

Public Document Pack



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY 17TH JUNE 2026

AT 6.00 P.M.

PARKSIDE SUITE - PARKSIDE

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

AGENDA

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

To invite Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Disclosable Interests they may have in items on the agenda, and to confirm the nature of those interests.
3. **To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 20th April 2026 (Pages 7 - 26)**
4. **Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 14th April 2026 (Pages 27 - 38)**

There are no outstanding recommendations contained in the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board included in this agenda pack.

If there are any recommendations as a result of the pre-scrutiny of any Cabinet reports due to be considered at the Boards's meeting on 16th June 2026, these will be published in a supplementary papers pack to this agenda.

5. **Appointments to the Shareholders Committee 2026/27** (Pages 39 - 42)
6. **Cabinet Appointments to Outside Bodies 2026/27** (Pages 43 - 48)
7. **Shared Homelessness Strategy 2026-2031** (Pages 49 - 104)
8. **Economic Development & Regeneration Service Delivery** (Pages 105 - 112)
9. **Enforcement and Civil Penalty Policy** (Pages 113 - 196)
10. **Quarter 4 25/26 Performance Report** (Pages 197 - 208)
11. **VAT Recovery Updated Position** (Pages 209 - 214)
12. **To consider, and if considered appropriate, to pass the following resolution to exclude the public from the meeting during the consideration of item(s) of business containing exempt information:-**

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

| <u>Item No.</u> | <u>Paragraph</u> |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 13 | 3 |

13. **Windsor Street delivery options** (Pages 215 - 228)
14. **To consider any urgent business, details of which have been notified to the Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting**

J. Leach
Chief Executive

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

9th June 2026

**If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact
Eve Davies**

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

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

Notes:

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



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- Meeting Minutes
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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

MONDAY 20TH APRIL 2026, AT 6.00 P.M.

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

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

Councillor J.W. Robinson

Officers: Mr J. Leach, Mr. J. Walton, Mrs. D. Goodall, Mrs.
R. Egan, Mr. M. Cox, Mr. M. Bough, Ms. T. Ainscough,
Ms. M. Bailey, Mrs. H. Mole, Mr. M Eccles, Ms. G. Harris, Miss. K.
Sharp-Fisher and Mrs J. Gresham

94/25 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

95/25 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

96/25 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE CABINET HELD ON 25TH MARCH 2026**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 25th March 2026 were
submitted for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 25th March
2026 be approved as a true and accurate record.

97/25 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
BOARD HELD ON 24TH MARCH 2026**

The Leader took the opportunity to welcome the newly appointed
Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer to Bromsgrove District
Council.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was invited to
present the minutes from the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held

on 24th March 2026. In doing so it was noted that there were no outstanding recommendations from this meeting. However, a number of Cabinet reports had been pre-scrutinised at the Board meeting held on 14th April 2026 and at the two Finance and Budget Scrutiny Meetings held on 13th and 20th April 2026. Any recommendations made as a result of this pre-scrutiny would be discussed during consideration of the reports at this meeting.

RESOLVED that the minutes from the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 24th March 2026 be noted.

98/25

REVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME ENFORCEMENT POLICY

The Principal Officer (Planning & Enviro- Crime Enforcement) from Worcestershire regulatory Services (WRS) presented the Revision of Environmental Crime Enforcement Policy for Members' consideration.

Cabinet Members were advised that this was an updated policy which adhered to the most up to date legislation. This policy aimed to reflect the most current working practices in enforcement.

The updated policy was welcomed by Members and expressed that it would lead to better compliance in the disposal of waste within the District. However, it was also felt that when the policy was launched there needed to be a communications strategy that ran alongside. This would help support the policy, particularly in respect of the emphasis on the public's responsibility for waste until it was removed. Members felt it would be appropriate for the communications to include information regarding residents who were disposing of waste through a third party, and the importance of requesting sight of a disposal license to ensure the waste would be disposed of legally and responsibly.

RECOMMENDED that the Bromsgrove and Redditch Enforcement Policy be adopted and replace the current Joint Environmental Enforcement.

99/25

INTRODUCTION OF ENFORCEMENT OF LITTERING FROM VEHICLES

The Principal Officer (Planning & Enviro- Crime Enforcement) from Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) presented the Introduction of Enforcement of Littering from Vehicles for Members' consideration.

In doing so it was noted that this policy enabled littering from vehicles to be tackled through civil enforcement in the future. This would help to

Agenda Item 3

Cabinet
20th April 2026

assist in dealing with this matter, which was problematic, particularly in rural areas of the District. If the policy was approved, it was considered a reactive and proactive response and would enable the Civil Enforcement Team to issue Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) to the Registered Keeper of the vehicle from which the litter was thrown. It was noted that this would result in an additional resource in the tackling of litter within the District.

In terms of the PCN level, it was stated that this would be £250 and £125 (for prompt payment).

Members felt that along with the introduction of this type of enforcement, it was important to communicate a robust anti-littering message to residents. This would ensure that residents were aware if a littering offence was committed from a vehicle, and that the Registered Keeper was responsible for the PCN. It was also requested that the communications should remind residents of the risk to Council staff in carrying out increased litter picks as part of their role and as a result of littering.

Councillor J. Robinson, who was in attendance at this meeting, queried whether there would be a targeted approach to this enforcement and how evidence would be gathered. Officers confirmed that this would not be targeted but would rely on the Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO) witnessing the offence and obtaining video evidence on their body worn camera equipment. The PCN would be issued by administrative staff when the CEO returned to the office, in much the same way as a parking PCN was issued.

The right to appeal was also queried, particularly as the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) might not have the most up to date information on the Registered Keeper of a vehicle, or if the registration license plate was incorrect. This might result in letters being received from an enforcement agency to the incorrect person or address. Officers explained that there would be very few instances when this would happen, however there would be the opportunity for review in some cases.

In terms of whether this would only be applicable to vehicles registered within the UK, it was confirmed that this was the case as it would be difficult to enforce for vehicles from outside the UK.

Members queried whether there would be additional training provided to CEOs to carry out these additional duties. It was noted that CEOs were already trained to carry out enforcement as part of their role. As

Members were aware, Wychavon District Council provided parking enforcement for the Council and CEOs already carried out this type of littering enforcement in Wychavon and therefore the training would be easily applied within Bromsgrove. Officers explained that there had been five littering PCNs issued by Wychavon District Council in 2025.

On being put to the vote it was

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) Civil enforcement of Littering from Vehicles be introduced;
- 2) The Civil Enforcement Team be given delegated authority to issue Litter Penalty Charge Notices;
- 3) The parking administration team be authorised to deal with appeals and enforcement matters in respect of Litter Penalty Charge Notices;
- 4) The Penalty Notice Charge be set at the level set by Council for Criminal offences where a Fixed Penalty Notice is served for Depositing Litter (section 87/88 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990) which for 2026/27 subject to Council approval are proposed to be set as:
 - a) £250; and
 - b) £125 for prompt payment (within 14 days); and
- 5) Authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Regeneration & Property to issue Penalty Notice Charges for Littering from Vehicles under The Littering From Vehicles Outside London (Keepers: Civil Penalties) Regulations 2018.

100/25

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND

The UK Prosperity Fund Manager presented the Community Investment Fund report. In doing so it was noted that on 25th February 2026, the Council resolved to create a reserve of £1.25 million for a Community Investment Fund to enable agile investments to meet local community needs. In addition to this, an uplift in respect of Members' Ward Budgets from £2,000 to £5,000 and therefore £93,000 of this reserve was allocated to accommodate this increase.

The process for the allocation of funding for projects would be competitive, and applications evaluated against the assessment criteria in the policy and a scoring matrix based on these criteria applied. A panel of at least three officers would independently assess each application, followed by a moderation process to review and align scores. The resulting list of proposed decisions would be reviewed by the Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services who would make recommendations to the Executive Director Environment and Communities. The Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development and Enabling and the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning and Strategic Housing would then be consulted on the recommended decisions before applicants were informed of the outcome.

The final recommendation contained within the report was in respect of funding for 0.5 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) for a post to administer the funding.

The Leader explained that this report had been pre-scrutinised by the Finance and Budget Working Group at its meeting on 13th April 2026 where some recommendations were made and ratified at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board at its meeting on 14th April 2026. The recommendations were as follows:

- 1) Regarding Bromsgrove District Departments – any projects put forward must have the approval of the Ward Member.
- 2) Bromsgrove District Departments help and assist Ward Members with any projects they may put forward.
- 3) That the Panel should be Cross-Party.
- 4) If Ward Members feel they cannot sponsor a project, then it cannot go ahead.
- 5) Consideration should be given to an appeal process.

These recommendations were discussed in detail. It was stated that applications for this funding must be in line with Council Priorities. In terms of Council departments applying for funding this was not an opportunity for any service area who had not applied for a Budget Bid to apply for funding. The process of approval was clear within the funding criteria and with an Officer panel evaluating the applications, this would ensure that the funding would be available more quickly and the process less bureaucratic. There had been funding rounds undertaken previously, such as the New Homes Bonus, which had been long and protracted and taken up a considerable amount of Member time and Officer resource. The Leader confirmed that both she and / or the

Agenda Item 3

Cabinet
20th April 2026

Deputy Leader would remove themselves from considering any projects that might be a conflict of interest for them. This was the advantage of both Members being consulted as part of the application process.

In respect of recommendations 1 and 4 above, it was confirmed that Ward Members would be consulted as part of the application process. Ward Members would need to provide confirmation that they were in support of a project within their Ward. Where a Ward Member was not in support of a project, they would need to provide a clear rationale, as to the reasons why they did not support the project, especially where it related to a Council priority. This would be taken into account as part of the evaluation process. It was agreed that it was the responsibility of the applicant to provide further details to the Ward Member if they were not initially supportive of the project. Alternative wording was proposed for recommendation 1 as detailed below:

‘Any project proposal that had potential implications for a ward must include feedback from the Ward Member and be provided for consideration by the Executive Director Environment and Communities following consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development and Enabling, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning and Strategic Housing and Assistant Director Regeneration and Property.’

The Chairman of the Board expressed that he required more surety around the proposed wording and requested that the word ‘feedback’ be replaced with ‘confirmation’. This request was accepted.

There was a discussion regarding recommendation 2 above regarding support from Bromsgrove District departments. Members were informed that technical support via initially the Assistant Director would be made available to advise as appropriate whilst recognising council officers would not be leading on bids from communities. An amendment to the wording was suggested as follows:

‘Support Ward Members to fulfil their community leadership role in working with the communities by accessing any appropriate technical support via Assistant Directors in the first instance, whilst ensuring bids were owned and developed by Ward Members and their communities.’

The Chairman of the Board accepted this amendment.

The recommendation regarding a cross-party panel was noted. It was confirmed that it was not intended to create a Member panel or

committee at this time for determination of Community Investment Funding.

Whilst an appeal process was not supported at this time, a rationale would be provided by the Executive Director for Environment and Communities for any decisions made regarding bids, following consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development and Enabling and the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning and Strategic Housing in liaison with the Assistant Director for Regeneration and Property Services.

Members queried the 0.5 FTE allocation to the administering of the fund. The Overview and Scrutiny Board had understood that this would be divided between Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils resulting in 0.25 FTE for each Council. It was clarified that the post would be 0.5 FTE at each Council and not 0.25 FTE. The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was pleased that this was the case.

As there were three rounds of funding available, Members felt it was prudent to undertake the first round of funding, which was due to start imminently. It was determined that following the first round, which would be monitored closely, a review of the process took place to accommodate any lessons learnt and make any amendments to the process if necessary. It was reiterated that this process involved ownership by the Ward Member and communities and it was not for the Council to undertake all the work.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The Community Investment Fund policy be approved;
- 2) Recommendations in relation to the Community Investment Fund to be received from the Assistant Director Regeneration and Property with delegated authority for spend, upon receipt of those recommendations, to be granted to the Executive Director Environment and Communities following consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development and Enabling and the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning and Strategic Housing;
- 3) £93,000 of the Community Investment Fund be allocated to Members' Ward Budgets;

- 4) Up to £43,792 of the Community Investment Fund be allocated to the cost of administering the fund;
- 5) Any project proposal that had potential implications for a ward must include confirmation from the Ward Member and be provided for consideration by the Executive Director Environment and Communities following consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development and Enabling, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning and Strategic Housing and Assistant Director Regeneration and Property;
- 6) Ward Members were supported to fulfil their community leadership role in working with the communities by accessing any appropriate technical support via Assistant Directors in the first instance, whilst ensuring bids were owned and developed by Ward Members and their communities;
- 7) Where a project does not receive the support of a Ward Member this would be taken into account as part of the evaluation process;
- 8) A rationale would be provided by the Executive Director Environment and Communities for any decisions regarding bids, following consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development and Enabling, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning and Strategic Housing in liaison with the Assistant Director Regeneration and Property; and
- 9) A review of the process of the Community Investment Fund be undertaken following the completion of the first round of funding.

101/25

CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2026 TO 2031

The Climate Change Manager presented the Climate Change Strategy 2026 to 2031. In doing so, the following was highlighted:

- The Climate Change Strategy 2026 to 2031 replaced the previously approved Strategy. The new Strategy focused on priority themes where the Council had direct control or significant influence such as:

- Buildings within the Council's Estate
 - Residential Buildings
 - Transport
 - Planning and Land Use
 - Biodiversity
 - Waste and Food
 - Collaboration and Engagement
 - Governance and Finance
-
- The Strategy would be embedded in the Council's performance framework with annual reporting to Cabinet and Council. Members were reminded that Climate Change implications were already included in all Committee reports.
 - In order to ensure the Strategy moved from high-level ambition to operational reality, Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART) actions and milestones would be included directly in the relevant Service Business Plans. It was hoped that this would ensure that Assistant Directors and Service Managers maintained full ownership over the delivery methods required to meet the Climate Change Strategy outcomes.
 - The Climate Change Manager would act as the central corporate auditor, responsible for the annual monitoring and reporting of these milestones to Cabinet and Council. Members noted that although the Climate Change Manager would be the auditor, it was the responsibility of all Service areas to embed and take ownership of policies and processes in respect of Climate Change within their Service Area.
 - Partnerships would be instrumental in delivering the Strategy. There would be continued collaboration with Worcestershire County Council, Everyone Active, BDHT/Registered Providers, Act On Energy, Midland Net Zero Hub, Worcestershire Regulatory Services, in order to maximise delivery capacity and funding leverage.
 - There were some key operational programmes that would be undertaken which included:
 - PV at Bromsgrove Sport and Leisure Centre
 - Lighting upgrades across the Council's estate
 - Warm Homes retrofit
 - Expansion of EV charging
 - Preparation for separate weekly food waste collections
 - Biodiversity improvements

Agenda Item 3

Cabinet
20th April 2026

- The Strategy would be delivered through a mix of existing revenue budgets, invest-to-save business cases, Capital Programme bids, and external funding as required by service areas.
- Within the context of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), this was an adaptable Strategy which had been prepared and could be passed over to the new Authority in whatever structure was adopted.
- An annual report would be provided to ascertain the status of milestones and actions within the Strategy.

Members welcomed the ambitious Strategy and requested that areas of commonality between neighbouring Districts be considered during the implementation of the Climate Change Strategy 2026 to 2031 particularly in light of LGR.

It was raised that the previous Carbon Reduction Action Plan had set out the pathway to Net Zero by 2040 for the Council's own operations, with a 50 per cent reduction by 2030. Given that the Council would no longer be operating in its current form in 2030, what would be the Council's reduction in its operation in May 2028, when the new unitary authority would be established? It was noted that currently the Council's operations were successfully moving towards the 50 per cent reduction and were already close to attaining this result. The exact reduction in 2028 was not recorded within the report, however Officers looked to provide this information as part of the annual update of the Strategy reported to Council.

Further clarification was requested on whether the District would be establishing an anaerobic digester in the future. It was noted that a definitive answer could not be provided on this matter. An anaerobic digester would come at a considerable expense to the Council and require significant capacity. Both Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils were committed to providing a Food Waste Collection service in October 2026 in line with legislation. However, Members were keen to understand what the journey was for the neighbouring Councils in terms of food waste. It seemed that not all Councils would be operating a food waste collection service within the Government guidelines and it was queried why this was the case. Officers would provide updates on these areas as part of the annual updates.

It was noted that as the previous Cabinet Member for Climate Change had been consulted as part of the completion of the Strategy. The contents of the Strategy would not be amended to reflect the change in

portfolio responsibly and that she would present the report when it was considered at Full Council in the new municipal year.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) The Council's Climate Change Strategy 2026–2031 be approved; and
- 2) an annual review of the Climate Change Strategy be reported to Council.

102/25

EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY

The Senior Strategic Housing Officer presented the Empty Homes Strategy for Members' consideration.

It was reported that according to the national council tax database for 2025, there were 542,276 empty homes recorded in October across England, representing 2.1 per cent of all homes. In October 2025, Bromsgrove District had 635 empty homes, of which 384 had been empty for more than 6 months.

The Council was committed to identifying empty homes and developing options for bringing them back into use as quickly as possible.

Cabinet was informed that the aim of the Strategy was to:

- help alleviate housing need
- improve housing conditions
- offer a wider choice of housing to residents
- minimise the blight that can result where properties are left empty and neglected.

The strategic approach to tackling empty homes and delivering on the Council's commitment, was centred around three priority areas:

- Priority 1 - Develop systems, processes and multi-agency working
- Priority 2 - Improve intervention pathways, resources and performance
- Priority 3 - Strengthen early intervention, engagement and monitoring

It was explained that an empty home was a dwelling which was unoccupied and substantially unfurnished. There were two main types of

empty homes. Short term empty homes were dwellings which had been unoccupied for under six months. It was often the case that these were in the process of sale. Short term empty homes naturally occurred as people's circumstances changed, and they moved between homes.

Long term empty homes were dwellings which had been unoccupied and were substantially unfurnished for six months or longer. Bringing long term, privately owned empty homes back into use was the focus of this Strategy. Rather than representing a natural process of change, long term empty homes indicated there may be other factors leading to a property remaining empty.

Residential properties remained empty for various reasons, for example resolving legal ownership as part of an inheritance process. Other factors included new homes waiting for a buyer, owners abandoning properties and owners having a lack of funds for repairs and refurbishment.

There was no Act of Parliament that created a duty on local housing authorities to tackle empty homes. However, Councils did have a general housing duty to review housing conditions and needs as defined in the Housing Act 1985.

National policy focused on empowering Local Authorities to bring vacant dwellings back in to use, guided by a local empty homes strategy. Local Authorities had the discretion to charge empty homeowners council tax premiums and had a range of legislative powers to tackle empty homes.

A contribution of £7,680 from Bromsgrove District Council's Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant (26/27) had been agreed to support the funding of the part-time Empty Homes Officer.

Members welcomed this important Strategy and thanked the Senior Strategic Housing Officer for the comprehensive report.

Members questioned whether this process would be undertaken quickly in terms of getting empty homes back on the open market. Officers explained that this would be the responsibility of the Private Sector Housing Team to manage this process as quickly and effectively as possible. It was reported that since November 2025, five long term empty homes had been released on the open market, which was a great result for the District.

RECOMMENDED that the Bromsgrove District Council Empty Homes Strategy 2026 – 29 be adopted.

103/25

RENTERS RIGHTS ACT 2025

The Private Sector Housing Manager presented the Renters Rights Act 2025 report.

In doing so it was noted that The Renters Rights Act 2025 (RRA25) obtained Royal Assent in October 2025 with reforms being introduced through a phased approach.

Phase 1 would take effect from 1st May 2026 and included the following elements:

- The abolition of Section 21 'no fault' evictions.
- The introduction of Assured Periodic Tenancies in the private rented sector.
- The reform of possession grounds in the Private Rent Sector (PRS) so they are fair for both parties.
- The limitation of rent increases to once a year.
- Ban rental bidding and rent in advance.
- It would be illegal to discriminate against renters who had children or received benefits.
- Required landlords in the (PRS) to consider tenant requests to rent with a pet.
- Strengthen both local council enforcement and rent repayment orders.

Members were informed that Phase 2 would take effect from late 2026 and included the following elements across two stages:

- 1) Stage 1 the regional rollout of the database for Landlords and Local Councils. Signing up to the PRS Database would be mandatory for all PRS landlords and they would be required to pay an annual fee, the amount of which was still to be confirmed.
- 2) Stage 2 involved the further roll out of the database and introduction of the Ombudsman.

Phase 3 involved the introduction of a new Decent Homes Standard (DHS) in the PRS. It was reported that the dates of implementation were still to be confirmed following consultation, but it was likely to start in 2035.

In addition to these measures, the Government had consulted on plans to require all domestic privately rented properties in England and Wales to meet Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) of Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) C or equivalent by 2030 unless a valid exemption was in place. Awaab's Law would also be extended to the PRS, this dealt with mould and damp in properties and required landlords to make housing safe where they contained serious hazards.

New Burdens Funding 2025/26 had been provided by Government to support Local Authorities with the implementation costs. It was reported that Bromsgrove District Council had been allocated £16,575.66 to support the Council to undertake preparatory work for the new responsibilities around enforcement and reporting enforcement activity in private rented sector housing arising from the Renters' Rights Act 2025. In addition to this, Government had also confirmed that £34,332 for 2026/27 and £16,165 for 2027/28 had been added to the Council's final allocation of the Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant 2026-29.

Following the presentation of the report, Members queried what the current EPC rating must be in the PRS. It was reported that currently rental properties could not be an F rating or below, however, it was confirmed that there were not many properties at this rating within the District.

It was hoped that this legislation would succeed in doing what it was intended to do by Government. However, there were some reservations that it could reduce the numbers of rental properties available and increase homelessness across the District in the long term.

Members requested that a review be undertaken in six months to see the effects of the legislation and ascertain the impact on the District.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The update provided in the report in respect of the Renters Rights Act 2025 be noted;
- 2) The new burdens funding of £16,575.66 be noted; and

- 3) A review be undertaken in six months to see the effects of the Renters Rights Act 2025 legislation and ascertain the impact on the District.

RECOMMENDED that

- 4) The Scheme of Delegations be amended to incorporate new powers under the Renters Rights Act 2025.

104/25

QUARTER 3 2025/26 FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT (INCLUDING FINANCIAL SAVINGS)

The Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services presented the Quarter Three 2025/26 Finance and Performance Monitoring Report (including Financial Savings) for the consideration of Cabinet, which covered the period April to December 2025.

The report provided an update on the Council's forecast revenue and capital outturn, savings delivery, reserves, treasury management, and key performance information.

At Quarter Three, the Council was forecasting a £314,000 revenue overspend for the full year. This represented a broadly stable position compared with previous forecasts and reflected ongoing financial management actions taken during the year.

The overall position included the impact of both service-level pressures and favourable movements within corporate financing.

The key message was that the position remained manageable, but there were material service pressures that continued to require close monitoring into Quarter Four and beyond.

In terms of revenue pressures and underspends the most significant overspend was within Environmental Services, currently forecast at £884,000. This was mainly driven by waste management pressures linked to the ageing vehicle fleet, higher maintenance and hire costs, and the use of agency staff to cover vacancies and sickness. These pressures were expected to reduce once the new fleet was fully introduced.

Finance and Customer Services was forecasting a £674,000 overspend. This primarily related to agency staffing costs to cover vacancies, specialist VAT support and insurance property valuation work required

Agenda Item 3

Cabinet
20th April 2026

for the Statement of Accounts, alongside a housing benefit subsidy budget realignment. A review of resourcing arrangements was ongoing.

The overspends were largely offset by significant underspends elsewhere. Corporate Services was forecasting an £864,000 underspend due mainly to vacancy management, corporate efficiencies, and lower-than-expected inflation and utility costs. Corporate Financing was also showing a £970k underspend, driven by higher investment interest income, savings on interest payable, and the recognition of revenue grants received in advance in the previous financial year.

The Council had a savings target of £1.213m for 2025/26. As of Quarter Three, savings of £1.457m had been delivered, exceeding the target by approximately £244,000. The majority of savings had been achieved through vacancy management and corporate efficiencies. Further work was underway to review vacant posts and ensure that these savings were sustainable into future years.

Capital expenditure to date totalled £13.593m against a revised capital budget of £21.876m, which included additional grants received and carry forwards from previous years.

Key schemes included Nailers' Yard, where construction was progressing with a revised completion date of 6th May 2026, and the Windsor Street site, where remediation works were continuing to prepare the site for redevelopment.

Public Realm works had been completed and were reporting a notable underspend.

While delivery continued, there might be short-term cashflow implications pending the receipt of some external grant funding.

At the end of Quarter Three, earmarked reserves stood at £11.266m and were forecast to rise to £12.245m by 31st March 2026. This remained consistent with the approved Medium-Term Financial Plan and provided a reasonable level of resilience to manage known risks and future pressures.

The Council continued to operate without external borrowing. At the end of December 2025, £6m was held in short-term investments. Treasury activity remained fully compliant with approved prudential indicators, and returns had benefited from the higher interest rate environment.

Council Tax and Business Rates collection performance remained strong and was close to or above national averages. Benefits processing times had improved during the year, despite increased complexity in cases retained by the Council. Overall, corporate performance indicators were broadly on track at Quarter Three.

Following the presentation of the report, there were several areas discussed in detail. These included the consideration of this report at a Finance and Budget Working Group meeting held on 20th April. There had been several actions as a result of this pre-scrutiny including:

- Further information in respect of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) funding which was due to be received by the Council.
- Information on the costs of temporary accommodation. There had been a request made that the Assistant Director for Communities and Housing Services be invited to a meeting of the FBWG in the new municipal year.
- Funding for potholes at the Aston Road roundabout. This was an unadopted roundabout, maintained by the Council, which needed to be repaired if it was to be adopted in the future.
- Further information on the £64,000 pressure from North Worcestershire Water Management (NWWM). Cabinet queried whether the pressure would be shared between the partner Authorities. It was confirmed that this was the case.
- Clarification on the £27,000 additional rent on St John's car park. Members noted that this was referred to as 'Waitrose' car park.

In respect of all these actions, Cabinet requested that they also receive a copy of the information provided to FBWG Members.

Members also requested clarification on the £46,000 savings in terms from UK Shared Prosperity Fund within Economic Development. This was particularly pertinent given the approval of the funding for the 0.5 FTE approved as part of the Community Infrastructure Fund considered earlier at this meeting.

Vacancies and agency costs had also been discussed at the FBWG meeting earlier that day. Clarification on whether vacancies should be considered as underspends or savings was queried. Information was provided on when a vacancy would be considered an underspend and instances when it would be a saving. It was also clarified why a 'central pot' was used to hold funds when there were vacancies and that it was returned to the Service area when it was filled. It was noted that some

Agenda Item 3

Cabinet
20th April 2026

roles were particularly difficult to recruit to and therefore the monies might stay in the 'central pot' for long periods of time. However, once the role was recruited to the proportionate (depending on when in the financial year the role was recruited to) amount was returned to the specific service area. Concerns had been raised in respect of agency costs, and it was noted these were carefully monitored. However, it was noted that Environmental Services used agency staff regularly as there was often long-term sickness due to the physical nature of the roles within that Service area.

The Cabinet Member for Finance stated that the Quarters Three and Four reports would be presented to Council at its meeting in July 2026. The reporting schedule would be looked at closely to provide timely reporting to Members and the most up to date information as possible.

The Performance & Improvement Manager presented the Quarter Three Performance Monitoring report for Members consideration. The data had remained largely stable since the previous report at Quarter Two. A request was made that for future reports, any data that had not be received for a specific performance measured, be reported in a different way. This was to ensure that when assessing the data it showed that reporting was still taking place in this area.

RESOLVED that the following be noted:

- 1) The current Revenue position of £314k adverse variance;
- 2) The current Capital spending of £13.593m against a revised budget of £21.876m;
- 3) The current savings delivery is £1.457m against an annual target of £1.213m for 2025/26. This is included in the above Revenue position;
- 4) The Earmarked Reserves balances of £11.266m;
- 5) The Ward Budget allocation position to date is 22 approved allocations at £23,433.59, leaving a balance of £38,556.41 to be allocated before year end;
- 6) There is an updated procurements position, with any new items over £200,000 to be included on the forward plan;
- 7) The position on Council Tax and Business Rates be noted;
- 8) The position on benefits processing be noted;
- 9) The Q3 position on Corporate Performance Indicators be noted;
- 10) The Council's Treasury performance for Q3 of the financial year 25/26;
- 11) The position in relation to the Council's Prudential indicators;

RECOMMENDED that

- 12) That the Balance Sheet Monitoring Position for Q3 is noted – which is the Treasury Monitoring Report and required to be reported to Council; and
- 13) That £120k capital funding be approved for work on fixing potholes on the Aston Road roundabout and the road leading to the depot.

105/25

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

There was no Urgent Business on this occasion.

The meeting closed at 8.00 p.m.

Chairman

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

14TH APRIL 2026, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors P. M. McDonald (Chairman), A. M. Dale (Vice-Chairman), S. Ammar, A. Bailes, R. Bailes, J. Clarke, 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 Reorganisation and Climate Change
Councillor S.T. Nock – Cabinet Member for Finance
Councillor K. Taylor - Cabinet Member for Planning, WRS and Strategic Housing
Councillor P.J. Whittaker - Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Community Safety
Councillor M. Marshall

Officers: Mr. G. Revans, Ms H. Corredor, Ms R. Egan, Mr. M. Bough, Mr M. Cox, Ms R. McElliott, Ms. T. Ainscough, Ms. K. Sharp-Fisher, Ms. M. Worsfold and Mrs S. Woodfield

Other parties: Mr R. Church (Representative on behalf of Applied Resilience)

113/25 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

Apologies for absence was received from Councillor R.E. Lambert.

114/25 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

There were no declarations of interest nor of whipping arrangements.

115/25 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 24TH MARCH 2026**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 24th March 2026 were considered by the Board.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 24th March 2026 be approved as a correct record.

116/25

HEATWAVES PREPAREDNESS - YEARLY UPDATE

The representative from Applied Resilience provided an annual update on heatwave preparedness, explaining the Council's role within the Worcestershire Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and participation in the Adverse Weather Planning Group.

The key points included:

- The Council participated in the Local Resilience Forum and was represented on the Adverse Weather Planning Group.
- Community venues, including council buildings, libraries and selected church buildings were identified as potential cool spaces, although these were not formally promoted due to safeguarding and security concerns.
- Vulnerable residents were encouraged to register with the utility providers' Priority Services Registers, which allowed additional support during utility disruptions.
- All Council services had up-to-date business continuity plans.
- A roster of trained officers was maintained to respond to emergencies.
- During heatwave events, the UK Health Security Agency would act as the lead body, with the Council reinforcing national messaging through local communications.

After the presentation the Board carried out the following key discussions:

Priority Services Register (PSR)

- Whether data was available of the number of residents registered on the PSR for the District? – In response it was advised that a search could not be defined by District/Borough due to there being no defined boundary line, however a search could be defined by area.
- If staff were adequately trained in this field of work for the PSR? – In response Members were advised that this field of work was adequately resourced with duty response officers available as part of the service to assist residents and staff were also available at Bromsgrove and Redditch Day Centres.

Cool Hubs

- Members requested progress for seeking the use of cool hub spaces within the Church of England (COE) venues and queried if blank spot areas could be provided. – The Board were advised that all COEs had been contacted within the District but unfortunately there had been a lack of response. It was explained also that these areas could not be publicly advertised, due to safeguarding concerns.

Agenda Item 4

Overview and Scrutiny Board
14th April 2026

- If leisure centres (not owned by the Council) could also be possible cooling hub areas and if blank spot areas could be provided to Members? – In response it was acknowledged that access to cool spaces remained challenging, particularly in rural areas and that further engagement with partners such as rest centres and supermarkets was being explored and could possibly be used if in a Red Alert situation.
- Members queried the use of libraries, particularly difficulties faced for the public who were not members. – In response Members were advised that Worcester County Council (WCC) had been instructed to allow the public into libraries during Amber/Red warning alerts.
- Questions were also raised regarding excess heat related deaths nationally and if the reports were correctly reflective. - Officers acknowledged the recent UKHSA data and advised the Board that local impacts appeared lower, possibly reflecting effective community based resilience measures.

RESOLVED that the Heatwaves Preparedness yearly update be noted.

117/25

ENVIROCRIME (TO INCLUDE ENVIRONMENT CRIME UPDATE, ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME ENFORCEMENT POLICY AND LITTERING FROM VEHICLES)

Officers from Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) outlined enforcement activity since June 2024, covering fly tipping, littering, dog fouling and untidy land, with an increase in staffing to 1.5 full time equivalent (FTE) to support Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) when WRS took over the service delivery.

The key points included:

- Since June 2024, WRS had undertaken environmental enforcement on behalf of the Council.
- Fly tipping volumes in Bromsgrove were high compared to other districts.
- Successful enforcement relied heavily on gathering admissible evidence.
- Intelligence led approaches were used to identify hotspots and repeat offenders.
- A proposal was put forward to adopt the WRS Environmental Crime Enforcement Policy.
- Approval was sought to allow Civil Enforcement Officers to issue littering penalties from vehicles.

After discussions, Members raised the following questions:

Environmental Crime Update

- Dog fouling offences reported for investigation were discussed. Members requested clarity on the reported offences for dog fouling within the District. – The standard procedures were explained to Members which included firstly establishing if the complaint was an offence, followed by an initial warning to the perpetrator, and then escalation through a Community Protection Warning (CPW), Penalty Charge Notice (PCN), Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN), followed by possible court proceedings.
- Clarification was sought for the extra resource increase of .5 FTE to cover the BDC area and if this would be sufficient to cover the role? – Members were informed that the extra resource had been operating since June 2024, which was predominantly being used to assist with review of camera footage, associated intelligence checks and to also administer enforcement files. Members noted that the team were working as hard as they could with the resource available.

Littering from vehicles

- If there were other local authorities carrying out similar civil enforcement action to compare work productivity? – Members noted Wychavon District Council were carrying out similar enforcement action and it was agreed that Officers would seek their expertise in this field of work.
- If Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) could be used if the offence had not been witnessed by a Civil Enforcement Officer? – Members noted that evidence from CCTV and evidence from members of the public could be used if the claims were supported by witness statements. Members were also advised that the Team were using vehicle registration numbers as another approach to gain evidence.
- What was defined as a hotspot, could cameras be used in these particular areas and what were the costs? – It was advised that hotspots were identified by volume, severity and patterns of offending and camera deployment was limited by theft and technical constraints. Therefore, cameras were deployed selectively due to cost, theft risk and technical limitations.
- If an update could be provided on the number of fly tips reported since January 2026 as reported? – Members noted numbers were high due to the impact of littering issues in neighbouring District, particularly within the Birmingham City area, however, Officers were liaising with Birmingham City Council to tackle these issues. Members also noted that trying to track down individuals was becoming increasingly difficult, as offenders were learning new ways to avoid detection.
- Members discussed and queried the links between organised crime and fly tipping. – Members were advised that fly tipping was increasingly linked to organised criminal activity and required an intelligence led approach to identify offenders, which was a lengthy process. Members noted the need to raise public awareness of these organised crimes and their impact. It was

also highlighted that the individual who owned the waste was ultimately responsible for its disposal. Residents were advised to verify waste carriers via the Environment Agency register or the Council website.

- If recycling centre access restrictions were contributing to fly tipping? - It was advised that there was no clear evidence which currently linked fly tipping directly to recycling centre restrictions.

RESOLVED that the Envirocrime Update be noted.

118/25

LOCAL HERITAGE ACTION LIST - QUARTERLY UPDATE

Progress on the Local Heritage Action List Quarterly Update was provided to Members.

The following key points were considered:

- Draft Local Heritage Lists had been produced for several parish areas.
- Recruitment difficulties had delayed progress, although a vacant Conservation Officer post had been filled.
- External consultancy support had been used to maintain progress.

After consideration of the presentation Members asked when non parished areas would be covered. Officers explained that work would progress sequentially subject to resources. Questions were also raised regarding recruitment difficulties. Officers confirmed posts had required re advertisement due to skills shortages.

RESOLVED that the Local Heritage Action Quarterly Update be noted.

119/25

PERMISSION TO REVOKE THE FIRST HOMES POLICY

This was not considered by the Board as the item had been deferred.

120/25

RENTERS RIGHTS ACT 2025

The Private Sector Housing Officer presented a comprehensive update on the Renters' Rights Act. Members were informed that The Act represented the most significant reform of the private rented sector in decades. The act also expanded the Local Authorities enforcement duty from property conditions to tenancy regulation and consumer protection.

The 3 implemented phases were highlighted were as follows:

Phase 1

- The Section 21 "no fault" evictions would be abolished.
- Would provide greater protection for both parties.
- No fixed tenancy period.

Agenda Item 4

Overview and Scrutiny Board
14th April 2026

- Rent increases would be limited to once per year.
- Discrimination against tenants with children or on benefits would be prohibited.
- Landlords would be required to register properties on a national database.
- Consideration rights for tenants to request a pet.
- Enhanced enforcement powers had been granted to Local Authorities.

Phase 2

- All landlords were permitted to register their properties on the National Private Rented Sector Database (PRS)
- The Landlord Ombudsman dealt with tenancies due to end and disputes.

Phase 3

- Introduction of the Decent Homes Standard in the private sector for the first time.
- Proposals on Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards being a C rated or above.
- Extend Awaabs law into the Private Rented Sector.

Member questions and officer responses were as follows:

A query was raised whether there was adequate proactive engagement with tenants and landlords to provide advice on specific issues within the District, with a Member suggesting “pop up” events. Officers advised that national guidance and future databases would improve local targeting and there was also work set to provide information on the Council’s website. Communications and relevant training would also be provided to the social housing providers within the District. Officers were encouraged by the “pop up” suggestion which would be looked into further as a possible engagement method.

Questions were also raised about antisocial behaviour and landlord powers. Officers confirmed that possession grounds had been expanded but complexities remained.

RESOLVED that the Renters Rights Act 2025 be noted.

121/25

LOCAL GOVERNMENT RE-ORGANISATION (LGR) UPDATE

The Assistant Director for Corporate Services and Transformation provided a detailed update on LGR, including refreshed Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) guidance and recent national announcements.

Members were advised on the following:

Agenda Item 4

Overview and Scrutiny Board
14th April 2026

- National announcements regarding approved unitary proposals elsewhere.
- Expected transition arrangements, including joint committees, shadow authorities and vesting day.
- Funding available for transition and implementation.
- Establishment of additional workstreams, including communications and data.
- The proposal to establish a single county wide data hub to support decision making.

After the presentation, Members discussed the following:

- Members queried the Data Hub Workstreams costs and lessons learnt from Cumbria Council, particularly in relation to disaggregation. – In response Members were informed that Cumbria had moved to a two unitary authority, disaggregating social services and therefore provided potentially helpful insights into this process. Officers also highlighted that work was being focused on preparation and data collection, with more detailed modelling dependent on Government decisions.
- The Board also requested when there would likely to be a boundary review for the number of Members required for a specific ward? – In response it was explained that the specifics would be dependent on county divisions in the first instance.
- Members requested clarity on scrutiny arrangements during the shadow period. – It was advised that existing councils were likely to continue for an additional year subject to legislation.
- Clarity on risks relating to education funding and adult social care were also discussed by the Board. – Members were advised that the Council would need to review the budget requirements and grant funding availability, therefore, the Data Hub would be a good tool to assist with data collection. The Leader also reminded Members of the Baroness Casey review which would be addressing adult social care requirements.

RESOLVED that the LGR Update be noted.

122/25

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2026-26

The Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2025/26 was considered by the Board.

References to live streaming within the report were discussed. Members agreed that scrutiny meetings should explore live streaming where possible.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2025/26 be noted.

123/25

FINANCE AND BUDGET WORKING GROUP - UPDATE

The Chair of the Finance and Budget Working Group provided a verbal update. Members were advised that the Group had considered the Community Investment Fund. Recommendations included increasing cross-party representation on the assessment panel, introducing an appeals process, ensuring Ward Members were consulted on projects in their wards and requiring Ward Member sponsorship for externally proposed projects.

RESOLVED that the Finance and Budget Working Group update be noted.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that

- 1) Any projects put forward by BDC must have the approval of the Ward Member. In addition, BDC departments help and assist Ward Members with any projects they may put forward;
- 2) That the Panel be cross-party;
- 3) If Ward Members feel they cannot sponsor a project, then it cannot go ahead; and
- 4) Consideration should be given to an appeal process.

