



Bromsgrove District Council Council Plan 2024 - 2027



Bromsgrove
District Council

www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

Foreword from Council Leader Karen May

Our Council Plan helps us to set the strategic direction for this authority for the next three years. Our overarching vision prioritises the quality of life for our residents and businesses, creating an environment where both can belong and in which to flourish.

This plan helps us to spend our money in the areas which our customers have told us matter to them and to tailor our services to make biggest difference in our communities.

We want to provide more affordable houses, create a clean and green environment with an infrastructure to support the growing demand and to breathe life into our economy by focussing on our businesses and developing opportunities for investment across our District.

Of course there are challenges to do this, not least the financial ones, but prudent budgets mean we are in a stable position to explore and deliver our priorities and, in response to national issues, offer support to our more vulnerable residents.

But we are also fortunate to have a head start to realise our vision. We have wonderful green parks and open spaces, we have seen millions of pounds of investment in regeneration projects in our town and have played our part by building a development of 61 new properties, including 18 affordable homes, at the Burcot Lane site. We have the confidence to make bold and creative moves like this and will continue to do so.

To ensure continued resilience we have made sure that the green agenda is realised in this plan and indeed throughout all of our decision making.

Together we are building a Better Bromsgrove for everyone for a district to be proud of.



Leader of Bromsgrove District Council



Foreword from Deputy Council Leader Sue Baxter

I am absolutely delighted to introduce this Council plan especially with my portfolio for town centre and regeneration in mind.

Economic Development is a priority in this Council Plan which means for the next four years we will be continuing to identify and seize opportunities to attract business and investment to the area to create jobs for our residents.

Already we have seen plans approved to create a new commercial and cultural hub in the space of the former market hall and contractors have been approved to start work in Windsor Street soon.

While change can be unsettling, it is vital that we make strides towards establishing a thriving and resilient economy now and for the future.

This plan focusses not just on big investment opportunities but also enabling and supporting our business starts ups and existing entrepreneurs in our eight town and village centres to establish themselves in the communities and beyond.

Exciting times lie ahead and this Council Plan which encompasses our vision and the priorities will help us to ensure our businesses thrive and people prosper now and in the future.

