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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY 16TH SEPTEMBER 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 22nd July 2026** (Pages 7 - 20)

4. **Housing Assistance Policy 2026** (Pages 21 - 62)

5. **Promotion of Business Support** (Pages 63 - 70)

6. **Quarter 1 2026/27 Performance Report** (Pages 71 - 110)
7. **BDC Equality Strategy 2026-2028 (including Engagement Policy)** (Pages 111 - 138)
8. **Discretionary Council Tax Reduction Policy 2026/27** (Pages 139 - 160)
9. **Recommendation from the Shareholders Committee - Appointment of Shareholders Committee Representative** (Pages 161 - 164)
10. **Quarter 1 Financial Monitoring Report 2026/27**

This report will follow in a supplementary pack for this meeting.

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

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

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Paragraph(s)</u>
12	3

12. **Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 21st July 2026** (Pages 165 - 182)
 - (a) To receive and note the minutes
 - (b) To consider any recommendations contained within the minutes
13. **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

8th September 2026

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

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GUIDANCE ON FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS

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

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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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.

Agenda Item 3

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22nd July 2026

- 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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Cabinet

16th September 2026

Housing Assistance Policy 2026

Relevant Portfolio Holder		Councillor Sue Baxter
Portfolio Holder Consulted		Yes
Relevant Assistant Director		Assistant Director Community and Housing Services
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		Community and 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 is asked to **RESOLVE** that:-

- 1) The Housing Assistance Policy be approved and adopted; and
- 2) Delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to agree any revisions to the Housing Assistance Policy and in line with any legislative or government guidance updates.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Disabled facilities grants (DFGs) are a mandatory service to fund adaptation of properties across all tenures based upon a means-test for adults and without a means test for children. Typical works range from provision of a stairlift or level access shower up to a complete extension for ground floor living. Whilst most elements of the mandatory grants are legally set, a local policy is needed to set out the Council's approach to a number of discretionary elements and to set out how discretionary funds are applied.
- 2.2 Most disabled facilities grants and many of the other forms of assistance are delivered through the Worcestershire Home Adaptations Service. This is a shared service being delivered on behalf of the Worcestershire districts by Wyre Forest District Council. The policy has also been developed through feedback from the staff of the service that highlighted for example

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the need to review how fees are charged for high value cases. The shared service operates under a formal Collaboration Agreement, with Bromsgrove District Council retaining responsibility for adopting the Housing Assistance Policy, approving discretionary assistance arrangements and ensuring appropriate governance and statutory compliance.

- 2.3 The proposed policy provides for a limited range of discretionary assistance mechanisms and the criteria for these. Most forms of discretionary assistance are repayable upon future sale of the property without any interest applied. Any repaid money is recycled into future discretionary assistance. Discretionary forms of assistance include topping up mandatory disabled facilities grants. Other forms of help include essential repairs and energy efficiency improvements for homeowners on low income. All assistance is based upon the works not being covered by insurance or some other funding available. There is an annual review mechanism to distribute available funding across the schemes. Discretion is also provided to be flexible on conditions and criteria when it is apparent to do so would be in the strategic housing interest of the Council.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 There are no additional operational implications in implementing the Housing Assistance Policy due to the activity currently being undertaken.
- 3.2 The amendments from the 2024 policy have been made to achieve three functions.

a) The proposed revised policy has been prepared by officers across all Worcestershire councils. This has led to the suggested common policy that will help to clarify arrangements and be more user friendly therefore for county-wide partners and service users. It will facilitate the delivery by the Home Adaptations Service that operates across all of Worcestershire and will enable a smooth transition for any future local government re-organisation outcome. The policy is mostly focused on the disabled facilities grants and revised wording has been agreed at an officer level based on experience and legal principles.

b) The policy sets out recognised national guidance performance aims to try to achieve completion timescales for urgent, non-urgent, complex and non-complex cases. This will guide the work of the new service.

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c) Removing the additional discretionary fee for high-value adaptations ensures that a greater proportion of available funding is spent directly on adaptations rather than fees. This will improve affordability for applicants requiring major adaptations whilst maintaining the financial sustainability of the shared service.

3.3 This policy makes clear there is potential for individual exceptional cases of assistance at the discretion of the Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services where: -

- The application is outside of the normal limits of assistance;
- Where it appears to be the best option to achieve strategic housing objectives and better care fund objectives; and
- It is the most reasonable and practical option.

3.4 The Council recognises the Armed Forces Covenant. The covenant sets out the relationship between the nation; the government and the country's Armed Forces. It recognises that the whole nation has a moral obligation to members of the Armed Forces and their families, and it establishes how they should expect to be treated. The Armed Forces community should not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases such as the injured and the bereaved.

3.5 The proposed Housing Assistance policy recognises the covenant. It sets out how the Council will work with local organisations including the Royal British Legion and the Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association to ensure persons who are ex-forces or serving personnel are identified and provided with additional support as appropriate.

3.6 The implementation of the revised Policy will be monitored through the governance arrangements for the Worcestershire Home Adaptations Service (WHAS). The WHAS Client Management Group, consisting of representatives from all six Council's oversees the provision of the service and monitors the service performance, financial management and produces the annual business plan. This performance monitoring will also ensure the Policy is delivered correctly and identify solutions to any issues that become apparent.

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4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no additional financial implications for the provision of housing assistance. The funding for housing assistance is provided by Government through the Better Care Fund mechanism and from recycled funds from previous assistance where a repayment condition has been activated. Revenue costs and Council officer costs are met from capitalisation of the assistance provided. The Policy also supports effective use of recycled grant repayments by ensuring they are reinvested into future housing assistance, maximising the value of available Better Care Fund resources.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Councils are required to have an up-to-date Housing Assistance Policy under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) 2002. The purpose is for standard conditions and assessment of means to pay for disabled facilities grants are set out in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.
- 5.2 Under this legislation, assistance can include a variety of purposes including acquisition of, adapting, repairing or improving properties.
- 5.3 Assistance can be in any form. The assistance can be subject to such conditions as appropriate including repayment.
- 5.4 Appropriate governance arrangements are addressed within the policy. The Policy includes a governance framework setting out responsibilities for service delivery, decision making, performance monitoring, quality assurance and policy compliance. This provides assurance that grant decisions are made consistently, transparently and in accordance with statutory requirements whilst enabling the Council to monitor performance and continuous improvement through the existing governance arrangements of the Worcestershire Home Adaptations Service.
- 5.5 The Council has a statutory duty to give due regard to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant when carrying out certain functions, including housing. This is detailed in the Armed Forces Act 2021.

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6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 The policy has been aligned with neighbouring Worcestershire Local Authorities therefore ensuring consistency for residents. These duties will be continued with the new unitary authority.

Relevant Council Priority

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

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 The implementation of this policy has a positive impact in relation to climate change. Through the delivery of home adaptations the Council will support improvements to the energy efficiency of residential properties.
- 6.4 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

- 6.5 A scoping assessment shows the policy has a positive impact on persons who are disabled and/or elderly and low income persons of any age.
- 6.6 The policy has a positive impact on mitigation of climate change as it incorporates a mechanism for delivery of grants for greater energy efficiency in homes.
- 6.7 The policy has a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of people with physical disabilities and their families, as they receive adaptations to their homes. It also has a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of other grant and financial assistance recipients to enable them to live in warmer, safer homes.

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7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 Failure to maintain an up-to-date Housing Assistance Policy could expose the Council to legal challenge, findings of maladministration by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, financial risk through inconsistent decision making, reputational damage and failure to comply with statutory duties relating to Disabled Facilities Grants.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Housing Assistance Policy 2026

Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment

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9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Sue Baxter	26/06/2026
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Judith Willis Assistant Director Community and Housing Services	7/04/2026
Financial Services	Deb Goodall Assistant Director Financial Services	27/04/2026
Legal and Democratic Services	Nicola Cummings, Principal Solicitor – Governance and Jess Bayley-Hill, Principal Democratic Services Officer	27/04/2026

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Bromsgrove District Council
HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY
2026

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 requires all councils to adopt and publish a policy outlining how they intend to exercise powers set out within the legislation, to include use of government funding received through the Better Care Fund, to meet both national aims, outcome measures, metrics and local needs in addition to locally funded forms of assistance.

The policy is designed to contribute towards the council's strategic aims and objectives by assisting with:

- a) The improvement of housing quality in all tenures
- b) Enabling people to stay in their home as they get older and provide disabled persons with maximum manoeuvrability around their homes
- c) Improving energy efficiency and eliminating fuel poverty
- d) Improvement of social care, health and social wellbeing

2. OUR POLICY AIMS

The key aims are to address the issue of vulnerable persons or persons on low incomes who either cannot afford to maintain their properties in good repair or who cannot fund essential adaptations required in order that they might fully utilise their home, benefit from safe and decent housing and retain their independence. This will include;

- Increasing the number of people who are able to remain at home and prevent inappropriate admission to hospital, residential and care homes
- Preventing delayed release from hospital or other types of care
- Reducing the number of persons and particularly vulnerable persons living in homes that have category 1 and serious category 2 hazards (as set out within the Housing Act 2004)
- Improving the health of customers by reducing the number of households in fuel poverty
- Assisting people to move at an earlier stage to avoid unnecessary Disabled Facilities Grant spend and care/support costs.

The council will consider in all cases a person's ability to repay or contribute towards the assistance given whether under a mandatory requirement or as a criteria set within any discretionary form of assistance (unless stated in the policy). The council's Home Adaptations Service or its appointed agent will provide in writing the conditions and any obligations to which any form of assistance provided is subject.

The council or its appointed agent will consider all applications for assistance on their merits however all cases will be assessed against the following criteria;

- All available options, including but not restricted to financial, have been fully explored
- Assistance through other means is not reasonably available or practicable
- The proposal fits the strategic aims of the council and/or national aims and metrics of the Better Care Fund Plan
- The proposal is economically viable considering the council resources available

The council will seek best value for the funding available whilst ensuring needs identified are met. Discretionary funding will normally involve a repayable local land charge for the cost of works. Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants will involve a local land charge where applicable under the legal framework. The council will ring fence recycled money from local land charges, where grants are repayable, to provide funding for future discretionary grants and support through the housing assistance policy applicable at that time. There is discretion to allow for non-repayment where appropriate.

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces, and their families, are treated fairly. The council works actively with the local representatives of organisations such as Royal British Legion (RBL) and the Soldiers', Sailors' & Airmen's Families Association (SSAFA) to ensure wider support is available to any cases where active or ex-service persons are identified. This includes acceptance of direct applications from these organisations and referrals to support from them or other agencies where identified as applicable. The council will include in any grant provision covering the costs of any relevant assessments or support work by RBL or SSAFA to enable the grant to proceed. Those with a service history may have received a financial award in association with their service, discharge or ongoing benefits in relation to that service. These amounts will not be considered in any means test undertaken to determine whether a contribution is required towards any grant in this policy.

The council will review this policy on a regular basis to reflect evidence concerning the conditions of housing within the area and respond to changing policies at a national or local level or to reflect evidence concerning the conditions of housing within the area.

3. SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

Financial Assistance schemes are discretionary, except Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant, and are subject to the council having sufficient resources.

The Policy grants discretion to extend or amend eligibility criteria, conditions, level of grant or assistance and scope of works where the situation is exceptional and, in the opinion of the relevant Head of Service that assistance would help the council meet its strategic housing objectives and/or Better Care Fund metrics.

3.1 Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants:

These are mandatory grants to support the provision of adaptations to promote independent living within the home, subject to the provisions of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

3.2 Discretionary Disabilities Assistance:

The following are discretionary forms of assistance enabled through the central government Better Care Fund allocation, subject to the primary requirements of Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant being firstly met:

- **Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant Top Up** - To enable top-up funding to a Disabled Facilities Grant scheme that exceeds the Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant maximum where the additional costing is considered justifiable.
- **Dementia Dwellings Grant** - To assist persons with dementia with specialised living aids to enable independent and safe living.
- **Hospital Discharge: Disabled Facilities Grant** – For fast-tracked means tested works to the home to enable earlier discharge from hospital or place of temporary care where problems in the home are identified as a possible reason for delayed discharge. These DFGs will be prioritised to enable earlier discharge from hospital.
- **Home move grant : Disabled Facilities Grant** - to enable people to move to more suitable accommodation where this is considered more appropriate and/or cost effective than adaptations to their existing home.

3.3 Discretionary Assistance:

- **Home Repair Assistance:** To ensure that persons on low income can undertake essential repairs or improvements to their home.

4.1 HOW TO APPLY AND MAKING A FORMAL APPLICATION FOR A MANDATORY OR DISCRETIONARY DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT (for information on how to apply for the other discretionary assistance please see section 5) for information regarding direct Council Application see 4.2

All applications must be on a form provided by the council or its appointed agent and must include the following documentation:-

- (i) Particulars of the work to be carried out including, where appropriate, plans, specifications, schedule of work and specialist reports. This should include the complete scheme in cases where the whole scheme exceeds that which is eligible for Assistance.
- (ii) Details of any professional fees or charges relating to the work and for which assistance is being sought.

- (iii) Proof of ownership of all land and buildings pertaining to the application from a solicitor or mortgagee, or copies of the title deeds/land certificate, or a copy of the tenancy agreement or licence to occupy in the case of a tenanted property.
- (iv) Proof of occupation and/or tenancy where applicable.
- (v) Proof of a qualifying pass-porting benefit is being claimed.
- (vi) Where no pass-porting benefit is received, full financial documentation including but not limited to income received, benefits received, savings, pensions and where applicable rental income from tenants and boarders.
- (vii) Where applicable, permission of co-owners and landlords
- (viii) A VAT exemption form where the applicant or relevant person is registered disabled or capable of being registered.
- (ix) A signed conditions form accepting the obligation to repay the assistance in the event of any breach of the relevant conditions concerning future occupation, letting or ownership.
- (x) If required, permission under any statute including but not limited to, planning permission, Building Regulation approval, Party Wall Act, etc.

Applications relating to the disabled will require an assessment report from the Occupational Therapy Service or Trusted Assessor.

An application will only be considered complete or valid when the council or appointed agent has all the information necessary to make a decision on the application.

Where an applicant uses the appointed agent to undertake the application and that agent is permitted to charge a fee, this will be included in the eligible costs.

The council may at its discretion choose to waive certain application requirements where considered appropriate to do so in the interests of the policy aims.

Once approval has been given the applicant has 12 months from the date of the approval in which to complete the works, unless otherwise stated.

4.2 Direct Application

Applicants are not obliged to use the services of the council's appointed agent. However, where the application is being coordinated through the council's appointed agent and there is a procurement framework approved by the council, then this will be used.

For a direct application to the council the applicant will need to provide quotes in line with the council's financial framework.

The council does not provide assistance to the applicant in the manner as its appointed agent would provide where the applicant chooses not to utilise the appointed agent and to submit an application directly to the council. The direct applicant will not be assisted in any way by the Council to make their application, there are no payments of grant funding upfront, the applicant has to manage the project, no

payment will be made until all works are completed. The decision to approve these applications may take up to 6 months.

5. DETAILS OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

5.1 Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)

These grants are mandatory under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and are subject to a statutory test of resources (means test) required to establish whether the applicant is financially able to contribute towards the costs of the eligible scheme.

Disabled Facilities Grants are awarded to enable applicants to have access to and around their homes, or to use essential facilities within the home to enable them to live safely and independently. Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants can only be given for the purposes set out in the Act. Detailed guidance on what the council deems to be eligible works or not are set out in a separate document that is available to applicants or others upon request. This is maintained across the county as a common approach wherever possible.

Ongoing maintenance and repair of adaptations and equipment, whether provided under a grant previously or not, is the responsibility of the applicant or landlord as relevant.

Whilst it is recognised that a Disabled Facilities Grant is a mandatory grant, a move to a more suitable property may meet the needs of the applicant in a more appropriate way. This could include moving to a more suitable and/or adapted accommodation that may be available to the applicant.

The maximum amount of Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant is currently £30,000 set by statute. Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant for costs above the mandatory amount will not be made available except upon the agreement of the council, in accordance with this policy under the Discretionary top up for Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant, and where justified to be the most satisfactory course of action in the circumstances or to have arisen through reasonable and unforeseeable additional works or costs.

The council/appointed agent will endeavour but cannot guarantee to determine complete applications and provide the relevant adaptations work within recognised national guidance timescales. In any event the council will determine a complete and valid direct application at the earliest opportunity within the statutory timescale of 6 months.

Eligible Applicants

- Any applicant registered or capable of being registered under the Chronically Sick & Disabled Persons Act 1970 and requires adaptations to be provided.

- Any disabled person, as described by Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, s.100. Applicants can be property owners or tenants
- Landlords can make an application on behalf of their tenant.

Qualifying Criteria

- A referral from the Community Occupational Therapist (COT) via Social Services or a Trusted Assessor confirming that the works are 'necessary and appropriate' is required. This referral will recommend works.
- Entitlement to a Disabled Facilities Grant is mandatory but before approval the council has to be satisfied that the relevant works are both necessary and appropriate for the disabled person, and additionally that it is 'reasonable and practicable' to carry out the works.
- A permanent and legal residence, or long-term in the case of fostering, including dwellings, mobile homes, caravans and houseboats.
- Second or holiday homes will not be considered for assistance.

Conditions

- Works must qualify as described in s23 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (as amended).
- Works must be recommended by a Community Occupational Therapist or Trusted Assessor and be necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the disabled applicant.
- The works must be reasonable and practicable to carry out having regard to the age and condition of the dwelling or building.
- Applicant will be subject to a financial assessment of resources except where:
 -
 - i) the applicant (relevant person(s)) is in receipt of one or more of the following means tested benefits; Housing Benefit, Income Support, Guaranteed Pension Credit, Income-based Employment Support Allowance (ESA), Income-based Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), Working/Child Tax Credit where income is less than set threshold, Universal Credit
 - ii) The application is in respect of a disabled child.
- Proof of title is required
- Landlord consent to the works is required where applicable.
- Conditions relating to the recovery of equipment in specified circumstances are applied.

- The council will use its powers to place a local land charge against the property and recover the amount, in line with current legislation and regulations. At time of adoption of this policy, this is where the Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant exceeds £5000. The charge may be up to a maximum of £10,000 and repayment of the sum on charge is required where the adapted property is sold, transferred or otherwise disposed of within a 10 year period from completion of the work. Conditions for any land charge and repayment will be informed to any applicant or their representative.
- At the time of adoption of this policy, In the case of a Disabled Facilities Grant where a 10 year conditional repayment obligation exists and the recipient intends to dispose of the property by sale, assignment, transfer or otherwise within the 10 year period, the charge must be repaid, unless the council, having considered:
 - i) the extent to which the recipient of the assistance would suffer financial hardship were he/she to be required to repay all or some of the grant or charge;
 - ii) whether the disposal of the property is to enable the recipient to take up employment, or to change the location of his/her employment;
 - iii) whether the disposal is made for reasons connected with the physical or mental health or well-being of the recipient of the assistance or of the disabled occupant of the property; and
 - iv) whether the disposal is made to enable the recipient of the assistance to live with, or near, any person who is disabled and in need of care, which the recipient of the assistance is intending to provide, or who is intending to provide care of which the recipient of the assistance is in need of by reason of disability, is satisfied that it is reasonable in the circumstances to waive or reduce the repayable sum. This will be updated in line with any legislative/regulatory changes and informed to the applicant or their representative as part of the application process.

Maximum Assistance

- £ 30,000

5.2 DISCRETIONARY ASSISTANCE

5.2.1 Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant (Top Up)

Where DFG works requested are in excess of the mandatory limit (currently £30,000) or considered to be unreasonable given the age, construction and/or condition of the property, alternatives to discretionary DFG funding including the following will normally be considered first;

- a) Referral to Social Services and other relevant organisations (including charities) for their consideration of providing additional resources

- b) Alternative schemes of work.
- c) Advising the applicant to move to alternative accommodation, with funding for adaptations to the new accommodation available if required.

Subject to availability of funding the council may consider Discretionary Top Up for Disabled Facilities Grant. Where Discretionary Top Up for Disabled Facilities Grant is considered appropriate the discretionary assistance will not normally exceed £30,000. The cost of works funded above the mandatory grant limit will be registered as a Local Land Charge and repayable to the Council in full on the sale transfer or disposal of the property for owner-occupied properties. For rented properties there will be a condition that the landlord agrees to let the property to persons requiring the adaptation for their lifetime unless breach of tenancy contract occurs that results in re-possession or the disabled tenant moves to meet changed needs.

If the cost of works exceeds both the mandatory disabled facilities grant and discretionary top up grant amounts the applicant must be able demonstrate that they can fund the remaining balance before grant approval. Should the applicant not be able to demonstrate availability of additional funds this grant will be unable to proceed.

Discretionary top up grants are subject to available budget in year

Maximum Assistance

£30,000 (once only)

5.2.2 Dementia Dwelling Grant

Subject to availability of funding the council may consider providing non means-tested assistance to provide aids and adaptations in the home

Assistance to support people living with dementia to remain safe and independent within their home. The assistance is intended to provide aids, adaptations and environmental adjustments that support individuals to better navigate and use their home, reduce risks and promote independence and well being. Examples of support may include, but are not limited to night lighting, touch lamps, dementia-friendly clocks, improved lighting controls and other assistive products.

Eligible Applicants

Individuals with a diagnosis of dementia.

- A referral from the Early Intervention Dementia Team Service (EDTS) or other relevant referring agent.
- The grant offer will be a combination of standard and bespoke products based around an assessment of individual need. Assessments will adopt a person-centred approach recognising that dementia affects individuals differently.

Qualifying Criteria

- Dementia diagnosis or living with a recognised memory loss affecting day-to-day independence.
- Aid the person to remain in the home independently for a longer period.

Conditions

The proposed assistance will support the individual to maintain independence, safety and wellbeing within the home.

- Works or equipment must directly relate to the needs arising from the individual's dementia.
- Assistance will only be provided where it supports the individual to remain safely and independently in their home.
- Only one application will normally be approved within a two-year period, up to a maximum of £750.
- Exceptions may be approved at the discretion of the relevant Head of Service where justified.
- Works must be completed within 12 months of approval.

Maximum Assistance

£750

5.2.3 Hospital Discharge – Disabled Facilities Grant

Subject to availability of funding this assistance is intended to aid timely discharge from hospital or temporary place of care and help avoid re-admission.

This assistance forms part of the Disabled Facilities Grant and will be prioritised. Where a request to facilitate discharge from hospital is received the council or its appointed agent will endeavour to fast track that application and delivery of required eligible works as soon as is practical to achieve.

This grant is subject to the same means-testing and other requirements for a mandatory DFG.

5.2.4 Home Move Grant Assistance- Disabled Facilities Grant

The aim of providing this discretionary financial assistance is to enable people to move to more suitable accommodation where this is considered more appropriate and/or cost effective than providing adaptations to their existing home. A Disabled Facilities Grant must be used to adapt the property they are moving to up to the total amount they would be entitled to including the £3k for tenants and /£8k for owner occupiers.

Eligible Applicants

- Any disabled person, as described by the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, s100.

- Applicants can be property owners or tenants.

Qualifying Criteria

- A permanent and legal residence
- Eligible costs - legal and ancillary fees, estate agent fees, removal costs, carpet and curtains

Conditions

- This grant can only be used alongside adaptations at the new property, and the amount awarded will count toward the maximum mandatory DFG allowance.
- The assistance will only be approved on a strict case by case basis
- Applicants must be moving from a property which is their main residence to another property which will become their main residence and both properties must be within the Council's area.
- Assistance will not be given towards the purchase price of a property.
- Grants cannot be awarded retrospectively. If the move is aborted costs will not be paid.
- All applicants will be required to complete the move within 12 months from the date of approval of their application.

Maximum Assistance

- £3,000 for tenant transfers, £8,000 for move into an owner-occupied property.

5.2.5 Home Repair Assistance

This discretionary assistance, available subject to budget availability of the council, is intended to ensure persons on low income can undertake essential repairs or improvements to their home. It is available to homeowners and tenants with a repairing responsibility that do not have sufficient financial resources to maintain their homes in a safe, health enabling condition free of serious defects or hazards. The assistance is repayable on sale, transfer or disposal of the property and does not accrue interest charges.

Eligible Applicants

- Owner occupiers or private tenants with a repairing responsibility, having savings of less than £16,000 and in receipt of one or more of the following means-tested benefits:- Income Support, Guaranteed Pension Credit, Income-based Employment Support Allowance (ESA), Income-based Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), Working Tax Credit, Universal Credit, Housing/Council Tax Support (not including single person or disabled person discount), or
- Where the household income is less than £31k, or

- Assessment of income and expenditure shows they would not reasonably be expected to repay a loan for the works needed within a 2 year period. Assessment by council or it's agent.

Qualifying Criteria

- The property is the applicant's permanent and legal residence.
- The property needs essential repairs as determined by the Housing Act 2004 to address Category 1 or significant Category 2 hazards as determined under the Housing Health & Safety Rating System, in order to make the property safe, warm, weatherproof and healthy for the occupants
- No assistance will be granted in respect of properties built or converted less than 10 years prior to the application date.

Conditions

- Only one application for assistance will be considered up to a maximum of £20,000 within any 3 year period. Where exceptional circumstances exist this condition may be relaxed at the discretion of the relevant Head of Service.
- Assistance is repayable in full to the council on sale, transfer or other disposal of the property. A Local Land Charge will be placed on the property for this purpose.
- The applicant must have lived at the property for a minimum of 12 months immediately prior to the application date as his/her sole permanent residence.
- The approved works must be completed within 12 months of the date of approval.
- The scope of work should aim to tackle all the identified category 1 or significant category 2 hazards unless there are reasonable grounds to limit the works.
- Where the works are in respect of common parts or group repair assistance will only be considered to a reasonable sum or proportion of costs reflecting the applicant's liability.

Maximum Assistance

- £20,000 (within 3 year period)

6. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Any person who makes an application for Assistance must;

- (i) Be over 18 years of age at the date of the application
- (ii) Live in the dwelling as his/her only main residence and

- (iii) Have an owners interest in the dwelling (other than by virtue of being a Registered Social Landlord under Part 1 of the Housing Act 1996 or being eligible for such registration) or be a tenant or licensee of the dwelling, alone or jointly with others but not being a member of the landlords family, with a tenancy or licence permitting occupation of the dwelling for a minimum period of 12 months after approval of the Assistance, and
- (iv) Have the power or duty to carry out the works and where appropriate have the owner's consent in writing to carrying out the works, and
- (v) Satisfy such test(s) of resources as the council, or statute, may from time to time have in place
- (vi) Not be ineligible, by virtue of the Housing Grants, construction and Regeneration Act 1996, regulations made under the Act or any other enactment
- (vii) Homeowners have the primary responsibility for ensuring their homes are properly maintained and in the first instance should pursue private finance. We may assist eligible, vulnerable homeowners to make sure they have the opportunity for achieving the correct property standards.

Where an owner occupier has given a signed undertaking to occupy a property as his/her principle residence after completion of the assisted works for a period of time, and if they cease to do so during that time, they will repay on demand to the council the total amount of Assistance paid out.

Where a landlord (or owner) has given a signed undertaking that the property will be available for letting for a period specified after completion of the assisted works, and if the landlord ceases to make the relevant property available for letting during the specified period then the landlord will repay on demand to the council the total amount of Assistance paid out.

Where the council has the right to demand repayment but extenuating circumstances exist, the council may determine to waive the right to repayment or to demand a sum less than the full amount of Assistance paid out.

7. SUPERVISION OF WORKS

In the absence of any agent agreement with the council or its appointed agent, the responsibility for supervision of the works rests with the applicant or with any suitably qualified and indemnified building professional or agent acting on the applicant's behalf and not with the council.

All work must be undertaken;

- a) In accordance with manufacturers recommendations and best practice.
- b) In accordance with and to the satisfaction of the council.
- c) In accordance with building, planning and installation regulations where applicable and Health and Safety regulations.

Payment of grant/assistance will be made, in whole or by part payments, on receipt of contractors invoice following satisfactory completion of the eligible work as determined by the council's Officer or its appointed agent.

8. PAYMENT OF ASSISTANCE

The Assistance will only be paid if;

- (i) The assisted works are completed within 12 months from the date of the approval unless the delay was caused by the council or its appointed agent.
- (ii) The assisted works are carried out in accordance with the specifications set out in the formal approval or as varied with the prior agreement of the council or its appointed agent.
- (iii) The assisted works are carried out to the satisfaction of the council or its appointed agent and the applicant.
- (iv) The council or its appointed agent are provided with an invoice, demand or receipt for payment in an acceptable format.

Invoices must be addressed to the applicant c/o the council or its appointed agent and must contain sufficient detail for the council to identify in full, the works carried out, the price charges and any variations previously agreed with the council or its appointed agent, and must not be provided by the applicant or a member of his/her family.

The payment of the Assistance to the contractor may be made via the applicant, or, where requested within the original application, paid directly to the contractor engaged by the applicant.

The Assistance may be paid in one lump-sum on satisfactory completion of the works or by staged payments as the work proceeds. Stage payments (Interim payments) will only be made where the council or its appointed agent, is satisfied that the value of work completed exceeds the value claimed. A maximum of three stage payments and final payment will be considered.

The council or its appointed agent will not enter into any form of contract with a builder or contractor, and, in the absence of any agent agreement with the applicant, it is a matter for the applicant to agree any contract with the builder or contractor. Whilst the council's Standing Orders on procurement do not directly apply as no contract exists with the council, the principles of the Standing Orders will be referred to for determining the administration of procedures regarding the obtaining of quotes, etc.