124/25

HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (HOSC) UPDATE

There was no update provided for this item as the HOSC meeting was due to take place on 27th April 2026.

125/25

CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Cabinet Work Programme was presented for Members' consideration.

During discussions on the Levelling Up Fund Programme update, a Member requested that the Windsor Street Delivery Options Paper be scrutinised by the Board, which had been requested at the previous Board meetings. It was agreed that this would be added to the Board's work programme along with the Bromsgrove Car Park report.

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

126/25

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

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

Discussions were raised regarding previous considerations to establish an LGR Task Group. It was agreed that the terms of reference and membership would be established through the Board at its next meeting in June.

The Leader of the Council also informed Members that the Board would receive a Police and Crime Panel update briefing paper, following scheduled panel meetings.

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

127/25 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ACTION SHEET**

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

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Action Sheet be noted as per the preamble above.

128/25 **TO CONSIDER ANY URGENT BUSINESS, DETAILS OF WHICH HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED TO THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR LEGAL DEMOCRATIC AND PROCUREMENT SERVICES PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE MEETING AND WHICH THE CHAIRMAN, BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, CONSIDERS TO BE OF SO URGENT A NATURE THAT IT CANNOT WAIT UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING.**

There was no urgent business for consideration.

129/25 **TO CONSIDER, AND IF CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE, TO PASS THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING DURING THE CONSIDERATION OF ITEM(S) OF BUSINESS CONTAINING EXEMPT INFORMATION:-**

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

| <u>Minute Item No</u> | <u>Paragraph</u> |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| 130/25 | 3 |

130/25 **LEVELLING-UP FUND PROGRAMME (QUARTERLY UPDATE)**

The Levelling Up Fund Programme Quarterly Update was presented to Members.

Progress continued for the Bromsgrove Town Centre regeneration projects. Windsor Street remediation had entered Phase 2, with works delayed and would commence in May 2026 and completion expected by July 2027. The Nailers Yard construction was advancing, albeit with some delays linked to Section 278 approvals. Overall programme

funding remained secure, with a small Windsor Street overspend to be met from contingency. Cabinet engagement on future delivery and partnership models was ongoing. The completion of the agreement for the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) funding was progressing well.

After the presentation, Members raised the following questions:

Windsor Street

- Frustrations were expressed by Members due to the further delays for Phase 2 works, delaying completion, with an expected date of July 2027.
- Further clarification was requested for the works relating to the monitoring of remediation works by the Environment Agency (EA)? – In response Members were informed that if levels of contamination were high for the barrier injection works then further monitoring would be required.
- Clarity on the Phase 2 works which would result in a project overspend of approximately £74k funded by the Levelling-Up Fund (LUF) programme contingency budget? – The Board were informed that this would be covered by the additional contingency allowance agreed as an urgent decision which was taken back in August 2025.

Nailers Yard

- When was the Public Realm work likely to commence? – It was advised that there was a 10-week delay, however, works were in progress to mitigate risks for delays envisaged.
- A three-week delay for the culvert works, which would result in a loss and expense claim by Keir due to heavy rainfall was raised with Members. Querying why this had not been raised when reviewing the contract from Keir, which should be common practice to mitigate such risks. – In response Officers confirmed that the Council was liable for costs due to poor weather conditions.
- Members raised the lack of interest in the soft market testing exercise for the Pavilion building and queried if the single response from Rubicon Leisure Limited was best value for money (VFM). – Officers reassured Members that the two-week soft market testing exercise had been carried out through the correct procurement process, with only one bidder response based on the drafted scope put forward. Officers and the Leader reassured Members that Rubicon Leisure Limited had the relevant expertise, operating similar facilities elsewhere and would be a good opportunity for the Council.

General discussions

Agenda Item 4

Overview and Scrutiny Board
14th April 2026

- Members requested that liability costings be tabled for the next quarter reporting, which was agreed by Officers.

RESOLVED that the Levelling Up Fund Programme Quarterly Update be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.57 p.m.

Chairman

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Appointments to the Shareholders Committee 2026/27

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

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- 1) **Five Members of the Cabinet be nominated to sit on the Shareholders Committee for the 2026/27 municipal year;**
- 2) **One of the members nominated to sit on the Shareholders Committee, as detailed at resolution 2 above, be appointed the Chairman of the Committee for the 2026/27 municipal year; and**
- 3) **One of the members nominated to sit on the Shareholders Committee, as detailed at resolution 2 above, be appointed the Vice Chairman of the Committee for the 2026/27 municipal year.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The report invites the Cabinet to appoint Members to serve on the Shareholders Committee, including Members to serve as Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee, in the 2026/27 municipal year.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 The Shareholders Committee forms part of the governance structure for the Council's company, Spadesbourne Homes Limited.

- 3.2 The Shareholders Committee is a sub-committee of the Cabinet in line with national best practice. Therefore, only Cabinet Members may be appointed to serve on the Committee. Furthermore, it is the Cabinet's responsibility to appoint Members to serve on the Committee.
- 3.3 Whilst only Cabinet Members can be appointed to serve on the Shareholders Committee, all political group leaders are invited to attend meetings of the Committee and can speak during the debate on items on the agenda.
- 3.4 Members appointed to the Shareholders Committee are required to attend training in respect of their roles and responsibilities on this Committee if they have not previously attended training on this subject. Returning members of the Committee are strongly encouraged to attend refresher training.
- 3.5 It is important to note that the Councillor appointed as the Chairman of the Shareholders Committee will be required to present an annual report to Council relating to the activities of Spadesbourne Homes Limited at the first ordinary Council meeting in the following municipal year.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Cabinet Members already receive Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) for their position on Cabinet. As Members are only eligible to receive one SRA per year, there will be no SRA for position of Chairman of the Committee.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council is the only Shareholder in Spadesbourne Homes Limited.
- 5.2 The powers of the Council as Shareholder are vested in the Cabinet assisted by the Shareholders Committee.
- 5.3 As the Shareholders Committee is a sub-committee of the Cabinet, it does not form part of the Council's political balance.

6. OTHER – IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

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

Relevant Council Priority

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

Climate Change Implications

- 6.4 There are no climate change implications.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.5 There are no equalities and diversity implications.

Community Impact Implications

- 6.6 There are no community safety or health and wellbeing implications.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The risk arising from not appointing Members to the Shareholders Committee is that the authority will not be able to fulfil its obligations as shareholder in Spadesbourne Homes Limited. There is a risk that matters reserved to the shareholder could not then be addressed and this could undermine the sustainability of Spadesbourne Homes Limited.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background Papers

Committee Terms of Reference in the Council's Constitution.

Cabinet
2026

Wednesday 17 June

**Cabinet
2026**

17th June

Outside Body Appointments 2026/27

| | |
|--|--|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder | Councillor K. J. May |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | Yes |
| Relevant Head of Service | Claire Felton |
| Report Author Claire Felton | Job Title: Assistant Director, Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services Contact c.felton@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk email: |
| Wards Affected | All |
| Ward Councillor(s) consulted | N/A |
| Relevant Council Priority | Sustainability |
| Non-Key Decision | |
| If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting. | |

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet considers nominating to the bodies listed at Appendix 1 as appropriate.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Cabinet makes appointments and nominations to a number of Outside Bodies each year; some of these are for executive functions and these are made by the Cabinet. This report sets out the details of the relevant appointments.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 A number of bodies ask the Council to make appointments to them for terms of office which vary from one year upwards.
- 6.3 The Council has previously agreed that a number of such appointments, usually to national or regional bodies, should be made by office. Where there are specific requirements for appointments these are shown against the organisations in the appendix.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 No specific legislation governs the appointment or nomination of members to outside bodies by the Council. Depending on the nature of the relationship the Council has with the organisation, the legal status of the organisation, its corporate, charity or other status and its constitution, there are differing legal implications for the members sitting on these bodies.
- 5.2 The Local Authorities (Indemnities for Members and Officers) Order 2004 governs the Council's ability to indemnify members sitting on outside bodies.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.1 The action proposed in this report supports the organisational priority of sustainability.
- 6.2 Cabinet reviews a number of outside body appointments on an annual basis to ensure that those bodies to which the Cabinet puts forward nominations continue to address the needs and aspirations of the District.

Local Government Reorganisation Implications

- 6.3 There are no specific implications for Local Government Reorganisation.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.4 There are no specific climate change implications.

Community Impact Implications

- 6.5 Members appointed to outside bodies can make a valuable contribution to local communities by serving on these bodies.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.6 There are no specific equalities and diversity implications.

**Cabinet
2026**

17th June

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 There would be risks arising if the Council failed to make appointments to the Outside Bodies listed in this report; the nature of the risk would vary depending on the type of body in question. The Council needs to participate in certain Outside Bodies to ensure that existing governance arrangements can be complied with. On other bodies the risk would be less severe but non-participation would detract from the Council's ability to shape and influence policies and activities which affect the residents of Bromsgrove.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendices

Appendix 1 - list of Cabinet appointments to outside bodies

Background Papers:

Terms of reference and governing documents of organisations are held by Democratic Services.

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

| Department | Name and Job Title | Date |
|---------------------------------|--|------|
| Portfolio Holder | Councillor K. J. May | |
| Lead Director / Head of Service | Claire Felton, Assistant Director, Legal, Democratic and Property Services | |
| Financial Services | Deb Goodall, Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services | |
| Legal Services | Nicola Cummings, Principal Solicitor - Governance | |

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Appendix 1: Outside Bodies By Office (Cabinet appointments)

| Organisation | Number of representatives and length of term | Appointed 2025/2026 | Nominations 2026/2027 |
|--|--|--|-----------------------|
| Bromsgrove Partnership (Local Strategic Partnership) | Leader Substitute – Deputy Leader | Cllr Karen May Sub: Cllr Sue Baxter | |
| District Councils Network | Leader Substitute – Deputy Leader | Cllr Karen May Sub: Cllr Sue Baxter | |
| Local Government Association General Assembly | Leader Substitute – Deputy Leader | Cllr Karen May Sub: Cllr Sue Baxter | |
| North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership | Cabinet member | Cllr Peter Whittaker | |
| PATROL (Parking And Traffic Regulations Outside London) Adjudication Joint Committee | Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services Substitute: | Cllr Peter Whittaker Sub: Cllr Sue Baxter | |
| West Midlands Employers | Portfolio Holder for Human Resources | Cllr Karen May | |
| West Midlands Employers Shareholder Board (established in 2024) | Leader, hold a cabinet role, or have a specific interest or expertise in the services of WME | Cllr Karen May | |

Agenda Item 6

Cabinet 17th June 2026

| Organisation | Number of representatives and length of term | Appointed 2025/2026 | Nominations 2026/2027 |
|---|--|---|-----------------------|
| | (2024-2028) | | |
| Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board | 1 Rep for each council | Cllr Shirley Webb Sub: Cllr Karen May | |
| Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) | One representative on behalf of the 3 North Worcestershire Councils – required by LEP constitution in 2025/26 | Cllr Karen May (Bromsgrove District Council) Sub: Cllr Sue Baxter | |
| Worcestershire Local Access Forum (Worcestershire County Council) BDC included on this forum from May 2025 | 1 representative from North Worcestershire District Councils. Term: 1 year (Note: Would be beneficial if the representative had a keen interest in countryside access and recreation issues.) No liability issues identified. | Cllr Karen May (Bromsgrove District Council) Sub: Cllr Matt Dormer | |

**Cabinet
2026**

17th June

Final Shared Homelessness Strategy 2026-2031

| | |
|---|---|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder | Councillor Sue Baxter |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | Yes |
| Relevant Assistant Director | Judith Willis, Assistant Director Community and Housing Services |
| Report Author: Lead Officer | Job Title: Amanda Delahunty Contact email: a.delahunty@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Lead Officer Tel; 01527 881269 |
| Wards Affected | No Specific Ward Relevance |
| Ward Councillor(s) consulted | Not Applicable |
| Council Prioritie(s) | |
| Key Decision / Non-Key Decision | |
| If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting. | |
| This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph(s) of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended | |

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is requested to RECOMMEND that: -

- 1) The Shared Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031 (Appendix 1) be approved.**

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 On the 25th March 2026 members resolved that :

“the draft Shared Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031 and action plan be approved for public consultation for six weeks starting 13th April 2026”

2.2 As previously reported the Homelessness Act 2002 requires all housing authorities to have a homelessness & rough sleeper strategy in place which is based on a review of all forms of homelessness in their local authority area.

2.3 It is intended that this Strategy will sit under the existing Worcestershire Strategic Housing Board Plan.

Cabinet 2026

17th June

2.4 The consultation responses have been considered and included where appropriate. MHCLG have reviewed the strategy and provided separate feedback. They are satisfied that the action plan covers all the main areas and sets out clear and consistent actions and measures.

2.5 MHCLG has also provided the metrics required for the Local Outcomes Framework. These are now included, with the exception of the metric on successful prevention and relief outcomes for individuals with three or more support needs, which is the only metric not currently published. The Strategy will be updated to reflect this once it is published and the metrics below reported under the heading of Shared Homelessness Strategy 2026-2031 via the Corporate Performance monitoring process:

2.6 **Core outcome measures (metrics)**

The framework uses a small set of **national outcome indicators** (largely from MHCLG statutory data) to assess performance:

- Rate of households with children in temporary accommodation (per 1,000 households)
- Number of families in Bed & Breakfast accommodation for over 6 weeks
- Percentage of duties owed where homelessness was prevented or relieved
- Number of people sleeping rough on a single night (snapshot count)
- Number of people sleeping rough over the month who are long-term rough sleepers

These will be the primary performance indicators used nationally to judge whether local areas are reducing homelessness and rough sleeping.

2.7 We have ensured that our action plan includes targets against each of the metrics in the Outcomes Framework, and a description of how, working with partners, those targets will be achieved. The key numerical targets are achieving less than 6 week hotel placements for families and halving monthly long term rough sleeping numbers by 50% by the end of this parliament. The other targets relate to successful prevention and relief outcomes increasing while rough sleeping and families in temporary accommodation reduce.

Cabinet 2026

17th June

- 2.8 Above universal prevention, we have included reference to the supply of affordable housing and the effective use and allocation of social housing stock.
- 2.9 We have reviewed our approach to rough sleeping and single homelessness. This is to ensure that services move away from verification as a way to access services and ensure a robust approach to assessment, identifying people at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness or rough sleeping quickly and assessing risk and need in order to direct services.
- 2.10 In respect of children and young people we have strengthened our approach to partnership working with Children's Services and the Care Leavers Team. This is to prevent homelessness legislation from being used as a pathway to house care leavers following the end of a Looked After Child Placement and ensuring more support is provided to care leavers in their transition to adulthood and independent living.
- 2.11 We have strengthened our approach to the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Duty where B&B is not considered suitable or safe accommodation so that we strive to end the use of B&B in these cases.
- 2.12 In regard to temporary accommodation we have included a requirement to develop a policy to ensure temporary accommodation is suitable to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- 2.13 We have placed greater emphasis on tenancy sustainment and budgeting support as part of efforts to prevent repeat homelessness.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 The delivery of the Shared Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy actions will be overseen by the Housing Strategy Team and will sit under the existing Worcestershire Housing Board Plan.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The new Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant will provide funding to develop services to support the strategy and a report has already been taken to members to provide the detail on spending priorities for the next three years.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council has a duty under the Homelessness Act 2002 to conduct a review of the nature and extent of homelessness in its District every

5 years and to develop a strategy setting out how services will be delivered in the future to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.

- 5.2 The Homelessness Reduction Act came into force in April 2018, and places new legal duties on local housing authorities so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to early meaningful help, irrespective of their priority need status, so long as they are eligible for assistance.
- 5.3 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires local authorities to collaborate with Tier One authorities to provide safe and supported accommodation for victims/survivors of domestic abuse.
- 5.4. The Renters Rights Act 2025 shifts the local authority role from discretionary enforcement to a mandatory duty to enforce landlord legislation. The abolition of Section 21 no fault evictions is likely to result in more tenancies being ending by Section 8 Notices for rent arrears and provides an opportunity for local authorities to work with landlords to, wherever possible, sustain tenancies. The Council has utilised Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse grant to provide a new service with Citizens Advice to support this work.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Re-organisation

- 6.1 LGR does not alter the statutory homelessness duties set out under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and Housing Act 1996, including prevention (s.195), relief (s.189B), interim accommodation (s.188) and the duty to provide free advice and information (s.179).
- 6.2 The Government's National Plan to End Homelessness sets out a cross-government expectation that homelessness cannot be reduced without multi-agency integration
- 6.3 Both the National Plan to End Homelessness and the Homelessness Code of Guidance stress the need for coordinated arrangements across the below areas,
- health
 - social care
 - children's services
 - criminal justice
 - and domestic abuse services

and it is considered that the most appropriate method is to have a shared strategy approach across as much of Worcestershire to ensure there is a coherent approach to our homelessness duties until the results of LGR are provided.

- 6.4 A single Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy must be produced for any new authority, and this strategy and action plan has been produced so that it is able to be incorporated into either one or two unitary authorities until a new single strategy for the new area, based on a fresh homelessness review is completed as required by the Homelessness Code of Guidance

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 Housing – The strategy provides a framework for a range of services which support this Council priority.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 There are no direct climate change implications from the strategy itself but individual actions/services may have an impact.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.4 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken as the strategy seeks to deliver a range of services for homeless households and draws on ways to improve the work of the Council in developing services and preparing links, pathways and referrals between services to prevent homelessness in the first place or minimise its impact when it happens.
- 6.5 The design of services which tackle the root causes of homelessness such as poverty, health inequalities and adversity in childhood will include ensuring that providers have appropriate policies and training in place to make sure that there is no adverse impact on equalities groups with protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 If the strategy is not approved the Council will not be legally compliant. Furthermore, it is likely that more households who are threatened with homelessness, or who are in housing need, will have limited options for support to sustain their accommodation or find alternative suitable accommodation that meets their needs. If they have to make a homeless approach this could lead to the following negative outcomes:

Cabinet 2026

17th June

- Increased B&B costs
- Increased rough sleeping in the District
- Impacts on physical and mental health, educational achievement, ability to work and similar through increased homelessness

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – To Follow: Shared Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan

Appendix 2 – Report to Cabinet 25th March 2026 [REPORT TITLE](#)

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

| Department | Name and Job Title | Date |
|---|---|-------------|
| Portfolio Holder | Sue Baxter Cabinet Member for Planning and Strategic Housing | 27.5.26 |
| Lead Director / Head of Service | Judith Willis Assistant Director Community and Housing Services | 27.5.26 |
| Financial Services | James Walton, Director of Finance | 27.5.26 |
| Legal and Democratic Services | Nicola Cummings – Principal Solicitor – Governance and Jess Bayley-Hill, Principal Democratic Services Officer | 27.5.26 |
| Policy Team (if equalities implications apply) | Rebecca Green Policy Manager | 27.5.26 |
| Climate Change (if climate change implications apply) | Matthew Bough Strategic Housing & Business Support Manager | N/A |

**Cabinet
2026**

17th June

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Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

Page 57
2026 - 2031

Our Vision - to end homelessness and rough sleeping and where it has not been possible to prevent it from occurring, ensure that it is rare, brief and non-recurring

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Foreword: | 3 |
| Chair of Worcestershire Housing Board | 3 |
| 1. Introduction | 4 |
| 2. Pillar 1: Universal prevention - tackling the root causes of homelessness | 6 |
| 3. Pillar 2: Targeted prevention - targeted support for people at risk of homelessness | 9 |
| 4. Pillar 3: Preventing crisis - helping people stay in their homes | 16 |
| 5. Pillar 4: Improving emergency responses - improving temporary accommodation and making people’s experiences better if they do become homeless | 18 |
| 6. Pillar 5: Recovery and preventing repeat homelessness - ensuring people don’t experience homelessness more than once and halving long term rough sleeping..... | 20 |
| 7. Governance arrangements..... | 22 |
| 8. Partnerships | 23 |
| Appendix 1 - Action Plan | 26 |
| Appendix 2 - Funding the strategy..... | 36 |
| Appendix 3 - Glossary of terms..... | 39 |

Foreword

Chair of Worcestershire Housing Board

I am proud to introduce this shared Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-31 for Bromsgrove District Council, Malvern Hills District Council, Redditch Borough Council, Wychavon District Council and Wyre Forest District Council.

Homelessness and rough sleeping remain among the most visible and urgent challenges facing our communities today. They are stark reminders of inequality, vulnerability, and the need for collective action. It is not simply the absence of a home, but the absence of security, dignity, and opportunity. Every child should grow up with the security of a home, and every adult deserves a safe place to live that provides stability and where they have a chance to thrive.

Tackling homelessness and rough sleeping continues to be of utmost importance for each of the councils involved in developing and delivering on this strategy.

Our vision, aligned with the Government's national strategy, will focus on 5 pillars to end homelessness:

Universal prevention: tackling the root causes of homelessness across the whole population.

Targeted prevention: providing tailored support to people who are more likely to face homelessness.

Preventing crisis: early identification of people who need help and putting in place personalised interventions that meet their needs.

Improving emergency responses: to ensure that if people do become homeless, they receive high quality support and that homelessness is brief.

Recovery and preventing repeat homelessness: helping people rebuild their lives with the right support.

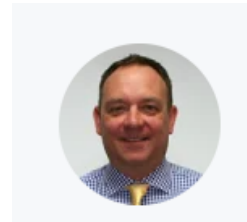
This strategy will also take a renewed approach to the support and intervention for families with children in temporary accommodation to minimise the associated risk and long-term impact this has on them.

We recognise that homelessness is not simply a housing issue, but a complex social challenge shaped by health, employment, family breakdown, and wider economic pressures. Tackling homelessness requires collaboration across government, local authorities, health and social care, the voluntary sector, and communities themselves. That is why we have developed this strategy in collaboration with a range of stakeholders, which is essential to the successful implementation of our vision, as well as with the voice of those with lived experience of homelessness.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the organisations and individuals who have contributed towards the development of this strategy.

Governance will sit with the Worcestershire Housing Board- recognising that tackling homelessness not only benefits the individual but also benefits the economy, the health of our population, reduces crime and disorder and reduces costs for the taxpayer.

This strategy will govern our approach for five years and will see us beyond Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). However, given our experiences over recent years in tackling homelessness and the ever-changing landscape, it is vital that it remains responsive and will be kept under constant review.



Vic Allison, Chief Executive of Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Councils and Chair of the Worcestershire Housing Board

1. Introduction

Our vision is to **end homelessness and rough sleeping and where it isn't possible to prevent it from occurring, ensure it is rare, brief and non-recurring.**

We will tackle homelessness and rough sleeping through our work on the 5 pillars to end homelessness in line with the Government's National Plan to End Homelessness: universal prevention, targeted prevention, preventing crisis, improving emergency responses and recovery.

The district councils collaborating on the development and implementation of this strategy have a proven track record of working closely together to prevent and tackle homelessness across our districts. This is the third shared homelessness strategy to be developed, and the achievements of our last strategy are highlighted below.

1.1 Achievements of the last strategy

The previous Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022 - 2025 was developed by all six Local Housing Authorities (LHAs) in Worcestershire and focused on the then three main tenets of the national strategy: *prevention, intervention and recovery* as well as increasing the supply of temporary and permanent accommodation.

- Established a **countywide Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Group**.
- Developed a **Prison Leavers Protocol** and the pre-release homeless panel.
- Developed **stakeholder involvement and People With Lived Experience (PWLE) in reviewing services** through regular countywide meetings, bespoke focus groups, and questionnaires.
- Quarterly **reviews of data collection and deep dives into client groups** to inform decision making and share learning.

- **Joint training** in homelessness, Mental Capacity Act, psychologically informed environments, Care Act 2014, Complex Adults Risk Management framework, self-neglect etc.
- Support for those with mental health illnesses through development of **Mental Health Link Worker posts** and non-medical interventions
- **Delivery of the Rough Sleeper initiative** (target 563 p.a):
 - 2024/25 - **637 people supported**
 - 2023/24 - **837 people supported**
 - 2022/23 - **713 people supported**
- **Housing and support plans developed for the Target Priority Group (TPG)** (the most complex rough sleepers)
- **Cost of living plans, welfare assistance and bespoke support** to reduce homelessness developed across the county
- **Safe accommodation units set up for survivors of domestic abuse**
- **Supported provision of domestic abuse support services** including through the Domestic Abuse Support Service (West Mercia Women's Aid), Sanctuary Scheme and Domestic Abuse Coordinator and specialist Housing Officers (all councils)

There are also some actions from the previous strategy that are still underway at the time of writing this strategy including:

- Undertaking a **review of peer support models** in place in some areas of the county to share learning and best practice and explore whether the models could be expanded.
- **Explore opportunities for a greater range of supported and step-down accommodation** available following the supported housing needs assessment and strategy. The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 has yet to be implemented so this action was deferred.

1.2 The current situation: homelessness review

To inform and provide the evidence base for the strategic objectives and actions within this strategy, a homelessness review was undertaken.

The review includes a compilation of homelessness data and trends, mapping of services and analysis of gaps in provision, service provider feedback and the feedback of People With Lived Experience (PWLE). We also held a stakeholder engagement event in September 2025 to gather the views of statutory and voluntary sector organisations and co design the strategy.



1.3 The plan to prevent and tackle homelessness in our districts: long-term vision and short-term priorities

In line with the Government’s national strategy, our long-term vision is to end homelessness and rough sleeping and where it isn’t possible to prevent it from occurring, that it is rare, brief and non-recurring.

Our strategy and action plan are centred around the 5 pillars to end homelessness as set out in the national strategy:

1. Universal prevention: tackling the root causes of homelessness across the whole population.
2. Targeted prevention: providing tailored support to people who are more likely to face homelessness.
3. Preventing crisis: early identification of people who need help and putting in place personalised interventions that meet their needs.

4. Improving emergency responses: to ensure that if people do become homeless, they receive high quality support and that homelessness is brief.
5. Recovery and preventing repeat homelessness: helping people rebuild their lives with the right support.

The action plan defines our priorities over the next 5 years to achieve our vision, and contains short-, medium- and long-term priorities.

1.4 Strategy structure

The strategy firstly explores the local issues that need to be addressed against each of the five pillars in the national strategy, based on the Homelessness Review undertaken in 2025.

Secondly it defines how we will take action to address local issues through the Strategy Action Plan, the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Group and local homelessness partnerships, and comprehensive governance arrangements under the Worcestershire Housing Board.

Finally, it outlines the funding and resource available to implement the strategy and deliver services.

1.5 Partnership working to codesign the strategy

The LHAs recognise the role our statutory and voluntary sector partners play in supporting the work we do, and how they go beyond the delivery of our statutory services through providing complimentary statutory and non-statutory services. However, this strategy is focused primarily on the role of LHAs and in meeting their legal responsibilities. It is a legal obligation of the LHAs to have a strategy in place and for it to be compliant with the Homelessness Act 2002. In developing the strategy, we have followed the legislative and good practice guidance and reviewed homelessness strategies from across the country.

2. Pillar 1: Universal prevention – tackling the root causes of homelessness

2.1 Increasing the supply of social and affordable housing

The Worcestershire Housing Strategy 2023-40, developed by the six Worcestershire LHAs and partners provides a long-term housing strategy for Worcestershire centred around four priority areas:

- Economic growth and jobs
- Quality and standards
- Health and wellbeing
- Net zero carbon and climate change

Specifically in relation to housing growth, the focus is on developing a 5+ year public sector pipeline of development sites, and the development of housing delivery capacity e.g. the exploration of direct delivery housing models for those LHAs who do not currently have this capacity.

There are two established delivery groups working to implement Housing Strategy actions and these are overseen by the Worcestershire Housing Board, which also oversees the implementation of this Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. This arrangement will ensure synergy between the two strategies.

In terms of permanent housing all the councils collaborate with developers and registered providers to deliver market and affordable housing across the county. This work is underpinned by the councils Local Plans which identify a wide range of tenures and types of housing including low-cost home ownership and social/ affordable rent properties.

There is a shortage in the supply of housing, particularly in the provision of affordable housing with an annual requirement of all housing tenures of approximately 1,911 per annum across the districts that share this strategy.

Local Plan numbers are informed by a combination of the standard methodology requirement, Housing Market Assessments and Housing Needs Surveys to determine the required mix of housing.

2.2 Making the best use of existing housing and that it is allocated to those who need it most

All LHAs sharing this strategy have their own allocations policies to ensure that much needed affordable housing is allocated to those who need it most. In each LHA area, the demand for affordable housing far outstrips supply. At the time of writing, Local Government Reorganisation could see the abolition of all six district councils in Worcestershire and the introduction of one or two unitary authorities and with it the requirement to develop new allocations policies for the new organisation(s).

Feedback from the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Stakeholder Event indicated that partners felt that the “managed move” process whereby Registered Providers (RPs) move households within their own stock and therefore negating the need for a homelessness approach could be an area to try to seek consistency on. This would mean less upheaval for households and reduced service demand on local authority housing teams.

The councils also collaborate with registered providers to ensure best use is made of existing stock including tackling under occupation and low demand schemes.

Whilst evictions from social housing are relatively low locally as they are nationally, there are more opportunities to prevent homelessness from social housing tenancies at an earlier stage through the establishment of pre-eviction panels and improved collaborative working. The government references a new toolkit in the National Plan to End Homelessness to provide advice for providers and councils on strengthening tenant engagement to reduce homelessness risks.

2.3 Supported housing

As with general needs affordable housing, the demand for supported housing is far higher than the supply locally and nationally. People need supported accommodation for a range of reasons e.g. young people needing support with life skills, people with mental health needs, people with substance misuse needs, survivors of domestic abuse. Some cohorts of homeless households will need more than just a housing solution to lift them out of homelessness and will require a sustainable, supported, and appropriate environment.

The Government's new Social and Affordable Homes Programme includes new flexibility for accommodation where the level of design and adaptation results in higher costs and calls on providers to produce ambitious bids for new supported housing.

The Worcestershire Housing Strategy delivery groups are exploring opportunities with RPs to deliver supported housing.

To improve standards across existing supported accommodation and tackle rogue landlords the government is introducing a new licensing regime following the consultation on the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023. As part of the implementation of this Act, the councils will be required to develop a Supported Housing Strategy by 31st March 2027.

2.4 Private rented sector accommodation

The Renters Rights Act seeks to give more security to tenants by abolishing section 21 'no fault' evictions which has been a significant cause of homelessness across the districts. The Act also brings with it a range of other measures to strengthen tenants' rights e.g. empowering tenants to challenge unreasonable rent increases, bringing an end to rental bidding and reducing barriers to accessing private rented accommodation such as outlawing discrimination against prospective tenants with children or who receive benefits, and preventing landlords from charging high rent in advance payments.

Making sure both tenants and landlords understand their rights under the Act will play an important part in reducing the risk of homelessness.

For the first time, the Act also includes the provision for councils to issue civil penalties against landlords who evict their tenants illegally.

Whilst the local authorities sharing this strategy welcome the intention of this legislation, there remains concern that the Act will lead to private landlords exiting the market prior the major implementation milestones e.g. no-fault evictions being removed in May 2026, which may lead to a spike in homelessness. Measures to mitigate this situation are considered within the strategy action plan.

As there is not enough social housing to meet demand, helping people to access private rented accommodation remains a priority across the districts - through rent deposits, bonds and private sector leasing schemes.

The councils will also be considering as part of this strategy how they can build relationships with private landlords to both improve access to private rented accommodation and prevent homelessness from private rented accommodation e.g. by encouraging landlords to work with the councils if they have a tenant who is at risk of homelessness.

Work with private sector landlords and letting agents also enables councils to meet some housing needs in parts of the county, although local housing allowance rates do make this challenging. The councils have been innovative in attracting landlords to provide accommodation through landlord forums, the use of rent bonds and deposits, social letting agencies and private sector leasing schemes, and this will continue during the lifetime of the strategy.

It should be noted that in some areas of the county, there are particular pressures on private sector accommodation with both Home Office and criminal justice providers looking to purchase/lease private rented sector accommodation for asylum seekers and prison leavers. In some cases, this has led to homelessness situations as existing tenants are served with notice and has led to reducing private sector accommodation available to homeless households.

2.5 Maximising income, financial inclusion and welfare assistance

Supporting low-income households to be able to pay their rent and other essential living costs to sustain their accommodation is critical to preventing homelessness. Recent years funding from the Household Support Fund, and Discretionary Housing Payments have led to some positive outcomes locally in the face of the cost-of-living crisis. It is expected that the new Crisis Resilience Fund will build on this bespoke approach.

Some councils involved in this strategy also have specialist Financial Inclusion Officers who work directly with people making homeless approaches due to rent arrears who are struggling with the cost of living. Their role is to ensure that their income is maximised

through ensuring they are receiving correct benefit entitlements, assistance to apply for benefit back payments and working with local services to increase their income through quality employment. Help is also provided by tenancy sustainment or support workers on issues like budgeting and maximising benefit entitlement,

Continuing to provide discretionary welfare support to ensure low-income households do not become homeless is a key priority for this strategy and action plan.

3. Pillar 2: Targeted prevention – targeted support for people at risk of homelessness

3.1 Collaboration to prevent homelessness

The LHAs and partner agencies have a proven record of working collaboratively to prevent homelessness. The Worcestershire Housing Board comprises of senior officers from across sectors who oversee the implementation of housing and homelessness strategies. A countywide Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy Group has been in existence for many years comprising of LHAs, MHCLG, statutory and voluntary sector partners.

Feeding into the countywide group, each LHA has a local homelessness partnership. This arrangement will continue to provide assurance that the strategy action plan is implemented, outcomes are achieved against the strategy targets - and that people that are at risk of homelessness are identified early and linked into the right housing and support services.

The government intends to introduce a new 'duty to collaborate' requiring public services to work together to prevent homelessness and support those at crisis point. Locally we developed a 'commitment to refer' which goes beyond the existing 'duty to refer' which requires certain public bodies to notify the LHA should they identify a household who may become homeless within 56 days. This is in recognition that there are many partners who will identify a potential homelessness situation and not just those included in the legislation.

It is the intention of this strategy to scrutinise adherence to the duty to refer locally and prepare for the new 'duty to collaborate'.

3.2 Addressing barriers to accessing services

Some groups of people face barriers to accessing services because they may not be delivered in a way that meets their needs. For example, an action in the previous homelessness strategy was to understand the barriers for women rough sleepers in accessing services that are often communal provisions for both male and female rough sleepers. This work is ongoing at the time of writing this strategy. We also know that young people, care leavers, people from ethnic minority backgrounds, disabled people and LGBT+ people also face barriers.

For young people and care leavers the LHAs and Children's Services work closely together and have developed a longstanding Care Leavers Protocol and a 16/17-year-old Protocol to clarify joint working arrangements. Each district has supported accommodation for young people, which in recent years has been at risk due to a change in funding structures and has meant LHAs have needed to meet the shortfall in County Council funding. It is a priority for supported accommodation to be in place for homeless young people in order for them to have a safe and supported environment for them to develop the necessary life skills needed to live a successful future life. In 2021 Wychavon District Council bought and refurbished a 10-room property to provide supported accommodation for young people and have also committed to purchasing a further property in its latest council plan.

Locally we also know that people with a physical disability can find it hard to access adapted temporary accommodation due to the lack of availability. This can then lead to extended stays in hospital and a delay in discharge. Wyre Forest District Council opened a new temporary accommodation facility in 2025 which includes a small number of fully adapted rooms. Our intention is to explore opportunities to work with colleagues across the health system to increase the availability of adapted temporary accommodation.

We also know locally that people with multiple and complex needs face barriers to accessing accommodation, for example those that are using drugs and alcohol and with mental health support needs. Worcestershire Public Health have developed a Memorandum of Understanding between services to address this issue.

Working with People With Lived Experience (PWLE) of homelessness and accessing services is also a priority for this strategy as it is critical that we design accessible, inclusive and culturally sensitive, trauma informed services.

We already regularly undertake lived experience engagement with certain groups, for example survivors of domestic abuse and rough sleepers. However, we are seeking to go further with this strategy and ensure PWLE are contributing to, and overseeing, the strategy actions and performance via the Countywide Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Group.

3.3 Interventions to prevent homelessness for higher risk groups

There are many challenges that affect the higher risk groups and these include a severe housing shortage, silting up or undersupply of supported accommodation especially for those with complex needs and some poor-quality supported accommodation.

3.3.1 Single people

Single homeless households make up 57% of all housing register applicants across the districts, with the largest group being single adults aged 35-65 (26%).

Between 2022-2025, 54% of applicants owed a homeless duty were single adults:

65% were already homeless (relief duty)
37% were threatened with homelessness (prevention duty)

Single homeless people often face multiple needs: mental ill health, substance misuse, social isolation, and barriers to employment. Many do not qualify as having a priority need under legislation, limiting access to settled housing and statutory support. They are overrepresented among rough sleepers and those in insecure arrangements (e.g. sofa surfing), leading to poor health, social exclusion, and instability. Even those without vulnerabilities struggle due to unaffordable rents and precarious finances.

This homelessness strategy aims for early intervention, clear routes to housing, and multi-agency collaboration (local authorities, housing providers, health, probation, voluntary sector).

The LHAs use national homelessness funding to provide both accommodation-based and floating support, rent deposits and rent in advance to help access accommodation and No First Night Out/No Second Night Out provision and access to furniture.

3.3.2 Prison leavers

A small but significant number of homeless applications are from those leaving prison. We hold fortnightly prison meetings to ensure that where a Duty to Refer has been made, individuals are provided with a homelessness assessment prior to release wherever possible.

However, housing options are often limited due to the individual not meeting the priority need threshold under homelessness legislation. With limited supported accommodation available, Community Accommodation Service (CAS3) accommodation has provided a much-needed lifeline for those who otherwise might be released without an accommodation offer which may result in rough sleeping.

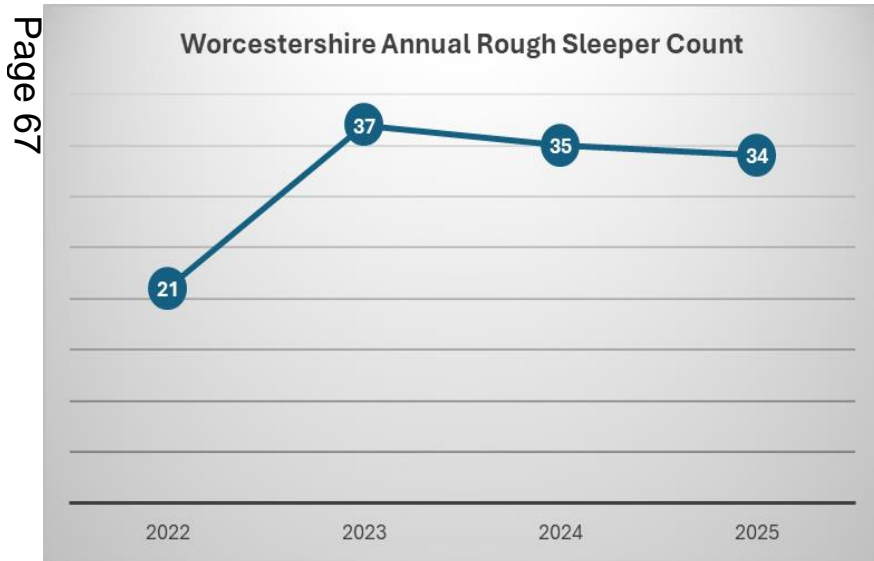
Recalls from this accommodation remain a concern (circa 50%) and a

positive housing pathway from CAS 3 accommodation needs to be explored.

3.3.3 Rough sleepers/those at risk of rough sleeping

Rough sleeping can be a dangerous and isolating experience. People who sleep rough are more likely to be victims of crime and violence. The longer a person remains on the streets, or actively engages in street life culture, the more likely it will have significant implications on their physical and mental health. Female rough sleepers are particularly at risk and may require specialist or women only services to address their needs. Safeguarding is therefore particularly relevant to these groups.

The Worcestershire official street count held each year shows fluctuating levels of rough sleeping across the county, with numbers in recent years remaining fairly static.



