

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

20TH MAY 2026, AT 6.00 P.M.

PARKSIDE SUITE - PARKSIDE

PRESENT: Councillors J. Robinson (Chairman), B. Kumar (Vice-Chairman), S. Ammar, S. J. Baxter, S. R. Colella, A. M. Dale, S. M. Evans, E. M. S. Gray, C.A. Hotham, D. Hopkins, R. J. Hunter, R. E. Lambert, M. Marshall, K.J. May, P. M. McDonald, B. McEldowney, S. T. Nock, D. J. Nicholl, S. R. Peters, S. A. Robinson, J. D. Stanley, K. Taylor, H. D. N. Warren-Clarke, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

Officers: Mr J. Leach, Mr. G. Revans, Mr. J. Walton,
Mrs. C. Felton, Mr. M. Dunphy and Mrs. J. Bayley-Hill

1\26

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN 2026/27

A nomination was received on behalf of Councillor J. Robinson to be elected as Chairman of the Council for the 2026/27 municipal year. The nomination was proposed by Councillor R. Hunter and seconded by Councillor S. Ammar.

A further nomination was received on behalf of Councillor R. Bailes to be elected as Chairman of the Council for the 2026/27 municipal year. The nomination was proposed by Councillor C. Hotham and seconded by Councillor S. Colella.

On being put to the vote, Councillor J. Robinson's appointment as Chairman of the Council for the 2026/27 municipal year was carried.

RESOLVED that Councillor J. Robinson be elected as Chairman of the Council for the ensuing municipal year.

Councillor J. Robinson signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, thanked Members of the Council and stated that it was an honour to be elected to the Office of Chairman for the 2026/27 municipal year.

2\26

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN 2026/27

A nomination was received for Councillor B. Kumar to be elected as Vice Chairman of the Council for the 2026/27 municipal year. The nomination was proposed by Councillor K. May and seconded by Councillor S. Baxter.

A further nomination was received for Councillor R. Bailes to be elected as Vice Chairman of the Council for the 2026/27 municipal year. The nomination was proposed by Councillor C. Hotham and seconded by Councillor S. Coella.

On being put to the vote, Councillor B. Kumar's appointment as Vice Chairman of the Council for the 2026/27 municipal year was carried.

RESOLVED that Councillor B. Kumar be elected Vice Chairman of the Council for the ensuing municipal year.

Councillor Kumar signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and thanked Members of the Council for electing him to the office of Vice Chairman.

3\26

VOTE OF THANKS TO RETIRING OFFICE HOLDERS

The Chairman proposed a vote of thanks to Councillor S. Evans for his time serving as Chairman of Bromsgrove District Council. This was seconded by Councillor S. Baxter.

RESOLVED that the thanks of the Council be tendered to Councillor S. Evans for services rendered as Chairman of the Council in 2025/26.

4\26

TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors A. Bailes, R. Bailes, J. Clarke, J. Elledge, D. Forsythe and H. Jones.

5\26

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor C. Hotham declared an other disclosable interest in Minute Item No. 15/26 – Cabinet Recommendations in respect of the Empty Homes Strategy. Members were advised that a relative of Councillor Hotham was renovating a property located in the District and whilst this work was taking place the building was empty. He remained present for the debate in respect of this item and voted thereon.

During consideration of Minute Item 15/26 – Cabinet Recommendations in respect of the Renters Rights Act 2025, Councillor S. Ammar declared an other disclosable interest in her capacity as a landlord of a property located outside the District. She remained present for the debate in respect of this matter and voted thereon.

6\26

TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 21ST JANUARY 2026

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 21st January 2026 were submitted.

During consideration of this item, a Member suggested that previous minutes had stated the location of the meeting and a request was made for this to be included in future iterations of the minutes.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 21st January 2026 be approved as a true and correct record.

7\26

TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND/OR HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

The Chairman advised that his consort for the year would be his wife, Councillor S. Robinson. Council was informed that the Chairman intended to confirm the chairty(ies) he would be supporting at the following meeting of Council.

The Head of Paid Service confirmed that he had no announcements to make on this occasion.

