



Council Plan

2017-2020



Bromsgrove
District Council

www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

Welcome to the Bromsgrove District Council Plan.

It sets out our strategic purposes, what matters to our residents and our priorities for 2017-2020.

This is a practical document which sets out what we are aiming to focus on for the next four years to deliver the things which our residents have told us matter to them.

As newly appointed leader for the Council I am keen that while our priorities remain realistic and achievable, they also embrace a new and effective way of approaching the challenges which local government faces. We are all aware of the financial pressures impacting on local Councils. Therefore, we need to generate income to increase our longevity and so we can reinvest this money in the areas which will benefit our residents the most, especially those who are on limited incomes.

We are committed to being innovative in reducing costs and generating income. We have looked at the needs of our

residents to understand what we should be focussing on and we are working more efficiently to do so.

This plan is split into strategic purposes to guide us and includes priority actions for each of our strategic areas, providing us with a clear focus for addressing issues and allocating funding for the next four years. It looks at how we can work together with our partners for the benefit of all of our communities and indeed to create a Better Bromsgrove for everyone.

However we will not be complacent and, with my Cabinet Members, who are responsible for their own strategic purposes, we will revisit this plan to make sure it is still relevant to the needs of our customers and the strategic purposes we have set out.

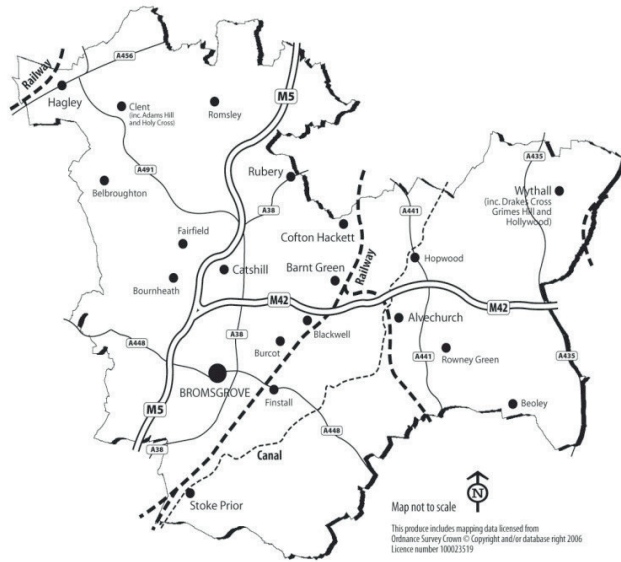


Bromsgrove District Council Cabinet

Council Vision:

“Working together to build a district where people are proud to live and work, through community leadership and excellent services”

Bromsgrove District



Bromsgrove District is in the north of Worcestershire and over 90% of its 217 square kilometres is greenbelt. With 95,768* residents, there are population clusters including Hagley, Rubery and Wythall, with the town of Bromsgrove accounting for just over a third of the total population of the District. Approximately 20% of the population are children and 21% are over 65 years old.

Issues such as an ageing population, affordable housing and developing the local economy all impact on the District.

- Bromsgrove District Council moved to its new facilities at Parkside in 2015; this
- heritage site, in the heart of Bromsgrove Town Centre, houses not only the District
- Council but also Job Centre Plus, a new library and several other Worcestershire
- County Council functions, providing a range of services for residents and customers
- and increased footfall into the town centre.



*ONS mid-year population estimate 2015

Context

The **economic** picture for Bromsgrove District is positive, with consistently low unemployment. However, the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2015 (specifically income, employment and education indicators) show there were issues, particularly in parts of Charford and Sidemoor. Our Financial Inclusion Team (FIT) is working with residents to help them manage their finances and debt. We have also been working with Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) and other partners through the Bromsgrove Sunrise Project, which supports residents in the areas of highest need.

Supporting **business** is incredibly important for the District; Bromsgrove entrepreneurs recorded the highest number of business start-ups outside London in the first six months of 2016.

Through North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration we will continue to support these businesses and established companies within the District to grow.



Bromsgrove town centre is a major area of focus and extensive redevelopment is under way. Recent improvements to the town centre include enhancement of the High Street, a new retail park and planning permission for an exciting development on the Market Hall Site.

The Bromsgrove Town Centre Townscape Heritage Initiative has allocated £1.6 million of funding from Heritage Lottery Fund and Worcestershire County Council, and is set to be completed in October 2017. The scheme has and continues to provide grant assistance for the repair of historic buildings including the iconic Tudor House on New Road. The scheme is also working to assist small independent retailers who are establishing themselves in the town, with support towards projects such as traditional hand painted signage.



