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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

TUESDAY 17TH NOVEMBER 2026
AT 6.00 P.M.

PARKSIDE SUITE - PARKSIDE

MEMBERS: Councillors P. M. McDonald (Chairman), A. M. Dale (Vice-Chairman), S. Ammar, A. Bailes, J. Clarke, C.A. Hotham, B. Kumar, R. E. Lambert, S. A. Robinson, J. D. Stanley and H. D. N. Warren-Clarke

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence and Named Substitutes**

2. **Declarations of Interest and Whipping Arrangements**

   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 Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 15th September 2026** (Pages 7 - 24)

4. **Heatwaves (Cooling Hubs) Update**

   (To follow).Presentation/papers for this item will be published in a supplementary papers pack.

5. **Capacity of the Minor Works Team** (Pages 25 - 32)

6. **Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Update** (Pages 33 - 42)

7. **Bromsgrove Car Parks (Pre-Scrutiny)**

   This report will be published in a supplementary pack following Cabinet agenda publication.

8. **Planning Advisory Service (PAS) - Update on Recommendations (Pre-Scrutiny)**

   This report will be published in a supplementary pack following Cabinet agenda publication.

9. **Medium Term Financial Plan Stage 1 2027/28 (Including Fees and Charges) - Prior to Consultation (Pre-Scrutiny)**

   This report will be published in a supplementary pack following Cabinet agenda publication.

10. **Car Parking Task Group - Membership and Terms of Reference (ToR)** (Pages 43 - 52)

11. **Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) - Update** (Pages 53 - 56)

12. **Finance and Budget Working Group - Update**

13. **Cabinet Work Programme** (Pages 57 - 62)

14. **Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme** (Pages 63 - 64)

15. **Overview and Scrutiny Action Sheet** (Pages 65 - 68)

16. **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.**

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 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:-

Item No	Paragraph
18	3

18. **Levelling Up Fund Programme (Quarterly Update)** (Pages 69 - 80)

J. Leach
Chief Executive

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

9th November 2026

If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact
Sarah Woodfield

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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.

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

Notes:

Although this is a public meeting, there are circumstances when the Board might have to move into closed session to consider exempt or confidential information. For agenda items that are exempt, the public are excluded and for any such items the live stream (if applicable) will be suspended, and that part of the meeting will not be recorded.

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B R O M S G R O V E D I S T R I C T C O U N C I L

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

15TH SEPTEMBER 2026, AT 6.00 P.M.

PARKSIDE SUITE - PARKSIDE

PRESENT: Councillors P. M. McDonald (Chairman), A. M. Dale (Vice-Chairman), S. Ammar, A. Bailes, J. Clarke, D. J. A. Forsythe (as substitute), C.A. Hotham, B. Kumar, S. A. Robinson, J. D. Stanley and H. D. N. Warren-Clarke

Observers:
Councillor K. J. May – Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development and Enabling
Councillor S. J. Baxter – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning and Strategic Housing
Councillor S.T. Nock – Cabinet Member for Finance
Councillor K. Taylor - Cabinet Member for Local Government Reorganisation, WRS and Climate Change
Councillor P.J. Whittaker – Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Community Safety
Councillor J. Robinson

Officers: Mr J. Walton, Ms R. Egan, Mr R. Elmes, Mr S. Parry, Mr M. Austin, Ms R. Milward, Mr D. Riley, Ms M. Worsfold, Mr J. Carradine and Mrs S. Woodfield

Other parties: Ms R. Perrott and Ms C. Browne (Representatives of Warwickshire County Council)

20/26 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor R.E. Lambert with Councillor D.J.A. Forsythe in attendance as her named substitute.

Apologies were also received from Councillor S.A. Webb as portfolio holder for Health and Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture.

21/26 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

Councillor S. Robinson declared, for transparency, that the Worcestershire County Council (WCC) Cabinet Member for Environment and Communities, who was attending in connection with the Libraries Unlocked item, was her husband.

No other declarations of interest or whipping arrangements were declared.

22/26 **LIBRARIES "UNLOCKED" UPDATE**

Representatives of WCC presented an update on the implementation and impact of Libraries Unlocked across Worcestershire, with particular attention given to Bromsgrove and Rubery libraries.

The Board was advised that Libraries Unlocked was operating at 11 locations. A further implementation at Woodrush Library was being progressed, subject to lease negotiations with the Black Pear Trust. This was expected to be the final site in the current programme. Across the service, Libraries Unlocked had more than 21,000 registered members and more than 14,000 active users. Since the programme began in 2022, more than 8,700 hours of community led activity had taken place in participating libraries.

Across the 11 sites, total library opening hours had increased by 59 per cent, while staffed opening hours had reduced by 31 per cent. Libraries Unlocked had not been progressed at Alvechurch because of prohibitive Private Finance Initiative (PFI) related capital and revenue costs, or at Hagley because increased building costs had reduced the projected return on investment.

Bromsgrove and Rubery libraries had joined the scheme in early 2024. Both were reported to have healthy levels of visits, book issues, computer use and community led activity, although neither had extensive meeting room facilities.

The total capital investment across the 11 sites was reported as approximately £580,000, with staffing savings of just over £300,000. Approximately £33,500 had been deducted from gross savings to account for additional utility costs. At Rubery, this amounted to approximately £4,000. At Bromsgrove Library, utility costs had not been separately apportioned because the library formed part of the Parkside building and there was no mechanism for separately monitoring the library's consumption. Property Services would investigate whether utility expenditure at Parkside had noticeably increased following implementation in March and April 2024.

Customer feedback indicated that barriers to joining included insufficient information, the requirement to attend a face-to-face induction, access to toilets, safety concerns and a desire for Sunday opening. In response, information sessions had been introduced, toilets had been made available at some locations and library managers were sharing good practice on community engagement. Officers were considering a trial of online registration, while recognising the safeguarding and health and safety value of the existing face to face induction. A communications

campaign highlighting the safety of Libraries Unlocked was also planned.

A survey undertaken to inform the refreshed library strategy had ranked Libraries Unlocked as the third library service most useful to families, after books and the provision of welcoming community space.

Eligibility had been extended to people aged 15 and over so that pupils in Years 10 and 11 could access libraries during examination preparation. Local library teams were working with schools and attending community events, while central social media campaigns promoted libraries as quiet study spaces offering study and wellbeing support.

After the presentation, Members queries and officer feedback were discussed which included:

- How was an “active” user defined? - Officers explained that this was defined as a unique individual who had used Libraries Unlocked during the relevant reporting period. Entry was recorded when the person used their library card to access the building. Wider library use was also assessed through borrowing and computer use data, supplemented periodically by exit surveys to estimate activity that could not be captured electronically.
- A further question clarified that “issues” within the performance information meant book issues.
- Members expressed concern that the information did not provide a sufficiently clear comparison with library use before the introduction of Libraries Unlocked. Without baseline data, it was difficult to judge whether the programme had succeeded. - Officers accepted this point and agreed that comparative information could be provided. Experience elsewhere had shown that visits often declined following the introduction of an open library model before recovering over subsequent years. Across the seven phase two libraries, including Bromsgrove and Rubery, visits had initially been 8 per cent below the pre implementation level. The latest monitoring showed that the gap had reduced to approximately 4.4 per cent. Local library managers were preparing audience development plans using data to identify groups that were not using the service which included work with schools to increase participation by older teenagers. Officers offered to provide further information about the local audience development plans for Bromsgrove and Rubery.
- Members asked why Bromsgrove and Rubery showed different conversion rates between registered and active members. - Officers were unable to provide an immediate explanation and agreed to investigate.
- Members also asked about the difference between gross and net staffing savings at the two libraries. - Officers explained that Bromsgrove was a larger library with more staff covering its

opening hours. A reduction in staffed hours therefore produced greater staffing savings than at the smaller Rubery Library.

- Members expressed the view that a face-to-face induction could prevent working residents from registering. - Officers acknowledged that the Council might have been overly cautious and confirmed that they were open to trialling online registration. This could potentially use a QR code and an online safety video. The face-to-face process had originally been retained to address safeguarding and health and safety concerns. Officers considered that experience gained since 2022 meant the authority could now assess alternative arrangements more confidently.
- A Member emphasised that any online process must retain stringent identity verification. - Officers confirmed that an individual had to be a library member before becoming a Libraries Unlocked member and that ordinary library registration currently included identity checks. The WCC Cabinet Member added that Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) operated during unstaffed opening hours and staff at Rubery had reported no particular safety concerns.
- The Chairman questioned whether, after two years, use remained significantly below previous levels. - Officers clarified that use was approximately 4 per cent below the earlier figure and was moving in the right direction, suggesting that additional promotional work could assist.
- A Member expressed the view that there seemed to be national decline for in-person use of libraries. - Members noted that increased online activity and changed patterns of borrowing, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic, could also have influenced physical library visits. The WCC Cabinet Member encouraged Members and community organisations to promote their local libraries and make use of library space, helping to sustain the service.

RESOLVED that the libraries “Unlocked” Update was noted.

23/26 **LOCAL HERITAGE ACTION LIST - QUARTERLY UPDATE**

The Principal Conservation Officer updated the Board on the development of the Local Heritage List.

Lists had already been adopted for Alvechurch, Beoley, Belbroughton with Fairfield, and Dodford with Grafton. Draft lists had been prepared for Bromsgrove, Bournheath, Catshill and North Marlbrook, and Wythall. Work was continuing for Lickey and Blackwell and Bentley Pauncefoot and had commenced or was about to commence for Clent and Hagley.

The draft lists for Bromsgrove, Bournheath, Catshill and North Marlbrook, and Wythall were ready to proceed to formal consultation. Letters were expected to be issued to property owners, parish councils, ward councillors and other interested bodies. Consultation was expected

to begin on 28 September 2026 and continue until the end of the first week of November 2026.

Consultation events would enable residents to discuss the proposals with conservation officers. Further sites could be nominated during the consultation. Following consultation, officers would review the representations, amend the lists where appropriate and prepare a consultation summary. The amended lists would then be reported to Cabinet, with adoption anticipated in the new year.

Following the update, Members asked why nationally listed buildings did not appear on the Local Heritage List. The Principal Conservation Officer explained that the local and national lists were separate. National listing was determined by the Secretary of State on advice from Historic England. Whereas statutorily listed buildings could not be placed on the Local Heritage List because they already had a higher degree of protection. Locally listed buildings would not receive statutory listed building protection but would remain non designated heritage assets and would be a material consideration in the planning process. It was also confirmed that ordinary planning requirements would continue to apply.