8\26

TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER

The Leader confirmed the following appointments to Cabinet and Portfolios that had been allocated to each Cabinet Member:

- Councillor K. May – Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development and Enabling
- Councillor S. Baxter – Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Planning and Strategic Housing
- Councillor S. Nock – Cabinet Member for Finance
- Councillor K. Taylor – Cabinet Member for Local Government Reorganisation, WRS and Climate Change
- Councillor S. Webb – Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture
- Councillor P. Whittaker – Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Community Safety

9\26

TO RECEIVE COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Chairman confirmed that no questions, comments or petitions had been submitted in time for consideration at the meeting.

10\26

URGENT DECISIONS

The Chairman advised that two urgent decisions had been taken since the previous meeting of Council on the following matters:

- Council Tax Resolutions
- Appointment of a Section 151 Officer

As these decisions had already been taken, they were not due to be debated at the meeting.

During consideration of this item, Members welcomed reference to the names of the Councillors who had been consulted on the urgent decisions although it was noted that a spelling error had occurred in the recording of Councillor P. McDonald's surname.

11\26

CONSTITUTION REVIEW

The Leader presented a report detailing proposed changes to the Council's constitution, including the Scheme of Delegations, for Members' consideration.

Council was informed that there was a requirement, detailed in the constitution, for Members to review the Scheme of Delegations at the Annual Council meeting. This included proposed updates to the Scheme of Delegations to reflect changes to job titles and legislation since the last Annual Council meeting. There were some additional delegations proposed for Community Services, in relation to CCTV and Lifeline, climate change and the operation of BURT and Shopmobility services. Many of the changes had been considered and proposed at a meeting of the Constitution Review Working Group held on 28th April 2026.

The report also detailed proposed changes to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. The Council's existing Contract Procedure Rules had been adopted in 2016 and were set in EU procurement law, (based on the Public Contract Regulations 2015). Things had moved on since then, with the implementation of the Procurement Act 2023 into UK law in 2025. The Council's Contract Procedure Rules were being updated as a consequence of this. The report set out the key changes that had been made to the rules. These changes were all to ensure compliance with the Procurement Act. The updated rules had already been signed off by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the Constitution Review Working Group.

The report contained information about Members' eligibility to join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). This eligibility for Members was reintroduced by the Government in May 2026. Participation in the LGPS was on an opt in basis, so any Members who were interested in joining the LGPS were advised to contact the Financial Services team. The Government's announcement on Members' eligibility to join the LGPS and the start date for joining had been issued after the Council had approved the Scheme of Members' Allowances 2026/27 and the Council therefore needed to update the scheme to reflect this entitlement.

Council was asked to note that there was a proposal for the size of the Shareholders Committee to increase from 4 to 5 members. This would make it easier to convene meetings of the Committee during the year.

Finally, Members were asked to note that an additional recommendation had been proposed since the publication of the main agenda pack. This requested changes to the Committee Terms of Reference and Procedure Rules for the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee to reflect the role of the Committee in consideration of the Statement of Accounts and Treasury Management Strategy.

After the report had been presented, Members discussed the titles that had been used in the Scheme of Delegations and Finance Procedure Rules to refer to the Section 151 Officer and Chief Finance Officer and the reason why both titles had been used in addition to the job title of Director of Finance. Members were informed that Director of Finance was the Officer's official job title at the Council but he was the Council's Section 151 Officer, which was a statutory post often referred to within Local Government as Chief Finance Officer. As this was the Director of Finance's first Council meeting since he commenced employment with the Council, Members welcomed him to the meeting.

Consideration was given to the content of the Scheme of Delegations, specifically the reference to Section 106 monies and questions were raised about the reasons why separate figures of £15,000, £50,000 and £200,000 were referred to in different places. Officers clarified that the limit should have been recorded as £200,000 to reflect the Council's key decision threshold and this typographical error would be corrected after the Annual Council meeting.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor K. May and seconded by Councillor S. Baxter.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The current version of the Scheme of Delegations be adopted;**
- 2) The proposed new delegations for Community Services be approved;**
- 3) The updated Contract Procedure Rules be approved;**
- 4) The updated Financial Procedure Rules be approved;**
- 5) An update to the Scheme of Members' Allowances 2026/27, to incorporate reference to Members' eligibility to join the Local Government Pension Scheme be approved; and**
- 6) The Committee Terms of Reference for the Shareholders Committee be updated to reflect the proposed membership of 5 rather than 4 members on the Committee.**

MOTIONS ON NOTICE - MOTION 1

Members were advised that the first Motion on Notice that had been submitted for consideration at this meeting would be debated at this stage. This would ensure that, should the Motion be approved, the action that would be required as a consequence could be implemented at the Annual Council meeting during consideration of the Appointments to Committees 2026/27 (Including Political Balance) report.

