS					
Process request	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
<u>With additional fees of:</u>					
Withdraw Building Notice application where no inspections have taken place	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Withdraw Building Notice application where inspections have taken place	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Withdrawn Full Plans application without plans being checked or any site inspections being made	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Withdraw Full Plans application after plan check but before any inspections on site	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery

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Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services					
Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.					
Withdraw Full Plans application after plan check and after site inspections made	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
RE-DIRECT INSPECTION FEES / ISSUE COPY DOCUMENTS					
Process request to re-invoice inspection fee to new addressee or issue copies of previously issued Completion Certificates, Plans Approval Notices or Building Notice acceptances.	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Optional Consultancy Services	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Charges Note					
Under the Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 2010 local authority building control is not permitted to make a profit or loss. The service is to ensure full cost recovery and no more. Any surplus or loss made against expenditure budgets is to be offset against the following years fees and charges setting. In addition, the level of competition from the private sector needs to continually defended against therefore it is proposed to curtail both the extent of fee categories published and to make extensive use of the fact that legislation now allows local authorities to offer site specific quotations for building regulations applications. In addition expenditure of the service has reduced since the creation of a shared service resulting in a reduction in the hourly rate charged by the service. Inspection fees equate to 70% of the total fee payable for a project.					
SPORTS DEVELOPMENT					
Community exercise class	4.35	4%	4.50	2%	4.60
Specialised health class	4.35	4%	4.50	2%	4.60
Primary Sports Project (Standard Curriculum)	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
Primary Sports Project (Specialist Curriculum)	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
Inclusive activities (hourly rate)	4.12	4%	4.30	2%	4.40
Inclusive activities (90 minute rate)	4.71	4%	4.90	2%	5.00
Inclusive activities (2 hour rate)	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
Multi Skills clubs					
Community Gymnastics	4.94	4%	5.10	2%	5.20
Couch 2 5k	1.18	4%	1.20	2%	1.20
PSI Falls Prevention	4.35	4%	4.50	2%	4.60

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SANDERS PARK

Tennis Courts (per court per Hour)

- Adult	9.36	4%	9.70	2%	9.90
- Adult & Junior	8.18	4%	8.50	2%	8.70
- Junior/Senior Citizen	6.24	4%	6.50	2%	6.60

Tennis Courts (per court per 1 and 1/2 Hour)

- Adult	13.54	4%	14.10	2%	14.40
- Adult & Junior	11.77	4%	12.20	2%	12.40
- Junior/Senior Citizen	10.36	4%	10.80	2%	11.00

Bowls

- Adult (per hour)	9.89	4%	10.30	2%	10.50
- Junior (per hour)	5.18	4%	5.40	2%	5.50
- Senior Citizen (per hour)	6.83	4%	7.10	2%	7.20
- Adult (season ticket)	64.74	4%	67.30	2%	68.60
- Junior (season ticket)	35.31	4%	36.70	2%	37.40
- Senior Citizen (season ticket)	47.08	4%	49.00	2%	50.00
Hire of Bowls Green Pavillion - half day (4 hours) - new charge	70.62	4%	73.40	2%	74.90
Hire of Bowls Green Pavillion - full day - new charge	105.93	4%	110.20	2%	112.40

OTHER RECREATION GROUNDS AND OPEN SPACES

Football

SENIOR 11 a side with changing

Match games	68.27	4%	71.00	2%	72.40
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SENIOR 11 a side without changing

Match games	50.02	4%	52.00	2%	53.00
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JUNIOR 9 or 11 a side with changing

Match games	37.66	4%	39.20	2%	40.00
per season (x 12 games)	451.97	4%	470.00	2%	479.40

JUNIOR 9 or 11 a side without changing

Match games	28.25	4%	29.40	2%	30.00
per season (x 12 games)	338.98	4%	352.50	2%	359.60

MINI FOOTBALL 5 or 7 a side

Match games	20.60	4%	21.40	2%	21.80
per season (x 12 games)	247.17	4%	257.10	2%	262.20

ALLOTMENTS

- Rent per acre equivalent to 0.404685 hectares	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
- Rent per 3/4 acre equivalent to 0.303514 hectares	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
- Rent per 1/2 acre equivalent to 0.202342 hectares	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
- Rent per 1/4 acre equivalent to 0.101171 hectares	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
- Rent per 1/16 acre equivalent to 0.25529 hectares	80.74	4%	84.00	2%	85.70
- Rent per 1/32 acre equivalent to 0.01264 hectares	53.91	4%	56.10	2%	57.20

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Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services

Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.