Members asked when the work would be completed across the district. Members were advised that the project was detailed and resource intensive and was approaching the halfway point. No firm completion date could be given because progress depended upon workloads and the requirement to respond to planning applications within statutory deadlines.

Members noted that the four lists currently approaching consultation had taken more than a year to prepare and expressed concern that completion across the district could take too long. In response it was explained that staff changes and a period without a second conservation officer had affected continuity, however, members were advised that a consultant continued to provide support.

Members suggested that an alternative plan was needed, including an assessment of the hours and resources required to complete the project. Members emphasised that the local list should be progressed promptly because of the scale of anticipated development.

The Portfolio Holder agreed that the total work should be estimated and divided into manageable phases so that the case for additional resources could be considered, while acknowledging that the number of potential heritage assets in each area could not be known until detailed work began.

RESOLVED that the Local Heritage Action List – Quarterly Update be noted.

24/26 **FOOD WASTE IMPLEMENTATION**

The Environmental Services Manager presented an extensive update on the introduction of household food waste collections.

The Environment Act 2021 and the simpler recycling reforms required councils to standardise recycling arrangements, reduce landfill and lower waste related carbon emissions. Separate household food waste collections had become a statutory responsibility from 31 March 2026. Approximately one quarter of English authorities had not implemented a service by that date.

Although Government had provided capital funding for vehicles and food caddies, anticipated ongoing revenue funding had not materialised as a distinct additional allocation. The funding had instead been incorporated into the general settlement without an increase equivalent to the operating cost of the service. This had significantly affected planning.

Neither the Bromsgrove nor Redditch depot had sufficient capacity for the additional vehicles and staff. An initial joint outsourcing procurement with Redditch Borough Council and Wyre Forest District Council had not proceeded after Wyre Forest withdrew following the Government's revenue funding decision. The scale of this change meant the original contract could not be awarded under procurement rules.

The service was therefore being developed in-house using leased operational land. Vehicles had been ordered, recruitment had commenced, caddies were expected during October 2026 and vehicles were expected in December 2026. A phased collection rollout was planned from late January or early February 2027.

It was explained that each household would receive a small kitchen caddy, liners and a lockable 27 litre kerbside caddy. Waste composition analysis undertaken in 2022 suggested that food represented approximately 35 per cent by weight of the average residual waste bin in Bromsgrove.

Collected material would be taken to an anaerobic digestion facility near Kinver and Stourton. The process would produce biogas for energy and digestate for use as a low grade agricultural fertiliser. Because no suitable bulking point was available within Worcestershire, collection vehicles would need to travel to the facility to unload.

Existing funding was sufficient to provide the service to approximately 55 to 60 per cent of Bromsgrove households. Subject to an additional budget allocation of approximately £190,000, remaining households would be added through a second phased rollout. Full statutory compliance was anticipated by October 2027.

Member queries and Officer responses were advised as:

- Members asked how collection rounds would be stress-tested. – The Environmental Services Manager explained that route optimisation software would model collection and journey times using existing data.
- To explain how routine collections would be carried out. – In response it was explained that food waste collection days would mirror residents' existing collection days where possible. The phased rollout would allow issues to be addressed before each subsequent round began.
- To advise on training methods for new recruits. - New employees would receive route and local area training, spend time on existing collection services and help deliver the caddies so that they became familiar with the collection areas.
- Members stressed that effective behaviour change was essential. – It was explained that each caddy would be accompanied by an information pack explaining how to use the service and what happened to the collected material. Initial areas would be selected partly on the basis of existing participation in recycling and garden waste services.
- How was the Council engaging with residents? - Communications would include social media, messages on refuse vehicles, pre and post launch resident research and potentially case studies following households during the rollout. A vacant post was also being repurposed as a Waste Education and Engagement Officer.
- Members also queried how the scheme was being funded. – It was explained that government funding had been received for the initial communications programme. Additional funding from extended producer responsibility arrangements had been allocated for wider recycling messages for the following two years. The Waste Education and Engagement Officer post was being created by repurposing an existing vacancy.
- Members suggested that engagement should be provided at schools as children had the potential to influence household participation.
- Members raised concerns of caddy visibility. – It was confirmed that residents would be advised to place caddies out early. Where a container was not presented when the crew attended, opportunities to return would be limited by the route and the requirement to travel to the disposal facility. The kerbside caddies would be a lighter grey to improve visibility. Crews were expected to use larger "slave bins" while walking along streets, which should help them identify caddies at individual properties. Missed collections would be monitored to identify patterns. Replacement caddies would initially be provided without charge.
- If it would be a universal or opt in service? – It was clarified that the service would not be opt in. Legislation required the Council to provide the service to every household. Caddies would therefore be delivered universally and collection vehicles would cover every residential road on a weekly basis.

- Would the Council provide individual identification for caddies? – Officers informed members that residents could add their own address labels to caddies. The Council would not apply individual numbering. However, instructions on what waste should go into the caddy were provided.
- The Leader queried whether WCC would contribute to the transport cost of taking material outside the Worcestershire area. - Officers advised that no contribution had yet been agreed, but discussions about a possible haulage payment were continuing.
- Queries were raised on the leasing of collection sites. – It was explained that the collection sites were being leased under a five year arrangement with a three year break clause. However, purchase had not been pursued because of implementation timescales and uncertainty created by LGR.
- Members questioned whether service resources were based on optimistic participation assumptions. - Officers explained that route mileage and the need to pass every household were the principal resource drivers. The journey time would not reduce significantly if fewer residents participated. Actual operating experience could nevertheless identify efficiencies that might support future savings or wider waste services.
- Members queried the carbon assessment and saving benefits. – It was explained that the carbon assessment represented the net benefit of diverting food waste from the existing energy from waste process to anaerobic digestion and included the effects of vehicles and fuel. The saving was comparatively modest because residual waste was already used to generate energy rather than being sent to landfill.
- Would there be any financial value to the Council from energy produced by the anaerobic digestion methodology? – In response the Board were advised that once waste was collected, responsibility transferred to WCC as disposal authority. Any financial value from energy or digestate would therefore sit within WCC disposal arrangements and was expected principally to reduce disposal costs.
- If caddy liners were supplied to residents? – In response the Board were advised that an initial supply of liners would be issued to households. Residents requiring replacements would tie a liner around the caddy handle, signalling to the crew that a new roll should be left. This would avoid separate delivery journeys and ensure replacement liners were focused on participating households.
- Containment of food within the caddies was also raised and also concerns of harmful contaminants to the environment. – Members were advised that the kerbside caddies would have lockable handles to reduce access by animals. At the digestion facility, material would be shredded and screened to remove contaminants. The facility already processed significant commercial food waste and had several tanks, providing operational resilience. An alternative facility in Gloucestershire could potentially be used if required, although haulage and

contingency arrangements needed further development with WCC.

- Why plastic liners had been chosen and not biodegradable? - Plastic liners had been selected because biodegradable liners could begin to break down on contact with moisture and interfere with processing. The anaerobic digestion operator preferred plastic liners because its shredding and separation system could remove them to a high standard. Officers agreed to seek further information about the residual risk from microplastics.
- Had Officers considered utilising experience from other Local Authorities' successful roll outs? - Officers had considered experience from Stratford-on-Avon, Slough, Cambridgeshire, Newcastle, Malvern Hills and other councils, together with guidance from the Waste and Resources Action Programme. Members suggested that experience in Sussex should also be examined.
- If Central Government set the annual revenue costs and was there a risk to the Council if the funding was not utilised? – In response Officers confirmed that the government did not set the revenue costs, however, capital costs were set by Central Government.

RESOLVED that the Food Waste Implementation update be noted.

25/26 **COUNCIL TAX PAYMENTS**

The Revenue Services Manager presented the findings of an investigation into direct debits due on 15th August 2026 being collected on 14th August rather than 17th August.

The Council offered payment dates on the 1st, 15th, 21st and 28th of each month. When the due date fell on a non-processing day, staff had to amend the processing date manually. The officer processing the file had applied the rule used for outgoing payments, which were brought forward, rather than the rule for collections, which should be moved to the next processing day.

Contributing factors included insufficiently clear procedural guidance, failure of the post submission review, unused system validation controls and temporary staffing pressure caused by annual leave and long-term absence within a small team.

Approximately 5,500 customers were affected. Fewer than five complaints had been received and one reimbursement of less than £2 had been made. Although the actual impact was limited, officers recognised the potential seriousness.

Immediate action included briefing staff, reinforcing the checking process and clarifying guidance for non-processing days. Longer term work would strengthen procedure guides and investigate integration or

automation between Civica and AccessPay, reducing manual intervention.

After the presentation Members queries and officer responses were as follows:

- What was the root cause of the problem? - Officers confirmed that the incident involved human error, but that weaknesses in procedures and controls contributed. Three principal direct debit risks were identified which included collecting too early, failing to collect and transmitting a file twice.
- What future preventative controls had been put in place? - Control totals and post submission checks were intended to prevent these errors but the post submission check had failed partly because previous reliability had created complacency. A senior officer would oversee checks during the following months.
- Could Application Interface (AI) or automation be used? – Officers advised that AccessPay offered interfaces capable of extracting files directly from the core system. Feasibility, costs and any necessary business case would be assessed.
- Would regular future reconciliations/audit trails be carried out? – The Director of Finance confirmed that future assurance reporting could include this issue and that a report could be brought to the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee.
- Members welcomed the transparent “learning from errors and failure” simplistic approach and asked how widely it was used. - Officers explained that it was a Revenues Service framework rather than a corporate framework. It was designed to identify underlying causes instead of attributing every error solely to an individual.
- Had other manual interventions across the wider service had been reviewed? – In response the Board were informed that no additional service wide review had yet been undertaken, although annual audits examined specific processes and controls.

RESOLVED that

1) The findings of the investigation into the early collection of direct debit payments; and
2) The actions to be taken to improve the collection process, as outlined in the investigation findings are noted.

26/26 **DRAFT BROMSGROVE CAR PARKS STRATEGY**

Officers presented the draft Bromsgrove Car Parking Strategy for early scrutiny before Cabinet consideration.

Evidence suggested that the town centre had sufficient overall parking capacity, including after the future loss of the Stourbridge Road car park. Demand was, however, concentrated in central car parks. Parkside was

used predominantly by season ticket holders rather than Council employees.

The proposed objectives included supporting regeneration and economic growth, improving customer experience, optimising use of the parking estate, supporting sustainable and low emission travel, improving management and enforcement and ensuring the network's long term financial sustainability.

Potential actions included clearer signage, redistribution of season ticket holders, regular utilisation monitoring, reviews of parking in local centres, a visible enforcement improvement plan, assessment of slower electric vehicle charging and possible use of the National Parking Platform.

