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**Bromsgrove Council Plan update**

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder                                                                                |                                                                                                                                 | Councillor Karen May |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted                                                                               |                                                                                                                                 | Yes                  |
| Relevant Assistant Director                                                                              |                                                                                                                                 | Hannah Corredor      |
| Report Author                                                                                            | Job Title: Policy Manager<br>Contact: Rebecca Green<br>email: r.green@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk<br>Contact Tel: 01527 881616 |                      |
| Wards Affected                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                 | All                  |
| Ward Councillor(s) consulted                                                                             |                                                                                                                                 | N/A                  |
| Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)                                                                            |                                                                                                                                 | All                  |
| Non-Key Decision                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                 |                      |
| If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting. |                                                                                                                                 |                      |

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Cabinet RECOMMEND that:-**

**1) The Council Plan report and update table be noted.**

**2. BACKGROUND**

2.1 The development of the new Council Plan began with sessions supported by the Local Government Association (LGA) in 2023. The priority areas identified in these sessions were built upon in two workshops in Spring 2024, which brought together the Cabinet and Corporate Management Team to consolidate the learning and direction identified with the LGA, in combination with relevant data, into a new vision for the district, distinct priorities and key objectives for the next four years. These have been articulated in the plan as the overarching vision, which focuses on the quality of life of local communities, and four new priorities:

- Economic Development
- Housing
- Environment
- Infrastructure (this priority underpins the ones above)

2.2 The Council Plan 2024-2027 went to Cabinet in July 2024. This report summarises progress from August 2024 up to December 2025, highlighting areas of work that have contributed to delivering the priority objectives, projects and vision of the Council Plan.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- 2.3 Economic development is central to delivering the Council Plan, with a strong focus on supporting businesses, creating opportunities for individuals, and strengthening communities.
- 2.4 The economically active population in the District is 83.9%, higher than both the West Midlands and Great Britain figures, with the economically inactive figure at 16.1%, considerably lower than the regional and national figures\*. There is a higher number of people in the district who have a level 4 qualification: 63%, versus 42.9% for the West Midlands and 47.2% for Great Britain\*\*. Gross weekly pay is also higher in the district at £843.20\*\*\*. The district is well positioned to take advantage of regional economic and employment opportunities.

\*ONS data, Oct 24-Sep 25

\*\*ONS data, Jan 24-Dec 24

\*\*\*ONS annual survey of hours & earnings 2025

**UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF)**

- 2.5 Through the UKSPF, numerous grants have been awarded during the period, including Skills Boost Grants and match-funded Business Grants. The UKSPF has also provided funding for Enterprising Worcestershire, Careers Worcestershire, different employability schemes (including targeted support for NEET young people) and the Growth Hub.

**Supporting businesses**

- 2.6 Support for growing businesses has been provided through the Elevate programme. Elevate has two strands – one for all businesses and Elevate Manufacturing which supports the manufacturing sector. The programmes support businesses that have been trading for more than 3 years to develop growth plans to scale-up their business.

**Innovation & Technology**

- 2.7 The new Innovation Lighthouse programme aims to drive growth, competitiveness, and resilience in the local manufacturing sector. Participants received bespoke, one-to-one support from the renowned Warwick Manufacturing Group to develop new products or processes. They are also able to apply for a match-funded grant to deliver their project.

- 2.8 Betaden, who has been supported by the Council, is a tech accelerator providing support to new and established businesses to develop new products and services and to commercialise their ideas.

**Town & District Centres**

- 2.9 Bromsgrove Town Centre has continued to develop, with the market being recognised nationally and hosting events such as the Christmas Lights. Work is progressing around a Town Centre Framework, which will support the development of a potential Business Improvement District. Action has also been taken through the courts to close shops that were selling illegal tobacco and vape items.
- 2.10 Work continues to be delivered in line with the Bromsgrove Centres Strategy (2023–2026), with ongoing officer support provided across all district centres as issues or challenges arise. This flexible, needs-led approach ensures that businesses, community partners and parish councils receive timely guidance, practical assistance and specialist expertise. Recent work includes supporting centre-based projects and public-realm improvements—such as the Rubery installation—and facilitating local enhancements like exploring the introduction of InPost lockers in Alvechurch. Officers also continue to contribute to planning, delivery and troubleshooting for events and activities across the district, including major seasonal events such as the annual Christmas Lights programme, helping to sustain vibrant, welcoming centres for residents, visitors and businesses.
- 2.11 There has been a focus on improving parking, with several of our car parks receiving national Park Mark status, EV charging points being installed and an annual Free Parking Day at Christmas time.