The **local centres** are also key to improving facilities and opportunities for all of our residents and improvement projects are underway across the district.

Bromsgrove has the highest level of **home** ownership in Worcestershire, and the smallest private rented sector in the county; demand for housing within the district has had a significant impact on property prices which are higher than the Worcestershire average. With affordability and suitable housing for the elderly both important issues, the Council's Local Plan is the driver that we are using to work closely with partners and developers to ensure that the housing mix in the district meets the needs of our residents.

Whilst the **health** of people in Bromsgrove District is generally good, health priorities include improving mental wellbeing, increasing physical activity and ageing well. Through the Bromsgrove Partnership various local agencies, including Bromsgrove District Council, have been playing their part to address these issues.

Mental Health has been a focus for the Council, with public commitment to the 'Time to Talk' initiative, providing support to our employees around wellbeing. Bromsgrove is also working towards becoming a Dementia Friendly Community, with officers and community members being supported to become 'Dementia Friends'.

The district is rich with biodiversity, geodiversity and attractive landscapes. The Council is committed to protecting our **environment** and has undertaken partnership work such as the 'Love Your Rivers Project' to improve ecology and biodiversity in Sanders Park with the creation of a wet grassland area. This improvement work not only provides further habitat opportunities for the



endangered water vole but will help by slowing the flow of the water in the brook reducing potential for downstream flooding as well as help tackling pollution.

It is important for the Council to ensure that Bromsgrove District remains attractive for everyone, and our Place Teams provide a strong environmental service across the District based on local needs and priorities. This focus gives our staff greater ownership and develops important local knowledge to support our communities, from picking up litter to cutting the grass. It also means that environmental crimes and hazards such as fly tipping can be removed and investigated in the quickest possible timescales to protect the public and our environment, with partnerships across the Worcestershire Authorities and the Police to ensure those responsible are stopped.

Bromsgrove District is a low **crime** area; however the North Worcestershire



Community Safety Partnership has been working hard across the district to address causes of crime and to support victims. A new website, Worcestershireruralwatch.co.uk, has been launched offering extensive rural crime prevention advice, links and resources to the rural community, with a new officer addressing rural, business and cyber crime issues in Bromsgrove. The Bromsgrove and Redditch Community Safety schools programme has provided one to one mentoring sessions for 81 young people across both districts since September 2015.

There has been continued investment in providing **activities** and facilities for all ages, such as an outdoor gym at Lickey End, inclusive play facilities at the ASDA Recreation Ground and a new skate park and risky play facilities in Hagley. There were over 55,000 attendances at Bromsgrove Council events during 2014 and 2015 with the international highlight "Mobile Homme" by Transe Express. The Council has also been committed to partnership working, leading to 10th Birthday celebrations at Artrix and a bigger and better Bromsgrove Festival and International Music Competition.

Finances

The December 2015 Government Spending Review announced an indicative four year funding settlement for local authorities. For Bromsgrove the settlement gives a much lower than anticipated level of revenue support grant from the Government with a potential unexpected repayment to Government in 2019/20 of £750k. Consultation has also started on planned changes to New Homes Bonus, which will see a reduction in the amount we receive towards the end of the five year period. The Council currently receives £1.7m of this grant and allocates £100k for community funding to support projects in those areas affected by housing growth. Government grant funding will be some £5m per year less in real terms by the end of this plan than it was in 2010/11. This equates to losing funding for just under half of the Council's net budget.



The Council has a proven track record in delivering cost and efficiency savings. Since 2010/11 the Council has made savings from sharing services with other Councils of £4.3m and generated other savings of approximately £2.648m from additional income and increasing efficiencies. With the continued cuts to our funding we will have to find more innovative ways to meet the on-going financial pressures that the Council faces. We are working with partners to achieve savings across the public purse which will ensure that valuable front line services continue to be delivered to our communities. The financial funding available will be aligned to our priorities as detailed in this document to ensure we meet customer and community need. In order to address the financial

challenges, over the financial planning period the Council will look at generating growth in our services to increase income, redesigning services to make them as flexible and efficient as possible and to work with others to maximise the value of Council services with the limited funding we have available.