Events, Open Spaces and Civic Spaces Hire

£250 - £1500 Bond Payable

Events

Commercial Rates

Small Attendance = 0 to 99

Per half day

188.32 4% 195.90 2% 199.80

Per Day

341.33 4% 355.00 2% 362.10

Medium Attendance = 100 to 499

Per half day

264.83 4% 275.40 2% 280.90

Per Day

453.15 4% 471.30 2% 480.70

Large Attendance = 500 to 1999

Per half day

341.33 4% 355.00 2% 362.10

Per Day

570.85 4% 593.70 2% 605.60

Community Rates

Small Attendance = 0 to 99

Per half day

77.68 4% 80.80 2% 82.40

Per Day

126.53 4% 131.60 2% 134.20

Medium Attendance = 100 to 499

Per half day

95.34 4% 99.20 2% 101.20

Per Day

160.07 4% 166.50 2% 169.80

Large Attendance = 500 to 1999

Per half day

112.99 4% 117.50 2% 119.90

Per Day

196.56 4% 204.40 2% 208.50

Charities / Not For Profit Organisations

Small Attendance = 0 to 99

Per half day

52.97 4% 55.10 2% 56.20

Per Day

87.10 4% 90.60 2% 92.40

Medium Attendance = 100 to 499

Per half day

63.56 4% 66.10 2% 67.40

Per Day

105.34 4% 109.60 2% 111.80

Large Attendance = 500 to 1999

Per half day

76.51 4% 79.60 2% 81.20

Per Day

139.24 4% 144.80 2% 147.70

Fairs & Circuses Min of 3 day Hire

Small Attendance = 0 to 99 Per Day

529.65 4% 550.80 2% 561.80

Medium and large attendance more than 99 per day (new Charge)

564.96 4% 587.60 2% 599.40

Boleyn Road, Frankley

- fairs (per day)

557.66 4% 580.00 2% 591.60

- deposit

2,550.21 4% 2,652.20 2% 2,705.20

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services

Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.

Market Street Recreation Ground - fairs (per day) - deposit One free day is allowed for each of the above bookings by fairs/circuses. Other hiring's – charge to be decided at the time of application. Football pitches and parks are not available for any organised football activity during the period June 1st to July 15th. This is to allow the pitches a rest period and for maintenance work to take place. After this date any organised football training must be paid for at a cost of £10 per session for one team and a negotiated price for more than one team. Please contact the Parks Team to book this, pitches will be allocated at our discretion.	561.84	4%	584.30	2%	596.00
	2,574.98	4%	2,678.00	2%	2,731.60
Ø Set up and Clearance charged @ 50% of applicable rate Ø Any event in excess of 1999 attendees is STN Event - Officer Support for event (per hour) Power and Water Supply Additional Charges Additional Costs for Outdoor Fitness Space: Ø Set up and Clearance charged @ 50% of applicable rate Outdoor Fitness Session Commercial Rates (Per Day) Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) One day maximum usage per week Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) Two days maximum usage per week Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) Three days maximum usage per week Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) One day maximum usage per week Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) Two days maximum usage per week Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) Three days maximum usage per week Annual Fee One day maximum usage per week Annual Fee Two days maximum usage per week Annual Fee Three days maximum usage per week Community Rates (Per Day) Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) One day maximum usage per week Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) Two days maximum usage per week Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) Three days maximum usage per week Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) One day maximum usage per week Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) Two days maximum usage per week Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) Three days maximum usage per week Annual Fee One day maximum usage per week Annual Fee Two days maximum usage per week Annual Fee Three days maximum usage per week Trial fee (1 day per week - MAX 4 week trial) The Bird Box - NEW CHARGE Use of Power connection	Full Cost Recovery Full Cost Recovery	N/A N/A	Full Cost Recovery Full Cost Recovery	N/A N/A	Full Cost Recovery Full Cost Recovery
Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) One day maximum usage per week	488.46	4%	508.00	2%	518.20
Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) Two days maximum usage per week	788.59	4%	820.10	2%	836.50
Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) Three days maximum usage per week	853.33	4%	887.50	2%	905.30
Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) One day maximum usage per week	243.64	4%	253.40	2%	258.50
Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) Two days maximum usage per week	488.46	4%	508.00	2%	518.20
Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) Three days maximum usage per week	729.74	4%	758.90	2%	774.10
Annual Fee One day maximum usage per week	635.58	4%	661.00	2%	674.20
Annual Fee Two days maximum usage per week	1,035.76	4%	1,077.20	2%	1,098.70
Annual Fee Three days maximum usage per week	1,235.85	4%	1,285.30	2%	1,311.00
Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) One day maximum usage per week	241.29	4%	250.90	2%	255.90
Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) Two days maximum usage per week	361.34	4%	375.80	2%	383.30
Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) Three days maximum usage per week	423.72	4%	440.70	2%	449.50
Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) One day maximum usage per week	96.51	4%	100.40	2%	102.40
Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) Two days maximum usage per week	241.29	4%	250.90	2%	255.90
Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) Three days maximum usage per week	361.34	4%	375.80	2%	383.30
Annual Fee One day maximum usage per week	300.14	4%	312.10	2%	318.30
Annual Fee Two days maximum usage per week	541.42	4%	563.10	2%	574.40
Annual Fee Three days maximum usage per week	602.62	4%	626.70	2%	639.20
Trial fee (1 day per week - MAX 4 week trial)	123.59	4%	128.50	2%	131.10
The Bird Box - NEW CHARGE Use of Power connection	2.00	4%	2.10	2%	2.10