The provision of assistance other than Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants is subject to the availability of funding. All applications will be considered based on the identified needs and circumstances of the applicant or household.

Assistance may be offered in a variety of forms including, but not restricted to, financial assistance, advice, provision of materials, carrying out of works, and loans. Advice offered may include Housing Options advice to ensure the most appropriate option for the applicant or household is considered and may include advice on housing rights, benefits entitlement, repairs or improvements, energy efficiency, re-housing or signposting to other agencies or services.

The council may enter into partnership or contractual arrangements with other organisations or agencies in order to deliver assistance in an effective and timely manner, such as a Home Improvement Agency or Energy Advice Service. The Home Improvement Agency is engaged to provide support to applicants throughout the process of seeking assistance and this may include identification of options, specifications, documentation, engagement of contractors, works supervision and monitoring through to completion.

Where assistance is provided the eligible costs will include necessary associated costs such as Building and Planning Fees, Architect and other professional fees and Home Improvement Agency/Energy Advice Service fees.

The provision of mandatory grants and discretionary financial assistance will be subject to internal and external auditing to ensure adequate procedures are in place and followed and that there is appropriate use of public funds.

9. WHERE ASSISTANCE WILL BE RESTRICTED

The following will not be eligible for assistance:

1. Where ownership of the property is disputed.
2. Where the owner(s) has a statutory duty to carry out the necessary works and it is reasonable in the circumstances for them to do so.
3. The Council will not consider an application for assistance in respect of premises built or converted less than 10 years prior to the date of the application, except where the application is for a Disabled Facilities Grant.
4. No assistance will be given in respect of properties owned by Statutory Authorities or trusts. This includes properties owned by Registered Social Landlord, NHS Trusts and Police Authorities, except in the case of a Disabled Facilities Grant (Mandatory or Discretionary), Dementia Dwellings Grant,
5. Where the residence is not regarded as permanent.
6. No assistance will normally be given for work started before formal approval of an application, except that:
 - (i) The council may in exceptional circumstances exempt an application from this condition for example where a defect may present a serious risk to health and safety.
 - (ii) The council may, with consent of the applicant, treat the application as varied so exclude any works that have been started before approval.
7. Grant assistance will not normally be provided for works covered by insurance. Where, before a grant for assistance is approved it is found that an applicant

can make an insurance claim, the insurance company will be requested to confirm in writing the level of their liability, if any. The level of assistance will be reduced by an amount equivalent to the insurance company's liability. Where assistance is approved, a condition will be imposed requiring the applicant to pursue any relevant claim against an insurance company or third party for;

- a) Claims for personal injuries where the works are required under a Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant.
 - b) Claims on the applicant's property insurance or on a third party where the application where the application is in respect of works for which financial assistance has been given and to repay the financial assistance provided out of the proceeds of such a claim.
8. The council will assess whether the scope of the works are reasonable and eligible, in particular having regard to the age, condition and structural layout of the property.
 9. The council will determine whether prices provided by contractors meet value for money. In determining this, the Officer will give consideration to similar jobs priced within the last year. The Officer may liaise with the relevant body or contractor to check the specification and any estimates, as part of the procurement procedure.
 10. In the event that the Officer believes the price for contracts are too high and identifies an appropriate price for this work (which is lower) they will advise the client that the total eligible assistance will be the lower amount. The client is under no obligation to use the lower priced contractor but must be aware the council will only make a grant or assistance payment up to the value of the lower price.
 11. In the case of an application for Disabled Facilities Grant where the client chooses to pursue a different scheme of work's or an enhanced scheme of works over and above the standard specification the client will be advised the Council will only provide assistance to the value of the scheme of works the Officer has determined would otherwise satisfy the basic primary requirement(s) identified by the report of the Occupational Therapy Service, subject to the Officer being satisfied the clients preferred scheme will also satisfy the primary requirements.
 12. The council may refuse any application for assistance lacking the required information or documentation.
 13. Where the client deviates from the scheme of work(s) submitted and subsequently approved by the council without prior consultation with, or agreement of, the Officer the council may rescind the approval or refuse to make any further payment of assistance. The council may also seek to recover any interim assistance payments previously made against the approved scheme.
 14. If the applicant is an owner of the dwelling in respect of which Assistance has been approved and ceases to be the owner before the works are completed the applicant must repay to the council on demand the total amount of Assistance that has been paid.

15. Where a grant condition imposes a liability to repay the Assistance, or a part thereof, the condition will be registered by the council as a Local Land Charge.
16. Where Assistance has been approved the works must be completed within 12 months of the approval date, except where an extension of time, not exceeding 6 months has been agreed by the council. Where no extension is agreed the council may rescind the approval or refuse to make any further payment of assistance. The council may also seek to recover any interim assistance payments previously made against the approved scheme.
17. In the case of common parts of a dwelling the council will only consider assistance for the reasonable sum or proportion of the applicant's liability. The applicant must prove a repairing liability for the common parts.
18. The council may, where financial or operational demands dictate, defer payment of a Disabled Facilities Grant for a period not exceeding 12 months. Any deferment will be detailed in the approval notice.
19. The provision of Assistance is allowed for caravans and houseboats used as a main residence, subject to meeting other eligibility requirements. Holiday residencies, caravans on holiday sites or sites with restricted occupancy, second homes (as defined by council Revenues criteria), properties without a certificate of lawful residential occupation and sheds, outbuildings or appurtenances will not qualify for Assistance.
20. The council recognises that this policy cannot cover every likely situation and there may be persons who genuinely are in need of some form of urgent support that are precluded from accessing Assistance due to a specific aspect. In these situations the council may consider offering assistance in exceptional circumstances, in particular where support would help the council meet its strategic objectives, as determined by the relevant officer.

10. SECURITY AND REPAYMENT OF ASSISTANCE

Where a grant condition imposes a liability to repay the Assistance, or a part thereof, the condition will be registered by the council as a Local Land Charge.

Any grant approval document will set out what amount of money will be placed as a local land charge for the applicant to confirm their acceptance. If significant separate works are identified, a review and revised approval will be issued for the applicant to agree to.

The council will recover grant/assistance monies in full if the relevant conditions of the assistance are not met. Where not already a requirement of the specific terms of the assistance granted, a local/legal land charge may be entered against the property for the purpose of debt recovery.

If an application is approved but it subsequently appears to the council that the applicant (or one of two or more joint applicants) was not, at the time the application was approved, entitled to receive the assistance approved, then no payment, or further payments, of assistance will be made and the council may seek to recover

immediately any payments made together with interest accruing from the date of payment.

The council may, at its discretion determine to require repayment of a lesser sum than the full amount of Assistance.

Any repayment of grant or land charge associated with a grant of financial assistance under this policy will be recycled to provide financial assistance under the terms of this or successor policies.

11. DEATH OF THE APPLICANT

If the applicant should die before the Assistance is approved, the application will be treated as withdrawn.

If the applicant should die after approval of the Assistance or whilst the approved works are in progress, the council may, at its discretion agree to completion or making good of the works and pay the Assistance in full, or an appropriate proportion of the approved sum relative to the works completed.

Where an applicant receiving Disabled Facilities Grant assistance dies following completion of the works but prior to the expiry of the ten year local land charge the council will seek repayment of the sum on charge from the applicant's estate if a disposal by sale, transfer or other change in ownership or tenure takes place.

12. ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS

The council or its appointed agent reserves the right to impose additional conditions when making a grant/assistance approval. These may include but are not restricted to:

- (i) A contribution to the cost of the assisted works by the applicant.
- (ii) The right to nominate tenants to housing accommodation available for rent.
- (iii) Housing accommodation being maintained in repair after completion of the assisted works.
- (iv) The right of the council or its appointed agent to recover specialised equipment when no longer needed.

13. DECISIONS, NOTIFICATIONS AND REDETERMINATIONS

The council or its appointed Agent will notify the applicant in writing when their application has been approved or refused. The decision will be notified as soon as reasonably practical and, in any event, no later than six months after receipt of a full and valid application.

If the application is approved, the notification will specify the eligible works, the value of the assistance and the builder/contractor who will execute the works. In the case of a Disabled Facilities Grant the council may, where financial or operational demands

dictate, defer payment of the assistance for a period not exceeding 12 months. Any deferment will be detailed within the grant approval notice.

The council or its Agent will maintain a document that sets out in details what works are considered eligible or not for a DFG by the council. This document will be made available to any applicant or other person upon request. The council will work with other Worcestershire authorities to ensure as far as possible consistency on eligible works.

For complex cases such as extension and cases likely to be above the mandatory DFG threshold of £30k, the council's agent will arrange a meeting with the Council and relevant professionals to inform the council to determine the most appropriate course of action to meet the discretionary DFG criteria. If the application for Assistance is refused, the council or its Appointed Agent will give the reasons for the refusal and confirm the procedure for appealing the decision.

Where Assistance has been approved and the council or following consultation with its appointed Agent are satisfied that through circumstances beyond the control of the applicant which could not have reasonably been foreseen, the cost of the assisted works has either increased or decreased, the council may, at their discretion re-determine the assistance given and notify the applicant accordingly by issue of a re-approval notice.

Works requested beyond the scope of the mandatory DFG or agreed schedule may be undertaken directly with the contractor at the applicant's own expense. Any such works will not be assisted by the council or its agent.

14. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S DECISION

Any person having made a valid application for Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant or Discretionary Assistance may request a review of the decision not to consider or to refuse an application.

A request for review of must be submitted to the council/or appointed agent (where delegated decision) with 21 days of the date of the decision letter. The request must be in writing. A review of the decision will be undertaken by the council's relevant Head of Service and the decision will be notified to the applicant in writing. If the person remains dissatisfied with the review decision they have the right to approach the Local Government Ombudsman.

Any departure from Policy will only be considered where the applicant can demonstrate both wholly exceptional circumstances to justify such a departure but also that the applicant does not have the means by which they could reasonably be expected to otherwise fund and undertake the work.

Complaints about service delivery rather than Policy must be made in writing to the council appointed Agent who will investigate the complaint in accordance with their Complaints Procedure which is available on request.

15. ADDITIONAL CAPITAL FUNDING SCHEMES

Capital funds for housing assistance may be used for projects which meet the strategic housing objectives. These may include but are not limited to:

- Energy efficiency measures
- Assistance to landlords
- Empty properties
- New build adaptations

To be undertaken by agreement of the relevant Head of Service with the relevant member/portfolio holder. Details can be obtained from the Private Sector Housing Team upon request.

16. Governance, Delivery and Monitoring

16.1 Service Delivery

Bromsgrove District Council delivers its Disabled Facilities Grant and discretionary housing assistance functions through the Worcestershire Home Adaptations Service (WHAS), hosted by Wyre Forest District Council under a formal Collaboration Agreement. WHAS provides the operational administration and delivery of mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants, discretionary assistance and associated home adaptation services on behalf of the participating authorities.

16.2 Council Responsibilities

Whilst operational delivery is undertaken by the shared Home Adaptations Service, Bromsgrove District Council remains responsible for: -

- adopting and reviewing this Housing Assistance Policy;
- setting local discretionary assistance;
- approving funding and budgets;
- ensuring compliance with statutory duties and financial governance; and
- exercising any functions reserved under each Council's Constitution and Scheme of Delegation.

16.3 Decision Making

Grant applications will be determined in accordance with:

- the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996;
- the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002;
- this Housing Assistance Policy; and
- the Councils' Schemes of Delegation.

Applications outside delegated authority or involving exceptional circumstances may be referred to the appropriate senior officer. Decisions shall be made under the Council's Scheme of Delegation and in accordance with this Policy. Applications outside delegated authority or involving exceptional circumstances may be referred to the appropriate senior officer or committee, as applicable.

16.4 Monitoring and Policy Compliance

The shared Home Adaptations Service will monitor delivery of this Policy through regular management oversight, performance reporting and quality assurance.

Performance monitoring will include, where appropriate:

- grant approvals and expenditure;
- delivery timescales;
- budget monitoring;
- customer satisfaction;
- compliance with statutory and policy requirements;
- quality assurance and case audits;
- complaints and lessons learned; and
- performance against agreed service indicators.

Performance and compliance will be monitored through the governance arrangements established under the Collaboration Agreement and reported to the appropriate governance bodies. Where monitoring identifies non-compliance or opportunities for improvement, appropriate corrective action will be implemented and monitored.

16.5 Review

This Policy will be reviewed periodically to reflect changes in legislation, Government guidance, available funding, operational requirements and learning arising from performance monitoring or audit. Minor administrative or operational amendments that do not alter the intent of this Policy may be approved under delegated authority where permitted by the Council's Constitution. The Council reserves the right to review individual decisions and undertake periodic audits of grant applications to ensure consistency, transparency and compliance with this Policy.

Version Control

Title		Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy 2026		
Description		Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy		
Created by		Miss Katie Sharp-Fisher Private Sector Housing Manager		
Date created		June 2026		
Maintained by		Private Sector Housing		
Next Review Date		June 2030		
Version number	Modified by	Modifications made	Date modified	Status

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Appendix 2 - Equality Impact Assessment

Title of Service, Policy, Procedure, Spending Review being Proposed	Housing Assistance Policy 2026
Name of Service Area	Private Sector Housing Community and Housing
Name of Officer completing this assessment	Katie Sharp-Fisher
Date Assessment Started	30/04/2026
Name of Decision Maker (in relation to the change)	Cabinet
Date Decision Made	16 th September 2026

Please ensure the following:

- That the document is understandable to a reader who has not read any other documents and explains (on its own) how the Public Sector Equality Duty is met. This does not need to be lengthy but must be complete.
- That available support information and data is identified and where it can be found. Also be clear about highlighting gaps in existing data or evidence that you hold, and how you have sought to address these knowledge gaps.
- That the equality impacts are capable of aggregation with those of other EIAs to identify the cumulative impact of all service changes made by the council on different groups of people

Overview

Provide a clear overview of the aims of the service/policy/procedure and the proposed changes being made. Will the current service users' needs continue to be met? Why is the change being proposed? What needs or duties is it designed to meet?

The Housing Assistance Policy forms part of a Worcestershire-wide aligned approach to the provision of housing assistance, ensuring consistency in the delivery of financial support across the county while allowing for local discretion in response to identified need and available resources. The policy sets out how the Council uses its powers under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 to provide financial assistance, including mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants and discretionary support.

The policy also supports delivery of statutory duties and wider housing and health objectives, including reducing hazards under the Housing Act 2004 and supporting hospital discharge and prevention. The aligned approach supports: -

- Consistency of service provision across Worcestershire
- Efficient use of Better Care Fund resources
- Shared learning and best practice
- Equitable access to assistance across geographic areas
- Reducing inequalities in housing conditions and health outcomes

Locally, the policy contributes to:-

- Reducing Category 1 hazards
- Supporting independent living
- Preventing hospital admission and delayed discharge
- Tackling fuel poverty and poor housing conditions
- Supporting vulnerable and low-income households to remain in safe and suitable accommodation

This ensures a consistent and equitable approach to housing assistance across Worcestershire while enabling proportionate responses to local housing conditions and demand.

Who is the proposal likely to affect?	Yes	No
All residents	☒	☐
Specific group(s)	☒	☐
All Council employees	☐	☒
Specific group(s) of employees	☒	☐
Other – Provide more details below	☐	☐

Details

Outline who could be affected and how they could be affected by the proposal/service change. Include current service users and those who could benefit from but do not currently access the service.

The policy affects: -

- Owner-occupiers
- Private tenants
- Landlords (indirectly through conditions and obligations)

It disproportionately benefits:

- Disabled persons (DFGs and adaptations)
- Older persons (age-related needs and hazards)
- Low-income households (repair assistance and fuel poverty support)
- People with health conditions (including dementia and hospital discharge cases)

The policy primarily affects owner-occupiers, private tenants and landlords (indirectly), with a particular focus on vulnerable households. This includes disabled persons, older people, low-income households, individuals with health conditions and those living in poor housing conditions. These groups are more likely to require financial assistance to address hazards, undertake repairs or adapt their homes.

Evidence and data used to inform your equality impact assessment

What data, research, or trend analysis have you used? Describe how you have got your information and what it tells you.

The assessment is informed by: -

- Local HHSRS data identifying Category 1 and serious Category 2 hazards
- Disabled Facilities Grant demand and delivery trends
- Demographic data (ageing population and disability prevalence)
- Public health evidence linking housing conditions to health outcomes
- Fuel poverty and energy efficiency indicators
- Operational experience of delivering housing assistance

Key Findings

- Vulnerable groups (disabled, elderly, low-income) are disproportionately affected by poor housing
- Demand for adaptations and repairs is increasing
- Poor housing contributes directly to health inequalities and hospital admissions

Data Gaps

- Limited detailed equality monitoring data on applicants
- Addressed through:
 - National datasets
 - Local intelligence
 - Service experience

In addition to local data, this policy is informed by a Worcestershire-wide evidence base, including: -

- County-level Disabled Facilities Grant demand and delivery data
- Public health data linking housing and health outcomes
- Shared intelligence across district councils and partners

This strengthens the reliability of the evidence used and ensures that the policy reflects both local and strategic housing need.

Engagement and Consultation

What engagement and consultation have you undertaken about the proposal with current service users, potential users and other stakeholders? What is important to them regarding the current service? How does (or could) the service meet their needs? How will they be affected by the proposal? What potential impacts did they identify because of their protected characteristic(s)? Did they identify any potential barriers they may face in accessing services/other opportunities that meet their needs?

Engagement has included: -

- Internal consultation with housing, health and social care partners
- Feedback from the Home Improvement Agency and delivery officers
- Review of casework and service demand patterns

Key Themes

- Need for accessible and supported application processes
- Importance of timely interventions, especially for hospital discharge
- Financial barriers to maintaining safe housing
- Value of flexibility in discretionary assistance

No adverse equality impacts were raised through consultation. Engagement has also taken place at a Worcestershire level, including collaboration with partner authorities, health partners and delivery agencies, ensuring a coordinated and consistent approach to housing assistance across the county.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Due regard must be given to the three aims of the Equality Duty. This means that you must consciously think about the three aims as part of the process of decision-making. Consider the current service and any proposed changes, thinking about what issues may arise.

Equality Duty Aims	Evidence
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation How does the proposal/service ensure that there is no barrier or disproportionate impact for anyone with a particular protected characteristic	The policy: • Applies consistent eligibility criteria as determined by legislation (housing grants construction and regeneration act 1996, Housing Act 2004) • Is based on housing need, vulnerability and financial circumstances • Includes safeguards such as case-by-case assessment No direct or indirect discrimination has been identified.
Advance equality of opportunity between different groups How does the proposal/service ensure that its intended outcomes promote equality of opportunity for users? Identify inequalities faced by those with specific protected characteristic(s).	The policy actively promotes equality by: - • Prioritising disabled persons through mandatory DFG provision • Supporting older people to remain independent • Targeting low-income households unable to maintain safe housing • Providing tailored support (e.g. dementia adaptations, hospital discharge works) This reduces inequalities in: - • Housing conditions • Health outcomes • Access to suitable accommodation The Worcestershire-wide alignment ensures that residents across the county have access to consistent forms of assistance, reducing the risk of unequal treatment based on geographic location, while still allowing local flexibility to respond to specific needs.
Foster good relations between different groups Does the service contribute to good relations or to broader community	The policy contributes to: - • Improved community wellbeing • Reduced inequality in housing standards • Support for vulnerable residents to remain within their communities

cohesion objectives? How does it achieve this aim?	
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Is there evidence of actual or potential unfairness for the following equality groups?

- Does the proposal target or exclude a specific equality group or community?
 - Does it affect some equality groups or communities differently and can this be justified?
 - Is the proposal likely to be equally accessed by all equality groups and communities? If not, can this be justified?
- (It may be useful to consider other groups, not included in the Equality Act, especially if the proposal is specifically for them e.g. lone parents, refugees, unemployed people, carers)

Impact of proposal

Describe the likely impact of the proposal on people because of their protected characteristic and how they may be affected. How likely is it that people with this protected characteristic will be negatively affected? What are the barriers that might make access difficult or stop different groups or communities accessing the proposal? How great will that impact be on their well-being? Could the proposal promote equality and good relations between different groups? How?

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If you have identified any area of actual or potential unfairness that cannot be justified, can you eliminate or minimise this?

What mitigating actions can be taken to reduce or remove this impact? (Include these in the action plan at the end of the assessment) Equal treatment does not always produce equal outcomes; sometimes you will have to take specific steps for particular groups to address an existing disadvantage or to meet differing needs.

Protected Group	Impact of proposal	Justification for any actual or potential unfairness identified	If you have identified any area of actual or potential unfairness that cannot be justified, can you eliminate or minimise this?
Age	Strong Positive	Policy enables older people to remain in their homes and reduces hazard exposure. Mitigation: assisted application routes. This also reduces risks associated with falls, excess cold and other	The policy does not: • Exclude any protected group • Create unjustified barriers Where differential impacts exist, they are: • Justified (targeting need) • Positive (supporting vulnerable groups)

		housing-related hazards that disproportionately affect older persons.	The aligned Worcestershire approach reduces the risk of a 'postcode lottery' in access to housing assistance, while local discretion ensures that assistance remains proportionate and responsive to individual circumstances. The policy therefore represents a proportionate and justified approach to targeting assistance based on need while ensuring equitable access across protected groups.
Disability	Significant Positive	Core focus of policy (DFGs, dementia support, adaptations). Promotes independence and safety. This directly advances equality of opportunity by removing barriers within the home environment.	
Transgender	Neutral	No differential impact identified. Access is based on housing need and eligibility criteria, ensuring equitable access.	
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Neutral	No differential impact identified. Access is based on housing need and eligibility criteria.	
Pregnancy and Maternity	Positive	Improved housing conditions benefit families with young children including safer living environments and reduction of hazards within the home.	
Race	Potential indirect negative	Language or cultural barriers may affect access. Mitigation: support via (Worcestershire Home Adaptation Service) and accessible communication. These barriers are mitigated	

		through supported applications, identification of communication needs and partnership working with delivery agencies.	
Religion or Belief	Neutral	No differential impact identified. Access is based on housing need and eligibility criteria.	
Sex (Male/ Female)	Neutral	No differential impact identified. Access is based on housing need and eligibility criteria.	
Sexual Orientation	Neutral	No differential impact identified. Access is based on housing need and eligibility criteria.	

How will you monitor any changes identified?

The Council/WHAS (Worcestershire Home Adaptions Service) will:

- Monitor uptake of assistance locally
- Contribute to Worcestershire-wide monitoring and benchmarking
- Review consistency of outcomes across the county
- Identify any disparities in access or outcomes between groups or geographic areas
- Adjust delivery in response to identified inequalities
- Review customer feedback and complaints to identify any barriers to access for protected groups

The actions required to address these findings are set out below.

Action Required	By Whom	By When	Completion Date
Ensure assisted application routes are available	WHAS/LAs	Ongoing	
Improved accessibility of information	WHAS/LAs	Ongoing	
Monitor equality data and uptake	WHAS/LAs s	Annual	

Continue engagement with vulnerable groups	WHAS/LAs s	Ongoing	
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Sign off on completion	Name	Signature	Date
Lead Officer completing assessment	Katie Sharp-Fisher		30/04/2026
Equality Officer			

When you have completed this assessment, retain a copy and send an electronic copy to the Policy Team (Equalities) attaching any supporting evidence used to carry out the assessment.

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Promotion of Business Support

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor K May Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development & Enabling
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services
Report Author: Georgina Harris	Job Title: Economic Growth Manager – Business and Skills Contact email: georgina.harris@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Tel: 01527 534082534082
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Council Priorities	Economic Development;
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 Council continues to develop and enhance its digital-first model for promotion of business support programmes available to businesses in the District; and
- 2) The Council continues to utilise Worcestershire Growth Hub as a central access point for business advice, support and opportunities.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At the meeting of the Council which took place on 25 February 2026 a motion was submitted for consideration by the Council relating to promotion of business support in the district.
- 2.2 The motion asked “the Cabinet to consider producing a concise business prospectus bringing together useful information about available grants, incentives, guidance and clear signposting of business opportunities in the north of the County. This will be a single market-ready document to be distributed across Bromsgrove and

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subject to agreement from Redditch Borough Council and Wyre Forest District Council, across North Worcestershire. This document would be made available at Council offices and published digitally on the Council's website."

- 2.3 Enhanced business engagement and the promotion of available business support have long been identified as priorities within the Council's economic development agenda. While resource constraints limited the Council's ability to undertake additional activity in these areas at the time the motion was submitted, a revised economic development structure has now been agreed and is being implemented to provide the capacity needed to further develop this area of work.
- 2.4 To identify examples of best practice and understand how business support is promoted elsewhere, Officers have reviewed approaches used by other organisations and local authorities.
- 2.5 As part of a national, Government supported network, Growth Hubs are recognised as an effective mechanism for improving business productivity, resilience and growth by simplifying access to a complex support landscape. Officers contacted the national growth hub network and reviewed approaches used elsewhere. The examples identified were primarily digital or downloadable resources, reflecting the need for business support information to be easy to update and access.
- 2.6 In addition, 30 local authorities across England were surveyed to understand how they bring together and promote local business support information. The findings support a digital-first approach, with online information and signposting used as the main route for helping businesses identify relevant advice, funding and opportunities.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 The Council recognises the importance of attracting small and medium sized businesses to the district and helping new and existing businesses to grow and thrive in the area. To support this objective, the Council has invested in and supported the delivery of a range of business support programmes. The Council also co-funds Worcestershire Growth Hub which acts as the primary access point for business advice, support and opportunities.
- 3.2 The business support offer currently available to Bromsgrove businesses comprises a combination of District Council-funded initiatives, County Council-funded initiatives, and national schemes. Locally, the County Council funds business start-up and early years support, business growth support, innovation support and business

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grants. Bromsgrove District Council funds innovation support through the Betaden and Innovation Lighthouse programmes, as well as specialist advisor support accessed through the Growth Hub.

- 3.3 At present, the Council's website contains information on local business support initiatives and signposts businesses to Worcestershire Growth Hub and other delivery organisations. Whilst this approach provides access to online information it does not currently offer a comprehensive and regularly updated directory of available support. The Growth Hub website is primarily designed to encourage businesses to contact their advisers rather than enabling business to independently identify all available support options.
- 3.4 There is currently no uniform business support offer across North Worcestershire. Each existing local authority delivers programmes that are tailored to the needs of its local business community and aligned with its own economic priorities and ambitions. However, in the context of local government reorganisation and the anticipated creation of a North Worcestershire Unitary Authority, the development of improved business support information should be designed in a way that is capable of supporting greater consistency and future alignment across the wider area. While discussions have not yet taken place with Wyre Forest District Council, the shared officer arrangements covering Bromsgrove and Redditch provide an opportunity to begin shaping an approach that could, subject to future agreement, form the basis of a North Worcestershire business support resource.
- 3.5 The purpose of promoting business support is to raise awareness of the range of programmes available and to make them easier to find, understand and access. Officers consider that this objective is best achieved through a strengthened digital business support resource, supported by clear signposting to Worcestershire Growth Hub and direct officer assistance where required.
- 3.6 This approach allows information on grants, incentives, guidance and business opportunities to be kept current as programmes, eligibility criteria and delivery arrangements change. It also enables businesses to access information at any time and from any location, while retaining assisted routes for those who need additional help.
- 3.7 A printed or static prospectus would be less suitable as the main channel because information can change quickly and would require further updating, reissuing and redistribution. For this reason, the recommended model is digital-first, rather than digital-only, with support available through Council officers and Growth Hub advisers where additional advice and guidance is required.

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- 3.8 The Council acknowledges that the current online offer could be improved. Additional capacity will shortly be available within the economic development team to support the maintenance and ongoing development of the Council's web content. This will create an opportunity to provide a more comprehensive, user-friendly and regularly updated source of business support information directly through the Council's website.
- 3.9 Officers will review examples of best practice from other local authorities and business support organisations and use these findings to inform the development of an improved online business support resource.
- 3.10 The preferred approach is therefore to focus resources on enhancing the Council's online offer, ensuring that businesses can access high-quality, current and comprehensive support information, with clear routes into Worcestershire Growth Hub and officer support where further guidance is needed. The structure of the resource will also be capable of supporting future development into a wider North Worcestershire business support resource, subject to future discussions and agreement.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The costs associated with developing and maintaining enhanced online business support information can be accommodated within existing budgets and staffing resources.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications directly resulting from this report.

6. OTHER – IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 The online business support directory will be developed with local government reorganisation in mind. The proposed structure will be designed to meet current Bromsgrove requirements while remaining flexible enough to support a wider North Worcestershire approach in future. This would allow content, signposting and presentation to be adapted over time as service delivery arrangements evolve.
- 6.2 The Council recently resolved to provide funding to Worcestershire Growth Hub for the financial years 2026/27 and 2027/28. This will

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ensure that the Growth Hub can provide enhanced support for local businesses leading up to local government reorganisation and be well positioned to continue operating effectively under the strategic authority that ultimately assumes responsibility for business support following LGR.