Rough sleeper data is collated each week improving our local intelligence of the flow, return, and stock of individuals and the reason behind their homelessness. Regular rough sleeper/prevention meetings and multi-agency meetings are held at a local level enables

the co-ordination of services and information sharing to develop partnerships with all organisations and individuals committed to ending rough sleeping and homelessness. This includes a consideration of any safeguarding issues that need to be flagged with partners or referred to the Adult Safeguarding Team. All five councils have rough sleeper outreach teams providing intensive support and routes into accommodation such as No First / No Second Night Out, Housing First/Led and other services.

Progress has been made in tackling health inequalities with increased access to health services and countywide drug and alcohol support, including harm reduction teams. Outreach teams have strengthened their practice by signing up to Homeless Link's outreach principles and undertaking learning and development.

Although Supported Housing providers in Worcestershire work within a trauma informed, person centred approach, those clients with substance misuse, serious mental health conditions and/or a history of arson may find themselves waiting for a suitable placement due to stringent accessibility criteria. There is also limited availability of rapid access supported accommodation resulting in an individual's only accommodation option being outside of the county.

We will also expand the multi-agency work on Target Priority Group rough sleepers and expand the Mental health and Homelessness Group so that multi-agency working is consistent across all districts and there is effective cross boundary working.

Therefore, the strategy will continue to promote collaborative working with health partners, housing providers and other organisations to improve access to services for rough sleepers including early intervention for those at risk and accommodation for those with complex needs.

3.3.4 Young people and care leavers

Homelessness for young people remains significant issue. This includes from people aged 16-17, Care Leavers and young parents. Many young people will have support as well as accommodation needs as they leave home for the first time.

Changes to the benefits system together with the impact of the cost-of-living crisis, and the number of young people in low paid work, has seen a rise in the number of those at risk of homelessness.

For young people the data indicates that the most common causes of homelessness in Worcestershire are family or friends being no longer willing to accommodate, the loss of private rented accommodation and relationship breakdown with partner (non- violent breakdown).

Whilst services do work closely together, there is still more to be done to prevent young people from becoming homeless. It is a focus of this strategy to enable more upstream homelessness prevention through family mediation and identifying potential homelessness situations at the earliest stage e.g. via schools and other relevant sectors/organisations.

3.3.5 Families with children

Worcestershire continues to be an attractive place to live and work, inevitably leading to high rents and house prices. This means some families are unable to afford to own or privately rent a home. Changes to the benefits system together with the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and the number of people in low paid work has seen a rise in the number of families at risk of homelessness.

We want to prevent homelessness by identifying the key risk factors/triggers in families lives that can lead to a family being at risk of homelessness at the earliest possible stage.

Families in Worcestershire access social housing registers for a variety of reasons, often reflecting both long-term housing challenges and immediate triggers that place them at risk of homelessness. The key reasons include:

- **Relationship Breakdown**
Non-violent relationship breakdowns, particularly involving partners, remain a significant factor. Families in this situation often require alternative accommodation to prevent homelessness or unsafe living conditions.
- **Domestic Abuse**
Domestic abuse is a major reason families seek housing support. Increased awareness of available services and support pathways has led to earlier reporting and engagement with housing services.
- **Loss of Private Rented Accommodation**
The end of an assured shorthold tenancy in the private rented sector, whether due to eviction, rent increases, or landlord decisions, continues to trigger housing register applications.
- **Financial Hardship and Housing Affordability**
Rising rents, high house prices, low wages, and changes to the benefits system contribute to families' inability to secure or sustain accommodation.
- **Other Factors**
Other, less frequent reasons include overcrowding, unsuitability of current accommodation (e.g., health/accessibility needs), and the need to move closer to education, employment or support networks.

As of June 2025, there were 4,955 families on the housing registers across the councils' areas which equates to 43% of all applications.

Analysis of trends shows that relationship breakdown, domestic abuse and the loss of private rented tenancies remain the leading immediate triggers for applications, emphasising the importance of early intervention and targeted prevention support.

3.3.6 Survivors of domestic abuse

Domestic Abuse continues to be one of the primary drivers of homelessness across Worcestershire, with a profound and lasting impact on victim/survivors, families, and communities. Since the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, LHAs and Worcestershire County Council have worked collaboratively to strengthen housing pathways, deliver on new statutory duties, and create a coordinated, trauma-informed response using a whole family approach for those fleeing abuse.

The establishment of the Worcestershire Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, a domestic abuse and housing coordinator, specialised domestic abuse housing officers and the provision of safe accommodation has led to more consistent standards of support across the county. Housing teams, alongside commissioned domestic abuse providers, now play a critical role in early identification, prevention, and sustaining safe accommodation for survivors.

Data and Trends

Data highlights that domestic abuse remains a significant cause of homelessness presentations across Worcestershire over the last three years. Of those owed a homelessness duty in 2024/25, 30.8% of households presented due to domestic abuse.

| | Prevention (%) | Relief (%) | Total (%) |
|---------|----------------|------------|-----------|
| 2022/23 | 8.3% | 18.4% | 26.7% |
| 2023/24 | 9.7% | 18.8% | 28.5% |
| 2024/25 | 7.1% | 23.7% | 30.8% |

In 2024/25 over 10,000 domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes were recorded by police in Worcestershire. This total includes both crimes and non-crime incidents. According to Worcestershire County Council's Operation Encompass page, which summarises West Mercia Police's Q4 2024/25 Performance Monitoring Report, around 25% of all recorded crimes in the county were classified as domestic abuse related.

While West Mercia Police data for the same period indicates a statistical decrease in domestic abuse incidents across the force area, the figures for Worcestershire demonstrate that domestic abuse remains a significant issue locally.

Despite improved reporting, local insight suggests that many survivors still do not disclose abuse, indicating ongoing unmet need. Across the county, domestic abuse-related approaches accounted for a significant proportion of homelessness applications. The majority were women with dependent children, though a growing number of single survivors, male victims, and individuals with complex needs have been identified.

Sanctuary Schemes and Safe Accommodation

LHAs across Worcestershire, work in partnership to deliver safe accommodation, including, refuge spaces, dispersed units, and sanctuary schemes to enable survivors to remain safely in their homes where appropriate.

Sanctuary Scheme Referrals (September 2024 - August 2025):

| District | 2024/25 |
|---------------|---------|
| Bromsgrove | 3 |
| Malvern Hills | 15 |
| Redditch | 8 |
| Wychavon | 32 |
| Wyre Forest | 47 |

Between 2024-2025 a total of 105 referrals were made to sanctuary schemes across all 5 local authorities. Overall referrals have decreased

across most districts, with some localised increases, highlighting variation in demand and referral pathways.

There has been much progress across the LHAs since the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 statutory duty across LHAs including the expansion of the Domestic Abuse Community Champions network through Worcester Community Trust and West Mercia Women's Aid, delivery of trauma-informed housing training to frontline staff, specialist Domestic Abuse Housing in each council (who have received positive feedback from service users) and strengthened partnership working between housing, police, and support providers through regular MARAC coordination and attendance at DRIVE meetings.

All the housing teams work in partnership with Sanctuary Schemes to help victim-survivors of domestic abuse stay safely in their homes by providing tailored security measures, reducing the need to move.

The introduction of the Domestic Abuse Housing Coordinator role to work closely with Domestic Abuse Housing Officers has ensured training and knowledge remain up to date.

3.3.7 Veterans

Instances of homelessness amongst veterans are low locally, however there is action to be taken to further tackle this. LHAs are currently working with the Worcestershire Armed Forces Covenant team to ensure that there is a good understanding of the Armed Forces Covenant in housing services and ensure that organisational policies reflect the needs of the Covenant e.g. that local connection rights (for the purposes of social housing allocation) are embedded in policy.

3.3.8 Refugees and migrant homelessness

Worcestershire has provided a sanctuary to refugees from Ukraine, Syria and Afghanistan through the government's resettlement schemes, including Homes for Ukraine, the [Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme](#) (ACRS) and [Afghan Relocations and Assistance](#)

[Policy](#) (ARAP), as well as a small number of arrivals through the Community Sponsorship Scheme. Accommodation has been provided by a combination of private hosts, the private rented sector and, where appropriate, social housing.

The Home Office is responsible for providing accommodation for asylum seekers, whilst their asylum claims are being processed. Home Office accommodation is provided in Worcestershire in both contingency hotels and dispersal accommodation (usually self-contained family accommodation or houses of multiple occupation). However, asylum seeker numbers in Worcestershire are currently relatively low in comparison to other areas of the UK.

Once asylum has been granted, a refugee is required to leave their Home Office accommodation, with notice to quit currently at 42 days from the date of decision. A process is in place for information to be shared with the local housing authority of notice to quit local Home Office accommodation, to ensure housing advice can be provided.

Homelessness amongst this cohort is relatively low locally due to fewer asylum seeker numbers than other areas of the country and the fact that those placed in Worcestershire often look to relocate to areas where cultural or religious needs are better met or nearer to family members once asylum has been granted. However, it still remains a challenge to be able to respond to the needs of refugees and migrants. In particular, we are seeing an increase in approaches for those with No Recourse To Public Funds, where options for support are extremely limited, and LHAs need to work closely with our partner VCSE organisations to respond to this.

3.3.9 Hospital discharge, substance use and Adult Social Care support

“Discharge from hospital into poor quality, insecure housing or, in the worst cases, onto the streets is a deeply harmful outcome. When combined with unmet mental health needs and substance use needs, it can severely undermine people's recovery and increase the risk that

their health deteriorates further and makes them even more vulnerable.” [A National Plan to End Homelessness, MHCLG, 2025.](#)

The government is committed to a target that no one eligible for assistance is discharged to the street after a hospital stay and will be working with the NHS and councils to implement the [Discharging people at risk of or experiencing homelessness guidance published in 2024.](#)

In preparation for this, our strategy will commit to exploring local opportunities with colleagues across the health system to promote early identification of housing issues and planning from admission both for accommodation needs but also any ongoing health and care needs.

The LHAs do not provide any supported temporary accommodation and therefore it is essential that if people do need to access temporary accommodation that the necessary support and care package is provided to reduce the risk of a harmful outcome.

Sadly, district councils have seen a rise in the number of homeless people harming themselves, and others, in temporary accommodation and an increase in the number of deaths in temporary accommodation through people dying by suicide or overdose. Although the numbers are small, they are increasing and this desperately needs to be addressed to safeguard people and prevent this from happening.

At the time of writing this strategy a roundtable event was being organised to bring together senior officers from housing, health, social care, registered housing providers, and safeguarding to focus on the issue of supporting people with complex needs in unsupported accommodation. It is expected that the recommendations from that event will feed into this strategy and the action plan.

3.3.10 Neurodivergence and homelessness

People with a range of neurodivergent needs, including autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, learning disabilities and other cognitive differences, may face additional barriers and challenges when navigating housing services or experiencing homelessness. These barriers often relate to communication differences, difficulties with unfamiliar and changing environments, sensory needs, and the cumulative impact of unmet support needs.

To better support local residents with neurodiverse needs, Local Housing Authorities have introduced training for housing officers to improve understanding of neurodivergence and to help staff recognise when individuals may require tailored approaches, including those who do not have a formal diagnosis. This training aims to ensure that interactions are accessible, supportive, and responsive to individual needs rather than relying on assumptions or labels.

LHAs are also reporting increasing numbers of households requesting additional bedrooms where, for example, children with neurodivergent needs are unable to share bedrooms with siblings. This often reflects genuine challenges relating to sleep, safety, behaviour regulation, or sensory differences. These pressures contribute to growing demand for larger family homes within an already limited social housing stock.

4 Pillar 3: Preventing crisis – helping people stay in their homes

Identifying and preventing homelessness at the earliest possible stage is the best outcome for households, LHAs and the public purse. However, where it has not been possible to prevent homelessness, services need to work together quickly and effectively to ensure that it is as brief as possible.

4.1 Preventing homelessness at the earliest stage

‘Too often, households are known to one service, such as a voluntary or community organisation, without that information being shared with the council or other relevant partners. To deliver truly coordinated and preventative support, everyone must work together, with clear referral pathways and shared responsibility for identifying and responding to risk early.’

[A National Plan to End Homelessness, MHCLG, 2025](#)

Locally as well as nationally, we want to increase the proportion of households who are supported to stay in their own homes or helped to find alternative accommodation - to prevent homelessness and the need for temporary accommodation.

Details of the Government’s new Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant were announced in December 2025 as part of a provisional multi-year settlement. The intent of this grant is to simplify homelessness funding and allow for greater flexibility in spend according to local need.

The provisional 3-year allocations will allow for longer term strategic planning to commission or directly provide homelessness services/initiatives on a longer-term basis, rather than annual allocations in recent years.

To inform this strategy, a mapping exercise was carried out as part of the homelessness review which identified what services are available across Worcestershire and what gaps in provision there might be. A summary of this is contained within the homelessness review and an action within the plan is to explore what services are required to be commissioned or directly provided by LHAs based on the findings of the review.

The LHAs already provide a number of services to help prevent homelessness or to ensure suitable alternative accommodation is available at the prevention stage. This includes access to funding for rent deposits/bonds and rent in advance, welfare assistance, working with landlords and families to resolve issues and mediation for young people and their families.

4.2 Accessing the right support at the right time

It is vital that people get the support that they need, when they need it, to prevent homelessness. Housing and homelessness systems can be complex by the very nature of legislation, geographical location, differences in funding and associated criteria, whether they are provided by statutory or voluntary services and as such it can be challenging for people to navigate them or understand what support is available.

The need to raise awareness of what services are already available was a key theme arising from partners who attended the strategy stakeholder event held in September 2025. The mapping exercise outlined in the previous section will be useful in raising awareness but the LHAs are keen to work with partners to build further on this through improved communication and joint training across organisations and sectors. Joint work with the Adult Front Door and the Community Directory are actions within the strategy action plan.

To proactively identify and predict where households may be at risk of homelessness, we want to improve our use of data to enable us to target high-risk households 3-6 months before they potentially reach crisis point. To address this, we want to explore using a predictive analytics model utilising a range of different data to target our homelessness prevention work.

4.3 Person-centred support to prevent rough sleeping

The councils have worked closely together for many years to tackle rough sleeping and have developed a range of initiatives such as No First Night Out (emergency bed spaces for those that are new to the street), Housing First/Led models (intensive support linked to accommodation), outreach support, bespoke funding and person-centred packages of support. A Rough Sleeper Coordinator has also been in post for several years to oversee the councils' strategic approach to tackling rough sleeping and unblock barriers to accommodation for those with a poor tenancy or offending history.

We will aim continue providing bespoke funding for outreach teams and the Rough Sleeper Coordinator to find a housing solution for those at risk of rough sleeping and rough sleepers.

5. Pillar 4: Improving emergency responses – improving temporary accommodation and making people’s experiences better if they do become homeless

Whilst the aim is to prevent homelessness at the earliest possible stage and negate the need for temporary accommodation, it will always be needed as a safety net for households at crisis point.

LHAs have a duty to provide temporary accommodation in certain circumstances to homeless households. They can also utilise a discretionary duty to accommodate others, where no duty is owed but they are accommodated under wider policy initiatives such as No First Night Out/No Second Night Out to prevent rough sleeping or to support rough sleepers coming off the streets.

If temporary accommodation is required then it must be safe, affordable, of a decent standard and stable. B&B accommodation is not suitable for families with children, but we recognise that it may be the only option at crisis point.

Over the previous three years the number of placements ending has steadily declined from 1121 to 734 and the same for placements with children 339 to 235. Which means that households are spending longer in temporary accommodation. This is due to increasing pressure on housing availability impacting on the ability to house people into permanent accommodation. Correspondingly in the five districts the length of stay in temporary accommodation over 12 weeks has risen from 18% in 2022/23 to 26% in 2024/25 and a corresponding increase of length of placements for the longer timescales (or static numbers over the last three years).

For all the councils the most used type of temporary accommodation is Bed and Breakfast but the amount this is used varies from 46% of all

placements in Redditch to 59% in Wyre Forest in 2024/25. There has been a decrease in use of Bed and Breakfast between 2023/24 and 2024/25 in all of the councils except Bromsgrove where the percentage of placements in B&B have increased from 42% to 48%.

This shows positive work undertaken by many councils to bring other forms of temporary accommodation into use including from Registered Providers and councils’ own stock. When considering the use of temporary accommodation for households with dependent children, WFDC and MHDC still mainly use Bed and Breakfast (53% and 72% respectively). However, both WDC and BDC use more temporary accommodation provided by Registered Providers than B&B (39% and 56% respectively) and RBC mainly use their own housing stock (61%).

The availability of different types and numbers of temporary accommodation differs across the county and can range from ad hoc used of emergency accommodation such as Bed and Breakfast to accommodation owned and managed by the Councils directly. See the table below for more information on temporary accommodation across the districts.

| Placements into: | 22/23 | 23/24 | 24/25 |
|--|-------|-------|-------|
| TA within RP Stock | 89 | 89 | 72 |
| TA within your own stock | 113 | 115 | 98 |
| Any other type of TA | 27 | 28 | 76 |
| Made own arrangements for TA | 36 | 13 | 3 |
| Other nightly paid, privately managed accommodation | 165 | 92 | 69 |
| Private sector TA leased council / Registered Provider | 29 | 43 | 12 |
| Bed & Breakfast | 633 | 578 | 395 |
| Temporarily remains in property | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| Other: e.g refuge | 24 | 13 | 6 |

The new government strategy has a strong focus on households in temporary accommodation and particularly those with dependent children. There is now a body of research around the health impacts of temporary accommodation on people’s health including infant mortality and councils are expected to reduce the use of Bed and Breakfast style accommodation for families over the lifetime of this parliament.

All the LHAs have support workers who can provide additional support to households in need, but the resource is limited and it is critical that the councils utilise other support and care providers where relevant.

LHAs want to increase the amount of good quality self-contained accommodation, which will provide a better experience for homeless households but is also better value for money and less expensive than nightly paid accommodation.

We will work with education providers and GPs to ensure they are aware and can support those households in Temporary Accommodation where appropriate.

6. Pillar 5: Recovery and preventing repeat homelessness – ensuring people don't experience homelessness more than once and halving long term rough sleeping

With the right support people can rebuild their lives after experiencing the trauma of homelessness and break the cycle of repeat homelessness.

6.1 Ensuring people don't experience homelessness more than once

Preventing repeat homelessness is achieved through a variety of ways depending in part on the client group. Ensuring households are supported through the transition from temporary into permanent accommodation and working with households to make them tenancy ready whilst in temporary and supported accommodation has proved beneficial.

Some repeat homeless can arise through households not being able to access health interventions when needed. Locally some LHAs have funded Mental Health Link workers to work with housing teams and households approaching for homelessness assistance. This has proved a valuable resource to enable homeless households to access mental health support and assisting them to access existing mental health services at the right time.

Through regular meetings, agencies collaborate on policy development, share data and good practice, and coordinate funding opportunities. This joined-up approach strengthens the county's ability to deliver sustainable solutions and improve outcomes for those at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness.

Further work needs to be done to better understand why repeat homelessness for survivors of domestic abuse and larger families with complex needs is high and we will work with those with lived experience to see if we can develop workstreams to tackle this.

6.2 Tackling long term rough sleeping

The Government's funding programmes have enabled LHAs to implement a number of service offers for rough sleepers including Housing First/Led, No First/Second Night Out, outreach workers and access to personalised budgets. This approach has supported the most entrenched rough sleepers, some of whom had previously been on the streets for many years, to maintain social housing/private rented tenancies. Through the use of personalised budgets for meaningful activities and engagement opportunities councils have been able to help rough sleepers and former rough sleepers to sustain their accommodation, make their property a home, build positive routines and strengthen community connections.

By offering bespoke interventions, the personalisation budget helps to break the cycle of homelessness and reduce the likelihood of individuals returning to the streets. It empowers frontline staff to respond quickly and creatively to barriers faced by rough sleepers, ensuring that support is not only practical but also person-centred.

This strategy is committed to maintaining this robust approach to tackling and reducing rough sleeping.

6.3 Access to specialist health services: mental health, physical health & substance use

“What needs to be considered is the traumatic experience of being homeless. And that doesn't stop the moment you come out of homelessness... Even if you didn't have mental health issues going into homelessness, you are guaranteed 100 million percent [to have mental health issues after experiencing homelessness]. I have no doubt in my mind at all that everybody goes through a homelessness journey will experience trauma if being homeless and that needs to be considered because even if you've got no recovery to deal with, no official mental health diagnosis or

any compound need, you are going to have an adjustment and, you know, adjustment from that trauma”

MHCLG (2025) Lived Experience Forum Report, recommendations from people with lived experience for the cross-Government homelessness strategy, Revolving Doors, Groundswell, Justlife Foundation

Project Bright Path supports people who are rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping and experiencing mental health challenges, both diagnosed and undiagnosed. The programme provides rapid, relational and trauma-informed support through short-term, focused interventions and better connection into mainstream services. Its purpose is to help people stabilise at times of crisis and access the right mental health and housing support at the right time. A key development during the year was the appointment of two Band 7 mental health practitioners, one based in Herefordshire and one in Worcestershire. Their specialist clinical input has already made a difference, supporting people with complex needs, helping unlock access to formal mental health assessments and diagnosis, and strengthening the ability of frontline workers to navigate mental health systems.

The project also delivers a training programme which is delivered in partnership with a wide range of organisations, including LHAs, housing providers, rehabilitation centres and voluntary sector partners. Content has continued to evolve, with additions including trauma-informed approaches, neurodiversity awareness and clearer pathways for mental health and homelessness support.

In developing this strategy, housing and health colleagues have been engaging in more detailed discussions around the links between mental health, physical health and homelessness and what could be done locally to address poor health and inequalities via the countywide Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy group, the Worcestershire Housing Board, the Housing and Health Group, the district health collaboratives, and the Health Inequalities Prevention Personalisation Care Board. This strategy is committed to ensuring access to specialist services for homeless

households and specific actions will be defined in conjunction with housing and health.

6.4 Community support and services

The LHAs recognise that peer support can be invaluable in tackling and preventing homelessness. Those that have lived experience will often be able to engage complex homeless households more effectively as they know first hand what it is like to experience homelessness and disadvantage.

Homelessness peer support models are in place in some areas of the county and there remains a commitment from the previous strategy to review peer support models and identify good practice with a view to potentially increasing or upscaling peer support.

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy Group continues to learn from those with lived experience of homelessness through ongoing feedback, workshops and questionnaires.

The service mapping exercise carried out as part of the Homelessness Review and the [Community Services Directory](#) are also useful to highlight the community support services available. Ongoing discussions on how to harness community support continue to take place at local homelessness forums.

We will continue to engage with other services that can support households into education, employment and training and those that assist people with managing finances such as the Citizens Advice Bureau.

7. Governance arrangements

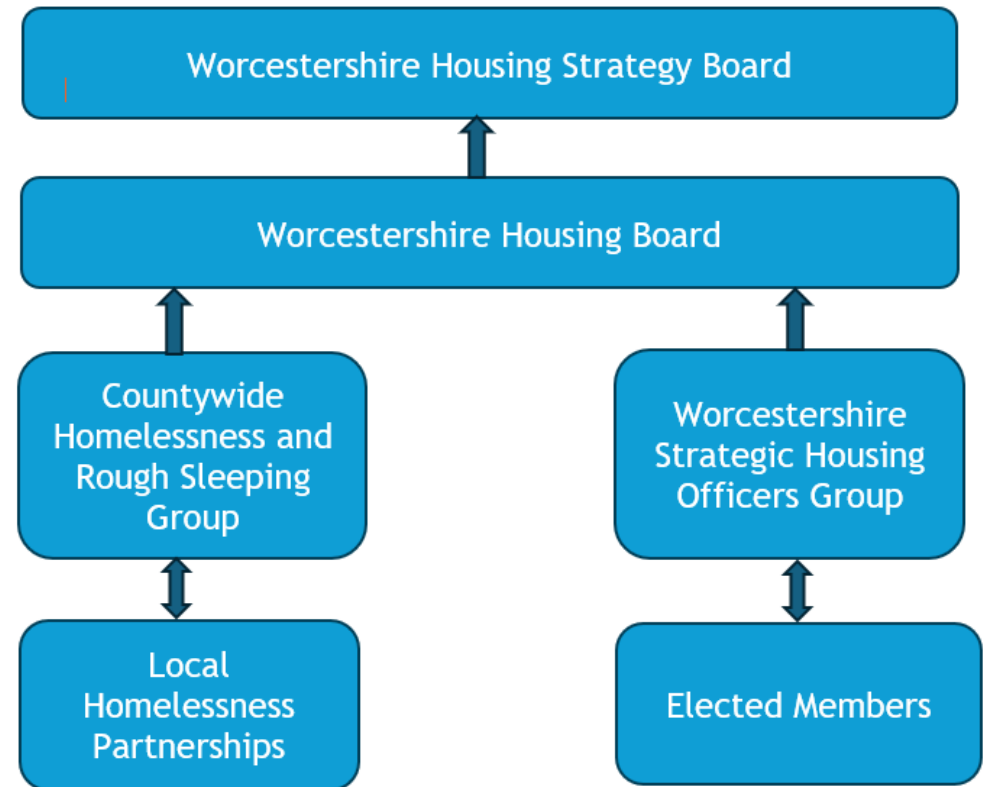
7.1 Oversight, delivery and monitoring

Worcestershire Housing Board is responsible for ensuring that the commitments within the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy are realised. The partnership is a multi-agency and cross-sector partnership, ensuring delivery of the strategy is supported across relevant organisations. The Housing Board reports to the Housing Strategy Board comprised of Chief Executive or senior officers from LHAs, Registered Providers, NHS and Public Health.

The Strategy will be overseen by the Countywide Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Group, a public and voluntary sector partnership that brings together statutory agencies, housing teams, health services, and community partners to ensure a coordinated response to homelessness across the county. The chair of that group will attend the Housing Board regularly to report on outcomes achieved and progress against actions.

Each LHA has its own local homelessness partnership, consisting of local statutory and voluntary partners which will oversee and deliver on homelessness services and the strategy at a local level and feed into the Countywide Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Group.

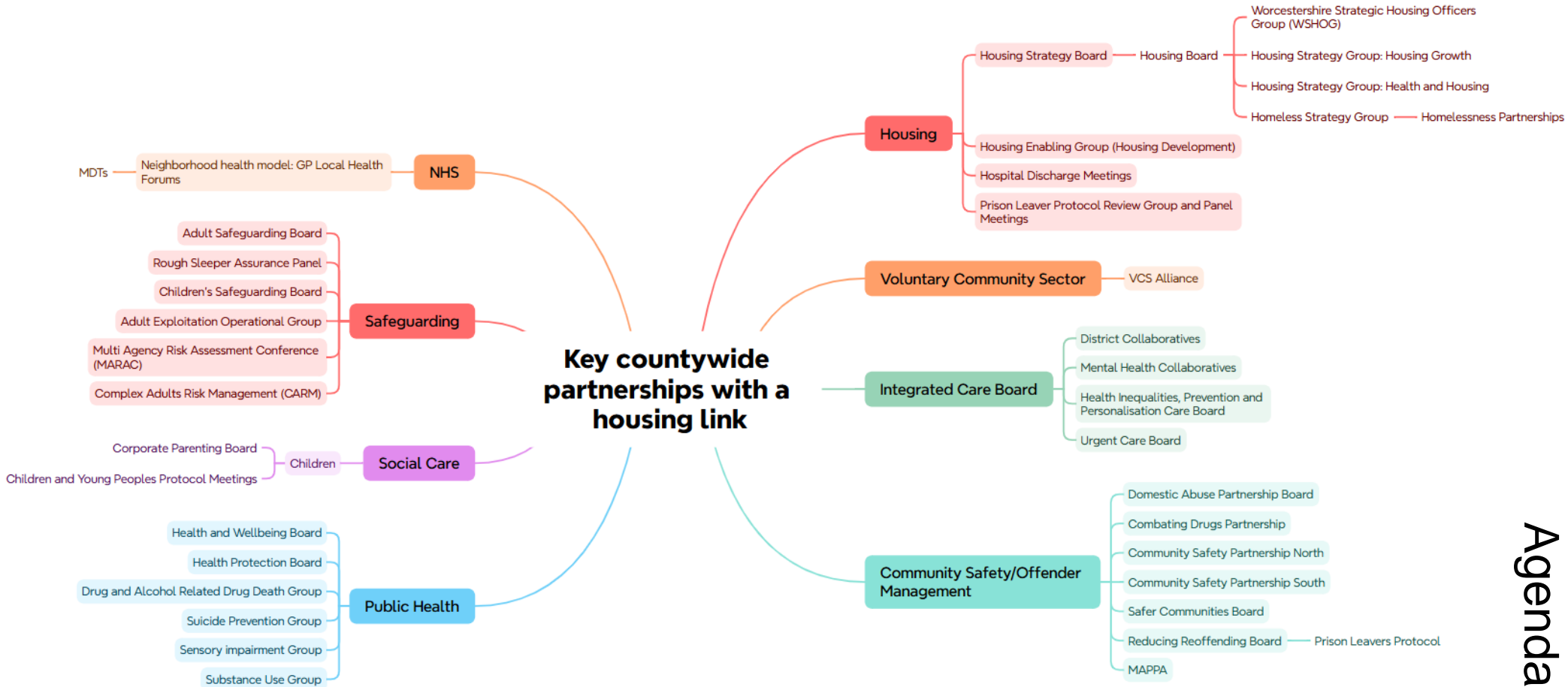
The LHAs are responsible for meeting their own statutory duties in relation to preventing homelessness. The Worcestershire Strategic Housing Officers Group (WSHOG) will be responsible for the operational delivery of the LHA elements of the strategy. Each LHA will have their own separate mechanism for reporting back to elected members on outcomes and progress including committees and member briefings to ensure there is political oversight on the delivery of the strategy and services.



8. Partnerships

Partnerships are essential to the delivery of the strategy as many organisations have a role to play in tackling homelessness and rough sleeping in the wider context.

Page 79



Agenda Item 7

This is not a definitive or exhaustive list of all partnerships but highlights some key groups and inter-relationships. There are also localised partnership and strategic groups within each LHA that are not included in this section.

The advent of the Integrated Care Boards and review of the role of the Health and Wellbeing Board has led to a new way of working within the health, social care and wider partnerships including greater district level working with Primary Care Networks.

Integrated Care System - Taking collective action to tackle health inequalities.



Reducing Re-offending Group & MAPPA Strategic Management Board

The Reducing Re-offending Board oversees the development and delivery of the criminal justice pathway and protocol across the county, following on from work commissioned by Public Health and the LHAs. Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) were introduced in 2001 under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 and subsequently strengthened by the Criminal Justice Act 2003 as the statutory arrangement for managing sexual and violent offenders. It provides a mechanism whereby the agencies involved can better discharge their responsibilities and protect the public in a coordinated way. The responsible authority for MAPPA in each criminal justice area consists of the police, probation, and prisons. LHAs have a duty to cooperate with MAPPA arrangements in assessing and managing the risks posed by MAPPA-eligible offenders and the Board oversees the process.

Adult Safeguarding Board and the Assurance Panel

The main purpose of Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board (WSAB) is to promote wellbeing and reduce the risk of harm for people with care and support needs. Rough sleepers specifically are overseen by an Assurance Panel. The LHAs are represented on the Board and Panel at Senior Officer level.

Corporate Parenting Board (CPB)

The CPB provides leadership and a governance structure for corporate parenting to drive forward the outcomes for looked after children and care leavers. It oversees the Board's strategy and promotes the voice of

children and young people. It also provides challenge and scrutiny to ensure the best outcomes are achieved for children in care and care leavers. LHAs are represented at CPB by officers from WSHOG.

Domestic Abuse Partnership Board (DAPB)

The DAPB consists of key partners with an interest in tackling domestic abuse and supporting victims, including their children. The DAPB has been created to support Worcestershire County Council in meeting its duty under Part IV of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and to expand upon the wider community-focused work of the Worcestershire Forum against Domestic Abuse.

Appendix 1 – Action Plan

Pillar 1: Universal Prevention - tackling the root causes of homelessness

| Action | Measure | Lead | Timescale |
|--|---|---|---------------|
| 1.1 Prevent homelessness from private rented sector tenancies by building relations with landlords to identify those at risk of homelessness at an earlier stage, utilising funding where appropriate and available and take action to sustain tenancies. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Countywide landlord forum established. - “Help to Stay” scheme established. - Tenancy Sustainment Officers in place (funding dependent). - Decrease in households becoming homeless due to end of a private sector tenancy for a negative reason. - Prevention panel established with landlords - Utilise funding such as the Crisis Resilience Fund and homeless funding to sustain tenancies | Housing Advice Team Leaders/Housing Strategy Officers/Private Sector Housing Teams | March 2027 |
| 1.2 Ensure more legal support is available for tenants facing eviction by expanding partnerships with organisations who already undertake this work so that services have sufficient resource, knowledge, expertise and capacity to robustly defend evictions based on grounds under Renters Rights Act. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training on Renters’ Rights Act undertaken for LHA staff. - Established referral mechanisms are in place with the Housing Loss Prevention Advice Service - Decrease in households becoming homeless due to end of a private sector tenancy for a negative reason. - Increase in tenancies sustained in the private rented sector following intervention. | Housing Advice Team Leaders/Housing Strategy Officers/Private Sector Housing Teams Registered Housing Providers | December 2026 |
| 1.3 Develop an integrated tenancy sustainment approach, bringing together housing, community organisations/hubs, employment and financial inclusion partners and develop stronger links to online support, to identify tenancies at risk and deliver coordinated support. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Tenancy at Risk” protocol with Registered Providers is explored. - Coordinated support packages in place including income maximisation, debt advice, financial literacy training, and flexible crisis prevention/ discretionary welfare funding. - Decrease in households becoming homeless due to end of a tenancy for a negative reason. | Housing Advice Team Leaders/Housing Strategy Officers and Community Services | March 2028 |
| 1.4 Review the Duty to Refer data and prepare for the new Duty to Collaborate to ensure that any potential homeless cases are referred to the local housing teams by partner agencies at the earliest opportunity. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Duty to refer data is reviewed. - Increase in the number of Duty to Refer referrals | Housing Strategy Officers/All statutory agencies | March 2027 |

Agenda Item 7

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| | - Increase in the proportion of cases approaching for homelessness assistance at prevention stage, or earlier. | required to refer | |
| 1.5 Use data and lived experience to track and evaluate progress against the strategy (and inform service delivery) using key performance indicators and regular reviews. Consider how we can implement “big picture” reporting to demonstrate and understand homelessness prevention activity across all sectors/organisations. | - Data dashboard and baseline statistics developed and monitored at countywide homelessness strategy meetings. - Summary reporting mechanism developed to show homelessness prevention work across all sectors/organisations. - PWLE attending/providing feedback to the Homelessness Strategy Group. | Research and Intelligence Officer/Housing Strategy Officers | September 2028 |
| 1.6 Improve shared understanding of the work of all partner agencies in preventing homelessness through promoting the Community Services Directory, and joint training and awareness sessions. | - Joint training undertaken and increased awareness of roles and responsibilities. - All homelessness prevention services are signed up to the community services directory. | County Council, Housing Advice Team Leaders/Housing Strategy Officers, Homelessness Partnerships | September 2027 |
| 1.7 Develop and implement clear referral guidance and processes between agencies (housing, health, education, social care) for early identification of at-risk individuals. | - Referral guidance and process defined and promoted. - Individuals are not released from institutions into homelessness. | Housing Strategy Officers, Health, Education and Social Care Leads | March 2029 |
| 1.8 Explore opportunities to develop and deliver homelessness education programmes in schools | - Review service offered by Nightstop in WF and the Basement Project in BDC and roll out across other district (funding dependent) | Housing Strategy Teams | March 2029 |
| 1.9 Make better use of existing social housing by exploring opportunities to better match disabled households with adapted housing and by tackling under occupation of larger properties | -Current demand for adapted housing and best practice in maximising use of existing stock reviewed | Housing Strategy Teams | March 2028 |

Pillar 2: Targeted Prevention - targeted support for people at risk of homelessness

| Action | Measure | Lead | Timescale |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|------------|
| 2.1 Explore the feasibility of a predictive homelessness risk model that pulls data from a range of sources to identify and target support to people at greatest risk of becoming homeless before they reach crisis point. | - Predictive analytics system developed and implemented. - Data driven services/provision are developed. - Increase in homelessness prevention. - Decrease in TA placements. | Research and Intelligence Officer | March 2029 |

| Rough sleepers and single homeless households: | | | |
|--|--|---|-----------------------------|
| <p>2.2 Review and strengthen the rough sleeper support/accommodation options (All services and interventions that tackle rough sleeping) and commission or directly deliver services required utilising the new multi-year homelessness funding arrangements.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carry out a needs assessment and develop a Supported Housing Strategy - Number of services newly commissioned or expanded (if required) - Map unmet needs identified through outreach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WSHOG - Housing Advice/strategy Teams, - Outreach Services, - Rough Sleeper Co-Ordinator | July 2027 |
| <p>2.3 Investigate the ability to provide bespoke funding Outreach teams and the Rough Sleeper Coordinator to develop tailored solutions for individuals who have previously been unable to secure or maintain accommodation, subject to funding.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduction in rough sleeping. - Number of individuals housed through the funding - Tenancy sustainment 6 months + - Number of individuals supported through the funding to address unmet needs - Reduction in repeat presentations to outreach services - Building relationships with Registered Providers to overcome barriers into accommodation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rough Sleeper Co-ordinator - Outreach Services - Housing Advice/Strategy Teams | rch 2029 (pending funds) |
| <p>2.4 Expand the online multi-agency work on Target Priority Group rough sleepers Implement outreach and support services TPG online group across all districts to improve cross-boundary coordination and case management. Learning from good practice and promoting joined up working.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online multi-agency TPG group working effectively across boundaries+. - Reduction in the number of TPG rough sleepers. - Increase in TPG rough sleepers accessing services and accommodation - Number of districts consistently using the TPG platform - Number of cross-boundary cases successfully resolved | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rough Sleeper Co-Ordinator/Housing Advice Teams | September 2026 |
| <p>2.5 Extend the Mental Health & Homelessness Group to all districts to enable discussion/referrals into mental health services for those at risk of or experiencing rough sleeping</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mental Health and Homelessness group expanded across all districts to ensure consistent access to mental health services. - Increased number of districts participating - Number of rough sleeping cases discussed - Increased access to mental health support for rough sleepers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing Advice/Strategy Team Leaders - Rough Sleeper Co-Ordinator | rch 2027 |
| <p>2.6 Understand factors leading to returns to rough sleeping Using data to identify repeat patterns, implement targeted interventions, and redesign support offers, subject to funding.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhanced support offer in place for those who return to rough sleeping. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rough Sleeper Co-Ordinator - Outreach Services | April 2027 |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work undertaken with Registered Providers to reduce the no. of people refused housing due to poor tenancy history - Reduction in recurring rough sleeping - Number of individuals enrolled in enhanced support - Tenancy sustainment following re-engagement | - Housing Advice/Housing Strategy Teams | |
| <p>2.7 Set up a Lived Experience involvement process to ensure people who have experienced rough sleeping or homelessness are able to put forward ideas or feedback. Use this feedback to make changes to services and improve everyday practice, subject to funding.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People with lived experience involved in service development and improvement - Number of people with lived experience taking part in a way that meets their needs - Feedback collected and recorded - Number of service changes or improvements made because of the group's feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rough Sleeper Co-Ordinator - Outreach Services | October 2026 |
| Children, young people and care leavers: | | | |
| <p>2.8 Support the pilot(s) of the “Upstream” model in partnership with schools, specialist youth and family support services e.g. Centrepoint model (should funding be available). This would include a review of family intervention and mediation services. Initial pilot to commence in Wyre Forest.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prevention initiatives developed across the Councils leading to a reduction in youth homelessness. - The causes of youth homelessness and what interventions can be made to sustain accommodation and positive relationships with family/friends are better understood. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing Advice/Strategy Team Leaders - WF & SW Nightstop - The Basement Project - Children's Services - Youth Services - Schools | December 2027 |
| <p>2.9 Review the Care Leavers Protocol in light of new legislative requirements that state that care leavers will no longer be deemed intentionally homeless in the case of accommodation breakdown.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Care leavers protocol updated to be compliant with the legislation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing Advice/Strategy Team Leaders - Children's Services | December 2026 |
| <p>2.10 Agree a Memorandum of Understanding with providers of young persons supported accommodation to facilitate movements to alternative supported accommodation where relationships between residents have broken down</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Memorandum of Understanding in place across providers to respond to potential homelessness situations where the relationship between residents has broken down. - Fewer crisis situations in which a suitable move cannot be found | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing Advice/Strategy Team Leaders - Supported Housing Providers | December 2027 |