**Key development projects**

- 2.12 Key projects have also progressed. At the Windsor Street site, Phase 1 remediation is now complete. The project team are agreeing the programme for phase 2 remediation that will commence in Spring 2026 and take approximately twelve months to complete. The preferred option to develop the site was agreed by Cabinet in November 2025 which was to deliver residential in partnership with a Registered Social Landlord. Legal advice is being sought in relation to the preferred option, and a report will be brought back to Cabinet in 2026.
- 2.13 The Market Hall site, which following community input is now known as Nailers Yard, continues to progress, with the construction ongoing and a completion date of 4th May 2026. There is significant interest in

terms of potential lettings for the new commercial space. A full business case was submitted to Birmingham City Council for funding from the former Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) in September 2025. Birmingham City Council's Cabinet approved the business case in January 2026 for the funding of £2.425m, to be paid in financial year 2026/27.

### **HOUSING**

- 2.14 The Council Plan sets out our aspiration to create thriving and inclusive communities where everyone has access to safe, healthy, affordable, and environmentally responsible housing options.

#### **Homelessness support**

- 2.15 Bromsgrove District Council, in partnership with BDHT, has carried out research into the supply and demand for temporary accommodation and accommodation to meet the needs of those approaching as homeless. The resulting strategy and action recommended additional static temporary accommodation units be made available for homeless households. The Council has also joined with some of the other districts in Worcestershire to develop a shared Homelessness Strategy for 2026-2031 in line with the Government's National Plan to End Homelessness.
- 2.16 The Council has also looked at a range of options to support an increase in the supply of accommodation. The Council has made a grant available from low-cost housing receipts for BDHT to purchase additional units of temporary accommodation and permanent social rented housing to support the homelessness service to move households more quickly out of temporary accommodation into permanent accommodation. In addition, the Council is also developing an Empty Homes Strategy to work with homeowners or landlords of empty properties to bring them back into use.
- 2.17 The establishment of the Worcestershire Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and the provision of safe accommodation have led to more consistent standards of support across the county. Housing teams, alongside commissioned domestic abuse providers, now play a critical role in early identification, prevention, and sustaining safe accommodation for survivors.

#### **Affordable housing**

- 2.18 The median house price to disposable household income affordability ratio for Bromsgrove was 9.7\*, one of the highest in the West Midlands.

\*ONS data 2024

- 2.19 The Council has recently consulted on the Affordable Housing Allocations Policy in conjunction with procuring a new more up to date homelessness, housing register and allocations system. The changes proposed will ensure that those with a local connection are given greater priority, whilst still recognising those households who do not need to meet local connection criteria such as armed forces personnel, care leaver and those fleeing Domestic Abuse.

**Private rented sector**

- 2.20 Support for the private rented sector continues to develop, with the Council hosting a Private Sector Landlord Forum, a chance to share best practice, get practical advice, and build stronger links between landlords and the Council. The Council has also been working with Citizens Advice to develop a debt advice service to Private Tenants and homeowners. This new service will ensure that where rent arrears and mortgage arrears are putting a home at risk, that households will be able to access support and advice to prevent this from happening. The team are the Worcestershire lead for the Renters Bill Act 2025, ensuring consistency for renters and landlords across the county.

**Spadesbourne Homes**

- 2.21 61 units were delivered on the site of the former Bromsgrove Council House by the District Council, incorporating green technology such as air source heat pumps, under floor heating, and solar panels (where feasible), with the properties achieving high EPC ratings. Spadesbourne Homes, the Council's wholly owned company, took over responsibility for 37 private rented sector units on the site. All properties were let to people with a local connection to Bromsgrove District and have been very positively received by the tenants and the wider community.

**ENVIRONMENT**

- 2.22 The Council Plan committed to safeguarding the natural environment, addressing issues such as biodiversity and climate change mitigation and supporting recycling and reducing waste reduction.

**Environmental enforcement**

- 2.23 Increased environmental enforcement has helped to protect the beautiful environment of the district and minimise pollution. Since WRS took over the enviro-crime functions on behalf of Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils, WRS Officers have served 11 Community Protection Notices, 47 Fixed Penalty Notices and 1 section 215 (T&CPA) notice. We have 18 Enforcement files with PACE interviews arranged and have four files with legal to consider prosecution. The team remain committed to educating businesses and the public on how to dispose of waste properly, reducing fly-tipping and serving more FPNs where necessary.