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.3 The promotion and delivery of business support programmes aligns with the Council priority Economic Development. The programmes are designed to help businesses to start-up, grow and innovate creating employment opportunities and improving productivity.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.4 A digital approach support's the Council's wider sustainability objectives. By reducing the need for printing, storage and distribution, an online resource minimises the consumption of paper and other materials and reduces the risk of outdated publications being discarded. This approach is consistent with the principles of waste prevention and resource efficiency and contributes to the effort to reduce the environmental impact of Council activities.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.5 Information on a well-designed website is more accessible than printed materials. Websites can offer a wide range of built-in and user-controlled accessibility features whereas printed materials are in a fixed format.
- 6.6 It is recognised that a digital-first approach may present challenges for some individuals and businesses who experience digital exclusion, including some older people, disabled people and those with limited access to, or confidence using, digital services. These considerations have been assessed as part of the development of the proposal. While the preferred approach is to improve the provision of online information, the intention is for this to be digital-first rather than digital-only. Alternative routes to accessing support will remain available, including direct assistance from Council officers and Worcestershire Growth Hub advisers, who can help businesses identify and access appropriate support where self-service online access is not suitable. This approach seeks to balance the benefits of maintaining accurate and up-to-date digital information with the need to ensure that business support remains accessible to all potential users and that equality considerations are appropriately taken into account.

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7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 Providing business support information on a website ensures it is available at all times, can be adapted to meet accessibility needs and can be updated quickly and efficiently. However, not all businesses have access to digital channels or find websites meet their individual needs. To address this, officers and Growth Hub staff are available to offer one-to-one support, guidance and advice directly to businesses.

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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	5/8/26
Lead Director / Head of Service	Rachel Egan Assistant Director Regeneration and Property	13/08/26
Financial Services	Paul Earley Financial Services Manager	28/7/26
Legal and Democratic Services	Nicola Cummings, Principal Solicitor – Governance Jess Bayley-Hill, Principal Democratic Services Officer	28/07/26
Policy Team	Helen Mole Business Improvement Manager	03/08/26
Climate Change Team	Matthew Eccles Climate Change Manager	6/8/26

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Quarter 1 2026/27 Performance Report

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor K. J. May
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Hannah Corredor, Assistant Director Transformation and Corporate Services
Report Author: Sarah Davis	Job Title: Performance & Improvement Lead 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

The overview of Quarter 1 performance for the period April to June 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 which includes the current and previous quarters data.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 The corporate measures are structured under the Council Plan priorities:
- Economic Development
 - Environment
 - Housing
 - Community Safety
 - Organisational Priorities

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Delivery of Council Plan (Measures)

- 3.2 An assessment of our performance measures over the last quarter offers insight into progress, stability, and challenges across each priority area, informing assurance on delivery against the Council Plan.
- 3.3 As part of the annual review of the Corporate Performance Framework, several performance measures have been added and removed for 2026/27. Members should note these changes when comparing performance trends with previous years.
- 3.4 This ensures that the framework remains relevant, reflects current service priorities, and focuses on the indicators that best demonstrate the Council's performance and the outcomes being achieved for residents.
- 3.5 In addition, a corporate measures directory which provides definitions, examples and source data for our corporate performance suite has been compiled which has been added as an Appendix 3 to this report.

Economic Development:

- 3.6 **ED-01/02** The business grant funding performance measures track grants funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund from 1 April 2025 to 30 September 2026, with figures reported cumulatively. Businesses apply for funding and, if successful, receive an award confirmed through a funding agreement. "Business Grant funding awarded (£)" measures the total value of these confirmed awards. Businesses then deliver their approved projects and submit claims to receive the grant. "Business Grant funding – % spent" measures the proportion of the total grant funding available that businesses have claimed and received. There is a natural delay between funding being awarded and paid, which largely depends on how quickly each business completes its funded project and submits its claim. Reporting against these measures will end after Quarter 2 2026/27, when the UK Shared Prosperity Fund closes.
- 3.6.1 **ED-01/02** One Innovation Lighthouse grant was awarded during the quarter, with a further application approved. As remaining funding is restricted to programme participants, the budget is unlikely to be fully utilised, with any underspend reallocated to other UKSPF projects.
- 3.6.2 **ED-03/04/05** As this is a new programme, no grants have yet been approved. Round 1 of the fund opened during Quarter 1 and attracted 71 applications, of which 66 met the eligibility criteria. Applications have now been assessed, and the grant panel is scheduled to meet at the beginning of Quarter 2 2026/27 to determine funding awards. Subject to

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approval, the first grant payments are expected to be issued from Quarter 3 2026/27 onwards.

Environment:

- 3.7 **EN-01** Provisional Quarter 1 data indicates a significant increase in residual waste collected, alongside higher garden waste tonnages and recycling levels that remain broadly comparable with the same period last year. As Worcestershire County Council provides waste data on a monthly basis, seasonal and year-on-year comparisons can be undertaken. Initial analysis has identified a notable variation from established collection patterns, and further investigation is underway with Worcestershire County Council to understand the underlying causes and validate the reported figures.
- 3.7.1 **EN-02** Fly-tipping incidents remain high, with several significant incidents reported during the quarter, some requiring notification to the Environment Agency due to their scale and volume. WRS continues to make progress in investigating one of the largest sites and, in partnership with Environmental Services, is developing a Fly-tipping Strategy that will establish the overarching principles for preventing, investigating, and addressing fly-tipping across the area.
- 3.7.2 **EN-02/03** Clearance performance was impacted by a small number of large-scale incidents that each required several days to remove. The quarterly trend follows the pattern observed since WRS assumed enforcement responsibilities, with reported breaches typically increasing in Quarter 1 each year.
- 3.7.3 **EN-05** Fewer Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) were issued during the quarter, reflecting a reduction in incidents where sufficient evidence was secured in the preceding period. In addition, a number of cases that could have resulted in an FPN are instead progressing towards potential prosecution, where this is considered the more appropriate enforcement response. The average figure is provided for comparative purposes only and does not represent a target, as FPNs should only be issued where supported by the evidence and circumstances of each case.
- 3.7.4 **EN-06** Quarter 1 2026/27 performance for households supported by energy advice service is below both the previous quarter and the same period last year, largely reflecting lower seasonal demand for energy advice services during the warmer months. Officers will continue to promote the service through Act on Energy and monitor demand trends throughout the year.

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Housing:

- 3.8 **HS-01** Performance for major planning applications was 75% during Quarter 1, with three of four applications determined within the statutory timescale. While this represents a decrease from Quarter 4 100% performance, only one major application was determined during that period. Current performance remains well above the Government target of 60%, and officers continue to work proactively with applicants to secure extensions of time where appropriate to support timely and well-considered decision-making.
- 3.8.1 **HS-02** Performance for minor planning applications was 77.4% during Quarter 1, with 96 of 124 applications determined within the statutory timescale. Whilst this is lower than Quarter 4 performance of 87%, a higher volume of applications was determined this quarter (124 compared with 107). Performance remains above the Government target, and officers continue to work proactively with applicants to secure extensions of time where appropriate, supporting timely and effective decision-making.
- 3.8.2 **HS-03/04** Since June 2024, the majority of planning enforcement functions have been delivered by Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) on behalf of the Council, working closely with Development Management officers to investigate and resolve alleged breaches of planning control. The Council's adopted Enforcement Plan (January 2024) provides the framework for prioritising cases according to the seriousness of the breach. Enforcement cases can vary considerably in complexity and timescales, with some resolved quickly and others requiring detailed investigation, negotiation, planning applications, appeals, or legal action. As a result, performance is focused on securing appropriate planning outcomes and effective case management rather than achieving fixed completion targets.
- 3.8.3 **HS-03** More planning enforcement cases were opened during Quarter 1 (35) compared with Quarter 4 (24). This continues the trend observed since WRS assumed responsibility for the service, with reported breaches typically increasing during Quarter 1 each year. Cases may be opened in response to alleged breaches of planning control, untidy land complaints, or other matters within the scope of planning enforcement legislation.
- 3.8.4 **HS-04** Marginally more planning enforcement cases were closed during Quarter 1 (30) compared with Quarter 4 (28). Cases may be closed for a variety of reasons, including where investigations conclude through immunity, informal resolution, service of a notice, direct action, or prosecution. The measure also includes untidy land cases falling

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within the remit of the Town and Country Planning Act and ASB legislation.

3.8.5 **HS-05** Performance for building control applications was 100% during Quarter 1, with all applications determined within the required statutory timescales. Statutory reports were also submitted to the Building Safety Regulator as required, ensuring continued compliance with regulatory obligations.

3.8.6 **HS-06/07** Performance remains above the Quarter 1 position last year, with demand remaining relatively stable due to a continued shortage of affordable housing.

Community Safety:

3.9 **CS-01/02** Crime data is sourced from Police.uk, sits outside the Council's control, and is subject to reporting delays. Figures are presented separately for recorded crime (excluding ASB) and ASB, with trends potentially influenced by reporting practices and police activity. Commentary from the Community Safety Team and relevant North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership insights provide context on local trends and preventative work, members to note that some Community Safety Partnership information cannot be shared in full.

3.9.1 **CS-01** Crime levels reported quarterly to North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership were broadly in line with expected levels. The reported increase in business robbery is likely due to changes in police recording practices rather than a genuine rise in offending.

3.9.2 **CS-01** In Bromsgrove, an increase in other theft offences in Barnt Green & Hopwood Ward was largely attributable to incidents of making off without payment at Hopwood Park Motorway Services and is not currently considered an emerging local crime trend.

3.9.3 **CS-01** An increase in residential burglary was reported in Aston Fields Ward (6 offences compared with none previously). The majority of offences were linked to a single incident.

3.9.4 **CS-02** ASB data from Police.UK has not been publicly published since March 2026; however, quarterly analysis provided to North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership identified a small number of localised hotspots across Bromsgrove.

3.9.5 **CS-02** Lickey Hills Ward experienced ASB linked to young people accessing an abandoned building in Blackwell. The issue has been

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raised through the Community Safety Partnership, and preventative actions are being progressed.

3.9.6 **CS-02** Drakes Cross Ward saw ASB concentrated around ongoing neighbour disputes in Shawfield, Hollywood. Vehicle nuisance and youth-related incidents were also recurring themes.

3.9.7 **CS-02** Sanders Park Ward recorded the highest concentration of repeat-location ASB, with youth-related and alcohol-related incidents increasing in Bromsgrove town centre. Rooftop access and e-scooter nuisance continue to be monitored through local partnership forums.

Organisational Priorities:

3.10 **OR-01** Council Tax collection rates are largely driven by Direct Debit uptake which for Bromsgrove sits at 81% of bill payers. Collection over a ten month, rather than a twelve-month, period is considered in setting the target. Collection levels and recovery of outstanding debt is otherwise driven by staff capacity within the team, and this is currently not optimal. A review is being undertaken with planned improvement in collection rates which are above sector and national averages but, in line with these averages have seen a small decline in the last year.

3.10.1 **OR-02** Business Rate collection levels are below target by 1.3% and below the level achieved at Quarter 1 last year by almost 3.8%. This mirrors end of year performance for 2025/26 which, over the year, nevertheless outperformed national and sector averages. A review will be completed ahead of Quarter 2 to identify if performance and levels of income over the year are likely to be impacted.

3.10.2 **OR-03/04/05** Local authority error rates remain low due to robust quality assurance procedures. Quarter 1 processing times increased following a Civica Open Revenues system fault and a slight rise in the complexity of new claims; however, the system issue is expected to be resolved imminently, with performance anticipated to return to normal levels in Quarter 2 onwards.

3.11 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. These are reflected in Appendix 1.

3.12 Alignment between the Council Plan and Service Business Planning reporting has been strengthened, improving transparency, accessibility, and strategic alignment. This is reflected in the Quarter 1

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2026/27 performance measures, with the Council introducing a refined approach to quarterly performance reporting, with measures aligned to the Bromsgrove District Council Plan 2024-2027 and the Local Outcome Framework.

- 3.13 The quarterly performance reports provide an opportunity to recognise both areas for improvement and areas of strong performance. Members to note that the information from these reports will be used to develop an annual report which will provide a public-facing performance overview, highlighting key achievements and outcomes against the Council Plan.
- 3.14 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.
- 3.15 Following the commitment set out in the Quarter 4 report, a process has been established to monitor and report progress against Council motions through the Quarterly Performance Report. From Quarter 1 2026/27, Members will receive regular updates on the implementation and status of agreed actions arising from Council motions.
- 3.16 This section provides an update on motions considered during the quarter and the actions taken to progress them.

Motion	Lead	Due Date/Status
Officers to work with members of the Electoral Matters Committee on a Working Group to investigate the matters raised in the Motion	Darren Whitney & Melissa Basset	14 th October 2026 Ongoing
Response		
The Electoral Matters Committee met on 11 June 2026 and agreed the scope and timetable for the Working Group. The Working Group also had its first meeting to consider the scope of the work to consider future local governance as proposed by officers, and next steps.		
Motion	Lead	Due Date/Status
Progress with the Motion to be added to Power BI to monitor	Helen Mole	9 th July 2026 Completed
Response		
A process has been established to report progress against Council motions through the Quarterly Performance Report		

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from Quarter 1 2026/27 onwards. Updates will include the status of agreed actions and any outcomes arising from the Electoral Matters Committee's recommendations to Council in October.
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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

- 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

Local Outcome Framework – Core outcome metrics

- 6.2 The Local Outcome Framework (LOF) provides a set of national performance measures, enabling the Council to understand local performance in the context of comparable authorities across key outcome areas.
 - 6.2.1 The core outcome metrics set out below are drawn from the Local Outcome Framework via the LG Inform platform, providing national and local comparable data. These measures sit alongside and supplement the Council Plan quarterly performance measures, offering additional context. In some cases, data is subject to a reporting lag; the detailed datasets can be found in Appendix 2.
 - Percentage of major development applications excluding Planning Performance Agreements (PPA), Extension of Time (EoT) or Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) decided in time (Annual)

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- Rate of households with children in temporary accommodation (per 000s households)
- Number of families in Bed & Breakfast accommodation for over 6 weeks
- Percentage of duties owed where homelessness was prevented or relived
- Number of people sleeping rough on a single night (snapshot count)
- Estimated number of people sleeping rough over the month-long term
- Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling, and composting (annual)
- Residual was per household (annual)
- Number of fly-tipping actions (per 000s incidents)

6.2.2 The LG Inform platform provides a quantiles dashboard which compares key indicators set out below against other local authority districts. These dashboards sit alongside and supplement the Council Plan quarterly performance measures. In some cases, data is subject to a reporting lag; the dashboard can be found in Appendix 2.

- Average number of days taken to process housing benefit new claims (Quarterly)
- Total households on the housing waiting lists (per 000s households on 31st March)
- Households in temporary accommodation (per 000s households)
- Percentage of minor development planning applications with Planning Performance Agreements (PPA), Extension of Time (EoT) or Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) decided in time (Quarterly)
- Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling, and composting (Annual)
- Council Tax not collected as a percentage of council tax due

Climate Change Implications

6.3 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 and environmental enforcement.

6.3.1 Performance reporting therefore plays an important role in tracking progress and supporting continuous improvement against the Council's environmental and climate-related ambitions set out in the Council Plan.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

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- 6.4 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 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.

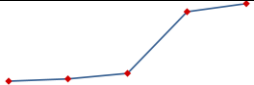
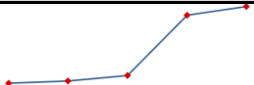
8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1: Quarter 1 Performance Table 2026/27

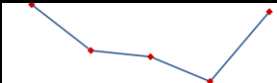
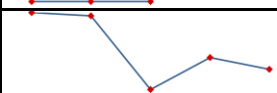
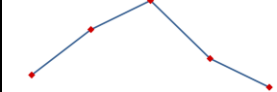
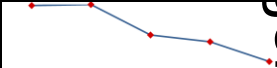
Appendix 2: Quantiles dashboard key performance indicators and Local Outcome Framework core outcome metrics (New for 2026/27)

Appendix 3: Corporate Measures Directory (New for 2026/27)

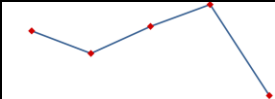
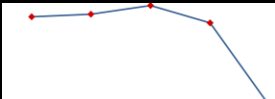
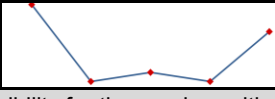
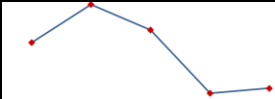
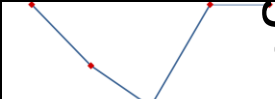
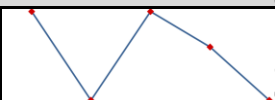
Economic Development

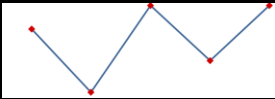
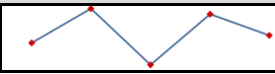
Measure ID	Measure name	Type	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26	Q1 26/27	Target	Average	Aim	Trend
ED-01	Business grant funding - £s paid	£	£0.00	£2,599.39	£8,804.00	£79,349.00	£88,849.00			⬆️	
The business grant funding performance measures track grants funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund from 1 April 2025 to 30 September 2026, with figures reported cumulatively. One grant funding was award in Q1 through the innovation lighthouse programme to a waste management business											
ED-02	Business grant funding- % spent	%	0.0%	2%	7.4%	66%	74.5%			⬆️	
The business grant funding performance measures track grants funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund from 1 April 2025 to 30 September 2026, with figures reported cumulatively. One grant funding awarded with one further grant approved in Q1. It is unlikely that all participates will seek grant funding through the innovation lighthouse programme, so it is anticipated that the current budget will not be fully defrayed											
ED-03	Community Investment Fund - Money Spent	£	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	£0.00			⬆️	
No grants have been approved to date. Decisions regarding applications submitted in Round 1 of the funding will be made at the beginning of Q2 (2026/27) with first grant payments expected to take place in Q3.											
ED-04	Community Investment Fund - % Spent	%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.00%			⬆️	
No grants have been approved to date. Decisions regarding applications submitted in Round 1 of the funding will be made at the beginning of Q2 (2026/27).											
ED-05	Community Investment Fund - Committed	£	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	£0.00			⬆️	
Round 1 of the fund was held in Q1. 71 applications were received of which 66 met eligibility criteria. The applications have been assessed and the grant panel will meet at the beginning of Q2 to decide the outcome of the applications.											

Environment

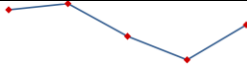
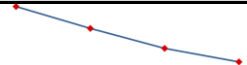
Measure ID	Measure name	Type	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26	Q1 26/27	Target	Average	Aim	Trend
EN-01	% household waste recycled or composted	%	53.36%	44.79%	43.61%	39%	52.03%		44%	↶	
Significant increase in residual waste tonnage reported during Quarter 1; data is being reviewed with Worcestershire County Council to understand the variance from expected seasonal trends.											
EN-02	No. of fly tips	#	635	668	524	577	644		600	↷	
Fly tipping incidents remain high with several incidents being significant in volume, with the EA being informed. WRS are making progress in investigating one of the largest sites. In conjunction with Environmental Services, WRS is developing a Strategy to tackle Fly tipping which will set out the overarching principles of how fly-tipping will be addressed. The trend line follows the pattern observed since WRS took over enforcement elements of the service with an increase in reported breaches for Q1 each year. The average is given for comparative purposes only and is not a target figure.											
EN-03	Average time taken to remove fly-tipping reported	# days	3	3	3	4	4	5		↷	
EN-04	No. of active environmental enforcement cases	#	126	124	80	99	92		107		
The figure represents the number of fly tipping, littering and dog fouling cases currently open. It also includes untidy land cases falling under the remit of ASB legislation where waste is a concern. Numbers are driven by the complexity of open cases, weight of evidence which allows progression to extended enforcement processes (such as FPN and prosecution) and proportion of incidents where evidence has been obtained.											
EN-05	No. of environmental enforcement fixed penalty notices	#	4	15	22	8	1		12		
Fewer Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) were issued this quarter due to a drop in incidents where evidence was obtained in the preceding quarter and also, because for some incidents where FPNs could be issued, the cases are instead proceeding to potential prosecution. The average is given for comparative purposes only and is not a target figure as FPNs should only be served where appropriate.											
EN-06	No. of households supported by energy advice service (AoE)	#	377	382	213	175	66		287		
Q1 is a third lower in comparison with previous quaters and equivalent period last year, this reduction is largely contributed to season demand with the service still being actively promoted and demand monitored											

Housing

Measure ID	Measure name	Type	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26	Q1 26/27	Target	Average	Aim	Trend
HS-01	% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks (or agreed extension)	%	92.8%	86.6%	94%	100%	75%	60%		⬆️	
This is a measure of the 'speed' of decision making. Performance for the previous quarter was 100%, so current performance appears to suggest a drop. However, in the previous quarter just one application was determined. This quarter 4 decisions were made, 3 of which were in time, hence 75% of decisions in time and well above the 60% required by government. Officers continue to work positively with applicants to secure extensions of time where possible, as set out on the Council website.											
HS-02	% of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks (or agreed extension)	%	87.7%	88%	89%	87%	77.4%	70%		⬆️	
This measure shows the 'speed' of decision making for minor applications. Performance was higher in the previous quarter (87%) however less applications were determined in that quarter (107 vis 124 in this quarter). Determining 77.4% of these 124 in time remains above the government's target. Officers continue to work positively with applicants to secure extensions of time where possible, as set out on the Council website.											
HS-03	No. of planning enforcement actions taken- cases opened	#	41	24	26	24	35		29		
This measure records the actual number of planning enforcement cases opened during the reporting period. The trend follows the pattern observed since WRS assumed responsibility for the service, with reported breaches typically increasing during Q1 each year. Cases may be opened in response to alleged breaches of planning control, untidy land complaints, or matters falling within the scope of related planning enforcement legislation. The average figure is provided for comparative purposes only and does not represent a target.											
HS-04	No. of planning enforcement actions taken- cases closed	#	48	63	53	28	30		48		
The measure is the actual number of cases closed. An investigation can be concluded and the case closed for a variety of reasons, including closed due to reaching immunity, informal resolution, service of notice, direct action or prosecution. It also includes untidy land cases falling under the Town and Country Planning Act and ASB legislation remits. The average is given for comparative purposes only and is not a target figure.											
HS-05	% of Building Control applications determined within 5 weeks (or 8 weeks on agreement)	%	100%	97%	95%	100%	100%	85%		⬆️	
All building regulation applications decided in this Q have been done so within statutory timescales. Statutory reports to the Building Safety Regulator provided.											
HS-06	No. of households threatened with homelessness - preventions	#	12	7	12	10	7		10	⬆️	

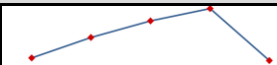
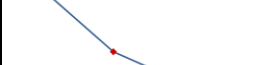
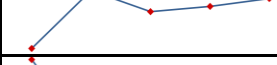
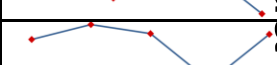
HS-07	No. of households in temporary accommodation - snapshot	#	34	26	37	30	37		32	↻	
Although above the average in Q1 from the previous year, numbers remain relatively consistent and this is due to the lack of affordable housing coming forward to meet needs											
HS-08	Cost of B & B placements	£	£31,132.64	£46,503.28	£21,307.00	£44,073.00	£34,511.98			↻	

Community Safety

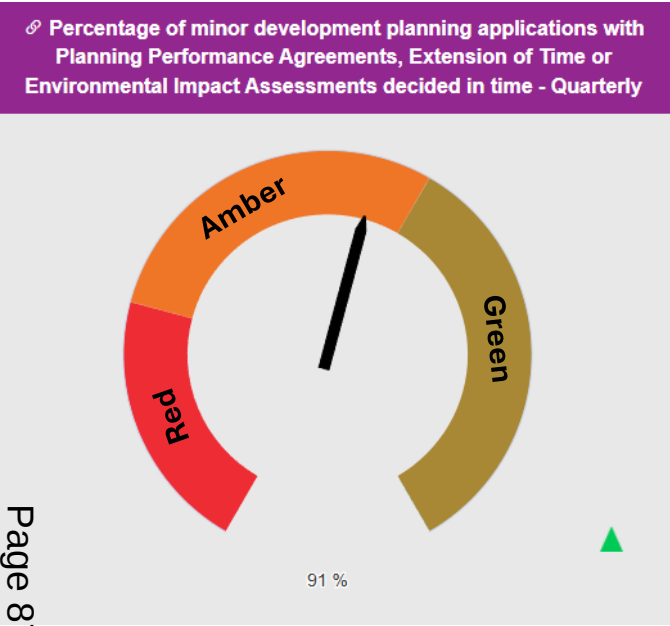
Measure ID	Measure name	Type	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26	Q1 26/27	Target	Average	Aim	Trend
CS-01	No. of crimes recorded (excluding ASB)	#	1396	1418	1304	1222	1344		1335		
This measure usually has an approximate 6 week lag before going live publicly via the police.gov website (updated 13/08), however the NWCSP receives a quarterly report for the district.											
CS-02	ASB reports	#	301	267	236	215	No Data		255		
ASB data hasn't been updated publicly since March 2026 on police.uk website, however NWCSP quarterly ASB data report provides an overview of ASB across the district.											

**there is a lag with this data as it is obtained using verified figures from Police.uk*

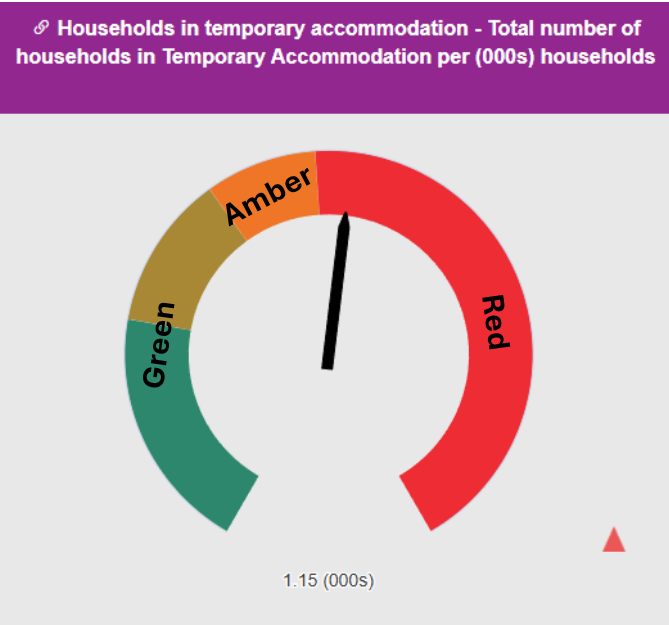
Organisational Priorities

Measure ID	Measure name	Type	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26	Q1 26/27	Target	Average	Aim	Trend
OR-01	Council Tax Collection Rate	%	28.8%	56.6%	85%	98%	28.55%	28.95%		⬆️	
Performance shows a small variance against target and Q1 2025/26. Further review will take place in Q2.											
OR-02	Business Rates Collection Rate	%	28.3%	56.8%	80%	97%	24.51%	25.86%		⬆️	
Performance shows a significant variance against target and Q1 2025/26. Further review will take place ahead of Q2.											
OR-03	Housing Benefit: Speed of processing new claims	# days	20	12	11	18	22	20		⬇️	
Complexities of new claims received has caused a slight increase in Q1											
OR-04	Housing Benefit: Speed of processing change of circumstances	# days	10	8	11	6	11	8		⬇️	
Civic Open Revenues system fault has increased the time of processing. A fix is due imminently with a reduction previous levels in Q2 onwards											
OR-05	Housing Benefit: Local Authority error rate	%	0.48%	0.16%	0%	0%	0.03%	0.48%		⬇️	
OR-06	No. of complaints received	#	11	33	25	27	30		24		
OR-07	Average working days to respond to complaints	# days	18	5	6	4	6	10		⬇️	
OR-08	% complaints answered within 10 days	%	75%	96.8%	84%	92%	92%	95%		⬆️	
Most complaints responded within timescales with just 2 out of 30 complaints taking longer than the standard 10 days reply time											
OR-09	Staff turnover rates	%	10.2%	9.2%	12.4%	8%	7%		14.5%	⬇️	
OR-10	Sickness absence - short & long term	# days per FTE	2.88	3.19	3	2	2.99		9.4	⬇️	

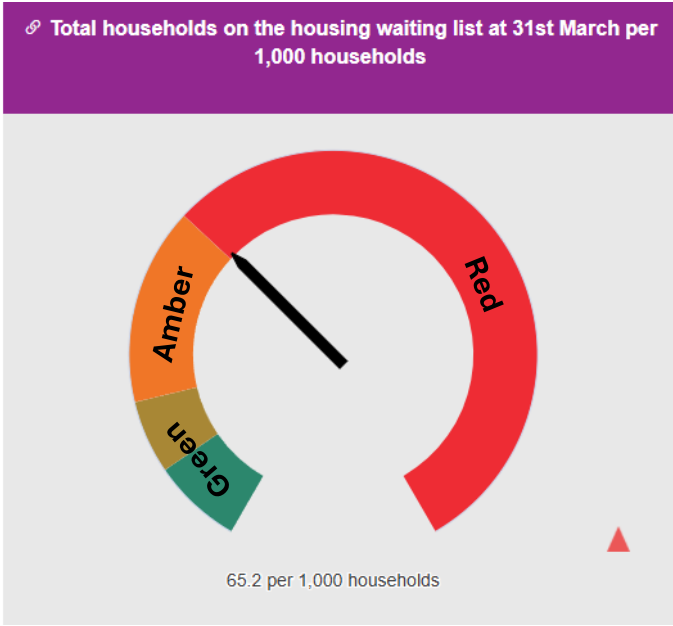
Bromsgrove compared to All local authority districts in West Midlands Quantiles dashboard



