BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

22ND JULY 2026, AT 6.00 P.M.

PARKSIDE SUITE - PARKSIDE

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

Observers: Councillor P. M. McDonald

Officers: Mr J. Leach, Mr. J. Walton, Mr. G. Revans, Mr S. Parry, Mr. M. Bough and Mr M. Austin, Mr J. Bevan and Mrs E. Davies

14/26 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors K. J. May and K. Taylor.

In the Leader's absence, Councillor S. J. Baxter chaired the meeting in her capacity as Deputy Leader.

15/26 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

16/26 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON 17TH JUNE 2026**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 17th June 2026 were submitted for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 17th June 2026 be approved as a true and accurate record.

17/26 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 16TH JUNE 2026**

The Chair invited Councillor P. M. McDonald, in his capacity as Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, to present the minutes of the meeting held on 16th June 2026.

It was reported that there were no outstanding recommendations arising from this meeting.

Members were also updated on discussions that had taken place at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held the previous evening. Members were advised that the Bromsgrove Sports and Leisure Centre Update had been considered and that further investigations into the financial information had subsequently been requested.

In addition, Members were advised that discussions had taken place regarding the provision of cool hubs during periods of extreme heat, including concerns relating to conflicting information provided by Worcestershire County Council regarding potential venues that could be utilised for this purpose.

Finally, it was noted that membership of the Finance and Budget Working Group was in the process of being confirmed.

18/26

FOOD WASTE COLLECTIONS IMPLEMENTATION

The Environmental Services Manager presented a report outlining proposals for the implementation of a food waste collection service.

Cabinet was reminded that Government had introduced a new statutory duty under the Environment Act 2021 which required local authorities to introduce a dedicated separate weekly collection of food waste to all households by 31st March 2026. It was noted that Bromsgrove District Council was not currently compliant with this requirement.

Members were informed that there had been conflicting information from Government regarding the provision of ongoing revenue funding for the service. Whilst funding had initially been expected, revenue support had subsequently been incorporated into the wider Local Government Settlement, resulting in a significant annual funding shortfall for the delivery of the service. However, capital funding had been received to support the purchase of vehicles and caddies required for implementation.

Cabinet noted that provision of one million pounds had been included within the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2026/27 to facilitate the introduction of the service. It had originally been anticipated that this allocation would be supplemented by Government funding.

It was reported that the Council had initially intended to procure the service through an outsourced arrangement due to limitations in available land and staffing resources. Whilst this had been considered the most cost-effective option, the approach had subsequently been reviewed following Wyre Forest District Council’s withdrawal from the joint procurement process.

Members were advised that officers had maintained ongoing dialogue with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), including correspondence from the Chief Executive. DEFRA had confirmed that it did not intend to take direct enforcement action against the Council at the present time, although it had acknowledged that the statutory requirements were not being met.

Cabinet was informed that the Council now intended to implement the service on a phased basis, with approximately fifty per cent of households receiving the service during the first phase and around sixty-six per cent during the subsequent phase. The service was expected to commence in January 2027, following delays in the delivery of the required vehicles, which were not anticipated to arrive until December 2026.

Members were further advised that recruitment of staff required to deliver the service would commence imminently. One of the principal challenges was the identification of suitable operational land which could be used jointly with Redditch Borough Council and provide adequate staff parking facilities.

Following a review of land holdings across both Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council, together with discussions with a local land agent, officers had identified two sites in Redditch which would collectively meet operational requirements. It was acknowledged that operating from Redditch would result in increased fuel costs. However, these costs were expected to be offset by savings in staffing for supervisory and management positions.

Cabinet noted that the Council would not initially be able to provide the service to approximately one third of properties within the District, including Houses in Multiple Occupation and some high-density developments. The report outlined the additional revenue funding that would be required to extend the service to all households in accordance with the statutory duty. This matter would be considered further through the budget-setting process for the forthcoming financial year.