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| 2.11 Work with partner organisations (e.g. DWP) to explore services provided to address youth unemployment and ensure they can be connected with prevention/mediation/budgeting/debt advice services. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduction in youth homelessness - More young people managing their money and able to live independently | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing Advice Team Leaders - DWP | March 2027 |
| 2.12 Work with partners to understand the links between homelessness and neurodiversity in young people and how homelessness prevention services can meet their needs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduction in youth homelessness. - Officers trained to ensure that neurodivergence is recognised and services are adapted to meet needs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing Advice Team Leaders -County Council | March 2027 |
| Families with children: | | | |
| 2.13 Identify the key risk factors in families that lead to homelessness to ensure targeted intervention at the earliest stage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review best practise around early intervention and prevention for families including risk factor identification. - Increase in homeless prevention for families with children | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing Advice Team Leaders and Housing Strategy Officers - Research and Intelligence Officer | Ongoing |
| Homelessness and health: | | | |
| 2.14 Commission a homelessness and health audit to understand the health needs of homeless households, reduce health inequalities for rough sleepers and improve life expectancy. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The health needs of homeless households are understood and services commissioned or adapted to meet need and prevent homelessness. - Health inequalities experienced by rough sleepers are reduce and life expectancy is increased. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WSHOG | September 2026 |
| 2.15 Improve joint working across housing, health and social care to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Prevent unnecessary hospital admissions for those who are homeless/at risk of homelessness (ii) remove barriers to hospital discharge for those who cannot return to their home or who are homeless (iii) Develop and implement the Duty to Collaborate for hospital admission, discharge, and step-down care that ensure a housing plan is in place before discharge. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved pathway into accommodation to ensure that discharges are planned in partnership with housing options services and that appropriate support is in place. - Reduced unnecessary hospital admissions for homeless households - Reduced delays in hospital discharge for homeless households | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -WSHOG -Integrated Care Board -NHS | September 2027 |
| 2.16 Explore opportunities to provide a flexible approach to medical appointments to meet the needs of those with complex needs/chaotic lives and ensure follow up care is provided- example of health care worker in local day centres. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health Bus service locations are near rough sleeper locations wherever possible. - All rough sleepers have access to a GP and substance use services where appropriate. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -WSHOG -Integrated Care Board -NHS | December 2026 |
| 2.17 Enhance the collaborative approach with partners to effectively manage the risk to those with complex and multiple needs in temporary accommodation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existing support and ongoing care and support processes are reviewed. - Reduction in serious incidents in unsupported TA/housing. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Worcestershire Housing Board - WSHOG | April 2027 |

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| <p>2.18 Integrate mental health services more deeply into homelessness prevention and intervention strategies. E.g. outreach teams should have improved access to mental health professionals to provide immediate support to those in crisis, and ongoing support is provided for those in unsupported temporary accommodation.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current mental health services (and their capacity) are mapped, gaps are identified. - Those in TA can access appropriate mental health support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outreach Teams - Mental Health Services | <p>June 2028</p> |
| <p>2.19 Develop more fully accessible permanent and temporary housing through Disabled Facilities Grant and Homes England Funding (dependent on funding)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase in the number of accessible/healthy homes delivered by Developers and RPs - Increase in the number of accessible temporary accommodation units. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WSHOG - Worcestershire Housing Adaptations Service | <p>June 2030</p> |
| <p>2.20 Investigate the ability to provide flexible budgets to prevent homelessness especially for non-priority/intentional cases or individuals facing severe mental health issues. This could be used to help cover emergency needs.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding identified - Data captured on “what works” to prevent homelessness for this cohort to inform future service delivery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing Advice Team - Leaders/Housing Strategy Teams | <p>December 2026</p> |
| <p>Domestic abuse</p> | | | |
| <p>2.21 Sustain and expand safe accommodation options (funding dependent) to minimise the use of B&B for DA survivors.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase in the number of safe accommodation options | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DA Coordinator - Public Health - Housing Providers | <p>September 2027</p> |
| <p>2.22 Review best practice in preventing homelessness due to domestic abuse at an earlier stage through early interventions with households at risk of homelessness due to DA.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Those at risk of homelessness and experiencing domestic abuse approach for homelessness assistance at an earlier stage e.g. prevention stage, not relief/crisis stage - Decrease in homelessness approaches due to DA - Greater awareness and take up of Sanctuary Scheme options | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DA Coordinator - DA Housing Officers - Research and Intelligence Officer | <p>March 2027</p> |
| <p>2.23 Develop a protocol for Registered Providers to access relevant survivor information (with consent) to deliver trauma-informed housing offers and minimise re-traumatisation.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved accommodation offers due to greater understanding of needs and risk - Reduced repeat homelessness for DA survivors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DA Coordinator - Registered Housing Providers - DA Housing Officers | <p>June 2027</p> |
| <p>2.24 Develop dedicated housing pathways for survivors with multiple needs and those with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduced homelessness levels due to DA - Improved partnership working with schools and health and holistic support available to whole family. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DA Coordinator - DA Housing Officers | <p>June 2027</p> |
| <p>2.25 Strengthen communication and engagement with schools and health professionals to support early identification and safeguarding and ensure children affected by domestic abuse are linked to appropriate support services to prevent future</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Processes are defined and embedded | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DA Coordinator - DA Housing Officers | <p>July 2027</p> |

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| victimisation or perpetration. | | | |
| Prison leavers: | | | |
| 2.26 Review supported and transitional accommodation capacity and barriers to accommodation to ensure that there are pathways into accommodation prior to release. | - Reduced homelessness due to leaving prison | - Housing Advice/Strategy Team Leaders - Prison and Probation Service | September 2027 |
| 2.27 Improve data capture: referrals to Prison Release meetings, homeless assessments before release, and accommodation pathways including CAS3 accommodation. | - Improved understanding of housing needs - Increased accommodation options and improved process for prison leavers | - Housing Advice/Strategy Team Leaders - Prison and Probation Service | December 2026 |
| 2.28 Increase the number of housing assessments undertaken within prisons to identify a housing solution before release. | - Increased accommodation options and improved process for prison leavers | - Housing Advice/Strategy Team Leaders - Prison and Probation Service | June 2027 |
| 2.29 Work with partner housing providers to develop a positive pathway from CAS3 accommodation | - More individuals moving on from CAS3 into settled or supported accommodation | - Strategic Housing Senior Officers | March 2027 |
| 2.30 Review Worcestershire Criminal Justice Housing and Support Protocol | - Protocol is updated to reflect current legislation and service provision | - Strategic Housing Lead | March 2028 |
| Asylum seekers and refugees: | | | |
| 2.31 Collaborate with community, voluntary, and faith organisations to develop tailored, culturally appropriate information and guidance for asylum seekers, refugees and those with No Recourse to Public Funds, enabling them to access necessary support. | - Comprehensive and culturally appropriate guidance developed. | - Homelessness Partnerships | September 2027 |
| Veterans: | | | |
| 2.32 Continue to work with the Worcestershire Armed Forces Covenant Partnership to ensure that there is a good understanding of the Armed Forces Covenant in housing and that organisational policies reflect the needs of the Covenant | - Armed Forces Covenant embedded in housing services (where relevant) - Housing staff received training on the Armed Forces Covenant. | - WSHOG | Ongoing |

Pillar 3: Preventing crisis - helping people stay in their homes

| Action | Measure | Lead | Timescale |
|---|---|---|---------------|
| 3.1 Use the findings of the Homelessness Review Service Mapping to explore funding services required to be commissioned or directly provided by LHAs to sustain accommodation. | - Gaps are defined, business case developed. - More homelessness cases are prevented | Housing Advice Team Leaders and Housing | December 2026 |

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| | | Strategy Officers | |
| 3.2 Ensure that homelessness services are well connected to services offering support through the new Crisis and Resilience Fund. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CRF fund outcomes analysed to inform “what works” - Report on outcomes that have prevented homelessness without the need for a homeless approach to housing services. - Homelessness Services are aligned with the local delivery of the Crisis and Resilience Fund and support is available to those in crisis and facing homelessness. | WSHOG | March 2027 |
| 3.3 Utilise funding to ensure services such as accommodation and floating support, and help with housing costs are targeted to reduce homelessness through prevention | -Number of households prevented from becoming homeless increases | Housing Advice Team Leaders and Housing Strategy Officers | December 2026 |
| 3.4 Make use of the government toolkits to aid prevention of homelessness (when available) | -Number of households prevented from becoming homeless increases | Housing Advice Team Leaders and Housing Strategy Officers | March 2028 |

Page 89

Pillar 4: Improving Emergency Responses - improving temporary accommodation and making people’s experiences better

| Action | Measure | Lead | Timescale |
|---|---|---|------------|
| <p>4.1 Increase the number of high-quality, self-contained, TA units for families with children through working with Registered Housing Providers and considering options such as leasing or purchasing accommodation (funding dependent). Minimise the use of B&B, and other forms of shared accommodation and out of area placements for families with children.</p> <p>4.2 Improve the transition of households moving out of TA and into settled accommodation by providing an assessment of support needs and referring families into the appropriate support. This would include sharing the needs assessment with housing providers (with consent) so they can provide a trauma informed housing offer.</p> <p>4.3 Create family-centred TA solutions: reevaluate the model for families in TA, ensuring that placements consider the impact on children’s schooling, health, and</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase in the number of suitable TA units - Reduction in the average length of stay in temporary accommodation - Reduction of the number of households with children in temporary accommodation - Reduction in the number of families with children in B&B over 6 weeks - Reduction in temporary accommodation costs - Increase in successful move-ons per quarter | Housing Advice Team Leaders and Housing Strategy Officers | March 2028 |

Agenda Item 7

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| <p>support networks and help children, families and young people in TA to maintain connections to services and support networks.</p> <p>4.4 Jointly review social housing allocations policies once government’s new guidance is available to try to prevent the need for TA or move people on into settled accommodation more quickly if they do need to access TA.</p> <p>4.5 Develop a resilience plan to address the impacts of rising temporary accommodation use, accommodation costs, and the anticipated loss of grant funding. This will include a review of block booking contracts, introduce dynamic purchasing and reduce the use of spot purchasing</p> <p>4.6 Work with PWLE to analyse the barriers to accessing temporary accommodation and implement solutions e.g. increased security measures, provisions for pets.</p> <p>4.7 Explore opportunities to work with colleagues across the health economy to increase the availability of adapted temporary accommodation.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PWLE feedback from families who have experienced TA is gathered and analysis on a regular basis - Barriers to TA are understood and action taken to overcome barriers | | |
|---|--|--|--|

Pillar 5: Recovery and Preventing Repeat Homelessness - ensuring people don't experience homelessness more than once and having long term rough sleeping

| Action | Measure | Lead | Timescale |
|---|---|---|---------------|
| <p>5.1 Take action to tackling long term rough sleeping through reviewing: Accommodation-based and floating support/Rough sleeper outreach and intensive support/Rent deposits and rent in advance/No First Night Out Accommodation/Furniture projects</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All activities to prevent and tackle rough sleeping locally are reviewed and defined, gaps identified and services commissioned. - Reduction in rough sleeping | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing Advice/Strategy Team Leaders - Rough Sleeper Co-Ordinator | March 2027 |
| <p>5.2 Review opportunities to develop and implement community and peer support models</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase in tenancy sustainment - increase in engagement of service users | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing Advice/Strategy Team Leaders - Rough Sleeper Co-Ordinator | March 2028 |
| <p>5.3 Review opportunities to strengthen advocacy services: increase the availability of independent advocates, particularly for vulnerable groups like young people, those with mental health issues, and DA survivors.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocacy services are defined and strengthened | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing Advice/Strategy Team Leaders - Outreach Services - Housing Advice | December 2027 |
| <p>5.4 Investigate with PWLE why there is a high level of repeat homelessness in certain homeless cohorts e.g. DA survivors, rough sleepers, families with complex support needs.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repeat homelessness is minimised - Drivers of repeat homelessness are understood and minimised | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research and Intelligence Officer | March 2028 |

Agenda Item 7

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| 5.5 Develop mechanisms for referring temporarily accommodated households (with consent) to medical professionals, schools etc (subject to Government guidance) | -Repeat homelessness is minimised and households are safeguarded | - WSHOG | December 2028 |
|--|--|---------|---------------|

Stakeholders identified a number of suggestions that are business as usual and as such do not feature in the action plan but will still be delivered. The strategy action plan will be reviewed on an annual basis, and this will include a review of current actions and identification of any new actions required for future years.

Appendix 2 - Funding the strategy

Homelessness Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant, & New Burdens Funding for Renters Rights Act

Our targets are based on national targets to create a step change in our approach to work upstream and prevent homelessness wherever possible. These are to:

- increase the proportion of people who are supported to stay in their own home or helped to find alternative accommodation when they approach their local council for support
- eliminate the use of B&B accommodation for families, other than very short-term use in emergencies
- halve the number of people sleeping rough long-term

Total Three Year Funding Allocation 2026-2029

| Local Authority | Homelessness Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant | Of Which, funding for Homelessness and Rough Sleeping | Funding for Renters Rights Act 2025 New Burdens | Funding for Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Grant |
|-----------------|--|---|---|---|
| Bromsgrove | £ 1,636,130.00 | £ 1,474,318.00 | £ 50,497.00 | £ 111,315.00 |
| Malvern Hills | £ 1,414,759.00 | £ 1,310,533.00 | £ 42,799.00 | £ 104,226.00 |
| Redditch | £ 2,477,421.00 | £ 2,294,301.00 | £ 72,088.00 | £ 111,032.00 |
| Wychavon | £ 2,627,008.00 | £ 2,552,442.00 | £ 76,082.00 | £ 104,565.00 |
| Wyre Forest | £ 2,485,740.00 | £ 2,307,923.00 | £ 70,660.00 | £ 107,157.00 |
| Total | £ 10,641,058.00 | £ 9,939,517.00 | £ 312,126.00 | £ 538,295.00 |

The Local Authorities will utilise the funding strategically to meet deliver on our targets and respond to local need. We will measure the outcomes below with a view to improving performance year on year.

- number of households with children in temporary accommodation
- number of families in B&B over 6 weeks
- percentage of duties owed where homelessness was prevented or relieved
- percentage of duties owed where homelessness was prevented or relieved for those with 3 or more support needs
- number of people sleeping rough on a single night
- number of people sleeping rough over the month who are long-term

We will ensure that we have a policy in place for ensuring suitability of temporary accommodation, following an assessment, including procuring sufficient units of temporary accommodation and allocating them.

Domestic Abuse Act Funding for Domestic Abuse Housing Officers 2025/6

| Housing Authority | Grant (£) |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Fromsgrove District Council | 33,666 |
| Malvern Hills District Council | 33,666 |
| Redditch Borough Council | 33,666 |
| Wychavon District Council | 33,666 |
| Wyre Forest District Council | 33,666 |

Funding for domestic abuse services is essential to ensure the provision of dedicated, specialist officers who can effectively respond to victims and survivors. These officers play a critical role in early intervention, risk assessment, safeguarding, and multi-agency coordination. Sustained investment will allow for improved response times, consistent victim support, enhanced offender management, and better outcomes for families affected by domestic abuse. Funding will support recruitment, specialist training, and retention of officers, ensuring victims receive trauma-informed, timely, and effective protection while reducing repeat incidents and long-term harm within communities.

Household Support Fund (2025/26)

HSF 7 Allocation April 25 - March 26

| District Council 12 month allocation | General allocation | Food/warm space allocation | Total |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Bromsgrove | £171,321.39 | £18,000.00 | £189,321.39 |
| Malvern Hills | £235,312.23 | £18,000.00 | £253,312.23 |
| Redditch | £329,900.14 | £18,000.00 | £347,900.14 |
| Wychavon | £230,918.03 | £18,000.00 | £248,918.03 |
| Wyre Forest | £328,625.52 | £18,000.00 | £346,625.52 |
| Total | £1,296,077 | £90,000.00 | £1,386,077 |

The Household Support Fund (HSF) is intended to provide targeted financial assistance to vulnerable households who are struggling to meet the cost of essential living expenses. The fund aims to prevent crisis, reduce hardship, and support households to maintain stability.

Discretionary Housing Payments (2025/6)

| Housing Authority | Grant (£) |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Bromsgrove District Council | 62,332 |
| Malvern Hills District Council | 75,651 |
| Redditch Borough Council | 79,296 |
| Wychavon District Council | 112,099 |
| Wyre Forest District Council | 110,242 |
| Total | 439,620 |

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) provide short-term financial assistance to households who require additional help with housing costs and are in receipt of Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit. The fund aims to prevent homelessness, sustain tenancies, and support households during periods of financial difficulty.

Appendix 3 - Glossary of terms

| | |
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| CAS3 : Community Accommodation Service | 11 |
| DAPB: Domestic Abuse Partnership Board | 24 |
| DRIVE: A domestic abuse partnership that protects victims by disrupting, challenging and changing the behaviour of those who are causing harm..... | 14 |
| LGR: Local Government Reorganisation | 2 |
| LHAs: Local Housing Authorities | 4 |
| MHCLG: Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government..... | 9 |
| MARAC: Multi agency risk assessment conference..... | 14 |
| PWLE: People with Lived Experiencee | 4 |
| RPs: Registered Housing Providers | 6 |
| TPG: Target Priority Group (most complex rough sleepers)..... | 4 |
| WSHOG: Worcestershire Strategic Housing Officers Group..... | 26 |

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Cabinet
2026

25th March

Shared Homelessness Strategy 2026-2031

| | |
|--|--|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder | Councillor Kit Taylor |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | Yes |
| Relevant Head of Service | Judith Willis Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services |
| Report Author | Job Title: Amanda Delahunty Housing Development and Enabling Manager Contact email: a.delahunty@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 881269 |
| Wards Affected | No specific ward relevance |
| Ward Councillor(s) consulted | Not Applicable |
| Relevant Strategic Priority | Housing |
| Non-Key Decision | |
| If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting. | |

1. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cabinet is requested to RESOLVE that: -

1) the draft Shared Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031 and action plan be approved for public consultation for six weeks starting 13th April 2026.

2. **BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires all housing authorities to have a homelessness strategy in place which is based on a review of all forms of homelessness in their local authority area.
- 2.2 It is intended that this Strategy will sit under the existing Worcestershire Strategic Housing Board Plan.
- 2.3 In developing this strategy a comprehensive assessment of the nature and extent of homelessness across the local authority areas was carried out by analysing homelessness data and taking account of the views of customers and partner organisations. A consultation event was held on the 30th September 2025 with partners and stakeholders, to consider housing from both a strategic and client-based perspective.

This event included partners from a variety of statutory and voluntary organisations.

- 2.4 Service users were also consulted and supported to complete a questionnaire. This provided them with an opportunity to feedback on their experiences including those in temporary accommodation, young people, rough sleepers and victims/survivors of domestic abuse.
- 2.5 The National Plan to End Homelessness, published by the Government October 2025, is a long-term strategy with the overarching vision that: Homelessness should be rare, brief and non-recurring and that people who do become homeless should receive support quickly and effectively. Local authorities are expected to move from crisis to prevention. A key requirement will involve greater collaboration across government departments. There are five pillars of the strategy –
1. Universal Prevention
 2. Targeted Prevention
 3. Preventing Crisis
 4. Emergency Response
 5. Recovery and Stability
- 2.6 This new Shared Homelessness Strategy, in partnership with Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Wychavon and Wyre Forest, builds on the success of our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-25, which emphasised prevention, intervention, recovery and joined-up systems, which are core themes echoed in the new National Plan.
- 2.7 The strategy sets out how the Council will invest in early intervention and support systems to stop homelessness before it happens. The Council will strengthen cross-service collaboration (health, jobcentres, criminal justice, social care) to identify risks early. A ‘duty to collaborate’ for key public services (planned through future legislation) will support this approach.
- 2.8 The local authorities will aim to eliminate unlawful use of B&Bs for families (beyond statutory short stays) and improve the quality of temporary accommodation and aim to halve long-term rough sleeping.
- 2.9 Local authorities are also expected to tackle the structural causes of homelessness by building more affordable and social homes and support the reform of the private rented sector working with landlords and tenants to help them to sustain their accommodation where at all possible. The new Crisis and Resilience Fund will be key to providing welfare support to those who have experienced an income shock or unexpected bill, such as boiler replacement.

- 2.10 The Government is providing nearly £3.5bn funding for homelessness prevention and rough sleeping services from 2026/27–2028/29.
- 2.11 Funding streams have been amalgamated into a new Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant.
- 2.12 Worcestershire has aligned its strategic approach to homelessness with these national priorities with a plan to shift from Crisis to Prevention. The strategy focuses resources upstream, supporting people earlier (before accommodation loss). The shared action plan has measurable targets based on the national outcomes framework.
- 2.13 Progress reporting is tied to funding conditions. This means expanding preventative services such as advice services, financial resilience support and co-ordinated multi-agency pathways that intervene before homelessness occurs.
- 2.14 The national plan emphasises coordination across services. At the local level, this reinforces: Multi-agency structures like housing partnerships, health and wellbeing boards, prison and probation and specialist support teams which already exist in Worcestershire.
- 2.15 The National Plan highlights that the Government expects closer collaboration between housing, health, social care, children's services, prison and probation and voluntary sector partners. Better case-sharing, data exchanges and joint pathways, particularly for people with complex needs.
- 2.16 The shared strategy aspires towards this more integrated model to prevent gaps and reduce repeat homelessness.
- 2.17 The consolidation of funding into a single grant over a three-year period gives the local authority's partners greater stability and flexibility to prioritise local needs (e.g., rough sleeping services, domestic abuse related housing support). There is a requirement to spend a minimum proportion on prevention and staffing. This allows improved local commissioning of support services, such as tailored housing support and landlord engagement schemes.
- 2.18 The outcomes framework metrics (e.g., rough sleeping rates, B&B usage, prevention success) will provide a basis for performance review. The local authorities will collect and monitor relevant homelessness data, publish regular progress reporting, and adjust strategies based on outcomes. Creating a more outcome-focused, transparent approach to homelessness planning at the local level.

2.19 The local authorities will work closely together and with regional NHS and public health partners.

2.20 Each of the local authorities will develop their own action plan which will sit under the overarching, shared action plan, by October 2026.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

3.1 The delivery of the Shared Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy actions will be overseen by the Housing Strategy Team.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The new Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant will provide funding to develop services to support the strategy and a report has already been taken to members to provide the detail on spending priorities for the next three years.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Council has a duty under the Homelessness Act 2002 to conduct a review of the nature and extent of homelessness in its District every 5 years and to develop a strategy setting out how services will be delivered in the future to tackle homelessness and the available resources to prevent and relieve homelessness.

5.2 The Homelessness Reduction Act came into force in April 2018, and places new legal duties on local housing authorities so that everyone who is homelessness or at risk of homelessness will have access to early meaningful help, irrespective of their priority need status, so long as they are eligible for assistance.

5.3 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires local authorities to collaborate with Tier One authorities to provide safe and supported accommodation for victims/survivors of domestic abuse.

5.4. The Renters Rights Act 2025 shifts the local authority role from discretionary enforcement to a mandatory duty to enforce landlord legislation. The abolition of Section 21 no fault evictions is likely to result in more tenancies being ending by Section 8 Notices for rent

arrears and provides an opportunity for local authorities to work with landlords to, wherever possible, sustain tenancies. The Council has utilised Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse grant to provide a new service with Citizens Advice to support this work.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Re-organisation

- 6.1 LGR does not alter the statutory homelessness duties set out under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and Housing Act 1996, including prevention (s.195), relief (s.189B), interim accommodation (s.188) and the duty to provide free advice and information (s.179).
- 6.2 The Government's National Plan to End Homelessness sets out a cross-government expectation that homelessness cannot be reduced without multi-agency integration
- 6.3 Both the National Plan to End Homelessness and the Homelessness Code of Guidance stress the need for coordinated arrangements across the below areas,
- health
 - social care
 - children's services
 - criminal justice
 - and domestic abuse services

and it is considered that the most appropriate method is to have a shared strategy approach across as much of Worcestershire to ensure there is a coherent approach to our homelessness duties until the results of LGR are provided.

- 6.4 A single Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy must be produced for any new authority, and this strategy and action plan has been produced so that it is able to be incorporated into either one or two unitary authorities until a new single strategy for the new area, based on a fresh homelessness review is completed as required by the Homelessness Code of Guidance

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 Housing – The strategy provides a framework for a range of services which support this Council priority.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 There are no direct climate change implications from the strategy itself but individual actions/services may have an impact.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.4 The strategy seeks to deliver a range of services for homeless households and draws on ways to improve the work of the Council in developing services and preparing links, pathways and referrals between services to prevent homelessness in the first place or minimise its impact when it happens.
- 6.5 The design of services which tackle the root causes of homelessness such as poverty, health inequalities and adversity in childhood will include ensuring that providers have appropriate policies and training in place to make sure that there is no adverse impact on equalities groups

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 If the strategy is not approved the Council will not be legally compliant. Furthermore, it is likely that more households who are threatened with homelessness, or who are in housing need, will have limited options for support to sustain their accommodation or find alternative suitable accommodation that meets their needs. If they have to make a homeless approach this could lead to the following negative outcomes:

- Increased B&B costs
- Increased rough sleeping in the District
- Impacts on physical and mental health, educational achievement, ability to work and similar through increased homelessness

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Shared Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

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Cabinet
2026

25th March

| Department | Name and Job Title | Date |
|---|---|----------|
| Portfolio Holder | Kit Taylor Cabinet Member for Planning, WRS and Strategic Housing | 20.2.26 |
| Lead Director / Head of Service | Judith Willis Assistant Director Community and Housing Services | 24.2.26 |
| Financial Services | Julie Lorraine, Director of Finance | 24.2.26 |
| Legal and Democratic Services | Nicola Cummings – Principal Solicitor – Governance and Jess Bayley-Hill, Principal Democratic Services Officer | 25.02.26 |
| Policy Team (if equalities implications apply) | Rebecca Green Policy Manager | 24.2.26 |
| Climate Change (if climate change implications apply) | Matthew Bough Strategic Housing & Business Support Manager | N/A |

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Economic Development and Regeneration Service Delivery

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder | | Councillor K May Leader and Cabinet Member Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development and Enabling |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | | Yes |
| Relevant Assistant Director | | Rachel Egan Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services |
| Report Author Rachel Egan | Job Title: Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services Contact email: rachel.egan@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 07484 546807 | |
| Wards Affected | | All |
| Ward Councillor(s) consulted | | No |
| Relevant Council Priority | | Economic Development |
| Key Decision | | |
| If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting. | | |

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet Committee RESOLVE that:-

- 1) **Earmarked reserves be released to fund economic development and regeneration activities as follows:**
 - a. **Worcestershire Growth hub - £140,000**
 - b. **Careers Worcestershire - £300,000**
 - c. **Betaden - £70,000**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP), now operating through Worcestershire County Council as the accountable body, provides the strategic framework for delivering business support and skills initiatives across Worcestershire. It operates through a blended funding model, combining core Government grant funding with a range of programme-specific resources, including UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), legacy Growth Deal funding and contributions from local partners. Between April 2022 and March 2026, Bromsgrove District Council, alongside the other district councils, has contributed to the delivery of these activities through its UKSPF allocation, enabling the continuation and enhancement of local

business and employability support. With UKSPF funding due to cease, there is currently no confirmed replacement funding stream, creating a significant risk to the continuity of these services.

- 2.2 The Worcestershire Growth Hub is a core component of this delivery model, providing a single access point for businesses to obtain advice, skills support and information on grant and investment opportunities. As part of a national network supported by Government, Growth Hubs are recognised as an effective mechanism for improving business productivity, resilience and growth by simplifying access to a complex support landscape. In Worcestershire, the Growth Hub has been enhanced through UKSPF investment, enabling more targeted local support. The loss of this funding would significantly reduce the level of tailored support available to Bromsgrove businesses, limiting their ability to access specialist advice, workforce development opportunities and growth funding.
- 2.3 Careers Worcestershire supports young people aged 16–24 into employment, education and training, through a partnership-based delivery model. Delivered by Worcestershire County Council in partnership with Seetec Pluss, district councils and a range of external agencies, the service brings together career’s advice, benefits guidance, wellbeing support and access to specialist services including education, SEND, housing and apprenticeships. It works closely with employers to align support with local labour market needs and create pathways into work. In Bromsgrove, this has been complemented by the development of an informal, place-based hub and outreach activity to engage young people, particularly those who are not in education, employment or training. The continuation of the Careers Worcestershire provision is reliant on sustained local investment and partnership funding to maintain and grow this coordinated, community-focused offer, without which there is a clear risk of reduced engagement and worsening levels of youth unemployment.
- 2.4 In the absence of UKSPF, the continuation of both the Growth Hub and Careers Worcestershire within Bromsgrove will require local financial support. Failure to provide this funding would result in a reduction or cessation of locally accessible business support and employability provision, with direct implications for economic growth, workforce development and inclusive opportunity within the borough.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 Worcestershire LEP and Worcestershire County Council have developed a set of proposals to enable the continuation of key programmes previously supported through UKSPF, including the

Worcestershire Growth Hub, Careers Worcestershire and a business support programme delivered through BetaDen. These proposals set out delivery models, outputs and funding requirements for the continuation of services between April 2026 and March 2028. Bromsgrove District Council officers have engaged with both organisations to review and refine the proposals, ensuring that they are aligned with the Council's economic development and regeneration priorities and that they demonstrate appropriate value for money. This has included consideration of local delivery impacts, targeted support for Bromsgrove residents and businesses, and the extent to which the proposed programmes complement existing provision and maximise outcomes from the Council's investment.

- 3.2 The Worcestershire Growth Hub provides the principal local gateway to business support, offering coordinated access to local, regional and national advice, funding and specialist services through a single, easily accessible service. Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2026, the Growth Hub supported 458 businesses within Bromsgrove. A proposed Council contribution of £140,000 would enable the delivery of a minimum of 170 additional business assists, ensuring the continuation of targeted support for local businesses.
- 3.3 Careers Worcestershire provides one-to-one, personalised support to help young people prepare for and access education, employment and training opportunities. Since opening in April 2024, Careers Worcestershire has supported 364 young people from Bromsgrove. The proposed Council contribution would enable the continuation of this provision which is at risk without district-level funding.
- 3.4 BetaDen provides a county-wide business innovation support programme delivered across a number of Worcestershire districts. A proposed Council contribution of £70,000 would secure access for Bromsgrove businesses to a range of targeted support, including six places on the Incubate programme supporting early-stage technology businesses, five places on the BetaDen Digital programme focused on digital adoption and artificial intelligence, and up to 65 places on a programme of workshops covering topics relevant to businesses investing in new product development and process innovation. Access to this provision is dependent on district-level financial contributions; without such funding, businesses in non-contributing areas would not be eligible to participate in the programme free of charge.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council has an ear marked reserve for Economic Growth Development with a balance of £911,000 as of 31st March 2026.

£200,000 has already been allocated in the budget to continue the delivery of the Innovation Lighthouse business support programme delivered by Warwick Manufacturing Group. This leaves a balance of £711,000 that could be used to support the continuation of business support and youth employability activity in Bromsgrove.

- 4.2 It is proposed that three projects are funded, for the period from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2028, to a value of £510,000 from the remaining £711,000 as shown in the table below.

| Project | Budget | Commitments | Further details |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|---|
| Economic Growth Development Reserve as at 01.04.2026 | £911,000 | | |
| Existing Projects: | | | |
| Innovation Lighthouse business support programme | | £200,000 | Delivered by Warwick Manufacturing Group. Delivery to 31 March 2028 |
| Proposed Projects: | | | |
| Betaden | | £70,000 | Proposed in this report. Delivery to 31 March 2028 |
| Worcestershire Growth Hub | | £140,000 | Proposed in this report. Delivery to 31 March 2028 |
| Careers Worcestershire | | £300,000 | Proposed in this report. Delivery to 31 March 2028 |
| Unallocated: | | | |
| Remaining Balance | | £201,000 | Plans to be confirmed |
| Total | £911,000 | £911,000 | |

- 4.3 Subject to approval of the recommendations in this report, budget will be vired to the projects identified above, leaving a balance of £201,000 yet to be allocated in the Economic Growth Development Reserve.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 In order to deliver the proposed activities it will be necessary to enter into contracts with Worcestershire County Council.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 All activities proposed in this report will be completed prior to local government reorganisation.
- 6.2 Funding for economic development activity post March 2028 is not yet confirmed. It is expected that responsibility for delivery of economic development and the funding that supports this activity will fall within the remit of a new Strategic Authority.

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.3 The proposed use of the earmarked reserves will contribute to delivering the Council's priority of Economic Development.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.4 There are no climate change implications directly relating to this report.

Community Impact

- 6.5 The proposed activities will support both new and established businesses, helping them to grow, create jobs and drive economic growth. Funding for Careers Worcestershire will provide targeted support to help young people progress into education, employment or training enabling them to benefit from future job creation and economic opportunities.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.6 There are some clear positives in the proposals, particularly around the continued investment in Careers Worcestershire and its focus on supporting young people including those not in education, employment or training. This will support more inclusive access to economic opportunities locally.
- 6.7 It is important to ensure that equality considerations are built into delivery of the funded services with a focus on ensuring services are accessible, inclusive and responsive to the needs of all communities

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 Failure to secure funding for business support activities will lead to a reduction in services available to businesses across the borough. Without additional investment, the Growth Hub will be limited to delivering a core, reactive service focused solely on responding to

enquiries. The proposed funding contribution would enable the Growth Hub to provide a higher level of business support and take a more proactive approach in targeting and supporting priority sectors.

- 7.2 The Betaden programme delivers innovation support to both new and established businesses, helping them explore how innovation can drive improvements in productivity and sustainability. It plays a key role within the local innovation ecosystem. Without district-level financial contributions local businesses will not be able to access the broad range of expertise provided by the programme in the development of new products and processes, including digital adoption and the use of Artificial Intelligence.
- 7.3 Careers Worcestershire has been in operation for two years and has supported a substantial number of young people during this time. However, youth unemployment remains a significant challenge. Without district-level financial support, the service will cease, risking a rise in youth unemployment.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Cabinet
2026

17 June

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

| Department | Name and Job Title | Date |
|---|--|-------------|
| Portfolio Holder | Cllr K May Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development and Enabling | 26/5/26 |
| Lead Director | Guy Revans Executive Director Environment and Communities | 22/5/26 |
| Financial Services | Debra Goodall Assistant Director Finance and Customer Service | 22/5/26 |
| Legal Services | Claire Felton Assistant Director Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services | |
| Policy Team (if equalities implications apply) | Helen Mole Business Improvement Manager | 26/5/26 |

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Cabinet
2026

17th June

Enforcement and Civil Penalty Policy

| | |
|--|---|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder | Councillor Sue Baxter |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | Yes |
| Relevant Assistant Director | |
| Report Author: Katie Sharp-Fisher | Job Title: Private Sector Housing Manager Contact email: k.sharp-fisher@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 881437 |
| Wards Affected | ALL |
| Ward Councillor(s) consulted | N/A |
| Relevant Council Priority | Housing |
| Non-Key Decision | |
| If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting. | |

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet **RESOLVE** that:-

1. That Members approve the Private Sector Housing Enforcement and Civil Penalty Policy (“the Policy”) attached to this report at Appendix 1.

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

2. Delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director Community & Housing Services, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to update the Policy in line with any legislative or government guidance updates.
3. The Scheme of Delegations be updated to reflect the adoption of the Policy and the new Enforcement powers under the Renters Rights Act 2025 in accordance with the wording set out in Appendix 2.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This report follows on from the previous report to Cabinet regarding the Renters Rights Act dated 20th April 2026. The Private Sector Housing Enforcement and Civil Penalty Notice Policy has been reviewed and re-written in response to the Renters Rights Act 2025, which received Royal Assent on the 27th October 2025, with Phase 1 commencing on the 1st May 2026. This represents a significant update to the Council’s

enforcement framework in response to the expanded statutory duties and regulatory burdens introduced by the Renters' Rights Act 2025.

- 2.2 The revised Enforcement and Civil Penalty Notice Policy (“the policy”) incorporates new enforcement duties arising from the Renters Rights Act 2025. It does not however alter the Council’s overarching approach to how and when the Council decides to take enforcement action. It clarifies and strengthens how existing and statutory powers will be exercised ensuring that enforcement activity remains: -
- Proportionate
 - Evidence-based
 - Risk-led
 - Consistent with the Regulators Code
- 2.3 The Policy provides a consistent framework for the Council’s enforcement functions across a wide range of housing and associated legislation, including primary housing statutes, landlord and tenant law, environmental protection and relevant regulatory regimes such as: -
- Housing Act 2004
 - Protection from Eviction Act 1977
 - Renters Rights Act 2025
 - Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property)(England and Wales) Regulations 2015
 - Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020
- 2.4 The Policy aligns with national best practice, including the Association of Chief Environmental Health Officers (ACEHO) model enforcement and Civil Penalty policy, and establishes a clear, consistent and legally robust framework for enforcement decision making and the application civil penalties.
- 2.5 Approval of the Policy ensures the Council can lawfully and effectively discharge its regulatory responsibilities. Failure to adopt the updated policy would result in: -
- A lack of alignment with new statutory duties
 - Increased risk of inconsistent or unlawful enforcement
 - Reduced ability to respond to emerging risks in the private rented sector
 - Increased exposure to legal challenge
- 2.6 This Policy applies to all private sector housing-related enforcement functions exercised by the Council, including private rented housing, owner-occupied housing, empty homes, Houses in Multiple Occupation and relevant site-based accommodation, where statutory powers apply.

2.7 The Policy recognises that most landlords operate responsibly and therefore prioritises advice, engagement and support where appropriate. Formal enforcement is targeted at landlords and managing agents who fail to comply with their legal obligations, ensuring a fair and proportionate regulatory approach.

2.8.1 The Policy establishes a clear framework for decision making, ensuring that enforcement action is based on consistent assessment of risk, harm, vulnerability and evidence. This supports transparency and ensures that cases are progressed in a structured manner.

2.8.2 The policy makes clear that civil financial penalties are not fixed or automatic and must be assessed on a case by case basis. In determining the level of any penalty, officers have regard to statutory guidance, the seriousness of the breach, culpability, harm caused, any aggravating or mitigating factors, and the need for proportionality. Maximum penalties will be reserved for the most serious or deliberate cases of non-compliance.

3. Key Policy Changes

3.1 The Policy reflects the Council's expanded enforcement responsibilities under the Renters Rights Act 2025 and associated housing legislation. It sets out the Council's approach to enforcing statutory requirements relating to, among other matters: -

- misuse of possession grounds
- unlawful rent practices, including rent bidding
- failure to provide prescribed tenancy information
- discriminatory letting practices
- compliance with the Private Rented Sector Database (when in force)

3.2 The Policy adopts the enforcement principles and formalises decision making through: -

- defined investigation thresholds
- evidential and public interest tests
- proportionality assessments
- clear case closure criteria

3.3 It establishes a more robust and intelligence-led approach to enforcement enabling the Council to address serious and systematic non-compliance including: -

- Portfolio-wide investigations of landlords where systemic non-compliance is identified
- Targeted enforcement based on harm, vulnerability and risk

- Co-ordinated action across multiple properties where landlords or agents demonstrate repeated non-compliance.
- 3.4 The Policy confirms that civil penalty income is ringfenced and it must be reinvested into private sector housing enforcement in accordance with statutory requirements and internal financial governance arrangements. This supports the long term sustainability of the service and potentially reduces the reliance on core Council funding.
- 3.5 The policy provides clarity for residents, landlords and managing agents and partners organisations by confirming that: -
- the Council acts as a statutory regulator, not an arbitrator of private contractual disputes
 - enforcement action is undertaken only where statutory breaches are identified
 - resources are focused on matters that pose the greatest risk of harm
- 3.6 The implementation of this policy is expected to contribute to improve housing conditions, reduced health risks and increased tenancy security and within the District.

4. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 4.1 The Renters Rights Act 2025 significantly expands the Council's regulatory responsibilities, introducing new enforcement duties relating to landlord conduct and tenancy compliance alongside existing Housing Act 2004 duties. The policy complements existing duties in relation to the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), including mandatory action where Category 1 hazards are identified and discretionary action for Category 2 hazards.
- 4.2 The Council anticipates an increase in enforcement activity arising from the use of civil financial penalties. The effective use of civil financial penalties requires a high evidential threshold. Officers must ensure that cases meet the relevant legal tests, including sufficient evidence and public interest considerations, and that all enforcement action is supported by clear and auditable evidence. This includes a higher volume of cases requiring formal investigation, evidence gathering and decision-making to the required legal standard, particularly where penalties must be justified and capable of being defended at appeal.
- 4.3 There is an increased risk of appeals to the First-tier Tribunal where civil penalties are imposed. This requires that all notices, calculations and decision-making processes are legally robust, proportionate and clearly documented to withstand external scrutiny.

- 4.4 The policy establishes a structured and consistent approach to determining civil penalty levels. This requires officers to assess each case individually, taking into account factors including culpability, harm, aggravating and mitigating circumstances, and the need for proportionality. This approach ensures fairness but increases the time and complexity associated with decision-making.
- 4.5 The implementation of the policy requires effective case management systems to support the administration of enforcement action, including the preparation of notices of intent, final notices, representations, and appeals. Accurate record keeping is essential to ensure transparency and consistency.
- 4.6 The recovery of civil financial penalties presents an operational challenge. Payment is not guaranteed and may require additional enforcement action, including debt recovery processes and legal intervention. This introduces additional administrative and financial considerations for the Council.
- 4.7 The policy requires officers to exercise discretion in determining when to pursue civil penalties as opposed to alternative enforcement options. This necessitates consistent decision-making across the service to ensure that enforcement action is proportionate, targeted and aligned with the Council's wider regulatory objectives.

Implications for the Scheme of Delegations and previous level of civil penalties

- 4.9 As noted at paragraph 3.1 above, under the Renters Rights Act 2025 the scope of the Council's enforcement powers has been expanded. To ensure that officers are able to utilise these powers it will be necessary for some additional delegations to be added to the Officer Scheme of Delegations.
- 4.10 Members are referred to the updated version of the Scheme of Delegations for Strategic Housing at Appendix 2 which sets out the additional delegations sought. The alterations are shown in track changes. Members may recall that delegations were previously approved for other aspects of the Renters Rights Act in April 2026, and these delegations are shown shaded in blue.
- 4.11 In summary the main changes are to enable officers to use all the enforcement powers available to them under the relevant housing legislation. In addition to new powers contained in the Renters Rights Act itself, changes have also been introduced to existing legislation including the Protection from Eviction Act and Housing Acts 2004. There

is also a move to introduce greater use of civil penalties as an alternative to prosecution.

- 4.12 Members are asked to note that the levels of civil penalties applicable under the Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector and Social Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 will be amended by the policy and the new rates will replace those previously approved by members (Report to Cabinet: Electrical Safety Enforcement Charges in the Private Rented Sector 20th October 2021). Likewise, the new policy will replace the civil penalties applicable to certain offences under the Housing Act 2004 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016) as previously reported to members on 10th July 2019 (Introduction of Civil Penalties for failure to comply with standards in the private rented sector).

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The implementation of the Renters Rights Act 2025 and the associated Enforcement and Civil Penalty Notice Policy introduces additional financial demands on the Council. These relate primarily to increased enforcement activity, including investigation, case management, legal support, and the administration of civil financial penalties.
- 5.2 New Burdens Funding of £60,000 has been allocated to the Council by Central Government in recognition of the additional duties and responsibilities arising from implementation of the Renters Rights Act 2025. This includes increased activity relating to enforcement of tenancy reforms, illegal eviction and harassment investigations, reporting requirements and wider private rented sector enforcement activity.
- 5.3 At this stage, detailed allocation of funding is still being developed as part of the Council's wider implementation planning arrangements. However, it is anticipated that the funding will support areas such as officer training, legal and governance support, operational readiness, case management system improvements, reporting system improvements, enforcement procedure development and costs associated with enforcement activity and appeals. These measures are intended to ensure that enforcement activity remains consistent, auditable and legally robust.
- 5.4 Government guidance accompanying the funding allocation indicates that the funding is intended to support implementation activity and additional enforcement capacity associated with the new regulatory regime. At the present time, no additional permanent staffing commitments have been approved specifically in relation to this policy

and staffing implications will continue to be reviewed as operational demand becomes clearer. The Private Sector Housing service is currently operating within existing approved budgets.

- 5.5 Whilst the current funding allocation relates to 2026/27, future enforcement demand, appeal activity and staffing pressures are likely to create additional ongoing financial pressures which will be actively managed through normal budget monitoring arrangements.
- 5.6 Civil financial penalties provide a mechanism for cost recovery and service sustainability. Any income generated from civil penalties must be ringfenced and reinvested into private sector housing enforcement functions in accordance with statutory requirements and internal financial governance arrangements. Government guidance accompanying the funding allocation indicates that authorities are expected to offset a proportion of enforcement costs through the use and recovery of civil financial penalties where appropriate. This reinforces the importance of maintaining robust enforcement, debt recovery and financial governance arrangements.
- 5.7 Income from civil penalties is variable and cannot be relied upon as a guaranteed funding source. The level of income will depend on the number and nature of enforcement cases, the outcome of appeals, and the Council's ability to successfully recover unpaid penalties.
- 5.8 There is a risk that civil penalties may not be recovered in full, particularly where individuals are unwilling or unable to pay. This may result in additional costs associated with debt recovery, including legal action.
- 5.9 The Council must also consider the financial implications of appeals to the First-tier Tribunal. While robust decision-making and evidentially sound enforcement practise minimises the number of appeals and improves outcomes, there remains a risk that some cases will be challenged. Where appeals arise, the Council may incur costs associated with officer time in preparing and presenting cases, and, where necessary, external legal advice. Any associated financial implications will be managed through existing service budgets and funding allocations, with ongoing monitoring through established budget and performance management arrangements.
- 5.10 Overall, the introduction of civil financial penalties supports a more sustainable enforcement model. However, the Council must continue to balance enforcement activity with available resources to ensure that the service remains financially viable and effective.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Amendments to the Scheme of Delegations are required to ensure officers are authorised to exercise enforcement powers and duties under the Renters Rights Act 2025 and related housing legislation. Individual officer authorisations will also be updated accordingly.
- 6.2 The policy confirms that formal enforcement action will only be taken where evidential thresholds and public interest tests are satisfied, reflecting requirements under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and the Code for Crown Prosecutors. The policy also provides clear safeguards in relation to appeals, representations and tribunal proceedings.

7. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 7.1 The Policy has been aligned with ACEHO model enforcement policy and Civil Penalty policy. The new unitary authority will take over these duties as a local Housing Authority.

Relevant Council Priority

- 7.2 The implementation of the policy supports the Council's ability to meet one of the Council's priorities of 'Community & Housing'. The updated Policy directly impacts upon the residents throughout the community by ensuring that houses are safe and warm enabling the residents to be happy and Bromsgrove a safe place to live.

Climate Change Implications

- 7.3 The implementation of this policy has a positive impact in relation to climate change. Through the enforcement of housing standards, including the Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 (Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards), the Council will support improvements to the energy efficiency of residential properties within the private rented sector.
- 7.4 Improved energy efficiency contributes to reduced carbon emissions, lower energy consumption and enhanced thermal performance of housing stock. This supports wider national and local climate change objectives, while also delivering benefits in terms of reduced fuel poverty and improved health outcomes for residents

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 7.5 The implementation of this policy has been considered in the context of the Council's duties under the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty. The policy supports the Council's obligation to eliminate discrimination in the exercise of its enforcement functions.
- 7.6 Enforcement activity under this policy is expected to have a positive impact on vulnerable households, including those with protected characteristics, who are disproportionately affected by poor housing conditions and unlawful practices within the private rented sector.
- 7.7 The policy embeds a risk-based approach to enforcement, which includes consideration of vulnerability and individual circumstances when prioritising cases and determining appropriate action. This ensures that enforcement decisions are proportionate, fair and responsive to the needs of those at greatest risk of harm.
- 7.8 No adverse equality impacts have been identified. An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed prior to the implementation of this policy. While the policy primarily reflects statutory duties, the Council retains discretion in how enforcement powers are exercised. The assessment will ensure that due regard has been given to the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010, including consideration of potential impacts on vulnerable groups and those with protected characteristics.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 The implementation of the Enforcement and Civil Penalty Notice Policy introduces a number of operational and strategic risks. These risks have been identified and mitigation measures are in place to ensure that enforcement activity is effective, proportionate and legally robust.
- 8.2 There is a risk that enforcement action, including the serving of civil financial penalties, may be subject to challenge or appeal where processes are not correctly followed or decisions are not sufficiently evidenced.
Mitigation: The policy establishes clear evidential thresholds, decision-making frameworks and procedural requirements aligned with statutory guidance. Officers will receive appropriate training and access to legal support to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and procedural standards.
- 8.3 There is an increased likelihood of appeals to the First-tier Tribunal, which may result in penalties being reduced, overturned, or subject to delay.
Mitigation: The policy embeds a structured and consistent approach to determining civil penalties, supported by clear

reasoning, proportionality assessments and robust documentation to ensure decisions are defensible.

- 8.4 Income from civil financial penalties is not guaranteed and there is a risk that penalties may not be recovered in full, resulting in additional costs associated with debt recovery and legal proceedings.

Mitigation: The policy details appropriate debt recovery processes and penalty levels have been set in accordance with statutory guidance to maximise compliance and recovery where appropriate.

- 8.5 Increased enforcement activity may place pressure on staffing and resources, particularly where cases are complex and require significant officer time to investigate, prepare and defend enforcement action.

Mitigation: New Burdens Funding has been allocated to support implementation of the Renters Rights Act 2025 and associated enforcement activity. The Council will continue to monitor operational demand, staffing capacity, appeals activity and service pressures through normal management and budget monitoring arrangements. Officer training, procedural guidance and case management systems will support the efficient prioritisation and progression of enforcement cases.

- 8.6 There is a risk of inconsistent enforcement decisions across the service, which could undermine fairness and increase the likelihood of challenge.

Mitigation: The policy provides a clear and structured framework for enforcement decisions, including defined thresholds, proportionality assessments and case closure criteria (where compliance has been achieved, enforcement action has concluded or no further action is required) to ensure consistency across officers.

- 8.7 Enforcement action, particularly the use of civil financial penalties, may attract challenge or criticism from landlords or other stakeholders. Equally, failure to take appropriate action may undermine public confidence in the Council's regulatory role.

Mitigation: The policy promotes a balanced approach to enforcement, prioritising advice and engagement where appropriate, while ensuring that formal action is taken where statutory breaches are identified.

- 8.8 Effective enforcement relies on accurate record keeping and evidence management. There is a risk that inadequate systems or processes could weaken enforcement cases.

Mitigation: Investment in case management systems and clear procedural requirements will ensure that evidence is properly

recorded, retained and accessible to support enforcement action and appeals.

- 8.9 There is a risk that future enforcement demand, appeal activity and staffing pressures may exceed available funding or create additional financial pressures for the Council.

Mitigation: The Council has received New Burdens Funding to support implementation of the new regulatory regime and will continue to monitor enforcement activity, appeal trends, staffing pressures and associated financial implications through existing financial governance and budget monitoring arrangements. Civil financial penalties may assist in offsetting a proportion of enforcement costs where recovery is successful; however, income from penalties will not be relied upon as a guaranteed funding source.

- 8.10 There is a risk that increased use of civil penalties may influence landlord behaviour, including market withdrawal or reduced supply in the private rented sector, which may indirectly impact housing availability

Mitigation: The Council will ensure that enforcement activity is proportionate, targeted and intelligence-led, focusing on serious or repeat non-compliance rather than minor breaches. The policy prioritises advice and engagement where appropriate, with formal enforcement action directed at those who fail to meet their legal obligations. All enforcement decisions will be underpinned by statutory guidance, the Regulators' Code and robust proportionality assessments to ensure fairness and consistency. The Council will monitor enforcement activity, appeal outcomes and local market conditions to identify any unintended impacts on the private rented sector and will keep its approach under regular review to maintain an appropriate balance between regulatory intervention and market stability.

- 8.11 These risks will be monitored as part of ongoing service management, financial monitoring and governance arrangements, and the policy will be kept under review to ensure that it remains effective, proportionate and aligned with legislative requirements.

9. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Private Sector Housing Enforcement & Civil Penalty Notice Policy 2026

Appendix 2 – Scheme of Delegations for Strategic Housing with amendments shown in track changes

Cabinet
2026

17th June

Background papers

Reports to Cabinet

Renters Rights Act 2025 – 20th April 2026

Electrical Safety Enforcement Charges in the Private Rented Sector - 20th October 2021

Introduction of Civil Penalties for failure to comply with standards in the private rented sector – 10th July 2019

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

| Department | Name and Job Title | Date |
|------------------------------------|--|-------------|
| Portfolio Holder | Cllr Sue Baxter | 28/05/2026 |
| Lead Director / Assistant Director | Judith Willis Assistant Director Community and Housing Services | 08/05/2026 |
| Financial Services | Deb Goodall Assistant Director Financial Services | 08/05/2026 |
| Legal Services | Nicola Cummings, Principal Solicitor – Governance and Jess Bayley-Hill, Principal Democratic Services Officer | 08/05/2026 |

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT
COUNCIL
PRIVATE SECTOR
HOUSING
ENFORCEMENT & CIVIL
PENALTY POLICY 2026**

1. Background

Bromsgrove District Council (“the Council”) has statutory duties to keep housing conditions in its area under review and to take appropriate action where residential accommodation presents risks to health, safety or welfare, or where housing related legislation is not being complied with. This policy sets out the Council’s principles for enforcing and exercising its duties as a Local Housing Authority under the relevant legislation. It has been developed having regard to government statutory guidance and recognised good practice frameworks including the Association of Chief Environmental Health Officers (ACEHO) model.

Local authorities exercising regulatory functions are required by section 5 of the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006 to publish an enforcement policy. Where regulatory functions fall within the scope of the Regulators Code, the Council is also required to have regard to that Code in the exercising of those functions. This policy provides transparency and consistency in the way the Council carries out its enforcement functions and ensures that regulatory activity is proportionate, targeted and accountable in regard to private sector housing enforcement.

This policy explains how the Council will approach housing enforcement across the private sector and how enforcement decisions will be made. It establishes the principles that guide enforcement activity and provides clarity to landlords, tenants, managing agents and other stakeholders about what can be expected from the Council when regulatory intervention is considered necessary.

In developing this policy, the Council has had regard to relevant statutory guidance and good practise. The Council will support compliance through advice and engagement where this is appropriate and likely to be effective. However, the Council is not required to take informal action before exercising its statutory enforcement powers and may take formal action where this is necessary and proportionate to protect residents, address serious risks, and secure compliance with legal requirements.

The need for a clear and robust enforcement approach is informed by local housing conditions. Evidence indicates that a higher proportion of private rented properties contain serious hazards or fail to meet minimum standards compared with owner occupied housing throughout the District. The Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey 2024 indicates that approximately 9.1% of all dwellings contain a Category 1 hazard.

The same survey identified that approximately 14.5% of private rented homes and 12.2% of owner-occupied homes do not meet the Decent Homes Standard. By comparison, the English Housing Survey (2020) estimates that 17.5% of private rented

homes and 15.1% of owner-occupied homes across the West Midlands do not meet the Decent Homes Standard. While overall housing conditions in the District compare favourably with regional averages, a significant number of properties still require intervention to address risks to occupants. This evidence supports the Council's use of a targeted and risk-based approach to enforcement activity. Detailed information on enforcement tools, procedures, penalties and officer decision making is set out in the sections that follow.

For the purposes of this policy, the term "*landlord*" includes letting agents, managing agents, licensors, property owners, directors of corporate landlords and any other person involved in the letting or management of privately rented accommodation. The terms "*House in Multiple Occupation*" (HMO) have the meaning set out in the Housing Act 2004. The term 'corporate landlord' should be read as referring to a corporate body that meets the definition of 'landlord' above.

For the avoidance of doubt, references in this policy to a "dwelling" have the meaning given by section 99 of the Housing Act 2004. The Housing Health and Safety Rating System applies only to premises that fall within that statutory definition. Caravans and mobile homes do not generally constitute dwellings for the purposes of Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004 and are not assessed under the HHSRS. Such accommodation is instead subject to regulation and enforcement under other applicable legislation, including the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and the Mobile Homes Act 2013.

2. Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure housing enforcement action is taken lawfully, fairly and proportionately, in accordance with relevant legislation and statutory guidance, while supporting the Council's wider housing objectives. Through effective regulation and enforcement detailed within this policy provides a framework through which the Council seeks to: -

- Improve the quality of housing across the District
- Tackle fuel poverty and poor housing conditions
- Reduce the number of empty homes
- Support wider public health objectives and reducing health inequalities
- Support tenancy sustainment and reducing homelessness, particularly for vulnerable households
- Ensure landlords comply with their legal responsibilities
- Prevent the exploitation and poor treatment of tenants
- Contribute to safer, healthier local communities

The Council recognises that most landlords operate responsibly. The Council will therefore seek to support compliance through advice and engagement where this is appropriate and likely to be effective. However, where legal requirements are not met or risks to health or safety persist, the Council will take proportionate and effective

enforcement action. Effective enforcement is essential to maintaining confidence in the private rented sector and ensuring that responsible landlords are not undercut by those who choose to operate unlawfully.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all private sector housing enforcement activity undertaken by the Council within its administrative area. It applies to all residential accommodation with the exception of Bromsgrove District Council owned stock where statutory hazards or nuisances arise. The Council's private sector housing enforcement functions include the following areas: -

- **Housing Standards and Property Conditions**
 - Privately rented properties and Housing Association properties
 - Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), including licensable and non-licensable HMOs for licensing and management standards
 - Owner occupied housing where hazards or statutory nuisances may arise
 - Empty properties
 - Buildings or structures used or intended to be used for human habitation, including outbuildings, sheds, garages or other non-traditional structures where occupation gives rise to risks to health, safety or welfare.
- **Tenancy Regulations and Landlord Conduct**
 - Enforcement of landlord obligations, tenancy requirements and tenant protections introduced by the Renters Rights Act 2025
 - Illegal eviction and harassment offences
- **Other Private Sector Housing Enforcement**
 - Residential mobile homes and caravan sites including licensing and site standards
 - Unauthorised encampments where the Council acts in its capacity as a land owner

All enforcement action will be carried out in accordance with relevant statutory Codes of Practice, Council procedures and protocols, and official guidance issued by central and local government bodies. In exercising its enforcement functions, the Council will act in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

The Council recognises that certain aspects of housing-related enforcement fall under the remit of other regulatory services. In particular, enforcement of tenancy fees and prohibited payments under the Tenant Fees Act 2019 is primarily undertaken by Trading Standards. However, Private Sector Housing may identify potential breaches during the course of their duties. Where such matters are identified, cases will be

referred to Trading Standards for investigation where appropriate. The Council will work collaboratively with partner services to ensure a coordinated and proportionate enforcement response.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The effective regulation of private sector housing requires cooperation between the Council, landlords, agents, tenants and partner agencies. The following sets out the general expectations of each party.

Authorised Officers

Authorised officers will: -

- Act in accordance with this Policy, relevant legislation and statutory guidance
- Exercise professional judgement in determining appropriate enforcement action
- Act proportionately, consistently and transparently
- Ensure that decisions are properly evidenced, recorded and capable of withstanding legal scrutiny;
- Have regard to vulnerability, safeguarding considerations and equality duties when exercising enforcement functions

Landlords, Letting Agents and Managing Agents

Landlords and agents are expected to: -

- Maintain properties in compliance with all relevant legal requirements
- Respond promptly to tenant reports of disrepair or hazards
- Engage constructively with the Council and comply with statutory notices and requests for information
- Ensure that letting and management practices comply with all relevant tenancy and consumer protection legislation
- Take proactive steps to prevent risks to health and safety

Tenants and Occupiers

Tenants are expected to: -

- Report defects and hazards to their landlord or managing agent in the first instance, where it is safe and reasonable to do so
- Provide access for inspections and works where required
- Act in a tenant-like manner and not cause damage or contribute to unsafe conditions

Partner Agencies

The Council will work with partner agencies, including the Police, Fire Service, Trading Standards, Housing Options and safeguarding services, to ensure a coordinated and effective response to housing-related risks.

5. Legislative Framework

Bromsgrove District Council acts as the Local Housing Authority responsible for regulating housing conditions and tenancy practices within the District. Under section 3 of the Housing Act 2004, the Council has a statutory duty to keep housing conditions in its district under review with a view to identifying any action that may need to be taken. Where hazards are identified (as defined by the Housing Act), the Council has powers and duties to take appropriate enforcement action in accordance with Part 1 of the Act.

Section 5 Housing Act 2004 places a duty on Local Authorities to take appropriate enforcement action where a Category 1 hazard exists. Section 7 of the Housing Act 2004 gives the Council a discretionary power to take enforcement action where a Category 2 hazard exists. The Council will usually act where a Category 2 hazard presents a significant risk to health or safety.

Section 107 of the Renters' Rights Act 2025 places a duty on the Council to enforce the landlord legislation including statutory duties and offences relating to tenancy standards, security of tenure, eviction practices, information requirements, rent practices and discrimination, as set out in the Act and associated legislation comprising of the following: -

- Chapters 3 and 6 of Part 1 of the Renters Rights Act 2025;
- Part 2 of the Renters' Rights Act 2025;
- Sections 1 and 1A of the Protection from Eviction Act 1977; and
- Chapter 1 of Part 1 of the Housing Act 1988.

Section 110, which places a duty on the Council to report to the Secretary of State on the exercise of its functions under the Landlord Legislation.

The Renters Rights Act 2025 and Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004 fall outside the scope of the Regulators Code. Where the Code does not apply, the Council will nevertheless seek to act in accordance with the principles of good regulation unless statutory duties require otherwise.

Other housing legislation enforced by the Council does however fall within the scope of the Legislative and Regulatory Reform (Regulatory Functions) Order 2007, and the Council will act in accordance with the principles of good regulation where applicable. Legislation within the scope of the Regulators Code includes (but is not limited to): -

- Parts 8, 9 and 10 of the Housing Act 1985;
- Part 8 of the Housing Act 1996; and
- Parts 2 to 5 of the Housing Act 2004.

5.1 Primary Legislation

When exercising its housing enforcement functions, the Council may rely on the following primary legislation, where relevant (this list is not exhaustive): -

- Housing Act 2004
- Housing Act 1985
- Housing Act 1988
- Renters Rights Act 2025
- Housing and Planning Act 2016
- Protection from Eviction Act 1977
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Building Act 1984
- Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960
- Mobile Homes Act 2013
- Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984
- Criminal Justice & Public Order Act 1994
- Public Health Act 1961
- Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949
- Proceeds of Crime Act 2002
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982
- Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000

5.2 Secondary Legislation

Relevant secondary legislation includes (but is not limited to): -

- Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020
- Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015 (as amended)
- Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 (as amended)
- Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Other Houses (Miscellaneous Provisions) (England) Regulations 2006
- Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006
- Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Additional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2007
- Mandatory Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Order 2018
- Any regulations made under or associated with the Renters Rights Act 2025 relevant to the Council's enforcement functions

The Council's enforcement responsibilities include both housing condition and tenancy related regulatory functions. All enforcement action will be taken in accordance with relevant statutory Codes of Practice, Council procedures, and official guidance. In exercising its functions, the Council will act in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010. All enforcement powers under the legislation referred to in this policy are exercised by officers authorised by the Council in accordance with its Constitution, scheme of delegation, and officer authorisation procedures.

6. Regulatory Principles

The Council fulfils its regulatory role through a combination of proactive inspection, intelligence-led investigation, reactive complaint response and multi-agency working. The Council may investigate: -

- The physical condition of residential accommodation
- Management of the residential accommodation/mobile home site
- The conduct of landlords, agents and other relevant persons
- Compliance with relevant legislation.

In order to secure compliance, the Council may use the full range of statutory powers where available, necessary and proportionate to protect occupants and improve housing conditions. In carrying out its regulatory functions, the Council will act in accordance with the following principles of good regulation: -

- **Proportionate** – Enforcement action will reflect the seriousness of the breach and the risks posed to occupants.
- **Targeted** – Resources will be directed towards the most serious housing hazards, the highest risks to health and safety, and the most serious or repeated breaches of landlord obligations.
- **Consistent** – Similar cases will be treated in a consistent manner, while recognising the specific circumstances of each case.
- **Transparent** – Landlords, tenants and property owners will be provided with clear information about legal requirements and enforcement decisions.
- **Accountable** – Officers will explain enforcement decisions and provide information on rights of appeal and complaint procedures.

Advice, guidance and engagement may be used where appropriate and likely to be effective, but nothing in this policy requires the Council to take informal action before exercising formal enforcement powers.

7. Prioritisation and Use of Discretion

The Council has a duty to regulate housing conditions and tenancy practices across the District; however, it is not required to investigate every potential breach. Enforcement activity will be prioritised based on: -

- The level of risk to health or safety
- Evidence of non-compliance
- The potential harm to occupants or the wider community.

Nothing in this policy creates a duty on the Council to take enforcement action in any particular case, nor does it confer a right on any person to require the Council to investigate or act. The Council retains discretion to determine whether to investigate and whether to exercise any of its statutory powers, having regard to the available evidence, the relevant legal framework, and the professional judgement of authorised officers.

The Council may only exercise enforcement powers in respect of properties located within its district, unless another Local Housing Authority has formally delegated functions to Bromsgrove District Council. Where a landlord or business is subject to a Primary Authority partnership, the Council will have regard to the applicable Primary Authority and its advice in accordance with statutory requirements. For the purposes of this policy, a *Primary Authority partnership* is an arrangement under Part 2 of the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008 under which a business receives assured advice from a nominated enforcing authority.

The Council may have regard to patterns of conduct across a landlord's property portfolio, including evidence of repeated breaches, systemic non-compliance or failure to respond to previous enforcement action. This may include reviewing enforcement history, regulatory datasets, licensing records, housing benefit, council tax or information lawfully shared by partner agencies.

Where a complaint has been investigated and inspected and an authorised officer is satisfied, that no actionable hazard or breach of housing legislation exists, the case will be closed with no further action. The Council is not required to carry out repeated inspections where issues have already been assessed and no breach identified. The local authority will not normally undertake further investigation unless new evidence or materially changed circumstances are presented. The Council retains discretion to determine whether further investigation is appropriate in any individual case.

Where landlords or property owners fail to meet their legal responsibilities, or where housing conditions or tenancy practices present a risk to the health or safety of occupiers, the Council will take proportionate enforcement action. The Council

recognises that poor housing conditions and unsafe tenancy practices can have a disproportionate impact on vulnerable residents and will prioritise enforcement action where serious hazards affect those at greatest risk. In deciding whether, when, and how to pursue enforcement and recovery action, the Council will have regard to any known vulnerability, health needs or welfare concerns, while ensuring that legal requirements are enforced and unlawful conduct is not left unaddressed.

In exercising its discretion, the Council may have regard not only to the underlying breach, but also to a person's conduct following enforcement action, including any failure to engage, delay, or comply with requirements such as the payment of civil financial penalties.

8. Initial Complaints and Informal Resolution

The Council will normally expect that, where appropriate and safe to do so, tenants will first raise concerns regarding housing conditions with their landlord or managing agent. Landlords are expected to take reasonable steps to investigate and address reported issues within a reasonable timeframe. The Council may take this into account when determining whether to intervene; however, this will not prevent the Council from taking immediate action where: -

- there is a serious risk to health or safety;
- there is evidence of harassment, illegal eviction or retaliatory action;
- the occupier is vulnerable; or
- there is clear evidence of non-compliance.

Nothing in this section limits the Council's discretion to take formal enforcement action at any stage where it considers it necessary and proportionate.

9. Investigatory powers and powers of entry

In addition to the Council's informal and formal powers of enforcement, there are investigatory powers relating to the collection of information and relating to the entry of premises. Investigatory powers will only be exercised where it is necessary and proportionate to do so for the purposes of enforcing housing legislation and in accordance with statutory safeguards. For the purposes of this section, *rented accommodation legislation* means: -

- Sections 1 and 1A of the Protection from Eviction Act 1977;
- Chapter 1 of Part 1 of the Housing Act 1988;
- Parts 1 to 4 and 7 of the Housing Act 2004 ;
- Section 83(1) or 84(1) of the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013;
- Sections 21 to 23 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016;
- Chapter 3 of Part 1 and Part 2 of the Renters' Rights Act 2025.

9.1 Power to Investigate

Section 114 Renters Rights Act 2025 gives the Council power to issue a notice to a relevant person to require that person to provide specified information to the Council. This notice may be given to any person with an estate or interest in the land, the licensor, their agents, or a marketer of a property. It may be served for the investigation relating to the rented accommodation legislation.

Failure to comply with section 114 notice is an offence under section 131 Renters Rights Act 2025, as is being obstructive and intentionally or recklessly making false or misleading statements in response to a section 113 notice. Section 115 Renters Rights Act 2025 permits the Council when it reasonably suspects a breach of the rented accommodation legislation to issue a notice to any person requiring them to provide the information specified. This may only be done to investigate whether a breach has occurred under rented accommodation legislation, or to determine the amount of a penalty.

Where an individual has not complied with a section 115 notice, section 116 Renters Rights Act 2025 enables the Council to make an application to the Court to enforce the provisions of the notice and seek reimbursement for the costs of the application. Section 131 Renters Rights Act provides that, in addition to the offence of non-compliance with a Section 114 notice, it is an offence for an individual to obstruct a Council officer seeking to exercise their powers without reasonable excuse. It is also an offence to fail to give an officer any additional assistance or information which they reasonably require without reasonable excuse.

Section 235 Housing Act 2004 allows the Council to issue a notice to relevant individuals, including occupiers, directing them to provide specified documents under their control for the purpose of investigating whether an offence has been committed under Parts 1 to 4 of the Housing Act 2004 or exercising the Council's functions under Parts 1 to 4 of the Housing Act 2004.

Section 16 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 also permits the Council to issue a notice to an occupier, manager, or individual with an interest in the land to compel them to provide the Council with information on the nature of their interest and the names and addresses of current occupiers and of any others with an interest in the land.

Where relevant to the Council's housing enforcement functions, investigatory powers may also be exercised under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 for the purposes of investigating statutory nuisances or pest-related conditions affecting residential premises.

10. Decision Making Framework

The Council adopts a structured and proportionate approach to decision-making in all enforcement cases. The purpose of this framework is to ensure that enforcement action is consistent, transparent, evidence-based and proportionate to the risk posed. Enforcement decisions will be informed by a range of factors including: -

- The seriousness of the breach
- The level of risk or harm to occupants or the wider community
- The vulnerability of those affected
- The conduct, culpability and compliance history of the landlord or responsible person
- The likelihood of achieving compliance through different forms of intervention.

To support consistency in decision-making, the Council applies a structured escalation approach which reflects the severity of the case.

Band 1 – Informal Resolution

Cases involving minor deficiencies or low risk where there is no immediate threat to health or safety. Action is likely to include advice, guidance, or informal engagement.

Band 2 – Non-Punitive Formal Action

Cases where there is evidence of non-compliance but the risk remains moderate and can be addressed without punitive action. Action may include formal notices, licence conditions, or other regulatory interventions designed to secure compliance.

Band 3 – Formal Enforcement

More serious cases involving significant non-compliance, elevated risk, or failure to respond to previous interventions. Action may include civil financial penalties, formal investigations, or other enforcement measures.

Band 4 – Serious / High Harm Cases

The most serious cases involving significant harm, deliberate or reckless conduct, or repeated non-compliance. Action is likely to include prosecution, banning order applications, or the imposition of substantial financial penalties.

The bands are intended to guide and support officer decision-making. Each case will be considered on its individual merits, and authorised officers retain discretion to depart from this framework where justified, provided that the reasons for doing so are properly recorded.

Recording of Decisions

All enforcement decisions will be documented in accordance with the Council's procedures and governance arrangements. Records will include the evidence relied upon, the options considered, and the reasons for the decision taken. Where

prosecution or other formal legal action is proposed, cases will be reviewed in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors and, where required, in consultation with Legal Services.

Records will, where appropriate, include: -

- the nature of the breach or hazard identified
- the evidence relied upon
- the relevant legislative provisions
- the enforcement options considered
- the reasons for selecting the chosen course of action
- consideration of proportionality, vulnerability and public interest
- details of officer authorisation and, where required, legal advice

This ensures transparency, consistency and that decisions are capable of withstanding challenge through appeal, complaint or legal proceedings.

11. Entry to Premises

Section 118 Renters Rights Act 2025 permits Council officers to enter business premises of relevant people (including landlords, letting agents, and marketers) if it is necessary for the production or seizure of documents under section 122-123 Renters Rights Act 2025. This power will be exercised without a warrant.

Section 121 Renters Rights Act 2025 allows an authorised Council officer named in a warrant to enter premises used for a rental sector business which is not mainly accommodation if there are documents on the premises which the officer could require under section 122 or seize under section 123. In addition, for this power to be exercised, one of the following conditions must be met: -

- That access to the premises has been or is likely to be refused, and the Council has provided notice of their intention to apply for a warrant to the occupier
- Those documents on the premises would likely be concealed or interfered with if notice of entry were to be given
- That no occupier is present, and waiting for their return might defeat the purpose of the entry

Following a section 118 or section 121 Renters Rights Act 2025 entry, section 122 allows an officer at any reasonable time to require a relevant person on the premises to produce any documents relating to the business and to take copies of them. This may only be exercised to ascertain whether there has been a breach of the rented accommodation legislation where an officer reasonably suspects there has been a breach or an offence; or to ascertain whether the documents may be required in evidence for proceedings regarding a breach or offence.

Following a section 118 or section 121 Renters Rights Act 2025 entry, section 123 authorises Council officers to seize and detain documents that the officer reasonably suspects may be required as evidence in proceedings relating to a breach of, or an offence under, the rented accommodation legislation. When doing so, the officer will provide evidence of the officer's identity and authority if reasonably practicable. The officer will take reasonable steps to inform the person from whom documents have been seized that they have been seized and will provide that person with a written record of what has been taken. Documents seized will be retained only for as long as reasonably necessary for the purposes of the investigation or any related proceedings and will be returned as soon as practicable thereafter, unless lawfully retained.

Section 126 Renters Rights Act 2025 permits the Council to enter residential premises used for a tenancy at a reasonable time if the officer considers it necessary as part of an investigation into potential offences specified in subsection 1(b). Where required, the Council will give at least 24 hours' notice of this to the occupier and individuals with an interest in the property as per subsection 1(c), detailing in writing why the entry is necessary and the suspected offences. Where there are occupiers found on the premises, the officer will provide evidence of the officer's identity and authority to at least one of the occupiers if reasonably practicable.

In addition, section 239 Housing Act 2004 permits Council officers to enter, if necessary and at a reasonable time, a property to carry out a survey or examination. This may be done if any one of the following is met: -

- to determine if any Part 1-4 enforcement functions should be exercised
- the premises are part of an Improvement Notice or Prohibition Order
- a management order is in force under Chapter 1 or 2 of Part 4 on the premises

In certain circumstances the Council may obtain a warrant to enter by force, if necessary, under section 240 Housing Act 2004.

11.2 Other Statutory Powers of Entry

In addition to the investigatory powers contained within the Renters Rights Act 2025 and the Housing Act 2004, the Council has powers under a range of other primary legislation to enter premises, obtain information and carry out inspections for the purposes of enforcing housing, public health and related regulatory requirements.

Under section 81 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and associated provisions of that Act, the Council has powers of entry for the purposes of investigating and dealing with statutory nuisances, including conditions that may be prejudicial to health or constitute a nuisance. Council officers may enter premises at reasonable times to

investigate complaints, carry out inspections, assess conditions, take measurements or gather evidence for the purposes of determining whether a statutory nuisance exists or for taking enforcement action under the Act. Where required by the legislation, advance notice will be given. Where entry is refused or otherwise obstructed, the Council may apply to the court for a warrant authorising entry.

Under the section 4 of the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 and associated provisions of that Act, the Council has powers to enter land or premises for the purpose of inspecting for, preventing or dealing with infestations of rats or mice. These powers may be exercised to establish whether treatment or works are required, to monitor compliance with statutory notices, or to carry out works in default where appropriate. Entry will normally be at reasonable times and in accordance with the procedural requirements of the Act.

Under section 95 of the Building Act 1984, the Council may exercise powers of entry for the purpose of carrying out functions under the Act, subject to the statutory requirements relating to notice and warrants. These powers may be used in connection with those building-related functions and delegations exercised by the Council, such as inspections relating to drainage, defective buildings or dangerous land. Where necessary and permitted by law, the Council may apply to the court for a warrant authorising entry, including entry by force.

The Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and the Mobile Homes Act 2013 operate together to regulate residential caravan and mobile home sites. The Mobile Homes Act 2013 strengthens the site licensing and enforcement regime under the 1960 Act, including compliance notices, emergency action and works in default.

Under section 26 of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960, authorised Council officers have powers to enter land used as a caravan site, including licensed residential caravan sites, at reasonable times and on production of authority if required. Entry may be exercised for the purposes of inspecting sites, assessing compliance with site licence conditions, investigating potential contraventions and taking enforcement action where permitted. Where required by law, at least 24 hours' notice of entry will be given to the occupier. Where entry is refused, anticipated to be refused, or where giving notice would defeat the purpose of entry, the Council may apply to the court for a warrant authorising entry, including entry by force where permitted by statute.

In relation to empty or unoccupied residential premises, the Council may exercise powers of entry where authorised by relevant legislation and where inspections are necessary to assess risks to neighbouring properties or the wider community. Such entry may be undertaken, where statutory requirements are met, under provisions including the Housing Act 2004, the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Building

Act 1984, or the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982. These powers may be used, for example, to investigate potential housing hazards, statutory nuisances, dangerous conditions, or to secure unoccupied buildings where this is necessary in the interests of public safety.

Any powers of entry in relation to empty or unoccupied premises will be exercised in accordance with the specific procedural requirements of the relevant legislation, including notice and warrant provisions where applicable.

11.3 General Provisions

Where legislation requires notice to be given prior to entry, the Council will comply with those requirements. Where consent to enter is refused, or where entry is otherwise impracticable, the Council may apply to the court for a warrant authorising entry, including entry by force where permitted by law. All powers of entry will be exercised reasonably and proportionately, and in accordance with: -

- Relevant statutory provisions and safeguards
- Applicable Codes of Practice
- Council procedures and governance arrangements
- The Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.

Entry powers will be exercised only where necessary and proportionate for the purposes of enforcing relevant legislation and securing compliance.

12. Enforcement Action

The Council aims to support responsible landlords and property owners to raise and maintain housing standards. Landlords are expected to have an appropriate understanding of the legal requirements relating to the condition and management of privately rented accommodation and to take proactive steps to ensure compliance.

The Council will seek to secure compliance through advice, guidance and engagement wherever this is appropriate and likely to be effective. However, the Council is not required to take informal action before taking formal enforcement action and may proceed directly to formal measures where it considers this necessary and proportionate, having regard to the seriousness of the breach and the risk of harm.

In deciding the most appropriate course of action, officers will have regard to the circumstances of the case, the nature and extent of any breach, the degree of risk posed to occupiers or others, and the likelihood of achieving compliance within a reasonable timeframe.

12.1 Informal action

Informal enforcement action may include the provision of written or verbal advice, guidance, warnings, or requests for voluntary compliance. In some cases, a visit by authorised officers may be undertaken at the outset where an initial complaint, referral or other information indicates that an inspection or investigation is warranted.

Where officers visit a property, whether following a complaint, as part of a planned audit, or because of a landlord's failure to adequately resolve a reported issue informal action may be considered sufficient where only very minor deficiencies are identified and there is no immediate risk to health or safety. Where written advice is provided, this will normally specify the action required and include reasonable timescales for compliance.

