

**Portfolio Holder Report****Portfolio Holder Report – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling Services****Introduction and Overview:**

At Bromsgrove District Council Portfolio Holders provide an annual update to Council on services within their portfolio remit. These services are delivered in accordance with the Council's Strategic Purposes, as detailed in the Bromsgrove District Council Plan 2019 – 2023.

This report provides an outline of services and activities within the remit of this particular Portfolio Holder. Information is included in relation to the Council's Strategic Purposes, relevant key activities, partnership working, projects and programmes and news stories.

A version of this report, focusing on each Portfolio Holder's remit in turn, will be considered at each meeting of Council (except for the Annual Council meeting).

Whilst services will be contributing information into this report it is worth noting that not all sections of the report will be relevant to all service areas. In this circumstance, some sections may not be completed by all services.

The report will be structured as follows:

- 1) Update on Strategic Purposes
- 2) Partnership working
- 3) Key activities and priorities
- 4) Good news stories and awards (if applicable)
- 5) Other

The Council has the following Strategic Purposes and Priorities:

<b>Strategic Purposes</b>	<b>Council Priorities</b>
Run and grow a successful business	Economic development and regeneration
Work and financial independence	Skills for the future
Living independent, active and healthy lives	Improving health & well being
Affordable and sustainable homes	A balanced housing market
Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	Reducing crime & disorder
The Green Thread runs through the Council Plan	<b>Internal priorities</b>
	Financial stability
	High quality services
	Sustainability



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**1. Update on Strategic Purposes**

**Relevant Strategic Purpose – Supports All Strategic Purposes and the Council Priority of Sustainability**

Democratic Services

The Democratic Services are an enabling service with an integral role in Council governance. The work of the Democratic Services team, facilitating Council and Committee meetings and managing the decision-making process, enables decisions to be taken that support all of the authority's strategic purposes and priorities. The work of Democratic Services is also crucial to the Council's internal priority of service sustainability because, if the decision-making process was to be disrupted, this could also delay delivery of important Council plans and activities.

Electoral Services

The Electoral Services team is both an enabling and customer facing service. The team maintains the Electoral Roll on behalf of the Electoral Registration Officer and carries out elections at all levels from Parishes to Westminster Parliamentary (General) on behalf of the Returning Officer. Electoral Services also deals with a number of different electoral reviews including community governance, polling and boundary reviews.

Finance and Customer Services

Finance and Customer Services is made up of a number of teams:

Corporate finance set the Council's financial agenda. They are responsible for the Council's financial regulations/controls and compliance to them, Supporting Members, the Chief Executive and CMT, setting and delivering the budget, closing the Council's Accounts, in year monitoring of the Council's financial position to stakeholders.

Management Accountancy is the primary source of financial support to Budget managers and Heads of Service. They are responsible for the delivery of the operational budget, the monthly/quarterly monitoring, and the closure of accounts in liaison with budget managers and other Council staff.

Exchequer Services delivers the Council's Payment and Income Services along with running the GPC Card (procurement Card) system and Insurance.

Payroll Services is a small team which work closely with HR and finance and run the monthly payrolls for Bromsgrove, Redditch, Rubicon and Wyre Forest Councils.

Revenue Services is responsible for the annual collection of £60m of non-domestic rates; £116m council tax, £27m in sundry income and is



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responsible for collection of £2.4m in overpaid housing benefit across both Redditch and Bromsgrove.

The principal functions of the Benefits Service are to maximise benefit awareness and take-up and to assess benefit claims promptly and accurately.

Customer Services provided a comprehensive service to the council, mainly face-to-face enquiries on both reception and cashiers.

**Human Resources**

The Human Resources and Organisational Development primary function is to provide a HR advisory service, organisational development, training and health and safety, providing advice and support to the organisation in respect of; recruitment, employment issues, pay and grading, training, workforce planning and health and safety advice. HR focuses on the people within the business and on every aspect of the employment relationship.

**Information Communication and Technology**

The different areas of ICT include:

- helpdesk support, technical project implementation, infrastructure and business
- application support, small systems development and automation, service requests,
- website design and support, graphical information systems support (including street naming and numbering) and information management.