Following presentation of the report, Members had detailed discussion and commented on the following matters:

- Members sought clarification regarding the level of Government funding allocated for the implementation of food waste collection services through the Local Government Settlement. Officers advised that Government had declined to provide a breakdown of the funding attributable to food waste collections.
- It was noted that seven collection vehicles were due to be delivered in December 2026, which would provide sufficient capacity to support a district-wide food waste collection service.
- Discussion took place regarding the position of Wyre Forest District Council in light of Local Government Reorganisation. Officers advised that Wyre Forest District Council had maintained that it would not implement a food waste collection service until either dedicated Government revenue funding became available or a new unitary authority was established. Members noted that compliance with the food waste collection requirement remained a statutory

obligation and that recent improvements to Wyre Forest District Council's depot may provide future operational capacity, although no food waste collection vehicles had yet been ordered.

- Cabinet was informed that an update on progress across Worcestershire had been presented to the Leaders' Board. Members noted that, following decisions regarding the future structure of local government within the county, authorities would continue to work collaboratively to develop food waste collection arrangements ahead of Local Government Reorganisation. An update was also provided on the position of other Worcestershire authorities.
- The importance of the Council meeting its statutory obligations and delivering the food waste collection service as soon as possible was emphasised.
- Discussion was had regarding the proposed lease arrangements for the two Redditch sites in the context of Local Government Reorganisation. Officers advised that the immediate priority was to secure suitable facilities to enable service implementation. It was reported that five-year lease agreements were being pursued, incorporating break clauses after three years, which would provide operational certainty whilst retaining flexibility for future review.
- Members queried the potential impact of operating the service from Redditch on residents living furthest from the proposed depot locations. Officers advised that no impact on service delivery was anticipated as collection vehicles would travel across the District as part of their normal operating routes.
- The benefits of a phased implementation programme were discussed. Members noted that the approach would enable officers to assess operational performance and address any issues before expanding the service further. Reference was made to the experience of other local authorities that had implemented services on a Council-wide basis from the outset and subsequently experienced operational difficulties. Cabinet noted that a phased rollout would support resilience and help ensure adequate staffing resources during implementation.
- The food waste collections would mirror the current arrangements for other waste collections. This would be beneficial as staff already knew the areas and would be able to share knowledge with colleagues dealing with the new waste service. It was clarified that only collection days would be mirrored rather than collection rounds.
- The proposed communications plan was also discussed. Members were advised that residents would receive advance notification of the introduction of the service in their area, notice regarding the delivery of food waste caddies and a further information pack explaining how the new arrangements would operate.

NOTED the progress made on food waste collection implementation.

RESOLVED that Authority be granted to the Assistant Director for Regeneration and Property Services to negotiate and finalise the terms of the lease for land at Howard Road and Crossgate Road.

RECOMMENDED that an allocation of additional ongoing revenue of £186,155 for the expansion of the food waste collection service from 2027/28 be considered as part of the Medium-Term Financial Plan, with any decision deferred until the full financial implications are assessed alongside wider funding priorities through the budget process.

19/26

LOW COST HOUSING CAPITAL RECEIPTS

The Strategic Housing Services Manager presented the Low Cost Housing Capital Receipts report.

Members were advised that the Council currently held a thirty per cent equity share in one hundred and eleven low cost housing properties through the low cost housing scheme. Cabinet had previously agreed in 2017 that proceeds arising from the sale of these properties should be ring-fenced for strategic housing purposes. A subsequent report considered by Cabinet in December 2024 had explored the potential use of these capital receipts in partnership with Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT). However, due to capacity constraints within BDHT, it had not been possible to progress this initiative.

The report therefore proposed that the Council utilise the available capital receipts to acquire properties for use as temporary accommodation. Members were informed that, following the purchase of suitable properties, a procurement exercise would be undertaken to appoint a registered provider to manage the accommodation on the Council's behalf.

It was noted that approximately £2,000 had been allocated within existing budgets to meet legal and development officer costs associated with property acquisitions. Ongoing management costs were estimated at approximately £6,500 per annum for each accommodation unit.

Members were further advised that the Council would principally seek to acquire existing suitable residential properties. However, opportunities to work with developers through Section 106 housing developments would also be explored where appropriate.