Sue Baxter

Deputy Leader of Bromsgrove District Council

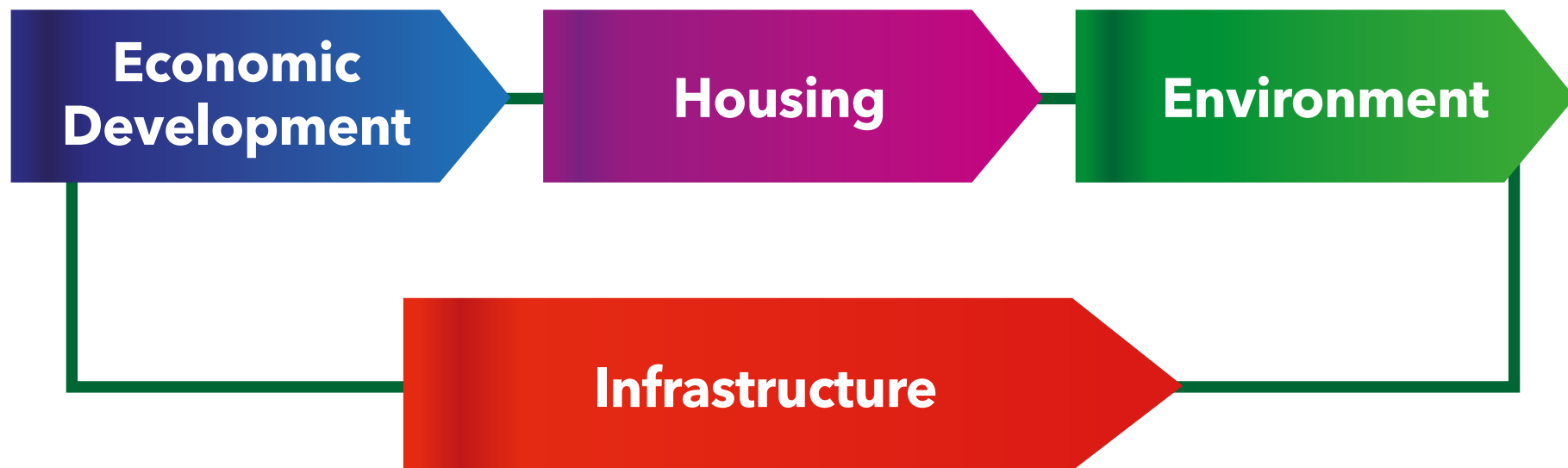


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Our Vision & Priorities

'We aspire to create a welcoming environment that prioritises quality of life, where residents and businesses feel a deep sense of belonging and connection.'



Introduction

Delivering for our communities is the driving force of this plan, whether by supporting local businesses, understanding the housing needs across the district or preserving the beauty and biodiversity of the environment. A 'green thread', for how priorities relate to environmental and climate matters, also runs through the whole plan (**indicated in green**).

Our residents and the distinct neighbourhoods are what make Bromsgrove District such a wonderful place to live. The vision places quality of life for our residents at the centre of how we deliver services and plan for the district, creating a thread that relates to our communities and their wellbeing which is integral to all the priorities (**indicated in purple**). In addition to the specific priorities identified within this plan, the Council delivers other services that contribute to quality of life and wellbeing, from financial inclusion and benefits, to Lifeline, sports development and community safety. Safer Bromsgrove, part of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership, works to keep Bromsgrove a safer place to live, work and visit. The Partnership focuses on priorities including anti-social behaviour, neighbourhood crime and protecting vulnerable communities.

The Council Plan will inform annual service business planning and budget setting agreed by full council, ensuring that available resources (both financial & staffing) are used to deliver the council's priorities.

Our Opportunities

The opportunities include:

- The location of Bromsgrove for business; with Worcestershire, regionally and beyond
- The entrepreneurial and community spirit within Bromsgrove District
- Keeping businesses in the district when they grow
- The amazing natural environment of the district
- The creative options provided through new technologies to enhance our services and our customers experiences

Our Challenges

The challenges include:

- The ongoing financial challenge- to both the organisation but also our communities and residents through the real pressures presented by cost of living and the housing market
- Continuing to support those who are most vulnerable, and manage the increasing costs
- Keeping businesses in the District when they grow
- Understanding the different community needs across the district
- The need for enhanced digital and physical connectivity

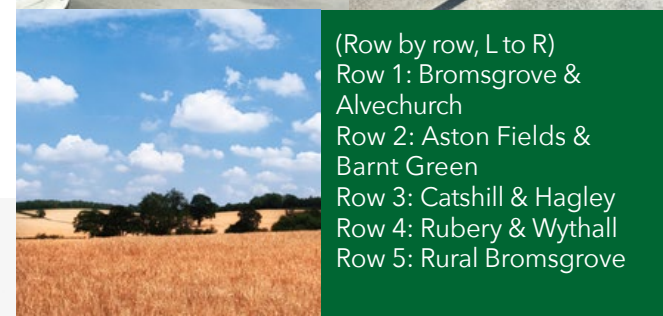
About Bromsgrove District

Bromsgrove District has an excellent geographic location in north Worcestershire, with excellent links to the rest of Worcestershire, the wider region and nationally. It is a predominantly rural district, with 89% of the land covering 20,000 hectares is designated as Green Belt, although the north of the district is part of the major urban conurbation linked to south Birmingham. The main centre of population is in Bromsgrove Town, with other large centres in Alvechurch, Aston Fields, Barnt Green, Catshill, Hagley, Rubery and Wythall. Around 61% of the district population live in 'urban' areas.