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Legal, Democratic and Property Services					
Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.					
Service Category	Actual Charge 24/25 £	Actual Increase 25/26	Actual Charge 25/26 £	Charge Increase 26/27	Proposed Charge 26/27 £
<u>ELECTORAL REGISTRATION</u>					
<u>Register Sales*</u>					
In data form					
- basic fee	20.00	N/A	20.00	N/A	20.00
- for each 1,000 names or part thereof	20.00	N/A	20.00	N/A	20.00
In printed form					
- basic fee	10.00	N/A	10.00	N/A	10.00
- for each 1,000 names or part thereof	5.00	N/A	5.00	N/A	5.00
<u>Marked Election Register Sales*</u>					
In data form					
- basic fee	10.00	N/A	10.00	N/A	10.00
- for each 1,000 names or part thereof	1.00	N/A	1.00	N/A	1.00
In printed form					
- basic fee	10.00	N/A	10.00	N/A	10.00
- for each 1,000 names or part thereof	2.00	N/A	2.00	N/A	2.00
Copy of return of Election expenses plus 20p per sheet, per side.	5.00	N/A	5.00	N/A	5.00
<u>Miscellaneous Charges</u>					
Address labels printed	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
- for each 1,000 properties or part thereof	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
- street list	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
* - Data Property Addresses	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
* - For each 1,000 properties or part thereof	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
<u>LEGAL</u>					
- Legal work (per hour)	183.10	4%	190.40	2%	194.20
- Legal Consent - Admin Fee	32.60	4%	33.90	2%	34.60
- RTB	255.90	4%	266.10	2%	271.40
- Consent for proposed works	201.10	4%	209.10	2%	213.30
- Retrospective Consent	211.60	4%	220.10	2%	224.50
Garden License	311.70	4%	324.20	2%	330.70
Wayleave Agreement	467.50	4%	486.20	2%	495.90
Deed of Grant or Easement	490.00	4%	509.60	2%	519.80
License to Assign	490.00	4%	509.60	2%	519.80
Rent Deposit Deed	490.00	4%	509.60	2%	519.80
Authorised Guarantee Agreement	490.00	4%	509.60	2%	519.80
License for Alterations	490.00	4%	509.60	2%	519.80
License to Sublet	490.00	4%	509.60	2%	519.80
Deed of Variation	490.00	4%	509.60	2%	519.80
Grant of Lease	662.70	4%	689.20	2%	703.00
Extended Lease	662.70	4%	689.20	2%	703.00
Deed of Surrender	490.00	4%	509.60	2%	519.80
Tenancy at Will	490.00	4%	509.60	2%	519.80
Renewal of Lease	490.00	4%	509.60	2%	519.80