While the Council will use its discretion on whether to take informal action in cases involving Category 2 hazards, it is not required to provide written or verbal advice before commencing formal enforcement action and may proceed directly to statutory measures where this is considered appropriate.

In relation to matters regulated under legislation other than the Housing Act 2004 and the Renters Rights Act 2025, the Council may also seek to secure compliance through informal enforcement action where it considers this appropriate. Informal engagement may be used where inspections or investigations identify minor deficiencies, low level breaches, or matters that do not present an immediate risk to health or safety.

12.2 Formal action

Formal enforcement action may be taken where informal action is ineffective, inappropriate, or insufficient to address risks to health, safety or the environment, or where the Council considers that informal engagement is unlikely to secure compliance. Formal enforcement action may be taken without prior informal action where, for example: -

- there are serious risks to health or safety
- there is deliberate, reckless or blatant non-compliance
- there is a history of previous breaches or failures to comply, or
- informal engagement is unlikely to achieve timely or effective compliance

The Council will therefore select the most appropriate enforcement tool having regard to the relevant legislation, the circumstances of the case, and the principle of proportionality.

The following sections describe the principal statutory enforcement powers available to the Council under specific legislative regimes. The choice of enforcement tool in any case will depend on the nature of the breach, the level of risk, the evidence available, and what is necessary and proportionate to secure compliance and protect occupants.

12.3 Enforcement

12.3.1 Housing Act 2004 Part 1

Where hazards are identified in a dwelling, the Council may exercise its powers under Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004. These powers include the service of the following notices and orders: -

- **Improvement Notice** – In respect of any Category 1 hazards and any Category 2 hazards. This requires the person to whom it is served to undertake the specified remedial action within a stated period. The mandated work and the timeframe will be determined by the Council depending on the nature and scale of the work.
- **Prohibition Order** - In respect of any Category 1 hazards and any Category 2 hazards on the property. This prevents occupation of whole or part of the property, or can be used to limit occupant numbers, within a specified time frame.
- **Hazard Awareness Notice** - In respect of any Category 1 hazards and any Category 2 hazards on the property. This makes the owner and occupiers aware of the hazards identified however, it does not require remedial action. As a result, and because it does not secure risk reducing works within a specified timeframe, a Hazard Awareness Notice will not usually be the most appropriate course of action where remedial works are necessary to reduce the risk of harm to occupiers or potential occupiers.
- **Emergency Prohibition Order** – To immediately prohibit the use of all or part of a dwelling where there is an imminent risk of serious harm to the health or safety of the occupants or others.
- **Emergency Remedial Action** - Where there is a Category 1 hazard present, section 40 of the Housing Act 2004 allows the Council to undertake Emergency Remedial Action on the Category 1 hazard without prior notice.
- **Suspended Improvement/Prohibition Order** - The Council also has the power to suspend action taken under Part 1 Housing Act 2004 in situations where it has the power or duty to take enforcement action. This will be at the Council's discretion and will normally be considered for the purpose of minimising inconvenience to the current occupiers.
- **Demolition and Clearance** - Where the statutory criteria are met, the Council may consider action under Parts 9 and 10 of the Housing Act 2004 in respect of

dwellings that are unfit for human habitation or areas containing multiple such dwellings.

Non Compliance with Housing Act 2004

- Failure to comply with an Improvement Notice under section 30, or a Prohibition Order under section 32, of the Housing Act 2004 is a criminal offence. The Council may consider prosecution or the imposition of a civil financial penalty, having regard to the circumstances of the case and statutory guidance.

Other formal notices served by the Council may not relate to the landlord undertaking remedial works but may cover a range of other matters including, but not limited to, exercising a right of entry under section 239 of the Housing Act 2004 and a request to provide information or the need to abate or avoid overcrowding.

12.3.2 Renters Rights Act 2025

The Council has specific statutory duties to enforce landlord obligations and tenant protection provisions introduced by the Renters Rights Act 2025. In exercising its functions under the Renters Rights Act 2025, the Council may investigate and take enforcement action in relation to breaches of the landlord legislation, including (but not limited to): -

- Failures to comply with prescribed tenancy requirements
- Unlawful eviction and harassment offences
- Attempts to end tenancies otherwise than in accordance with the prescribed statutory process
- Misuse or abuse of possession grounds
- Failures to provide required information to tenants
- Breaches of restrictions on reletting, remarketing or rent practices
- Unlawful discrimination against prospective tenants in breach of the Renters Rights Act 2025. The Council recognises that other forms of discrimination in the letting process may arise under separate legislative frameworks. These are addressed elsewhere in this policy.

Enforcement action under the Renters Rights Act 2025 may include the service of statutory Notices, the requirement to provide information, the imposition of civil financial penalties, prosecution, applications for rent repayment orders, or other regulatory action permitted by law. Enforcement under the Renters' Rights Act 2025 is primarily offence-based and may be addressed through civil penalties, prosecution and other statutory remedies rather than through prescriptive notice regimes.

In determining the most appropriate enforcement response, the Council will have regard to the circumstances of the case, including the seriousness of the breach, the

impact on the tenant, any evidence of deliberate, reckless or repeated non-compliance, and the need to protect tenants from unfair or unlawful practices.

12.3.3 Right to Rent Avoidance of Discrimination

The Council recognises the requirements placed on landlords under the Immigration Act 2014 and associated secondary legislation in relation to Right to Rent checks. Section 23 of the Act provides for a Code of Practice issued by the Home Office to ensure that such checks are carried out without unlawful discrimination.

Enforcement of immigration legislation does not fall within the remit of the Council's Private Sector Housing functions. However, the Council recognises that discriminatory letting practices may impact access to accommodation and contribute to housing need. Where such practices are identified, the Council may: -

- provide advice and guidance to landlords on lawful letting practices
- signpost to relevant statutory codes of practice
- consider whether wider housing enforcement powers are engaged
- work with partner agencies where appropriate.

12.4 Other Housing and Public Health and Environmental Legislation

12.4.1 Environmental Protection Act 1990

Under the Section 79 to 80 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Council has powers to take enforcement action in relation to statutory nuisances, including conditions that are prejudicial to health or constitute a nuisance.

Where a statutory nuisance is identified, or is likely to occur, the Council may serve an Abatement Notice requiring the nuisance to be discontinued, restricted or prevented, or requiring works to be carried out. Failure to comply with an Abatement Notice is a criminal offence and may result in prosecution or further enforcement action, including works in default where appropriate.

12.4.2 Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949

Under section 4 of the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949, the Council has powers to require owners or occupiers of land or premises to take steps to prevent or eradicate infestations of rats or mice.

Enforcement action may include the service of statutory notices requiring treatment or works to be carried out, monitoring compliance, and the carrying out of works in default where necessary. Failure to comply with a notice may lead to prosecution and/or the recovery of costs incurred by the Council.

12.4.3 Building Act 1984

Under the Building Act 1984, the Council may take enforcement action in connection with those building-related functions delegated to it under the Act, where statutory conditions are met. This may include action in respect of buildings or land presenting risks to persons or property, or where works are required to address defective conditions within the Council's remit.

Formal enforcement action may include the service of statutory notices requiring remedial works to be carried out, the taking of emergency action where there is an imminent risk of serious harm, or the carrying out of works in default, in accordance with the provisions of the Act. Any enforcement action will be taken only where authorised by law and where other regulatory powers are not more appropriate.

12.4.4 Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 & Mobile Homes Act 2013

In relation to licensed residential caravan sites and protected mobile home sites, the Council has enforcement powers under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and the Mobile Homes Act 2013.

Formal enforcement action may be taken where a site is operating without a licence, site licence conditions are not complied with, where site management standards are deficient, or where offences are identified. Enforcement action may include the service of statutory or compliance notices, emergency action where permitted, the carrying out of works in default, and the prosecution of offences in accordance with the relevant legislation.

12.4.5 Empty Properties

The Council will take a proactive and risk-based approach to the identification and management of empty private residential properties, recognising the impact that long-term vacant dwellings can have on housing supply, neighbourhood amenity and community wellbeing.

Where empty or unoccupied properties give rise to housing hazards, statutory nuisances, anti-social behaviour or other breaches of housing-related legislation, the Council may take proportionate enforcement action using the relevant statutory powers available to it.

The Council's approach to empty properties is supported by its adopted Empty Homes Strategy 2026, which sets out the Council's wider objectives, priorities and non-statutory interventions for bringing empty homes back into use. This Enforcement

Policy provides the framework through which statutory enforcement and regulatory powers may be exercised, where appropriate, to support the delivery of those objectives.

The Council will seek, in the first instance, to work with owners to bring empty properties back into use through advice, engagement and voluntary measures. However, where voluntary action is not achieved, the Council may consider proportionate enforcement action in accordance with this policy and the relevant statutory framework.

Enforcement options may include: -

- service of statutory notices to address housing hazards, statutory nuisances, waste accumulation or defective conditions;
- action to secure properties where they present a risk to public safety;
- carrying out works in default where required works are not undertaken;
- recovery of costs incurred by the Council, including through local land charges; and
- consideration of enforced sale procedures where debts are secured against a property.
- Consideration of compulsory purchase orders

Where statutory criteria are met, the Council may also consider the use of Interim or Final Empty Dwelling Management Orders under Part 4 of the Housing Act 2004, or compulsory purchase powers, in accordance with adopted policies, corporate governance arrangements and decision-making procedures. The Council will prioritise long-term empty properties that have a significant adverse effect on the local community and may adopt a coordinated approach involving internal services and external partners to support their return to occupation.

12.4.6 Electrical safety / smoke and carbon monoxide / energy efficiency

The Council may take enforcement action to secure compliance with statutory private rented sector safety and energy efficiency requirements. This includes duties relating to electrical safety standards, smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, and minimum energy efficiency standards.

In relation to energy efficiency, the Council enforces the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards under the *Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 (as amended)*. Where landlords fail to comply with the prescribed minimum energy efficiency standard or other regulatory requirements, the Council may take enforcement action, which may include the service of compliance notices, the requirement to provide information, and the imposition of civil financial penalties.

Enforcement of electrical safety requirements and smoke and carbon monoxide alarm standards may also include the service of statutory notices and the imposition of civil financial penalties in accordance with the relevant regulations. Further detail on the Council's approach, including statutory statements of principles for determining penalties, is set out in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3.

12.4.7 HMO licensing and management

The Council may take enforcement action to secure compliance with Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing requirements, licence conditions and management standards, including the imposition of civil financial penalties or prosecution where appropriate. Enforcement action may include the service and enforcement of licence conditions and requirements imposed under the Housing Act 2004 and associated Management Regulations.

HMO licences may include conditions requiring works to be carried out or measures to be taken to meet prescribed standards, including compliance with the Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations. In general, the Council will seek to address Category 1 and Category 2 hazards through the exercise of its powers under Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004. This does not prevent the Council from imposing licence conditions relating to the provision, installation or maintenance of facilities or equipment, even where similar outcomes could be achieved through Part 1 enforcement.

Failure to comply with HMO licence conditions or management requirements is a criminal offence and may result in prosecution or the imposition of a civil financial penalty, having regard to the circumstances of the case and relevant statutory guidance.

The Council has adopted local amenity standards for HMOs, published as "Amenity Standards", which set out minimum requirements for facilities and space. Compliance with these standards forms a condition of all HMO licences issued within the District.

12.4.8 Illegal eviction and harassment

The Council will investigate and take enforcement action in relation to illegal eviction and harassment offences, including offences under the Protection from Eviction Act 1977 and related tenant-protection provisions. Such action will be taken in accordance with the applicable evidential tests and public interest considerations.

Enforcement action may include the imposition of civil financial penalties, prosecution, or other regulatory action permitted by law, including enforcement of relevant duties and offences introduced by the Renters' Rights Act 2025. In determining the

appropriate response, the Council will have regard to the seriousness of the conduct, the impact on the occupier, and the need to protect tenants from unlawful interference with their occupation of residential premises.

12.4.9 Traveller Incursions on Local Authority Land

This section sets out the Council's approach to unauthorised encampments on land it owns or manages. In dealing with unauthorised encampments, the Council is acting primarily in its capacity as a landowner rather than as a housing regulator.

Where an unauthorised encampment occurs on Bromsgrove District Council land, the Council will adopt a lawful, proportionate and case-specific approach. In determining the appropriate response, the Council will have regard to all relevant circumstances, including:

- the location, use and characteristics of the land occupied;
- any risks to health, safety or public amenity;
- the presence of children, elderly persons or individuals with health, welfare or support needs;
- any evidence of criminal activity, significant disruption or environmental harm; and
- the availability of alternative authorised sites or appropriate support.

The Council recognises the need to balance the rights and welfare of individuals occupying land without authorisation with the rights of the wider community and its responsibilities to protect public land, public safety and amenity. When considering any action in relation to unauthorised encampments, the Council will have due regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Where appropriate, and having considered all relevant circumstances, the Council may take enforcement action as a landowner. This may include, but is not limited to:

- seeking possession of land through civil proceedings;
- the service of notices or the taking of action under relevant housing, public health or environmental legislation where statutory criteria are met;
- the recovery of costs associated with enforcement or remediation, where lawful to do so; and
- working with the Police or other agencies where statutory thresholds for involvement are met.

Matters relating to unauthorised encampments will normally involve joint working with partner agencies, which may include the Police, Legal Services, Housing, Environmental Health, Public Health and safeguarding services. Where welfare needs

or safeguarding concerns are identified, the Council will ensure that appropriate enquiries are made and that relevant support services are engaged before, or alongside, any enforcement action.

The Council retains discretion as to whether, and how, enforcement action is taken in relation to unauthorised encampments. Nothing in this policy creates a duty on the Council to take enforcement action in any particular case, nor does it confer any right on any person to require the Council to act. Any action taken will be proportionate, justified and recorded, with decisions made by authorised officers in accordance with the Council's governance arrangements.

13. Work in default

Where legislation permits, the Council may carry out works in default where a person has failed to comply with the requirements of a statutory notice or with licence conditions, or where urgent action is required and the relevant statutory criteria are met. Works in default may be undertaken under a range of legislative regimes, including housing, public health, environmental and site licensing legislation.

The carrying out of works in default is an enforcement option available to the Council in addition to other action for non-compliance, such as prosecution or the imposition of civil financial penalties. The Council is under no duty to undertake works in default and will do so only where it considers this necessary, appropriate and proportionate to secure compliance or to remove or reduce risks to health, safety or amenity.

Where works in default are undertaken, the Council will seek to recover its reasonable costs in accordance with the relevant statutory provisions. This may include the application of local land charges or other lawful cost-recovery mechanisms.

Decisions to carry out works in default will be taken by authorised officers having regard to the circumstances of the case, the seriousness of the breach, the risk posed, the availability of alternative enforcement options, and the Council's governance and financial procedures.

14. Enforcement Outcomes for Non-Compliance

14.1 Prosecution

Prosecution is a formal enforcement option available to the Council in respect of criminal offences under housing and related legislation. Where legislation provides an alternative of a civil financial penalty, the Council will normally consider prosecution only in more serious cases.

Prosecution will normally be considered where one or more of the following circumstances apply: -

- A breach has resulted in serious harm or risk of serious harm to occupants or others
- There is evidence of deliberate, reckless or persistent non-compliance
- There have been repeated breaches or a history of non-compliance
- There has been a failure to comply with a statutory notice
- False or misleading information has been provided to the Council
- An individual has obstructed officers in the course of their duties
- The offence is of such seriousness that a financial penalty would not be an appropriate response
- It is necessary to act as a deterrent and protect the wider community

The decision to prosecute will be made having regard to the evidential sufficiency of the case and the public interest factors set out in the Code for Crown Prosecutors, issued by the Director of Public Prosecutions. In determining whether prosecution is appropriate, the Council will consider the seriousness of the offence, any evidence of deliberate or reckless conduct, the harm caused, and the deterrent effect of formal legal proceedings.

In circumstances where an offence has been committed by a corporate body, relevant legislation may permit enforcement action to be taken against company officers or, where applicable, company members, in addition to or instead of the corporate body itself. The Council will determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether enforcement action against individuals is appropriate, having regard to their level of responsibility and involvement in the offence. The Council may, where appropriate following conviction, consider the use of confiscation proceedings under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 to recover financial benefit obtained as a result of criminal conduct.

14.2 Civil Financial Penalties for specified offences

The Council may impose civil financial penalties where legislation provides an alternative to prosecution. Civil penalties will be imposed in accordance with statutory guidance and this policy.

If a landlord has committed multiple breaches or offences, a separate civil penalty can, and usually will, be imposed for each breach and offence. In each case, the level of any civil penalty imposed will be determined in accordance with this policy. If multiple landlords have committed the same breach or offence at the same property, a separate civil penalty can, and usually will, be imposed on each offender. In each case, the level of civil penalty imposed on each offender will be in accordance with this policy.

This section of the policy outlines the Council's methodology and mechanism for assessing and setting the level of a civil penalty at all stages where a civil penalty is

under consideration, including the preparation of a notice of intent, and where a final decision has been made to impose a civil penalty.

When applying the civil penalties matrix, interim calculations at individual stages may result in figures that exceed the statutory maximum. Where the final amount reached following application of all relevant steps exceeds the statutory maximum, the civil penalty will be reduced to the applicable statutory maximum.

The Council considers the need for transparency and consistency to be of primary importance to ensure fairness in the discharge of its functions. The general objective of this policy is, therefore, to promote both transparency and consistency in the imposition of financial penalties so that those involved in the letting or management of accommodation

- (a) know how the Council will generally penalise relevant breaches and offences and;
- (b) are assured that, generally, like cases will be penalised similarly, and different cases penalised differently.

The Council recognises that, despite its best efforts, landlords may operate unlawfully for a significant period without detection, and that only a proportion of those committing relevant breaches and offences will be identified. Accordingly, the Council seeks to ensure that civil penalties are set at a level that makes it clear to the landlord concerned and to others that operating unlawfully as a landlord is financially disadvantageous when compared to operating lawfully.

The Council has a duty to act fairly, transparently and consistently when assessing civil penalties. To maintain fairness between all landlords, the Council will not give weight to claims advanced as factors that might reduce the amount of a civil penalty unless those claims are supported by evidence that the Council reasonably considers to be relevant, reliable, credible, and sufficient in scope and detail to enable proper assessment of the claim, having regard to the nature of the claim, the information ordinarily available to the landlord, and the need for consistent and fair decision-making. Allowing inadequately evidenced assertions to influence outcomes would risk rewarding those who provide incomplete or misleading information and would create an unfair advantage over landlords who provide a full and properly evidenced account.

Accordingly, the Council expects landlords against whom a civil penalty is being considered to provide all documents and records that would ordinarily exist if their account were accurate. Where such evidence is not provided, and no explanation that the Council considers adequate is given, the Council may draw an adverse inference.

Where claims are advanced without sufficient supporting evidence, the Council may request specified supporting material before determining whether to issue a final

notice or whether any mitigation has been sufficiently evidenced so as to justify a lower civil penalty. The Council has the power to impose a Civil Financial Penalty for the following: -

- Unlawful eviction and harassment of occupier as defined under the Protection from Eviction Act 1977
- Failure to comply with an Improvement Notice [s30 Housing Act 2004]
- Offences in relation to licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) [s72 Housing Act 2004]
- Offences in relation to the Selective Licensing of 'houses' [s95 Housing Act 2004]
- Failure to comply with an Overcrowding Notice [s139 Housing Act 2004]
- Failure to comply with a management regulation in respect of an HMO [s234 Housing Act 2004]
- Offences in relation to Regulation 3 of the Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020
- Failure to comply with a banning order [s21 Housing and Planning Act 2016]
- Failure to give a written statement of terms under section 16D of the Housing Act 1988
- Failure to give an existing tenant information about changes made by the Renters' Rights Act under paragraph 7(2) of schedule 6 to the Renters' Rights Act 2025
- Attempting to let a property for a fixed term under section 16E of the Housing Act 1988
- Attempting to end a tenancy orally or by service of a notice to quit under section 16E of the Housing Act 1988
- Serving an eviction notice that attempts to end a tenancy outside the prescribed section 8 process under section 16E of the Housing Act 1988
- Relying on a ground where the person does not reasonably believe that the landlord is/will be able to obtain possession under section 16E of the Housing Act 1988
- Relying on a ground knowing the landlord would not be able to obtain possession or being reckless as to whether they would under section 16J of the Housing Act 1988
- Failing to provide a tenant with prior notice that a ground which requires it may be used under section 16E of the Housing Act 1988
- Reletting or remarketing a property before expiry of the 12 month no-let period after using the moving and selling grounds under sections 16E and 16J of the Housing Act 1988
- Discriminating against prospective tenants during the letting process on the grounds that those tenants are in receipt of benefits or have children under sections 33 and 34 of the Renters Rights Act 2025

- Marketing a letting without stating the proposed rent under section 56 of the Renters Rights Act 2025
- Inviting or encouraging any person to offer to pay an amount of rent under the proposed letting that exceeds the stated rent under section 56 of the Renters Rights Act 2025
- Accepting an offer from any person to pay an amount of rent under the proposed letting that exceeds the stated rent under section 56 of the Renters Rights Act 2025

The Government has issued statutory guidance entitled “Civil penalties under the Renters' Rights Act 2025 and other housing legislation”. The Council has regard to this guidance in the exercise of their functions in respect of civil penalties. The Council has considered the following factors in developing this civil penalty policy to help ensure that the civil penalty is set at an appropriate level.

14.1 Persons Liable for Civil Penalties

Civil financial penalties may be imposed on any person who has committed a relevant breach or offence under the legislation outlined in this policy. In determining who is liable, the Council will consider the available evidence and identify the person or persons responsible for the breach or offence. Liability will be determined on a case-by-case basis and may include landlords, agents, licence holders, or other persons involved in the letting or management of residential accommodation. The following table provides a general guide to responsibility for common breaches and offences: -

Summary of Offence Responsibilities

| Breach or Offence | Person(s) Liable |
|---|---|
| Rent to Rent arrangements | Landlord and/or superior landlord |
| Illegal eviction and harassment | Any person who has committed the offence |
| Assured tenancy duties (Renters Rights Act 2025) | Landlord or person acting on their behalf |
| Discrimination in breach of the Renters Rights Act 2025 | Landlord or person acting on their behalf |
| Unlicensed HMOs | Person having control and/or person managing (section 263 Housing Act 2004) |
| Overcrowded HMOs | Person having control and/or person managing |
| Breach of HMO licence conditions | Licence holder |
| Breach of HMO Management Regulations | Person having control and/or person managing |
| Failure to comply with a statutory notice | Person on whom the notice was served |
| Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Regulations | Relevant landlord |

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Electrical Safety Regulations | Private landlord or registered provider |
|-------------------------------|---|

The table above is intended as a general guide only. The Council will determine liability based on the specific facts of each case. Where a breach or offence is committed by a body corporate, and it is shown to have been committed with the consent, participation or neglect of an officer of that body, the Council may impose a civil penalty on that individual as well as, or instead of, the corporate body.

Where more than one person is liable for the same breach or offence, the Council may impose a civil penalty on more than one person. The amount imposed on each person may differ depending on the circumstances of the case.

Once the Council has identified the appropriate person or persons against whom enforcement action should be taken, it will determine the level of any civil financial penalty in accordance with statutory guidance and this Policy. In doing so, the Council will have regard to a range of factors such as: -

- **Severity of the breach or offence.** The more serious the breach or offence, the higher the penalty should be.
- **Culpability and track record of the offender.** A higher penalty will be appropriate where the offender has a history of failing to comply with their obligations and/or their actions were deliberate and/or they knew, or ought to have known, that they were in breach of their legal responsibilities.
- **The harm caused to the tenant.** This is a very important factor when determining the level of penalty. The greater the actual harm or the potential for harm, principally to the tenant but also potentially the local community, the higher the penalty should be.
- **Punishment of the offender.** The penalty should, in a way that is fair, both punish the offender and demonstrate the consequences of not complying with their responsibilities.
- **Deter the offender from repeating breaches or offences.** The ultimate goal is to prevent any further offending and help ensure that the offender fully complies with all of their legal responsibilities in future. The level of the penalty should therefore be set at a level that it is likely to have a very significant deterrent effect.
- **Deter others from committing similar breaches or offences.** While the fact that someone has received a civil penalty may not be in the public domain, the civil penalty policy itself will be and local authorities should consider how their formal enforcement activity can be effectively publicised. An important part of deterrence is the realisation on the part of landlords that the local housing authority is proactive in levying civil penalties where the need to do so exists and the civil penalty will be set at a high enough level such that operating lawfully will be the sensible financial choice.

- **Remove any financial benefit the offender may have obtained as a result of committing the breach or offence.** The principle here is that it should not be in the offender's financial interest to commit a breach or offence rather than comply, for example that the penalty for breaching licensing conditions in respect of occupancy of a property is less than the additional rent received as a result of the over-crowding. The absence of any financial benefit to the landlord does not mean though that the penalty should be reduced.

The factors set out above will be applied through the Council's civil penalties matrix to determine an appropriate starting point and any subsequent adjustments to the level of the penalty. The matrix provide a structured framework to promote consistency, but does not remove the Council's discretion to depart from starting points where justified by the particular circumstances of a case, subject to statutory limits and guidance. Once the level of the civil financial penalty has been determined, the Council will apply the relevant statutory process for imposing the penalty.

14.2.1 Statutory requirements for Imposing Civil Penalties

The table below sets out the statutory requirements applicable to different civil penalty regimes. It is intended as a general guide only. The Council will ensure that all enforcement action is taken in accordance with the specific statutory provisions applicable to each case, including any requirements relating to notices, representations, appeals and publication.

| Legislation | Relevant Provision | Notice of Intent Required? | Publication / Transparency |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Housing and Planning Act 2016 | Civil penalties (including banning order breaches) | Yes – Notice of Intent must be served before imposing a civil penalty | Details may be recorded on the Rogue Landlord Database (where applicable) |
| Housing Act 2004 | Civil penalties under s.249A | Yes – Notice of Intent required before imposing a civil penalty | Publication at the Council's discretion and/or on relevant databases |
| Protection from Eviction Act 1977 | Illegal eviction and harassment (civil penalty alternative) | Yes – where a civil penalty is imposed instead of prosecution | Publication discretionary via Council reporting or enforcement transparency |
| Renters' Rights Act 2025 | Civil penalty provisions | Yes – Notice of Intent required | Publication may include national PRS database and Council |

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|--|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| | | | transparency reporting |
| Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 | Regulations 33–42 | No – Compliance Notice issued first | Publication on PRS Exemptions Register |
| Electrical Safety Standards Regulations 2020 | Regulations 3–11 | Yes – following Remedial Notice | Publication discretionary |
| Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm Regulations 2015 | Regulations 5–8 | No – Remedial Notice precedes penalty | Statement of Principles must be published |
| Consumer Rights Act 2015 | Letting agent transparency | Yes | No statutory publication requirement |

14.2.2 Civil Penalties Matrix

In determining the level of a civil penalty, officers will have regard to the matrix set out in Appendix 1 and the following sequential steps: -

1. Determining the starting point based on the seriousness of the breach or offence.
2. Adjustment for factors relating to the type of landlord; size and type of portfolio controlled, owned or managed; experience of the landlord (“Landlord Type”)
3. Mitigating and aggravating factors the Council deems significant including, but not limited to, factors relating to the track record and culpability of the landlord and the actual or potential harm to the occupants.
4. Financial considerations.
5. Applying the totality principle.

Where legislation requires the Council to publish a separate statement of principles for determining penalty charges, including the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015 (as amended) and the Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015, the offence-specific factors and starting points set out in the relevant appendix will apply in place of those in Appendix 1. In all other respects, the methodology set out in this policy, including landlord-type adjustments, financial consideration and the totality principle, will continue to apply.

Where a civil financial penalty is imposed in respect of an offence under section 234(3) of the Housing Act 2004 (failure to comply with HMO Management Regulations), or section 72(3) of the Housing Act 2004 (breach of licence conditions), the offence-specific duties, factors and starting points set out in Appendix 1 will apply. The Council will determine whether a separate civil penalty is appropriate for each

breached regulation or licence condition having regard to the facts of the case, statutory guidance, and the totality principle.

Starting point based of seriousness of the breach or offence

The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government has provided statutory guidance that prescribes starting points for all breaches and offences based on the seriousness of the breach or offence. Where the Council has determined its own starting points for specific offences, including breaches of licence conditions under sections 72(3) and 95(2) of the Housing Act 2004, these are set out in the relevant matrices appended to this policy.

Adjustment for factors relating to the type of landlord; size and type of portfolio controlled, owned or managed; experience of the landlord (“Landlord Type”)

While all landlords are expected to comply fully with their legal obligations, the Council considers that a higher standard of professionalism and regulatory awareness is reasonably expected of landlords who operate at greater scale, who have greater experience, or who are involved in more complex forms of letting. Where such landlords fail to comply with their obligations, this will ordinarily justify a higher civil penalty. In particular, a higher degree of professionalism is expected of landlords who:

- Control, own, or manage a significant portfolio of properties
- Have significant experience in the letting or management of property
- Are or have been involved in the letting or management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)
- Are corporate landlords, or
- Are or have been directors of corporate landlords

An upward adjustment of 20% of the applicable starting point will be applied where the landlord meets any one or more of the following criteria: -

- The landlord has, at any point in time, controlled, owned, or managed six or more properties. These properties need not have been held concurrently or at the time civil penalty proceedings are brought
- The landlord has, at any point in time, controlled, owned, or managed three or more properties that operated as HMOs, whether or not concurrently
- The landlord is, or has previously been, a director of a corporate landlord
- The landlord is a corporate landlord
- The landlord has, in the Council’s assessment and by reference to the available evidence, significant experience in the letting or management of property.

A downward adjustment of 20% of the applicable starting point will be applied only where all of the following criteria are met: -

- The landlord has, at any point in time, controlled, owned, or managed no more than two properties
- The landlord has controlled, owned, or managed no more than one property that has operated as an HMO, at any point in time
- The landlord has, in the Council's assessment and by reference to the available evidence, very limited experience in the letting or management of property

Mitigating and aggravating factors the Council deems significant including, but not limited to, factors relating to the track record and culpability of the landlord and the actual or potential harm to the occupants

To promote fairness and consistency in the administration of civil penalties, the Council will apply a structured and consistent framework when determining the extent to which mitigating and aggravating factors affect the quantum of any civil penalty.

14.2.2 General approach

Each breach or offence may have offence-specific mitigating and/or aggravating factors, which will be considered alongside the generic factors set out below. Where multiple civil penalties are issued under this policy against the same landlord at the same time, and except where expressly stated otherwise, mitigating and aggravating factors will be considered and applied separately to each civil penalty when determining the quantum of each penalty.

Mitigating factors

The Council may reduce the level of a civil penalty by up to 20% of the applicable starting point to reflect the presence of mitigating factors. Only in exceptional circumstances may the Council depart from the application of this policy in respect of mitigating factors and apply a reduction in excess of 20%. Exceptional circumstances are rare and unusual and are not established merely by the presence of multiple mitigating factors.

Within the framework of this policy, the Council has not sought to provide an exhaustive list of mitigating factors, recognising that a wide range of circumstances may potentially give rise to mitigation. However, the following generic mitigating factors will be considered in respect of each breach or offence: -

Steps taken to remedy the basis of the breach or offence

Non-exhaustive examples include: -

- Promptly remedying all elements of the breach or offence after receiving communication from the Council.

- Promptly remedying all the significant elements of the breach or offence leaving only less significant elements of the breach or offence.

A high level of cooperation

Non-exhaustive examples include:

- Proactive provision of significant information the Council reasonably considers relevant beyond that required by statutory notice.

Acceptance of liability

Non-exhaustive examples include: -

- Accepting liability before or within the period for representations.

Where a landlord relies on a reasonable excuse defence or otherwise contests liability, this mitigating factor will not usually apply.

Health circumstances

Non-exhaustive examples include:

- A serious health condition or medical incident experienced by the landlord during, or in the period immediately preceding, the breach or offence, where there is clear and reliable evidence that the condition had a direct and material impact on the landlord's ability to comply with the relevant legal obligation. Examples may include, but are not limited to, a heart attack, stroke, cancer diagnosis, or other acute or serious medical event causing significant incapacity or impairment.

Diminished culpability (limited responsibility)

Non-exhaustive examples include: -

- A joint landlord who has evidenced that compliance arrangements for the subject property were directed and controlled by another joint landlord, and not by them.
- A landlord who became involved only after an unforeseen change in circumstances (such as the death of the previous landlord) and who committed the breach or offence only for a limited period while putting their affairs in order.

The instruction of a managing or letting agent, or reliance on an agent's actions or omissions, will not of itself constitute diminished culpability.

Aggravating factors

The Council may increase the level of a civil penalty by up to 20% of the applicable starting point to reflect the presence of aggravating factors. Only in exceptional

circumstances may the Council depart from the application of this policy in respect of aggravating factors and apply an increase in excess of 20%. Exceptional circumstances are rare and unusual and are not established merely by the presence of multiple aggravating factors. The following generic aggravating factors will be considered in respect of each breach or offence: -

Previous history of non-compliance.

Non-exhaustive examples include: -

- Previous successful prosecutions (including relevant spent convictions), previous civil penalties, previous rent repayment orders, previous works in default, previous simple cautions.

Concurrent investigations or proceedings relating to other civil penalties, prosecutions, or rent repayment orders will not be treated as previous non-compliance.

Non-cooperation with the Council.

Non-exhaustive examples include: -

- Failure to comply with notices issued under section 16 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, section 235 of the Housing Act 2004, or section 114 of the Renters Rights Act 2025.
- Failing to provide a substantive response to a letter of alleged offence.
- Failing to attend previously agreed meetings.

Where the Council considers that steps have been taken to avoid payment or enforcement (including asset transfer, company dissolution, or re-structuring), this may be treated as an aggravating factor and pursued through appropriate legal routes. Where the Council has prosecuted, or is pursuing a prosecution, in respect of the same act or omission involving failure to provide legally required information (including failure to comply with a statutory notice), that conduct will not also be treated as an aggravating factor for the purposes of setting the civil penalty, in order to avoid double counting. Where multiple civil penalties are imposed against the same landlord at the same time, this aggravating factor will be applied only to the civil penalty with the highest starting point, unless there is a clear and reasoned basis for applying it differently.

Deliberate intent or negligence when committing the offence.

Non-exhaustive examples include: -

- Knowledge that the breach or offence was occurring.
- Continuation of offending after communication from the Council.
- Premeditation or planning, including steps taken to prevent detection or effective investigation.

- Providing false or misleading information to the Council.
- Applying pressure to occupants to deter cooperation with the Council.

The number of occupants affected.

Non-exhaustive examples include: -

- 3-5 occupants affected.

Duration of non-compliance.

Non-exhaustive examples include: -

- The offence or breach occurred over a 3–6 month period.

Vulnerability of occupants

Non-exhaustive examples include children and young adults, persons vulnerable by reason of age, disability or sensory impairment, persons with drug or alcohol dependency, victims of domestic abuse, children in care, persons with complex health needs, persons who do not speak English as a first language, victims of trafficking or sexual exploitation, refugees, asylum seekers, and pregnant women.

14.2.3 Financial considerations

The Council will review the quantum of the civil penalty and consider whether it is sufficient to act as an effective deterrent to future non-compliance. Where the Council has evidence that it considers to be sufficiently reliable regarding rental income and/or asset value from the landlord's, it may determine that an increase in the level of the penalty is appropriate in order to achieve effective deterrence. It is essential that, as an absolute minimum, landlords do not financially benefit from their offending behaviour.

Financial circumstances will ordinarily be considered after any written representations have been received and as part of the determination of any final notice. Where a landlord seeks to rely on a strained or limited financial position as a basis for reducing the level of a civil penalty, that position must be supported by appropriate and verifiable evidence sufficient to enable the Council to assess the landlord's financial position consistently, objectively, and transparently. A distinction will be drawn between evidenced financial hardship and deliberate or strategic non-payment. A claimed inability to pay will not prevent enforcement or recovery action where the Council is satisfied that non-payment is avoidable or part of a pattern of non-compliance.

Unsupported assertions, partial disclosure, or selective provision of information will not be given weight. At a minimum, and where such information exists, the following should be provided as part of any written representations: -

- The last three full tax years full self-assessment tax returns filed with HMRC, including all additional and supplemental pages
- The last three full tax years SA302 documents & tax year overviews
- The last three months payslips
- The last three years P60 certificates
- The last twelve months Universal Credit payment statements
- A list of all property assets owned or jointly owned (not limited to rental properties), together with corresponding Land Registry title documents
- A list of all property assets owned, or held on a long lease, by any corporate entity in which the landlord has a beneficial interest, together with corresponding Land Registry documentation
- The most recent annual mortgage statement for each property, or the last twelve months mortgage statements where the mortgage has been in place for less than twelve months
- Valuation statements for all ISAs held
- Statements from any cryptoasset exchange accounts showing balances and valuations
- A list of all shareholdings
- Recent bank statements for any account holding a balance in excess of £5,000
- Recent statements for all secured and unsecured loans
- Bankruptcy orders and official notifications of bankruptcy

Where the Council is not satisfied that it has been provided with sufficiently reliable, complete, and accurate information to assess the landlord's financial position, the Council may draw the inference that the landlord is able to pay the civil penalty as imposed.

A claimed inability to pay will not, of itself, outweigh the need to ensure effective deterrence or to remove any financial benefit obtained as a result of the breach or offence.

14.2.4 The Totality Principle

The Council will have regard to the totality principle to ensure that the overall outcome of its enforcement action is just and proportionate. In exceptional cases and having regard to the particular circumstances of the case, the Council may take account of totality at an earlier stage by deciding not to pursue a civil penalty in respect of a specific breach or offence where doing so would render the overall outcome disproportionate.

In general, however, the application of the totality principle will form the final step in the Council's decision-making process, undertaken after any written representations have been considered and before final notices are issued, once the level of each individual civil penalty has been assessed in accordance with this policy.

As a final step before issuing final notices, the Council will consider whether multiple civil penalties being imposed under this policy against the same landlord at the same time result in an aggregate amount that is just and proportionate. Where the Council concludes that the aggregate amount would not be just and proportionate, it will consider whether a proportionate reduction of the penalties is appropriate.

The totality principle does not operate across different legal persons who are separately liable in law, nor does it operate across civil penalties imposed at different times. In general, it applies only to multiple civil penalties imposed under this policy on the same person at the same time. Where, however, legislation provides that an officer of a body corporate, or a person concerned in its management, may be separately liable in relation to the same conduct as the body corporate, and that officer also holds a shareholding interest in the body corporate, the Council will, where civil penalties are imposed at the same time on both the body corporate and the officer arising from that same conduct, consider whether the combined outcome results in punitive duplication and is therefore not just and proportionate.

Where a reduction is applied under the totality principle, the Council will ordinarily do so by applying a uniform percentage reduction across all relevant civil penalties being issued at the same time, being those civil penalties that form part of the same totality assessment. Where, however, the application of the totality principle is required to address punitive duplication arising from a shared economic interest between a body corporate and an officer, the Council may apply a differential adjustment to ensure that the overall outcome is just and proportionate.

This approach reflects the statutory guidance on the application of the totality principle and is intended to promote consistency, transparency, and proportionality, while avoiding arbitrary or selective adjustment of individual penalties.

In accordance with the statutory guidance, any rent repayment orders made in respect of the same breach or offence will be disregarded for the purposes of assessing the totality of civil penalties under this policy.

14.2.5 Process for imposing a civil penalty and the right to make written representations

Notice of intent

Before imposing a civil penalty on a landlord, the Council will give the landlord a notice of intent. The notice of intent will set out: -

- The amount of the proposed civil penalty
- The reasons for proposing to impose the civil penalty
- Information about their right to make written representations

Right to make written representations

A landlord who is given a notice of intent may make written representations to the Council about the proposal to impose a civil penalty. Any representations must be made within a period of 28 days beginning with the day after the date on which the notice of intent was given.

Decision after the representations period

After the end of the period for representations the Council will: -

- Decide whether to impose a civil penalty on the landlord, and
- If it decides to impose a civil penalty, decide the amount of the penalty. This amount can be higher or lower than the amount stated in the notice of intent.