Comments and officer responses are provided below:

- Members suggested signage on the approaches to the town centre identifying the most suitable car park for particular destinations. - Officers agreed to consider this to encourage the use of car parks less utilised.
- A typographical error was outlined within the report. - Officers confirmed that this would be reviewed and amended as necessary.
- Questions were raised about discrepancies in capacity figures and whether the evidence distinguished between peak occupancy in individual car parks and peak occupancy across the whole network. - Officers agreed that the figures and explanation required checking and clarification.
- Members supported moving season ticket holders towards less heavily used outer car parks and also queried whether North Bromsgrove and School Drive could be connected or expanded using adjoining land. – In response it was confirmed that this was being reviewed as a possibility, although full costs were not yet available.
- Accessibility issues were raised, including the use of disabled spaces and payment machines. - Officers advised that all Council car parks retained cash payment facilities and agreed to examine accessibility in greater depth.
- Members expressed concern that the surveys represented only point in time manual counts rather than comprehensive beat surveys. – The Board were advised that no registration based, half hourly surveys had been undertaken and that more detailed work would require additional resources or commissioning.
- Members argued that forecasting needed to reflect housing growth and the Nailers Yard development, town centre residential development, free parking arrangements and other future demand before any irreversible decision was made about Churchfields. - Officers advised that Recreation Road South had been observed at below 50 per cent occupancy and that up to approximately 70 cars might be associated with the Nailers Yard commercial building, in addition to visitors.

- Members stressed that parking pressures in local centres, including Aston Fields, Hagley, Barnt Green and Alvechurch, could be more severe than in Bromsgrove town centre. - Officers advised that strategic responsibility for parking had transferred to the Towns and Local Centres Strategic Lead, who would examine these issues.
- An update was requested on the extra resource suggested by the Board for enforcement officers. – In response Members were advised that the Council had funded 1.5 additional full-time equivalent civil enforcement posts. One full-time officer had been recruited however the half-time post had proved difficult to fill. Further recruitment and use of overtime were being pursued. Members suggested considering whether available underspends could fund a full post.

During consideration of this matter the Chairman concluded discussions and confirmed the Board's feedback to Cabinet should include the need for the following:

- Stronger and clearer evidence.
- Robust forecasting of future demand.
- Improved signage.
- Consideration of accessibility.
- Examination of parking pressures outside the town centre.
- Improved enforcement capacity.
- Caution before making decisions affecting Churchfields car park.

Also during consideration of this item the following recommendation was also proposed by Councillor B. Kumar and seconded by Councillor S.A. Robinson:

"Whether a task group should be established to examine district-wide parking requirements".

On being put to the vote the recommendation was carried.

RECOMMENDED that:

Following consideration of the draft Bromsgrove Car Parking Strategy 2026-2029 the Board's feedback to help shape the final version prior to Cabinet consideration would include the need for the following:

- Stronger and clearer evidence.
- Robust forecasting of future demand.
- Improved signage.
- Consideration of accessibility.
- Examination of parking pressures outside the town centre.
- Improved enforcement capacity.

- Caution before making decisions affecting Churchfields car park; and

RESOLVED that a scrutiny task group be established to investigate parking requirements district-wide.

27/26 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT RE-ORGANISATION (LGR) UPDATE**

The Acting Assistant Director of Corporate Services and Transformation presented the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) update to the Board.

Earlier in the month, Government announced a pause to the LGR process, including in Worcestershire, whilst it reviewed July 2026 decisions on future unitary authority structures. The July decision has not been withdrawn, but implementation activity has been paused pending the outcome of that review.

Worcestershire remained within scope of the review and LGR and devolution continue to be part of Government policy. However, there was limited clarity on the review's full scope, timetable or eventual outcome. As a result, Worcestershire councils have moved into a preparation and readiness phase. Work linked to any specific future model had been halted.

There was currently no Structural Changes Order in place and no legislation to implement any new council structure. So, it remained unclear what any future proposal would involve.

In light of Government guidance, Bromsgrove had adopted a cautious approach to financial expenditure. Most implementation activity had been paused, including planned spend in some core areas.

Some limited expenditure would continue to maintain critical programme capability, including shared programme management arrangements via the Programme Director but only where it provided value irrespective of the eventual LGR outcome and represented an appropriate use of public funds.

Whilst most implementation activity had paused, disaggregation data and analysis activities would continue within the County Council and readiness work would continue within all councils where each council determined it was beneficial and represented value for money.

Decisions on any shared activity funded through the LGR Implementation Reserve fund would continue to be taken through the agreed countywide governance arrangements.

The current expectation was that any May 2027 local elections would proceed on existing council boundaries, however, longer-term

governance arrangements would remain subject to future Government decisions and any associated legislation.

The approach being taken by the LGR Implementation Board was that the Board would be asked to adopt the following principle at their next meeting "Would any work still be useful under any future LGR outcome, or if LGR did not proceed?" If yes, it should continue; if aligned to a specific LGR model, it is paused.

Examples of work that could continue during the pause, if approved were as follows:

- Workforce data, structures, contracts and HR records.
- Asset information, registers, compliance and property records.
- Contract inventories, financial analysis and readiness planning.
- Data quality, systems mapping, governance and technology risk.
- Service improvement, productivity, resilience and organisational effectiveness.

The Board was advised that further updates would be provided as the position developed.

The Leader asked whether the Council could access the £900,000 reportedly allocated per unitary authority to recoup transitional expenditure already incurred. Officers were unable to provide an immediate answer and undertook to investigate further.

Members emphasised that continuing uncertainty created further costs and that the Council should seek to recover expenditure wherever possible.

The Portfolio Holder also wished to place on record his thanks to the officer previously leading the work and wished her well during maternity leave.

RESOLVED that the Local Government Reform (LGR) update be noted.

28/26 **WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - UPDATE**

The HOSC representative Councillor B. Kumar updated the Board following the latest meeting which was held on 21st July 2026 covering adult mental health rehabilitation and end of life care.

The redesign of adult mental health rehabilitation aimed to shift some care from inpatient settings to outpatient, home and community provision.

Members expressed concern about the reduction in inpatient bed numbers and the proposed closure of Cromwell House and Oak House.

It was recognised that some people experiencing acute psychiatric episodes would continue to require inpatient care.

On end-of-life care, the Board noted the projected growth in Worcestershire's older population and the need to coordinate emergency, hospital, rehabilitation, neighbourhood health, palliative and home based services.

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

29/26 **FINANCE AND BUDGET WORKING GROUP - REVIEW TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP**

Members received a report reviewing the Terms of Reference for the Finance and Budget Working Group for the 2026/27 municipal year.

It was agreed that the Working Group would appoint its own Chair.

It was also agreed that the Chair of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee should not serve on the Working Group because of the potential conflict between scrutiny and audit responsibilities.

RESOLVED that the revised Terms of Reference for the Finance and Budget Working Group be approved.

30/26 **POLICE AND CRIME PANEL BRIEFING PAPER**

Councillor B. Kumar provided a summary of the latest Police and Crime Panel meeting held on 10th July 206.

Long term road safety performance had improved, with collisions down by nearly 40 per cent since 2016, although fatal and serious injuries remained a concern. Public consultation indicated opposition to police force mergers, particularly because of concerns about local visibility, priorities and community knowledge.

Crime was described as broadly stable or reducing in several categories, although domestic abuse, rape and robbery had increased. Detection rates were stronger for robbery, violence and rape but weaker for burglary, vehicle crime and domestic abuse. Emergency response and 101 performance remained below target, while 999 call handling was strong.

Members welcomed the detailed report but questioned whether collision data understated the true number of incidents because many slight or serious collisions were not reported. The Council's representative agreed to raise concerns about the completeness of collision data with West Mercia Police.

RESOLVED that the Police and Crime Panel Briefing Paper was noted.

31/26 **CABINET WORK PROGRAMME**

The Cabinet Work Programme was presented for Members' consideration.

No additional substantive matters were suggested.

RESOLVED that the content of the Cabinet Work Programme be noted.

32/26 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME**

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

The following discussions were raised during this item:

- That an agenda containing too many substantive items could weaken effective scrutiny. The Chairman and Vice Chairman agreed to review future agendas and arrange additional meetings where necessary.
- It was noted that the timing of further consideration of the Car Parking Strategy would need to be reviewed following the decision to establish a task group.
- Members discussed whether the Local Heritage List update needed to return at the next meeting, given the previous agreement for quarterly reporting. However, it was advised that this was in line with quarterly reporting.
- The heatwave and cooling hubs item had been deferred to November because relevant officers were unavailable due to training commitments. Members considered that the matter should remain on the programme.
- Fly tipping including discarded nitrous oxide canisters should be added to the work programme for future consideration.

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

33/26 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ACTION SHEET**

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

The Chairman requested an update on progress with live streaming of meetings, noting that bids had been expected by 26th August 2026. Officers agreed to seek a progress report from the relevant service area and report back to the Board.

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

34/26 **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.

35/26 **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:-

Item No	Paragraph
36	3

36/26 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 21ST JULY 2026 (INCLUDES EXEMPT MINUTES)**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 21st July 2026 were considered.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 21st July 2026 be agreed as a true and correct record.

The meeting closed at 9.01 p.m.

Chairman

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Overview & Scrutiny Board

17th November 2026

Civils Minor Works Service: Delivery, Challenges and Improvement Plan

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Karen May
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Rachel Egan, Assistant Director Regeneration & Property Services
Report Author: Joanne Wharrad	Job Title: Capital Programme Manager Contact email: Joanne.wharrad@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Council Priority	Environment and Infrastructure
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Overview and Scrutiny Board is asked to RESOLVE to:

1) **Note the report and the proposed actions to improve the Civils Minor Works service**

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Civils Minor Works Team helps ensure that Council assets, infrastructure and public spaces remain safe, functional and well maintained for residents, businesses and visitors. Through planned and reactive interventions, the team addresses health and safety risks, improves the appearance and usability of the public realm, supports accessibility and community pride, and helps protect the Council's assets from deterioration. The service responds to requests from internal services, Members and residents, enabling issues to be resolved quickly and efficiently

2.2 Recent activities can be structured into four key workstreams:

Emergency and Reactive Public Safety Works

High-priority, unplanned interventions to mitigate immediate public risks or address identified Health and Safety escalations.

a) **Rock Hill Bus Shelter:** Emergency removal coordinating traffic management through Worcestershire County Council (WCC).