What matters

Bromsgrove District Council is committed to providing residents with effective and efficient services that not only meet their needs but understand them too. We have listened to demand from our customers in order to understand what goes on in our communities and considered how we work with partners to support the issues within those communities. Through considering what really matters to our residents we produced a set of six strategic purposes to guide us; they are based on customer demands and data and evidence about the needs of and issues affecting the people of Bromsgrove District. Working to these purposes will help us to understand the needs of the District and how, together with our partners, we can improve the lives of our residents and the prospects for Bromsgrove District as a whole.



*Help me run a
successful business*





“I want to expand my business, is there any support or advice available?”

“I want to start a new business, is there any information about vacant premises, please?”

“I want to set up my own business, can I get a grant?”



What matters

Help me run a successful business

Encourage local business and inward investment

- Develop the 'Business begins in Bromsgrove' brand
- Identify potential sites, funding and delivery partners
- Encourage businesses to come to Bromsgrove
- Introduce a package of support mechanisms to help new businesses and inward investment
- Promote key employment sites
- Promote Bromsgrove Enterprise Park
- Organise events to promote grants and access to national finance schemes



Create a more vibrant Bromsgrove Town Centre and flourishing local centres

- Further develop the outdoor market in Bromsgrove
- Continue to support local centres across the district
- Develop and manage an events programme
- Continue the town centre regeneration programme
- Develop a car parking strategy for the Town Centre

Between
January and June '16
**the highest number
of business start-ups
outside of London were
in Bromsgrove – 29 for
every 1,000
residents**



Improve connectivity within Bromsgrove (Digital and Transport)

- Ensure Bromsgrove's public transport needs are integrated into Local Transport Plans and delivered
- Work with WCC to identify a long term solution to tackling congestion along the A38
- Continue to work with WCC to rollout superfast broadband, including to rural areas.

Invest in our local workforce by supporting training and apprenticeships

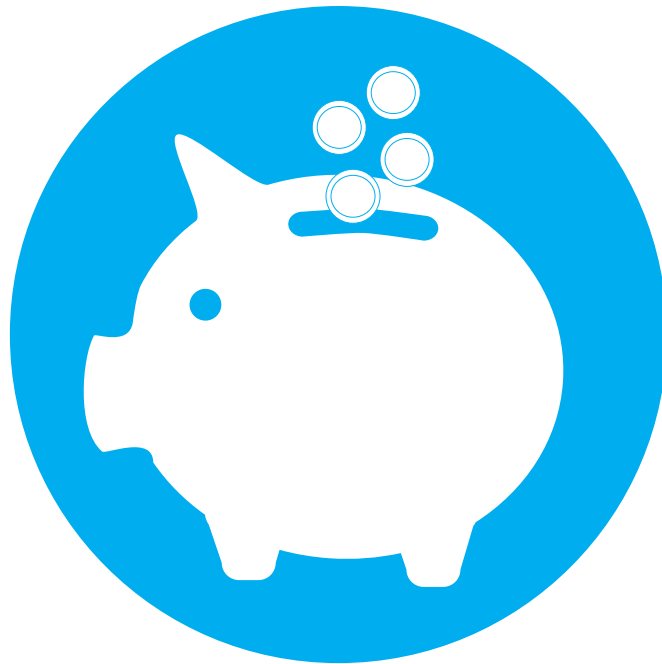
- Organise a programme of local Apprenticeships events and fairs
- Ensure SMEs can access Apprenticeship grant support
- Understand employer needs by carrying out a local skills audit
- Work with Heart of Worcestershire (HoW) College and other providers to deliver training that matches employer needs
- Work with local employers to promote career opportunities for young people in Bromsgrove
- Work with schools and other partners to understand the barriers to employability
- Undertake a fundamental review of our economic strategies and priorities

*In the last 9 years, there has been a **3 fold increase** in the number of apprenticeships completed*

*Almost **700** apprenticeships were started in 2014/15*



Help me to be financially independent

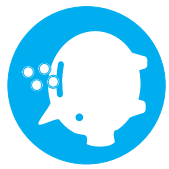


“I need to speak to someone about my housing benefit because my wages have changed.”

“I am struggling to live on my money - what help can I get?”

“I care for my mother and I want to check if we can get any benefits.”