The district has rich biodiversity, geodiversity and attractive landscape, containing 13 Sites of Special Scientific Interest and 90 local sites (85 ecological and 5 geological).

The 2021 Census shows that Bromsgrove District had a resident population of 99,183 and Mid-Year Populations estimates suggest that the district population has increased to 100,076 in 2022. The population is forecast to reach 117,014 by 2043.

The population of the district is ethnically less diverse than the national picture and residents are typically older than the average for England. The district tends to be relatively affluent compared to the national and local context and Bromsgrove has levels of deprivation significantly below average. However, this can hide pockets of deprivation; there is one lower support output area (LSOA) in the most deprived 20% nationally and a further three LSOAs that are in the most deprived 30% and access to appropriate support can be a challenge for residents in these areas. The rural nature of much of the district can also present challenges, from accessing services to utilising public transport.

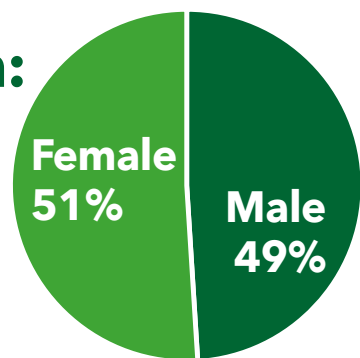


(Row by row, L to R)
Row 1: Bromsgrove & Alvechurch
Row 2: Aston Fields & Barnt Green
Row 3: Catshill & Hagley
Row 4: Rubery & Wythall
Row 5: Rural Bromsgrove

Total population:

100,076

Source - ONS 2022 Mid-year population estimates



Profile:

White British - **90.4%**

White other - **1.7%**

Mixed - **2.5%**

Black - **0.8%**

Asian - **3.2%**

Other ethnic group - **0.4%**



Source - Census 2021

Health:

Life expectancy

Male - **79.8**

Female - **83.8**



Describe health as bad or very bad - **3.9%**

Source - Census 2021

significantly less active than recommended - **22,100**

Source- Sport England Active Lives 2023



Deprivation:

The 326 local authority districts in England are ranked for each domain, with 1 indicating the most deprived and 326 the least deprived. Bromsgrove experiences below average levels of deprivation across all domains.

Living environment - **271**

Crime - **160**

Barriers to housing & services - **204**

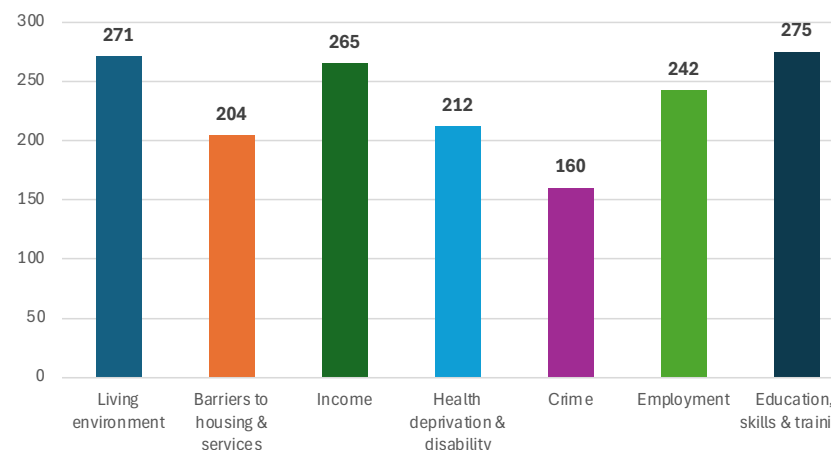
Employment - **242**

Income - **265**

Education, skills & training - **275**

Health deprivation & disability - **212**

Source - English indices of deprivation 2019 (ONS)



Economically active 16 - 64 year olds - **85.9%**

Above national average of **78.8%**

Source- NOMIS Employment & Unemployment (Jan 23 - Dec 23)

Economic Development

Economic development is key for delivering our vision for the district, with the aim of cultivating a thriving and resilient local economy. We will focus on supporting businesses, **enabling individuals, and developing communities**.