Infrastructure Decommissioning and Asset Management

Lifecycle management, clearance, and maintenance of Council-owned street furniture and assets.

a) **Stourbridge Road:** Cleared site assets, including 12 lamp posts and parking pay machines.
b) **Asset Restoration:** Reconditioned and repainted local finger-post directional signage.
c) **Commercial Sponsorship:** Installed corporate sponsorship signs to support revenue generation.
d) **Street Name Plates:** Over 60 street name plates are replaced every year.

Civil Engineering and Parks Infrastructure

Groundworks and structural modifications within the Council's open spaces and parks.

a) **Sanders Park:** Mechanically excavated a 100m long, 0.7m deep trench for a 3-phase electrical connection duct to support the redevelopment of Sanders Park Cafe.
b) **Civic Amenities:** Cast concrete bases and installed new public benches.

Facility Maintenance and Civic Preparations

Corporate asset maintenance and high-profile community event logistical support

a) **Civic Events:** Supported infrastructure setup for the upcoming Remembrance Day parades. Supporting preparation for the installation of Christmas lights.
b) **Repairs:** Repairing taps at allotments.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

Operating in A High Demand Environment

3.1 The Civils Minor Works Team operates in a high demand environment where finite resources must be appropriately managed. Alongside its planned maintenance programme, the service receives a continual flow of requests from residents, Members and internal services, many of which require urgent attention due to health and safety, including community safety, considerations alongside other requests. In addition, the team supports wider corporate priorities, such as the installation, maintenance and removal of the Council's Christmas lights, which create significant peaks in workload during key periods of the year. These competing demands can result in a conflict between planned and reactive works impacting on the timescales for delivery, particularly for lower-priority requests.

Ensuring a Resilient Service

3.2 Considerations regarding capacity and resilience are a particular challenge for the service, in order to ensure priority work is appropriately planned and delivered. The team's broad range of responsibilities requires staff with specialist skills, knowledge and practical expertise, but the relatively small size of the workforce limits flexibility when demand increases, priorities change or staff are unavailable. Decisions often need to be made regarding the allocation of resources between competing priorities, while maintaining the ability to respond quickly to urgent issues that affect public safety or service continuity. Effective work programming and performance monitoring are therefore essential to ensure that available resources are directed towards the highest-priority activities.

Managing Workflow Communications

3.3 The reactive nature of much of the service's workload creates an ongoing challenge in managing expectations around delivery timescales and priorities. Changes in priority arising from urgent or unforeseen works can impact planned activities, making clear communication with Members, residents and service areas essential to ensure a shared understanding of service priorities and programme delivery.

Programme of Service Improvements

3.4 The Civils Minor Works Team has recently been incorporated into the newly formed Capital Programme Team. This change provides closer alignment between minor works activity, capital projects and wider property priorities, whilst strengthening service oversight and coordination. Additional capacity has also been introduced within the service to improve resilience and support increasing service demands. Alongside this, enhanced management and performance arrangements are being established to support more effective work planning, prioritisation, resource allocation and service reporting.

3.5 An internal review of the Civils Minor Works service is underway to further consider workload, capacity, processes and performance monitoring arrangements. Initial findings have identified a number of opportunities to strengthen service planning, prioritisation, communication and performance management. The following actions are being progressed in response.

a) **Understanding Service Demand and Workload**
A baseline assessment of service activity to provide a clearer understanding of demand, work completed, outstanding requests and available resources. This will create a consistent evidence base to inform future planning, prioritisation and performance reporting.

b) **Prioritisation and Service Scope**
Clear prioritisation criteria to support consistent decision-making and ensure resources are directed towards the highest-risk and highest-priority

activities. The scope of the service is being reviewed to provide greater clarity regarding the types of work that should be undertaken by the team.

c) **Work Programming and Planning**
A rolling programme of work to balance planned maintenance, reactive requests and recurring commitments. This will support improved visibility of workload, resource allocation and delivery timescales, whilst providing greater flexibility to respond to urgent and unforeseen work.

d) **Managing Requests and Customer Communication**
Arrangements for receiving, recording and monitoring requests are being strengthened to provide a clear audit trail from receipt through to completion. Communication arrangements will also be further reviewed to support clearer information for Members, residents and internal services regarding priorities, expected timescales and changes to planned work programmes.

e) **Service Resilience and Continuity**
Continuity of service is being strengthened by ensuring key procedures, recurring commitments and service knowledge are documented to support resilience and reduce reliance on individual members of staff. This will not only help ensure continuity of service it will support effective use of additional capacity introduced through the revised structure.

f) **Performance Monitoring and Reporting**
A proportionate performance monitoring framework to provide visibility of workload, delivery, response times and progress against planned activity. This will further support ongoing management oversight and help identify emerging issues at an early stage.

3.6 Progress against these actions will be monitored through existing management arrangements within the Capital Programme Team. The actions are intended to provide a clearer understanding of service demand, improve the management of competing priorities and support more effective planning, communication and delivery. Together with the revised service structure and additional capacity introduced within the team, these improvements are expected to strengthen service resilience, improve performance oversight and provide greater confidence in the service's ability to respond to current and future demands.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report. The review is being undertaken using existing resources following the recent restructure. Improved prioritisation, scheduling and workload management are expected to support more efficient use of existing resources.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Council has a duty to ensure that its assets, highways-related infrastructure and public spaces are maintained in a safe condition. The

introduction of formal prioritisation procedures, improved record keeping and enhanced monitoring arrangements will support the Council in demonstrating a consistent and risk-based approach to service delivery and decision-making.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

6.1 There are no direct implications arising from Local Government Reorganisation at this stage. However, the review will help ensure that service processes are robust, resilient and capable of adapting to future organisational changes.

Relevant Council Priority

6.2 The review supports the Council's commitment to delivering efficient, responsive and customer-focused services through improved operational management, accountability and resource utilisation

Climate Change Implications

6.3 There are no direct climate change implications arising from this report. Opportunities to improve operational efficiency and reduce unnecessary travel through improved scheduling will be considered as part of service improvement measures.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.4 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report. Consistent prioritisation and recording processes will help ensure that requests are assessed fairly and transparently

Community Impact Implications

6.5 The work undertaken by the Civils Minor Works Team has a direct impact on residents, visitors and local communities across the district. Through the delivery of maintenance and repair works, the team helps to maintain safe and accessible public spaces, respond promptly to health and safety issues, and support community events and initiatives. The additional capacity strengthened management arrangements and service improvements outlined in this report will help ensure that the Council can continue to respond effectively to community needs and emerging issues as they arise.

6.6 The Civils Minor Works service supports the Council’s duties under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 by helping to maintain safe public spaces and reduce opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 The principal risk to the service is that, without effective workload management, prioritisation and documented processes, resources may not be utilised as efficiently as possible, resulting in delays to planned and reactive works, increased backlogs and reduced service resilience.

7.2 These risks are being managed through the ongoing service review and revised management arrangements, with improvements to prioritisation, workload planning, performance monitoring and service resilience.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 None

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Overview & Scrutiny Board

17th November 2026

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Karen May	04/11/26
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Rachel Egan Assistant Director Regeneration & Property Services	03/11/26
Financial Services	Paul Hutchinson Senior Finance Business Partner	05/11/26
Legal Services	Nicola Cummings Principal Solicitor, Governance	06/11/26
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	Emily Payne Engagement & Equalities Officer	04/11/26
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	Matthew Eccles Climate Change Manager	N/A
Community Safety Team	Bev Houghton Community Safety Manager	06/11/26

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Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

Latest position and implications for Bromsgrove and Redditch – *as of 3 November 2026*

Bromsgrove O&S | 17 November 2026

Rob Elmes, Assistant Director for Corporate Services and Transformation (Acting)

Bromsgrove District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

Executive position

Government is “minded to” proceed with two unitary councils for Worcestershire, with implementation in April 2029, but the final decision is still to be confirmed.

What is confirmed

- July decision withdrawn and re-made as a “minded to” decision.
- Proposed model remains North and South Worcestershire.
- Existing councils and services continue as normal.

What is proposed

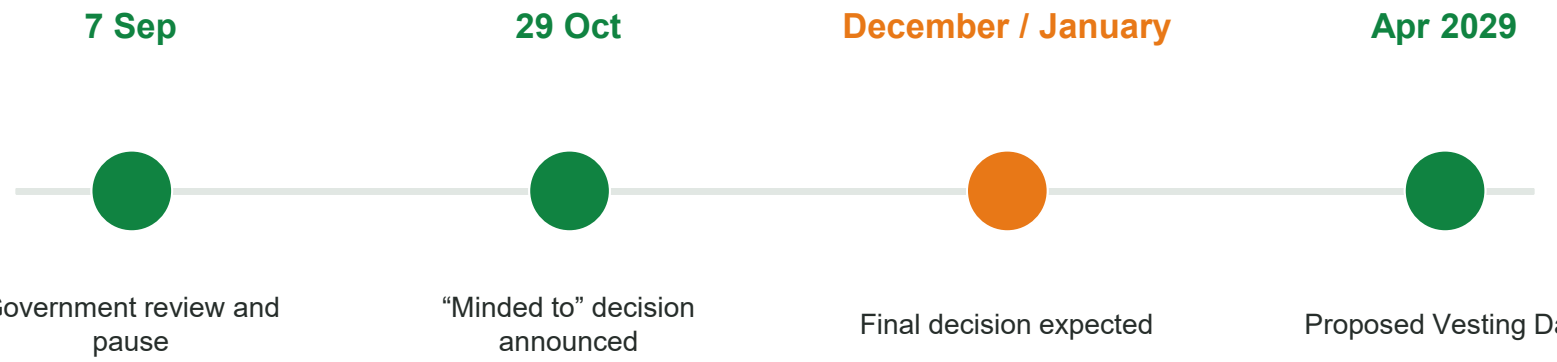
- District and borough elections in May 2027.
- New unitary elections in May 2028.
- Vesting Day in April 2029.

What remains open

- At least three weeks of representations, expected shortly. Government letter to set the process.
- Final decision expected around Christmas, possibly early New Year.
- Detailed implementation and legislative arrangements.

No immediate change for residents, businesses or day-to-day service delivery.

What has changed since the 7th September 2026 pause



Five areas: East Sussex and Brighton and Hove, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire. Fifteen other areas remain under review without “minded to” decisions.

Government has reached the same two-unitary view for Worcestershire a second time.

Government remains committed to LGR and considers the framework robust.

Preparation continues proportionately, without pre-empting the final decision.

Indicative timetable

Subject to the final Government decision and Parliamentary approval

Nov 2026	Minimum three weeks of representations. Government letter to confirm dates and process.
December / January	Government expected to confirm final position
May 2027	District and Borough elections
May 2028	Elections to the proposed new unitary councils
Apr 2029	Proposed Vesting Day; existing councils abolished subject to legislation

Government seeks views on the minded to decision, rather than alternative unitary models or a reopening of the original debate.