In considering the report Members had detailed discussion and commented on the following points:

- Members welcomed the proposal, noting that it would make effective use of the Council's existing expertise and resources whilst helping to address the shortage of temporary accommodation.
- Clarification was sought regarding the types of properties that would be acquired. Officers advised that both existing suitable

dwellings and properties available through new developments, including Section 106 schemes, would be considered, subject to availability, cost and standards being met.
- Members queried the standards that acquired properties would be required to meet. Officers confirmed that all properties would be assessed against the Council's established acquisition criteria and condition standards before purchase.
- Discussion took place regarding the purpose of the temporary accommodation. Officers explained that the properties would be used to meet the Council's statutory homelessness duties by providing short-term accommodation until suitable long-term housing became available.
- Members noted that the proposals would help reduce the Council's reliance on bed and breakfast accommodation and provide more suitable accommodation for households in need.
- A typographical error within the report was identified which referred to Redditch Borough Council, officers agreed that this would be corrected.
- Members requested that regular progress updates be provided as the scheme developed.
- Officers advised that, subject to available opportunities and funding, it was anticipated that between six and ten properties could be acquired.
- An alternative suggestion involving mobile homes was discussed. Officers advised that this would require additional licensing and planning approvals and was not considered the preferred approach for reducing dependence on bed and breakfast accommodation.

RECOMMENDED that

1) all low cost housing receipts be used by the Council to increase the supply of temporary accommodation by purchasing suitable dwellings.

2) delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services following consultation with the Cabinet Member of Housing to purchase properties.

20/26 **FIRST HOMES POLICY REVIEW**

The First Homes Policy Review report was presented for Members' consideration by the Strategic Housing Services Manager.

Cabinet was advised that Government had introduced an affordable housing product known as First Homes to be provided by all local housing authorities from 28th March 2022. This required a minimum of twenty five per cent of affordable housing on Section 106 sites to be First Homes.

An update to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) guidance in 2024 offered an opportunity for this approach to be reviewed. The removal of the mandatory requirement to deliver a minimum of twenty five per cent of affordable housing as First Homes would allow Strategic Housing to flexibly negotiate with developers regarding appropriate affordable housing products on site.

It was noted that this report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee the previous evening.

RESOLVED that the Council's revised First Homes Policy be approved.

21/26 **FINAL BROMSGROVE HOME CHOICE ALLOCATIONS POLICY APPROVAL**

The Strategic Housing Services Manager presented this report for the consideration of Cabinet.

Members were advised that, as the local housing authority, the Council had a statutory duty to maintain an allocations scheme setting out how social housing would be allocated within the District. Following the end of a previous partnership arrangement with neighbouring authorities, Bromsgrove District Council was required to develop and adopt its own allocations policy.

Cabinet noted that approval had been granted in 2025 to undertake a six-week consultation on the draft Housing Allocations Policy, which commenced on 27th November 2025. Following the consultation exercise, amendments had been made to the policy to reflect feedback received.

Members were informed that the revised policy had also been reviewed by external legal advisers. The review had identified no significant concerns, although it had highlighted the importance of ensuring that the housing register remained accessible to all groups with protected characteristics where required. Cabinet's attention was drawn to the Equality Impact Assessment within the report.

RESOLVED that the final Bromsgrove Home Choice Housing Allocations Policy be approved.

22/26

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN SCENE SETTING REPORT 2027/28

The Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer presented the Medium Term Financial Plan Scene Setting Report for 2027/28.

Members were advised that this was the first in a series of reports that would be presented to Cabinet throughout the remainder of the financial year. The report established the starting position for the development of the 2027/28 budget and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) covering the subsequent financial years leading up to Vesting Day under Local Government Reorganisation.

Cabinet noted the proposed timetable for consideration of the MTFP by both Cabinet and Council. The report also outlined the key assumptions underpinning the financial forecasts and identified a number of budget pressures that would need to be addressed as part of the financial planning process, which totalled approximately one million pounds.

Members were informed that the report highlighted a number of overarching financial risks and uncertainties that could impact the Council's financial position.

Cabinet also noted that the first stage of a budget review had been undertaken with senior officers to identify key service pressures, savings opportunities and areas requiring further consideration as part of the development of the MTFP.