The following Motion on Notice was presented by Councillor D. Nicholl for Council's consideration:

“Council resolves to amend the constitution with immediate effect so that Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Council’s formal committees for each municipal year are elected at the Annual Meeting of the Council.”

The Motion was proposed by Councillor Nicholl and seconded by Councillor S. Robinson.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Nicholl explained that other Councils in Worcestershire appointed the Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of their Committees at their Annual Council meetings. He expressed the view that this approach could be considered more transparent than appointments made at the first meeting of a Committee in the municipal year, which was the current arrangement at Bromsgrove District Council. He also expressed the opinion that this approach might ensure that the number of chairing roles allocated per political group at the authority reflected a balanced position.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor S. Robinson commented that contrary to concerns expressed by some Members, she did not feel that the Motion was proposing a top-down approach to appointments of Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of Committees. The political balance would continue to apply to relevant Committees and only Members nominated to sit on those Committees by their group leaders, in accordance with the political balance figures, would be eligible to be nominated to be the Chairmen or Vice Chairmen of those Committees. Members were also asked to note that the approach proposed in the Motion would help to ensure that all or at least a majority of Members would be in support of the appointments agreed at the Annual Council meeting.

Members discussed the proposed Motion in detail and in doing so commented on the following:

- The need for clarity as to whether every Member of Council would be provided with an opportunity to vote on the appointments of Chairmen and Vice Chairmen to Committees or just the members of those Committees. Members were informed that the intention was to provide all Members with an opportunity to vote at the Annual Council meeting on these appointments.

- The arrangement whereby Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of Committees were currently appointed by their colleagues at the first meeting of the Committee in the municipal year. The suggestion was made that this helped to demonstrate that the Councillors appointed to these positions had the confidence of their colleagues on the relevant Committee.
- The historic arrangements for appointing Chairmen and Vice Chairmen to Committees, which had reflected the approach proposed in the Motion. It was suggested that a decision had been made to change this arrangement some years ago due to concerns about Council imposing Chairmen and Vice Chairmen on Committees.
- The extent to which a Chairman and a Vice Chairman could be considered to be more accountable to the members of a Committee if they were appointed to chair that Committee by those Members.
- The need for the most appropriate Councillors with relevant skills to be appointed to Chairmen and Vice Chairmen positions of Committees.
- The value of political groups working together whilst the Council was under no overall control to identify which Members should be appointed as the Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of particular Committees.
- The need for the Overview and Scrutiny Board and Audit, Standards and Governance Committee to be independent from the Cabinet and the extent to which it would be appropriate for Cabinet Members to engage at the Annual Council meeting in appointing the Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of these Committees.
- The extent to which Cabinet Members could be excluded from voting on the appointments of the Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Board and Audit, Standards and Governance Committee if this was determined at the Annual Council meeting.
- The constitutional changes arising from the proposals detailed in the Motion and whether Committee Members would have the power to overturn the appointment once determined at the Annual Council meeting. Members were informed that if the authority decided that appointments of Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of Committees should be a Council function Committees would not have the power to overturn decisions on appointments made at the Annual Council meeting.
- The appointment of Chairmen and Vice Chairmen to Committees at Annual Council meetings at other local authorities under No Overall Control. Members commented that this included Redditch Borough Council and it was noted that as a consequence, due to shared services, Council staff would be familiar with the arrangements that needed to apply.
- The extent to which appointment of Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of Committees at the Annual Council meeting could be viewed as

political in nature and whether this was appropriate for quasi-judicial Committees.

- The extent to which the distribution of Chairmen and Vice Chairmen's appointments to Committees at the authority in recent years was a fair reflection of the political balance at the Council.
- The live streaming of full Council meetings and the extent to which appointments of Committee Chairmen and Vice Chairmen made at the Annual Council meeting would be more transparent to the public than at Committee meetings that were not live streamed.
- The fact that meetings of the formal Committees, such as the Overview and Scrutiny Board and Licensing Committee, were open to the public to attend to observe proceedings.
- The previous discussions Members had held about specific Chairman and Vice Chairman roles and the extent to which these discussions had been productive.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was lost.