The public can submit views alongside key stakeholders, including police and health etc. This is a representation process, not a new public consultation.

Implications for Bromsgrove and Redditch

Services and residents

No immediate change.

Both councils retain their statutory responsibilities, and residents should continue to access services through the existing councils.

Governance and decisions

Current democratic and governance arrangements remain in place.

Transition arrangements depend on the final decision and subsequent legislation.

Programme readiness

Use the extended pause for internal housekeeping and proportionate preparation, with clear approvals and value-for-money controls.

Workforce

Timely staff communication remains important.

Staff and member updates went out on 29 October, including an all-staff briefing. Employment arrangements remain unsettled.

Finance and resources

Continue oversight of LGR costs and capacity. £450,000 per proposed unitary may be available, subject to Government funding terms.

Risk and assurance

Corporate risks should reflect the clearer direction, extended timetable and remaining uncertainty.

Current local response

A proportionate readiness approach

CONTINUE | No-regrets work

• Maintain service continuity and business-as-usual delivery.

• LGR Implementation Board continues during the pause and preserve existing programme knowledge, data and governance.

• Use the extended timeline for internal housekeeping and work useful across various scenarios.

• Develop the programme - clusters and domains with leads and deputies from all councils.

• Keep staff and members informed.

CONTROL | Commitments

• Test affordability and value for money.

• Use clear decision routes for shared activity.

• Avoid premature structural or staffing commitments.

• Track capacity, dependencies and risks.

CONFIRM | Next-stage clarity

• Final Government decision.

• Structural Changes Order and transition requirements.

• Governance and shadow authority arrangements.

• Funding and implementation plan.

• Government direction on a Mayoral Strategic Authority to secure devolution benefits.

• Options could involve Worcestershire, Warwickshire and Herefordshire, remain under discussion. Geography and election timing are unconfirmed.

Principle: prepare to move, but do not pre-empt the decision.

CLUSTER AND LEAD	DOMAIN, LEAD AND DEPUTY	DOMAIN, LEAD AND DEPUTY
Statutory People Paul Robinson	**Adults** Lead: Mark Fitton Deputy: Judith Willis Themes: Adult Social Care	**Children** Lead: Adam Johnston Deputy: TBC Themes: Children's Social Care, SEND, Schools, Support for Young People
Place, Housing & Resilience Lloyd Griffiths	**Place & Environment** Lead: Guy Revans Deputies: Ostap Paparega, Ian Edwards Themes: Highways & Transport, Waste & Environmental, Planning, Regulatory Services	**Housing, Public Health & Resilience** Lead: Kate Bailey Deputies: Thomas Mountford, Simon Parry Themes: Housing, Public Health, Resilience, Leisure & Culture
Resources Vic Allison	**Finance, Contracts & Assets** Lead: Rachel Cooper Deputy: Helen Ogram Themes: Finance, Contracts, Assets & Property, Local Authority Trading Companies	**People & Workforce** Lead: Hannah Perrott Deputy: Andy Baldwin Themes: Human Resources
Corporate Enabling John Leach	**ICT, Data & Customer** Lead: Jayne Pickering Deputy: David Sutton Themes: ICT & Data, Customer	**Legal, Governance & Democracy** Lead: Claire Felton Deputies: Hazel Best, Meesha Patel Themes: Governance, Legal, Policies
Transition Ian Miller	**Shadow Authorities** Lead: TBC Deputy: TBC Themes: To be determined	**Devolution** Lead: Sian Stroud Deputy: Rachel Egan Themes: To be determined

Programme Monitoring Officer: Hazel Best
Programme S151 Officer: Rachel Cooper

Ongoing assurance, risk and funding

Work carried forward from the pause period and the latest Government position

Risk management

• Corporate LGR risks reflect the “minded to” position, April 2029 timetable and remaining uncertainty.

• Controls cover governance, workforce and capacity, programme cost, service continuity and reputation.

• Risks, actions and mitigations remain under review through corporate reporting and programme governance.

• Potential judicial review remains a risk. The July decision has been withdrawn. Legal advice must confirm any challenge to the 29 October position and applicable time limits.

Pause implications work

• A cross-council exercise has captured service implications, risks, opportunities and decisions arising from the September pause.

• The live register, SharePoint and Power BI reporting support continued management of pause impacts.

• Use the extended timeline for internal housekeeping and prioritisation of work useful across scenarios.

• Evidence supports decisions, assurance and continuing oversight by the LGR Implementation Board.

Government funding

• Government has indicated £450,000 may be available for each proposed new unitary, half of the original £900,000 allocation.

• For the two proposed Worcestershire councils, this would total £900,000.

• Funding would support previous and continuing implementation work. Access, payment timing and governance remain to be confirmed.

• Treat the figure as indicative, rather than funding already received.

Key next steps

1	**Respond to and monitor the representation process**	Check the Government letter and contribute views on the provisional decision within the confirmed representation window.
2	**Refresh local programme arrangements**	Review cluster, domains and workstreams, governance, capacity, financial controls and reporting against April 2029.
3	**Update risks and dependencies**	Reflect the move from pause to “minded to”, while retaining uncertainty until confirmation. Factor in joint committee decision points following the outcome of the representation period and any community governance review outcomes.
4	**Maintain member, staff and public engagement**	Timely updates and member FAQs. Staff and member articles and an all-staff briefing accompanied the 29 October announcement.
5	**Return to scrutiny**	Bring back material changes, decisions, costs and assurance on transition readiness.

LGR workshop, 13 November: Cluster and domain leads and deputies will cover the programme structure, roles, governance, priorities, design principles and day 1 safe and legal requirements, then develop teams and plans. PMO, Comms and Data Hub representatives will attend.

Questions and discussion

The direction is clearer, but the final decision and detailed transition arrangements are still awaited.

- What further assurance and information would members like?

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Overview and Scrutiny Board 17th November 2026

Car Parking Task Group

Relevant Portfolio Holder		Councillor Karen May
Portfolio Holder Consulted		No
Relevant Assistant Director		Assistant Director Regeneration & Property Services
Report Author: Sarah Woodfield	Job Title: Democratic Services Officer Contact email: sarah.woodfield@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 881605	
Wards Affected		N/A
Ward Councillor(s) consulted		N/A
Relevant Council Priority		Infrastructure
Non-Key Decision		
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Overview and Scrutiny Board is asked to:-

a) **Agree the Membership of the Car Parking Task Group (as detailed at paragraph 3.4);**
b) **Appoint a Chairman of the Car Parking Task Group (who must be a member appointed at resolution a) above);**
c) **Agree the Terms of Reference (ToR) (as attached at Appendix 1); and**
d) **Approve the content of the Topic Proposal Form (as attached at Appendix 2)**

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 At the last meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 15th September 2026, Members agreed that a Task Group should be established looking at Car Parking within the District. However, no Terms of Reference (ToR) were agreed and in line with standard practice, this needs to be resolved by the Board before the investigation can commence.

2.2 A draft topic proposal form was submitted by Councillor B. Kumar to Democratic Services on 20th September 2026.

2.3 A meeting was held with Councillor B. Kumar, Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services and the lead Democratic Services Officer for the Board on 22nd October 2026 to discuss the topic proposal form and a final draft was developed.

2.4 The purpose of this report is to formalise and agree the ToR, to approve the Topic Proposal Form and to agree Membership including the Chairman of this Task Group.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

Membership

3.1 It has been the existing practice within the Council that Task Groups are composed of 5 Members with a quorum of 3. Councillors are asked to consider if this is an appropriate number of Members for this Task Group. It is not a requirement for the membership to be politically balanced, although it would be good practice to have each political group represented.

3.2 Following an email sent to all Board Members, expressions of interest were received from Councillors A. Bailes, A.M. Dale, B. Kumar and S. Robinson on 19th October 2026, and subsequently from Councillor R. Lambert on 2nd November 2026, who indicated they would like to join the Car Parking Task Group.

3.3 Following the deadline for expressions of interest from Board Members which expired on 26th October 2026, with one vacancy remaining, an email was sent to the Overview and Scrutiny "pool" (excluding Cabinet Members) on 28th October 2026 requesting expressions of interest. Expressions of interest from the "pool" were received by email from Councillors E.M.S. Gray, M. Marshall and J. Elledge.

3.4 In light of the terms of reference which states 5 members should be selected, as a priority from the Board, the desired numbers have been met. Therefore, the Board is asked to consider whether to grant membership of the Task Group to Councillors A. Bailes, A.M. Dale, B. Kumar, R. Lambert and S. Robinson.

3.5 Members are asked to note that the Task Group will meet regularly throughout the review. Subject to the approval of the ToR, it is proposed that this review should be completed in six months.

Terms of Reference

3.6 The ToR are included at Appendix 1 and the Topic Proposal Form at Appendix 2 to be agreed by the Board.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Depending on who is appointed as Chairman of the Task Group, they may be eligible to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) of

£1,523.75 (Members are only eligible to receive one SRA at a time at the Council).

4.2 It should be noted that there will be resource implications in respect of officer time in attending and preparing for the Task Group meetings and there may be resource implications associated with any recommendation(s) made by the Task Group.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications relating to this report, other than those in respect of the Overview and Scrutiny function as a whole.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

6.1 There are no direct implications for Local Government Reorganisation.

Relevant Council Priority

6.2 The work of the Task Group would support the Council priority of infrastructure.

Climate Change Implications

6.3 Vehicles contribute carbon emissions and it is suggested that Members may wish to be mindful of these implications during the review.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.4 There are no direct customer/equalities and diversity implications in respect of this report.

Community Impact Implications

6.5 There are no specific implications for community safety, health or wellbeing.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 No specific risks have been identified at this stage.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 - Terms of Reference
Appendix 2 - Topic Proposal Form

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APPENDIX 1

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD

Car Parking Task Group

Terms of Reference as at November 2026

Looking at Car Parking Provision within Bromsgrove District Council's Operations a 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 within 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 Car Parking Provision within Bromsgrove District Council's Operations and will cover the following areas:

- Define the local parking issues and the appropriate study area.
- Map the current supply of on-street and off-street parking, including public and private provision, restrictions, conditions of use and responsible organisations.
- Assess current demand and use, including short-stay, long-stay, residential, workforce, visitor, shopping and leisure parking.