What matters

Develop education and skills to sustain financial independence

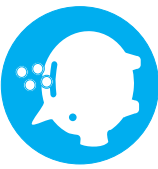
- Work with schools and colleges to deliver life skills in money and debt management
- Work with businesses to identify the skills that are required to enable local people to secure employment in their community
- Engage businesses to develop and grow in the area to continue to provide local jobs
- Support people in getting back to work

Support communities during changes to welfare and benefits

- Provide advice and guidance through the Financial Inclusion Team (FIT) to help residents maximise their income and reduce debt



*The
average weekly
income is over £65
more than the
West Midlands
average*



Support residents to reduce levels of individual debt

- Support residents to understand and manage all of their debts
- Work with voluntary sector and other partners to provide debt advice and support
- Promote schemes that encourage savings & financial independence

Support reductions in winter deaths and fuel poverty

- Work with stakeholders to ensure homes are energy efficient
- Provide funding to improve homes to reduce fuel poverty

Support the provision of affordable housing in the District to meet the needs of the community


- Work with partners to develop different options for housing provision
- Support older people who wish to realise the value of their homes
- Understand affordability through a rents audit

Fuel poverty in Worcestershire has reduced from 12.6% in 2011 to 9.1% in 2014



*Help me to live my
life independently*





“Are there any classes to help me get fit please?”

“I am interested in having lifeline fitted, can you help?”

“I am retired and looking for something to do...”



What matters

Help and support the vulnerable

- Work with health and other partners to reduce hospital admissions and keep people in their own homes
- Work with partners to support victims of domestic abuse
- Access to appropriate housing

Promote independence and reduce social isolation

- Work with partners to deliver adaptations/ improvements to homes (Disabled Facilities Grants)
- Access to (or support to find) appropriate transport
- Promote volunteering opportunities to reduce social isolation, particularly within rural communities



Over the last 2 years **nearly 300 people have been helped to continue to live at home** through disabled facilities grants

Over 1600 vulnerable or elderly residents have been supported by a Lifeline unit in their homes

Help people to be fit and well

- Work with partners to deliver appropriate mental wellbeing support
- Support in the Five Ways to Wellbeing
- Access to quality open space and facilities

Strengthening and supporting families and individuals

- Work with partners and the Bromsgrove Partnership to deliver appropriate family support through the 'Connecting Families' and 'Sunrise' programmes
- Access to work and employability skills

*More than
400 residents have
received activity
and falls prevention
referrals in the last 2
years*

Five ways to well-being



Help me to live my life independently

1

Connect with the people around you. With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. At home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.



Be active Step outside. Go for a walk or run. Cycle. Play a game. Garden. Dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity you enjoy and that suits your level of mobility and fitness.

2

3

Take notice Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment whether you are walking to work, eating lunch or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.



Keep learning Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility at work. Fix a bike. Learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun.

4


5

Give Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Look out, as well as in. Seeing yourself, and your happiness linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.



*Help me to find somewhere
to live in my locality*



A photograph of a person in a grey suit jacket and blue shirt holding a silver key. The background is a blurred window with a view of a city. Three speech bubbles are overlaid on the image: a white one with a purple border at the top left, a solid purple one at the bottom left, and a white one with a purple border at the bottom right.

*“I have lost my job
and can’t pay my rent
any more - can you
help me?”*

*“I would like to
move... I am having
problems where
I live...”*

*“Can you help
me, I am about to
be homeless.”*



What matters

Support the development of appropriate and affordable housing in the district

- Understand community housing needs through a strategic assessment
- Use the Local Plan and Green Belt Review to drive development
- Encourage developers to adopt Safe by Design standards
- Work with developers to increase the number of eco/energy efficient properties

Assist in making the best use of all housing across the district

- Work with Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) to review the housing waiting list
- Work with partners to ensure appropriate level of occupancy
- Support people to downsize where appropriate
- Ensure the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) process is meeting the needs of our communities
- Work with stakeholders in the private rented sector



In 2015/16
483 homes
were ***built*** in
the district
(net)

Prevent and respond to homelessness

- Review current housing and homelessness delivery arrangements
- Work with BDHT and partners to resolve issues that can lead to homelessness
- Work with partners and providers to deliver accommodation appropriate to need

Between
July '15 and
June '16 **over 220**
households have been
prevented from
becoming
homeless



Help me to find somewhere to live in my locality

*Keep my place safe
and looking good*



“Can I arrange to have my garden waste collected?”

“I am worried about crime in the area.”

“Can you help me improve my home security please?”