**Legal Services**

The Legal Services team is another enabling service with a similarly important role in Council governance. The work of the Legal Services team is crucial to ensuring that there is compliance with legal requirements and regulations, including in respect of the standards regime, through the provision of Council services. The team co-ordinates the Council's procurement arrangements in line with this approach. Legal Services Officers also have a crucial role advising Members and Officers on legal matters, which is important for a robust decision-making process at the Council.

**Property Services**

The Property Services team are an Enabling Service and are involved in helping to manage the Council's physical assets on behalf of the authority. This includes a role managing the condition of the Parkside offices and other buildings owned by the Council.

**Key activities since last report:**



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Democratic and Legal Services

Since the last update in respect of the work of the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling in October 2022, a review has been completed by the Audit Task Group of the reasons why the Council was issued with a Section 24 Notice by the Council's external auditors, Grant Thornton. The Audit Task Group comprised a cross party group of Councillors who gathered evidence from a range of sources and made recommendations to the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee in March 2023 that were designed to improve processes and to ensure the sustainability of Council services moving forward. The review was completed in the space of a month and-a-half, with 8 meetings held during this time.

The outcomes of the Audit Task Group's review were reported to and approved by the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee in March 2023. The recommendations were subsequently reported to and approved by Members at a meeting of the Cabinet held in June 2023. The findings of the Audit Task Group review also fed into the Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) for the Council, completed in March 2023.

Following the CPC, and at the request of Members, the Governance Systems Task Group investigation was undertaken in August 2023. Again, this Task Group comprised a cross-party group of Members who gathered evidence from a range of sources whilst reviewing the most appropriate governance model for the Council moving forward. In total, 5 meetings of the Task Group were held over a period of one month. The outcomes of the review were reported for Members' consideration at an extraordinary meeting of Council held in September 2023. All of the group's recommendations were approved at this meeting.

Since this review was completed, the Constitution Review Working Group (CRWG), has been reviewing and recommending changes to the Council's constitution, including changes proposed by the Task Group. This work has also occurred in a context in which the CPC suggested that the Council would benefit from a review of the constitution and therefore a comprehensive review of the Council's constitution has been launched. Sections of the constitution that have been reviewed so far include:

- Proposed terms of reference for the new Cabinet Advisory Groups (CAGs) proposed by the Task Group.
- A proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for cross party working.
- Rules in respect of Members who could be appointed Chairman of the Council, including a proposal that wherever possible this should be a Councillor not from a political group represented on the Cabinet.



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- Rules in respect of the Chairmen of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Board, including a proposal that wherever possible these should be Councillors not from a political group represented on the Cabinet.
- The introduction of supplementary Questions on Notice at Council meetings on a trial basis. Supplementary questions must relate to the original Question on Notice or the answer provided to that question.

These proposed changes to the constitution have all been reported through the Overview and Scrutiny Board and Cabinet prior to referral on to Council for approval. The Overview and Scrutiny Board has also received regular updates at every meeting held in 2023/24 since the Governance Systems Task Group review concluded in respect of progress with the implementation of the group's recommendations.

Another requirement that has emerged from the constitution review process over the last 18 months has been a requirement to undertake live streaming of Council meetings. At the request of Members, arrangements have been put in place to enable all full Council meetings to be live streamed. In addition, where possible, Planning Committee meetings have also been live streamed, as it is recognised that meetings of this Committee tend to attract public interest and some residents may be unable to attend these meetings in person.

Other significant areas of work over the past 12 months have included the Member induction and training programme for 2023/24, following the local elections held in May 2023. A significant programme of Member training was provided as part of the induction process, in line with the arrangements requested by the Member Development Steering Group, which co-ordinates Member training. At the request of the Member Development Steering Group, much of this training was delivered jointly with Redditch Borough Council, which helped to reduce the associated financial costs.

As part of the induction process, training was provided to Members in relation to the following subjects:

- The Code of Conduct and the Standards Regime (this has comprised multiple sessions, including training for Parish Councillors)
- The Planning process, including membership of the Planning Committee
- Licensing processes, including serving as members of a Licensing Sub-Committee
- The role of Audit, Standards and Governance Committee members
- Overview and Scrutiny Training
- Safeguarding Training



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- Data Protection Training
- Local Government Finance Training
- Modern.gov App and ICT training (including training in respect of how to use Microsoft Teams)
- Chairing Skills Training
- Emergency Planning Training
- Carbon Literacy Training
- Member Safety Training
- Procurement training

In addition to this programme, Councillors in specific roles, such as the Chairmen of Committees, were invited to consider participating in specialist training programmes provided by the Local Government Association (LGA). Participation in these training courses offered those Members an opportunity to learn from experts in those fields and to network with Councillors from other local authorities in similar positions. New Councillors were also informed about training provided by the LGA which was specifically designed to support new Members.