13\26

APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES 2026/27 (INCLUDING POLITICAL BALANCE)

The Leader presented a report concerning appointments to Committees for 2026/27, which included reference to the authority's political balance.

Council was informed that there was a legal and constitutional requirement for the political balance at the Council to be reviewed at the Annual Council meeting as well as each time there was a change to the political balance. The report detailed the political balance of the Council as of May 2026. The terms of reference for each of the Committees had also been provided for Members' consideration.

Prior to the Annual Council meeting, group leaders had been consulted on the political balance figures in order to achieve a proposed balanced position. Group leaders had also been consulted about their group's nominations to the Committees that formed part of the political balance and the Council's website would be updated accordingly after the meeting.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor K. May and seconded by Councillor S. Baxter.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **for the ensuring Municipal Year, the Committees be appointed and that the representation of the different political groups on the Council on those Committees be as set out in Appendix 1 until the next Annual Meeting of the Council, or until the next review of political representation under Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, whichever is the earlier.**

- 2) **Members be appointed to the Committees and as substitute members in accordance with nominations made by Group Leaders.**
- 3) **the terms of reference for the Boards and Committees be confirmed.**

14\26

COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES 2026/27

The Leader presented a report detailing proposed Council appointments to outside bodies for the 2026/27 municipal year.

Members were informed that the Council considered appointments to a number of outside bodies each year. Some of these appointments were made by full Council. Other appointments were made in an ex officio capacity, which meant that specific Cabinet members or other Councillors needed to be appointed. Council was advised that the Cabinet appointments would be considered at the June meeting of the Cabinet.

Group leaders had been consulted in advance of the Annual Council meeting regarding their nominations to the list of outside bodies. The Leader thanked all group leaders for confirming their nominations in advance of the meeting.

Following the presentation of the report, reference was made to the potential for Members appointed to outside bodies to update Council on the work of these external Committees, organisations and groups. Concerns were raised that updates were received from Members infrequently and the suggestion was made that, due to the importance of some of these groups, particularly the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel and the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Partnership, reporting arrangements should be formalised.

In response to these concerns, the following points were raised:

- Amphlett Hall Management Committee met regularly and reference had been made to the Committee's work in the previous Portfolio Holder Annual Report to Council received from the then Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing and Health and Well-Being.
- Two Members had been appointed to serve on the Bromsgrove and Redditch branch of the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and updates on the CAB's work had been received during the year.
- The suggestion was made that the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Partnership might be in the process of reviewing arrangements.
- The Midlands Joint Council for Environmental Protection had not held any meetings and therefore no updates were available to provide to Members.
- The Overview and Scrutiny Board had already requested the attendance of the Council's representative on the West Mercia

Police and Crime Panel to provide updates during the year on the work of the Panel.

- The Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) was required to provide updates on the work of the Committee at every meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board and did so.
- The work of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Board had been and would continue to be addressed in the Portfolio Holder Annual Reports from the relevant lead Cabinet Member for WRS.
- The WMTemps Partnership Board had not held a meeting and therefore no updates were available.
- The work of Worcestershire County Council's Corporate Parenting Board was very complex. The minutes of meetings of the Board were in the public domain and could be accessed on Worcestershire County Council's website. Members were asked to note that the Council's representative had been liaising with Bromsgrove District Council's HR department about the potential to ensure that young people seeking employment could secure an interview, subject to compliance with employment law requirements and Council policies.

Following these comments, questions were raised about the potential for all of these updates to be appended to the Outside Bodies report when it was considered at the Annual Council meeting. However, Members were asked to note that the purpose of the report was supposed to be to appoint Members to serve on the outside bodies for the forthcoming municipal year, not to focus on updates from the representatives who had served on those outside bodies in the previous municipal year.

The nominations were proposed by Councillor K. May and seconded by Councillor S. Baxter.

RESOLVED that the nominations for Council appointments to outside bodies for the 2026/27 municipal year be approved.

15\26

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN - NOTICE OF INTENTION TO COMMENCE LOCAL PLAN PREPARATION, LOCAL PLAN TIMETABLE AND SCOPING CONSULTATION

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Strategic Housing presented the Bromsgrove District Local Plan – Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan Preparation, Local Plan Timetable and Scoping Consultation report.