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Legal, Democratic and Property Services					
Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.					
Service Category	Actual Charge 24/25 £	Actual Increase 25/26	Actual Charge 25/26 £	Charge Increase 26/27	Proposed Charge 26/27 £
Section 106:					
- Private Owner	684.50	4%	711.90	2%	726.10
- Each additional unit added (up to a maximum of £1,650)	91.70	4%	95.40	2%	97.30
- Affordable housing schemes	1,285.20	4%	1,336.60	2%	1,363.30
- Deed of Variation	488.50	4%	508.00	2%	518.20
- Fee for agreeing a unilateral undertaking	488.50	4%	508.00	2%	518.20
Other Fees					
- Fees for sale of property under Low Cost Housing Scheme	336.70	4%	350.20	2%	357.20
- Fees for purchase of additional 30% Share	219.70	4%	228.50	2%	233.10
- Fees for preparation of Deed of postponement	143.50	4%	149.20	2%	152.20
- Administration fee for the grant of licences for more than 12 months	80.60	4%	83.80	2%	85.50
- Issuing of consents (transfer of mortgage)	95.10	4%	98.90	2%	100.90
Minor land sales up to £10,000	643.30	4%	669.00	2%	682.40
Major Land sales £10,000+ 2.75% of purchase price with a minimum charge of £500	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Major Land sales £50,000+ 2.75% of purchase price with a minimum charge of £750	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Deed of Release of Covenant	490.00	4%	509.60	2%	519.80
- Footpath Diversion Orders	2,706.00	4%	2,814.20	2%	2,870.50
LAND SEARCHES					
Single Con29 Question					
Official Certificate of Search (LLC1) only					
CON29R Enquiries of Local Authority (2016)					
- Residential	131.40	4%	136.70	2%	139.40
- Commercial	184.00	4%	191.40	2%	195.20
Standard Search Fee: LLC1 and CON 29R combined					
- Residential		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
- Commercial		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
CON 29O Optional enquiries of Local Authority (2007)					
(Questions 5,6,8,9,11,15) per question	16.70	4%	17.40	2%	17.70
(Questions 7,10,12,13,14,16-21) per question	8.40	4%	8.70	2%	8.90
(Question 22)	35.30	4%	36.70	2%	37.40
Extra written enquiries (Refer to Worcestershire County Council for Highways enquiries)	65.10	4%	67.70	2%	69.10
Question 4	18.60	4%	19.30	2%	19.70
Each additional parcel of land (LLC1 and CON29R)					
Expedited (within 48 hrs)	41.70	4%	43.40	2%	44.30

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Legal, Democratic and Property Services					
Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.					
Service Category	Actual Charge 24/25 £	Actual Increase 25/26	Actual Charge 25/26 £	Charge Increase 26/27	Proposed Charge 26/27 £
<u>PARKSIDE SUITE</u>					
<u>Per Hour (Suggest min Hire of 2hrs)</u>					
Main Room					
Community Group	28.20	4%	29.30	2%	29.90
Regular Hire	43.00	4%	44.70	2%	45.60
Commercial Hire	56.50	4%	58.80	2%	60.00
Committee Room					
Community Group	16.00	4%	16.60	2%	16.90
Regular Hire	23.30	4%	24.20	2%	24.70
Commercial Hire	31.30	4%	32.60	2%	33.30
Committee Room 2 – per hour (min 2Hours)					
Community Group	20.00	4%	20.80	2%	21.20
Regular Hire	25.90	4%	26.90	2%	27.40
Commercial Hire	35.30	4%	36.70	2%	37.40
Combined					
Community Group	38.30	4%	39.80	4%	41.40
Regular Hire	60.00	4%	62.40	4%	64.90
Commercial Hire	83.00	4%	86.30	4%	89.80
<u>Half Day up to 5pm (max 4hrs)</u>					
Main Room					
Community Group	105.90	4%	110.10	2%	112.30
Regular Hire	129.50	4%	134.70	2%	137.40
Commercial Hire	211.90	4%	220.40	2%	224.80
Committee Room					
Community Group	46.60	4%	48.50	2%	49.50
Regular Hire	63.90	4%	66.50	2%	67.80
Commercial Hire	80.00	4%	83.20	2%	84.90
Combined					
Community Group	128.90	4%	134.10	2%	136.80
Regular Hire	184.20	4%	191.60	2%	195.40
Commercial Hire	263.60	4%	274.10	2%	279.60
<u>Full Day Up to 5pm</u>					
Main Room					
Community Group	196.60	4%	204.50	4%	212.70
Regular Hire	245.60	4%	255.40	4%	265.60
Commercial Hire	343.70	4%	357.40	4%	371.70
Committee Room					
Community Group	79.80	4%	83.00	2%	84.70
Regular Hire	95.90	4%	99.70	2%	101.70
Commercial Hire	117.70	4%	122.40	2%	124.80
Combined					
Community Group	251.90	4%	262.00	2%	267.20
Regular Hire	319.00	4%	331.80	2%	338.40
Commercial Hire	423.70	4%	440.60	2%	449.40
<u>Combined Evening Commercial Hire, Fridays and Saturday's, 5pm - Midnight</u>	423.70	4%	440.60	2%	449.40
Only half day and full day rates allowed for weekends. No hourly rates.					
All day rate for weddings £720** (day and evening to include kitchen and set up) 9am – 12 midnight					
Sunday hire rates by negotiation.					
Room 54(Training Room) - Any internal county organisations whom wish to use this room will be charged £25.00 per hour.					