Data last updated: 23/06/2026

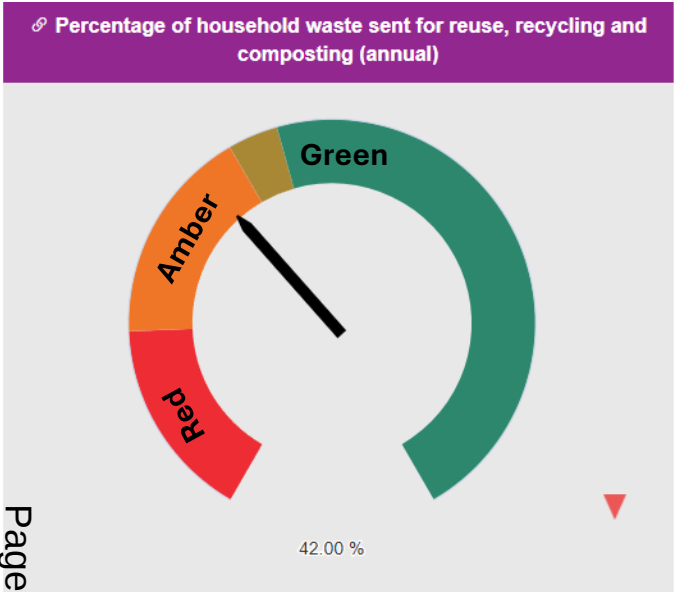


Data last updated: 22/06/2026

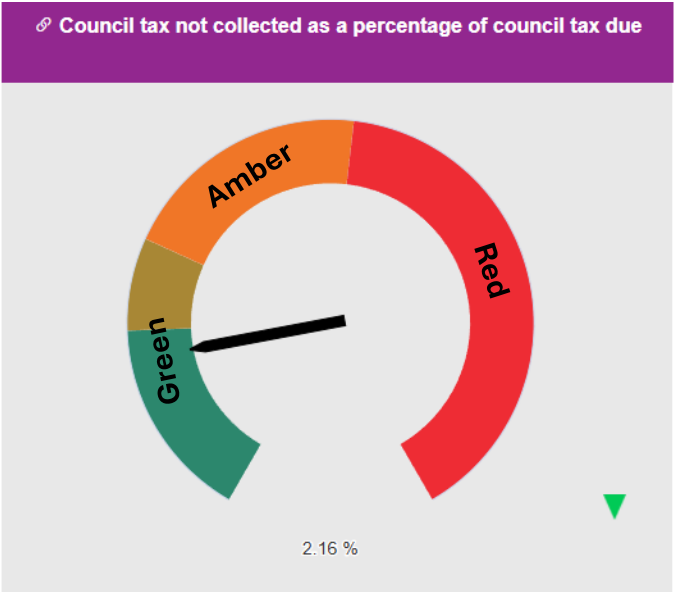


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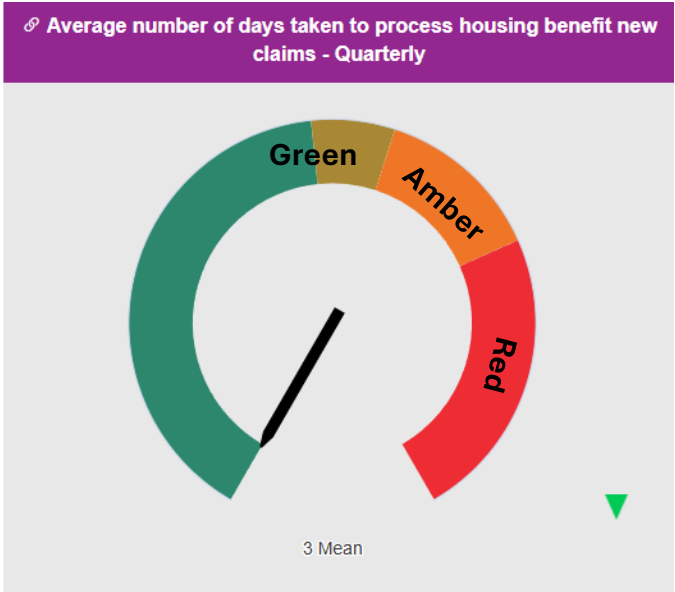
Bromsgrove compared to All local authority districts in West Midlands Quantiles dashboard



Data last updated: 07/04/2026



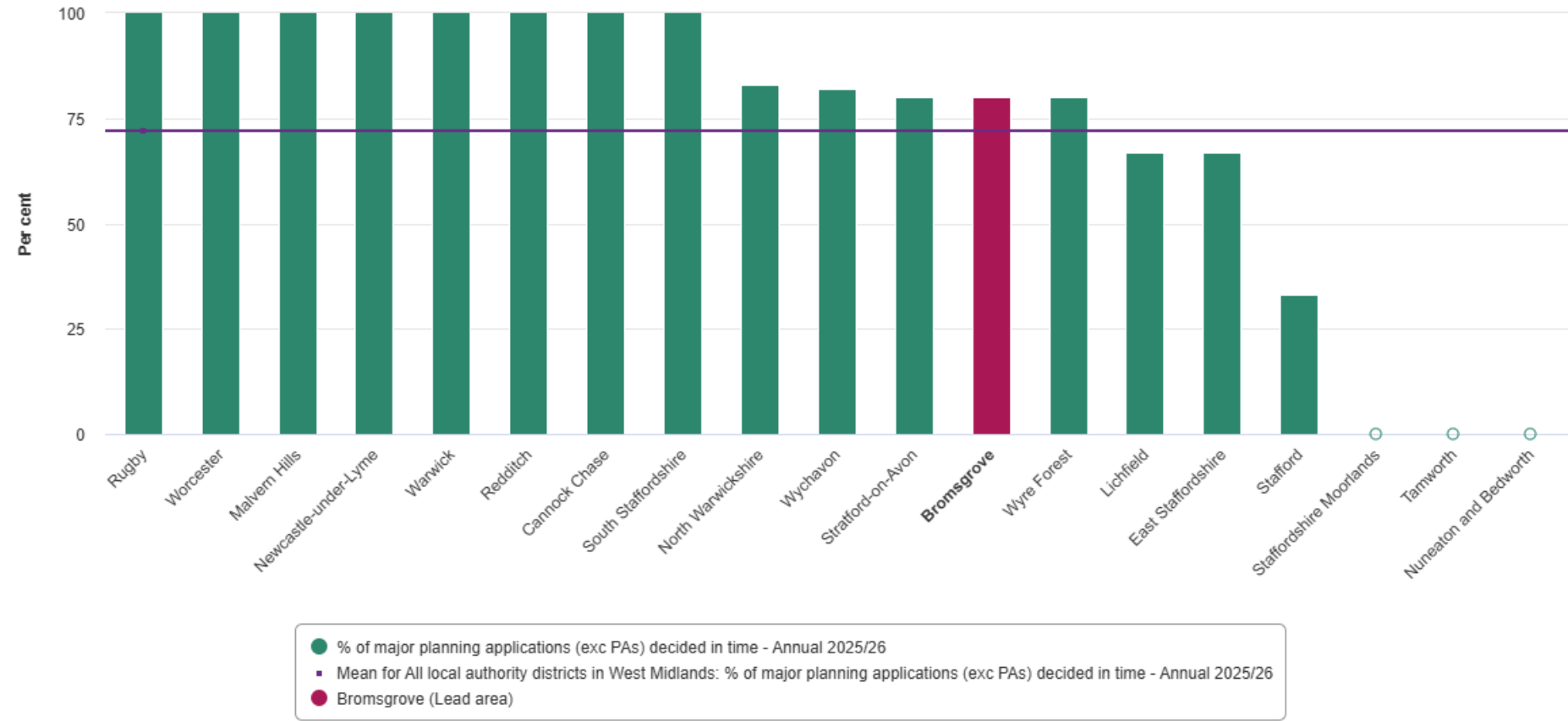
Data last updated: 25/06/2026



Data last updated: 29/04/2026

Bromsgrove compared to All local authority districts in West Midlands: Local Outcomes Framework: Priority outcomes and metrics

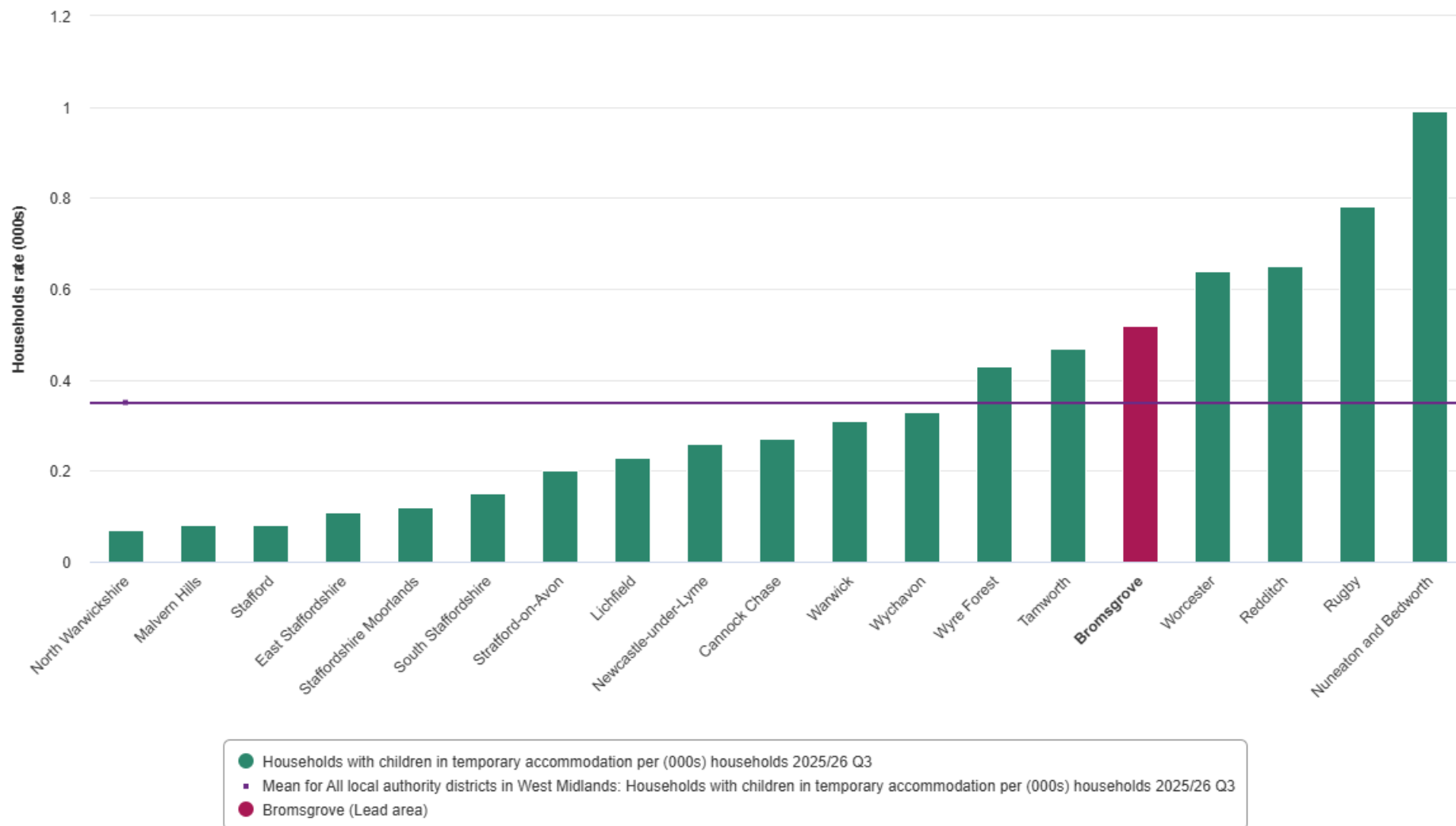
Percentage of major development planning applications excluding Planning Performance Agreements, Extension of Time or Environmental Impact Assessments decided in time - Annual (2025/26) for All local authority districts in West Midlands



Source:

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Development Control statistics, **Polarity:** High value is good, [Percentage of major development planning applications excluding Planning Performance Agreements, Extension of Time or Environmental Impact Assessments decided in time - Annual](#), **Data updated:** 23 Jun 2026

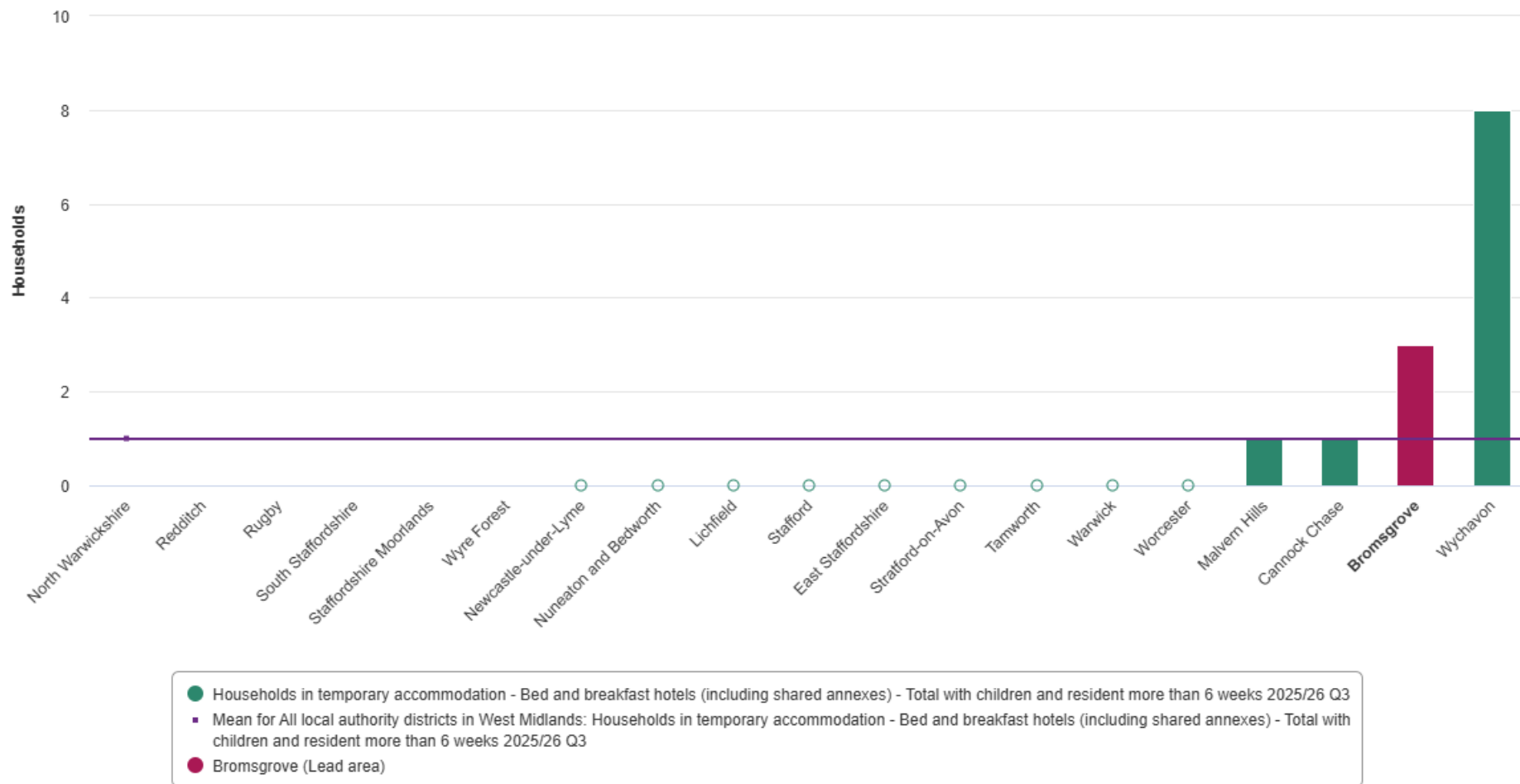
Households with children in temporary accommodation per (000s) households (2025/26 Q3) for All local authority districts in West Midlands



Source:

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Statutory homelessness live tables, **Polarity:** Low value is good, [Households with children in temporary accommodation per \(000s\) households](#), **Data updated:** 22 Jun 2026

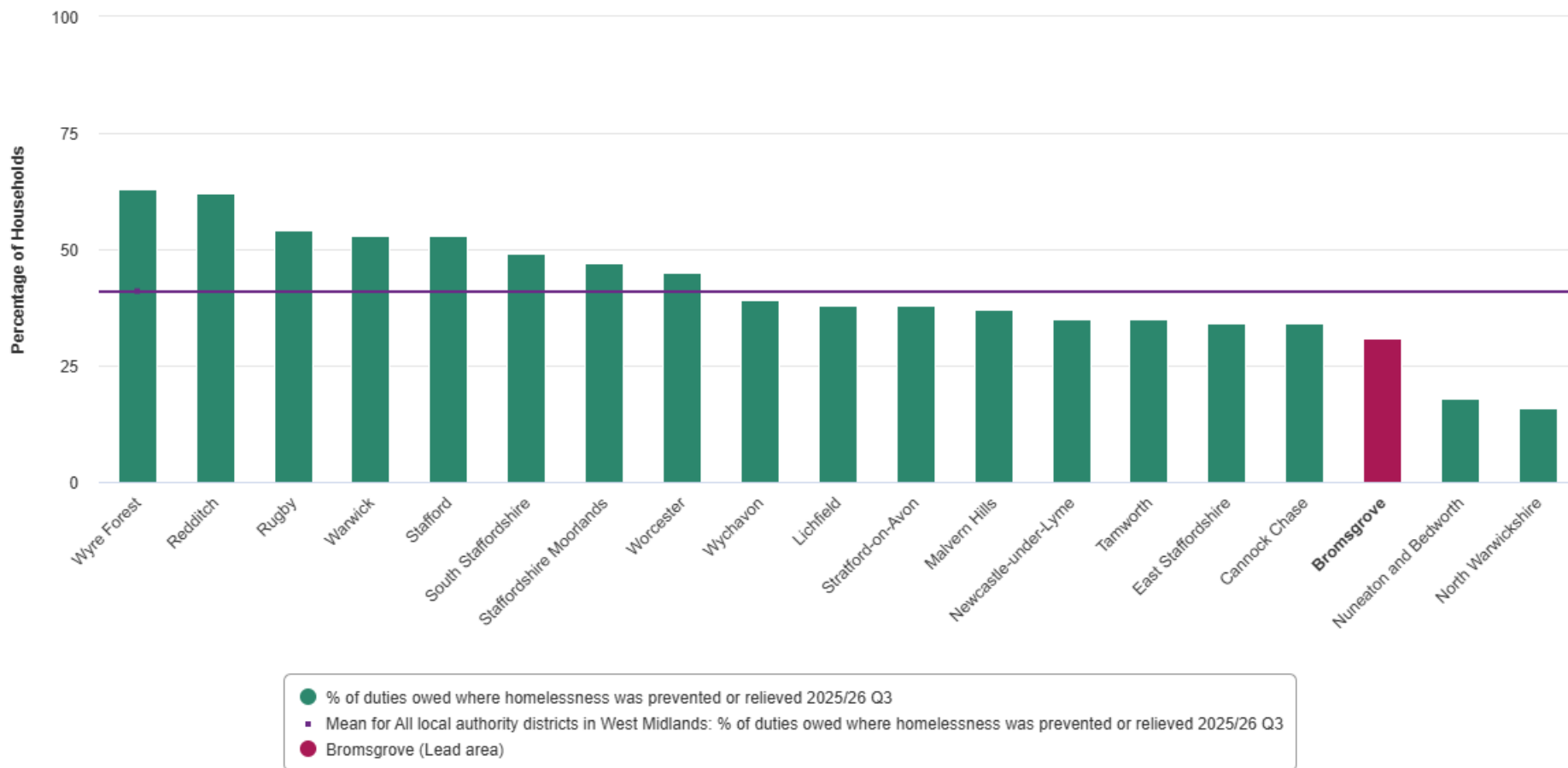
Households in temporary accommodation - Bed and breakfast hotels (including shared annexes) - Total with children and resident more than 6 weeks (2025/26 Q3) for All local authority districts in West Midlands



Source:

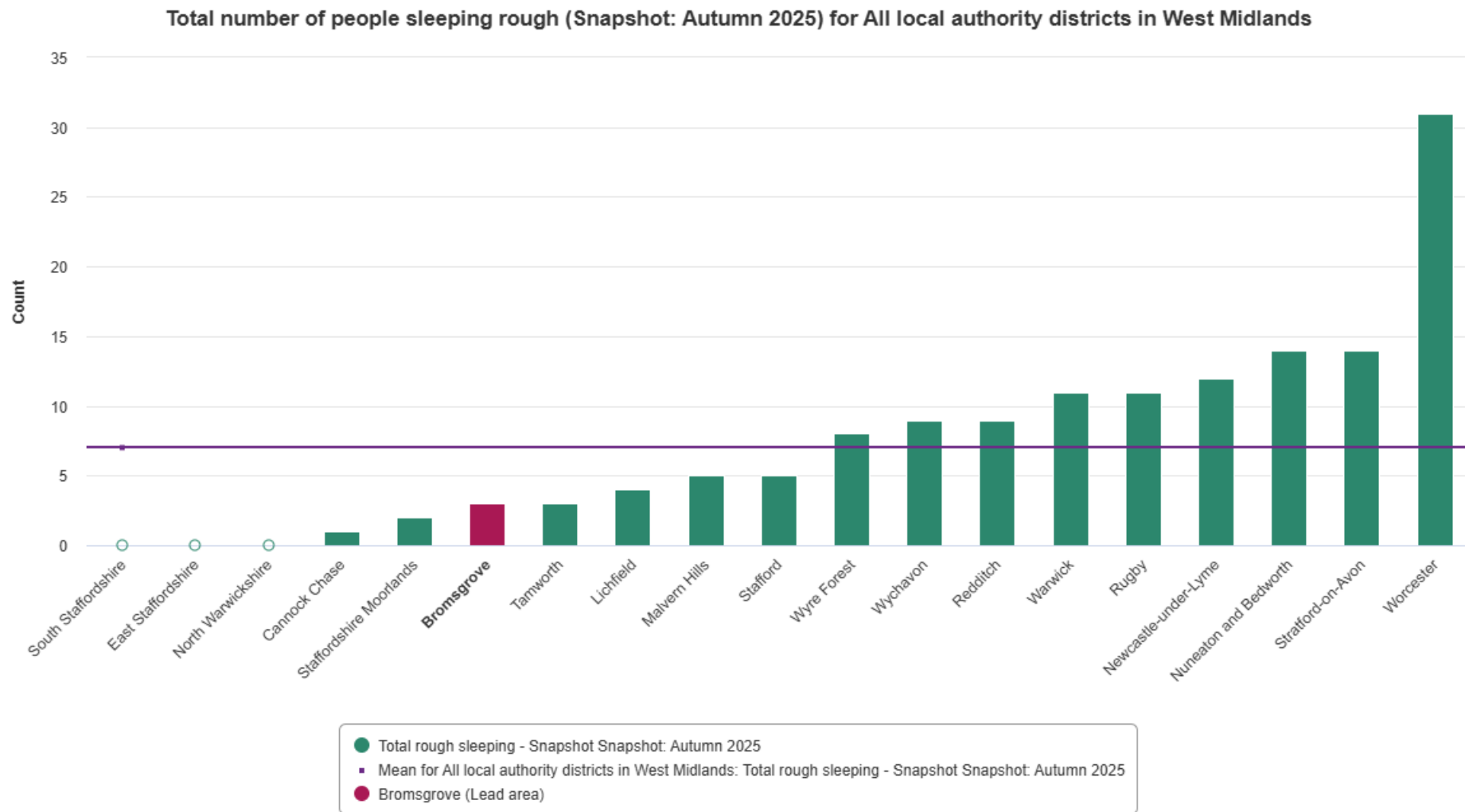
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Statutory homelessness live tables, **Polarity:** Low value is good, [Households in temporary accommodation - Bed and breakfast hotels \(including shared annexes\) - Total with children and resident more than 6 weeks](#), **Data updated:** 22 Jun 2026

Percentage of duties owed where homelessness was prevented or relieved (2025/26 Q3) for All local authority districts in West Midlands



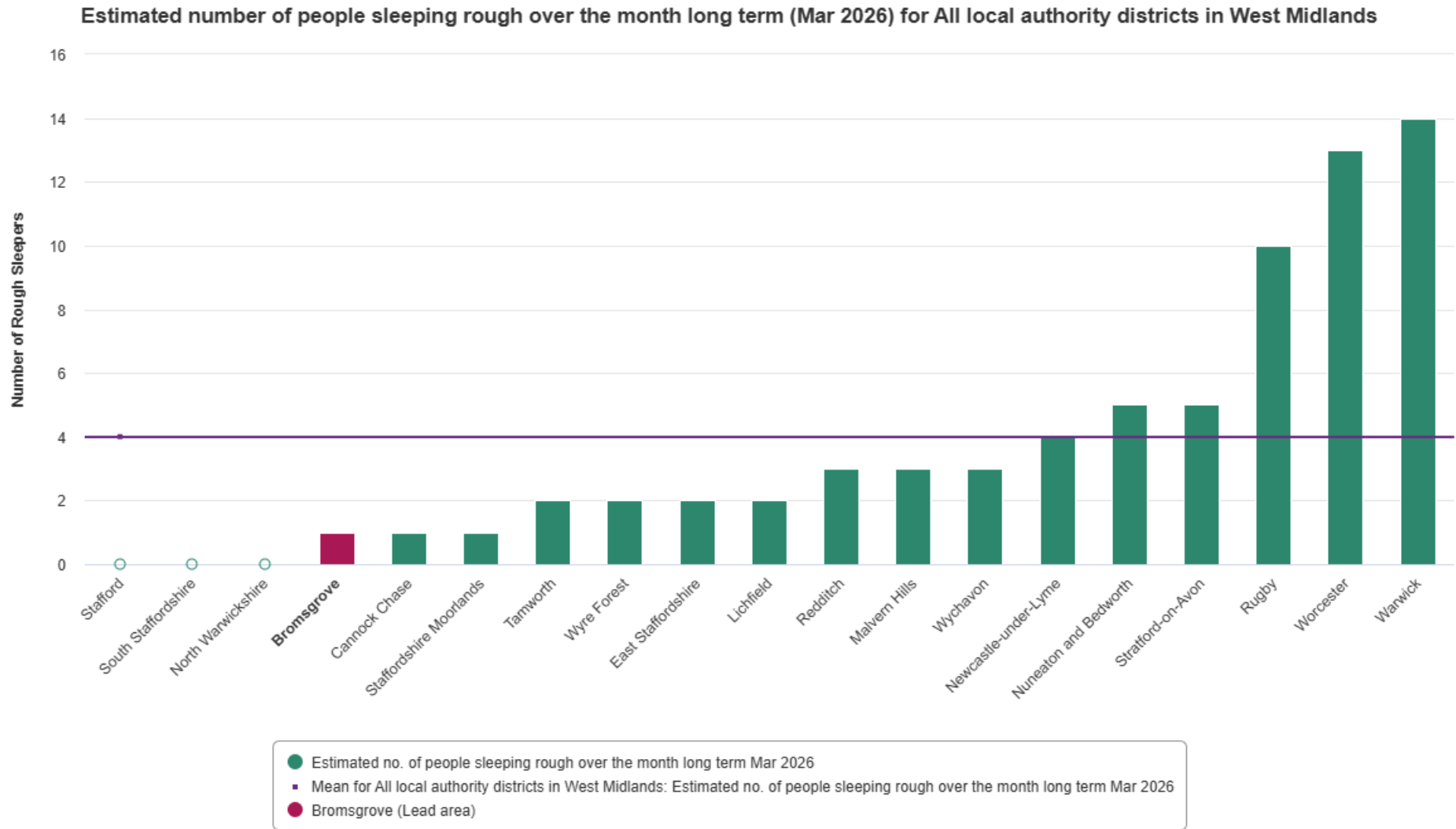
Source:

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Statutory homelessness live tables, **Polarity:** High value is good, [Percentage of duties owed where homelessness was prevented or relieved](#), **Data updated:** 22 Jun 2026