By supporting businesses, we seek to create an environment conducive to growth and innovation, offering resources, incentives, and infrastructure to bolster entrepreneurship and job creation. Enabling businesses to grow in the district will help us to retain them, creating more high-quality local opportunities. We will also encourage and support new business start-ups to see Bromsgrove District as a natural place to locate and do business.

Enabling individuals and businesses involves providing opportunities for skills development, education, and employment in order to develop prosperous communities where businesses flourish, **people thrive**, and places prosper. We will support the take-up of apprenticeships both across the district and within our own organisation, developing skills whilst also bolstering the businesses that employ them.

The eight centres across the district need to meet the changing needs of shoppers, residents, and businesses. We will work to improve the vitality and viability of the various centres and to reduce the number of empty shops in the district.



The Bromsgrove Town Centre 2040 Vision focuses on developing an inclusive, vibrant, and resilient town centre which is adaptable and resilient to change.

It looks to provide opportunities for redevelopment and regeneration, whilst preserving and strengthening the town's vibrancy and historic significance. A new Car Parking Strategy will address current and future requirements in order to meet the needs of our residents, businesses, and visitors alike.

A dynamic new team in partnership with Redditch Borough Council will provide enhanced resources and a review of our Economic Development Strategy will help us to implement our priorities, optimise our assets and attract businesses, jobs and investment to the district. Engaging with businesses and the wider communities they are part of, will help the team to understand and respond to the changing needs of the district, its businesses and the communities they serve.

Key objectives

- Supporting our businesses
- Upskilling the workforce
- Enabling growth & innovation
- Supporting entrepreneurship & job creation
- Vibrant town & district centres

Key projects

- Centres Strategy - Implementation of the yearly Centres Strategy action plan across the 8 centres within the district.
- Regeneration Sites - delivery of projects within the £14.5m Levelling Up Fund including Windsor Street and the Market Hall Site.



Housing

We want to address the diverse housing needs within our District, ensuring quality homes for our residents and families. The challenges, in particular affordability, presented by the housing market across all tenures, means we need to explore innovative solutions for housing provision. We will ensure that affordable options are available, while striving for a balanced mix of housing types to accommodate different demographics and stages of life.

The Bromsgrove 2040 Vision also includes residential opportunities as part of a town centre where people live, work and play.

Our Private Sector Housing Team **support vulnerable residents to live in safe, quality homes** and we will continue to work with Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) to support people at risk of homelessness. Prioritising energy-efficient homes will not only **reduce environmental impact** but also contribute to long-term sustainability and cost savings for residents. We aspire to create a **thriving and inclusive community** where everyone has access to safe, healthy, affordable, and environmentally responsible housing options.

We will explore alternative ways of delivering the housing the district needs, whether that is through planning, partnerships or investment. We will also work with our partners across the county to deliver the Worcestershire Housing Strategy 2023-2040 and how **affordable, warm, and healthy homes can contribute to a better quality of life**.

Key objectives

- Affordable & balanced housing
- Energy efficient homes
- Innovative housing provision

Key projects- TBC

- Former Dolphin Centre Car Park - continue to explore different options for housing provision on the Town Centre site.
- New Local Plan- identification of the numbers of new housing that should be provided and where.

Environment

We are committed to safeguarding the natural environment, addressing issues ranging from biodiversity conservation to climate change mitigation, supporting recycling to reducing waste production, all with the goal of enhancing the quality of life for current and future generations.

Increased environmental enforcement will help to protect the beautiful environment of our district and minimise pollution. By maximising penalties, we will send a clear message that we will not tolerate environmental crimes such as fly-tipping and that we will work tirelessly to reduce the impact this has on our communities and businesses. We will work with partners at Worcestershire Regulatory Services, who measure the air quality across the district, to assess the impact of real-time air quality monitoring.