All Members elected in May 2023 were provided with an induction pack which included useful information, such as key contact details for Council staff and the calendar of meetings for the 2023/24 municipal year. This was prepared and distributed by the Democratic Services team, in line with requirements set out by the Member Development Steering Group.

The Member Development Steering Group has continued to meet throughout the 2023/24 municipal year to review the outcomes of the training. Based on feedback received by Members of the group from their colleagues, changes have been suggested to the induction process in future years.

In line with targets detailed in the Council's Carbon Reduction Plan, Democratic Services have been working with other officers to try to reduce the amount of paper generated for Council and Committee meetings. This has involved providing training to Officers across the authority with respect to how to use the modern.gov app to access and annotate Committee papers. Many Officers have subsequently opted to go paperless at Council and Committee meetings. In addition, following provision of similar training to Members, some Councillors have opted to go paperless and / or to reduce the amount of paper copies of agenda packs that they receive for meetings. Further modern.gov training will be offered to Members in 2024/25 and can be made available to Members on a one-to-one basis on request.



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In addition to facilitating Council and Committee meetings at the authority, Democratic Services also provide advice and training to Council staff. As part of this process, during 2023 a lot of training has been provided to staff in respect of requirements in terms of decisions taken by Officers. As a consequence, compliance with these rules has improved significantly and greater clarity in reports has emerged in respect of the decisions being taken by Officers at the Council.

The Legal Services team have continued to deliver training to Council staff during the year in respect of the Council's procurement arrangements. In addition, for the first time, the team also delivered interactive procurement training to Members in March 2024.

The Democratic Services team is a small team, which delivers a shared service to Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils. The team has managed an increasing number of additional meetings during the 2023/24 municipal year, involving a fairly significant workload. This was recognised by the Governance Systems Task Group, which proposed that an additional Democratic Services Officer should be employed by Bromsgrove District Council.

One member of the Democratic Services team has recently completed the Certificate in Democratic Services Knowledge, which is a training programme delivered by the Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO), the professional body for the sector. Another member of the team is mid-way through studying for the certificate. This training should help to upskill the team moving forward.

**Electoral Services**

In May 2023 elections were held in all District Wards and Parishes. All wards were contested but only one Parish went to a poll on election day. A number of legislative requirements were implemented for these elections including the major change of the specific need for electors to produce photographic ID at the polling station. The elections went very smoothly and no problems arose from introduction of voter ID. The turnout was 34% which is broadly the same as 2019. Votes cast in 2023 was 27,072 compared to 27,219 in 2019.

Electoral Services carried out the statutory polling districts, places and stations review in 2023. This was quite light touch as the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) had selected Bromsgrove District Council for an Electoral Review which will require another polling districts, places and stations review on it's completion.



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A Parish Liaison meeting has been created for Parish Clerks to discuss items with council officers that fall outside the work of the Worcestershire Association of Local Councils.

In January 2024, Council approved the Council's proposed Council Size Submission as part LGBCE Preliminary Stage Boundary Review for Bromsgrove District. This followed detailed discussion of the report and subject at a meeting of the Electoral Matters Committee held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023, when the draft report, produced by the Senior Electoral Services Officer and the Principal Democratic Services Officer, was endorsed.

The Senior Electoral Services Officer has achieved the Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA) Diploma in Electoral Administration. One member of the team achieved the AEA Certificate of Electoral Administration, and another is currently studying for this.

**Finance and Customer Services**

Since the last meeting there has been significant activity in finance and customer services. Unlike most other areas in the portfolio, work in this area is heavily scrutinised by Cabinet, Finance and Budget Working Group and Council.

We have seen the 2023/24 and the 2024/5 budgets, both two stage processes, debated through the Chamber. Overall, the 2023/4 three year budget had a £637k deficit position. Most of this gap was due to a 7% pay award however a significant portion of the increase was mitigated by significant pension fund savings. The 2024/5 budget has moved to a "break even" position with a £27k surplus over the three year planning period. Both budgets had significant number of assumptions and were based on One Year Local Government Financial Settlements. 2023/4 saw a 2% increase in the Council Tax and in 2024/5 this rose to 3%. The overall "band D" Council Tax increases by 4.7% year on year to a level of £2,195.85. The Council's portion of this is £250.00.

Capital budgets have remained at similar levels over the two planning period due to the fact that both are dominated by Levelling Up Fund activity and the ongoing replacement of our Refuse Fleet. Over the upcoming five year period £22.7m of Capital investment is planned of which £5.9m is externally funded.

Reserves at March 2027 are estimated at £5.7m for the General Fund and £5.7m for the Earmarked Reserves.

As part of the Budget process we have:



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- Set the Council's Treasury Management, Asset, Minimum Revenue Provision and Investment Strategies. These strategies are a statutory requirement then reported at a half year and year end.
- Set Discretionary policies for Council Tax and Business Rates to help those most in need.
- Updated the Council Tax Empty Homes Discounts and Premiums Policy to make it financially advantageous for empty Homes to be bought back into use.
- Updated the Council Tax Support Scheme from the fundamental changes implemented in the 2022/3 budget process to ensure this reaches as many residents as is possible.

We have delivered combined quarterly finance and performance monitoring report to Cabinet over both years. The most significant factor in the financial monitoring has been 7% pay awards in both years, both of which have been mitigated in the subsequent years budgets. However, it has led to significant "in year" overspends in both years. It should be noted that for the first time Officers carried out their monitoring returns "on system" for Quarters 2 and 3 in 2023/4. This is a significant move forward in terms of upskilling users and their ongoing use of the financial system.

The most significant issue facing the Council financially is moving out of the Section 24 Statement that was issued in October 2022 and extended in October 2023. A "root and branch" review of why the Section 24 Statement occurred was undertaken by a Task Group of the Audit Standards and Governance Committee in February 2023. The Audit, Standards and Governance Committee in March 2023 recommended the findings of the Task Group as did Cabinet and Council. These findings are now being implemented.

Overall, the Council are now very close to agreeing the Opening balances from the old system "efin" to the new system "TechOne". Once this has happened the 2020/21 Accounts will be submitted for Audit.

As part of the "root and branch" findings, Audit, Standards and Governance Committee are meeting six times a year and a report is presented to each meeting that sets out progress on all the finance deliverables. In addition over the period of this report, Risk Management has moved from No to a Moderate Assurance Internal Audit Rating. Part of this improvement has included quarterly reporting to the Audit Committee.

It should be noted that there are significant issues across Local Government in relation to Auditing of the Accounts with over 700 Audits up to 2022/23 still outstanding as at February 2024. The Government are looking to implement a backstop date of 30<sup>th</sup> September for the clearance of these



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Audits which will mean many Councils, including Bromsgrove, could end up with multiple years of unaudited accounts.

Revenues continue to proactively collect circa £100m of Tax income that funds services across the County.

**Human Resources**

A new Workforce Strategy was launched in November 2022. The strategy had three main themes:

- Workforce planning and development.
- Staff engagement.
- The health, safety and wellbeing of staff.

This launch was referred to in one of the Corporate Peer Challenge recommendations, which took place in March 2023, that the Council embed the 2022-2026 Workforce Strategy and develop an action plan which needs to be implemented at pace.

A Workforce Strategy Officer Board meets monthly which measures delivery against the Workforce Strategy and its associated action plan, whose deliver is over a three year period. This Board also oversees the Council's Cultural and Agile Strategies and their implementation.

We moved to a new online recruitment platform Talentlink with the support of WM Employers in late 2022. We then moved from Talentlink to Tribepad (Recruitment Applicant Tracking System) in February 2024.

Our agency provider moved to WMTemps/Opus in April 2023. All agency appointments now run through Opus, who provide management information on usage. In the Q3 Monitoring report, staff turnover was reported at 8.8% which is significantly below the national turnover rate of 15.6%.

The Corporate Apprenticeship programme, which was supported by a budget bid in the 23/4 budget, was launched in the summer of 2023. This programme provides support for those service areas wishing to introduce apprenticeships, but which do not have the budget available to cover the salary costs.

**Information Communication and Technology**

Since the last Cabinet Member report we have:

- Implemented KnowBe4 Cyber Security Training platform
- Gained PSN Cyber Security Certification
- Implementation of Power BI for Corporate Monitoring
- Open Revenues System upgraded to latest version.



