

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

17TH FEBRUARY 2025, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors P. M. McDonald (Chairman), S. T. Nock (Vice-Chairman), A. Bailes, R. Bailes, A. M. Dale, S. M. Evans, E. M. S. Gray, B. Kumar, D. J. Nicholl and J. Robinson

Observers: Councillor K.J. May – Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships and Enabling

Officers: Mr. G. Revans, Mrs. R. Bamford, Mr. M. Dunphy and Mrs S. Woodfield

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APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor R.J. Hunter with Councillor S.M. Evans in attendance as named substitute and Councillor S.A. Robinson with Councillor J.W. Robinson in attendance as named substitute.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS

No declarations of interest were received nor of any whipping arrangements.

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LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (PRE-SCRUTINY)

The Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager presented the Local Development Scheme (LDS) to the Board.

Following Government consultation in the summer of 2024 on the 12th December 2024, a new version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published and to meet the requirement, a new LDS had been produced. The LDS was the timetable for the Planning Policies which the Council intended to produce and outlined the likely path the Bromsgrove District Local Plan would take to adoption.

The timetable was explained in detail which set out the following timeframes:

- **Draft Plan Consultation** – The Draft Plan Consultation was planned to begin in May or June 2025 and Members would be consulted on progress of this through the Strategic Planning Steering Group (SPSG), Cabinet and Council meetings.
- **Notice of start of plan making under reformed** – This was notification of the new local plan process.
- **Gateway 1 (Advisory)** – This date was set to meet with the Planning Inspectorate in February 2026.
- **Public Consultation (8 weeks)** was due between June/July 2026.

- **Gateway 2 (Advisory)** – The Council would be advised on progress and any likely issues going forwards in December 2026.
- **Public Consultation (6 weeks)** – This would be the final public consultation publication in April/May 2027.
- **Gateway 3 (Stop/Go)** – This would detail the likely prospects of the local plan in December 2027.
- **Examination** – The examination process would take 6 months between January – July 2028.
- **Finalisation and adoption** – The finalisation and adoption of the local plan was due in July 2028.

Until the final details of the new system were known, the stages of plan making identified for 2026 and beyond were considered by Officers to be the likely process, however, dates could differ. Members also noted that the Council would be judged based on its capabilities to deliver against the processes set by Government.

The significant element to note on the timetable was the publication of the draft plan for wide ranging public and stakeholder consultation in May/June 2025. The details of the draft plan and the approach to engagement and consultation would be covered and reported through SPSG, Cabinet and Council meetings.

Following the presentation, Members made the following comments and considerations as follows:

- Members queried why the timetable at the SPSG meetings had not been presented to the Board, which demonstrated the groups involvement. – In response it was explained that the timetable presented during SPSG was appropriate for that meeting, however, the table displayed within the report was more appropriate for publication in the public domain.
- If the 8-week consultation period set for June/July 2026 was “Regulation 18”, which was the start of the formal public consultation period. – Members noted that this terminology would not exist as part of the new regulations.
- Members queried who would be consulted on the Draft Plan set for May/June 2025. – Officers explained that although the exact details were to be worked up there would be a full public consultation.
- If the 8-week public consultation period set for June/July 2026 was a full consultation period for the public and stakeholders? – It was advised that all stakeholders would be consulted, including SPSG which would be set up for Members to attend.
- Members referred to the recommendation of delegated authority to approve updates on the LDS. Members expressed the view that the Board should be provided with regular updates along with the necessary delegated powers. It was agreed that Officers would be updating Members on the LDS through SPSG. It was also agreed that any updates to the LDS would be presented to the Board for scrutiny as requested by the Chairman.
- Members enquired how much weight would be put on Neighbourhood Plan for Parish Councils as it was important that Members could advise the Parish Councils on how the Neighbourhood Plan would be applied through the Local Plan. - In response it was explained that when the Local Plan was near to completion, there may be some conformity issues between the two plans, however, Officers didn't see anything

significant within the current Local Plan which had allocation or strategic policies. Proposals and policies in the Neighbourhood Plan would need to be reviewed as to what influence they had. If proposals were agreed, these would form part of the development plan and carried through the decision-making process, however, most Neighbourhood Plans mirrored what was within the Local Plan.

- The reference in the report that it was not considered that the LDS would have any climate change implications was discussed by the Board and Members expressed concerns that climate change should be addressed imminently as the LDS and Local Plan were linked. – In response Members were informed that this would be addressed through the Local Plan in May/June.
- If public consultations considered all comments made. – Members noted that all comments were welcomed and not restricted. Forms were available for completion, “drop in” sessions and online platforms were also available. Following consultations, comments received would be reviewed by Officers and fed back for Members’ consideration.
- If Parish Councils formed part of the consultation process? – The Board were informed that all stakeholder comments were welcomed. Formal engagement would also be set up for Parish Councils at Village Halls to hold talks with residents.
- Members expressed concerns that the Draft Plan consultation set for May/June was imminent and if there were adequate resources in place to achieve the timescale. Members also queried if the consultations were District wide. – In response Members were reassured that sufficient resources were in place and that consultations were District wide.
- Members also queried if due notice would be given to Members prior to the Draft Plan Consultation so that Members were prepared. – The Board were advised that if the report and recommendations had been approved by Cabinet and Council on 19th February 2025 then Members would be informed, with the forward plan ready for consultation in June.
- Members requested if the final report for the Draft Plan was complete. – In response the Board were advised this was not complete as Member engagement was required through the SPSG meetings.
- Members requested specific details which would be contained within the Draft Plan going out to consultation in May/June and reassurance that Members would be given ample opportunity to consider the relevant proposed details? – In response Members were advised that the content of the report would be discussed during the SPSG meetings for Members’ consideration and input and were reassured that there would be adequate time to consider the relevant details.
- The Leader of the Council informed Members that the LDS was a requirement set by Government with strict timeframes in place. Members were urged to respond to consultations in a timely manner.
- If the Draft Plan consultation in May/June would include the additional sites for the various wards to ensure the Council would meet the required housing number target. – The Board were advised that this would form part of the proposals considered.
- Following a request and for ease of reference, the different terminologies of documentations within the report were explained to Members.
- Members queried that if their Parish did not have a proposed development, would they still be consulted in advance? – In response Members were advised that all Members would be consulted.

RECOMMENDED that:

The Cabinet RECOMMEND that:

- 1) Appendix A: Bromsgrove District Council Local Development Scheme 2025 is approved as the Council's programme for plan-making, effective as of 19th February 2025.

Delegated authority is granted to the Assistant Director for Planning and Leisure Services, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, Licensing and WRS, to approve updates to the Local Development Scheme as required.

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

There was no urgent business for consideration.

The meeting closed at 6.36 p.m.

Chairman