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Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.

Service Category	Actual Charge 24/25 £	Actual Increase 25/26	Actual Charge 25/26 £	Charge Increase 26/27	Proposed Charge 26/27 £
<u>Customer Services</u>					
Interview rooms (based at the service centre)					
- Per Full day (9am - 5pm)	54.50	4%	56.70	2%	57.80
- Per Half day (9am-1pm/1pm-5pm)	34.10	4%	35.50	2%	36.20
- Per hour (1Full hour only)	11.70	4%	12.20	2%	12.40
<u>Bromsgrove Markets</u>					
3 x 3 Market Stall (per day)					
Tuesday Regular Trader	32.10	4%	33.40	2%	34.10
Tuesday Casual Trader	34.60	4%	36.00	2%	36.70
Each additional stall requested	13.90	4%	14.50	2%	14.80
Friday Regular Trader	37.00	4%	38.50	2%	39.30
Friday Casual Trader	39.40	4%	41.00	2%	41.80
Each additional stall requested	13.90	4%	14.50	2%	14.80
Saturday Regular Trader	39.40	4%	41.00	2%	41.80
Saturday Casual Trader	41.80	4%	43.50	2%	44.40
Each additional stall requested	14.50	4%	15.10	2%	15.40
Catering Van					
Tuesday Regular Trader	30.90	4%	32.10	2%	32.70
Tuesday Casual Trader	36.40	4%	37.90	2%	38.70
Friday Regular Trader	35.80	4%	37.20	2%	37.90
Friday Casual Trader	41.20	4%	42.80	2%	43.70
Saturday Regular Trader	38.20	4%	39.70	2%	40.50
Saturday Casual Trader	43.70	4%	45.40	2%	46.30
All 3 days (Annual booking per week) - Charge to be deleted	0.00	4%	0.00	2%	0.00
All 3 days (Casual booking per week) - Charge to be deleted	0.00	4%	0.00	2%	0.00
Table only booking for Craft Markets (only available in good weather)					
First two 5ft tables	18.20	4%	18.90	2%	19.30
each additional table	6.10	4%	6.30	2%	6.40

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Legal, Democratic and Property Services					
Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.					
Service Category	Actual Charge 24/25 £	Actual Increase 25/26	Actual Charge 25/26 £	Charge Increase 26/27	Proposed Charge 26/27 £
Electric					
Regular 3 day traders	11.20	4%	11.60	2%	11.80
Casual/Single day traders per day	6.10	4%	6.30	2%	6.40
Trade Waste Collection					
Regular 3 day traders	3.20	4%	3.30	2%	3.40
Casual/Single day traders	6.10	4%	6.30	2%	6.40
<u>Other Market Charges - New Charges</u>					
Vintage, Craft and Food Markets					
Single Stall	24.20	4%	25.20	2%	25.70
Additional stalls	12.10	4%	12.60	2%	12.90
Catering units/pitch	18.20	4%	18.90	2%	19.30
Sunday Food Festival Markets					
Price by negotiation to include staff on cost and overtime	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Seasonal Traders					
Seasonal supplement per stall for seasonal adhoc traders in December	6.10	4%	6.30	2%	6.40
Market Hire					
Hiring cost of providing a market to Parish Councils or other organisations	848.60	4%	882.50	2%	900.20
Trader Incentive Scheme					
New traders attending the market on a Tuesday will be charged 50% rent fee for 4 weeks continous weeks only (based on a 3m x 3m stall)	17.30	4%	18.00	2%	18.40
New traders attending the market on a Friday will be charged 50% rent fee for 4 weeks continous weeks only (based on a 3m x 3m stall)	18.50	4%	19.20	2%	19.60
New traders attending the market on a Saturday will be charged 50% rent fee for 4 weeks continous weeks only (based on a 3m x 3m stall)	21.00	4%	21.80	2%	22.20
<u>Property Services - New Charges</u>					
Minor Land Sales Request for Information	84.70	4%	88.10	2%	89.90
Minor Land Sales Full Application	579.10	4%	602.30	2%	614.30
Advertising - Estimated Fee per Advert (new charge based on cost per advert)	423.70	4%	440.60	2%	449.40
Surveyors Fees - Estimated Fee (new charge based on an hourly cost)	105.90	4%	110.10	2%	112.30

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Business Transformation and Organisational Development

Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.