Delivery of the Environment Act signifies our dedication to comprehensive environmental policy and action, in particular how we can reduce waste, increase recycling and improve our waste management systems. We will work with residents, communities and businesses to provide education and awareness around any changes to recycling and the future introduction of food waste collection.

Efforts aimed at safeguarding ecosystems, green spaces, and wildlife habitats all contribute to not only carbon reduction but **improved wellbeing**.



Through these initiatives, whether that is meadow planting or promoting the inclusion of green corridors into developments, the Council strives to foster sustainable practices, promote environmental stewardship, and create **resilient communities in harmony with nature**.

Carbon reduction is essential in order to address the challenges faced by changes in our climate. With our partners, we will support residents and businesses to reduce their carbon emissions. We will review all aspects of our organisation; from the fuel our vehicles use to how energy efficient our buildings and facilities are, we will continue to work proactively towards our Carbon Reduction Strategy objectives.



Key objectives

- Increased environmental enforcement
- Implementing the Environment Act 2021 (waste)
- Carbon reduction

Key projects

- Low carbon fleet fuel options- continue with the fleet conversion and the electrification of smaller vehicles.
- Bromsgrove District Heat Network- work with partners to develop, design and build the network, reducing carbon emissions.

Infrastructure

Prioritising infrastructure is paramount for our District, as it serves as the bedrock of not only our communities but also growth. This priority underpins the other three, as they can only be delivered with the right infrastructure in place. We will focus on delivering key infrastructure projects such as the new Local Plan, utilising our parks and open spaces, and initiatives promoting active travel.

Delivering a new Local Plan will help us to ensure that local infrastructure meets the needs of our residents, communities, businesses, and visitors alike. This key strategic document will detail the direction and ambition for the district and will set out the infrastructure requirements needed now and into the future, in order to support vibrant and resilient communities that can thrive.

Parks and open spaces link strongly with the Environment priority, **providing green spaces where people and nature can flourish**. But they also provide opportunities for communities to come together, people to get active and for local businesses and initiatives to deliver activities and events. By focusing on the implementation of our Parks and Open Space Strategy, we will seek to increase the investment in these resources and the number of people who can enjoy them.



Active travel is a key driver not only in **reducing carbon emissions** but also in **health and wellbeing**.

Working with Worcestershire County Council we will support the implementation of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and the development of Local Transport Plan 5, which will provide the strategic direction for future investment in active travel initiatives across the district.

By investing in these areas, we seek to **elevate the quality of life**, bolster economic development, and ensure the safety and **well-being of our residents**.

Key objectives

- Delivering the new Local Plan
- Parks and open spaces
- Active travel

Key projects

- Behaviour Change (air quality) - utilising real time information, a programme of encouraging community groups to lead on reducing polluting behaviour, which has active travel as a key component.
- Green Flag Awards- develop a rolling programme for achieving the national standard Green Flag Award for priority parks across the district.
- We will also continue to work in partnership on transport and environmental projects locally, regionally and nationally.



Monitoring, Review & Reporting - Our Measures

The measures below, by which we will evaluate this Council Plan, will help us to understand how we are delivering against our priorities.

Progress will be monitored on a quarterly basis (where the data is available), allowing us to adjust, as needed, to keep the plan on track. Reports will be considered by the Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny and the Corporate Management Team, with the updates being available to the public on the website. The Council Plan will be reviewed annually to ensure that it addresses the key issues for the district and that the measures are telling us what we need to know.