- Identify anticipated changes that could affect parking supply or demand, including future development, changes to third-party parking, highway proposals and local-centre improvements.
- Develop and test practical options with Members, residents, businesses and the organisations responsible for delivery, including Worcestershire County Council, West Mercia Police, parish councils, landowners and parking operators.
- Produce a local parking action plan for each area involved, setting out the evidence and preferred actions to inform delivery of the Car Parking Strategy action plan.

Bromsgrove District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

APPENDIX 2

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: Cllr Bakul Kumar	
Tel No: 07768991454	Email: b.kumar@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Date: 18.9.2026	

Title of Proposed Topic (including specific subject areas to be investigate)	Parking Review – Areas Outside Bromsgrove Town Centre Specific subject areas to investigate, building upon the approach taken for the Alvechurch parking review: • Define the local parking issues and the appropriate study area. • Map the current supply of on-street and off-street parking, including public and private provision, restrictions, conditions of use and responsible organisations. • Assess current demand and use, including short-stay, long-stay, residential, workforce, visitor, shopping and leisure parking. • Identify anticipated changes that could affect parking supply or demand, including future development, changes to third-party parking, highway proposals and local-centre improvements. • Develop and test practical options with Members, residents, businesses and the organisations responsible for delivery, including Worcestershire County Council, West Mercia Police, parish councils, landowners and parking operators.

	• Produce a local parking action plan for each area involved, setting out the evidence and preferred actions to inform delivery of the Car Parking Strategy action plan.
Background to the Proposal (Including reasons why this topic should be investigated and evidence to support the need for the investigation.)	The Bromsgrove Car Parking Strategy, to be considered by the Cabinet in November, sets the strategic direction for parking in line with the vision "To provide a well-managed, accessible and sustainable parking network that supports Bromsgrove's economy and regeneration ambitions. The strategy will help ensure that residents, businesses and visitors have access to appropriate parking in locations that meet their needs. It will also support future growth, maintain accessibility and encourage more sustainable travel choices where practical." It contains a number of actions, including: "Consider the findings of the Alvechurch Parking Review and consider other areas that may benefit from similar reviews, incorporating agreed actions into future parking service planning and investment programmes as appropriate." The task and finish group will support the delivery of this action and further develop that aspect of the action plan.
Links to national, regional and local priorities (including the Council's strategic purposes)	**Local priorities** • The Bromsgrove Car Parking Strategy sets the direction for parking and includes an action to consider other areas that may benefit from reviews similar to Alvechurch. • The work supports the Council's strategic purposes by helping local businesses, improving access to services and contributing to safe and accessible places. **Regional priorities** • The review will support partnership working with Worcestershire County Council on on-street parking, highways and transport matters. **National priorities** • The work is consistent with national planning and transport objectives for accessible, safe and sustainable places.

Possible Key Objectives (these should be SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely)	**Objective 1 – identify areas outside Bromsgrove Town Centre that would benefit from a local parking action plan** **Objective 2 – develop a common methodology for identifying and assessing local parking needs, enabling ward members to lead and champion the collection of a robust and consistent evidence base upon which local parking action plans can be developed.** **Objective 3 – produce local parking action plans to inform and support the delivery of the Councils Car Parking Strategy Action Plan.**	
Anticipated Timescale for completion of the work.	The work will commence as soon as possible and will be completed by the end of April 2026.	
Would it be appropriate to hold a Short Sharp Inquiry or a Task Group? (please tick relevant box)	Task Group	A Task Group is appropriate to undertake a focused and time-limited exercise that brings together existing evidence, targeted local intelligence and partner input to identify the key parking issues and produce a practical, local parking action plan.

OFFICE USE ONLY - TO BE COMLETED 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	

Primary Prevention in the Context of Neighbourhood Health *(Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 3 September 2026)*
Cllr Bakul Kumar

Primary prevention is now a central pillar of Worcestershire's Neighbourhood Health programme, aiming to shift care into communities, reduce avoidable illness, and strengthen local capacity. As the report states, *"clinical care accounts for less than 20% of health outcomes… over 80% is determined by wider social factors"*. Worcestershire's approach focuses on three integrated domains: **Insight & Intelligence**, **Health Improvement Services**, and **Community Engagement & Development**.

Insight & Intelligence
Public Health has developed neighbourhood-level analysis across 350 LSOAs, identifying variation in non-elective admissions and profiling 14 priority neighbourhoods. These profiles cover demographics, deprivation, housing, retail environments and service access, enabling Primary Care Networks to target interventions more effectively. *"Neighbourhood profiles have been developed for fourteen priority neighbourhood areas… shared with Primary Care Networks"*.

Health Improvement Services
Worcestershire delivers a wide range of prevention services including smoking cessation, weight management, falls prevention, substance misuse support, sexual health, and children's public health programmes. The **Healthy Worcestershire** programme integrates physical activity, strength and balance, weight management, smoking cessation and social connection in community venues.
A new **online referral portal** streamlines access for professionals, and services are promoted through social media, community outreach and local media partnerships. Investment includes £131,390 per year to expand online STI testing and the launch of **Quit Coach**, an AI-supported WhatsApp cessation tool. Trading Standards contributes through enforcement against illicit tobacco and non-compliant vaping products.
Rural access is supported through Family Hubs outreach and 35 Healthy Worcestershire venues, including village halls such as Blackwell and Burford.

Community Engagement & Development
Worcestershire's asset-based approach empowers communities to shape health improvement. Over **1,000 grants** worth **£3 million** have been awarded since 2023. The programme is based on the WHO Ottawa Charter and has won the **2025 LGC Public Health Award**, with national and international recognition. Youth work engages over 1,000 young people monthly, supporting wellbeing and reducing risk-taking behaviours.
Outcomes
Recent performance shows significant improvements:

- Smoking in pregnancy reduced from **8.3% to 3.3%**, halving the number of women smoking during pregnancy.
- Adult smoking prevalence fell to **7.5%**, a 33% reduction in two years.
- Overweight/obesity rates dropped from **68% to 63%**, now below regional and national averages.
- Falls among older people reduced from **1660 to 1607 per 100,000**, outperforming national trends.
- Healthy Worcestershire engaged **1,000+ residents**, with 75% improving activity and strength.
- Worcestershire now has the **highest healthy life expectancy in the West Midlands** (63.6 years men; 63.1 years women).

Challenges
Key challenges remain:

- Rising proportion of children in low-income households (from **16.6% to 18%**).
- Child development outcomes slightly below national average.
- Child obesity strongly linked to deprivation; behavioural interventions alone are ineffective.
- STI testing rates remain too low; expanded online testing aims to address this.

A multi-agency strategy is underway, including expanded Family Hubs and system-wide action on healthy food environments.

Conclusion
Primary prevention is delivering measurable improvements across smoking, obesity, falls, mortality and healthy life expectancy. Worcestershire's model is influencing national policy and international practice. Continued investment and system-wide collaboration will be essential to maintain progress and address persistent inequalities.

HOSC Briefing Report: Winter Planning & Stroke Services Transformation
Meeting Date: 12 October 2026
Cllr Bakul Kumar

2 Items on the agenda

- **Urgent care & Winter Planning 2026/2027**
- **Stroke Services Restructuring**

Urgent Care & Winter Planning 2026/27

The primary goal of the county-wide Winter Plan is to actively mitigate severe urgent and emergency care pressures by moving care pathways out of major acute hospitals and into secondary settings.

Key System Metrics & Local Impacts:
• **Emergency Department Redirection:** Shifting up to 200 to 400 patients per month away from overstretched acute Emergency Departments (EDs) by expanding the Single Point of Access (SPA) and utilizing NHS 111 triage. While positive for major hospital flow, this creates an unquantified risk of shifting the physical waiting room burden onto local high street services.
• **Princess of Wales MIU Capacity:** The Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust is investing £300,000 to scale up Minor Injury Unit (MIU) staffing. This funding is critical for the Princess of Wales Community Hospital (Stourbridge Road, Bromsgrove) to expand triage and emergency care practitioner capacity and prevent out-of-hours service suspensions.
• **Virtual Ward Framework Limitations:** The plan expands county-wide 'Hospital at Home' and Virtual Ward capacity from 20 to 45 beds, focusing heavily on severe respiratory and frailty conditions. Given the vast geographic footprint of the county, a 45-bed limit provides a highly restricted localized safety net for clinically vulnerable or fuel-poor residents in Bromsgrove.

Agenda Item 2: Stroke Services Restructuring

The Integrated Care Board (ICB) has advanced an Outline Business Case to completely restructure acute stroke care pathways, resolving longstanding workforce fragility and reliance on locum clinicians.

Clinical Centralisation & Local Realities:
• **Projected 70% Demand Surge:** In 2025/26, Worcestershire recorded roughly 700 stroke admissions. Driven by an ageing demographic, this figure is modeled to skyrocket by nearly 70% to 1,200 annual stroke admissions by 2040.
• **Centralised Hyperacute Care:** The new endorsed model permanently eliminates all acute stroke beds from Hereford and consolidates a centralized Acute Stroke Centre exclusively at Worcestershire Royal Hospital. Confirmed stroke patients will bypass or be transferred instantly out of local district borders for hyperacute clinical intervention.

• **The Evesham Rehabilitation Travel Burden:** Crucially for our district, inpatient rehabilitation will be provided at the designated Stroke Recovery Units at Evesham Community Hospital or Hereford County Hospital, utilizing a reduced bed base that aligns with regional averages.

Key District Scrutiny Challenges
To safeguard public interest and ensure care accessibility, Bromsgrove District Council through Cllr Karen May, Leader of the Council should hold health partners to account across the following three key dimensions:

1. Travel & Isolation Barriers: Evesham Community Hospital is located more than 20 miles away from Bromsgrove. Public transport connectivity between these two areas is severely limited, placing a major financial and logistical travel burden on elderly spouses and disadvantaged families visiting recovering relatives.

2. Community Care Capacity Deficits: The strategy to reduce physical stroke recovery beds relies entirely on shifting patients to community 'Home First' models. However, the Winter Plan openly identifies that domiciliary social care capacity remains a 'significant risk' that is already stretched to the limit, threatening to leave patients stranded at home without adequate physical rehabilitation.

3. Consultation and Funding Loopholes: Paragraph 36 explicitly states that public consultation on these major acute modifications will only proceed once full funding is secured. The Council must ensure that these 'fragile' services are not altered incrementally on the ground due to operational pressures before the public has a formal right to look at the plans.
demand.