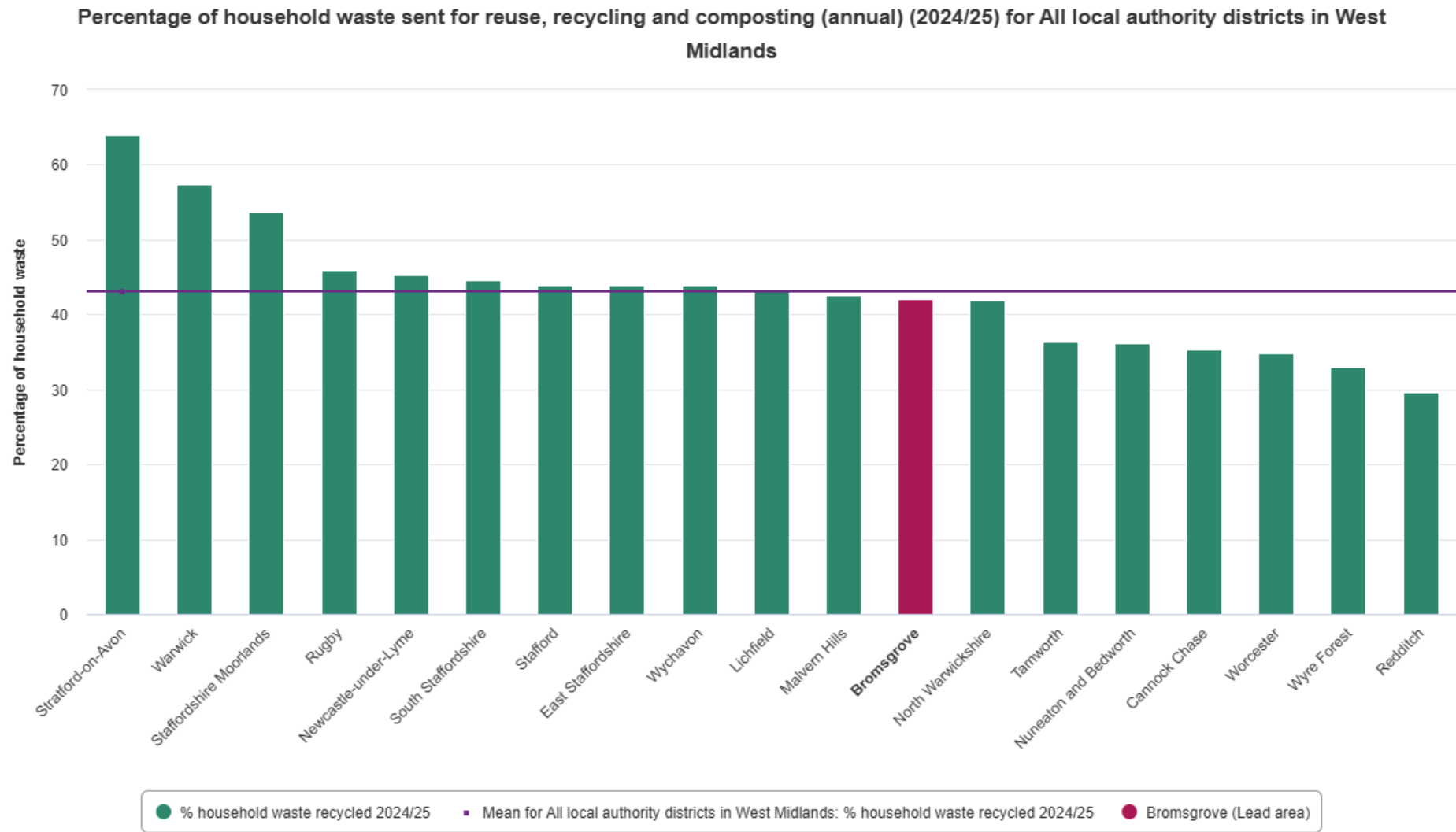


Source:

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Rough sleeping snapshot, **Polarity:** Low value is good, [Total number of people sleeping rough](#), **Data updated:** 03 Mar 2026

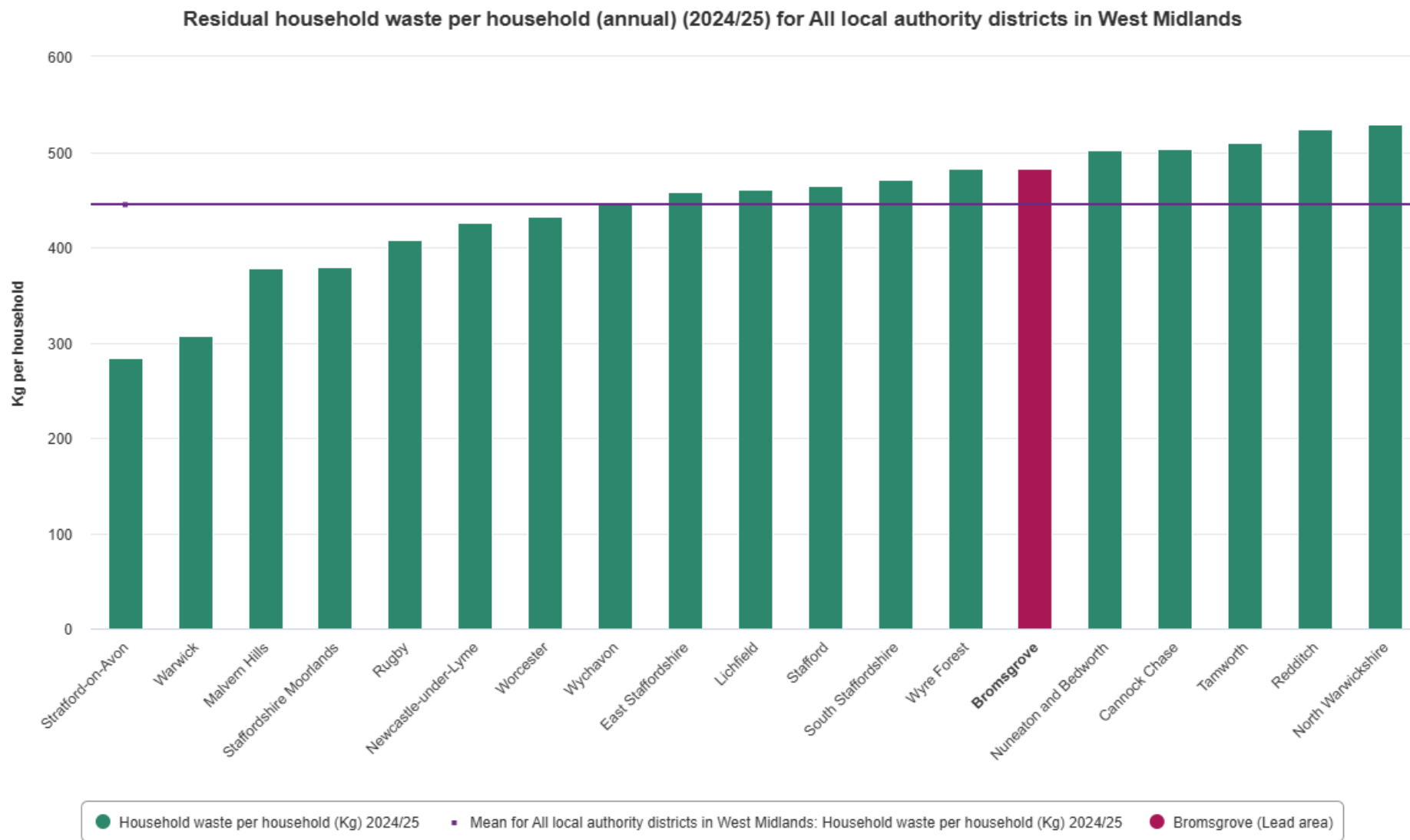
**Source:**

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Rough Sleeping Data Framework, **Polarity:** Low value is good, [Estimated number of people sleeping rough over the month long term](#), **Data updated:** 25 Jun 2026



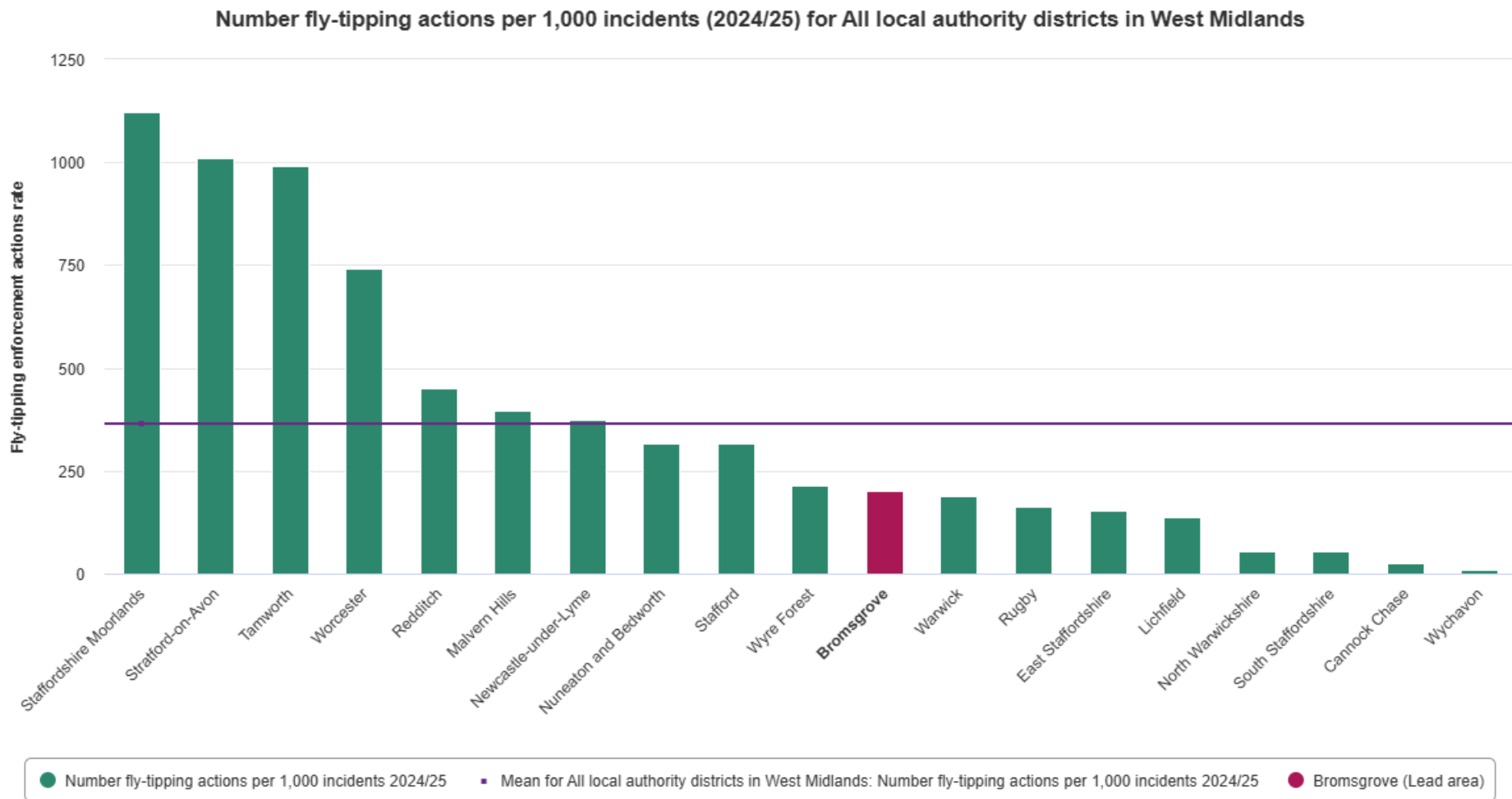
Source:

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Local authority collected waste management, **Polarity:** High value is good, [Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting \(annual\)](#), **Data updated:** 07 Apr 2026

**Source:**

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Local authority collected waste management, **Polarity:** Low value is good, [Residual household waste per household \(annual\)](#),

Data updated: 07 Apr 2026



Source:

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Fly-tipping incidents and actions taken, **Polarity:** High value is good, [Number fly-tipping actions per 1,000 incidents](#), **Data updated:** 26 Feb 2026

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Bromsgrove District Council Corporate Measures Directory

Reference Guide for Quarterly Performance Reporting



Purpose



People



Pride



Performance



Bromsgrove
District Council

www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

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Introduction

This Corporate Measures Directory is designed as a practical reference for members, aligning with the priority headers outlined in the Council Plan. It features clear definitions and working examples for each key metric, supporting a shared understanding of how corporate progress is evaluated each quarter.

Alongside these measures, selected Local Outcome Framework metrics are included to provide wider context on long-term outcomes, complemented by the quartile dashboard which benchmarks performance against comparable authorities. Together, this ensures a balanced view of both local delivery and broader place-based performance.

1. Economic Development

Measure ID	Measure name	Definition	Example
ED-01	Business Grant Funding - £ Paid	Total value of business grant funding awarded during the financial year to date. It includes all approved grant payments made to businesses up to the end of the quarter.	Total value of grant claims paid during the quarter.
ED-02	Business Grant Funding - % Spend	Percentage of grant funding awarded against available budget up to the end of the quarter	5 grants of £10,000 have been awarded from a pot of £100,000 equals 50%.
ED-03	Community Investment Fund - Money Spent	Total value of community investment fund awarded during the financial year to date. It includes all approved grant payments made up to the end of the quarter.	Total value of grant claims paid during the quarter.
ED-04	Community Investment Fund - % Spend	Percentage of grant funding award against available budget up to the end of the quarter	5 grants of £10,000 have been awarded from a pot of £100,000 equals 50%.
ED-05	Community Investment Fund - Committed	Applications which have been approved and awarded funding, but the grant has not been claimed by the recipient.	£20,000 has been applied for and approved and awaiting the project to completed before releasing the funds.

2. Environment Measures

Measure ID	Measure name	Definition	Example
EN-01	% household waste recycled or composted	The percentage of total household waste collected that is sent for reuse, recycling, or composting during the reporting period. This was previously reported as NI 192 and includes street sweeper arisings.	If 100,000 tonnes of household waste are collected and 50,000 tonnes are recycled or composted, the reported figure would be 50%.
EN-02	No. of fly tips	The total number of fly-tipping incidents reported and recorded during the reporting period.	Total number reported and recorded during quarter.
EN-03	Average time taken to remove fly-tipping report (by days)	The average number of days taken to remove reported fly-tipping incidents, measured from the date reported to the date cleared.	If five fly tipping incidents took 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 days to clear, the average time would be 4 days.
EN-04	No. of active environmental enforcement cases	The number of open environmental enforcement cases being actively investigated during the reporting period. It includes cases at any stage of investigation and excludes cases that have been closed.	If 30 cases were open at the start of the quarter, 10 new cases were added, and 15 were closed, the reported figure at period end would be 25 active cases.
EN-05	No. of environmental enforcement fixed penalty notices	The number of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued for environmental offences during the reporting period, excluding any that are cancelled or withdrawn. FPNs are one of several enforcement actions used where sufficient evidence has identified a perpetrator.	If 45 FPNs are issued in a quarter and 5 are later withdrawn, the reported figure would be 40 FPNs issued.
EN-06	# households supported by energy advice service (AoE)	The number of households that received support or advice through the energy advice service during the reporting period.	If 60 households contact the service and receive energy advice, the reported figure would be 60 households supported.

3. Housing Measures

Measure ID	Measure name	Definition	Example
HS-01	% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks (or agreed extension)	The percentage of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks or an agreed extension during the reporting period. It includes all decisions made within the statutory timeframe or formally agreed extensions.	If 20 major planning applications are determined and 15 are decided within 13 weeks or an agreed extension, the reported figure would be 75%.
HS-02	% of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks (or agreed extension)	The percentage of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks or an agreed extension during the reporting period. It includes all decisions made within the statutory timeframe or formally agreed extensions.	If 40 minor planning applications are determined and 32 are decided within 8 weeks or an agreed extension, the reported figure would be 80%.
HS-03	No. of planning enforcement actions taken - cases opened	The number of new planning enforcement cases formally opened during the reporting period. It includes all cases where an investigation has been initiated and excludes enquiries that do not progress to a case.	If 50 planning complaints are received and 30 proceed to formal investigation, the reported figure would be 30 cases opened.
HS-04	No. of planning enforcement actions taken - cases closed	The number of planning enforcement cases formally closed during the reporting period. It includes cases closed following resolution, compliance, or no further action.	If 25 cases are resolved and closed during the quarter, the reported figure would be 25 cases closed.
HS-05	% of building control applications determined within 5 weeks (or 8 weeks on agreement)	The percentage of building control applications determined within 5 weeks, or within 8 weeks where an extension has been agreed, during the reporting period. It includes all valid applications with a recorded decision.	If 50 building control applications are determined and 40 are decided within 5 weeks or an agreed 8 week extension, the reported figure would be 80%.
HS-06	No. of households threatened with homelessness - preventions	Counts the number of households where action was taken by the council to prevent homelessness before it happened.	If 60 households approached the council at risk of homelessness and 40 were supported to stay in their home or find alternative accommodation, the reported figure would be 40 preventions.

Measure ID	Measure name	Definition	Example
HS-07	No. of households in temporary accommodation (snapshot)	The number of households placed in temporary accommodation at a single point in time. It includes all households housed by the council, regardless of property type, but excludes placements arranged by other organisations.	If there were 42 households in temporary accommodation on 31 March, the reported figure is 42, even if more households used temporary accommodation during the whole quarter.
HS-08	Cost of B&B placements	Total net cost of placing households in bed and breakfast accommodation during the reporting period. It includes nightly accommodation charges but excludes internal staffing costs.	If the council paid £50 per night for 10 households over 30 nights, the total cost upfront would be £15,000 for that period, net cost would vary due to housing benefit subsidies and VAT.

4. Community Safety Measures

Measure ID	Measure name	Definition	Example
CS-01	No. of crimes recorded (excluding ASB) Data provided via police.uk	The number of recorded crimes reported to the police during the reporting period, excluding incidents classified as anti-social behaviour (ASB). This includes all notifiable offences logged within the period, regardless of outcome.	If 325 crimes are reported during the period, excluding 75 incidents recorded as ASB, the total number of crimes reported (excluding ASB) would be 250.
CS-02	ASB Data provided via police.uk	The number of incidents reported during the reporting period that are classified as anti-social behaviour (ASB), based on police or partner agency definitions. This includes incidents involving nuisance, disturbance, or behaviour causing harassment, alarm, or distress.	If 75 incidents of anti-social behaviour are reported during the period, the total number of ASB incidents would be 75.

5. Organisational Priority Measures

Measure ID	Measure name	Definition	Example
OR-01	Council Tax Collection Rate	The percentage of Council Tax due that has been collected during the reporting period. It includes all Council Tax payments received and is measured against the total amount due for the same period.	If £10 million of Council Tax is due and £9 million is collected, the reported collection rate would be 90%.
OR-02	Business Rates Collection Rate	The percentage of Business Rates due that has been collected during the reporting period. It includes all payments received and is measured against the total amount due for the same period.	If £8 million of Business Rates is due and £6.4 million is collected, the reported collection rate would be 80%.
OR-03	Housing Benefit: Speed of processing new claims (by days)	The average number of days taken to process new Housing Benefit claims during the reporting period. It is measured from the date a complete claim is received to the date a decision is made.	If three new claims are processed in 10, 15 and 20 days, the reported average processing time would be 15 days.
OR-04	Housing Benefit: Speed of processing change of circumstances (by days)	The average number of days taken to process changes in circumstances for Housing Benefit claims during the reporting period. It is measured from the date the change is reported to the date the updated decision is made.	If three changes in circumstances are processed in 5, 8 and 11 days, the reported average processing time would be 8 days.
OR-05	Housing Benefit: Local Authority Error Rate	The percentage of Housing Benefit payments that are incorrect due to Local Authority error during the reporting period. It includes all cases where an error has resulted in an overpayment or underpayment.	If 1,000 Housing Benefit claims are assessed and 5 are found to contain a Local Authority error, the reported error rate would be 0.5%.
OR-06	No. of complaints received	The total number of formal complaints received during the reporting period. It includes all complaints recorded through the Council's corporate complaints process and excludes general enquiries, service requests, and informal feedback.	If 150 contacts are received and 90 are logged as formal complaints, the reported figure would be 90 complaints.
OR-07	Average working days to respond to complaints	The average number of working days taken to provide a full response to formal complaints during the reporting period. It includes all closed complaints and is measured from the date the complaint is received to the date the response is issued.	If three complaints are responded to in 5, 10 and 15 working days, the reported average response time would be 10 days.

Measure ID	Measure name	Definition	Example
OR-08	% complaints answered within 10 days	The percentage of complaints where a full response was sent to the customer within 10 working days. It includes all formal complaints logged in the system but excludes enquiries or service requests.	Percentage is based on number of complaints vs responded within 10 working days i.e. 30 complaints with 3 completes answered outside of target = 90%.
OR-09	Staff turnover rates	Percentage of employees who leave the organisation during the reporting period (rolling 12 months) compared to the average number of employees.	If 20 employees leave during the year and the council employs 200 staff on average, the turnover rate is 10%.
OR-10	Sickness absence - short & long term (days per FTE)	Measures the average number of days lost to short & long-term sickness absence per full-time equivalent employee.	If a total of 780 days is lost to short & long-term sickness and there are 100 full-time equivalent staff, the average is 7.8 days per FTE.

6. Quantile Dashboard & Local Outcome Framework

Measure	Definition	Source
Page 106 Average number of days taken to process housing benefit new claims (Quarterly)	This measures the average number of calendar days taken to process new Housing Benefit claims within the quarter, from receipt to decision. The average is calculated by dividing the total days taken by the number of cases processed.	Data is from the Single Housing Benefit Extract (SHBE). Source name: Department for Work and Pensions Collection name: Housing Benefit: statistics on speed of processing (SoP) Polarity: Low is good
Total households on the housing waiting list on 31st March per 1,000 households (Annual)	The housing waiting list includes both households in housing need and those without an identified housing need. Although there is no longer a statutory duty to maintain a Housing Register, local authorities retain waiting lists to support their housing allocation responsibilities.	Figures in this table are unaudited by local authorities. Source name: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Collection name: Local Authority Housing Statistics (LAHS) Polarity: Low is good

Measure	Definition	Source
Total number of households in Temporary Accommodation per (000s) households	Households threatened with homelessness within 56 days are entitled to support from the local authority to prevent homelessness, while those already homeless receive assistance to secure accommodation. Statutory homeless households are owed duties across three stages: prevention, relief, and the main homelessness duty.	Source name: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Collection name: Statutory homelessness live tables Polarity: Low is good
Percentage of minor development planning applications with Planning Performance Agreements, Extension of Time or Environmental Impact Assessments decided in time	This measures the percentage of minor planning applications determined within statutory timescales of 8 weeks (or 16 weeks where an Environmental Impact Assessment is required). While the focus is on minor applications, data is also available for county, major, and other application types. Minor applications include developments such as dwellings, industry and warehousing, offices, retail and services, traveller sites, and other categories.	Source name: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Collection name: Development Control statistics Polarity: High is good
Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling, and composting (Annual)	This measures the percentage of household waste collected that is sent for reuse, recycling, composting, or anaerobic digestion. It is calculated by dividing the total tonnage of waste sent for these treatments by the total tonnage of household waste collected.	Source name: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Collection name: Local authority collected waste management Polarity: High is good
Council tax not collected as a percentage of council tax due	This explains how council tax is set and collected by the billing authority to meet its budget and precept requirements, based on property valuation bands. The data is drawn from the final quarterly returns (QRC4) submitted by billing authorities to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.	QRC4 returns Source name: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Collection name: Council tax collection rates Polarity: Low is good

Measure	Definition	Source
Percentage of major development planning applications with Planning Performance Agreements, Extension of Time or Environmental Impact Assessments decided in time	This measures the percentage of major planning applications (excluding those with a Planning Performance Agreement, Extension of Time, or Environmental Impact Assessment) determined within statutory timescales. Timely determination is defined as within 13 weeks, or 16 weeks where an Environmental Impact Assessment applies.	Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Collection Name: Development Control statistics Polarity: High is good
Percentage of duties owed where homelessness was prevented or relieved	This measures the percentage of prevention or relief duties that result in homelessness being prevented or relieved within the quarter. Success is defined as securing accommodation for at least 6 months, compared to the number of new duties owed in that period.	Source name: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Collection name: Statutory homelessness live tables Polarity: Low is good
Households with children in temporary accommodation per (000s) households	This measures the rate of households with dependent children living in temporary accommodation per 1,000 households. The data is reported by MHCLG and provides a comparative measure of the scale of temporary accommodation use.	Source name: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Collection name: Statutory homelessness live tables Polarity: Low is good
Households in temporary accommodations - Bed and breakfast hotels (including shared annexes)	This measures the number of households with children placed in bed and breakfast accommodation for more than 6 weeks. It highlights the use of temporary accommodation beyond recommended time limits for families with dependent children.	Source name: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Collection name: Statutory homelessness live tables Polarity: Low is good
Total number of people sleeping rough (Snapshot)	This measures the number of people sleeping rough on a single night, including those bedding down in open air or makeshift shelters. It excludes people in hostels, shelters, or other temporary accommodation, and only counts those seen or believed to be sleeping rough at the time of the snapshot.	Source name: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Collection name: Rough sleeping snapshot Polarity: Low is good

Measure	Definition	Source
Estimated number of people sleeping rough over the month-long term	This estimates the number of people sleeping rough over a month, including those with long-term rough sleeping identified through outreach or snapshot data. Long-term rough sleepers are those seen within the month who have been recorded sleeping rough in 3 or more months over the past year.	Source name: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Collection name: Rough Sleeping Data Framework Polarity: Low is good
Residual household waste per household (Annual)	Residual household waste per household (annual) - This is the number of kilograms of residual household waste collected per household. Residual waste is any collected household waste that is not sent for reuse, recycling, or composting.	Source name: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Collection name: Local authority collected waste management Polarity: Low is good
Number fly-tipping actions per 1,000 incidents	This measures the number of fly-tipping enforcement actions taken per 1,000 reported incidents, based on data recorded in WasteDataFlow. Figures should be interpreted with caution, as reporting practices, local conditions, and data quality can vary, limiting direct comparison between authorities.	Source name: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Collection name: Fly-tipping incidents and actions taken Polarity: High is good

Appendix: Using the Directory

- Review the directory alongside quarterly reports to understand the rationale behind each assessment.
- Refer to measure definitions and examples for clarity in interpreting results.
- Contact the Performance & Improvement Team for further details or support.

This directory is updated regularly to reflect evolving council priorities and reporting requirements. Feedback is welcomed to ensure continued relevance and clarity for all members.

Cabinet

16th September 2026

Equality Strategy 2026-2028 (inc. Engagement Policy)

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Karen May (Leader)
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Hannah Corredor
Report Author	Job Title: Performance & Improvement Manager Contact email: h.mole@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 881685
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Council Priority	High-Quality Services
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 RECOMMEND that: -

The Equality Strategy 2026 – 2028 (including the Engagement Policy 2026 - 2028) be approved.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council previously operated under an Equality Strategy covering the period 2022-2026 and an Engagement Strategy from 2022 to 2025. These strategies have helped embed equality considerations across service delivery, decision-making, engagement and workforce practices. As those strategies have now reached the end of their intended timeframe, an updated Equality Strategy, which includes the Engagement Policy as an appendix, have been developed for 2026-2028.
- 2.2 Progress and achievements from the previous strategies will be reported through the Councils' annual reporting arrangements alongside future updates on delivery of the new strategy.
- 2.3 The Equality Strategy is supported by an Action Plan, which brings together activity taking place across Council services to deliver the authority's equality objectives. The Action Plan enables more consistent monitoring of progress under each objective and enables the Council to demonstrate to residents how equality considerations are being embedded within the authority's work.
- 2.4 The refreshed Engagement Policy is included as an appendix to the Equality Strategy, demonstrating how effective equality work depends on high-quality insight and an understanding of the needs and experiences of different communities. It sets out how the Council will undertake

Cabinet

16th September 2026

inclusive and meaningful engagement so that the insight gathered from residents, community groups, partners, and staff can inform Equality Impact Assessments, service improvement activity and wider decision-making.

3. OPERATIONAL DETAIL

- 3.1 Both documents build on the Councils' existing equality and engagement work and reflect learning from residents, community groups, partners, and staff over the four-year period of the last strategy. They provide an updated framework for ensuring equality, accessibility and community insight from approval until unitarisation in 2028.
- 3.2 The strategy sets out four equality objectives for 2026-2028:
- Continue to deliver fair and accessible services.
 - Strengthen inclusive engagement and communication.
 - Improve understanding of communities and support inclusion.
 - Support an inclusive and representative workforce.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications. However, where future actions arising from the Equality Action Plan or engagement activity require additional resources, these will need to be considered through the relevant service planning, budget setting or decision-making process.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Equality Strategy supports the Council in meeting the authority's responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Duty requires local authorities to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups.
- 5.2 Approval of these documents will provide a clear framework for demonstrating that equality, accessibility and community engagement are embedded within policy development, service delivery and decision-making across the Council.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 Both documents recognise the importance of maintaining a consistent approach to equality, accessibility and community engagement during the upcoming transition through Local Government Reorganisation into a North Worcestershire unitary council.

Cabinet

16th September 2026

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 The Equality Strategy and Engagement Policy contribute to the delivery of high-quality services.
- 6.3 Together, they help ensure services are informed by the needs and experiences of residents, support continuous improvement and promote fair, effective, and inclusive service delivery across the Council.

6.4 **Community Impact**

Will have a positive impact on communities by helping the Council better understand local needs, support inclusion and ensure services and decisions are informed by the views and experiences of residents. This contributes to community wellbeing and cohesion across the district.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.5. There are no direct climate change implications arising from the approval of the Equality Strategy and Engagement Policy. The documents do not commit the Council to any specific projects, developments or operational activities that would directly affect greenhouse gas emissions, energy consumption or climate adaptation measures.
- 6.6. However, the principles set out within the Equality Strategy and Engagement Policy support inclusive decision-making and engagement, which can help ensure that the impacts of climate change and environmental changes on different communities are better understood. This is particularly relevant for groups who may be disproportionately affected by extreme weather, fuel poverty, poor housing conditions or other climate-related risks.
- 6.7. Future actions, policies or projects developed under the framework of these documents will continue to be considered on their individual merits and, where appropriate, will be subject to separate assessment of climate change implications.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.8 The subject matter of this report is directly concerned with equality, diversity and inclusion.

7. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 Without an up-to-date Equality Strategy and Engagement Policy, there is a risk that the Council cannot clearly demonstrate how equality and engagement considerations are embedded. This could increase the risk of inconsistent practice across services and reduce assurance that the Council is meeting its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty.