What matters

Help support and create communities where people feel safe

- Work with partners, schools and our communities to reduce crime, nuisance and anti-social behaviour
- Encourage developers to adopt Safe by Design standards
- Ensure that premises and vehicles licensed for various activities are safe
- Work with local businesses to deliver safe products and services



Look after our district to provide clean and tidy streets and open spaces

- Ensure our resources are aligned to the different needs of our local areas
- Work to reduce litter, fly tipping, dog fouling, fly posting and chewing gum in the district
- Develop our commercial services to better support local businesses and residents
- Work in partnership with our communities



Over 1100
bulky waste
collections
undertaken in
2015/16



Protect and enhance the environment spaces

- Work with communities to enhance the environment
- Monitor air quality and encourage our communities to reduce emissions where possible to limit the effect of climate change
- Endeavour to reduce our emissions
- Change the way we maintain the environment to improve biodiversity
- Work with partners to achieve proactive tree management
- Work with stakeholders to improve the infrastructure for cycling and walking
- Promote the ethos of 'reduce, reuse, recycle' within the community and our organisation

On average
4275 tonnes
of waste was
recycled

17.5%
reduction in
carbon
emissions

19,000
customers are
benefitting from
garden waste
collection
service



Keep my place safe and looking good

*Provide good things for
me to see, do and visit*



“Can I book a swimming lesson for my child?”

“My doctor said I need to lose some weight, can you help me?”

“What is there to do in Bromsgrove this weekend?”





What matters

Provide a leisure, cultural and arts programme for the whole district

- Engage with communities to develop an events programme
- Develop new Leisure facilities to provide a range of activities for the community
- Ensure play areas and parks meet the needs of all ages of the community
- Work with partners to develop a diverse range of arts and cultural activities

Create a more vibrant Bromsgrove Town Centre and flourishing local centres

- Progress regeneration of Bromsgrove Town Centre and local centre sites across the district
- Further develop the outdoor market in Bromsgrove
- Develop and manage a Bromsgrove Town Centre events programme
- Develop an action plan for the local centres



Approximately
10,000 people
attended the **street**
theatre events



Help people to be fit and well and reduce social isolation

- Develop a programme to raise awareness of social isolation
- Work with partners to explore opportunities for Council facilities to improve health across the District
- Continue to support '5 ways to wellbeing'

Five ways to well-being

Connect...
Be active...
Take notice...
Keep learning...
Give...

140+
weekly
attended the
junior park
run course

*We allocated
£188,000 from
the New Homes
Bonus to community
projects during
2015/16 &
2016/17*



Provide good things for me to see, do and visit

“We will lead the way for the future of reshaped public services, enriching the lives of our citizens by providing high quality services to all, as well as radically improving outcomes for those most in need, by removing barriers and solving their underlying problems.

We will meet our challenging goals by designing all of our services from a customer perspective accepting that they differ from area to area, community to community. This approach will enable us to work with partners and towards organisational change. This includes posing questions around whether we are the right people to do what we determine is necessary.

We will treat our workforce fairly, with respect and honesty, engaging their passion and talent and growing leaders””.



We will ensure that we:

- Provide excellent customer care at all times
- Listen to our residents to understand their needs
- Deliver our core services efficiently and effectively
- Make the best use of our resources, with residents at the heart of all we do
- As a community leader, work with partners in the public, voluntary and private sectors to ensure residents of Bromsgrove District get the services and support they need
- As a good employer, support our employees to provide services that meet the needs of our residents

As issues within the District can change we are committed to understanding whether we are delivering our strategic purposes; we do this by using measures to capture data which Officers, Managers and Members use to understand the services we provide. This data will be used to allocate resources and to help us gain a true picture of the District. We also need to recognise the continuing changes in national agendas and the impact they could have on our outcomes

