

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY 23RD JULY 2025, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors K.J. May (Leader), S. J. Baxter (Deputy Leader),
B. McEldowney, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

Observers: Councillor P. M. McDonald - Chairman of the Overview
and Scrutiny Board

Councillor S.T. Nock - Vice-Chairman of the Overview and
Scrutiny Board

Officers: Mr J. Leach, Mr B. Watson, Ms R. Egan, Mr M. Cox,
Mrs L. Berry, Mrs. R. Green, Mr. C. Poole, Ms. C. Hornblow and
Mrs J. Gresham.

24/25

TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K. Taylor.

25/25

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

26/25

**REVOCATION OF THE BROMSGROVE ROAD AND LICKEY END AIR
QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA**

The Technical Services Manager from Worcestershire Regulatory
Services (WRS) presented the report for Members' consideration.

During the presentation of the report, it was noted that the Air Quality
Management Areas (AQMA) at Lickey End and Redditch Road,
Bromsgrove had been declared as AQMA for some time.

Following an update of national policy in respect of revocation of AQMA
by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) it
had been deemed necessary to revoke AQMA which had not seen
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO²) exceedances for over five consecutive years.
Officers explained that there had been no exceedance of NO² at both of
these sites for some time. With the last exceedance for Lickey End in
2014 and for Redditch Road, Bromsgrove in 2016.

Should these two AQMAs be revoked this would result in only one remaining AQMA within the District, at Worcester Road. This site was subject to an Air Quality Action Plan and continued monitoring would take place at this site. It was noted that monitoring would also continue to take place at other sites across the District.

Cabinet was informed that a Behaviour Change Officer at WRS was working within the District to educate and influence behaviour changes with residents across the area. This included schools and other organisations in order to educate young people in the importance of air quality for the future with a view for them to influence their parents' behaviour.

Following the presentation of the report, concerns were raised by Members regarding the Lickey End AQMA and the revocation of this site. Of particular concern was the potential decrease in air quality following the closure of School Lane due to infrastructure changes and subsequent diversions now being in place. It was noted that there was significant congestion at this location which might increase NO² emissions in the future. Officers explained that congestion would not necessarily result in increased emissions that were an issue to air quality and that this site would still be subject to monitoring going forward.

It was suggested that a potential site for monitoring along the A38 where there had been recent changes to the road layout, resulting in the homes being closer to the road, which could mean a potential increase in poor air quality. Monitoring around this location would provide surety for the residents that this location was still a safe place in terms of air quality.

Some Members expressed that the revocation of these two AQMAs was positive for the District in that air quality was improving. It was reiterated that these sites would continue to be monitored closely to see if there were any future exceedances and to carry out any necessary work should this be the case. Officers reported that real time monitoring data for specific locations could be accessed on the WRS website.

There were also concerns raised in terms of the impact with current road closures within Bromsgrove by Worcestershire County Council (WCC). It was reported that these closures had not only greatly impacted on congestion, but they had also impacted on businesses located within the Town Centre.

The Chief Executive Officer proposed that a letter be written on behalf of the Council to WCC to express the concerns raised at this meeting in

respect of congestion and the impact the road closures had had on the Town Centre.

RECOMMENDED that the Lickey End, Bromsgrove Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and the Redditch Road, Bromsgrove, AQMA be revoked.

27/25

BROMSGROVE TOWN CENTRE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The Bromsgrove Centres Manager presented the Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategic Framework report for the consideration of Cabinet.

The Bromsgrove Town Centre Framework had been designed as a guiding document to anchor several Bromsgrove Town Centre strategies approved in recent years such as Bromsgrove Centres' Strategy, the Strategic Car Parking Review and Bromsgrove 2040 Vision.

Several engagement sessions had taken place for stakeholders to inform the development of the Framework. A dedicated Cabinet Advisory Group (CAG) meeting had also taken place for Cabinet in order to engage with all elected Members within the Council to understand their perspectives.