**Delivering the Environment Act**

- 2.24 The Council Plan also set out our dedication to the delivery of the Environment Act and how we can work to reduce waste and increase recycling. We are compliant with dry recycling requirements of Simpler Recycling across Domestic and Commercial Waste Services. The Commercial Food Waste service has been implemented and with the recent approval to expand the service, additional clients will be secured. Residential food waste collection is due to be implemented in 2026, with capital funding from central government. Following work with WFDC and RBC to undertake market engagement with the private sector, the Domestic Food Waste Tender closed in December 2025. Vehicle orders have been placed, although in light of changes to how ongoing revenue funding from central govt has been provided, a financial pressure has been identified, and we are now exploring options regarding how we deliver this new service. This may require us to operate an in-house service which will require assessment of lease arrangements for additional land and a potential phased approach to commence the service at the earliest possible time beyond April 2026, in line with available funding.

**Waste management systems**

- 2.25 We remain committed to improving our waste management systems; an essential bin-swap programme has been delivered, bringing the Council in line with national standards. In 2025, Bromsgrove District Council introduced HVO (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil) as a renewable diesel alternative across its fleet and machinery; approximately 30% of fuel usage for the fleet has been swapped to HVO, reducing the carbon impact of operating services. This is further enhanced through the refuse fleet replacement programme that will run through to January 2026 for 15 new more environmentally friendly and efficient vehicles, with old trucks being sold for parts and scrap, with proceeds going back to the public purse.

**Biodiversity**

- 2.26 Biodiversity has also been a key workstream, with the Biodiversity First Duty report being developed, which sets out continued engagement with the Worcestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy, monitoring and implementing Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) through planning, enhancing biodiversity on Council-owned land and promoting citizen science and community engagement.

2.6 **INFRASTRUCTURE**

- 2.27 The infrastructure priority underpins all the other priorities, as they can only be delivered with the right infrastructure in place.

**The Local Plan**

- 2.28 The Local Plan is how communities can guide where and how future homes, businesses, and infrastructure will be developed. As part of the Local Plan process, a consultation on the Draft Development Strategy was undertaken for 16 weeks, from 30<sup>th</sup> June to 20<sup>th</sup> October, based on the requirements of the Statement of Community involvement, which identifies who is to be consulted and how that consultation should be delivered. Social media posts generated 785 engagements with the links. 20 individual consultation events were delivered across the district to allow all residents to access an event near them; every settlement with growth proposed had at least 1 event, including centrally accessible events in Bromsgrove Town and edge of conurbation events. Approximately 8000 responses were received via the various methods of engagement offered. these responses are now being processed by planning officers.

**Air quality**

- 2.29 Work on air quality within the district continues to be important; Clean Air Day is marked each June and the Behavioural Change officer and colleagues have visited schools in Bromsgrove to promote behavioural change. They have also visited several businesses and community groups in Hanover Street and Redditch Road to raise awareness of air quality, promote the real time air quality monitoring portal and behavioural change generally. The Bromsgrove District Council's Air Quality Annual Status Report was produced and submitted to Defra, reviewing the air quality monitoring data and status for 2024. This led to the revocation of air quality management areas in Redditch Road,

Bromsgrove and Lickey End, Bromsgrove due to improving results from air quality monitoring.

**VISION**

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

2.31 Delivering for the community was also central to the Council Plan. The vision places quality of life for residents at the centre of how services are delivered, where communities and their safety and wellbeing are integral to all the priorities.

**Bromsgrove Partnership and Collaborative**

2.32 The importance of working in partnership is recognised in the Council Plan as we cannot meet the needs of our residents by working in isolation. One way we do this effectively is through the Bromsgrove Partnership (also our District Collaborative) which brings together representatives from partner agencies including NHS, Police, Fire, County and Parish Councils, a range of voluntary and community sector organisations and more.

2.33 The Board, Community Wellbeing, Better Environment and Ageing Well Partnership Groups continue to meet, and a regular Partnership bulletin is produced, all to help ensure local provision is as joined up as possible and any partnership opportunities to support our communities are recognised. Through the Ageing Well Group, the Older People's Forum in Bromsgrove has been restarted due to support from the Primary Care Network, District Council and other partners. The Ageing Well Group, and the Board, also recognised the needs of older people in relation to the 'digital switchover', so working together with partners, the District Council has supported local events to raise awareness.

2.34 The Cost-of-Living Partnership Group also continues to create a unified approach to alleviating the impact of the cost of living with the aim of improving the wellbeing of residents and communities. Following on from the production of cost-of-living leaflets and dedicated Council webpages, in response to consultation surveys, which showed residents were unsure where to go for support, discreet business cards of useful contacts were produced. Partners and District Councillors helped to distribute at events and locations in the community such as GP surgeries, libraries, shops, and community facilities like the Pod and Family Hub.