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- Gained Gold standard for quality of Gazetteer Address Information
- Began implementing Artificial Intelligence and Automation within departments.

**Property Services**

During the year, the Property Services team have undertaken works at the Council's Parkside offices which were designed to enhance the building. This has included upgrading the lighting in the building to LED lights, which are more energy efficient than traditional lights. The Property Services team have also worked on the installation of new solar panels at Parkside.

Outside the Parkside offices, the Property Services team have been involved in the following works to enhance assets owned by the Council:

- Resurfacing footpaths in Bromsgrove churchyard (St John's).
- Substantial repairs to the veranda and decoration of the external façade of Amphlett Hall.
- Undertaking works on the Artrix building to help bring this back into operational use.
- Finished works on upgrading the public toilets at Rubery in Spring 2023.

**Anticipated Activities/Key Milestones For Next Period**

**Democratic and Legal Services**

The Council's constitution will continue to be reviewed over the following 12 months to ensure that the content is transparent and remains compliant with relevant legislation. Key sections of the Council's constitution that are due to be reviewed over the next few months include the following:

- The Officer Scheme of Delegations, to ensure that any additional delegations agreed by Cabinet and Council during the 2023/24 municipal year have been added and that job titles are updated where appropriate. The latest version of the Officer Scheme of Delegations will be reported for Members' consideration at the Annual Council meeting in May 2024 in line with standard practice.
- The layout of the Committee Terms of Reference will be changed. It is proposed that in future this should be divided into Part A, detailing the terms of reference for 'internal Committees', such as the Overview and Scrutiny Board, and Part B, detailing the terms of reference for joint bodies with which the Council has some involvement alongside partner authorities, such as the Joint Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Board. The new proposed Committee Terms of Reference will be reported to the CRWG in due course, prior to consideration by Council.



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- The Financial Procedure Rules and the Contract Procedure Rules will be updated during 2024. Alterations will be required to these sections of the Council's constitution as legislative changes are due to come into effect during the year which will have implications for public sector procurement processes.

Whilst there will not be any local District Council elections in May 2024, the Member Development Steering Group have agreed a training programme for Members for the 2024/25 municipal year. In developing this training programme, feedback from Members during the 2023/24 municipal year has been taken on board. For example, Officers booked to deliver training have been instructed to make sure that the training they deliver is interactive and does not involve 'death by PowerPoint'.

Looking forward to the future, the Member Development Steering Group has already proposed changes to the Member Induction Programme, which will be applied after the next local District Council elections in May 2027. This has included the proposal that Members should be offered the choice in future as to whether to receive their induction packs in paper or electronic form. In advance of this development, useful documents from the Members' Induction pack have already been made available for Members to access electronically in the 'Your Library' section of the private modern.gov app.

Another additional area of work to emerge will be the Cabinet Advisory Group (CAG) meetings. The CAGs were proposed by the Governance Systems Task Group in 2023. Dates have been included in the 2024/25 calendar of meetings to ensure that these meetings can go ahead where required.

During the next 12 months the modern.gov report management system is due to be launched at the Council. This will involve report authors drafting and submitting reports through the report management system and should result in improvements to the standard of reports received for Members' consideration at Council and Committee meetings. The Democratic Services team have received training in respect of the administrative functions associated with this system and are currently working with the software provider on the development of a User Manual for this process. Full training will be provided to report authors once this part of the system is launched.

Forthcoming legislation in respect of public sector procurement rules will require changes to be made to the Council's Procurement processes. In addition to updating relevant sections of the Council's constitution, the work of the Legal Services team will be crucial to embedding these changes and to providing training to staff to ensure compliance moving forward.

The Governance Systems Task Group review recognised that some of the proposals detailed within the report would result in an increase to the workload of the Democratic Services team. Following agreement of the group's proposals and approval of a budget bid at the Council meeting held in February 2024, an additional Democratic Services Officer is due to be



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recruited to help facilitate some of this extra workload. At the time of writing, this post is being advertised via the Council's recruitment processes.

A member of the Democratic Services team is due to complete the ADSO Certificate in Democratic Services Knowledge over the next 12 months. In addition, a further member of the team is due to start studying for the certificate in April 2024.

**Electoral Services**

In May 2024, there are the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner elections being held. All polling stations will be open on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2024 and the Count will be held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2024.