Contained within the Framework was a comprehensive delivery structure overseen by a Town Centre Steering Group (TCSG) to monitor milestones, evaluate resource implications and budgets, in addition to the formation of the Business Improvement District (BID) for the Town Centre.

Members welcomed the Framework and noted the inclusive process taken to develop the Framework document. During the discussion, timelines for the establishment of the TCSG and BID for the Town Centre were queried by Members. Officers confirmed the TCSG would be in place by the end of 2025. A feasibility study for the BID for the Town Centre would take place immediately with a view to it being in place as soon as possible.

During consideration of this item, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was invited to address the Cabinet on behalf of the Board. Members were advised that this report had been pre-scrutinised at a meeting of the Board held on 22nd July 2025. The Board had been pleased with the proposed Framework and had felt that it was a positive step forward for the Town Centre. It was confirmed that no

recommendations had been made by the Board as a result of the pre-scrutiny of the report.

The Assistant Director Regeneration & Property Services explained that the Communications team would be contacted to ensure that some communications were provided to residents and that the Framework would be placed on the Bromsgrove District Council's website.

RESOLVED that

The Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategic Framework be approved.

28/25

FINANCIAL OUTTURN REPORT AND Q4 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT 2024/2025

The Leader invited the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, to present to the discussions in respect of the pre-scrutiny of the Financial Outturn Report and Quarter Four Performance Monitoring Report 2024/2025, which had taken place at a Finance and Budget Working Group meeting on 17th July 2025 and at the Board meeting held on 22nd 2025.

In doing so, Members were informed that during consideration of the report, Members of the Working Group had agreed that more detailed narrative was required in these reports going forward in order for Members and the public to better understand the content. Specific areas where further detail was needed was in the variances across service areas, information on the reasons for these variances and mitigations in place to ensure these were managed effectively. In addition, further information regarding the recharges made across both Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils during any financial year would also be helpful to better understand the financial position of the Council. This pre-scrutiny had resulted in a recommendation being made by the Board as follows:

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that

Future Quarterly Financial Outturn and Performance reports provide:

- i. a detailed narrative in terms of variance for each specific service area
- ii. for each area of high variance provide detail of the action(s) being taken to address the issue and the officer(s) responsible

iii. information on recharge amounts.

The Cabinet Member for Finance welcomed the recommendation from the Board and felt that this was necessary in order for Members to 'drill down' into future information presented. It was noted that Cabinet Members would be required to take ownership and have a clear understanding of the spending across their specific portfolios in the future.

The Deputy Chief Executive informed the Cabinet that in the future there would be a need to present not only the 'approved' budget in these reports but also the 'working' budget which would provide a more accurate picture of any variances, carry forwards and burdens experienced within the financial year. These changes had been discussed with the Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services who understood that this would provide extra detail. It was further noted that the changes to these reports would be an iterative process, and that feedback was welcomed when considering these reports in the future, in order to ensure that useful and transparent data was provided to Members.

In terms of the performance monitoring data, significant improvements had been made. This data, however, would be provided in a separate report going forward. Although it was confirmed that both financial and performance monitoring reports would be considered within the same committee cycle, in order to provide a clear picture and highlight the links between what the Council was spending and what it was doing.

The Policy Manager presented the performance monitoring data contained within the report. The way in which performance data was monitored and presented had evolved which had resulted in data that was easier to interpret. This was an ongoing process and would continue to be developed.

Cabinet was informed that there were still gaps within some areas of the data and that Officers were working with managers to ensure these gaps were filled. The Power BI dashboard continued to be developed to ensure that real time data could be tracked by Members and, if appropriate for some performance measures, by members of the public on the Bromsgrove District Council website. In addition to this it was reported that a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rating model would continue to be used to monitor and investigate areas where performance was unsatisfactory. Any areas that were not 'green rated' would be investigated further by Officers.