In response to a question from Members regarding identified budget pressures and undelivered base budget efficiencies, officers clarified that the £927,000 pressure related to savings that had been identified in previous budget-setting exercises but had not been delivered in a manner that could be permanently incorporated into the Council's base budget. Officers explained that, whilst some savings had been achieved, these had often been delivered through measures such as vacancy management rather than through permanent reductions in expenditure. Although some of the efficiencies related to earlier financial years, including 2025/26, their impact remained relevant to the Council's financial position and had therefore been reflected as a budget pressure within the MTFP for 2027/28.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance commented that the report provided a clear baseline of the financial challenges facing the Council over the medium term. It was emphasised that the administration's approach to the budget-setting process would be underpinned by transparency, openness and robust governance, ensuring that Members were fully informed of the financial position and the decisions required throughout the process.

RESOLVED that

1) The budget process outlined in this report be followed for the 2027/28 annual budget and the Medium Term Financial Plan (2027/28 to 2030/31), subject to the impact of Local Government Reorganisation and vesting day on 1st April 2028.

2) The current pressures of £1.037 million be noted for consideration as part of the budget process for 2027/28.

23/26

TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT 2025/26

The Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer presented the Treasury Management Outturn Report for 2025/26.

Members were advised that the report provided an overview of the Council's treasury management activity during the previous financial year, including its cash flow position, borrowing arrangements and investment activities. The report also outlined the wider economic backdrop within which treasury management decisions had been undertaken.

Cabinet noted that the report reviewed performance against the Council's Prudential Indicators and detailed the level of borrowing held by the authority. Members were advised that all borrowing and treasury management activity had remained within the approved prudential limits throughout the year.

It was reported that officers were continuing to review the Council's overall cash flow position to ensure that appropriate arrangements remained in place to support the Council's financial resilience. Members were further advised that an updated Treasury Management Strategy and revised cash flow forecasts covering the next twelve months would be developed to support future treasury management decisions.

Members sought clarification regarding the fifteen million pound borrowing facility referred to in the report and whether borrowing had already been undertaken. Officers explained that, following a review of the Council's cash position towards the end of 2025/26, it had been determined that additional cash was required to manage short-term cash flow pressures. Consequently, borrowing of fifteen million pounds had been undertaken, comprising five million pounds on a short-term basis and a further ten million pounds over a twelve-month period.

Officers advised that the borrowing had been undertaken to support cash flow requirements rather than to address a structural budget deficit. Particular pressures arose at year-end when significant payments continued to be made whilst income from Council Tax collection was reduced.

A further query was raised regarding whether additional borrowing would be required during the current financial year. Officers advised that no additional borrowing was currently anticipated and that the ten million pound loan was scheduled for repayment in March 2027. However, this would be kept under review as part of a wider assessment of the Council's cash flow requirements.

The possibility of repaying the borrowing early was discussed, however officers explained that loans of this nature would generally be repaid on their maturity date and that early repayment would typically incur financial penalties. This would however be investigated.

Members expressed concern regarding the level of borrowing and sought assurance about the Council's ability to repay the debt in March 2027. Officers reiterated that the borrowing related to cash flow management and not a lack of overall resources. It was noted that the timing of grant income, capital receipts and expenditure on large capital schemes could create temporary fluctuations in cash balances throughout the year.

Officers advised that further work was being undertaken, with support from treasury management advisers, to improve forecasting and provide a clearer understanding of the Council's future cash flow position. This would be reflected in future Treasury Management reports and the updated Treasury Management Strategy.

Members noted that the Council had historically operated without significant external borrowing.

The importance of understanding the timing of anticipated income, including capital receipts and other significant funding streams, when assessing the Council's future cash flow position was highlighted. Officers confirmed that these matters would form part of the ongoing review.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance commented that the report would be referred to Full Council for approval, reflecting the administration's commitment to transparency, accountability and appropriate Member oversight of the Council's financial affairs. Members were advised that, given the significance of treasury management activity and borrowing decisions, it was important that these matters were subject to detailed scrutiny and consideration by both Cabinet and Council.

RECOMMENDED that

1) the Council's Treasury performance for the financial year 25/26 be noted; and
2) the position in relation to the Council's Prudential indicators be noted.

24/26

QUARTER 4 FINANCIAL MONITORING AND OUTTURN REPORT 2025/26

The Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer presented the Quarter 4 Financial Monitoring and Outturn Report 2025/26.