- Monitor the number of jobs created by supported businesses (quarterly)
- Business births, deaths & survival rates (annual)
- Earnings (by residence & place of work) (annual)
- Track the delivery of the Centres Strategy action plan (quarterly)
- Community and business engagement (annual survey)
- Tracking affordability index - house prices, rental costs (quarterly)
- Monitor housing supply (annual)
- Number of private, affordable, and social houses delivered each year (annual)
- Number in temporary accommodation (quarterly)
- Number of homeless preventions (quarterly)
- Number of empty homes (quarterly)
- Grant funding for energy improvements of Private Housing (quarterly)
- Number of enforcement cases, planning and environment (number opened, number closed, number open for investigation) (quarterly)
- Time taken to remove Fly-tipping (quarterly)
- Track delivery of the actions in the Environment Act 2021 project (quarterly)



- Reduction in the amount of waste generated by households (quarterly)
- Percentage of household waste recycled or composted (quarterly)
- Track the delivery of the Carbon Reduction Strategy action plan (annual)
- Energy efficiency improvements in municipal buildings, facilities, and public infrastructure (biannual)
- Increase Community Engagement and Awareness around the environment (Quarters 2 & 4 Corporate Surveys and quarterly)
- Report on the stages of the new Local Plan development & adoption (biannual)
- Monitor the rate of planning approvals and appeals in alignment with the agreed policies and proposals (domestic & business) (quarterly inc by type)
- Track investment in infrastructure projects identified in the local plan (including section 106 monies spent) (annual)
- Track the delivery of the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy action plan (quarterly)
- To Achieve the Green Flag Award for the following parks: Sanders Park, Lickey End LNR, St Chads Park, Rubery and King George Vth Park over the next 10 years (annual)
- Engagement with WCC on the implementation of the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and the development of the Local Transport Plan 5 (biannual)



Organisational Priorities

Financial Stability

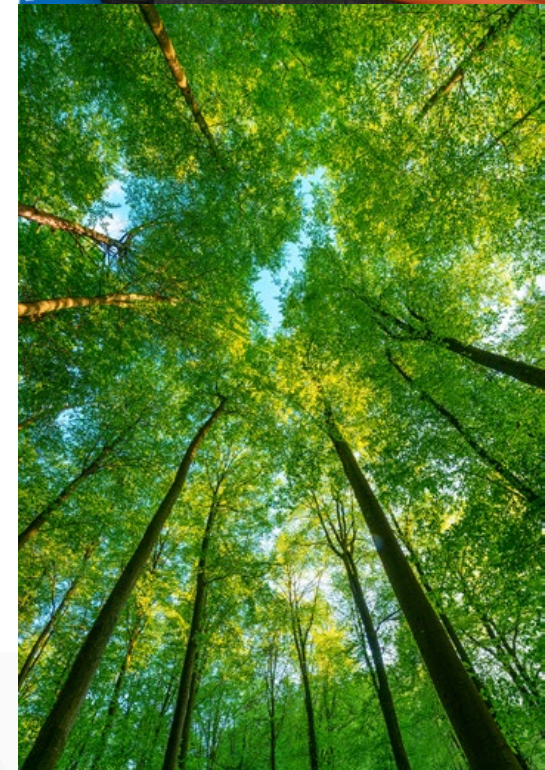
The primary organisational priority is financial stability, from ensuring prudent borrowing, undertaking effective contract management to managing our assets to get the best outcomes for our residents.

Finances have been difficult over recent years, with inflation and interest rates, and the resulting impact to employee costs, combining to make financial planning challenging across all sectors. Responding to these challenges, the organisation is focused on making even better use of existing resources, embedding business improvement, and exploring alternative methods of delivery, available grant funding, or potential income generation. We will use data and intelligence to inform how we deliver and procure services, prioritising the needs of our local communities and customers so that our services continue to be accessible and responsive.

Sustainability

Ensuring that a green thread runs through all the services we design and deliver is essential as we adapt to address the implications of climate change. From the buildings we work from to the vehicles we use, we will continue to review all our services to place sustainability, the environment, and the future generations of Bromsgrove District at the heart of all decision making.

We will also expand the use of digital technologies where appropriate, enabling more automation of services, freeing up capacity to deliver against the priorities of our communities. This will enable greater digital access to our services; allowing customers to book, pay and do things online when they want to 24/7.