Cabinet

16th September 2026

- 7.2 The approved documents will help mitigate these risks by providing a clear and consistent framework for considering equality impacts, engaging with residents and communities and supporting informed decision-making. The Action Plan will also support the delivery and monitoring of identified priorities over the life of the Strategy.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix A - Equality Strategy 2026-2028
Appendix 1 - Engagement Policy 2026-2028

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Karen May (Leader)	July 2026
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Hannah Corredor	12/08/26
Financial Services	Paul Earley	04/08/26
Legal Services	Claire Felton	03/08/26
Community Services	Bev Houghton	07/08/26
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	Emily Payne Engagement & Equalities Advisor Helen Mole Business Improvement Manager	N/A as authors
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	Matt Eccles, Climate Change Officer	03/03/26

Bromsgrove District Council Equality Strategy 2026-2028

Title	Bromsgrove District Council Equality Strategy 2026-2028.
Description	This Strategy sets out our commitment for progressing equality over the next two years.
Created by	Engagement and Equalities Advisor
Date created	May 2026
Maintained by	Engagement and Equalities Advisor
Next Review Date	April 2028

Version number	Modified by	Modifications made	Date modified	Status

If you need this information in another language or format, please contact us and we will do our best to help.

Email: equalities@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Phone: 01527 548284

Foreword

Bromsgrove is a district with strong communities, valued local traditions and a growing diversity of experiences and perspectives. As a Council, we want everyone to feel respected, included and able to access the opportunities, services and support they need to thrive.

This Equality Strategy sets out how Bromsgrove District Council will continue to promote fairness, dignity and inclusion between 2026 and 2028. It builds on the progress we have already made and reflects what we have learned through engagement with residents, community groups, partners and staff.

The strategy recognises that equality is not a separate area of work. It is an important part of how we develop services, make decisions, engage with our communities and support our workforce. By considering different experiences and understanding the barriers people may face, we can make better decisions and deliver services that are more responsive to local needs.

While Bromsgrove is often seen as a prosperous district, we know that not everyone experiences the same opportunities or outcomes. This strategy reaffirms our commitment to understanding those differences and ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to participate in community life and access Council services fairly.

As Bromsgrove prepares for significant change through Local Government Reorganisation, maintaining a focus on fairness, inclusion and understanding the needs of our communities will be more important than ever. This strategy provides a practical framework to help ensure those principles continue to guide our work in the years ahead.

I am pleased to support this Equality Strategy and look forward to working with residents, community organisations, businesses and partners to help deliver its objectives.

Councillor Karen May
Leader of Bromsgrove District Council

1. Purpose

At Bromsgrove District Council, we want everyone to be treated with fairness, dignity and respect. This Equality Strategy sets out how we will continue to do that between 2026 and 2028.

In recent years, we have listened to residents, community groups and staff to better understand people's experiences and the barriers they may face. This learning has helped shape how we deliver services, make decisions and support our workforce. While we are proud of the progress made, we recognise there is more to do.

This strategy builds on that learning and sets a clear direction for continuing to embed equality in our everyday work. Our aim is to support a district where people from all backgrounds can live, work and participate fully, and where individuals and communities feel valued and included.

The strategy will also support the Council during a period of organisational change. By maintaining a clear focus on equality, we can better understand how decisions may affect different people and communities, helping to ensure services remain fair, accessible and responsive to local needs throughout the transition to new local government arrangements.

2. Scope

This strategy applies to everyone who lives in, works in or visits Bromsgrove District. It covers all Council services and functions, our workforce and Elected Members.

It reflects the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 and supports a consistent approach to equality across all areas of Council activity, including during any organisational change.

3. Our Legal Duties and Responsibilities

The Equality Act 2010 provides the legal framework that underpins our work on equality. It protects people from discrimination based on nine protected characteristics and places a duty on public bodies to think about equality as part of everything they do.

The Council is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty. This means we must:

- eliminate discrimination and harassment
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations between different groups

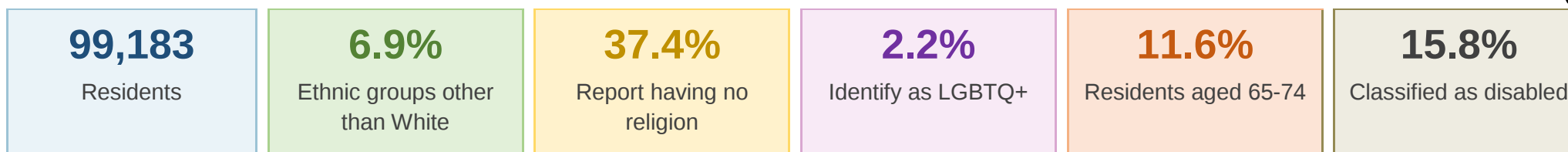
These duties reflect the way we already strive to work – by listening, learning and improving. Publishing this strategy helps us meet our legal responsibilities, but more importantly it sets out our commitment to creating a fairer, more inclusive district.

We also recognise that poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage can significantly affect people’s life chances. While not a protected characteristic in law, this remains an important consideration in how we understand inequality locally.

4. Understanding Bromsgrove District

Bromsgrove District is a place where town and countryside come together, combining Bromsgrove town, larger settlements such as Alvechurch, Barnt Green, Catshill, Hagley, Rubery and Wythall, and more than 40 parishes and villages, each with its own identity and strong sense of community. Home to around 99,200 residents, the district grew by 5.9% between 2011 and 2021 and has an older population than the national average, with a median age of 45. While the population remains predominantly White, Bromsgrove continues to become more diverse over time, with residents from a range of ethnic backgrounds, faiths, cultures and life experiences contributing to the character and identity of the district.

Understanding who lives in Bromsgrove and how the population is changing helps us recognise where barriers and inequalities may exist. Factors such as age, disability, caring responsibilities, ethnicity, faith, sexual orientation and wider socio-economic circumstances can all influence people's experiences, opportunities and access to services. This evidence provides an important foundation for delivering fair, inclusive and accessible services and for shaping the priorities of the Equality Strategy.



Age and life stage

Bromsgrove District has an older population than the national average, with a median age of 45 compared with 40 across England. Residents aged 65 to 74 account for 11.6% of the population, and the number of older residents continues to grow. This demographic change highlights the importance of accessible services, digital inclusion, prevention, health and wellbeing, and opportunities for people to remain active and connected throughout later life.

Disability, health and caring

Around 15.8% of residents report that a disability or long-term health condition limits their day-to-day activities, while more than 85% describe their health as good or very good. The district is also home to thousands of unpaid carers who provide support to family members, friends and neighbours, often balancing caring responsibilities alongside work, education and other aspects of daily life.

Socio-economic inequality

Bromsgrove is generally a prosperous district, with high levels of employment and home ownership. However, around 45% of households experience at least one dimension of deprivation, and some communities experience greater challenges relating to income, health, housing and access to services. Local evidence identifies parts of Charford, Sidemoor and North Bromsgrove as facing higher levels of deprivation than the district average.

Ethnicity and culture

The district is predominantly White, with 6.9% of residents identifying with ethnic groups other than White. While less diverse than many neighbouring authorities, Bromsgrove is becoming gradually more diverse over time. Residents come from a range of ethnic backgrounds, cultures and nationalities, contributing to vibrant communities and bringing a variety of experiences and perspectives that enrich life across the district.

Faith, belief and identity

Christianity remains the largest faith group, with around 53.5% of residents identifying as Christian, while 37.4% report having no religion. Alongside this are smaller but important faith communities, including Sikh, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and Jewish residents. This diversity of faith, belief and worldview contributes to the identity and community life of the district.

Sexual orientation

Around 2.2% of residents aged 16 and over identify as LGBTQ+, while a larger proportion preferred not to state their sexual orientation. LGBTQ+ residents are an important part of Bromsgrove District's communities, and people's experiences may be shaped by factors including sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability and other aspects of identity. Creating inclusive and welcoming services helps ensure everyone can participate fully in community life.

Source: ONS Census 2021 dataset via Nomis

Bromsgrove benefits from strong communities, active voluntary and community organisations, and a high-quality natural environment. However, people's experiences and opportunities are not always the same. The evidence highlights the importance of understanding the different needs, strengths and lived experiences of residents across the district, including those who may face additional barriers or disadvantage.

By using this information to inform decision-making, service planning and engagement, the Council can help ensure services remain fair, accessible and responsive to local needs, while supporting equality of opportunity and positive outcomes for all residents.

5. Equality in Practice: What We Have Learned

Between 2022 and 2026, equality has increasingly informed how our services are designed, how investment decisions are made and how we engage with communities. Equality considerations have shaped real activity across housing, regeneration, environmental services, health, community safety and support during the cost-of-living crisis.

As a service provider, we have used community insight, feedback and lived experience to reduce barriers and improve access. As an employer, we have continued to strengthen an inclusive workplace culture, supported by fair recruitment practices, staff learning and reasonable adjustments.

5.1 Economic Development

The Council played a central role in regenerating key sites and improving housing access. This includes leading the redevelopment of the former Council House site at Burcot Lane, delivering 61 new low-carbon homes with 18 affordable units, and enabling major investments such as the £14 million housing development in Hagley. Regeneration projects and consultations, such as the Market Hall redevelopment and Local Plan engagement, ensured residents had an influential voice in shaping future development and housing provision.

5.2 Communities Which Are Safe, Well Maintained & Green

Through investment in parks and community spaces, the Council has supported wellbeing, social connection and a sense of belonging.

Improvements at Brook Road Park, alongside planned enhancements to Sanders Park Café and its car park, will improve accessibility and create more inclusive community facilities. These improvements will help ensure that people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities can access and enjoy these spaces, while encouraging greater social interaction and community participation. The Council has also supported cultural inclusion through plans for a new Fringe Festival and continued funding for community-led environmental projects through its small grants funding programme.

Equality is strengthened when neighbourhoods are safe, accessible and well maintained. The Council invested in new refuse vehicles, district-wide bin upgrades and street-cleaning machinery to improve the cleanliness and reliability of services used by all households. Environmental enforcement, including action against fly-tipping and illegal vape sales, protected vulnerable residents and helped maintain safe local environments. Community safety consultations further embedded inclusive engagement in setting local priorities.

5.3 Living Independent, Active & Healthy Lives

The Council supported opportunities for all residents to lead healthier lives, including free Couch to 5K programmes that encouraged accessible physical activity. Community events such as annual Christmas lights switch-ons promoted social cohesion and inclusion. The new energy-efficient homes at Burcot Lane also advanced equality by reducing energy bills and improving living conditions for residents at risk of fuel poverty.

5.4 Cost of Living Support & Financial Resilience

The Government's Household Support Fund (HSF), which operated until March 2026, provided targeted assistance to residents experiencing financial hardship. Working with Citizens Advice Bromsgrove and Redditch and local voluntary and community organisations, the Council helped distribute more than £189,000 of support during the final phase of the programme, including over £103,000 through local community organisations and £84,000 in direct payments to eligible households. The delivery of HSF highlighted the value of partnership working and targeted support in reaching residents most affected by the rising cost of living.

Although HSF has now ended, the Council continues to work with Worcestershire County Council and local partners to help residents access support through the new Crisis and Resilience Fund and other available assistance programmes.

5.5 Leadership, Participation and Investment

The Council demonstrated its commitment to equality through inclusive engagement and opportunities for participation. This included delivering interactive democracy sessions for students from Chadsgrove School and Specialist Sports College, helping young people with additional needs to engage with local democracy and understand decision-making processes. The Council also worked with local voluntary and community organisations to support residents facing disadvantage and to strengthen community involvement across the district. The establishment of Spadesbourne Homes Ltd created an opportunity for income generated from Council-owned housing to be reinvested into local services and priorities, supporting long-term benefits for Bromsgrove communities.

5.6 Voluntary, Community & Partnership Support

The Council continued to deliver its long-running Equality Small Grants Scheme, supporting small voluntary and community groups working with older people, disabled residents, LGBTQ+ communities, women, families, ethnic minority groups and others experiencing inequality. Over the years, the scheme has provided over £99,000 in funding to more than 90 groups, ensuring sustained investment in grassroots equality projects that directly benefit the district's diverse communities.

5.7 Workforce Development and Organisational Culture

The Council continues to promote a working environment based on fairness, dignity and respect. Learning and leadership activity, including Dignity at Work training, supports a culture where equality is part of everyday practice and service delivery. Further detail on the Council's approach as an employer is set out in section 8.

5.8 Impact and Learning

Taken together, this work shows how the Council has continued to embed equality, inclusion and fairness into everyday practice. The activity delivered between 2022 and 2026 reflects learning from previous strategies, engagement with communities and staff, and a growing understanding of how people access services and opportunities in different ways.

This work demonstrates how equality considerations are increasingly part of how the Council plans, delivers services and works with partners. The learning from this period provides a strong foundation for the Equality Objectives set out below and will continue to inform how the Council develops its approach in a practical and proportionate way.

6. Equality During Change

Bromsgrove District is entering a period of significant change as preparations continue for the transition to a new unitary authority in North Worcestershire from April 2028. Throughout this period, equality will remain an important consideration in how services are planned, reviewed and delivered. Understanding how different people and communities experience change will help ensure decisions are informed by local evidence, community insight and an awareness of potential barriers.

We recognise that change can affect people in different ways. Factors such as age, disability, caring responsibilities, income, language, rurality and digital access can influence how residents access services, information and opportunities to participate in decision-making. Considering equality impacts at an early stage helps us better understand these differences and supports fair, accessible and inclusive outcomes.

We will continue to work with residents, community organisations, partners and staff to understand lived experiences and identify emerging issues as plans develop. This will help ensure that the diverse needs of Bromsgrove's communities remain visible throughout the transition and that local insight continues to inform decision-making.

Equality will also remain an important consideration for our workforce. As organisational arrangements evolve, we will continue to support staff through fair processes, clear communication and access to appropriate wellbeing, learning and development opportunities.

The Council will continue to make appropriate use of digital technology to support service delivery and decision-making. Where digital tools are used, they will be applied in a proportionate and transparent way, with appropriate safeguards, human oversight and consideration of accessibility and inclusion.

7. Equality in Service Delivery

The Council aims to deliver services that are fair, clear, and accessible. This means taking a thoughtful and proportionate approach to equality when services are designed, reviewed, and delivered.

7.1 Thinking about Equality in Decisions

The Council has an established Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process to help ensure equality considerations are taken into account when developing policies, reviewing services and making decisions. Equality Impact Assessments help the Council understand how proposals may affect different people and communities, identify potential barriers and consider opportunities to promote equality, inclusion and accessibility.

Equality Impact Assessments form part of the Council's decision-making framework and are completed for key decisions taken by Cabinet and Council, as well as for other proposals where there may be a significant impact on residents, communities or employees. The level of assessment undertaken will be proportionate to the scale, nature and potential impact of the proposal being considered.

The Council provides equality guidance, supporting templates and access to advice to help officers consider equality impacts in a practical and proportionate way. Rather than taking a rigid, one-size-fits-all approach, officers are expected to be able to explain how equality has been considered, drawing on available evidence, engagement findings, local knowledge and professional judgement where appropriate.

This reflects the Council's legal duties while recognising the realities of service delivery and decision-making. Equality considerations are particularly important when services are reviewed, redesigned or reduced, and as Local Government Reorganisation progresses. Considering equality at an early stage helps the Council understand potential impacts on residents, communities and the workforce and ensures these are reflected in planning, decision-making and service delivery.

7.2 Using Equality Information and Learning

The Council publishes equality information each year to show how equality is being considered across its work. This includes information about the Council's workforce including the gender pay gap, and where appropriate, people who use its services.

Reviewing this information helps build understanding of how different groups experience employment and access services, and where barriers may exist. Equality monitoring also highlights gaps in understanding and where further insight could be helpful. Monitoring activity remains proportionate and focused on supporting learning and improvement rather than meeting targets for their own sake.

7.3 Equality in Commissioning and Procurement

Many services are delivered by partner organisations, and the way services are bought and commissioned can influence people's experiences. When procuring goods and services, whether delivered directly by the Council or on its behalf, the Council considers equality, fairness and accessibility in a proportionate way.

Suppliers and partners are expected to share a commitment to inclusive and respectful practice and to meet their responsibilities under equality law. By being clear about expectations and encouraging fair access to opportunities, including for local businesses and community organisations, the Council seeks to ensure public money is used responsibly and supports positive outcomes for people who live, work or visit the district.

8. Equality as an Employer

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Our workforce plays a vital role in delivering services. Creating an inclusive working environment helps staff feel respected, supported and able to do their best work.

Equality in employment is about embedding it in everyday practice, supported by policies, training and leadership. Delivering learning around dignity at work, inclusion and respectful behaviour helps ensure equality is not treated as an add-on, but as part of how the organisation operates.

As the Council prepares for the transition to a new unitary authority as part of Local Government Reorganisation, we will continue to support staff through fair processes, clear communication, opportunities to engage with change and access to wellbeing and development support. We recognise that organisational change can affect people differently and will continue to consider equality, diversity and inclusion throughout the transition. This learning-based approach will help support staff wellbeing, resilience and fair decision-making.

Embedding equality within workplace culture helps ensure the Council remains a place where people feel respected, valued and supported to work collaboratively, contribute their skills and experience, and deliver inclusive, high-quality services for our communities.

8.1 Equality in Everyday Employment Practice

The Council has a range of employment policies that apply to all staff and prospective employees. These policies set shared expectations around behaviour, fairness, support and accountability, helping to create a working environment that is inclusive and respectful.

Rather than being viewed as stand-alone documents, these policies support everyday practice — guiding how people are treated, how issues are addressed and how decisions are made. They cover areas such as equality of opportunity, dignity at work, flexible working and work–life balance, and provide a framework for preventing and addressing discrimination, bullying and harassment. The Council keeps these policies under review to ensure they continue to reflect how the organisation works and evolves.

8.2 Learning and Support for an Inclusive Workplace

An inclusive working culture relies on people having the confidence, awareness and understanding to apply equality principles in their roles. Equality learning supports this by encouraging reflection on how behaviours and decisions affect colleagues and the communities the Council serves.

The Council's approach to learning is shaped by its wider values and culture, and is embedded through a range of activity, including Dignity at Work training, induction, refresher learning, targeted workshops and access to guidance and resources. This supports a consistent approach across the organisation, in the same way that equality learning informs service design and delivery.

This approach helps to:

- promote fair and respectful behaviour at work
- support inclusive leadership by managers and Members
- recognise and value different perspectives and experiences
- build confidence in addressing issues such as discrimination, bullying or harassment
- maintain a working environment where people feel safe, valued and supported

As the Council prepares for the transition to a new unitary authority, supporting an inclusive workplace will remain important. We will continue to provide staff with learning, guidance and support that helps them understand and apply equality principles in their day-to-day roles. Maintaining a positive and inclusive culture will help support staff wellbeing, resilience and fair decision-making, while ensuring employees feel respected, valued and able to continue delivering high-quality services for our communities.

9. Engagement and Listening

The Council believes that listening to people helps us make good decisions. Engagement is about learning what matters to people and understanding how Council decisions may affect them. By hearing from a wide range of voices, the Council can build a better picture of local needs and use this insight to help shape services, policies and partnership work where appropriate.

9.1 How We Approach Engagement

The Council's Engagement Policy sets out how engagement is planned and delivered. It reflects learning from previous activity and supports an approach that is flexible, proportionate and suited to different communities.

Engagement is planned based on who the Council needs to hear from and the most appropriate ways to involve them. In practice, this means the Council seeks to:

- plan engagement proportionately and make effective use of available resources
- encourage participation from a wide range of people, including those less likely to take part
- provide suitable opportunities for involvement, recognising different needs and circumstances

Page 127 Good engagement is not just about collecting feedback. It is also about being open and realistic about what can be influenced, and using what people tell us to improve understanding over time. The Council seeks to be clear about why engagement is taking place and how feedback will be used to help manage expectations.

Where appropriate, engagement insight is considered alongside other information to help inform decisions within available resources. Over time, this approach supports stronger relationships with communities and more meaningful ongoing conversations.

The Council's Engagement Policy sets out how we will continue to involve residents, communities, partners and staff in decisions that affect them. As the Council prepares for the transition to a new unitary authority, engagement will remain an important way of understanding different experiences, identifying potential barriers and ensuring a wide range of voices are heard. The insight gained through engagement helps build our understanding of local needs and supports informed, fair and inclusive decision-making. By listening to people and learning from their experiences, we can continue to develop services and policies that are responsive to the communities we serve.

10. Measuring Progress

Measuring progress helps the Council understand how well it is meeting its commitment to equality, accessibility and inclusion. We use information, feedback and insight to understand how people experience our services, identify areas of good practice and highlight where further action may be needed. Sharing this information helps support openness, learning and informed decision-making.

The Equality Strategy 2026-2028 builds on the learning, achievements and experience gained through the Council's Equality Strategy 2022-2026, while responding to current priorities and future challenges.

An annual update on progress against this strategy will be provided through the Council's reporting arrangements. This will include key achievements from both the current and previous Equality Strategy, helping to demonstrate the difference this work is making, support accountability and identify opportunities for further improvement. As the strategy is implemented, we will continue to review and strengthen our activities in response to feedback, emerging needs, changing legislation and best practice. In terms of measuring success, we will develop a performance evaluation and reporting framework which will align with the priorities set out in the strategy.

11. Equality Objectives 2026-2028

The Council publishes equality objectives to guide its approach to equality, diversity and inclusion over the period 2026 to 2028. These objectives provide a clear focus for how the Council will continue to embed equality in its work, particularly as it operates within a changing local government context.

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Objective 1: Continue to Deliver Fair and Accessible Services

Continue to deliver services that are fair and accessible by identifying and addressing barriers where reasonable and proportionate, and keeping services under review to ensure they meet local needs.

Objective 2: Strengthen Inclusive Engagement and Communication

Strengthen engagement and communication so that residents are informed and able to share their views, in line with the Council's engagement approach.

Objective 3: Improve Understanding of Our Communities and Support Inclusion

Improve understanding of local communities to support inclusion, promote respect and strengthen community cohesion.

Objective 4: Support an Inclusive and Representative Workforce

Support an inclusive workplace where employees feel respected, supported and able to contribute, promoting fairness across recruitment, development and progression.

12. Equality Action Plan

The Equality Action Plan translates these objectives into practical actions. It focuses on continuing to embed equality into everyday work, supporting learning and preparing for future change. The plan will be kept under review to ensure it remains relevant, proportionate and effective.

13. Contact Us

We welcome feedback and involvement from residents, partners and community groups.

Email: equalities@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk.

If you need this information in another format or language, please contact us and we will do our best to help.

Equality Action Plan 2026 - 2028		
Theme	What we will continue to do	Examples of how these are being delivered
Understanding Our Communities Better <i>(Supports Objectives 1, 2 & 3)</i>	• Use available information (including service feedback, engagement, complaints and partner insight) to understand how people experience services and identify any differences between groups • Apply this understanding to inform service planning, review and improvement • Where analytical tools or AI-supported insight are used, remain mindful of limitations and potential bias, and balance this with professional judgement and local knowledge. • Use available evidence to consider potential equality impacts linked to service change, including work associated with the Local Government Reorganisation.	Equality Impacts: Equality considerations built into quarterly performance and service monitoring reports to support informed decision-making. Service Feedback and Complaints Data: Using feedback and complaints data to identify recurring themes and improve services, including understanding differing experiences across groups. Equality Data and Evidence: Using available data proportionately to inform service planning, policy development and Local Government Reorganisation activity. Family Hub Services: Using tools such as pre- and post-questionnaires to measure the outcomes, understand impact and improve delivery.

		Using Insight to Inform Strategy: Applying consultation findings and local evidence to inform strategies including in our Shared Homelessness Strategy.
Making Our Services Easier to Access and Use <i>(Supports Objectives 1 & 2)</i>	• Apply the Council's approach to equality (Section 7) within service design and policy development. • Use feedback and insight to identify and address barriers to access where reasonable and proportionate • Communicate clearly with residents about service changes, including those connected to the Local Government Reorganisation. • Where reasonably practicable, ensure public-facing information reflects accessibility guidance and good practice. • Keep services under review to help understand how changes may affect different residents and communities over time.	Parkside Access Audit: Improving access to services by identifying barriers and implementing reasonable adjustments. Inclusive Play Audits: Creating more inclusive environments by reviewing accessibility across public spaces and delivering targeted improvements. Social Housing Allocations Policy Review: Improving fairness and accessibility through inclusive policy development supported by Equality Impact Assessments. Equality in Decision-Making: Embedding equality considerations within committee reports to support transparent and informed decisions. Consultation and Service Design: Engagement activities such as the Local Plan consultation used to shape services and policies based on resident feedback. Clear and Accessible Communication: Providing information in plain English and accessible formats when services or policies change.
Listening to People and Supporting Their Involvement <i>(Supports Objectives 2 & 3)</i>	• Deliver engagement activity in line with the Council's approach (Section 9), providing opportunities for people to be involved in local decision-making • Work with voluntary, community, cultural and faith organisations to support dialogue and improve understanding • Where appropriate, use accessible communication tools to help widen participation. • Consider engagement findings alongside other information to help inform decisions and service development over time.	Community Engagement Activity: Delivering engagement linked to regeneration, housing and service planning. Inclusive Engagement Methods: Using a mix of digital and non-digital approaches (e.g. online surveys, paper forms, face-to-face engagement) to reach diverse communities. Annual Places Survey and Budget Survey: Informing service improvement through regular corporate and service surveys and the effective use of resident feedback.

		Partnership Working: Working with voluntary, community and faith organisations (e.g. Bromsgrove Community Wellbeing Theme Group, Family Hub Network) to strengthen engagement and understanding. Community Collaboration: Working with residents and groups (e.g. allotment associations) to co-design services and improve local spaces.
Bringing Communities Together and Valuing Differences <i>(Supports Objectives 2 & 3)</i>	• Support inclusion and community cohesion through partnership-led activity, where resources and capacity allow. • Maintain awareness of hate crime reporting processes and use available information to help understand local issues and trends. • Continue to engage with voluntary and community sector organisations during periods of change. • Take care to ensure Council communications are respectful and inclusive, including where AI-supported tools are used.	Community Investment Fund and Equality Small Grants Scheme: Strengthening community cohesion and shared spaces by supporting inclusive, community-led activity, with over £1 million invested through the Community Investment Fund and £10,000 through the Equality Small Grants Scheme. Community Safety and Prevention: Delivering coordinated programmes to support safety and security, including prevention activity, awareness campaigns, Designing Out Crime initiatives and partnership working through the Safer Bromsgrove Tasking Group. Neighbourhood Services and Local Environment: Providing reassurance and helping to reduce anti-social behaviour and improve local environments, by working with partners to carry out Community Safety Assessments and Environmental Visual Audits. Hate Crime Awareness and Reporting: Raising awareness and promoting support services through engagement and campaigns to increase reporting and ensure safe, accessible systems for vulnerable victims and witnesses. Community Engagement and Involvement: Delivering events, outreach and engagement activity to raise awareness, alongside supporting volunteering, community-led initiatives and groups (including SEND networks) with resources, venues and connections.

Supporting our Workforce and Building an Inclusive Workplace (Supports Objective 4)	• Use workforce equality information already collected to help understand staff experiences and identify patterns over time. • Provide managers and Elected Members with guidance and advice to support fair, inclusive leadership and everyday decision-making. • Build on existing learning and development activity to promote inclusive ways of working, support wellbeing and encourage fair treatment at work. • Where new technology is used in workforce-related processes, consider potential equality implications and maintain appropriate human oversight. • Continue to promote awareness of wellbeing support and encourage a working environment where staff feel able to seek support when needed.	Workforce Data and Insight: Improving equality data within HR systems to better understand staff experiences and inform workforce planning. Training and Development: Delivering equality, diversity and inclusion training to staff, managers and Members to support inclusive leadership. Wellbeing Support: Promoting the Employee Assistance Programme and wider wellbeing support to staff. Inclusive Policies: Ensuring HR policies reflect inclusive practice and support fairness. Staff Engagement: Delivering the annual Staff Survey and using findings to improve workplace culture and staff experience.
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Bromsgrove District Council Engagement Policy 2026-2028

Title	Bromsgrove District Council Engagement Policy 2026-2028
Description	This policy sets out the Council's approach to delivering inclusive and meaningful community engagement over the period 2026–2028.
Created by	Engagement and Equalities Advisor
Date created	April 2026
Maintained by	Engagement and Equalities Advisor
Next Review Date	April 2028

Version number	Modified by	Modifications made	Date modified	Status

If you need this information in another language or format, please contact us to discuss how we can best meet your needs. Email:

equalities@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk or Phone: 01527 548284

1. Purpose

At Bromsgrove District Council, we want residents, communities and partners to feel informed, listened to and able to contribute to decisions that affect their lives. Engagement helps us understand how people experience services, what matters to them, and how decisions may affect different communities. This insight supports better understanding, strengthens the evidence we use, and helps ensure decisions are fair, balanced and responsive to local needs.

This policy provides a framework for planned consultation and engagement on wider Council policies, strategies, service changes and significant decisions. It sits alongside the day-to-day democratic routes through which residents raise individual matters with councillors and officers.

This Engagement Policy builds on the engagement work already taking place across the Council and the learning gained from it. In recent years, we have strengthened how we engage with communities, developing a more consistent and practical approach that supports service delivery and decision-making.

As we continue to develop our approach between 2026 and 2028, we will focus on making engagement accessible and proportionate, maintaining and strengthening relationships with communities and partners, and continuing to listen to a wide range of voices, particularly those who may be less likely to take part. We will be open about how feedback is used and realistic about what engagement can influence, helping to build trust over time.