Service Category	Actual Charge 24/25 £	Actual Increase 25/26	Actual Charge 25/26 £	Charge Increase 26/27	Proposed Charge 226/27 £
<u>New & Existing Properties</u>					
Naming a Street	684.80	4%	712.20	2%	726.40
Additional charge for each new premise on a street	160.70	4%	167.10	2%	170.40
Naming and numbering of an individual premise	338.60	4%	352.10	2%	359.10
Additional charge for each adjoining premise (eg Blocks of flats)	95.20	4%	99.00	2%	101.00
Confirmation of address to solicitor/conveyancer/ occupier or owner	66.30	4%	69.00	2%	70.40
Additional charge including naming of building	170.50	4%	177.30	2%	180.80

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Community & Housing Services

Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.

Service Category	Actual Charge 24/25 £	Actual Increase 25/26	Actual Charge 25/26 £	Charge Increase 26/27	Proposed Charge 26/27 £
STRATEGIC HOUSING					
Bed and breakfast					
- Single room	18.90	4%	19.70	2%	20.10
- Two single rooms	38.30	4%	39.80	2%	40.60
- Double room	18.90	4%	19.70	2%	20.10
- More than one double room per room	24.70	4%	25.70	2%	26.20
- Breakfast					
- adult	3.10	4%	3.20	2%	3.30
- child	2.60	4%	2.70	2%	2.80
- Storage of effects (per night)	3.20	4%	3.30	2%	3.40
- Right to Buy (RTB) Plan Preparation for BDHT	147.90	4%	153.80	2%	156.90
- Late Consents to transfer (shared ownership and low cost properties)	309.00	4%	321.40	2%	327.80
Private Sector Housing					
Housing Fitness Inspections	176.60	4%	183.70	2%	187.40
First Homes Application	160.50	4%	166.90	2%	170.20
Registration of housing in multiple occupation:					
per occupant	150.80	4%	156.80	2%	159.90
Service and Administration of Improvement	42.00	4%	43.70	2%	44.60
Prohibition, Hazard Awareness or Emergency Measures Notices * under Housing Act 2004, per hour					
Enforcement of Statutory Notices, Supervision of Work in Default etc.	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
Mobile Home Park Licencing - New Licence Application Fee	384.50	4%	399.90	2%	407.90
- Licence Amendment Application Fee	302.10	4%	314.20	2%	320.50
- Licence Transfer Application Fee	219.70	4%	228.50	2%	233.10
Mobile Home Park - Annual Site Inspection Charge -Band A (2-10 units)	302.10	4%	314.20	2%	320.50
-Band B (11-30 units)	322.70	4%	335.60	2%	342.30
- Band C (31-70 units)	453.10	4%	471.20	2%	480.60
- Band D (71 + units)	494.30	4%	514.10	2%	524.40
Mobile Home Park Statutory Registration or amendment of Park Home Rules	116.70	4%	121.40	2%	123.80
- Valuation Fee (relating to properties of 30% ownership)	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
*Based on salary of employee					

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Community & Housing Services

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Service Category	Actual Charge 24/25 £	Actual Increase 25/26	Actual Charge 25/26 £	Charge Increase 26/27	Proposed Charge 26/27 £
<u>LIFELINE</u>					
- Installation Fee	55.60	4%	57.80	2%	59.00
- Lifeline (per week)	0.00	4%	0.00	2%	0.00
- Replacement Pendant	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
- Key Safe	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery	N/A	Full Cost Recovery
- GSM Alarm Hire	5.50	4%	5.70	2%	5.80
- GPS Tracker Hire	5.50	4%	5.70	2%	5.80
- Daily Living Activity Equipment	7.90	4%	8.20	2%	8.40
<u>HIRE PRODUCTS</u>					
Hire of smoke alarm per week (hard wired, serviced smoke alarm)	1.55	4%	1.60	2%	1.60
CO2 Detector per week	1.55	4%	1.60	2%	1.60
Bogus Caller Panic Button	1.55	4%	1.60	2%	1.60
Flood Detector	1.55	4%	1.60	2%	1.60
Falls Detector	1.55	4%	1.60	2%	1.60
Additional pendant	1.55	4%	1.60	2%	1.60
Temperature extreme sensor	1.55	4%	1.60	2%	1.60

Appendix E – Consultation responses

To follow

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

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