

Overview and Scrutiny Board

2025

22nd July

Finance and Budget Working Group

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor S. Baxter
Portfolio Holder Consulted	No
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton, Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services
Report Author: Jane Oyenuga	Job Title: Trainee Democratic Services Officer Contact email: jane.oyenuga@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Wards Affected	N/A
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Council Priorities	Sustainability
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Overview and Scrutiny Board is asked to:-

- a) Agree the Membership of the Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group for the municipal year 2025/26; and**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group was set up by the Overview and Scrutiny Board a number of years ago to carry out detailed scrutiny of a number of Financial Reports (listed in the Terms of Reference) and to assist in scrutiny of the Council's budget setting.
- 2.2 Due to recent changes to the membership of the Board, following changes to the political balance at the Council, and following agreement at the previous meeting of the Board to consult with Board members who were not in attendance at the meeting, the purpose of this report is to formalise the membership of the Group for 2025-26..

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3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

Chairman

- 3.1 Historically the Chairman of the Working Group has been the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board. It was agreed at the previous Board meeting held on 17th June 2025 that Councillor P. McDonald be appointed as the Chairman of the Finance and Budget Working Group for the ensuing municipal year 2025/26.

Membership

- 3.2 It has been agreed within the terms of reference that the Working Group be composed of the Chairman of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee and 6 Members of the Board with a quorum of 3. Scrutiny Working Groups are not required to be politically balanced, although it would be good practice to have each political group represented.
- 3.3 Current, Members of the Board who have expressed an interest in joining the group to date are Councillors P.M. McDonald (Chairman), A. Bailes and S.T. Nock.
- 3.4 At the meeting of the Board held on 17th June 2025, Councillor Hunter, who is also a current Member of the Board, expressed an interest in being appointed to the working group. Councillor Hunter subsequently confirmed in writing that he no longer wanted to be appointed to serve on this group in 2025/26.
- 3.5 At that same meeting of the Board, Councillor S. Ammar confirmed that she would like to be appointed to the working group. At the time, Councillor Ammar was a member of the Board. However, following changes to the political balance agreed at the Council meeting held on 19th June, Councillor Ammar is no longer a member of the Board and therefore not automatically eligible to serve on the group.
- 3.6 At the Board meeting held on 17th June, Councillor C.A. Hotham, who was attending the meeting as a substitute, expressed an interest in

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serving as a Member of the Finance and Budget Working Group, should there be a relevant vacancy available.

- 3.7 Therefore, Members are asked to note that there are two members of the Overview and Scrutiny 'pool', Councillors Ammar and Hotham, who although not currently Members of the Board, have expressed an interest in being appointed as members of the Finance and Budget Working Group in 2025/26.
- 3.8 Members are asked to choose the membership of the Working Group (Cabinet members cannot be represented). It should be noted that the terms of reference for the group state that members must be members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, (with the exception of the Chairman of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee where s/he is not a member of the Board). However, the terms of reference for the working group also state "*should a vacant post remain after members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board had been approached, members of the Overview and Scrutiny "pool" (i.e. those who do not sit on the Scrutiny Board and are also not Cabinet Members) may be appointed to fill the vacancy.*"
- 3.9 For any Member wishing to sit on the Working Group, meetings have been scheduled for this year as per below, although there may be a need for extra meetings when the need is identified, particularly during the budget setting period. Conversely, meetings may be cancelled if there is no business to be considered on a particular date.
- 17th July 2025
 - 5th September 2025
 - 17th November 2025
 - 5th January 2026
 - 6th February 2026
 - 23rd March 2026
- 3.10 All meetings are due to start at 6.00pm and will be held remotely (on Microsoft Teams). Any meetings held on Friday will commence at 1.00pm.

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- 3.11 The Chairman of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee will be contacted about his/her membership of the Working Group in due course.

Terms of Reference

- 3.12 The terms of reference are reviewed at the beginning of each municipal year since the inception of the Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group. The Overview and Scrutiny Board approved the current terms of reference for the working group at the Board meeting held on 17th June.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications in respect of the recommendations this report. Although it should be noted that there are resource implications in respect of officer time in attending and preparing for the meetings.
- 4.2 Detailed scrutiny of the Council's budget forms an important part of the budget setting process at the Council and helps to enhance accountability and transparency.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications relating to this report, other than those in respect of the Overview and Scrutiny function as a whole. The Working Group is currently not constituted, but merely an arrangement set up by the Overview and Scrutiny Board to improve its work going forward in respect of scrutinising the budget and finances of the Council.

6. OTHER – IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation Implications

- 6.1 There are no implications for Local Government Reorganisation.

Relevant Council Priority

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- 6.2 The work of the Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group contributes towards ensuring that the Council continues to provide sustainable services to its residents.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 There are no climate change implications in respect of this report.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.4 There are no direct customer/equalities and diversity implications in respect of this report.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 No specific risks have been identified.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background Papers

‘Finance and Budget Working Group report to the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 17th June 2025’.