The policy also supports the Council through Local Government Reorganisation, helping ensure residents, communities, businesses and partners remain informed and able to contribute to discussions about future services and local priorities.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all consultation and engagement activity undertaken or commissioned by Bromsgrove District Council the Council is seeking views from residents, communities, businesses, partners or stakeholders to help shape policies, strategies, service design, service changes, priorities or other significant decisions. Activity may range from statutory consultation to more informal engagement and may take place at a corporate, service, or local level.

Engagement may be undertaken to meet statutory requirements or to support service improvement and community involvement. It plays an important role in understanding views and informing policies, priorities, services, budgets, and decision-making, including supporting Equality Impact Assessments.

It does not apply to individual enquiries, requests for service, complaints, appeals, enforcement matters, planning or licensing casework, or other specific cases raised by residents with councillors or officers. These matters are considered through the relevant statutory, democratic, complaints, customer service or casework processes.

This policy applies to external consultation and engagement activity only. It does not cover internal consultation within the organisation, such as matters relating to employee pay and conditions, which are managed separately through Human Resources. Consultation on planning applications, the Local Plan, and Traffic Regulation Orders is also outside the scope of this policy.

Across all engagement activity, the Council will take a coordinated and proportionate approach. This includes using established engagement channels and partnerships, encouraging participation from a wide range of people, and using a mix of methods to reflect different needs and circumstances. The Council will be clear about what can be influenced and will ensure that feedback is considered alongside other relevant evidence when making decisions.

3. Building on our Successes

Engagement activity across the Council has helped us build a better understanding of how people want to take part and what supports meaningful involvement. We have delivered a wide range of engagement activity, including consultations on local planning and regeneration, service-level engagement in areas such as housing and community services, and corporate surveys used to inform decision-making. Partnership working, for example through community wellbeing groups and local networks, has also helped strengthen local insight and collaboration.

We know that engagement works best when it is clear, relevant and easy to access, and when people understand how their feedback will be used. Using a mix of online and face-to-face approaches has helped us reach a broader range of people, while working with voluntary and community organisations has strengthened trust and improved our reach into different communities.

This learning will continue to shape how we approach engagement, ensuring it remains practical, proportionate and focused on supporting effective decision-making.

4. Our Responsibilities

National responsibilities

The Council has a responsibility to involve residents and communities in its work. This includes requirements under legislation such as the Equality Act 2010, Local Government Acts and national guidance. We follow established principles of good consultation, ensuring engagement takes place at the right time, provides clear information and allows people to give informed views. Alongside this, our approach reflects a broader commitment to openness, transparency and accountability.

What this means locally

In Bromsgrove, engagement supports the Council's priorities and the delivery of the Equality Strategy and Action Plan. It helps us understand lived experiences and identify how different people may be affected by decisions. This includes continuing to improve how we reach a range of communities, use insight to inform service delivery and link engagement more clearly to equality considerations and service planning.

We will continue to use a mix of digital and non-digital methods to ensure engagement remains accessible and appropriate.

Local Government Reorganisation

The Council recognises that Local Government Reorganisation will bring significant change as Worcestershire transitions to two new unitary authorities from April 2028. During this period, engagement will be an essential tool for understanding the needs, priorities and concerns of residents, communities and stakeholders. We are committed to providing clear opportunities for

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people to participate in conversations about the future of local services and places, ensuring that community insight helps inform planning and decision-making throughout the transition. By taking an open, accessible and coordinated approach, we will support meaningful involvement and help maintain trust during a period of change.

5. Our Approach to Community Engagement

What we mean by community engagement

Residents and stakeholders can influence the Council's work through a range of democratic, customer service and engagement routes, including elected Members, public meetings, committee and scrutiny processes, petitions, and provide feedback through established customer feedback and complaints processes. Information on these routes is available through the Council's website. These routes are an important part of local democracy. This policy focuses specifically on planned consultation and engagement activity, rather than individual casework or service requests.

Community engagement is about listening to people, understanding their experiences and involving them, where appropriate, in decisions that affect their lives. It builds on existing engagement activity across the Council and ranges from providing information through to working more closely with communities to shape services and solutions.

Why engagement matters

Engagement helps the Council better understand local needs and experiences, design services that are more accessible and appropriate, and make informed and balanced decisions. It also supports stronger relationships with communities and helps build trust over time.

For communities, engagement provides an opportunity to share views, contribute to local decisions and better understand how services are shaped. Where appropriate, it can also support confidence and involvement in local issues.

Good engagement is clear, proportionate and takes place early enough to support decision-making.

What we mean by community

People may identify with communities in different ways, including where they live, shared interests or experiences, or aspects of identity or background. Individuals may belong to more than one community.

Our approach reflects this by building on existing connections while continuing to reach a broader range of people and perspectives.

6. Who is Involved and How We Work Together

Community engagement is a shared responsibility across the Council. Understanding how people experience services is an important part of delivering effective and responsive services. Engagement activity already takes place across a range of services, and this policy supports a more coordinated and consistent approach.

Across the Council engagement is coordinated to reduce duplication, make best use of resources and ensure that insight is shared and used effectively.

Service areas lead engagement relevant to their work, supported by the Policy Team. This includes designing proportionate engagement, selecting appropriate methods and using findings to inform decisions and service improvements.

Elected Members play an important role in representing community views and supporting engagement locally. Through ward work, surgeries, local conversations, committee meetings, scrutiny, casework and day-to-day contact with residents, Members help ensure local views, concerns and experiences are understood and reflected in the Council's work. Members play a key role in ensuring community engagement reaches as many residents as possible and help to interpret what the feedback tells us, alongside our shared understanding of a topic.

Putting this into Practice

Community engagement will continue to be part of how the Council works day to day, building on existing practice.

Embedding engagement in everyday work

Engagement will be reflected in policy development, service design and review, budget setting and Equality Impact Assessments. This helps ensure decisions are informed by a combination of service knowledge, data and local insight.

A proportionate and inclusive approach

We recognise that not all decisions require the same level of engagement and that people experience different barriers to participation. Engagement will be proportionate to the issue and supported by a mix of methods, with adjustments made where needed to support accessibility.

Working alongside the Equality Strategy

Engagement supports the delivery of the Equality Strategy and Action Plan by helping the Council understand lived experience, recognise different needs and consider the potential impact of decisions.

Engagement during change

During Local Government Reorganisation, we will use engagement to understand local needs, explain developments clearly and support residents, communities, businesses and partners to contribute where decisions can be influenced.

Working with partners and communities

We will continue to work with voluntary, community and partner organisations to strengthen relationships, improve reach and make best use of local knowledge. This helps ensure engagement is practical, relevant and informed by local understanding.

7. Monitoring and Learning

We will take a data-led approach to engagement so that it helps improve outcomes for residents and supports the delivery of the best possible services. For each engagement exercise, we will set clear aims linked to the decision, service or outcome being considered, including who we need to hear from, the level of take-up we are seeking and how we will monitor whether the

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approach is reaching a broad and representative range of people. Where appropriate, this will include reviewing participation data, representation and the effectiveness of the methods used. We will use this learning to strengthen future engagement and improve service design and delivery.

8. Get Involved and Contact Us

You can find out about current consultations and engagement opportunities on the Council website www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/council/strategy/consultations/

We welcome feedback and involvement from residents, partners and community groups.

Email: equalities@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

Phone: 01527 548284

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Discretionary Council Tax Reduction Policy 2026/27

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

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet RECOMMEND that:-

- i) The revised section 13A(1)(C) policy be approved and adopted.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The council has the power under section 13A(1)(C) of The Local Government Finance Act 1992 (LGFA '92) to reduce the amount of council tax that a person is liable to pay. The power may be exercised on a case-by-case basis or by determining a class of case in which the liability will be reduced.
- 2.2 The existing policy for determining section 13A(1)(C) reductions was adopted from 1st April 2024 and is due to be reviewed.
- 2.3 The review has considered representations made by the Marie Curie charity, which has advocated for council tax discounts for individuals living with terminal illness, and specific guidelines for support for people with terminal illness has been incorporated into the draft policy.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 The existing policy sets out when officers will use discretionary powers to provide case-by-case reductions. Guidelines for the assessment and award of discounts for Worcestershire County Council care leavers, support under Government's flood recovery framework, ad-hoc

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Government supports schemes, and reductions in cases of exceptional hardship are set out within the policy.

- 3.2 The revised policy includes guidelines for reductions where the liable person for council tax has been diagnosed with a terminal illness.
- 3.3 The terminal illness support has been considered following representation made by the Marie Curie charity, which has requested local councils provide a 100% discount to people who have received a diagnosis of terminal illness.
- 3.4 Marie Curie has proposed the discount because around 110,000 people die in poverty each year in the UK. The charity states that a terminal diagnosis often brings lost income and higher living costs, and council tax relief could provide significant financial support.
- 3.5 The revised policy sets out that where the liable person has been diagnosed with a terminal illness then a discount of up to 100% will be considered. The reduction will not be available for second homes or empty homes, and when assessing reductions consideration will be made to the financial circumstances of the household.
- 3.6 The policy intends to balance appropriate support for people with terminal illness with the financial costs of providing relief and the financial position of the household receiving relief. A blanket policy to apply 100% relief to all taxpayers facing terminal illness would mean granting support to individuals with the ability to pay their council tax liability, to taxpayers who own multiple dwellings, and to taxpayers of unoccupied homes or second homes.
- 3.7 The policy intends to provide a flexible approach to the assessment of support in cases of terminal illness and will allow the council to work with the individual to maximise the support they are receiving, including support from energy providers and charitable organisations, ensuring they are not solely reliant on the provision of a council tax discount.
- 3.8 Discounts will be considered where a medical professional has confirmed terminal illness by completion of an SR-1 form. Applicants will normally be required to claim all relevant statutory support, including council tax support, before a discretionary award is considered. Where, following the assessment of support, a liability remains, consideration will be given to the wider financial circumstances of the household, including the ability to pay or where appropriate to defer payment of the liability.

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- 3.9 When assessing the ability to pay the factors that will be considered are:
- Whether the taxpayer is the sole resident of their home and whether there are assets available that would enable council tax liability to be deferred until a later date.
 - Whether the household has capital resources of more than £16,000, excluding the value of their home.
 - Where household income exceeds £35,000 per annum.

These factors are not intended to operate as absolute limits but will assist officers in determining whether it is reasonable for the household to contribute towards their council tax liability. The proposed thresholds broadly reflect eligibility criteria used within other forms of means-tested or targeted Government support and provide officers with a consistent framework for assessing ability to pay

- 3.10 In developing the proposed approach consideration has been given to how other billing authorities have responded to calls for additional support for residents living with a terminal illness. The use of Section 13A(1)(C) powers is discretionary and approaches vary between authorities; a review of current practice provides context in considering the balance between financial support for vulnerable residents and appropriate use of public funds.
- 3.11 Worcestershire authorities, Wyre Forest District Council, Wychavon District Council, Malvern Hills District Council and Worcester City Council, do not currently provide support to residents with a terminal illness. Taxpayers would be required to apply for council tax support, and where a council tax liability remained, they may make an application for support under exceptional hardship schemes.
- 3.12 Bristol City Council and Manchester City Council have recently introduced specific support schemes for residents with a terminal illness.
- 3.13 The Manchester scheme provides a full reduction in liability upon production of an SR-1 form for a resident of the dwelling and does not require consideration of the wider financial resources available to the household.
- 3.14 The Bristol scheme limits support to residents that are liable for council tax and allows for a proportional relief based on the number of jointly and severally liable taxpayers i.e. where the terminally ill resident is solely liable for council tax 100% support is provided, where two people are jointly and severally liable support would be reduced to 50%.

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- 3.15 The proposed Bromsgrove scheme retains an assessment of the household's financial circumstances. This ensures that support can be targeted to households experiencing financial hardship because of terminal illness, whilst avoiding the provision of automatic relief to households with significant income, capital or assets.
- 3.16 The proposed policy is considered to strike a balance between providing compassionate support to residents with a terminal illness and maintaining effective use of public funds. The scheme retains discretion to award up to 100% relief. Unlike schemes that limit relief to a proportion of the liability attributable to the terminally ill person, the scheme recognises that the finances of couples who live together as spouses or as civil partners are typically shared. This enables support to be determined by reference to the financial position of the household.
- 3.17 The council tax legislation provides a route of appeal to the Valuation Tribunal against decisions to refuse to provide support under 13A(1)(C). The policy will provide officers with a framework for making decisions on a case-by-case basis from households requesting discretionary support.
- 3.18 The other key changes in the revised policy are:

Clarification of legislative context

Revised policy adds references to Collection Fund Directions and clarifies the cost of any discretionary reduction is borne entirely by the billing authority.

Expanded Detail on Relief Categories

Care Leavers: Worcestershire County Council must confirm care leaver status. The policy now explains proportional discounts for joint liability more clearly.

Flood Recovery Framework: Includes detailed eligibility criteria, conditions and duration of relief.

Evidence and Applications Process

The revised policy provides a clearer list of evidence requirements, improving transparency and consistency.

Backdating and Appeals

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Structured appeal steps and timelines have been added to ensure fairness and clarity for applicants.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Collection Fund (Council Tax Reductions) (England) Directions 2024 require billing authorities to transfer the costs of reductions under 13A(1)(C) from the general fund to the collection fund. This means that the full costs of all 13A(1)(C) reductions are met by the billing authority.
- 4.2 An agreement with Worcestershire County Council is in place which ensures that the authority is reimbursed for the costs of care leaver reductions for WCC care leavers.
- 4.3 No data is available on the precise number of council taxpayers living with a terminal illness. The population of the Bromsgrove District is approximately 102,000, and data indicates that there are around 1,100 deaths each year. Whilst no reliable data exists detailing the number of residents that would be eligible for support the districts ageing population, and the prevalence of conditions such as cancer mean that it can be assumed that a continuing group of residents will meet the SR1 end-of-life criteria.
- 4.4 Only a proportion of the SR-1 cohort will be liable for council tax and require discretionary support and therefore the actual number of awards could be relatively modest. By way of illustration, were 20% of indicative cohort of 100 to 300 taxpayers to qualify for support the annual cost could be between £22,000 and £66,000.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The power to provided reductions to council tax is set out at section 13A(1)(C) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 None

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 The administration of discretionary reductions supports the council's Economic Development and Housing priorities by assisting vulnerable

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residents and helping individuals maintain their place within the community.

Climate Change Implications

6.3 None

Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.4 Equalities Impact Assessment completed.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 The table below identifies specific risks and mitigations in relation to the administration of discretionary council tax reductions. The table is not exhaustive and provides information on the main identified risks.

Risk	Mitigations
Financial Risk. The cost of discretionary reduction is met by the billing authority, and no specific budget is set aside for provision of reductions.	The costs of discretionary reductions will be monitored monthly and reported to Head of Finance and Customer services
Reputational Risk. The absences of a policy could limit the council's ability to defend valuation tribunal appeals, or result in adverse findings by the local government ombudsman	Approval of the policy will mitigate the risks and provided clear framework for the assessment of applications for support.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix A – Council Tax Section 13A(1)(C) Policy

Appendix B – Equalities Impact Assessment

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr S Nock	Jan 2026

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Lead Director / Assistant Director	Debra Goodall	Jan 2026
Financial Services	Debra Goodall	Jan 2026
Legal Services		

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Bromsgrove District Council

Council Tax Section 13A(1)(C) Policy

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out Bromsgrove District Council's approach to awarding discretionary council tax reductions under Section 13A(1)(C) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

It applies to all council taxpayers who may be eligible for reductions and provides a clear framework for:

- The criteria for awarding relief.
- The application and evidence process.
- Governance and decision-making arrangements.

The council aims to use its discretionary power to:

- Prevent homelessness.
- Support vulnerable residents to retain their place in the community.
- Assist customers during personal crisis and exceptional circumstances.
- Promote financial independence through short-term relief.
- Provide compassionate support for residents diagnosed as terminally ill.

2. Legislative Framework

The power to provide discretionary reductions to council tax was introduced by the Local Government Act 2003, which inserted section 13A into the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The Local Government Finance Act 2012 retained this power within section 13A(1)(C).

Under 13A(1)(C) a billing authority may reduce the council tax payable by any amount it considers appropriate. This power can be applied:

- To a defined class of cases.
- On a case-by-case basis.

The Collection Fund (Council Tax Reductions) (England) Directions 2024 require that, except in specific cases related to the removal of tax credits, the cost of reductions under section 13A(1)(C) is borne entirely by the billing authority. This means the district council must reimburse the precepting authorities for any council tax income lost through discretionary reductions.

3. Principles for Awarding Discretionary Relief

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

Worcestershire County Council Care Leavers

A discretionary reduction will be provided to care leavers under the age of 25 who were supported by Worcestershire County Council. The discount will be provided in-line with the care leavers concordat for the care leaver's sole or main residence.

Eligibility Criteria

- The applicant must be under 25 years of age
- Worcestershire County Council must have acted as the corporate parent.

Conditions

- The care leaver must claim Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) first. The discretionary reduction will be considered after LCTS, and all other applicable discounts or exemptions have been applied.
- Worcestershire County Council must confirm support for the award of any reduction.

Amount of Reduction

- A qualifying care leaver who is the sole resident of a property will receive a 100% discount.
- Where the care leaver shares liability (e.g. joint tenants) the discount will be proportional. For example, if two people are jointly liable and one is a care leaver, the discount will cover 50% of the council tax charge.

Special Circumstances

- If a care leaver under 25 moves in with a parent or grandparent and this results in the loss of a single person discount, or disregard discount, Section 13A(1)(C) will be used to provide an equivalent discount.

Policy Updates

- Support for care leavers will be amended as necessary to reflect any changes to the Worcestershire County Council Care Leavers Concordat.

Flood Recovery Framework

In a severe weather event with significant wide-area impacts, the Government may activate the Flood Recovery Framework. Section 13A(1)(C) powers will be used to provide support to qualifying households in accordance with central government rules.

Eligibility Criteria

Reductions will be provided in-line with the Flood Recovery Framework and the circumstances for providing relief will be:

- The property is the taxpayer's primary residence; and
- The property is uninhabitable due to flooding because:
 - Flood water entered habitable areas; or
 - Flood water did not enter habitable areas, but the local authority determines the property was otherwise unliveable for a period of time.
- The property is temporary accommodation for a household unable to return to their home due to flooding.

Conditions

- Second homes and empty homes will not be eligible.

Amount of Reduction

- Primary residence: 100% reduction for a minimum of three months, or while the household is unable to return to its primary residence.
- Temporary Accommodation: 100% council tax discount on any temporary accommodation for households unable to return to their home.

Special Circumstances

- Where a government scheme has been activated for 2 separate instances of flooding within 3 months, the 2 discounts would run concurrently.
- Where discount is still required after 15 to 18 months Government may ask for additional information to support the discount.

Terminal Illness Support

A discretionary reduction will be considered where a liable person has been diagnosed as terminally ill and a medical professional has confirmed they have less than 12 months to live.

Eligibility Criteria

- The dwelling is the sole or main residence of a liable person diagnosed as terminally ill; and
- A medical professional has confirmed terminal illness by completion of an SR1 medical report.

Conditions

- Reductions for terminal illness will not be provided for second homes or empty homes.

Amount of Reduction

- Where the liable person is terminally ill and forms part of a single household with the other residents of the dwelling a reduction of up to 100% will be considered.
- Where the liable person is terminally ill and does not form part of a single household with the other residents a proportional reduction will be considered.

Special Circumstances

- Determination of reduction will not be limited to an assessment of health status of members of the household; consideration will be given to the financial circumstances of the household.

Government Schemes of Support

The council will implement any Government-funded discount schemes in line with guidance issued by central government. Where schemes include discretionary funding, allocation guidelines will be determined by the Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services in consultation with the relevant portfolio holder.

Examples:

- Covid-19 Hardship Fund.
- Council Tax Hardship Support Fund.

Other Cases (Extreme Hardship)

The council will consider a discretionary reduction where:

- The taxpayer has an outstanding council tax balance and faces extreme financial hardship.
- The household members cannot contribute towards payment.
- Recovery action would result in severe hardship.
- There is no access to assets or funds to meet liability.
- There are no alternative means of securing payment of council tax.
- The taxpayer is unable to restructure payments or debts.
- The taxpayer demonstrates they have no available income to pay their council tax.

Evidence Required:

- Full income and expenditure details.
- Asset and capital evidence.
- Utility and household bills.

4. Relationship to Other Schemes

Section 13A(1)(C) reduction will be considered after applications for:

- Council Tax Discounts and Reductions
- Local Council Tax Support
- Discretionary Housing Payments
- Exceptional Hardship and Essential Living Funds
- Discretionary Council Tax Support provided under Government funded schemes.

5. Applications and Evidence

Taxpayers, or an authorised representative, must apply for the discretionary reduction in writing, clearly setting out the circumstances on which the application is based. This application will be in addition to any application for Local Council Tax Support (LCTS)

Where the initial application indicates a discretionary reduction may be appropriate, the council will request further evidence which may include (but is not limited to):

- Household composition and income/expenditure details for all members of the household.
- Evidence of all capital and assets of the taxpayer, including mortgage balances and property value where property is owned.
- Income and expenditure for the period relevant to the application up to the current date.
- Utility and household bills.

6. Amount of Award and Duration

The amount and duration of the reduction will be determined at the council's discretion, based on the evidence supplied and the circumstances of the claim.

The reduction will be calculated as a daily amount, and the taxpayer will be notified on the basis that their circumstances remain unchanged for the remainder of the tax year.

Where the reduction ends before the end of the tax year, the taxpayer will be notified of the end date, and the reduction will be apportioned accordingly.

The reduction will end if:

- The tax year for which the reduction was made ends.
- The liable person changes or an additional resident joins the household.
- The council taxpayer enters any form of insolvency process.
- The council taxpayer's finance circumstances significantly alter.
- The liability for council tax ends.

7. Backdating

Section 13A(1)(C) reductions will, where applicable, be backdated to the start of the tax year in which the application is made.

Where a new liability has been created for a previous tax year, backdating will be considered if the application is made within six months of the notification of liability.

Backdating for periods before the tax year in which the application is made, or outside of the six-month window, will be considered where the taxpayer demonstrates continuous exceptional hardship. Evidence will be required for the entire period.

8. Notification of Award

The council will notify the outcome of each application **in writing**, including:

- The reason for the decision.
- The period of the award and the end date (if applicable).
- A reminder that the taxpayer must inform the council of any relevant changes in circumstances.
- Details of the appeals process.

9. Appeals

Appeals against the council's decision may be made under Section 16 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:

- The taxpayer must first appeal in writing to the council, stating reasons for disagreement.
- The council will reconsider and notify the outcome in writing.
- If the taxpayer remains dissatisfied, they may appeal to the Valuation Tribunal within two months of the council's decision.
- If the council does not respond within two months, the taxpayer may appeal directly to the Valuation Tribunal.

10. Fraud

The council is committed to protecting public funds and ensuring funds are awarded only to eligible applicants. Any applicant who fraudulently claims a reduction by providing false information or evidence may have committed an offence under the Fraud Act 2006. Suspected fraud will be investigated and may lead to legal proceedings.



Equality Impact Assessment

Title of Service, Policy, Procedure, Spending Review being Proposed	Council Tax Section 13A(1)(C) Policy
Name of Service Area	Revenue Services
Name of Officer completing this assessment	David Riley
Date Assessment Started	1st November 2025
Name of Decision Maker (in relation to the change)	Redditch Borough Council – Full Council Bromsgrove District Council – Full Council
Date Decision Made	Redditch Bromsgrove

Please ensure the following:

- That the document is understandable to a reader who has not read any other documents and explains (on its own) how the Public Sector Equality Duty is met. This does not need to be lengthy but must be complete.
- That available support information and data is identified and where it can be found. Also be clear about highlighting gaps in existing data or evidence that you hold, and how you have sought to address these knowledge gaps.
- That the equality impacts are capable of aggregation with those of other EIAs to identify the cumulative impact of all service changes made by the council on different groups of people

Overview

Provide a clear overview of the aims of the service/policy/procedure and the proposed changes being made. Will the current service users' needs continue to be met? Why is the change being proposed? What needs or duties is it designed to meet?

This impact assessment considers the changes to the council's policy for reduction of council tax under Section 13A(1)(C) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The act gives the council power to reduce the amount of council tax payable on a case-by-case basis, or by defining a class of case where a reduction shall apply. The policy sets a framework for officers to determine applications for support.

In cases of where the taxpayer can demonstrate hardship a reduction of council tax will be made, or in specific types of cases e.g. where the Government has activated the flood recovery framework, officers will have discretion to apply appropriate discounts.

The policy is reviewed to include provision for reduction to be made where a person has a terminal illness.

The policy is broadly intended as a framework for officers to determine reductions for residents with vulnerabilities because of financial hardship, flooding, care leaver status, or terminal illness, and is intended to support vulnerable residents.

Who is the proposal likely to affect?

	Yes	No
All residents	☒	☐
Specific group(s)	☒	☐
All Council employees	☐	☒
Specific group(s) of employees	☐	☒
Other – Provide more details below	☐	☒

Details

Outline who could be affected and how they could be affected by the proposal/service change. Include current service users and those who could benefit from but do not currently access the service.

Changes to the policy allow for support to be applied where a person has a terminal illness, and it is appropriate to provide support having regard to the financial position of the household. The change will principally be target at support for terminally ill residents.

The policy provides a mechanism for support to be provided to household impacted by flooding events, and to provide support to young care leavers under the age of 25, and people experiencing financial hardship.

Evidence and data used to inform your equality impact assessment

What data, research, or trend analysis have you used? Describe how you have got your information and what it tells you.

Specific local datasets have been reviewed, including:

- **OHID Datasets:** OHID data provides information on mortality within the districts. Cancer remains a leading cause of death within the districts, and this coupled with national data that indicates 70% of deaths occur in hospital or home, provides insight that a significant proportion of people living with terminal illness will remain in their home and accruing a council tax liability.
- **Council Tax records** showing the number of households applying for discretionary hardship relief and the circumstances under which reductions have previously been granted. This provides insight into patterns of vulnerability linked to financial hardship.
- **Council Tax records for care leaver discount awards.** Identifying the number of young people aged under 25 who have benefited from discretionary discounts.

The data collectively demonstrates that the groups most likely to require support under Section 13A(1)(c) include

- Individuals with terminal illness (covered under disability)
- Young adults aged under 25 (care leavers)
- Low-income households
- Households affected by external events such as flooding, who are temporarily financially vulnerable

A gap has been identified in the availability of breakdowns by **race**, **sex**, and **religion**, as these are not routinely captured alongside Council Tax data. Further work will be undertaken to improve voluntary data collection to better understand differential impacts.

Engagement and Consultation

What engagement and consultation have you undertaken about the proposal with current service users, potential users and other stakeholders? What is important to them regarding the current service? How does (or could) the service meet their needs? How will they be affected by the proposal? What potential impacts did they identify because of their protected characteristic(s)? Did they identify any potential barriers they may face in accessing services/other opportunities that meet their needs?

While no formal public consultation was required for the discretionary relief framework, the following engagement informed the assessment:

- **Discussions with frontline Revenues staff**, who provided insight into the barriers residents face when applying for hardship relief, including digital exclusion, literacy challenges, and difficulties for terminally ill residents in completing forms.
- **Engagement with County Council**, on the adoption of discounts for care leavers
- **Review of previous applicants**, gathered through routine customer contact and complaints monitoring, which identified the need for clearer guidance.

The engagement emphasised the importance of:

- flexible, compassionate assessment processes;
- multiple routes for application (phone, online, assisted support); and
- timely decision-making for residents with deteriorating health.

This feedback has shaped proposed mitigations and monitoring plans.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Due regard must be given to the three aims of the Equality Duty. This means that you must consciously think about the three aims as part of the process of decision-making. Consider the current service and any proposed changes, thinking about what issues may arise.

Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation How does the proposal/service ensure that there is no barrier or disproportionate impact for anyone with a particular protected characteristic	The policy provides a structured and transparent mechanism for assessing hardship-related reductions, ensuring consistent treatment across all protected groups. By explicitly including residents with terminal illness and care leavers, the policy seeks to remove barriers that these groups experience when engaging with statutory services. The discretionary nature of the policy enables officers to make reasonable adjustments, such as accepting third-party representation or fast-tracking applications for terminally ill residents
Advance equality of opportunity between different groups How does the proposal/service ensure that its intended outcomes promote equality of opportunity for users? Identify inequalities faced by those with specific protected characteristic(s).	Residents with disabilities, long-term health conditions, or terminal illnesses are more likely to experience financial hardship. The policy provides targeted support that directly addresses these inequalities. Care leavers, who are disproportionately young and often economically disadvantaged, also benefit from tailored relief. The policy therefore contributes to reducing financial inequality between vulnerable and non-vulnerable groups
Foster good relations between different groups Does the service contribute to good relations or to broader community cohesion objectives? How does it achieve this aim?	No applicable

Is there evidence of actual or potential unfairness for the following equality groups?

- Does the proposal target or exclude a specific equality group or community?
 - Does it affect some equality groups or communities differently and can this be justified?
 - Is the proposal likely to be equally accessed by all equality groups and communities? If not, can this be justified?
- (It may be useful to consider other groups, not included in the Equality Act, especially if the proposal is specifically for them e.g. lone parents, refugees, unemployed people, carers)

Impact of proposal

Describe the likely impact of the proposal on people because of their protected characteristic and how they may be affected. How likely is it that people with this protected characteristic will be negatively affected? What are the barriers that might make access difficult or stop different groups or communities accessing the proposal? How great will that impact be on their well-being? Could the proposal promote equality and good relations between different groups? How?