- 2.35 Working with the County Council, the District Council has received an allocation of Household Support Fund (HSF) since it started, including the current phase 7, which runs up to end of March 2026. The District Council has distributed a proportion to local foodbanks and white goods schemes, as well as to BDHT's hardship scheme, with the majority of funds being used by the District Council to deliver a cash voucher scheme. The close working relationship with Citizens Advice Bromsgrove and Redditch and other voluntary and community sector organisations made this possible, as they were able to reach a number of households in need, many of whom would not have necessarily reached out to the Council.
- 2.36 The Knowledge Bank is a community services directory covering Bromsgrove and Redditch and it was redesigned at the end of 2024 to make it more inviting and user friendly. It's available publicly for all to use and is a searchable tool to help connect people to relevant support and activities. The Council, working closely with partners, in particular BARN (Bromsgrove and Redditch Network – who work with and support our voluntary and community groups) help us to update and maintain the content of the Knowledge Bank.

### **Community Safety**

- 2.37 The Community Safety Team continue to deliver the Respect Programme, a therapeutic mentoring scheme which provides weekly support and guidance sessions to young people at risk of becoming victims and/or perpetrators of crime. A 'Right Path Project' using Serious Violence Duty funding allocated to Worcestershire, and working with South Worcestershire, has been commissioned by NWCSF. This delivers intensive 1:1 mentoring to support and guide young people who are at greater risk of criminalisation through use of violence, including those not accessing education and those at risk of permanent exclusion. The Right Path project was hugely successful in 2024/25 to the point of being oversubscribed. An Older and Vulnerable Persons Project has also been developed, with a Nominated Neighbour scheme in Alvechurch progressing well.

### **CCTV**

- 2.38 In Bromsgrove District during the last 12 months the CCTV team have continued to support the safety of our communities, logging 348 CCTV incidents, completing 234 footage reviews and producing 81 videos for evidence. A new camera was also added in Bromsgrove, at the bus station, following a successful "Hot Spot" Funding Application through West Mercia Police.

**Lifeline**

- 2.39 NEW Lifeline has been accredited to the Technology Enabled Care industry best practice Quality Standards Framework, which was achieved through rigorous external audit and no areas of improvement were identified. They continue to support a six week free service, enabling residents of Bromsgrove to try the Lifeline service. Over the last 12 months we have had approximately 70 people using the free service at any one time. During 2025 the team installed 225 equipment packages in within Bromsgrove. NEW Lifeline are also delivering continuity of service where a person becomes Care Act eligible and/or their support/care needs become more. The team have supported 89 residents of Bromsgrove through this Social Care funded partnership.

**Family Hubs**

- 2.40 Family Hubs continue to work in attend or lead local events aimed at families and are positive examples of partnership working not only with other professionals and community groups but with families – using an asset based approach and co-production to understand the types of support and activities children, young people and families are asking for and what they are able to do themselves. For example, challenge dad was coproduced with father's voice and involvement. The events have enabled us to reach new people, gain voice and highlight volunteers.

**Social Prescribing**

- 2.41 Key activities undertaken by the Social Prescribing service have included continuing to promote the service and achieve positive outcomes with patients through their "What Matters to Me" plans. 956 referrals were received by the Social Prescribing service and 194 Bromsgrove residents were supported to access the Warmth on Prescription scheme.

**Arts & events**

- 2.42 Arts and events continue to be important to our residents and communities, and the council have supported numerous activities from the Christmas Lights in Bromsgrove and Rubery, to summer activity programmes. The ReNEW project was successful in obtaining over half a million pounds in Place Partnership funding from Arts Council England, which will support residents across Bromsgrove and Redditch to share their stories to creatively shape the future of both areas.

**Bromsgrove Small Grants Scheme**

- 2.43 The Council has continued to support our residents, communities and VCS through the small grants scheme, which supported 12 local organisations in 2025, including the Alvechurch Community Larder, Fairfield Village Community Association and the Bromsgrove Youth and Community Hub.

**Bromsgrove Urban & Rural Transport**

- 2.44 The 'BURT' bus helps residents of Bromsgrove District who are unable to make essential journeys by other transport, whether this is because of mobility or disability issues, or because suitable services are not available. The service is operated by Bromsgrove and Redditch Network, with support from the Council. It currently has approximately 567 registered users and undertook roughly 4425 journeys in 2024-25.

**ORGANISATIONAL PRIORITIES**

**Financial Stability**

- 2.45 A primary organisational priority is financial stability and sustainability, because it underpins our ability to deliver the things that matter most to our community. We have focussed on maintaining strong financial grip and improving transparency, effective contract management, proactively managing our assets and applying rigour in securing value for money. Whilst finances have been challenging over recent years, the organisation has responded well in managing our limited resources effectively. As a result, the council has been well placed to weather the financial storms affecting all the public sector. We have focussed on making even better use of existing resources, embedding business improvement, and exploring alternative methods of delivery and continue to operate sound financial judgement in all our endeavours.