Partnerships

We will work closely with our partners in the public sector, such as Redditch Borough Council, Worcestershire County Council, West Mercia Police, and the NHS and parish councils. We will also continue to work with the voluntary and community sector across the district, including through our Employee Volunteering Scheme.

The Bromsgrove Partnership brings together different organisations from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors in its role as the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for the District of Bromsgrove. Instead of each organisation working separately in isolation, the Bromsgrove Partnership provides a forum for local organisations to come together and address issues that are important to those living, working, and visiting Bromsgrove District in a more effective and cohesive way.

Bromsgrove Partnership's vision is: **"We will make Bromsgrove District the place to live, do business and to visit."** Their three priority themes, which complement the purposes in this plan are: Economic Growth; Balanced Communities; Environment.

Partnership also extends to how we will work with our communities, whether engaging residents and businesses in how services are delivered, what our priorities should be or the wider decision-making processes. Corporate and service level engagement with the public will continue to inform how we design and deliver our services.



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Organisational Culture - the 4P's

Through working closely with employees across the organisation, we have identified the '4P's' as a way of defining organisational culture and the aspirations of everyone who works for Bromsgrove District Council.

- **Purpose:** Aligns all actions and decisions with the council's overarching strategic goals, ensuring every task contributes to the collective vision and priorities, whether at a corporate, departmental, team or personal level. It provides a sense of direction, helping staff understand how their roles directly impact the community and reason for their work.
- **People:** This principle showcases the importance of 'our people' as our greatest asset, valuing and empowering staff, as well as recognising other important people or stakeholders that impact our work, from members to communities and partners. This principle aims to create a thriving working environment, supporting our people and offering wellbeing initiatives, development opportunities, flexibility, policies, and frameworks that ultimately enhance morale, productivity and the happiness of our staff.
- **Pride:** Taking pride in our work and our community is a key building block in maintaining high standards and a sense of achievement for our employees. By celebrating our successes and learning from challenges, pride encourages ownership, passion, and integrity in our day-to-day work life.
- **Performance:** By setting clear goals, measuring outcomes, and striving for excellence, we can drive continuous improvement and ensure that our work leads to tangible benefits for the community. This allows us to recognise our successes, set future objectives and identify areas for growth and improvement.

Whilst each principle has its own meaning, they are designed to work in a unified way to ensure a good culture where our staff are dedicated to delivering outstanding public services.



Purpose



People



Pride



Performance

Budget & Resources

Ensuring that we make the best use of our resources, capital and assets is essential in order to balance the books and provide our residents with value for money and confidence in the Council's ability to manage the budget. The priorities detailed within this plan will underpin our medium-term financial planning and financial management expertise informs all of our strategic decision making.

The Council has set its 2024/5 to 2026/7 budget in two tranches, in January 2024, with the second Tranche considered following the release of the final Local Government Settlement figures and approved in February 2024. The position that was approved in February 2024 was an overall £42k surplus in the 2024/5, putting the finances in a position of sustainability.

The revenue budget and capital programme have been formulated having regard to several factors including:

- Funding Available
- Inflation
- Risks and Uncertainties
- Priorities
- Service Pressures
- Commercial Opportunities
- Operating in a Post Covid-19 environment



Risk Management

The Council is committed to managing our risks effectively, efficiently, and proportionally, ensuring that risk management is fully embedded across the organisation. Corporate Risks are set out on a quarterly basis to the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee.

Mitigations for the risks identified are set out in Audit Reports as well as departmental risks that link to these Corporate Risks. An Officer Risk Board continues to take place quarterly to embed processes and validate risks on the register, with each department having as representative. The Corporate Management Team are updated on risk management issues in their monthly “assurance” meeting and a Member Risk Champion is appointed on an annual basis.





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01527 548284 or email equalities@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk