



OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY TOPIC PROPOSAL

This form can be used for either a Task Group or a Short Sharp Review topic proposal.

Completed forms should be returned to scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk – Democratic Services, Bromsgrove District Council.

Name of Proposer: Rob Hunter	
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Date: February 2022	

Title of Proposed Topic (including specific subject areas to be investigate)	Tackling the energy crisis in Bromsgrove
Background to the Proposal (Including reasons why this topic should be investigated and evidence to support the need for the investigation.)	<p>Local residents face crippling energy costs as a result of the lifting of the energy cap at the start of February. Average bills are set to increase by £693 a year whilst those on pre-payment metres will face an average rise of £708 per year. Families are facing increases of more than 50% in their annual energy costs at a time when other essential costs including petrol and food are also increasing rapidly.</p> <p>Recent research from the ONS shows that a third of households are already cutting back on gas and electricity spending, with the impact disproportionately affecting those on the lowest incomes. This energy crisis presents a real threat to the health and wellbeing of our residents.</p> <p>The purpose of this group is to examine what support BDC can offer to residents who are most adversely affected by the energy crisis and ensure we are doing as much as we can to prevent fuel poverty in our community.</p>

<p>Links to national, regional and local priorities</p> <p>(including the Council's strategic purposes)</p>	<p>This links to BDC's objectives as set out in the 2019-2023 BDC Plan. One of our Strategic objectives is to promote work and financial independence, with an action to support residents to manage their finances. The energy crisis represents an unprecedented challenge to these objectives, which merits further investigation.</p>			
<p>Possible Key Objectives</p> <p>(these should be SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore what insight BDC has into the likely impact of the energy crisis on local residents, such as EPC ratings data, volume of support referrals. - Explore what support is available locally, who provides it, how residents can access it and how success is measured - Explore what measures are being taken to retrofit our social housing stock in order to make it as energy efficient as possible - Explore what opportunities are available for residents in private rented housing to improve the energy efficiency of their homes - Consider whether there are any gaps in support for those facing fuel poverty in Bromsgrove and explore how these could be filled - Investigate whether there are any areas of good practice at other councils that we could learn from - Investigate whether there are any new national or regional policies or funding schemes that we could take advantage of to support local residents 			
<p>Anticipated Timescale for completion of the work.</p>	<p>A permanent body, reporting to council regularly (at least once a year).</p>			
<p>Would it be appropriate to hold a Short Sharp Inquiry or a Task Group? (please tick relevant box)</p>	<p>Task Group</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>Short Sharp Inquiry</p>	

Appendix 1 – Witnesses

It is anticipated that the following teams would be invited to give evidence (not exhaustive):

- Partnerships
- Finance
- Financial Independence Team
- Starting Well Team
- Housing Team
- BDHT
- Bromsgrove and Redditch CAB

OFFICE USE ONLY - TO BE COMPLETED WHEN THE TOPIC PROPOSAL IS ACCEPTED

Evidence	
Key documents, data, reports	
Possible Site Visits	
Is a general press release required asking for general comments/suggestions from the public?	
Is a period of public consultation required?	
Witnesses	
Officers	
Councillors (including Portfolio Holder)	
Any External Witnesses	