Members were advised that the Council had recorded a small overspend of £5,000 against a net revenue budget of over fifteen point three million pounds. It was noted that this represented a position that was very close to a balanced budget.

It was explained that the financial position had shifted significantly since Quarter three. Two key items had contributed to this change. Firstly, staffing costs of approximately £750,000 had been charged to the capital programme at year-end. Secondly, a VAT correction of approximately £400,000 had been charged to service budgets. The impact of these two adjustments had resulted in the projected overspend reducing from around £300,000 at Quarter three to the final outturn overspend of £5,000.

Members' attention was drawn to a section of the report which detailed variances across individual service areas. Whilst the overall outturn position reflected only a small overspend, there were significant variances within individual service budgets. The report set out explanations for the major variances and outlined the impacts within each service area.

In relation to the capital programme, Members were informed that the Council had commenced the year with a capital budget of seventeen point four million pounds, including schemes carried forward from previous years. The capital programme had subsequently increased to twenty-one point nine million pounds during the year. Against this budget, significant expenditure had been incurred, with only a relatively small amount, approximately five million pounds, required to be carried forward into 2026/27.

Details of the Council's two major Levelling Up Fund schemes were highlighted. Members were advised that the Council continued to maintain a healthy reserves position. At the end of the financial year, earmarked reserves stood at just over fourteen million pounds, whilst the General Fund balance totalled thirteen point one five million pounds. It was noted that these reserve levels provided the Council with a strong degree of financial resilience and risk mitigation.

Members were informed that a review of earmarked reserves would be undertaken during the forthcoming financial year. In addition, a risk assessment of the General Fund balance would be completed to determine the most appropriate level of reserves required. Any resulting adjustments or recommendations would be reported to Council as necessary.

Reference was also made to the Council's collection performance for Council Tax and Business Rates. Members noted that collection rates at year-end were slightly above the national average for shire district councils. Whilst performance had fallen marginally short of the target set at the start of the year, the shortfall was reported to be only minor.

Members commented that the final position was encouraging and that the overspend was minimal.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance thanked the Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer for his presentation of the report and highlighted the enhanced level of financial information now being provided, including service-level outturn data, to improve transparency and understanding of financial performance across the Council.

Whilst endorsing the financial outturn figures presented, the Portfolio Holder for Finance explained that a revised governance approach was being proposed. Following advice from the Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer, it was considered appropriate that key financial matters, including the revenue outturn, reserve movements and capital programme slippage, be referred to Full Council for approval. It was emphasised that the financial figures themselves were unchanged and that the proposal was intended to strengthen transparency, accountability and democratic oversight of significant financial decisions.

RESOLVED that

1) The updated procurement position set out in Appendix A to the minutes be noted, with any new items over £200k to be included on the forward plan.

RECOMMENDED that

2) The 2025/26 revenue outturn position is an overspend of £5,480 which will be funded by an allocation from General Fund Balance.
3) The General Fund Opening Balance of £13.382m will be reduced to £13.150m as a result of this overspend and the net transfer to Ward Budget Reserves previously agreed with members.
4) The 2025/26 capital outturn position is £16.943m spend against a total approved programme of £21.877m. The net balance of £4.934m will be carried forward and included within the 2026/27 capital programme.

5) The Ward Budget allocation for 2025/26 of £62,000 had approved allocations at £55,402 as at 31 March 2026, resulting in £6,598 which is transferred to General Fund reserves.
6) The balance of Earmarked Reserves as at 31 March 2026 is £14.169m.

25/26 **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 7.32 p.m.

Chairman

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Appendix A – Procurement Pipeline

Title	Council	Contract Description	Department	Value	Current Contract Expiry Date	Procurement Start Date	Contract Start Date	Contract Length (years)	Extension	Planned Procurement Route
Microsoft Licensing	Bromsgrove	Microsoft Licensing for Azure, Windows and Office365 etc.	Business Transformation	438,000		13/02/2026	01/07/2026	3	N/A	A Framework
Sanders Park, Bromsgrove	Bromsgrove	To appoint a tenant for the catering and management of the Cafe in Sanders Park.	Leisure	321,000		23/03/2026	01/08/2026	10years 2months	No	A Tender

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