A landlord's rectification of the identified breach or offence during the representations period will rarely, of itself, lead the Council to conclude that the imposition of a civil penalty is inappropriate. However, compliance at that stage will usually be relevant to the assessment of mitigating factors that may reduce the level of any civil penalty imposed.

Similarly, an admission of liability will rarely, of itself, lead the Council to conclude that the imposition of a civil penalty is inappropriate. An admission of liability will, however, usually be relevant to the assessment of mitigating factors that may reduce the level of any civil penalty imposed.

Final notice

If, following the receipt of written representations and/or the expiry of the time period to make written representations, the Council decides to impose a civil penalty on the landlord, it will give the landlord a final notice imposing that penalty. The final notice will set out: -

- The amount of the civil penalty
- The reasons for imposing the penalty
- Information about how to pay the penalty
- Explain the consequences of non-payment and the Council's powers to recover unpaid civil financial penalties.

- The period for payment of the penalty
- Information about rights of appeal
- The consequences of failure to comply with the notice

Discount for prompt payment

Where a civil penalty imposed by a final notice is paid in full within the period specified in that notice (normally 28 days beginning with the day after the final notice is given), the Council will apply a discount of 15% to the amount of the civil penalty.

The availability of the discount is conditional upon full payment being received within the specified period. The discount period will not be extended or suspended by the bringing of an appeal. A landlord who chooses to appeal may still benefit from the discount by paying the civil penalty in full within the specified period; however, where payment is not made within that period, the discount will not apply. The application of any prompt payment discount will be subject to internal approval and financial governance procedures.

Illustrative example of the application of the discount

The landlord of an HMO property fails to obtain a licence. They only operate two HMO properties and there are no other relevant factors or aggravating features. The starting point for the offence under the Council's civil penalties matrix is £17,000.

Following the issue of a notice of intent proposing a civil penalty of £17,000, the landlord makes written representations. Having considered those representations, the Council determines to impose a civil penalty of £16,000, as set out in the final notice. If the landlord pays the civil penalty in full within the payment period specified in the final notice, a 15% prompt payment discount is applied, resulting in a discounted payment of £13,600.

Appeals

Where an appeal is brought, the final notice is suspended in accordance with legislation. Where no appeal is brought, payment remains due in accordance with the final notice and recovery action may commence after the payment period expires.

A landlord who is given a final notice may appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Property Chamber) against the decision to impose a civil penalty and/or the amount of the civil penalty. Any appeal must be made within 28 days beginning with the day after the date on which the final notice was given. Where an appeal is brought, the final notice is suspended until the appeal is finally determined or withdrawn.

An appeal to the First-tier Tribunal is by way of a re-hearing of the Council's decision. In determining an appeal, the Tribunal may have regard to matters of which the Council

was unaware at the time the decision to impose the civil penalty was made. The Tribunal may dismiss an appeal if it is satisfied that the appeal is frivolous, vexatious, an abuse of process, or has no reasonable prospect of success.

The First-tier Tribunal may invite the parties to consider mediation or another form of alternative dispute resolution. The Council will not generally agree to mediation in relation to the level of a civil penalty, as civil penalties are determined by reference to this Policy to promote fair, consistent, and proportionate outcomes. Agreeing reductions outside the Policy framework would risk undermining consistency and the Council's enforcement objectives.

On determination of an appeal, the Tribunal may: -

- Confirm the civil penalty
- Vary the amount of the civil penalty (whether by increase or reduction)
- Cancel the civil penalty

Where the Tribunal varies a civil penalty by increasing its amount, it may do so only up to the applicable statutory maximum for the relevant breach or offence (£7,000 or £40,000, as applicable). A party to the appeal may apply for permission to appeal the decision of the First-tier Tribunal to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber).

14.3 Rent Repayment Orders

Part 2 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 permits the Council to seek a Rent Repayment Order at the First Tier Tribunal Property Chamber to require the landlord of the property where the offence(s) has been committed to refund rent to the tenants or the Council. S48 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 places a duty on the Council to consider applying for Rent Repayment Orders.

Where a landlord has been convicted or received a Civil Financial Penalty in respect of the offence, the Tribunal must award the maximum applicable amount, except in exceptional circumstances.

This power will be considered in response to all qualifying offences and where there is sufficient evidence for a successful application to the First Tier Tribunal. The qualifying offences are: -

- Unlawful eviction and harassment of occupier as defined under the Protection from Eviction Act 1997
- Failure to comply with an Improvement Notice [s30 Housing Act 2004]
- Offences in relation to unlicensed HMOs [s72(1) Housing Act 2004]
- Offences in relation to unlicensed houses [s95(1) Housing Act 2004]
- Failure to comply with an Improvement Notice [s30(1) Housing Act 2004]

- Failure to comply with a Prohibition Order [s32(1) Housing Act 2004]
- Breach of a Banning Order [s21 Housing and Planning Act 2016]
- Using Violence to secure entry [s6(1) Criminal Law Act 1977]
- Knowingly or recklessly misusing a possession ground [s16J(1) Housing Act 1988]
- Letting or marketing of a property within twelve months of using the 'moving in' or 'selling' ground of eviction [s16J(2) Housing Act 1988]
- Continuous breach of certain tenancy reform requirements [s16J(3) Housing Act 1988]

An application for an RRO may be in addition to other formal action, such as prosecution proceedings or the imposition of a Civil Penalty. Where the Council has issued a Civil Financial Penalty or pursued prosecution, it will usually apply for a Rent Repayment Order where public funds have been paid to a landlord who has committed a qualifying offence.

S49 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 enables the Council to assist tenants in applying for Rent Repayment Orders. The Council will usually assist tenants by referring or signposting them to a relevant organisation. An application for a Rent Repayment Order may be made in addition to, or alongside, other enforcement action where legislation permits.

14.4 Simple Cautions

A simple caution may be used as an alternative to prosecution in appropriate cases where: -

- there is sufficient evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction;
- the offender admits the offence; and
- the offender agrees to accept a caution.

Simple cautions will generally be considered where offences are less serious and where it is proportionate to do so, having regard to the circumstances of the case. A record of a simple caution may be taken into account in any future enforcement action. Where an offender declines to accept a simple caution, the Council will normally consider prosecution.

14.5 Banning Orders

Part 2, Chapter 2 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 permits a Council to apply for a Banning Order against a person who has been convicted of one or more of the relevant offences. This would prevent the landlord from:

- Letting housing in England
- Engaging in English letting agency work

- Engaging in English property management work
- Doing two or more of those things

The Council may consider a Banning Order for the more serious offenders. It will take into account the seriousness of the offence(s), whether the landlord has committed other offences (or received any Civil Penalty in relation to a Banning Order offence) and any history of failing to comply with their obligations or legal responsibilities. It will also take into account other relevant factors, including but not limited to: -

- The harm, or potential harm, caused to the tenant
- The need to punish the offender
- The need to deter the offender from repeating the offence
- The need to deter others from committing similar offences

Persistent non-compliance, including failure to pay civil financial penalties or comply with enforcement outcomes, may form part of the evidence considered when determining whether an application for a banning order is appropriate.

15. Costs and Charges

The Council incurs costs in carrying out its functions. Where legislation allows, the Council will seek to recover reasonable costs and expenses associated with its enforcement, licensing and wider regulatory activity. This may include (non-exhaustively) costs arising from inspections, investigation, evidence gathering, notices and other statutory documentation, follow-up action, compliance monitoring, and works or other interventions. Further detail on the recovery of unpaid civil financial penalties is set out at section 16 of this policy.

Recovery may be pursued using all available lawful routes, which may include civil action, local land charges, and enforcement against the property. Where permitted by legislation, interest may be applied to outstanding sums until paid.

16. Recovery of Unpaid Civil Financial Penalties

Where a civil financial penalty remains unpaid following the expiry of the period for payment specified in the final notice, and where no appeal is outstanding, the penalty may be recovered by the Council as a civil debt. The Council will actively pursue the recovery of unpaid civil financial penalties where it is lawful, proportionate and appropriate to do so. Recovery action is an important element of ensuring effective enforcement and maintaining public confidence in the Council's regulatory role.

The method of recovery pursued in any individual case will be determined having regard to the value of the debt, the conduct of the debtor, any history of non-payment

or non-compliance, vulnerability considerations, and what is reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances.

16.1 Ways to Enforce the Debt

Potential routes to recover an unpaid civil financial penalty include (but are not limited to): -

- **Warrant or writ of control**
This authorises court enforcement agents to take control of goods from the debtor's home or business to satisfy the judgment debt.
- **Attachment of earnings order**
This allows deductions to be made directly from the debtor's earnings by their employer and paid to the Council.
- **Third party debt order**
This enables money held in a debtor's bank or building society account to be frozen and paid to the Council to satisfy the debt.
- **Charging order**
This secures the debt against an asset (usually a property), preventing its sale without payment of the outstanding amount and potentially enabling the Council to seek an order for sale.
- **Bankruptcy proceedings**
This may be pursued where the statutory threshold is met (currently £5,000), enabling a trustee-in-bankruptcy to realise assets and distribute funds to creditors in accordance with insolvency law.

16.2 Costs and Interest

Where permitted by law, the Council may seek to recover reasonable court fees, enforcement costs, and associated expenses incurred in the recovery of unpaid civil financial penalties. Interest may also be applied to outstanding sums until paid.

16.3 Relationship to Wider Enforcement Action

Failure to pay a civil financial penalty may be regarded as evidence of ongoing non-compliance and may be taken into account in future enforcement decisions, including but not limited to decisions to prosecute, to impose further civil penalties, to refuse or revoke licences, or to consider banning order proceedings where the statutory criteria are met.

16.4 Governance and Write-Off

Any decision not to pursue, or to discontinue, recovery action will be taken in accordance with the Council's financial regulations and governance arrangements and

will be properly recorded with reasons. Decisions to pursue enforcement beyond initial recovery action, or to commence insolvency proceedings, will be taken or endorsed by a senior officer in accordance with the Council's scheme of delegation.

17. Joint Working and Information Sharing

The Council recognises that effective regulation of the private rented sector requires a coordinated and multi-agency approach. Many cases involve overlapping issues, including housing conditions, tenancy rights, safeguarding, financial exploitation, and criminal behaviour. The Private Sector Housing Team will work in partnership with a range of internal and external agencies to ensure that risks to tenants are identified at the earliest opportunity and addressed through appropriate and proportionate intervention. The Council may work jointly with other agencies including (this list is not exhaustive): -

- Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service
- Police
- Planning and Building Control
- Worcestershire Regulatory Services
- Trading Standards
- Home Office
- Worcestershire County Council

17.1 Internal Collaboration

The Council will work closely across internal services to ensure a joined-up approach to prevention and enforcement, including: -

- Housing Options and Homelessness Services - To support early intervention, prevent homelessness, and ensure effective case handover where enforcement action may be required.
- Legal Services - To support the use of formal enforcement powers, including civil penalties, prosecutions, and injunctions.
- Customer Services and Revenues and Benefits - To support intelligence gathering, identify vulnerable households, and ensure coordinated responses to tenant concerns.

17.2 External Partnership Working

The Council will work collaboratively with external partners to address risks within the private rented sector, including:

- Police - In relation to criminal matters such as unlawful eviction, harassment, violence, or organised criminal activity.
- Fire and Rescue Authority -To address fire safety risks, including Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), means of escape, and fire protection measures.
- Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) - In relation to environmental protection, statutory nuisance, public health, and wider regulatory functions.

- Trading Standards -In relation to unfair trading practices, letting agent regulation, and financial or consumer protection issues affecting tenants.

17.3 Letting Agents and Property Agent Regulation

The Council recognises that the regulation of letting agents and property managers forms an important part of protecting tenants within the private rented sector. The legislative framework includes the Consumer Rights Act 2015, the Tenant Fees Act 2019, and associated requirements relating to client money protection and redress schemes. Enforcement responsibilities in this area are shared across regulatory services. The Private Sector Housing Team will identify potential breaches through inspections, complaints, and casework, and will work collaboratively with Trading Standards and other partners to ensure appropriate enforcement action is taken.

17.4 Coordinated Enforcement Approach

The Council will adopt a coordinated and intelligence-led approach to enforcement, including:

- sharing information lawfully between partners
- undertaking joint inspections where appropriate
- coordinating enforcement action across agencies
- ensuring clear referral pathways between services
- prioritising cases involving vulnerable households or serious risk.

This approach ensures that enforcement action is effective, proportionate, and targeted at the most serious and high-risk cases.

17.5 Safeguarding and Vulnerability

The Council recognises that many cases involve vulnerable individuals or households at risk of harm. Officers will work with safeguarding partners and relevant agencies to ensure that appropriate support is provided alongside any enforcement action. Joint working arrangements applied in relation to unauthorised encampments are addressed in Section 9.4.9 of this policy.

18. Monitoring of Enforcement Activity

The Council will monitor the use of its housing enforcement powers to ensure enforcement activity is lawful, proportionate, consistent and effective. Information may be recorded and reviewed relating to:

- Inspections and investigations undertaken
- Statutory notices served
- Civil financial penalties issued
- Prosecutions and legal proceedings
- Works in default undertaken
- Rent repayment orders and banning orders pursued

- Enforcement activity undertaken under the Renters Rights Act 2025, including any statutory reporting requirements or Government data returns.
- Recovery action taken in respect of unpaid civil financial penalties, including outcomes and sums recovered.

This information will be used to: -

- Review enforcement practices
- Identify emerging risks within the private rented sector
- Inform future housing policy and regulatory activity
- Ensure consistency and fairness in enforcement decisions.

Summary information may be reported through internal governance processes or published, where appropriate and in accordance with transparency requirements. The Council may publish anonymised or summary information relating to enforcement activity, including civil penalties imposed and recovery outcomes, where lawful and appropriate.

19. Communication and Training

This Policy will be made publicly available and will be communicated to relevant stakeholders. The Council will: -

- ensure that authorised officers receive appropriate training in housing enforcement and relevant legislation;
- provide internal guidance, procedures and templates to support consistent application of this Policy; and
- engage with landlords, agents and partner organisations where appropriate to promote compliance and awareness of legal requirements.

20. Complaints

Contact may be made with the Council about any matters listed here by email at pshteam@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk or by post at: -Bromsgrove District Council, Parkside, Market Street, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, B61 8DA

A service user can still make a complaint in cases where the Council has instigated legal proceedings. However, making a complaint will not stop any impending legal action. Where statutory notices have been served, making a complaint does not replace the statutory rights of appeal or the right to make representations. It also does not allow extra time to comply with any notice or order. If a service user disagrees with a statutory notice, they should take action as specified in the notice or order to make an appeal, if any exists. Reference should be made to any notes that may accompany the notice or order for more detail.

21. Policy Review

This policy will normally be reviewed every five years, or sooner where there are significant legislative, regulatory or operational changes.

Version Control

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Appendix 1 – Civil Penalties Tables

1. Purpose of this Appendix

This appendix provides an indicative framework to support the Council in determining the level of civil penalty for relevant housing offences under:

- Housing Act 2004
- Housing Act 1988
- Protection from Eviction Act 1977
- Housing and Planning Act 2016
- Renters' Rights Act 2025
- Electrical Safety Regulations

This matrix must be applied alongside the main Enforcement Policy, including the Council's approach to:

- culpability
- harm
- proportionality
- deterrence

2. Landlord Adjustment (Applied Across All Offences)

The ranges within this table reflect indicative adjustments: -

- **Downward adjustment (up to -20%)** may apply where:
 - First offence
 - Small-scale landlord
 - Evidence of cooperation or engagement
- **Upward adjustment (up to +20%)** may apply where:
 - Portfolio or professional landlord
 - Previous enforcement history
 - Deliberate or reckless conduct

Officers must exercise discretion. The figures shown are indicative and must not be applied mechanically.

3. General Principles

- "No specific factors identified" means no additional factors beyond the Council's standard policy framework apply
- Where multiple offences arise, penalties may be considered individually or in combination
- Where offences are particularly serious, the Council may consider prosecution as an alternative to a civil penalty

Matrix Tables

1. Protection from Eviction Act 1977

| Offence | 1 st Offence/ starting point | 2 nd Offence (Statutory Maximum) | Landlord Type downward adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment | Offence-specific mitigating factors | Offence-specific aggravating factors: |
|---|--|---|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Unlawful eviction and harassment of occupier - section 1 of the Protection from Eviction Act 1977 | £35,000 | £40,000 | £28,000 | £42,000 | No specific factors identified. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violence or threats of violence. • Disposal of possessions or threats to dispose of possessions. • Breach or evasion of an injunction or undertaking. • Loss of home. |

2. Housing Act 1988 breaches and offences

| Offence | 1 st Offence/ starting point | 2 nd Offence (Statutory Maximum) | Landlord Type downward adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment | Offence-specific mitigating factors | Offence-specific aggravating factors: |
|---|--|---|--|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Failure to give a written statement of terms and any other prescribed information - section 16D of the Housing Act 1988 | £4,000 | £7,000 | £3,200 | £4,800 | Provision of some of the required terms and prescribed information within the required period. | No specific factors identified |
| Attempting to let a property for a fixed term - section 16E(1)(a) of the Housing Act 1988 | £4,000 | £7,000 | £3,200 | £4,800 | No specific factors identified. | No specific factors identified beyond the standard policy framework. |
| Attempting to end a tenancy by service of a notice to quit - section 16E(1)(b) of the Housing Act 1988 | £6,000 | £7,000 | £4,800 | £7,200 | No specific factors identified. | Tenant vacates property within four months of the date of vacation or equivalent specified in the notice to quit. |
| Attempting to end a tenancy orally or requiring that it is ended orally - section 16E(1)(c) of the Housing Act 1988 | £6,000 | £7,000 | £4,800 | £7,200 | No specific factors identified. | Tenant vacates property within four months of the date of vacation or equivalent specified in the notice to quit. |
| Serving a possession notice that attempts to end a tenancy outside the prescribed section 8 process - section 16E(1)(d) of the Housing Act 1988 | £6,000 | £7,000 | £4,800 | £7,200 | No specific factors identified | Tenant vacates property within four months of the date of vacation or equivalent specified in the notice to quit. |

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|---|---|---------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Relying on a ground where the person does not reasonably believe that the landlord is, will, or may be able to obtain possession on that ground and the tenant(s) surrendered the tenancy within the period of four months beginning with the date of the contravention, without an order for possession of the dwelling-house being made - section 16E(1)(e) of the Housing Act 1988 | £6,000 | £7,000 | £4,800 | £7,200 | No specific factors identified | No specific factors identified |
| Failing to provide a tenant with prior notice that a ground which requires it may be used - section 16E(1)(f) of the Housing Act 1988 | £3,000 | £7,000 | £2,400 | £3,600 | No specific factors identified. | No specific factors identified |
| Failure to give an existing tenant prescribed information about changes made by the Renters' Rights Act 2025 in the prescribed form and timeframe - paragraph 7(2) of schedule 6 to the Renters' Rights Act 2025 | £4,000 | £7,000 | £3,200 | £4,800 | Provision of some of the required prescribed information within the required period. Provision of prescribed information but not in the prescribed form. | No specific factors identified |
| Continuation of conduct subject to a relevant penalty (under s.16I or s.16K Housing Act 1988) after the 28-day period (or, if appealed, after conclusion of the appeal) where the final notice has not been withdrawn — section 16J(3) of the Housing Act 1988 | Double the starting level for the two constituent breaches added together | £40,000 | Dependent on the constituent breaches | Dependent on the constituent breaches | No specific factors identified. | No specific factors identified |
| Conduct giving rise to liability under s.16I, where within the preceding five years the person has either (i) had a relevant penalty (under s.16I or s.16K Housing Act 1988) imposed for different conduct and the final notice has not been withdrawn, or (ii) been convicted under s.16J for different conduct – section 16(J)(4) of the Housing Act 1988 | Double the starting level for the two constituent breaches added together | £40,000 | Dependent on the constituent breaches | Dependent on the constituent breaches | Dependent on the most recent conduct giving rise to liability to a civil penalty under section 16I of the Housing Act 1988. | Dependent on the most recent conduct giving rise to liability to a civil penalty under section 16I of the Housing Act 1988. |
| Relying on a ground where the person knows that the landlord would not be able to obtain an order for possession on that ground, or being reckless as to whether the landlord would be able to do so and the tenant(s) surrendered the tenancy within the period of four months beginning with the | £30,000 | £40,000 | £24,000 | £36,000 | No specific factors identified | No specific factors identified |

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|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| date the ground was relied on, without an order for possession of the dwelling-house being made – section 16J(1) of the Housing Act 1988 | | | | | | |
| Breach of restrictions relating to reletting (s16(E)(2) Housing Act 1988) or remarketing (s16(E)(3) Housing Act 1988) a property within restricted period after using Grounds 1 or 1A of Schedule 2 Housing Act 1988 - section 16J(2) of the Housing Act 1988 | £25,000 | £40,000 | £20,000 | £30,000 | No specific factors identified. | No specific factors identified. |

3. Renters Rights Act 2025

| Offence | 1 st Offence/ starting point | 2 nd Offence (Statutory Maximum) | Landlord Type downward adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment | Offence-specific mitigating factors | Offence-specific aggravating factors: |
|---|--|--|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Discrimination relating to children in the lettings process – section 33(1) of the Renters' Rights Act 2025 | £6,000 | £7,000 | £4,800 | £7,200 | No specific factors identified | No specific factors identified |
| Discrimination relating to benefits in the lettings process – section 34(1) of the Renters' Rights Act 2025 | £6,000 | £7,000 | £4,800 | £7,200 | No specific factors identified | No specific factors identified |
| Failure to specify proposed rent within a written advertisement or offer – section 56(2) of the Renters' Rights Act 2025 | £3,000 | £7,000 | £2,400 | £3,600 | No specific factors identified | No specific factors identified |
| Inviting, encouraging or accepting any offer of rent greater than the stated rate – section 56(3) of the Renters' Rights Act 2025 | £4,000 | £7,000 | £3,200 | £4,800 | No specific factors identified | No specific factors identified |

4. Housing and Planning Act 2016

| Offence | 1 st Offence/ starting point | 2 nd Offence (Statutory Maximum) | Landlord Type downward adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment | Offence-specific mitigating factors | Offence-specific aggravating factors: |
|--|--|--|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Breach of a banning order - section 21(1) of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 | £35,000 | £40,000 | £28,000 | £42,000 | A single, isolated incident | Concealment or evasion |

5. The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector and Social Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 breach of duties

| Offence | 1 st Offence/ starting point | 2 nd Offence (Statutory Maximum) | Landlord Type downward adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment | Offence-specific mitigating factors | Offence-specific aggravating factors: |
|---|---|---|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Failure to comply with The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector and Social Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 Regulation 3: (3)(b), (3)(d), (3)(e). Regulation 3D: (a), (b), (c), (f) | £5,000 | £40,000 | £4,000 | £6,000 | The report or record evidences that the electrical installations were compliant at all points. | The number or nature or severity of the issues observed on the report or record. |
| Failure to comply with The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector and Social Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 Regulation 3: (1)(a), (1)(b), (1)(c), (3)(a), (3)(c), (3)(ca), (5)(b), (5)(c). Regulation 3B: (1)(a), (1)(b), (1)(c). Regulation 3C: (1), (2)(a). Regulation 3D: (d), (e) | £12,500 | £40,000 | £10,000 | £15,000 | The report or record evidences that the electrical installations were compliant at all points. | The number or nature or severity of the issues observed on the report or record. |
| Failure to comply with The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector and Social Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 Regulation 3: (4), (5a), (6). Regulation 3E: (2)(b), (4) | £20,000 | £40,000 | £16,000 | £24,000 | No specific factors identified. | The number or nature or severity of the issues observed on the report or record. |

Page 178

6. Housing Act 2004 offences

| | 1 st Offence/ starting point | 2 nd Offence (Statutory Maximum) | Landlord Type downward adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment | Offence-specific mitigating factors | Offence-specific aggravating factors: |
|--|---|---|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Failure to comply with an improvement notice - section 30(1) of the Housing Act 2004 | £25,000 | £40,000 | £25,000 | £30,000 | The nature and extent of hazard(s) that are present once the deadline for compliance has passed. Whether the property is unoccupied once the deadline for compliance has passed. Access to the property was prevented by the actions or | The nature and extent of hazard(s) that are present once the deadline for compliance has passed. |

Agenda Item 9

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| | | | | | refusal of the occupant(s) and a landlord can evidence that they took steps to obtain access to the property for the purpose of carrying out the required works, but those steps fell short of establishing a reasonable excuse for non-compliance. | |
| Failure to comply with an overcrowding notice - section 139(7) of the Housing Act 2004 | £20,000 | £40,000 | £16,000 | £24,000 | No specific factors identified. | The level of overcrowding present. |
| Failure to obtain an HMO licence - section 72(1) of the Housing Act 2004 | £17,000 | £40,000 | £13,600 | £20,400 | No specific factors identified | The landlord has knowledge or experience of licensing requirements. The condition of the unlicensed property. |
| Knowingly permitting over-occupation of an HMO - section 72(2) of the Housing Act 2004 | £20,000 | £40,000 | £16,000 | £24,000 | There are suitable amenity and space provisions in the HMO. | The level of over-occupation present. |

Page 179

7. Failure to Comply with The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation [England] Regulations 2006 and The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Additional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2007 – section 234(3) of the Housing Act 2004

| | 1 st Offence/ starting point | 2 nd Offence (Statutory Maximum) | Landlord Type downward adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment | Offence-specific mitigating factors | Offence-specific aggravating factors: |
|--|---|---|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Duty of Manager to provide information to occupier | £3,000 | £40,000 | £2,400 | £3,600 | The nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation | The nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation The landlord has refused to provide any outstanding contact information more than 48 hours after it has been requested by an occupant or on behalf of an occupant. |

Agenda Item 9

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| Duty of manager to take safety measures | £20,000 | £40,000 | £16,000 | £24,000 | The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation | The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation |
| Duty of manager to maintain water supply and drainage | £10,000 | £40,000 | £8,000 | £12,000 | The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation | The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation |
| Duty of manager to supply and maintain gas and electricity | £12,000 | £40,000 | £9,600 | £14,400 | The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation | The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation |
| Duty of manager to maintain common parts, fixtures, fittings and appliances | £7,000 | £40,000 | £5,600 | £8,400 | The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation | The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation |
| Duty of manager to maintain living accommodation | £7,000 | £40,000 | £5,600 | £8,400 | The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation | The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation |
| Duty to provide waste disposal facilities | £7,000 | £40,000 | £5,600 | £8,400 | The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation | The nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation The lack of sufficient refuse and/or litter containers either inside and/or outside the property has been previously reported The refuse and/or litter that requires disposal includes hazardous materials |

8. Housing Act 2004 - Section 72(3) - Breach of licence conditions

| | 1 st Offence/ starting point | 2 nd Offence (Statutory Maximum) | Landlord Type downward adjustment | Landlord Type upward adjustment | Offence-specific mitigating factors | Offence-specific aggravating factors: |
|---|--|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|
| <p>Failure to comply with licence conditions related to: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage or the provision of information for tenants • Provision of written terms of occupancy for tenants • 21 • Procedures regarding complaints • Procedures regarding vetting of incoming tenants • Compliance with deposit protection legislation • The recording and provision of information regarding rent payments • Procedures relating to rent collection • The provision of information regarding occupancy of the property • The provision of information regarding change of managers or licence holder details • The provision of information related to changes in the property • Requirements relating to the sale of the property • Attending training courses • Requirements to hold insurance • The provision of insurance documentation • The provision of or obtaining of suitable references • The provision of keys and alarm codes • Security provisions for access to the property • The provision of suitable means for occupiers to regulate temperature • Carrying out items on a schedule of works not otherwise mentioned in the | £4,000 | £40,000 | £3,200 | £4,800 | The nature and extent of the licence condition breach | The nature and extent of the licence condition breach |

| | | | | | | |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--|--|
| <p>HMO licence conditions section of this policy, relating to non-compliance with items on a schedule of works</p> | | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to comply with licence conditions related to: • Procedures and actions regarding Inspections • Procedures regarding Repair issues • Maintenance and use of common parts (including gardens, outbuildings and property exterior) and living areas • Safeguarding occupiers and minimising disruption during works • The provision of information regarding alterations and construction works • Procedures regarding emergency issues • Waste and waste receptacles, pests, minor repairs, alterations or decoration. • Giving written notice prior to entry • Allowing access for inspections • Minimising risk of water contamination • The compliance of furnishings or furniture with fire safety regulations • Carrying out items on a schedule of works in relation to provision of mechanical extraction or electrical sockets | <p>£7,000</p> | <p>£40,000</p> | <p>£5,600</p> | <p>£8,400</p> | <p>The nature and extent of the licence condition breach</p> | <p>The nature and extent of the licence condition breach</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to comply with licence conditions related to: • The provision of documentation regarding energy performance certificates, fire detection and prevention, emergency lighting, carbon monoxide detection, fire risk assessments, gas installations, electric installations and appliances • Notification of legal proceedings, contraventions and other relevant information that may affect a fit and proper person status • Procedures and actions regarding ASB • Carrying out items on a schedule of works in relation to the provision of | <p>£12,500</p> | <p>£40,000</p> | <p>£10,000</p> | <p>£15,000</p> | <p>The nature and extent of the licence condition breach</p> | <p>The nature and extent of the licence condition breach</p> |

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|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---|---|
| personal hygiene facilities, kitchen facilities or heating | | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to comply with licence conditions related to: • Minimum floor areas • Occupancy rates • Occupancy of rooms or areas that are not to be used as sleeping accommodation • Limits on number of households allowed to occupy the property or part of the property | £20,000 | £40,000 | £16,000 | £24,000 | The nature and extent of the licence condition breach | The nature and extent of the licence condition breach |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to comply with licence conditions related to: • The condition or existence of smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms, emergency lighting, gas installations, electric installations and appliances, fire detection or other fire safety features or requirements <p>The provision and maintenance of safe means of escape, including requirements to keep escape routes and exits free from obstruction</p> <p>Carrying out items on a schedule of works in relation to fire safety or the provision of a Carbon Monoxide detector</p> | £25,000 | £40,000 | £20,000 | £30,000 | The nature and extent of the licence condition breach | The nature and extent of the licence condition breach |

Appendix 2

Statement of principles to determine the amount of a penalty charge under Part 4 of The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015 as amended by The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022 (“the Regulations”)

Section 13 of the Regulations requires local housing authorities to prepare and publish a statement of principles which they propose to follow in determining the amount of a penalty charge.

The Regulations introduced legal requirements on relevant landlords to:

1. Equip a smoke alarm on each storey of the premises on which there is a room used wholly or partly as living accommodation.
2. During any period when the premises were occupied under the tenancy, to ensure that a carbon monoxide alarm is equipped in any room of the premises which is used wholly or partly as living accommodation and which contains fixed combustion appliance other than a gas cooker.
3. Carry out checks by or on behalf of the landlord to ensure that each prescribed alarm is in proper working order on the day the tenancy begins if it is a new tenancy.
4. Where, following a report made on or after 1st October 2022 by a tenant or by their nominated representative to the landlord, a prescribed alarm is found not to be in proper working order, the alarm is repaired or replaced.

For the purposes of the legislation, living accommodation includes a bathroom or lavatory.

Where the Council believe that a landlord is in breach of one or more of the above duties, the Council must serve a remedial notice on the landlord. The remedial notice is a notice served under Regulation 5 of the Regulations.

If the landlord then fails to take the remedial action specified in the notice within the specified timescale, the Council can require a landlord to pay a penalty charge and can arrange for remedial action to be taken under certain circumstances. The power to charge a penalty arises from Regulation 8 of the Regulations. Failure to comply with each remedial notice can lead to a fine of up to £5,000. Fines will be applied per breach, rather than per landlord or property.

The Council will impose a penalty charge where it is satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that the landlord has not complied with the action specified in the remedial notice within the required timescale.

A landlord will not be considered to be in breach of their duty to comply with the remedial notice if they can demonstrate they have taken all reasonable steps to comply. Where there is evidence, including written correspondence, of repeated and consistent efforts to obtain access to the property, with access repeatedly being prevented by the occupant(s) of the property, a landlord will

Agenda Item 9

not be considered to be in breach of their duty to comply with the remedial notice. A landlord will be expected to have:

- Communicated the risk of harm that the lack of functioning alarms posed to all occupants in writing on multiple occasions
- Requested access to comply with the remedial notice on a regular basis of no longer than every seven days in writing

In considering the imposition of a penalty, the Council may look at the evidence concerning the breach of the requirement of the notice. A non-exhaustive list of methods that may be used to obtain relevant evidence includes, but is not limited to:

- Evidence obtained from a property inspection
- Evidence provided by the tenant or agent
- Evidence provided by the landlord demonstrating compliance with the Regulations by supplying dated photographs of alarms, together with installation records
- That all detector heads have not passed their expiration or replacement date

Landlords need to take steps to demonstrate that they have met the testing requirements at the start of the tenancy requirements. A non-exhaustive list of methods that may be used to evidence compliance with these testing requirements includes, but is not limited to:

- Tenants signing an inventory form which states that they observed the alarms being tested and confirming that the alarms were in working order at the start of the tenancy

Where a landlord is in breach, the local housing authority may serve a remedial notice. Failure to comply with each remedial notice can lead to a fine of up to £5,000. Fines will be applied per breach, rather than per landlord or property

When determining the amount of the penalty charge, regard will be had to whether this is a first breach under the Regulations.

Determining the amount of the penalty charge for a first breach

The minimum amount of a penalty charge for a first breach of the Regulations will be £2500. Only in exceptional circumstances may the Council depart from the application of this statement of principles and issue a penalty charge for less than £2500. Exceptional circumstances are rare and unusual and are not established merely by the presence of multiple mitigating factors

The starting level of a penalty charge for a first breach of the Regulations will be £3000. The penalty charge amount will then be varied depending on aggravating and mitigating factors.

Aggravating factor include, but are not limited to:

- The number of alarms not working or missing (the Regulations state there should be one per storey)
- Other fire safety concerns/defects in the property which increase the risk posed to the occupants
- The length of time the offence is believed to have been on-going

Agenda Item 9

- The frequency of complaints by the occupiers to the landlord about the non-working or missing alarms
- The costs of any remedial work the Council have carried out in response to the breach
- Whether the property is let as a HMO (which increases the overall risk)
- The number of occupants living in the property
- Presence of vulnerable occupiers such as elderly, children or disabled people
- Any history of previous enforcement or non-compliance of the landlord
- Attempts to obstruct the investigation

Mitigating factors include, but are not limited to:

- The property being small and low-risk (for example a one-bedroom ground floor flat with a large number of fire escapes including large windows)
- A single occupant living in the property
- Evidence that all required alarms were checked and in working order at the start of the tenancy
- Written evidence that some efforts to gain access and comply with the remedial notice were made and access was prevented by the occupant

Determining the amount of the penalty charge for a subsequent breach

The penalty for subsequent breaches by the same landlord will be £5000. Only in exceptional circumstances may the Council depart from the application of this statement of principles and issue a penalty charge for less than £5000. Exceptional circumstances are rare and unusual and are not established merely by the presence of multiple mitigating factors.

Appendix 3

Statement of principles to determine the amount of a penalty charge for a breach of minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES) with respect to domestic privately rented property

The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 (“the Regulations”) make it unlawful to rent out a domestic property if it has an EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) rating of F or G (unless a valid exemption has been registered on the PRS Exemptions register).

The Regulations make it unlawful to fail to comply with a compliance notice served by the Council.

The Regulations cover all relevant properties, even where there has been no change of tenancy.

The Regulations were introduced to improve the energy efficiency of housing in the private rented sector and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and tackle climate change. They should help make tenants’ homes more thermally efficient.

An energy performance certificate (EPC) gives the property an energy efficiency rating – A rated properties are the most energy efficient and G rated are the least efficient. It’s valid for 10 years and must be provided by the owner of a property, when it is rented or sold.

If you are a landlord and you fail, when requested, to provide an EPC for the start of a tenancy, you will be in breach of the Regulations.

An EPC contains information about the type of heating system and typical energy costs. It also gives recommendations about how the energy use could be reduced, lowering running costs. You can find the recommended energy efficiency improvements on the current EPC.

If you’re a private landlord, you must either:

- ensure your rented properties have an EPC with a minimum ‘E’ rating
- register a valid PRS exemption on the PRS exemptions register

Failure to do either of these is a breach of the Regulations.

The Council investigates any potential breaches of the regulations. If the Council is satisfied that you are, or have at any time in the 18 months preceding the date of service of the penalty notice, breached the Regulations, you may be subject to a penalty notice imposing a financial penalty. The Council may also impose a publication penalty.

The “publication penalty” means publication, for a minimum period of 12 months, or such longer period as the Council may decide, on the PRS Exemptions Register of such of the following information in relation to a penalty notice as the Council decides:

- Where the landlord is not an individual, the landlord’s name
- Details of the breach of these Regulations in respect of which the penalty notice has been issued
- The address of the property in relation to which the breach has occurred, and
- The amount of any financial penalty imposed.

Agenda Item 9

The Council will impose the following financial penalties:

- (a) letting a property with an F or G rating for less than 3 months: £2,000
- (b) letting a property with an F or G rating for more than 3 months: £4,000
- (c) registering false or misleading information on the PRS exemptions register: £1,000
- (d) failing to provide information to the Council demanded by a compliance notice: £2,000

The Council may not impose a financial penalty under both subsections (a) and (b) above in relation to the same breach of the Regulations. But they may impose a financial penalty under either paragraph (a) or paragraph (b), together with financial penalties under paragraphs (c) and (d), in relation to the same breach. Where penalties are imposed under more than one of these paragraphs, the total amount of the financial penalty may not be more than £5,000.