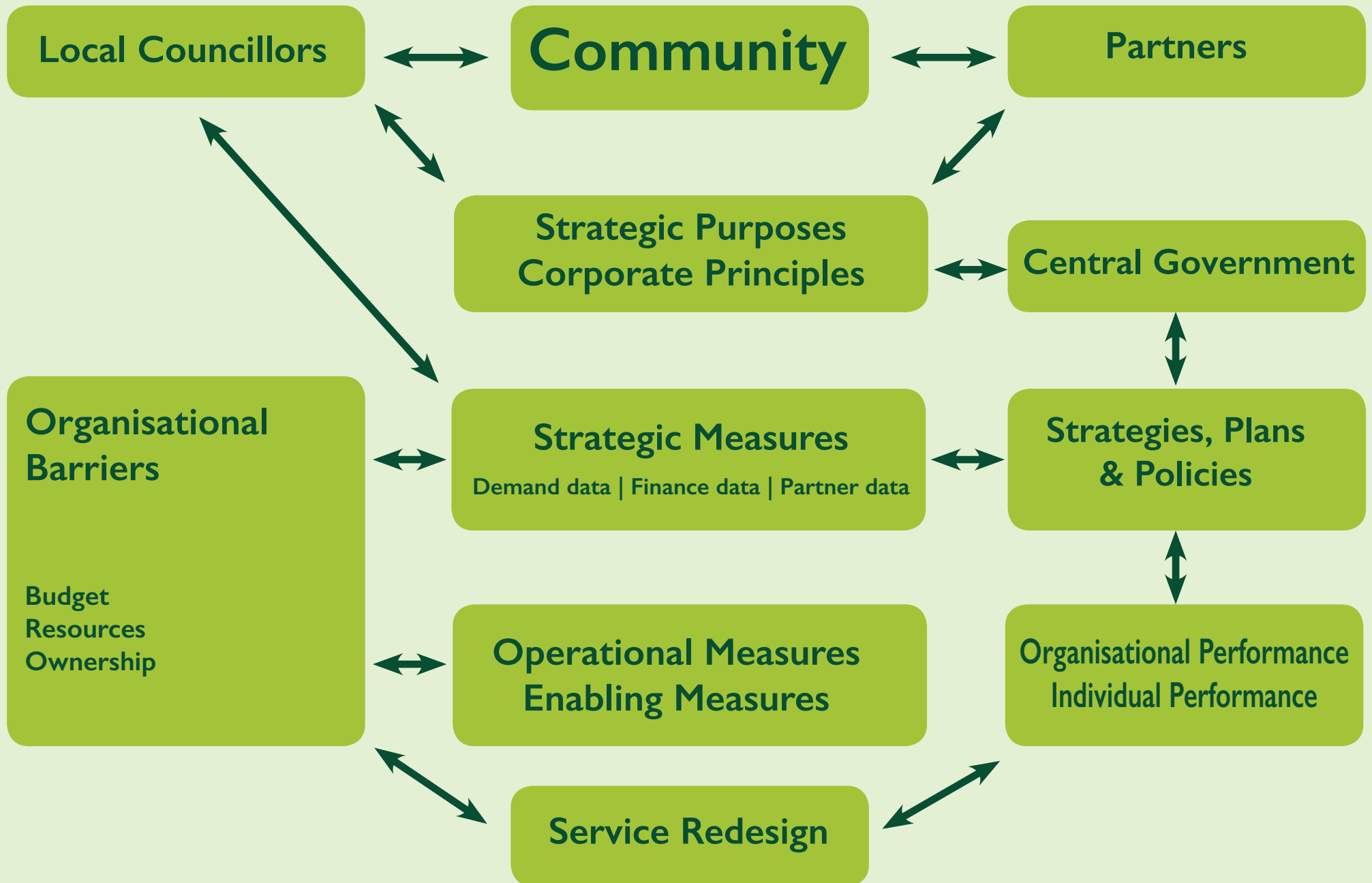
As the strategic purposes cover issues fundamental to our customers' lives, we are working differently with our partners. The Bromsgrove Partnership, the local strategic partnership for Bromsgrove District, is a key stakeholder in developing and supporting these new ways of working. We are also continuing to work in a more local and place driven way, which helps the Council to understand the differing needs of communities within our district and how public services can support them.



The Council Plan is central to the strategic direction of Bromsgrove District Council and links to other corporate documents, including the Local Plan, the Medium Term Financial Plan and the Corporate Performance Strategy.

1. *Design all our services from the customer's perspective to ensure we respond to the needs of our communities*
2. *Help people to help themselves where appropriate*
3. *Be corporately responsible by ensuring we meet our ethical, environmental and social responsibilities, and that services support our communities to develop*
4. *Constantly innovate, to make the best use of our resources to ensure we deliver efficient, quality services and eliminate waste*
5. *Make decisions and provide challenge based on data, evidence and learning*
6. *Use the Council's unique position in the community to encourage and support change amongst partners and other agencies.*
7. *Put the customer at the heart of what we do, treating people and issues fairly, with respect and honesty*
8. *Identify the best way to work, to satisfy customers' needs, by pushing departmental and organisational boundaries*

How we work





Bromsgrove District Council

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

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