At these elections new postal voting handling rules will commence and the impact of these will be reviewed after the election.

Also, in May after the elections, new rules regarding the franchise of European Union electors will begin. Officers will be delivering presentations to Councillors regarding the implications of this change.

Later in 2024 (or early 2025) there will be a General Election. This can be announced at short notice which may give officers only seven weeks to organise the poll. Officers are in constant contact with suppliers regarding the requirements of this election.

Parish Liaison meetings are working on full guidance for parish by-elections.

**Finance and Customer Services**

The key deliverables are:

- Signing off the Opening Balances.
- Submission of the 2020/21 Accounts.
- Draft 2021/22 Accounts (no Audit adjustments) ready June 2024.
- Draft 2022/23 Accounts (no Audit adjustments) ready August 2024.
- Value for Money Opinion for 2023/4 Accounts approved November 2024.
- Outturn Report for 2021/2 through to 2023/4 reported to Cabinet in July 2024.
- Delivery of quarterly finance and Performance Monitoring report.
- Upgrading of the existing TechOne financial system from version 23A to version 24A in the early summer 2024.
- Delivery of Tranche 1 of the 2025/6 budget in October 2024.
- Delivery of the 2025/6 final budget (and associated Appendices) in February 2025.

**Human Resources**

The key deliverables are:



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- Implementation of the Council's Workforce Strategy Action Plan
- Review, with finance, of the Council's establishment.
- Embedding the new Tribepad recruitment system.
- Supporting departments in their upcoming restructures.
- Delivering the Corporate Training programme

**Information Communication and Technology**

The key deliverables are:

- Re-Obtain PSN and Cyber Essentials Security Accreditations.
- Procure a Cyber Security Information and Event Management System.
- Roll out new GIS strategy.
- Implement Windows 11.
- Rollout New Laptops to all Members and Staff.
- Deliver new BDC Web Site.
- Deliver new Staff Intranet..
- Continue to implement Artificial Intelligence and Automation throughout the departments.

**Property Services**

The Property Services team are due to work on a range of areas over the next 12 months. This will include:

- Refurbishing the landscaped "mess" room at Bromsgrove Cemetery
- Replacement of the Vehicle wash ramp at Aston Fields
- Upgrading the toilets at Catshill Cemetery to a usable condition.
- Complete Burcot transfers and sales so units are occupied.
- Assess additional opportunities for the Housing Company.



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**2. Partnership Working:**

The Council works with a range of partner organisations to meet the needs of residents and businesses in the District. The following section details work delivered within the remit of this Portfolio Holder.

**Partnership working examples:**

**Democratic and Legal Services**

The Governance Systems Task Group review undertaken in 2023 received support from a representative of the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS). This support, arranged through the LGA, ensured that the group received independent, expert advice for the duration of the investigation, and this benefited the outcomes of the review.

Staff members sit on the Independent Remuneration Panel for Worcestershire. The coming year will involve the agenda management for the panel which is on a rotational basis.

**Electoral Services**

Staff members attend the West Mercia Electoral Administrators group which meets on a monthly basis. This group discusses all items regarding registration and elections across the region. It is considered to be a useful forum within which to exchange ideas in regard to electoral events.

**Finance and Customer Services**

The Council's Internal Audit Service is delivered via the Worcestershire Internal Audit Service which covers all District Councils in Worcestershire apart from Wyre Forest. The Director of Resources meets every 2 months with the other Directors of Finance across Worcestershire.

**Human Resources**

The Council are part of a West Midlands Human Resources Group, which is hosted by WM Employers, whom the Council are a shareholder.

**3. Good News Stories and Awards (if applicable)**

**Local Government Boundary Commission for England Preliminary Stage Boundary Review for Bromsgrove – Council Size Submission:**

The LGBCE considered the Council's submission in February 2024 and endorsed the Council's proposal to continue to have 31 Councillors at Bromsgrove District Council. In reporting back to the Council, it was noted that the Commissioners have also commended the Committee and the officers responsible for producing "such a comprehensive and well-



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considered submission.” The LGBCE has reported that they intend to use this as an example in future in their ‘best practice by authorities’ reference pack.

**Staff**

The Electoral Services Manager has been elected as the Board Member for the West Midlands to the Association of Electoral Administrators.

**Information Communication and Technology**

We Gained Gold standard for quality of Gazetteer Address Information