APPENDIX 2

| COMMUNITY SERVICES | | | |
|--|---|------------------|--|
| 1. Strategic Housing | | | |
| Subject | Detail | Delegated by: | Delegated to: |
| Discretionary Housing Assistance Grants. | To determine applications for Housing Assistance Grants under the Regulatory (Housing Assistance Grants) (England and Wales) Order 2002. | Cabinet/ Leader. | Strategic Housing Manager. |
| Home improvement Agency | To deal with day to day management of the Home Improvement Agency Service | Cabinet | Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services/ Strategic Housing Manager/Private Sector Team Leader |
| <u>General regulatory and enforcement activity for private sector housing (including Houses of Multiple Occupation</u> | <p>1. To exercise all <u>local authority regulation and enforcement functions under the legislation listed below:-</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Housing Act 1985</u> • <u>Housing Act 1988</u> • <u>Housing Act 2004 (and associated regulations)</u> • <u>Housing and Planning Act 2016</u> • <u>Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector and Social Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020</u> • <u>Environment Protection Act 1990 section 79(1)(a)</u> • <u>Building Act 1984</u> • <u>Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Acts 1976, 1982</u> | 1. | Strategic Housing Manager |

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¶ To sign housing-related notices for houses in multiple occupation under the Housing Act 2004.¶

¶ To inspect conditions under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System - Housing Act 2004.¶

¶ To issue interim and final orders

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APPENDIX 2

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949</u> • <u>Public Health Act 1961</u> <p>2. To institute legal proceedings <u>for offences under the legislation listed above.</u></p> <p>3. To impose a financial penalty for an offence as an alternative to bringing a prosecution.</p> | | |
| Housing Associations - Nominations. | To deal with the nomination where necessary of homeless applicants to housing association dwellings. | Cabinet/ Leader. | Strategic Housing Manager. |
| Housing Capacity Study. | To update the site details and housing figures in the Housing Capacity Study on an annual basis using data from the Housing Land Availability Study. | Cabinet/ Leader. | Strategic Housing Manager. |
| Housing Corporation Social Housing Grant. | To administer and approve applications and to authorise payment of local authority grant and Housing Corporation Grant under the Housing Corporation IMS System. | Cabinet/ Leader. | Strategic Housing Manager. |
| Housing Grants. | To determine applications for housing grants under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. | Cabinet/ Leader. | Strategic Housing Manager. |
| Low Cost Housing. | 1. To administer the Council's low cost housing scheme including the making of nominations and the sale of the Council's interest in dwellings. | 1. Cabinet/ Leader. | 1. Strategic Housing Manager. 2. Principal Solicitor. |

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2 and 3 Strategic Housing Manager in consultation with Principal Solicitor

APPENDIX 2

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| | <p>2. To take all necessary action including the institution of legal proceedings to recover deferred payments from the purchases of low cost homes who are in breach of covenants made in the purchase of low cost housing.</p> <p>3. To revise fees in relation to low cost housing transactions.</p> | <p>2. Cabinet/ Leader.</p> <p>3. Cabinet/ Leader.</p> | <p>3. Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services, Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services and Financial Services Manager in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holders.</p> |
| <p>Low-Cost Housing Capital Receipts</p> <p><i>(New delegation agreed by Members in 2024/25)</i></p> | <p>To approve individual proposals for new developments or the purchase of existing satisfactory dwellings and flipping Shared Ownership to affordable or social rented properties and the spend relating to these, as and when they were brought forward.</p> | <p>Council</p> | <p>The Assistant Director Community and Housing Services following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing.</p> |
| <p>Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant.</p> | <p>1. To determine applications for housing grants under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.</p> <p>2. To grant extensions of time of up to six months within which improvements are to be completed.</p> | <p>1. Cabinet/ Leader.</p> <p>2. Cabinet/ Leader.</p> | <p>1. Strategic Housing Manager.</p> <p>2. Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services.</p> |
| <p>Protection from Eviction Act.</p> | <p><u>1. To institute legal proceedings in respect of illegal evictions and harassment under the provisions of the</u></p> | <p>Cabinet/ Leader</p> | <p><u>1 and 2</u> Assistant Director of Community & Housing Services <u>in consultation</u></p> |

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Agenda Item 9

APPENDIX 2

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| | <p><u>Protection From Eviction Act 1977 and Housing Act 1988 (as amended by the Renters Right Act 2025).</u></p> <p>2. <u>To impose a financial penalty for an offence under section 1 of the Protection from Eviction Act (as amended) as an alternative to bringing a prosecution.</u></p> | | <p><u>with</u> Principal Solicitor.</p> |
| <p><u>Discrimination in the rental market</u></p> | <p><u>To take enforcement action under Chapter 3 of the Renters Rights Act 2025, including the imposition of financial penalties in accordance with the Councils Enforcement and Civil Penalties Notice Policy</u></p> | <p><u>Cabinet/ Leader</u></p> | <p><u>Assistant Director of Community and Housing Service</u></p> |
| <p><u>Stating the proposed rent and rental bidding</u></p> | <p><u>To take enforcement action under Chapter 6 of the Renters Rights Act 2025, including the imposition of financial penalties in accordance with the Councils Enforcement and Civil Penalties Notice Policy</u></p> | <p><u>Cabinet/Leader</u></p> | <p><u>Assistant Director of Community and Housing Service</u></p> |
| <p><u>Renters Rights Act 2025 – investigatory powers</u></p> <p>(Added following report on Renters Right Act in March 2026)</p> | <p><u>To exercise all powers in respect of entry, inspection, investigation, service of notices and other functions for the purposes of the following legislation: -</u> <u>Renters Rights Act 2025 sections 114 to 132 (investigatory powers) and section 110 (reporting to government)</u></p> | <p><u>Cabinet/ Leader</u></p> | <p><u>Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services] / [Housing Strategy Manager] / [Private Sector Housing Team Leader] / [Housing Strategy & Enabling Team Leader] / [Private Sector Housing Officer]</u></p> |

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Agenda Item 9

APPENDIX 2

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| <p>Renters Rights Act 2025 Investigations</p> <p>(Added following report on Renters Right Act in March 2026)</p> | <p>To undertake investigations into potential offences under sections 33, 34, 39 and 56 of the Renters Rights Act 2025</p> | <p>Cabinet/ Leader</p> | <p>[Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services] / [Housing Strategy Manager] / [Private Sector Housing Team Leader] / [Housing Strategy & Enabling Team Leader] / [Private Sector Housing Officer]</p> |
| <p>Private Sector Housing Enforcement and Civil Penalty Policy</p> | <p>To update the Policy in line with any legislative or government guidance updates</p> | <p>Cabinet/ Leader</p> | <p>Assistant Director of Community and Housing Service following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing</p> |
| <p>Utilities - Restoration or Continuance of Services.</p> | <p>To deal in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder and generally in accordance with emergency procedures with applications received pursuant to the arrangements according to section 33 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provision) Act 1976 (Public Utility Services to Dwellings) and to take such action as may be necessary for the recovery of any payments made by the Council in pursuance of such arrangements.</p> | <p>Cabinet/ Leader.</p> | <p>Executive Director Finance or Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services</p> |
| <p>Regulation of Mobile Home Sites</p> | <p>To institute legal proceedings under section 1 of the Caravan</p> | <p>Council</p> | <p>Strategic Housing Manager in</p> |

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APPENDIX 2

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| | <p>Sites and Control of Development Act 1960</p> <p>To take all steps to manage and regulate Mobile Home Sites, including the exercise of power of entry under the following legislation:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 • Caravan Sites Act 1968 • Mobile Homes Act 2013 | Cabinet/Leader | <p>consultation with the Principal Solicitor</p> <p>Strategic Housing Manager</p> |
| Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Sector) (England & Wales) Regulations 2015 | To implement enforcement powers under the Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Sector) (England & Wales) Regulations 2015 | Cabinet | Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services |
| First Homes | To make amendments to Council's the First Homes Policy to reflect future Government guidance | Cabinet | Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing |
| Local Lettings Plan | To agree and adopt future Local Lettings Policies | Cabinet | Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing |
| Requisition for Information | To serve a requisition for information under section 16 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976 | Cabinet/Leader | Strategic Housing Manager |
| Boarding up of dangerous buildings | To serve notice under Section 9 of the Local Government | Cabinet/Leader | Strategic Housing Manager |

APPENDIX 2

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| | (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 | | |
| Statutory Nuisance | To take all necessary action in relation to statutory nuisance under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. | Council | Strategic Housing Manager |

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Cabinet

Wednesday 17th June 2026

Quarter 4 25/26 Performance Report

| | |
|--|--|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder | Councillor Karen May, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development and Enabling |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | |
| Relevant Assistant Director | Hannah Corredor, Assistant Director for Corporate Services and Transformation |
| Report Author: Sarah Davis | Job Title: Performance and Improvement Advisor Contact email: sarah.davis@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Tel: 01527 534156 |
| Wards Affected | All |
| Ward Councillor(s) consulted | N/A |
| Council Priorities | All |
| Non-Key Decision | |
| If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting. | |

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that:

- 1) The overview of Quarter 4 performance for the period January to March 2026 against the Council Plan priorities, as detailed in Appendix 1 be noted.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 There are a set of corporate measures which are organised by the priorities set out in the Bromsgrove District Council Plan 2024–2027. The summary table for quarterly performance can be found in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 The corporate measures are structured under the Council Plan priorities:
 - Economic Development
 - Environment
 - Housing
 - Infrastructure
 - Organisational Priorities
- 2.3 Appendix 1 includes the current quarters data compared to previous quarters (where available) to support trend analysis

Cabinet

Wednesday 17th June 2026

- 2.4 For some measures, there are known timing constraints on data availability. Community Safety figures are sources from verified external data and are subject to a time lag, meaning that the latest quarter may not be available at the time of reporting. SLM Leisure measures are also reported with a one-quarter lag. These are reflected in Appendix 1.
- 2.5 The Council is looking at further aligning with Council Plan and Service Business Planning reporting, strengthening transparency, improving accessibility and strategic alignment. This continues to be undertaken as the Council work on developing a new style of quarterly performance reporting, as measures are aligned and refined to the Bromsgrove District Council Plan 2024-2027.
- 2.6 The Council Plan confirms that progress will be monitored quarterly (where data is available) and reported through the Cabinet and scrutiny arrangements. This report supports that approach, with Appendix 1 providing the summary view of quarterly corporate performance.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 Quarterly performance reporting supports services to understand delivery against the Council Plan priorities and enables timely identification of emerging pressures, supporting responsive service management and informed Member oversight.
- 3.2 Officers intend to monitor progress with the implementation of agreed Motions on Notice in the future. This monitoring will commence from Quarter 1 of the 2026/27 municipal year onwards.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Finance and performance reporting will continue to be aligned, with this report sitting alongside the quarterly financial reports.
- 4.2 Where performance pressures are identified in demand led services, these are monitored alongside budget forecasts to ensure emerging financial impacts are understood early and reflected in financial planning.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

6. OTHER – IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

Cabinet

Wednesday 17th June 2026

- 6.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report in relation to Local Government Reorganisation or Devolution. The performance reporting arrangements outlined in this report support the Council's ongoing governance and assurance frameworks and provide continuity in monitoring delivery against current Council Plan priorities

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 An assessment of performance over the last quarter offers insight into progress, stability and challenges across each priority area, informing assurance on delivery against the Council Plan.

Economic Development:

- 6.3 The cumulative nature of grant funding resulted in the total spend reach the target of 66% at the end of Quarter 4.
- 6.4 Members are asked to note that the external funding spend deadline has been extended to September 2026 by the UK Government, enabling Innovation Lighthouse Programme (Programme is aimed at boosting growth, competitiveness and resilience in the local manufacturing sector) participants to complete the support element before applying for grant funding to deliver their project.

Housing:

- 6.5 Planning and building control performance has been consistently strong, with major applications being determined at/near 100%, along with minor applications stable at/near 89% and building control returning to 100% in Quarter 4. These are all above the stated targets.
- 6.6 Housing pressures have been mixed with temporary accommodation fluctuating and B&B costs rising in Quarter 4. Members are asked to note that Quarter 4 costs are estimates pending reconciliation at the end of the financial year.

Environment:

- 6.7 Bromsgrove achieved above the national average for the proportion of household waste recycled or composted in 2025/26. The main variable across the year is the garden waste season, as this service generates a considerable proportion of composted waste that offsets the residual waste to generate more positive recycling rates. As the garden waste season operates February to November, there is always a dip in performance figures in Quarter 4, whilst Quarter 1 benefits from the first

Cabinet

Wednesday 17th June 2026

surge of growth in Spring that produces a high volume of grass and hedge cuttings.

- 6.8 In 2025/26, performance has been impacted by the bin swap project, as this saw a proportion of garden waste collected during Quarter 4 as part of replacing resident's bins. Much of that waste would typically have been collected during Quarter 1 of 2026/27, so this boosted performance in Quarter 4 to give a positive performance against the national average for the year 2025/26 but will likely be balanced by a lower recycling performance in Quarter 1 of 2026/27 because of this material being collected out of sequence.
- 6.9 Fly-tipping levels fluctuated across the year but remained within expected ranges across the district. The average time taken to remove fly tipping was below the five-day target in every quarter. This has been supported by active enforcement, with fixed penalty notices issued during the year and a reduction in active enforcement cases by Quarter 4, indicating use of enforcement powers alongside service delivery.
- 6.10 Households supported by the energy advice service have reduced with commentary attributing this mainly to external factors (milder winter, lower bills/cap). Members are asked to note that demand could rise again due to international factors.

Infrastructure:

- 6.11 A Green Flag Award (International accreditation recognised as a national benchmark) have been applied for, and the Council are currently getting re-assessed for Sanders Park, Lickey end and St Chads in Bromsgrove. Officers anticipate that these sites will be successful for a Green Flag award, and the Council will maintain a 75% completion in 2026/27.

Organisational Priorities:

- 6.12 Core responsiveness of the Council remained strong, with 100% of media enquiries responded to within agreed timescales in every quarter.
- 6.13 Council Tax and Business collection rates as expected improved progressively through the year with Council Tax rising to 98% and Business Rates rising to 97% by Quarter 4.
- 6.14 Customer and assurance performance was mixed: average complaint response times improved to four days by Quarter 4, with complaint volumes remaining low at 27 for the quarter. Two complaints exceeded the 10-day standard, resulting in performance remaining below the 95% target for most of the year, despite a stronger year-end position of 92%.

Cabinet

Wednesday 17th June 2026

- 6.15 Workforce indicator (staff turnover rates) was mixed across Quarter 1–Quarter 3, with turnover rising in Quarter 3 after improvement in Quarter 2. Data for Quarter 4 data was not available at the time of reporting because of payroll dates.
- 6.15 Bromsgrove Sport and Leisure centre’s targets follow the 2017 contract award but have been affected by increased local competition. Although visits have fallen, engagement and retention remain strong, with average length of stay 23% above the regional average and attrition consistently low. Ongoing performance reporting and quarterly reviews support joint work between Council Officers and Everyone Active to deliver the best outcomes.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.16 There are no direct climate change implications arising from this report. However, several measures within the Environment and Infrastructure priorities contribute to the Council’s understanding of progress against its environmental and sustainability objectives, including carbon reduction, waste and recycling, environmental enforcement and active travel. Performance reporting therefore supports ongoing monitoring of the Council’s climate related ambitions set out within the Council Plan

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.17 There are no equality and diversity implications arising directly from this report.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 Monitoring performance regularly will assist the Council in in effective identification and management of risks. It will also support the management of risks identified around robust decision making and the accuracy/effectiveness of performance data.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1: Quarter 4 Performance Table 2025/26 provides detailed quarterly performance data to support trend analysis and deeper scrutiny where required.

Cabinet

Wednesday 17th June 2026

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

| Department | Name and Job Title | Date |
|--|--|------------|
| Portfolio Holder | Councillor Karen May, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development and Enabling | 12/05/2026 |
| Assistant Director | Hannah Corredor, Assistant Director for Corporate Services and Transformation | 12/05/2026 |
| Financial Services | Debra Goodall, Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services | |
| Legal and Democratic Services | Nicola Cummings, Principle Solicitor (Governance) Jess Bayley Hill, Principle Democratic Services Officer | 05/05/2026 |
| Performance and Improvement Team (if equalities implications apply) | Sarah Davis, Improvement Advisor | Author |
| Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply) | Judith Willis, Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services | |

Economic Development

| Measure name | Type | Q4 24/25 | Q1 25/26 | Q2 25/26 | Q3 25/26 | Q4 25/26 | Target | Aim | Trend |
|---|------|-------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|------------|-----|-------|
| Business grant funding awarded | £ | £175,836.56 | £0.00 | £2,599.39 | £8,804.00 | £79,349.00 | £79,349.00 | ⬆️ | |
| This shows the cumulative grant paid in 2025/26 (with spending extended to 30 September 2026), including start-up grants in hospitality and financial services and eight growth grants across manufacturing, business services, retail, construction, IT and the creative industries. | | | | | | | | | |
| Business grant funding- % spent | % | 70% | 0.0% | 2% | 7.4% | 66% | 66% | ⬆️ | |
| Reflecting the cumulative grant funding, total spend reached 66% by Q4, supported by the UK Government's extension of the external funding deadline to September 2026 to allow Innovation Lighthouse Programme participants to complete support before applying for delivery funding. | | | | | | | | | |

Environment

| Measure name | Type | Q4 24/25 | Q1 25/26 | Q2 25/26 | Q3 25/26 | Q4 25/26 | Target | Aim | Trend |
|---|--------|----------|----------|----------|----------|------------|--------|-----|-------|
| % household waste recycled or composted | % | 36.79% | 53.36% | 44.79% | 43.61% | 39% | 50% | ⬆️ | |
| In 2025/26, the recycling rate remained above the national average, with seasonal variation from garden waste and a one-off Q4 uplift from the bin swap project that brought forward collections and is expected to rebalance in 2026/27. | | | | | | | | | |
| # of flytips | # | 568 | 635 | 668 | 524 | 577 | 650 | ⬇️ | |
| Average time taken to remove fly-tipping reported | # days | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ⬇️ | |
| # active environmental enforcement cases | # | | 126 | 124 | 80 | 99 | | | |
| # environmental enforcement fixed penalty notices | # | 6 | 4 | 15 | 22 | 8 | | | |
| No. of households supported by energy advice service (AoE) | # | 240 | 377 | 382 | 213 | 175 | | ⬆️ | |

The drop in calls from Q3 to Q4 likely reflects reduced household pressure from milder weather and lower energy costs, although international factors may drive increased demand in future.

Housing

| Measure name | Type | Q4 24/25 | Q1 25/26 | Q2 25/26 | Q3 25/26 | Q4 25/26 | Target | Aim | Trend |
|--|------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------|-----|-------|
| % of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks (or agreed extension) | % | 84.6% | 92.8% | 86.6% | 94% | 100% | 60% | ↕ | |
| % of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks (or agreed extension) | % | 87.2% | 87.7% | 88% | 89% | 87% | 70% | ↕ | |
| No. of planning enforcement actions taken- cases opened | # | 14 | 41 | 24 | 26 | 24 | | | |
| No. of planning enforcement actions taken- cases closed | # | 16 | 48 | 63 | 53 | 28 | | | |
| % of Building Control applications determined within 5 weeks (or 8 weeks on agreement) | % | 100% | 100% | 97% | 95% | 100% | 85% | ↕ | |
| Number of threatened with homelessness preventions | # | 8 | 12 | 7 | 12 | 10 | | | |
| No. of households in temporary accommodation- snapshot | # | 33 | 34 | 26 | 37 | 30 | | ↘ | |
| Cost of B & B placements | £ | £42,711.24 | £31,132.64 | £46,503.28 | £21,307.00 | £44,073.00 | | ↘ | |

Q4 costs are estimates, as payments and income have not yet been fully reconciled.

Infrastructure

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

Green Flag status has been applied for Sanders Park, Lickey End and St Chads in Bromsgrove, with successful awards anticipated and 75% Green Flag coverage expected to be maintained in 2026/27.

Community Safety

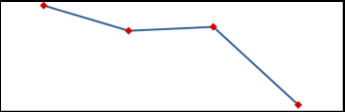
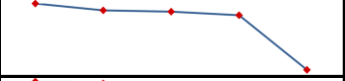

| Measure name | Type | Q4 24/25 | Q1 25/26 | Q2 25/26 | Q3 25/26 | Q4 25/26 | Target | Aim | Trend |
|-----------------------------------|------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------|-----|-------|
| # crimes recorded (excluding ASB) | # | 1275 | 1396 | 1418 | 1304 | 1222 | | ↻ | |
| ASB | # | 238 | 301 | 267 | 236 | 215 | | ↻ | |

*there is a lag with this data as it is obtained using verified figures from Police.uk

Organisational Priorities

| Measure name | Type | Q4 24/25 | Q1 25/26 | Q2 25/26 | Q3 25/26 | Q4 25/26 | Target | Aim | Trend |
|---|----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------|-----|-------|
| % of media enquiries responded to within agreed timescales | % | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | ⬆️ | |
| Council Tax Collection Rate | % | 98.1% | 28.8% | 56.6% | 85% | 98% | 84.5% | ⬆️ | |
| Business Rates Collection Rate | % | 98.2% | 28.3% | 56.8% | 80% | 97% | 80.2% | ⬆️ | |
| Housing Benefit: Speed of processing new claims | # days | 11.7 | 19.7 | 12 | 11 | 18 | 20 | ⬇️ | |
| Housing Benefit: Speed of processing change of circumstances | # days | 4.7 | 9.7 | 8.3 | 11 | 6 | 8 | ⬇️ | |
| Housing Benefit: Local Authority error rate | % | 0.26% | 0.48% | 0.16% | 0% | 0% | 0.48% | ⬇️ | |
| # complaints received | # | 17 | 11 | 33 | 25 | 27 | | | |
| Average working days to respond to complaints | # days | 16.6 | 18.2 | 4.7 | 6 | 4 | 10 | ⬇️ | |
| % complaints answered within 10 days (excluding Housing) | % | 68.8% | 75% | 96.8% | 84% | 92% | 95% | ⬆️ | |
| Complaint volumes were low at 27 for the quarter. Two complaints exceeded the 10-day standard, leading to a marginal miss against the 95% target. | | | | | | | | | |
| Staff turnover rates | % | 9.8% | 10.2% | 9.2% | 12.4% | No data | 13.4% | ⬇️ | |
| Sickness absence- long term | # days per FTE | 6.4 | 2.88 | 3.19 | 3 | 2 | 7.8 | ⬇️ | |

SLM Leisure Data

| Measure name | Type | Q4 24/25 | Q1 25/26 | Q2 25/26 | Q3 25/26 | Q4 25/26 | Target | Aim | Trend |
|---|------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------------|---------|-----|---|
| Total no. of visits including EA cards and non-card holders | # | 102,739 | 96,589 | 97,569 | 78,658 | Data rcvd Q1 | 134,666 | ⬆️ |  |
| No. gym members | # | 2,749 | 2,460 | 2,414 | 2,264 | Data rcvd Q1 | 3,000 | ⬆️ |  |
| Swimming lessons - children enrolled on scheme | # | 1,242 | 1,206 | 1,171 | 1,108 | Data rcvd Q1 | 2,160 | ⬆️ |  |
| Bromsgrove Sport and Leisure Centre performance reflects 2017 contract targets and increased local competition; while visits have declined, strong engagement and low attrition continue, supported by effective joint performance management with Everyone Active. | | | | | | | | | |

**there is a one quarter lag with this data*

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|----|---|
| RIDDOR reportable events | # | RIDDOR reports are measure throughout the year via risk management | | | | | | ⬆️ | ♦ |
|--------------------------|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|----|---|

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**Cabinet
2026**

17 June

Report VAT RECOVERY UPDATED POSITION

| | | |
|--|---|-----------------------|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder | | Councillor Simon Nock |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | | Yes |
| Relevant Assistant Director | | Debra Goodall |
| Report Author | Job Title: Debra Goodall, Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services Contact email: debra.goodall@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: | |
| Wards Affected | | ALL |
| Ward Councillor(s) consulted | | No |
| Relevant Council Priority | | |
| Key Decision NO – Information only | | |
| If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting. | | |

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet RESOLVE that:-

- 1) The actions being undertaken to resolve the outstanding VAT matters are noted.**
- 2) An expected net cash gain position to be recovered by the council, including the further anticipated recovery of the current Error Correction Note, is noted.**
- 3) The improvement of this on the cashflow position is noted and the corporate risk register duly updated to reflect the positive change to the council’s cash holding position.**
- 4) The Audit, Standards and Governance committee is requested to maintain oversight of the delivery of actions to satisfy any agreed penalty suspension conditions.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Bromsgrove District Council did not submit periodic VAT returns to HMRC for a period of three and a half years between April 2021 and

October 2024 as a result of issues with the TechnologyOne ERP system and key staffing changes..

The significant issues contributing to this included:

- TechnologyOne System issues from implementation
 - o Incorrect configuration of the cash receipting back office.
 - o Incorrect inter-entity processing Incorrect payment and bank statement file processing.
 - Failure to align work processes with the configuration of the TechnologyOne VAT module.
 - Staff turnover and a consequent period of lack of internal VAT expertise.
 - Weak reconciliation processes.
- 2.2 The Council managed the position by agreeing with HMRC to submit nil returns for each of the outstanding periods and then Error Correction Notices (ECNs) to reflect the returns that should have been made.
- 2.3 An initial ECN was prepared in early 2025 using data downloaded from the 'General Ledger' in the ERP and further issues, identified during the preparation of monthly VAT returns, were addressed by submission of a second ECN later in 2025. Subsequent work on the ERP has identified that subsidiary ledgers (Project Ledger and Property Ledger) do not record VAT information on transactions disbursed to the General Ledger.
- 2.4 For this reason, a further ECN is in preparation for submission in June 2026.
- 2.5 The Council has appointed specialist advisors (PSTax) to provide support and assurance. PSTax have been instrumental in providing advice, agreeing the process with HMRC, reviewing the data, assisting with the preparation of ECNs, VAT Returns and liaising with HMRC. Accountability, approval and submission of all ECNs and VAT returns rests with the Council.
- 2.6 To date, all ECNs and VAT Returns have been prepared manually by an internally resourced team using data downloaded from the ERP, with detailed reconciliation and external data review processes.

**Cabinet
2026**

17 June

2.7 Chronology

| Bromsgrove District Council Action | Date |
|--|---|
| Technology One System Implemented | February 2021 |
| First Missed VAT Return | April 2021 |
| Last Missed VAT Return | October 2024 |
| Monthly VAT Returns Reinstated | November 2024 |
| Initial Error Correction Notice Submitted | 19 December 2024 (£0.472m to BDC) |
| BDC aware of potential additional submission | HMRC informed March 2025 |
| Subsequent Error Correction Notice Submitted | June 2025 (£0.503m to HMRC) |
| BDC aware of potential additional submission relating the subsidiary ledgers | HMRC informed April 2026 |
| Subsequent Error Correction Notice expected to be submitted | June 2026 (value tbc verbally at the Cabinet briefing - to BDC) |

Penalty Suspension

2.8 HMRC impose mandatory financial penalties in the event an organisation fails to submit timely and accurate VAT returns. HMRC can, at its discretion, agree to suspend the financial penalties should HMRC deem the failure not to be “deliberate” and if the organisation agrees to meet conditions.

2.9 With the assistance of PSTax, Bromsgrove District Council and HMRC reached agreement on the suspension of the penalties, subject to the council meeting the following conditions.

- i) The council must meet all its notification and filing obligations.
- ii) The adoption of a dedicated internal email mailbox for VAT enquiries from staff.
- iii) Finance Business Partners are to be kept updated on changes affecting their service areas and a record of the communications is to be retained.

- iv) All finance staff to attend training provided by PSTax to focus on adopting best practice. A record of the date, attendees and a synopsis of the training content is to be retained.
- v) Relevant service-based staff to attend training, to ensure they understand the importance of seeking VAT advice when considering or entering into new contractual arrangements and, that they understand the internal processes. A record of the date, attendees and a synopsis of the training content is to be retained.

Current Position

- 2.10 Monthly VAT returns are now being submitted on time, following a robust quality assurance process providing an independent review of prepared monthly returns ahead of submission. The outcome of the monthly review is reported to the Section 151 Officer /Deputy 151 Officer to formally approval submission of the return. This process will be reviewed annually and should remain in place until such time as the section 151 Officer determines that independent assurance is no longer needed.
- 2.11 PSTax have been commissioned to develop and deliver the training needed to the finance team and wider staff group. Session dates for May 2026 have been agreed with CLT and mop up sessions will be provided to those staff unable to attend the scheduled events.
- 2.12 Control improvements have been agreed with CLT to apply across the organisation including:
 - i mandatory attendance on the training programme for all staff involved in the raising and processing of orders and invoices. Only trained staff will have system permissions granted to them.
 - ii An escalation process has been agreed where any issues of inaccurate data entry or coding will be reported to the relevant Assistant Director.
 - iii non-compliance with the required VAT processes can and will result in the removal of system access privileges.
- 2.13 The Internal Audit Plan for 2026/27 will include a review of key VAT processes and the actions outlined above to provide independent assurance that the necessary internal controls are now in place and operating satisfactorily.

- 2.14 Ultimately, the expectation is that the ERP system will ensure accurate VAT processing without manual intervention.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Two ECNs have been submitted and a further ECN is being prepared which are expected to deliver a total VAT repayment to the Council. The value of this will be confirmed at the Cabinet Briefing. It should be noted VAT repayments reflect a welcome improvement to the council's cash position, but the related accounting transactions have already been accounted for in the relevant prior years.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Submitting timely and accurate VAT returns is a statutory obligation. The actions set out in this report alongside the delivery of the agreed penalty suspension conditions reflect obligations the council must meet.

5. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 5.1 Resolving the long-standing issues around VAT will enable the council to enter LGR from a sound position of good standing and compliance financial management.

Relevant Council Priority

- 5.2 Financial resilience and good governance underpin the council's ability to meet all of its priorities.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.3 None directly as a result of this report.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

**Cabinet
2026**

17 June

5.4 No adverse impacts as a result of the content of this report.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 The council recognised the cashflow pressures it faced during the budget process and as a result included “Risk of Cashflow Strain” within the corporate risk register. The cash receipt from HMRC mitigates this risk significantly and the risk register will be updated accordingly.

7. COMMUNITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no Community implications as a result of this report.

7. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Windsor Street – Housing Delivery Options

| | |
|---|--|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder | Councillor Karen May |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | Yes |
| Relevant Assistant Director | Rachel Egan |
| Report Author Rebecca McElliott | Job Title: Regeneration programme manager Contact email: Rebecca.mcelllott@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 07484 546750 |
| Wards Affected | All |
| Ward Councillor(s) consulted | No |
| Relevant Council Priority | Economic Development Housing |
| 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

Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that:

- 1) **The feedback received from Registered Providers be noted.**
- 2) **Delegated authority is given to the Assistant Director for Regeneration and Property, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to progress an outline planning application for the Windsor Street site for up to 50 residential units.**
- 3) **Subject to the granting of outline planning permission and completion of Phase 2 remediation works, that the Windsor Street site be disposed of to a Registered Provider.**
- 4) **Delegated authority is given to the Assistant Director for Regeneration and Property, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to agree the terms of disposal and select the Registered**

Provider, following evaluation of proposals against the Council’s objectives.

- 5) **A budget of up to £150,000 is approved to meet the costs of progressing the outline planning application as set out in paragraph 4.3.**

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 In November 2025, Cabinet considered an options paper setting out the redevelopment proposals for the Windsor Street site, a key brownfield regeneration opportunity in Bromsgrove Town Centre. The report outlined the history of the site, progress on remediation, and four potential delivery routes for bringing forward new housing. It also sought a decision on the strategic direction of the project.

2.2 In November 2025 Cabinet resolved the following:

- 1) Agree that the Windsor Street site be redeveloped for residential use.
- 2) Agree that the Council should seek to enter into a partnership with a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) to bring forward the development, subject to a further Cabinet report setting out the detail of the collaboration agreement.
- 3) To delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Regeneration & Property and the Assistant Director for Legal, Democratic & Procurement Services, in consultation with the Leader, to progress the preferred option, undertake necessary administrative and contractual steps, and report back to Cabinet.

2.3 Bromsgrove District Council secured significant external funding to de-risk and remediate the site (none of which required Council match funding), including:

| Funding Source | Total (£) |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| Levelling Up Fund | 2,583,252 |
| One Public Estate | 100,000 |
| UKSPF | 84,000 |
| Brownfield Land Release Fund | 722,748 |

Phase 1 remediation was completed in late 2025. Phase 2 remediation works commenced on 1st June 2026 and are expected to complete in September 2026. This will be followed by a 12-month monitoring period which will end in September 2027. Following this monitoring period, the Environment Agency will confirm whether the site can be redeveloped. The project is currently £78,000 over budget. This overspend is being met by the existing Levelling Up Programme contingency budget.

2.4 Cabinet were presented with five options, ranging from “do nothing” to full Council-led development. The key delivery options were:

- a) Option A – Obtain outline planning permission and dispose of the site (lowest risk but lowest control; unlikely to secure more than 30% affordable housing).
- b) Option B – Develop through Spadesbourne Homes Ltd (full control but highest financial risk; long payback period).
- c) Option C – 50/50 partnership with a private developer (shared risk and expertise but unlikely to exceed 30% affordable housing).
- d) Option D – 50/50 partnership with a Registered Social Landlord (shared risk and funding opportunities; strongest route to delivering 50% affordable housing and meeting local housing need).

2.5 Both the Overview & Scrutiny Board and the Cabinet supported Option D – partnership with an RSL as the preferred route, as it best aligned with:

- a) Delivering a high-quality mixed-tenure housing scheme
- b) Achieving at least 50% affordable homes
- c) Controlling design quality
- d) Managing risk through shared responsibility
- e) Meeting funding requirements linked to the Brownfield Land Release Fund.

3. **REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORD FEEDBACK**

3.1 Since November, The Regeneration Programme Manager and Strategic Housing Services Manager have approached five RSLs that are actively seeking development sites in Bromsgrove to undertake soft

market testing. The names of these RSLs have been anonymised for the purpose of this report and can be found at Appendix 1.

- 3.2 The RSLs were asked if they were interested in the site, and on what basis. Their feedback is summarised in the table at Appendix 2. The organisations varied significantly in size, development output, and geographical focus, which shaped the level of interest shown.
- 3.3 Three of the five RSLs (A, B and E) confirmed they were not interested in the site at this time. Reasons included not being able to access Homes England funding, the site being too small for their minimum development thresholds or not aligning with their strategic priorities. These organisations collectively manage portfolios ranging from around 4,400 to 50,000 homes and typically deliver between 70 and 1,750 new units annually.
- 3.4 Two RSLs - (C and D)—expressed positive interest. RSL (C) indicated they would consider acquiring the site to deliver 100% affordable housing and acknowledged that local nominations would continue to be managed by BDHT. RSL (D) showed strong interest, preferring an outright acquisition and proposing delivery of a 100% affordable scheme using their in-house construction capability, guided by local housing need. This is higher than the minimum requirement that Members asked for previously (50%).
- 3.5 Securing outline planning permission prior to disposal significantly increases the site's value by reducing planning risk and giving potential purchasers confidence in the development potential. It also broadens market interest, particularly among RSLs, who are generally risk-averse and more likely to bid competitively on a site where the principle and scale of development have already been established. Obtaining outline consent allows the Council to set key parameters such as unit numbers, access arrangements, and design expectations, ensuring the eventual scheme aligns with local priorities. It also accelerates delivery, as a purchaser can move directly to reserved matters rather than starting the planning process from scratch. Finally, it reduces the likelihood of delays or failed transactions during disposal, as bidders will not need to undertake extensive pre-planning due diligence or negotiate conditional offers based on uncertain planning outcomes. The outline planning application will be informed by

identified local housing need, in consultation with the Strategic Housing Lead, and shaped by viability considerations, while remaining mindful of relevant planning policy.

- 3.6 Although Cabinet initially expressed a preference to progress the scheme through a partnership with a Registered Social Landlord (RSL), soft market testing indicates that, due to the site's relatively small scale, Registered Providers do not consider a partnership model to be commercially or operationally proportionate, as it would introduce additional governance and administrative overheads compared with an outright disposal route. In light of this, it is recommended that the Council proceeds with a disposal of the site to an RSL, conditional upon the granting of planning permission, to enable the timely delivery of much-needed housing.
- 3.7 This recommendation is not the Council's original preferred option, but fully aligns with the strategic objectives for the site—namely delivering a high-quality housing development with a strong affordable housing offer. Proceeding in this way removes development risk from the Council while enabling partners to bring forward a well-designed scheme that reflects local needs and priorities. Crucially, this route also allows the Council to secure a higher overall level of affordable housing than would likely be achieved through a traditional market-led disposal.
- 3.8 By inviting Registered Social Landlords to submit proposals as part of the disposal process, the Council retains the ability to select the scheme that best meets its objectives. Whilst the Council has a duty to achieve best value on disposals, they are permitted to accept a lower receipt in exchange for the delivery of strategic outcomes but must evidence this. Given that the clearing and remediation of the site has been funded through external grant funding, generating a capital receipt is not the primary driver. Instead, the recommended approach supports the wider ambition to maximise affordable, sustainable housing delivery while ensuring the site is brought forward in a way that reflects the Council's long-term regeneration goals.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 A budget of £150,000 is recommended to progress and secure outline planning permission for the site. This includes the following –

- a) Planning application fee
- b) Mandatory surveys and technical reports
- c) Planning consultant and architect
- d) Public consultation (if required)

- 4.2 The Council would 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.
- 4.3 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 Under section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council must ensure that any disposal of the site achieves the best consideration reasonably obtainable, unless a lawful basis exists to dispose at an undervalue. This requires the Council to obtain and have regard to appropriate valuation advice and to ensure that the terms of disposal, the selection of the preferred Registered Provider and the decision-making process are properly documented, rational and auditable.
- 5.2 The Council is not obliged simply to accept the highest monetary offer, but it must be able to evidence why the agreed transaction represents the best consideration reasonably obtainable in the circumstances, taking account of factors such as deliverability, certainty and risk. If the Council proposes to dispose of the site at less than best consideration in order to secure wider regeneration, housing or wellbeing objectives, it may only do so where it is satisfied that the disposal will help to secure the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of the area and where the undervalue does not exceed £2 million, in accordance with the General Disposal Consent (England) 2003; otherwise, specific consent from the Secretary of State would be required.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS**Local Government Reorganisation**

- 6.1 The government intends to issue directions under section 24 of the Local Government Act requiring written consent from successor Councils for land disposals worth more than £100,000, entering contracts of more than £1 million for capital and entering contracts of more than £100,000 for non-capital (whole life costs). The timeline for the date of these has not yet been confirmed but in the meantime, the government expects councillors and statutory officers to be mindful of their responsibilities and for Councils to work together in sharing information and making decisions that are in the best interests of the whole area.

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 Redevelopment of the Windsor Street site is one of the key projects within the Council Plan and Centres Strategy. As a brownfield site, its redevelopment will meet housing needs whilst protecting the Green Belt. Transforming an underutilised site into residential use will increase footfall and support local businesses, contributing to a more vibrant town centre. This approach is part of the Council's broader strategy to regenerate the town centre, making it a more attractive place to live, work, and visit.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 The redevelopment of the site has positive climate change implications as it involves the redevelopment of a brownfield site, encourages sustainable urban living and land remediation will improve soil and water quality. New housing will be built to modern energy efficiency standards, reducing operational carbon emissions.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.4 Increasing the supply of housing (including affordable) in the district helps households on low incomes by providing them with good quality

housing. It is important that the preferred option considers the potential for bringing appropriate housing stock to the market.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

| Risk | Mitigation |
|--|--|
| Phase 2 remediation and/or subsequent 12-month monitoring does not achieve a position that enables redevelopment; Environment Agency sign-off delayed or not achieved. | Soilfix are undertaking additional site investigations prior to commencing Phase 2 works to confirm the barrier injection design and optimise delivery, to provide assurance that the treatment will perform as intended. Maintain regular liaison with the Environment Agency and maintain clear audit trail of verification information. |
| Outline planning application delayed or refused | Early pre-application engagement with planning department. Keep scheme parameters aligned with local policy and housing need. |
| Insufficient interest from Registered Providers at disposal stage, reducing competition and risking delay. | Build on soft market testing, engage early with interested RPs and provide clear disposal timetable. |
| Decision route for selecting RSL and approving disposal is unclear, leading to delay or challenge. | Confirm delegated authority and decision points (including consultation requirements). Align with Constitution and Legal/Procurement advice. |
| Disposal does not demonstrate “best value” (s123 LGA 1972) where wider objectives are prioritised over highest receipt, risking legal challenge. | Obtain valuation advice, maintain transparent, auditable evaluation and ensure legal sign-off. |
| Local Government Reorganisation consent | Monitor government directions and assess transaction value thresholds early. Build |

| | |
|---|---|
| thresholds affect timing or ability to dispose of the site. | consents into programme and engage Legal and relevant successor authority contacts as required. |
|---|---|

8. **APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix 1 – Details of Registered Social Landlords consulted (EXEMPT)

Appendix 2 – Feedback from Registered Social Landlords

Cabinet
2026

17th June

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

| Department | Name and Job Title | Date |
|--|---|-------------|
| Portfolio Holder | Cllr Karen May | 22/4/2026 |
| Lead Director / Assistant Director | Rachel Egan | 22/4/2026 |
| Financial Services | James Walton | 18/5/2026 |
| Legal Services | Nicola Cummings, Principal Solicitor - Governance | 18/5/2026 |
| Policy Team (if equalities implications apply) | Rebecca Green | 18/5/2026 |
| Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply) | Matthew Eccles | 18/5/2026 |

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

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Appendix 2 - RSL feedback:

| RSL reference | Location | Interest in site | Basis of interest | Comments |
|----------------------|--|--|---|---|
| A | Worcestershire | Yes but unable to consider at this time. | N/A | They do not currently have a vehicle to access grant and are exploring at pace. They may be in a position to secure grant funding from Homes England by the time the site is ready for redevelopment. |
| B | Central and South West England (multi-regional but not national) | No – too small. Minimum requirement of 50 units. | N/A | They may be interested in the future. |
| C | West Midlands | Yes | Acquisition preferred but would consider disposal and transfer of units to LA | They do not have their own housing list so nominations would come from LA. Not currently that active in Bromsgrove – more so in Birmingham and Coventry but would consider this site |
| D | National (but head office in Worcestershire) | Yes | Acquisition only rather than partnership arrangement with BDC | They have their own construction company so would develop the site themselves. This RP would deliver a 100% affordable scheme on the site based on local housing need. |
| E | Midlands and Central England | No | N/A | N/A |

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