**Sustainability**

- 2.46 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. Changes to the fleet have been a key activity to reducing our carbon impact. A new Climate Change Strategy has been developed during 2025, aiming for adoption in 2026. We are also expanding the use of digital technologies where appropriate, including innovative use of AI, enabling more automation of services, freeing up capacity to deliver against the priorities of our communities and enabling greater digital access to our services.

**Partnerships**

- 2.47 We continue to 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. The Local Government Reorganisation consultation undertaken in 2025 involved the district level councils in Worcestershire working closely together to understand the implications of LGR for our residents and communities.
- 2.48 As detailed above, we collaborate with the voluntary and community sector across the district, with the Bromsgrove Partnership and Collaborative bringing together different organisations from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors to work together to support the residents and communities of Bromsgrove District.

**Culture- the 4 Ps**

- 2.49 Through working closely with employees across the organisation, we identified the '4Ps' as a way of defining organisational culture and the aspirations of everyone who works for Bromsgrove District Council:
- Purpose
  - People
  - Pride
  - Performance
- 2.50 Activities and initiatives have been undertaken to engage and support staff, including an internally delivered staff survey, staff wellbeing events at both Parkside and the Depot and enhanced inductions for new staff which include an opportunity to meet the Chief executive and the Corporate Leadership Team. Employee Assistance and Benefits programmes are also in place to support employees across the Council.

**Local Government Reorganisation**

- 2.51 Major changes are planned to councils across Worcestershire as part of the biggest shake-up of local government in more than 50 years, with the Government requiring 21 areas of England to restructure their system of local government before 2029, including Bromsgrove District Council. Through local government reorganisation, the Government is looking to replace Bromsgrove District, Malvern Hills District, Redditch Borough, Worcester City, Worcestershire County, Wychavon District and Wyre Forest District Councils with fewer councils.

- 2.52 Bromsgrove District Council voted to submit an ambitious proposal to transform local government in Worcestershire to the Government: 'Transforming Worcestershire: Local government that works for people, powered by place and built for the future - The North and South Local Government Reorganisation Proposal for Worcestershire'. To reach that point, the council carried out public engagement during summer 2025 for residents to have their say on their preferred option, called 'Shape Worcestershire: Reorganising your local councils together'.
- 2.53 The attached table at Appendix 1 summarises the progress to date against the key objectives and projects described in the Council Plan.

**3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES**

- 3.1 The Council Plan is essential to provide the strategic direction for service delivery. Operationally, the content of the Council Plan has informed and will continue to the service business planning process; this helps to ensure that services deliver against the priorities and objectives identified. From 2026 onwards, updates against the Council Plan will be captured using a PowerBI dashboard, linking information from service business plans, quarterly performance and project highlight reports into a single coherent summary of our progress to date.

**4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 As the key strategic document for the Council, the plan steers the financial element of service business plans and helps to determine the Medium-Term Financial Plan.
- 4.2 In order to continue deliver against the priorities and objectives included in the plan there will need to be appropriate resources allocated.

**5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

**6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS**

**Relevant Strategic Purpose**

- 6.1 The Council Plan articulates the priorities for Bromsgrove District Council; this report gives an update of progress against each priority area of work.

**Climate Change Implications**

- 6.2 A green thread runs through the Council plan, climate change and carbon reduction being key issues within the plan.

**Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 6.3 There are no equality and diversity implications arising directly from this report; however, specific projects and activities identified in the Council Plan may need individual Equality Impact Assessments to meet the requirements of the Equality Act.

**7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 Publishing a Council Plan makes the strategic direction of the Council clear to employees and Members and as such supports the management of risks identified around robust decision making and the accuracy/effectiveness of performance data.

**8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix 1- Council Plan progress update

**9. REPORT SIGN OFF**

| <b>Department</b>                                          | <b>Name and Job Title</b>              | <b>Date</b>   |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------|
| Portfolio Holder                                           | Councillor Karen May                   | 22/01/2026    |
| Lead Director / Assistant Director                         | John Leach, Chief Executive            | 21/01/2026    |
| Financial Services                                         | Debra Goodall, Assistant Director      | 21/01/2026    |
| Legal Services                                             | Claire Felton, Assistant Director      | 10/02/2026    |
| Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)             | Rebecca Green, Policy Manager          | Report author |
| Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply) | Matthew Eccles, Climate Change Manager | 20/01/2026    |