If you have identified any area of actual or potential unfairness that cannot be justified, can you eliminate or minimise this?

What mitigating actions can be taken to reduce or remove this impact? (Include these in the action plan at the end of the assessment) Equal treatment does not always produce equal outcomes; sometimes you will have to take specific steps for particular groups to address an existing disadvantage or to meet differing needs.

Protected Group	Impact of proposal	Justification for any actual or potential unfairness identified	If you have identified any area of actual or potential unfairness that cannot be justified, can you eliminate or minimise this?
Age	Positive impact for care leavers under 25	LA has statutory parental responsibility for young care leavers, who may face known financial vulnerability; tailored support is appropriate.	
Disability	The policy is expected to have a significant positive impact on disabled people, particularly residents with terminal illnesses and long-term health conditions who may face increased living costs, reduced income and barriers to employment.	Policy explicitly includes terminally ill applicants and disabilities often correlate with financial hardship.	

Transgender	No specific impacts identified		
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No specific impacts identified		
Pregnancy and Maternity	Potential minor positive impact through access to discretionary support where financial hardship arises.		
Race	No specific impacts identified		
Religion or Belief	No specific impacts identified		
Sex (Male/ Female)	No specific impacts identified		
Sexual Orientation	No specific impacts identified		

How will you monitor any changes identified?

Monitoring will include:

- quarterly analysis of Section 13A(1)(c) applications, approvals, refusals and reasons for refusal;
- identification of potential adverse impacts through complaint themes, staff feedback and case reviews;
- reviewing any applications from protected groups to identify barriers, delays, or unmet needs;

The actions required to address these findings are set out below.

Action Required	By Whom	By When	Completion Date
Monitor applications and report outcomes annually	Revenue Services Manager	March 2027	

Review policy after first year of operation	Revenue Services Manager	March 2027	

Sign off on completion	Name	Signature	Date
Lead Officer completing assessment	David Riley		1 November 2025
Equality Officer			

When you have completed this assessment, retain a copy and send an electronic copy to the Policy Team (Equalities) attaching any supporting evidence used to carry out the assessment.

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Recommendation from the Shareholders Committee - Appointment of Shareholders Committee Representative

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Karen May
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Judith Willis, Assistant Director Community & Housing
Report Author	Job Title: Assistant Director Community & Housing Contact email:judith.willis@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 64252
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Council Priority	Good Quality 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 is asked to RESOLVE that

Simon Parry, Assistant Director of Environmental and Housing Property Services be appointed as Shareholder Committee Representative.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At the Council's Shareholders Committee meeting held on 13th April 2026, the Interim Section 151 Officer presented a finance and governance position statement for Spadesbourne Homes Ltd (SHL). This had followed a review by the Interim Section 151 Officer supported by an independent advisor. An Action plan was developed as a consequence of this report.
- 2.2 In addition, the Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services sought an external reassurance report from external solicitors.

3. OPERATIONAL DETAILS

- 3.1 The external solicitors reported that: the Council is carrying out its shareholder function effectively; it appeared adequate information is provided by Spadesbourne Homes Ltd to the Council for its oversight

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function to be performed; and the minutes of the Committee reflect financial and performance reports on the activities of Spadesbourne Homes Ltd being provided on a regular basis.

- 3.2 The report made a recommendation to consider whether a Shareholder's Representative would be necessary to act as a liaison between Spadesbourne Homes Ltd and the Council as shareholder.
- 3.3 This is an option that is set out in Clause 30.8 of the Shareholder Agreement between Spadesbourne Homes Ltd and Bromsgrove District Council. It states "The Cabinet may designate an Officer that is a member of the Council's leadership team as the Shareholder Committee Representative to be a single point of contact for the Company and the Shareholder Committee and to liaise between them on a day-to-day basis and for such other purposes and with such delegated authority as the Cabinet may determine."
- 3.4 The Shareholders Committee on 30 July 2026 recommended to Cabinet that Simon Parry, Assistant Director of Environmental and Housing Property Services be appointed as Shareholder Committee Representative. Simon Parry has been attending recent meetings as a senior officer representing the Council as client representative. This decision would therefore represent a formal extension of this arrangement and ensure that a sufficiently senior officer with prior knowledge of the company can take on the role of Shareholder Committee representative.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications to Bromsgrove District Council from making this appointment as it is not a paid appointment.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The appointment will strengthen the governance arrangements of Spadesbourne Homes Ltd through the provision of this liaison and critical friend role to both the Council and the Company.

OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation Implications

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

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Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 Spadesbourne Homes Ltd contributes both to the Council's financial sustainability and to the authority's commitment to good quality housing within the District.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 No specific climate change implications have been identified as a direct result of this report.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.4 Spadesbourne Homes Ltd's policies and practices operate in accordance with the Council's corporate commitment to and legal obligations relating to customer service, equality and diversity.

Community Impact Implications

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

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 All trading entities involve a degree of commercial risk. The appointment of this role will enhance the existing governance action plan that is in place.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background Papers

Spadesbourne Homes Limited Finance and Governance Update Report presented to the Shareholders Committee on 30 July 2026(includes an exempt appendix).

Shareholder Committee dated 30 July 2026 minutes.

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9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Karen May, Leader and Portfolio Holder	26/08/2026
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Guy Revans, Director	04/08/2026
Financial Services	Oluwakemi Rafuah , Finance Business Partner	05/08/2026
Legal Services	Jess Bayley-Hill, Principal Democratic Services Officer	05/08/2026

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

21ST JULY 2026, AT 6.00 P.M.

PARKSIDE SUITE - PARKSIDE

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

Observers:

Councillor K. J. May – Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development and Enabling

Councillor S. J. Baxter – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning and Strategic Housing

Councillor S.T. Nock – Cabinet Member for Finance

Councillor S.A. Webb - Cabinet Member Health and Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture

Officers: Mr. G. Revans, Mr. J. Walton, Ms H. Corredor, Ms R. Egan, Mrs. C. Felton, Mr. M. Bough, Mr. M. Hanwell, Ms R. Millward, Mr C. Wells and Mrs S. Woodfield

Other parties: Mr R. Bell and Mr B. Betteridge (Representatives on behalf of Everyone Active)

3/26

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The meeting commenced with the Executive Director explaining the procedure for electing the Chairman of the Board. Members were advised that each nomination required a proposer and a seconder and that Members were permitted to propose or second themselves. It was also explained that, in accordance with the Council's Procedure Rules in the Constitution, if two or more Members were nominated and no candidate received a clear majority, the candidate with the fewest votes would be removed and a further vote would be taken until one candidate achieved a majority.

Nominations for the election of Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board for the 2026/27 municipal year were received for the following Members:

Councillor H.D.N. Warren-Clarke proposed that Councillor P.M. McDonald be appointed Chairman of the Board for the 2026/27 municipal year. This was seconded by Councillor B. Kumar.

Councillor S. Robinson proposed that Councillor C. Hotham be appointed Chairman of the Board for the 2026/27 municipal year. This was seconded by Councillor J. Clarke.

A Member raised a point of order after the voting had taken place, querying whether individuals who were not formally Members of the Committee had voted before apologies for absence and named substitutes had been declared. The Member stated that, in their view, substitute Members should not have been able to vote until the item on apologies and substitutes had been dealt with. In response the Democratic Services Officer advised that the relevant substitutions had been received prior to the meeting taking place. The Monitoring Officer also added that the Constitution required the first item of business at the start of the municipal year to be the election of the Chairman and confirmed that in her view, the Constitution had been followed accordingly.

After a show of hands it was

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

4/26

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Nominations were requested for the election of a Vice-Chairman of the Board for the 2026/27 municipal year.

Councillor B. Kumar proposed that Councillor A.M. Dale be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Board for the 2026/27 municipal year. This was seconded by Councillor H.D.N Warren-Clarke.

After a show of hands (including two abstentions) it was

RESOLVED that Councillor A.M. Dale be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Board for the ensuing municipal year.

5/26

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

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

6/26

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS

There were no declarations of interest nor of whipping arrangements.

7/26

FIRST HOMES POLICY REVIEW - PRE-SCRUTINY

The First Homes Policy Review was presented to Members by the Strategic Housing Services Manager.

Members were reminded that the Government had introduced the First Homes policy in 2022. At that time, it had been mandatory for 25% of affordable housing on qualifying Section 106 sites to be delivered as First Homes, however, subsequent changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) had removed the mandatory requirement. The policy had therefore been updated to remove the mandatory wording. Officers considered that First Homes should remain within the policy as a product that could still be negotiated with developers where appropriate. It was advised that the Council's preference remained for social rented housing and shared ownership, with shared ownership being the preferred affordable ownership product.

After the presentation, Member discussions were as follows:

- How likely was it that housing developers would agree to the Council's stated preference option for shared ownership when developers were considering affordable housing options? - The Strategic Housing Services Manager responded that developers generally did adhere to specific requirements in relation to tenure.
- Clarity on the position set out in the policy whereby a First Home had not sold and the Council expected compensation. – The Board were advised that because First Homes were discounted products, if a property cannot be sold as a First Home, it could be sold on the open market with 30% of the sale value paid to the Council. A Member suggested that there should be a penalty if the property was lost from the affordable housing stock and that 50% of the sale value be paid back to the Council. In response the Strategic Housing Services Manager advised that the ruling was stipulated within the First Homes policy and therefore would be difficult to revise.
- In order to help balance the affordable housing stock, what powers the Council had to insist that First Homes were built on small developments? – It was confirmed that affordable housing negotiations would proceed on the basis that the Council expected two-thirds social rented housing and one-third affordable home ownership, with shared ownership preferred. However, First Homes could still be used where share ownership was not appropriate or viable.
- Clarification was also provided to Members as requested by the Chairman on the local connection criteria.

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

8/26

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE WITHIN BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

A presentation was provided to Members by the ICT Transformation Manager on Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The key points were as follows:

- AI was becoming part of mainstream business application, including Microsoft 365 Copilot and other automation tools.
- The Council was required to ensure that its use was controlled, transparent and compliant.
- AI use within the Council was limited, governed and mainly used to support productivity and administration.
- Key messages included that AI was becoming part of everyday business systems and that its use would continue to grow.
- The Council's current use of AI was controlled and primarily through Microsoft Copilot and limited automation. AI was not being used for autonomous decision making.
- Staff remained responsible for checking and validating AI-generated output.
- The Council had an AI acceptable use policy in place to manage governance, data protection, bias, transparency and accountability.
- Supplier use of AI was currently limited, although many suppliers were exploring future AI functionality. The current risk position was described as manageable and controlled but requiring continued monitoring.

In summary, the Council had a controlled approach with limited use and focused mainly on productivity. The key challenge would be to ensure that governance, data protection, equality and procurement controls were in place as AI use increased in supplier systems and Council services.

After consideration of the presentation, Members raised the following:

- Some Members felt that the Council's approach to the use of AI seemed cautious compared to other Councils. Examples of AI use in other Local Authorities included chatbots to improve waiting times and data analysis for planning applications. The comments were noted.
- Members noted the 22 licenses purchased by the Council which gave a more in-depth experience of AI. Members requested details of who had been given access to the licences, if access was fairly distributed to staff who could benefit from the licenses, if the Council were getting value for money and how the use was measured. Members suggested that the Council could undertake a simple internal audit by emailing staff to request details on the use of AI. – The ICT Transformation Manager advised that the

licenses had been split amongst individual staff members and not limited to certain service areas or Senior Managers, however, the licenses could be reallocated if required. Feedback was positive and seemed were being well utilised, with staff keen to retain access. Members were informed that with only a small number of licenses purchased, the cost was relatively low. It was explained that productivity measurement was difficult to evaluate as the licenses were used for various tasks such as administrative use and actions required for meetings. The Assistant Director Corporate Services and Transformation informed Members that the cost of 22 licences was approximately £4,000 annually and expressed the view that use was popular and likely to increase and the balance between caution and opportunity would need to be monitored closely. She also advised that a robust way to measure usage could be through the staff survey, as these tracked response rates and also detailed where within the organisation they were received.

- A Member raised climate change implications as detailed within the report and suggested that for the purposes of LGR, the impacts of the usage of AI should be investigated further and risks mitigated. The comment was noted.

RESOLVED that the Use of Artificial Intelligence report be noted.

9/26

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM (LGR) UPDATE

The Chairman reminded Members that the Board had a previously agreed to establish its own task group on LGR, however, at a subsequent Council meeting, a motion had been passed that Electoral Matters should create a relevant working group and therefore any interests from the Board should be through that route.

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

The following key points were reported as follows:

- A significant milestone had been reached with the receipt of the decision from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), whilst some other local authority decisions had been delayed.
- The letter from MHCLG explained the reasons for the decision with references to housing supply, the ability to provide a tailored response, local identity and the use of public consultation in shaping the proposal.
- Once the decision was received the Chief Executive held a briefing with Group Leaders, followed by an all-staff remote briefing with an impressive turnout of approximately 400 attendees. The staff briefing included the decision, assurances, future direction and frequently asked questions (FAQ)s. An all-

member briefing had also been organised to be held for Members.

- Group Leaders across the County had agreed to start working informally and voluntarily as joint committees.
- Once the Structural Change Order (SCO) had passed through Parliament, those groups would become legislative bodies as set out in the SCO.
- External communications had been prepared for either outcome. Messaging was focused on getting behind the decision and maintaining strong implementation and delivery pace. The next focus would move from debating the proposal to delivering it effectively.
- The Board's scrutiny role would be examining whether implementation plans were thorough, robust and properly resourced.
- Existing workstreams would continue, including finance, human resources, information and communication technology, legal, communications and services. However, the services workstream would be expanded and broken down into individual service areas to consider options, costs, models and delivery approaches.
- A full-time Programme Manager and Programme Support Officer had been appointed to work across the seven authorities, initially reporting to the Assistant Director Corporate Services and Transformation. Recruitment for an LGR Programme Director was also underway. It was also hoped that a two-year Programme Director appointment would be made to provide vision and drive for implementation.
- In relation to the SCO, the MHCLG's letter confirmed that initial decisions around transitional arrangements were likely to be shared in draft form with Chief Executives. This would indicate which of the Council's proposals had been agreed by Government and would outline the implementation team. The letter also confirmed that existing Members whose terms would end in May 2027, would have their terms extended to vesting day.
- Feedback had been provided on the election cycle regarding the Government's current proposed 4+1 election cycle, placing the Council out of sync with parish elections, which was not preferred.
- Feedback was also anticipated on warding arrangements and member numbers, with Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) expecting to see a doubling under the proposed approach. A boundary review engagement confirmed that a review could progress properly after the first election to the new shadow authority in May 2027.
- Feedback to Government had also discussed charter trustees for Bromsgrove, focused on preserving civic regalia and ceremonial property.
- Under the agreed North Worcestershire option, the current Chief Executive would be the Returning Officer for the relevant elections.

- Future local governance arrangements engagement had been launched. Communities were being engaged through the website in relation to local identity and how residents might use their community voice in the future context of LGR. This exercise would inform the case for commencing a formal community governance review and would close on 9 August 2026.
- Consideration was being given regarding Member development for the Overview and Scrutiny and Audit, Standards and Governance meetings through the LGA offer and assurance arrangements.

After consideration of the update the Board made the following comments:

- The former portfolio spoke on behalf of the current portfolio holder who had sent his apologies. She thanked Officers for producing a strong proposal, noting that the Council had voted unanimously for the north/side option.
- If the Council were expecting any differences to the agreement, now that there has been a change in the ministerial position? – The Board were assured that Chief Executives had received communications two weeks before the decision, that the timelines would be unchanged. It was also stated that the Council had received no communication suggesting that current Government was less committed to the programme.
- Clarity was sought regarding future plans for supporting adult social care, public health and children's services, with Members querying how services would be allocated across the County area. – The Executive Director explained that some services such as children's services might be split into two larger workstreams including integration and disaggregation. There may also be a possibility for Local Authorities and shared services to collaborate, with an example provided whereby Cumbria County Council utilised the services of the Highways Department for the purposes of disaggregation to analyse salt requirements on their roads. The Assistant Director Corporate Services and Transformation also assured Members that Officers would be assisting staff, including Members to help familiarise staff with the details. A joint committee would be established with responsibility to drive the details, guided by MHCLG until the shadow authority was elected.
- Members queried how community engagement strategies were being carried out to assist residents' awareness of the progression of LGR for residents who did not use social media, suggesting road shows as an alternative solution. – It was advised that the priority for comms was to ensure that residents understood services would be unaffected during the process to vesting day. Members requested prompt communications to reassure residents that they would not notice any immediate change and that service delivery would not be affected. – In response it was advised that the website had been updated

immediately following the decision and the request for further reassurance would be fed back to the comms team.

- What efforts were BDC taking to secure key staff are retained within the Authority to ensure service delivery is unaffected ie HGV drivers and waste services and what was the timeline for senior staff recruitment? – The Executive Director advised that staff would not see considerable change for the foreseeable short/medium term. Members noted that recruitment of the Chief Executive positions would be in September and Senior Manager positions in December, however, most staff would be TUPE'd over to the shadow authority. Evidence from other Local Authorities who had been through LGR had communicated that it took several years to be fully functional. The Executive Director advised Members that regular communication with staff was provided through the Chief Executive FAQs and the intranet's LGR Routes.

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

10/26

BROMSGROVE SPORTS AND LEISURE CENTRE UPDATE

The Contracts and Utilities Officer presented the report to Members. Members were reminded that the item had been requested following questions around parking at the site, cleanliness and locker costs.

It was explained that the contract with Everyone Active was entered into in 2017 for a period of 21 years. It was noted that, although the contract had been in place for several years, the Council was still relatively early in the contract term and there remained a significant period left to run.

On contract management, the Contracts and Utilities Officer met with Everyone Active quarterly. These meetings covered key areas including usage numbers, customer feedback, cleanliness, energy efficiency and the activities being delivered at the Centre. The Officer explained that this process allowed both the Council and Everyone Active to discuss performance, identify areas requiring improvement and recognise successes.

It was emphasised that the environment in which the contract had originally been let was different from the current situation. In 2017 there was less competition in the district, the contract pre-dated the Covid-19 pandemic and the leisure market had since changed significantly. It was stated that these changes needed to be understood when considering the current performance of the centre and the wider leisure environment within the district.

In relation to car parking, Members were advised that this had been an ongoing conversation with Everyone Active which included; changes to parking, including free parking from 6.00pm rather than 7.00pm and the introduction of 30 minutes' free parking, had led to a reduced number of complaints or comments about parking charges.

On cleanliness, the Board were informed that leisure centres were difficult buildings to always keep clean, especially during peak periods. It was advised that cleanliness had been raised with Everyone Active around 18 months previously and was recognised as a need for improvement. Customer feedback demonstrated improvement and the contractors were working hard to maintain and improve cleanliness across the Centre.

Regarding locker costs, it was explained that when the centre was built, it had been designed around single use tokens, with fees contributing towards the maintenance and installation of lockers. It was noted that an option could be explored to convert all or a proportion of lockers on the wet side changing area to padlock lockers, allowing users to bring their own padlocks and reducing the need to purchase tokens repeatedly.

On financial implications, it was explained that the Covid-19 pandemic had affected income due to leisure facilities having to close which had affected the income the Leisure Centre could provide and therefore the Council's income. Following Covid-19, the Council had entered into a three-year agreement with SLM Everyone Active to reduce the management fee on a phased approach back to the contractual position. That agreement had run until the current year and Officers were working with Everyone Active to maximise the management fee returned to the Council.

The Contracts and Utilities Officer also reported that, following discussions with the Finance Team, the income levels being received from Everyone Active through the management fee were above the level included in the Medium-Term Financial Plan. It was therefore stated that there were no adverse financial implications on the Medium-Term Financial Plan from the current position.

Representatives from Everyone Active introduced the presentation (which is included in an addendum to these minutes to provide further context).

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

- If there were data available detailing regular attendees and if there was a maximum membership capacity? – Everyone Active advised that there was not a fixed maximum membership number but local demographic data and surveys were used. Since Covid-19 and with increased competition from other centres, increasing numbers was challenging. Everyone Active were looking at the potential to provide a 24-hour service. It was also explained that they looked at attendances, repeat visits and whether members were “multi-active” and it was noted that members who used multiple activities tended to have a longer length of stay. Everyone Active had introduced extra benefits for membership holders to encourage the retention of attendees.

- What would happen to the contract when BDC changed to a unitary authority? – In response Members were advised that discussions were being held with contract lawyers who was considering the position.
- Were there any funding opportunities such as Sports England or the Movement Fund? – The Board were advised that the Council had received Sports England Relief Fund to help with costs and capital funding which supported the installation of solar panels on the roof of the centre to help with carbon reduction. Members noted that Everyone Active and Officers were seeking other funding opportunities.
- A Member thanked Everyone Active for their presentation and praised the health and wellbeing schemes, in particular, the Escape Pain scheme which was welcomed by Officers.
- How were the spa facilities performing? – It was explained that the spa facilities formed part of the membership offer. It was also advised that Groupon spa days had shown a slight increase in figure attendance, however, figures showed that there had been a reduction of 10% attendance. The Committee were informed that efforts were being carried out with the PR Team through social media to encourage further interest. It was also explained that the spa had recently changed supplier and undergone a rebranding and retraining period, which may have contributed to the dip in usage. However, with staff adequately trained, a greater promotional push was expected. It was also stated that the spa remained a unique selling point because few gyms in the area offered spa facilities as part of a membership at a similar price. A Member suggested advertising in the Village Magazine, stating that it was popular locally and cheap to advertise in, which was noted by Officers.
- If there space availability at the Centre for racket sports? – In response Everyone Active responded that they were considering the potential for tennis courts and would be reviewing available capacity on the car park. Everyone Active worked with a company which funded the outlay, operated the courts and paid an agreed fee per court and the system operated whereby members could hire a racket from a vending machine. It was suggested by Everyone Active that this scheme could potentially be delivered at no extra cost to the Council.
- A Member raised the topic of parking permits and queried if users at the Centre had raised parking as a particular issue. The Member also referred to previous discussions with the Manager at the Centre suggesting a £40 annual parking permit to help with the cost of parking for users, however, it seemed that this suggestion had not been put into place. – In response Everyone Active expressed the view that parking charges, when added to the cost of membership, could significantly affect price competitiveness, especially compared with gyms where parking was free. It was also noted that the 30 minutes free parking did not help most gym users. The Contracts and Utilities Officer added that the Member's suggestion was being reviewed, looking at daytime users to warrant the permit idea. A Member suggested that Everyone Active might approach the Council with a potential monthly cost for parking, stating that this might help with membership and competitiveness, although it might or might not be supported by the Council. – The Board were advised that such conversations had taken place and were

ongoing. The Chairman queried if the Centre had considered giving members a discount on parking charges. – It was advised that the car park was not operated by Everyone Active, however, the pricing of the car park had been reflected in the costings of the membership.

- The portfolio holder wished to thank Everyone Active for attending and emphasised that the partnership was vital and worked well. She also reminded the Board that tennis courts and pickle board were available at Sanders Park for residents' use.

RESOLVED that the Bromsgrove Sport and Leisure Centre report be noted.

(During consideration of this item, Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to move to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed that included information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

11/26

WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVE FOR 2026/27 AND UPDATE

Councillor H.D.N. Warren-Clarke proposed that Councillor B. Kumar be appointed Chairman of the Board for the 2026/27 municipal year. This was seconded by Councillor A.M. Dale. Following a show of hands Councillor B. Kumar was nominated to become the Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) for the municipal year 2026/27.

The HOSC representative also updated the Board following the latest meeting which had been held on 17th June 2026 in which the Committee received an update from NHS partners on the performance of Worcestershire's Urgent and Emergency Care (UEC) system and Patient Flow arrangement during the winter period October 2025 to March 2026.

The key points were highlighted as follows:

- Continued high demand on urgent and emergency care services.
- Improved patient flow remained critical to reducing hospital and ambulance delays.
- Greater use of Same Day Emergency Care, virtual wards and community services was helping avoid unnecessary admissions.
- Ongoing work was improving hospital discharge processes and reducing the length of stay.
- Better integration between NHS organisations and social care was supporting more efficient use of beds and resources.
- Further improvement was required to ensure resilience during future winter pressures.

- Whilst Worcestershire's health and care system had made measurable progress in managing patient flow and urgent care pressures, sustained partnership working and continued service transformation would be essential to meet growing healthcare demand in the years ahead.

After the update, Members made the following comments:

- Members queried whether measles had been mentioned as a cause for concern during HOSC meetings? – The HOSC representative advised that measles had not been mentioned specifically in the meeting, however, the Board were advised that measles was on the increase, with cross contamination from Birmingham into the Worcestershire District and outbreaks were on the rise.
- What health issues were likely to affect Bromsgrove residents for the forthcoming year? – Councillor B. Kumar replied that a key priority was preventing unnecessary attendance at Redditch of Worcester hospitals. The Board were advised of ongoing work to promote out-of-hours services at Princess of Wales Hospital, noting that travel to Redditch and Worcester could be costly and distressing for senior residents. It was also highlighted that there were positive developments through Healthy Worcestershire, including wellbeing centres and activities for senior citizens, such as fitness to prevent falls.

Following the discussions concerning the Princess of Wales Hospital out-of-hours services, Members queried what the main obstacle was for this service? – The HOSC representative advised that the service still required nurses to link up with primary care, however, vital staff were not always available to cover the required shifts.

- Virtual and same day emergency care wards was raised with Members, commenting that many people shared concerns about virtual wards and suggested that where patients were well enough for a virtual ward, they might sometimes be well enough to be discharged with GP follow-up, while in other cases the support may not be strong enough. A Member expressed support for same-day emergency care as a way of taking pressure off hospitals and asked whether improvements had been seen. - Councillor Kumar responded that fit patients may receive assessment and treatment and go home the same day, however, many elderly patients had multiple ailments and could be too unfit to go home the same day.

RESOLVED that Councillor B. Kumar be appointed as the Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2026/27 municipal year and the update be noted.

12/26

FINANCE AND BUDGET WORKING GROUP - MEMBERSHIP REPORTS AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members received a report requesting for the Chairman and Members to be appointed to the Finance and Budget Working Group for the 2026/27 municipal year.

It was reported by the Chairman that as per the terms of reference, the Working Group would comprise seven members which would include the Chairman of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee, once appointed and six Overview and Scrutiny Members.

It was advised that priority would be given to appointing Overview and Scrutiny Board members to the group, in line with the terms of reference but membership could be offered to other scrutiny pool members should there be any vacancies.

It was agreed by the Board that a meeting scheduled for the Finance and Budget Working Group, to be held the next day, prior to the Cabinet meeting, would not be sensible due to the short notice and limited Members of the working group.

Members that expressed an interest in joining the group during the Board meeting were Councillors J. Clarke, B. Kumar and P.M. McDonald.

RESOLVED that

- a) Councillor P.M. McDonald be appointed as the Chairman of the Finance and Budget Working Group for the ensuing municipal year 2026/27;
- b) Councillors J. Clarke and B. Kumar be appointed as Members of the Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group for the municipal year 2026/27;
- c) Overview and Scrutiny Board Members not in attendance at this meeting of the Board to be contacted regarding their potential interest in being appointed as members of the Finance and Budget Working Group in 2026/27; and
- d) The Terms of Reference for the Finance and Budget Working be approved.

13/26

CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Cabinet Work Programme was presented for Members' consideration.

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

14/26

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

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

The Chairman stated that during the first heatwave, Worcestershire County Council had communicated that libraries could not be used as previously indicated. He therefore suggested and the Board agreed that a report be brought to the September meeting for scrutiny.

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

15/26

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ACTION SHEET

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

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

16/26

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

There was no urgent business for consideration.

17/26

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

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

Item No	Paragraph
18	3
19	3

18/26

LEVELLING UP FUND PROGRAMME - QUARTERLY UPDATE

The Assistant Director for Regeneration and Property updated the Board and provided a presentation on the levelling up fund for the Windsor

Street and Nailer's Yard projects (the details of this presentation are provided as an addendum to these minutes).

After consideration of the presentation, Members made the following comments:

Nailers Yard

- An update was requested on the remaining covenant agreements. – In response the Board were informed that of the two remaining covenant holders, one had reached an agreement in principle to release, however despite multiple attempts the other holder had not engaged. Members noted that the covenant agreement included the selling, storing and consuming of alcohol.
- Clarity where it details in the report that there was a shift in scheduling for the programme of external works. – It was clarified that the works related to the delays in respect of timescales to secure a required Section 278 agreement from Worcestershire County Council (WCC) for the public realm area surrounding the buildings. Members were assured that Officers were working closely with WCC to escalate the matter.
- What assurances could the Council expect that the levelling up assets would be protected under the new unitary authority? – The Executive Director was unable to provide assurances that the Council's assets would be protected, however, Members were advised that it would be advantageous, as a regular income would be generated for the Authority. It was also noted that there are grant conditions that would prevent a future unitary authority from disposing of the buildings for a certain number of years.

RESOLVED that the update on the progress of the Levelling Up Fund projects be noted.

(During consideration of this item, Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to move to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed that included information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

19/26

TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 14TH APRIL AND 16TH JUNE 2026

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 14th April and 16th June 2026 were considered.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 14th April and 16th June 2026 be agreed as a true and correct record.

Agenda Item 12

Overview and Scrutiny Board
21st July 2026

The meeting closed at 8.40 p.m.

Chairman

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

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