There was a query in respect of the Members Ward Budget Funds and whether there was the possibility to carry forward funds to future years. Although it was stated that in some exceptional cases this might be possible this was a fund that was set up to be accessed within a specific financial year and any leftover monies would go back into the General Fund at the end of the relevant financial year.

Although reminders had been sent out to Members regarding the Members Ward Budget Funds throughout the year, financial reporting on the Members Ward Budget Funds including the levels of funding spent by Members so far within the year, would be included in future reports as it would be helpful to ensure that all Members were aware of any spent and remaining funding.

The criteria for allocation of Members' Ward funding was robust and if any projects had been rejected throughout the year, it was likely due to not meeting the criteria, such as a request being made for funding to an individual rather than to an organisation.

Members thanked Officers for their work on this report and were pleased with the dynamic approach being taken for future reports.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the 2024/25 outturn position in relation to revenue budgets was a revenue underspend of £129k and that this excluded the Balance Sheet Monitoring for the Treasury Monitoring Report as this was to be taken as a separate report.
- 2) the 2024/25 outturn position in relation to Capital expenditure was £9.53m against a total an approved programme of £7.07m.
- 3) to note the Members Ward Budget allocation position at the year ending 31 March 2025 was approved allocations at £55,812.
- 4) to note the outturn position in respect of the General Fund Reserves which was £14.299m on the 31 March 2025.
- 5) to note the outturn position in respect of Earmarked Reserves.
- 6) there was an updated procurements position set out in Appendix D, with any new items over £200k to be included on the forward plan.

- 7) the Quarter 4 Performance data for the period January to March 2025 be noted; and
- 8) future Quarterly Financial Outturn and Performance reports provided:
 - i. a detailed narrative in terms of variance for each specific service area
 - ii. for each area of high variance provide detail of the action(s) being taken to address the issue and the officer(s) responsible
 - iii. information on recharge amounts.

29/25

TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT 2024/2025

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the Treasury Management Outturn Report 2024/2025 for Members' consideration. This was a highly technical report and provided narrative including information from the Council's Treasury Management advisors, Arlingclose.

It was reported that the Authority was debt free and had not breached any prudential indicators throughout the year.

Members were reassured that the Council was in a strong position and had made considered and suitable investments as part of its Treasury Management Strategy.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the Council's Treasury performance for the financial year 2024/25.
- 2) the position in relation to the Council's Prudential indicators.

30/25

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 17TH JUNE 2025

Members considered the contents of the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 17th June 2025. It was noted that there were no outstanding recommendations contained within the minutes.

The Chairman of the Board took the opportunity to explain to Cabinet that at the Board meeting held on 22nd July 2025, there had been a recommendation made in respect of Bin Recycling facilities on Bromsgrove High Street and the potential for them to be replaced. It was noted that this recommendation would be considered by Cabinet at its next meeting in September.

It was also reported that there had been discussions at the Finance and Budget Working Group during consideration of the Financial Outturn and Quarter Four Performance Monitoring 2024/25 report, in that there was a variance as the result of an underspend in salary costs for the Assistant Director Business Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Services position. Some Members had been unaware that this position was currently vacant and that the previous Officer no longer worked for the Authority. Members were informed that the recruitment process would start shortly for this role. It was suggested that the organisation chart be updated to reflect this and that Members be kept informed of any staff that ceased to work for the Council.

The Chief Executive also reported that there were some up to date organisation charts and contact details available and undertook to circulate them to Members following the meeting.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 17th June 2025 be noted.

31/25

TO CONSIDER ANY URGENT BUSINESS, DETAILS OF WHICH HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED TO THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, DEMOCRATIC AND PROCUREMENT 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 on this occasion.

32/25

TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON 18TH JUNE 2025

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 18th June 2025 were submitted for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 18th June 2025 be approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

Cabinet
23rd July 2025

The meeting closed at 6.52 p.m.

Chairman