CABINET LEADER'S WORK PROGRAMME

1 DECEMBER 2026 TO 31 MARCH 2027
(published as at 2nd November 2026)

This Work Programme gives details of items on which key decisions are likely to be taken in the coming four months by the Council's Cabinet

The Work Programme gives details of items on which key decisions are likely to be taken by the Council's Cabinet, or full Council, in the coming four months. **Key Decisions** are those executive decisions which are likely to:

(i) result in the Council incurring expenditure, foregoing income or the making of savings in excess of £200,000 or which are otherwise significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
(ii) be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the district;

If you wish to make representations on the proposed decision you are encouraged to get in touch with the relevant report author as soon as possible before the proposed date of the decision. Contact details are provided, alternatively you may write to the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services, Parkside, Market Street, B61 8DA or e-mail: democratic@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

The Cabinet's meetings are normally held every four weeks at 6pm on Wednesday evenings at Parkside. They are open to the public, except when confidential information is being discussed. If you wish to attend for a particular matter, it is advisable to check with the Democratic Services Team on (01527 64252 ext 3031) to make sure it is going ahead as planned. If you have any queries Democratic Services Officers will be happy to advise you. The full Council meets in accordance with the Councils Calendar of Meetings. Meetings commence at 6pm.

CABINET MEMBERSHIP

Councillor K J May	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development and Enabling
Councillor S. Baxter	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning and Strategic Housing
Councillor S. Nock	Cabinet Member for Finance
Councillor K. Taylor	Cabinet Member for Local Government Reorganisation Worcestershire Regulatory Services and Climate Change
Councillor S. Webb	Cabinet Member for Health and Well Being, Leisure and Culture
Councillor P. Whittaker	Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Community Safety

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Bromsgrove Council Plan - Position Statement **Key:** No **New !**	Cabinet 6 Jan 2027		Report of the Assistant Director Transformation and Corporate Services	Helen Mole, Business Improvement Manager Tel: 01527 881685 Councillor K. J. May
Council Tax Base 2027/28 **Key:** No	Cabinet 6 Jan 2027 Council 20 Jan 2027		Report of the Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services	Debra Goodall, Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070 Councillor S.T. Nock
Council Tax - Empty Homes Discounts and Premiums 2027/28 **Key:** No	Cabinet 6 Jan 2027 Council 20 Jan 2027		Report of the Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services	Debra Goodall, Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070 Councillor S.T. Nock
Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27 **Key:** No	Cabinet 6 Jan 2027 Council 20 Jan 2027		Report of the Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services	Debra Goodall, Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070 Councillor S.T. Nock

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Discretionary Council Tax Reduction Policy 2026/27 **Key:** No	Cabinet 6 Jan 2027 Council 20 Jan 2027		Report of the Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services	Debra Goodall, Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070 Councillor S.T. Nock
Non Domestic Rates - Discretionary Rates Relief Policy 2026/27 **Key:** No	Cabinet 6 Jan 2027 Council 20 Jan 2027		Report of the Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services	Debra Goodall, Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070 Councillor S.T. Nock
Spadesbourne Homes Ltd Business Plan 2025-2030 Refresh **Key:** Yes	Shareholders Committee 1 Feb 2027	This report may contain exempt information that would need to be considered in private session	Report of the Director of Spadesbourne Homes	Judith Willis, Director of Spadesbourne Homes Limited, Judith Willis, Assistant Director Community & Housing services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3284 Councillor K. J. May

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Spadesbourne Homes Ltd Financial Monitoring Report – Quarter 3 2026/27 **Key:** Yes	Shareholders Committee 1 Feb 2027	This report may contain exempt information that would need to be considered in private session	Report of the Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services, Director of Finance and Section 151	Debra Goodall, Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services, James Walton, Director of Finance (151) Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070, Councillor S.T. Nock
Spadesbourne Homes Ltd Performance Monitoring Report – Quarter 3 2026/27 **Key:** Yes	Shareholders Committee 1 Feb 2027	This report may contain exempt information that would need to be considered in private session	Report of the Director of Spadesbourne Homes	Judith Willis, Assistant Director Community & Housing services, Judith Willis, Director of Spadesbourne Homes Limited Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3284, Councillor K. J. May

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Medium Term Financial Plan Stage 2 2027/28 (Including Fees and Charges, Capital Strategy, Investment Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy and Recommendations from the WRS Board) **Key:** No	Cabinet 17 Feb 2027 Council 24 Feb 2027		Report of the Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services	Debra Goodall, Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070 Councillor S.T. Nock
Council Tax Resolutions 2027/28 **Key:** No	Cabinet 24 Feb 2027 Council 24 Feb 2027		Report of the Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services	Debra Goodall, Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070 Councillor S.T. Nock
Shareholders Committee Annual Report 2026/27 **Key:** No	Shareholders Committee 12 Apr 2027		Report of the Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services	Jess Bayley-Hill, Principal Democratic Services Officer Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor K. J. May

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Spadesbourne Homes Ltd Financial Monitoring Report – Quarter 4 2026/27 **Key:** Yes	Shareholders Committee 12 Apr 2027	This report may contain exempt information that would need to be considered in private session	Report of the Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services, Director of Finance and Section 151	Debra Goodall, Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services, James Walton, Director of Finance (151) Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070, Councillor S.T. Nock
Spadesbourne Homes Limited - Performance Monitoring Report – Quarter 4 2026/27 **Key:** Yes	Shareholders Committee 12 Apr 2027	This report may contain exempt information that would need to be considered in private session	Report of the Director of Spadesbourne Homes	Judith Willis, Assistant Director Community & Housing services, Judith Willis, Director of Spadesbourne Homes Limited Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3284, Councillor K. J. May

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME (2026-2027)

ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Date of Meeting	Subject	Lead Officer / Member
5th January 2027	**Substantive Items**	
	Overview Items Additional Licensing Scheme for HMOs (TBA)	Matthew Bough/ Katie Sharp-Fisher
	Information items LGR Update	Rob Elms, Acting Assistant Director Corporate Services and Transformation
	Local Heritage Action List (Quarterly Update)	Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager
9th February 2027	**Substantive Items** Fly-tipping (to include discarded nitrous oxide canisters)	Toni Ainscough/Leon Hill
	Information Items LGR Update	Rob Elms, Acting Assistant Director Corporate Services and Transformation
	Levelling Up Fund Programme (Quarterly Update)	Rachel Egan, Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services
	Local Heritage Action List (Quarterly Update)	Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager
	West Mercia Police and Crime Panel update (meeting held on 3rd February 2026)	Councillor Kumar
	Crime and Disorder Scrutiny – Annual Review of the Work of the Community Safety Partnership in the District	Bev Houghton, Community Safety Manager/West Mercia Police
23rd March 2027	**Substantive Items** Update on Heatwaves Preparedness (Yearly Update) (Impact of Heatwaves Task Group Recommendation).	Guy Revans, Executive Director

Date of Meeting	Subject	Lead Officer / Member
	Information Items LGR Update	Rob Elms, Acting Assistant Director Corporate Services and Transformation
13th April 2027	**Substantive Items** Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2026-27	Chairman of the Board
	Information Items Levelling Up Fund Programme (Quarterly Update)	Rachel Egan, Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services
	Local Heritage Action List (Quarterly Update)	Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager

FUTURE ITEMS FOR SCRUTINY (2026/27 municipal year)

Date of Meeting	Subject	Lead Officer / Member

ALL MEMBER BRIEFINGS

Date of Meeting	Subject	Lead Officer / Member

BDC Overview and Scrutiny Board - Action Sheet (2026/27)

14th April 2026

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2025/26	To explore the possibility of live-streaming at Board meetings.	27/4/26 Meeting set up to discuss. 11/5/26 – Progress update requested. 16/9/26 – Progress update requested. 30/10/236 – Update was requested from S151 Officer	Sarah Woodfield	**In Progress** Update received and emailed to members 22/9/26 - *The procurement exercise has been completed, and tender submissions have been received. The bids are currently being reviewed to assess affordability and value for money. However, the Section 151 Officer has advised that the project should not progress further until the Council has completed its wider review of the capital programme. The outcome of that review will determine whether the scheme can be prioritised for delivery alongside other capital commitments and, if so, the timetable for implementation.*

15th September 2026

Libraries "Unlocked" Update	• To provide comparative pre and post implementation performance data for Bromsgrove and Rubery libraries. • To investigate the differing conversion rates between registered and active Libraries Unlocked users at Bromsgrove and Rubery.	16/9/26 – Email request for action sent to relevant officers.	Carol Browne, WCC	**Completed** *22/9/26 – Email received* - Just getting in touch to confirm Carol has passed the below on to me. I am meeting with the Library Manager this week and gathering the data and information and will get a response to you early next week. Kind regards Kate Holford **Service Delivery Manager** **Worcestershire Libraries**

	• To provide details of the audience development plans and local initiatives for Bromsgrove and Rubery.			19/10/26 – Responses from WCC sent to members of the Board.
LGR Update	Can we access or recover any of the £900k per unitary authority that Government previously announced?		Rob Elmes	**Completed** 15/9/26 – Rob Elmes emailed a response to Councillor May – "*There has been no update from Government on the previously announced funding of c.£900,000 per proposed unitary authority, other than the instruction to cease activity and spending. At the moment, it is unclear whether that previous funding is still available, how it might be used, or whether councils will be able to claim against it.* *Continued lobbying of Government, individually or collectively, for clarity on the funding and to make the case that councils should not be out of pocket for any costs incurred in good faith.* *In the meantime, as I mentioned at O&S, councils are taking a cautious approach, limiting spending to essential readiness work and ensuring any expenditure offers value for money. I don't believe that any assumptions are currently being made that additional funding or reimbursement will be available. I will also flag this with the LGR programme team, for possible consideration at the LGR Implementation board on Thursday, which I imagine will probably be a focus for discussion."*
Local Heritage List	The Board recommended that the service estimate the resources and officer hours needed to complete the Local Heritage List across the District and consider whether additional capacity or a formal resource bid was required.	16/9/26 – Action was emailed to relevant officers. 1/10/26 – Chased action	Mary Worsfold	**Completed** 1/10/26 Email received from Mike Dunphy that a response is being formulated and will be sent in due course. 29/10/26 Email response sent to Members: *"Estimating the resources required to complete the task is problematic due to the fact it is not possible to tell at the outset how many structures need to be surveyed or how many additional ones will be*

		27/10/26 – Chased a response		*nominated by the public. An approach has been made to our recruitment consultants to see what further resource might be available and at what cost, should it be possible to appoint further temporary officers to advance to task then subject to budgets this can be considered."*
Food Waste Collection Service	• Officers to report further on discussions with Worcestershire County Council about haulage costs. • Officers to obtain information on microplastic risks associated with plastic liners.	16/9/26 – Action was emailed to relevant officers. 1/10/26 – Chased action 27/10/26 – Chased for a response		**In Progress**
Draft Bromsgrove Car Parking Strategy	1) Typo on page 56 should read *185* not *195*.	16/9/26 – Action was emailed to relevant officers.	Rachel Egan	**Completed**
	2) The Board's feedback to help shape the final version prior to Cabinet consideration to include: o stronger and clearer evidence (distinguish between individual car park peaks and network wide peak demand). o robust forecasting of future demand;	16/9/26 – Action was emailed to relevant officers.		**Completed** 1/10/26 response received from Rachel Egan that the changes to the strategy will be incorporated for Cabinet's consideration.

	○ improved signage; ○ consideration of accessibility; ○ examination of parking pressures outside the town centre; ○ improved enforcement capacity; ○ caution before making decisions affecting Churchfields car park.			
	3) A scrutiny task group be established to investigate parking across the Bromsgrove District.	17/9/26 – Topic Proposal form emailed to Cllr Kumar	Sarah Woodfield	**Completed**
Work Programme	Fly-tipping and discarded nitrous oxide canisters to be added to the list of potential future items.	17/9/26 – Emailed request to relevant officers.	Sarah Woodfield	**Completed**

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Overview and Scrutiny Board 17th November 2026

LEVELLING UP REPORT – BROMSGROVE TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION

Relevant Portfolio Holder		Councillor Karen May
Portfolio Holder Consulted		Yes
Relevant Head of Service		Rachel Egan – Assistant Director Regeneration and Property
Report Author: Rebecca Milward	Job Title: Regeneration Programme Manager email: Rebecca.Milward@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk	
Wards Affected		All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted		No
Relevant Council Priorities		Economic Development Communities and Housing Infrastructure
Non-Key Decision		
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.		
This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended – Appendix 1		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Overview and Scrutiny Board is asked to RESOLVE that:

1) the update on the progress of the Levelling Up Fund projects be noted.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a quarterly update on the continued progress of all regeneration schemes funded through the Levelling Up Fund (LUF).

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Overview and Scrutiny Board 17th November 2026

3. PROJECT UPDATES

Windsor Street Update

3.1 As Members will be aware, Phase 1 works have successfully seen the former library and fire station site cleared, having been derelict for many years. Phase 2 remediation works were completed at the end of October 2026. Ground water monitoring will be undertaken by Brownfield Solutions for a period of 12 months in line with Environment Agency requirements.

3.2 Procurement for appointing a planning specialist to secure outline planning permission for the site has commenced. The contract is expected to be awarded in December 2026.

3.3 Securing outline planning permission is expected to take up to nine months. Based on the current programme, site disposal is anticipated to take place in early 2028.

Nailers Yard Site

3.4 Members will be aware that this project has regenerated a key brownfield site in Bromsgrove town centre by creating a vibrant new commercial and cultural hub on the former Market Hall site (which has been renamed Nailers Yard). The project has also acted as a catalyst for wider regeneration in the area, prompting neighbouring businesses to undertake improvements to the appearance of their premises.

3.5 Both buildings are now complete, together with all external works apart from a small area of public realm to the rear of the buildings. This final area will be completed once the George Street works are finished, as access through this area is required to carry out those works.

3.6 The external works programme has been subject to delay arising from matters associated with the Section 278 works. The Council is currently reviewing the position on these matters and the potential programme and financial implications with support from its external legal and professional advisers. As these discussions remain live and commercially sensitive, further detail is provided in Appendix 1 under exempt cover.

3.7 The SLA is being finalised between Rubicon Leisure Ltd and the Council. Rubicon Leisure Ltd will operate and manage the Pavilion on behalf of the Council. They are developing an activity and events programme and are engaging with local groups and organisations interested in using the facility. Detailed layouts for the flexible multi-functional space have been agreed, with furniture specified to support a range of community, leisure and event uses.

3.8 GJS Dillons are continuing to make positive progress with viewings for the commercial building. The lease for 1.5 floors of office space with our anchor tenant is now in its final stages.
Building Control has advised that partial possession of the site (the buildings) can be taken in November, subject to Building Control being satisfied that all necessary requirements have been met and that no outstanding issues elsewhere on the site affect occupation. Subject to achieving partial possession as planned, we expect to complete the lease and progress tenant occupation shortly thereafter.

Hole Underneath George Street

3.9 During the implementation of the public realm works, a hole was discovered beneath George Street immediately adjacent to the Nailers Yard development site. It is believed to follow the former route of the culvert. Although the hole is not related to the Nailers Yard development, it must be addressed before the remaining external works can be completed. The Council considered a number of options for delivering the necessary investigation and remedial works, including continuing with the current contractor or removing the works from the existing contract and appointing an independent third party. Given Kier's contractual responsibility, technical knowledge of the works and existing mobilisation on site, it was decided that Kier should undertake the investigation and design phase. The costs submitted by Kier were reviewed by an independent quantity surveyor and confirmed as reasonable for the proposed scope of works. The Council reserves the right to appoint another contractor for the second phase, which will include filling and reinstating the hole.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Levelling Up programme was originally approved with a total budget of £16.103m. This comprised £14.5m of Levelling Up Fund grant and a Council contribution of £1.6m. The programme originally covered three projects in Bromsgrove: Windsor Street, Nailers Yard, (formerly the Market Hall site), and Public Realm improvements. The original allocation across these projects is set out below:

Project	Funding allocated (£)
Windsor Street	3,471,000
Nailers Yard (former Market Hall)	10,399,000
Public Realm	2,233,000
Total	**16,103,000**

4.2 In addition to the original Levelling Up Fund grant, further external funding has been secured for the programme. This additional funding totals £3,518,612 and is shown in the table below:

Funding source	Total Received (£)
UK Share Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) - Nailers Yard	224,364
Brownfield Land Release Fund	722,748
UKSPF - Windsor Street	84,000
Levelling Up Fund	62,500
GBSLEP	2,425,000
Total	**3,518,612**

4.3 In August 2025, an urgent decision was made to increase the Council's contribution from £1.6m to £2.1m due to overspend relating to culvert works on the Nailers Yard project. Together with the £3.519m additional funding in the table above, this increased the budget from £16.103m to £20.122m.

4.4 There was an underspend on the public realm project of £927,000. This was reallocated within the overall programme budget to the Nailers Yard project. Following this reallocation, the available budget for each project is as follows:

Project	Funding Allocated (£'000)
Windsor Street	3,555
Nailers Yard (former Market Hall)	15,261
Public Realm	1,306
Total	**20,122**

4.5 As of 8th October 2026, spend to date across the three schemes has reached £18,867.549 and a breakdown is included in the following table.

Project	Budget (£'000)	Spend to 08 Oct 2026 (£'000)	Committed spend (£,000)	Variance (£,000)
Windsor Street	3,555	3,326	3,569	14
Nailers Yard (former Market Hall)	15,261	14,369	14,806	(455)
Public Realm	1,306	1,306	1,306	0
Total	**20,122**	**19,001**	**19,681**	

4.6 During 2026/27, whilst the units are being marketed and occupancy levels established, the Council is expected to incur holding and operating costs. The financial performance of the development will therefore continue to be monitored, and any budget implications will be considered through the Council's normal budget monitoring and reporting processes.

4.7 In relation to Windsor Street, the Council will receive a capital receipt from disposing of the site to a Registered Social Landlord (RSL); however, the value of that receipt cannot be confirmed until the proposed development scheme is defined, and the planning position is known. Land without planning permission is discounted heavily as the buyer will take on all planning risk. Therefore, the investment of £150,000 to obtain planning permission will provide a return on that investment.

4.8 The expenditure required to secure outline planning permission would initially be funded from revenue reserves, with a view to replenishing those reserves once a capital receipt is received.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 External legal advice from construction law experts is being sought on the specifics of the Nailers Yard project.

6. OTHER – IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation Implications

6.1 Following Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), any ongoing revenue income from the Nailers Yard development and Windsor Street site will transfer to the new Unitary Council. The buildings on the Nailers Yard site will transfer to the new Unitary Council.

Relevant Council Priorities

6.2 This project supports the following Council Priorities:

Economic Development, Communities and Housing and Infrastructure.

6.3 The work on this project supports economic development and regeneration as well as a balanced housing market.

6.4 The regeneration project at Nailers Yard provides workspace and will enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre with the extra food and beverage offer and the community space.

Climate Change Implications

6.5 Through the redevelopment of the Nailers Yard site, energy efficiency measures and Low and Zero Carbon technologies will be introduced with a view to reduce operational energy consumption and the associated carbon emissions targets. These include introducing U values better than Building Regulations Part L, mechanical ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR), natural ventilation where possible, utilising

building thermal mass, high efficiency air source heat pumps and low energy LED lighting. The Nailers Yard site commits to achieving a minimum Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methodology (BREEAM) 'very good' rating on this site.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.6 There are no specific equalities and diversity implications.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 As part of the governance and reporting requirements, a risk register has been produced for each sub project. The five highest scoring risks for the Levelling Up programme are as follows:

Project	Risk	Mitigation
Nailers Yard	Commercial units are not let – Council responsible for void costs	GJS Dillon actively marketing units
Nailers Yard	Hole – George Street	Instructing Kier to undertake work to reduce impact on programme
Windsor Street	Remediation strategy does not result in a clean site.	Additional site investigation undertaken prior to phase 2 and working closely with Environment Agency
Windsor Street	RPs do not want to purchase the site for redevelopment	Soft market testing already undertaken and dialogue continues with Registered Providers

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8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Exempt information

The Levelling Up Programme has been reviewed at the following meetings:

- Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Levelling Up Programme Update July 2026
- Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Levelling Up Programme Update April 2026
- Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Levelling Up Programme Update January 2026
- Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Levelling Up Programme update report October 2025
- O&S Levelling Up Programme update report July 2025
- O&S Levelling Up Programme update report February 2025
- O&S Levelling Up Programme update report November 2024
- Bromsgrove Town Centre Regeneration July 2024
- Bromsgrove Town Centre Regeneration – Cabinet, 14th February 2024
- Bromsgrove 2040 Vision, Cabinet 12th July 2023
- Market Hall Proposal – Cabinet 15th March 2023
- Market Hall Scrutiny – Overview and Scrutiny, 13th March 2023.
- Levelling Up Fund Update – Overview and Scrutiny, 24th October 2022.

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9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Karen May	5/11/2026
Lead Director / Head of Service	Rachel Egan AD Regeneration and Property	4/11/2026
Financial Services	Paul Hutchinson Senior Finance Business Partner	4/11/2026
Legal and Democratic Services	Claire Green, Principal Solicitor – Commercial Contracts	6/11/2026
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	Not Applicable	N/A
Climate Change Team	Not Applicable	N/A

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

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