Members were advised that the aim of the plan was to streamline and speed up the Local Plan setting process. The first stage of the process would be to publish notification to commence Local Plan preparation, in line with legislative requirements. The Council had secured Government funding which was linked to meeting deadlines for the Local Plan process.

Subject to Members' approval at the meeting, the intention was to publish the notice on 29th June 2026. A scoping consultation would commence thereafter, in summer 2026, which would follow a further report to the Council meeting due to take place in July. This report would not include a spatial strategy, policy or site options. Members were asked to note that people would not need to resubmit comments that had been made in response to the Council's previous consultation on this subject.

At a later date, the draft Local Plan would take on board the draft infrastructure plan and comments received through consultation. The draft Local Plan would be considered by the Planning Inspectorate. It was anticipated that the final Local Plan would be implemented from spring 2028 onwards.

The Planning Policy team would continue to work on the Local Plan process moving forward. Three further employees were due to be recruited to assist with this work.

Following the presentation of the report, Members discussed a range of points in detail:

- The number of speculative planning applications that had been submitted to the Council in recent months by developers and the need for action to be taken on the Local Plan process to address this situation.
- The greater control available to local authorities to manage the planning process when a Local Plan was in place.
- The need for the Council to work on the Local Plan and to respond to national changes to planning policies.
- The responses that had been received from the public during the previous consultation exercise and the implications for the content of the Local Plan.
- The potential for data relating to consultation feedback to be provided at a ward level and for this to be made available to the public. Officers explained that some data could be shared at a ward level, however, Members were asked to note that some respondents did not share an address so this would not be possible for all responses.
- The lack of a 5-year land supply in the District. It was noted that the Council had been working on this.
- The number of new houses that the Council was required by the Government to approve for development each year and the fact that this number had increased when the local authority had attempted to challenge the Government on this figure.
- The speed with which decisions had historically been taken on the Local Plan process and the extent to which this had impacted on the current position at the Council.
- The fact that Councils that had already adopted a Local Plan were similarly having to review their policies in light of changing

Government requirements. Council was informed that these authorities were having to amend their policies more quickly than the process that applied to the development of the new Bromsgrove Local Plan.

- The training that had been attended by Members in respect of the Local Plan process.
- The green belt land in Bromsgrove District and the impact of the concept of the Grey Belt on housing development moving forward.
- The reason why the proposed date to publish the notice of intent on 29th June and a subsequent report would then be presented in July rather than at the Annual Council meeting. Officers clarified that scoping documents needed to be considered and approved at a meeting of Council. If the notice was published earlier, then the Council would need to convene at an earlier date to consider the matter.
- The work that had been undertaken by the Local Plan Cross Party Working Group to consider the timetable and Local Plan process.
- The anticipated date by which the complete summary and timetable would be issued for the Local Plan.
- The likely content of the summary of the responses received during the consultation.
- The process that would be used to report back to people who submitted comments in a non-electronic manner during the consultation period.
- The reason for the delay in providing a summary of the feedback that had been received during the Council's consultation process. Members noted that the consultation had closed seven months prior to the Annual Council meeting. Council was advised that the next phase in consultation on the sites for inclusion in the Local Plan would occur in 2027 and information would be published at that point.
- The reason why the Council had not triggered the notice of intention on the earliest date permitted by the Government on 26th March 2026. Officers explained that 26th March 2026 was the date when the legislation came out. The suggestion was made that it would have been too risky for the Council to act on the legislation on that date, as prior to then, there was uncertainty about the Government's requirements and there would not have been time to prepare.
- The role of the Local Plan Cross Party Working Group in considering many matters relating to the Local Plan process.
- The hard work of the Council's Planning Department on the Local Plan.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor S. Baxter and seconded by Councillor K. May.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan Preparation be approved; and
- 2) The Local Plan timetable be approved.

(At the start of the debate in respect of this item, Members voted to suspend standing orders for the item to enable the Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager to speak and answer Members' questions.

At the end of this item there was a brief adjournment which lasted from 19.55 – 20.06.)

16\26

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chairman opened the item by explaining that there were no recommendations from the meeting of Cabinet held on 6th March 2026 requiring consideration. This was because the recommendations arising from that meeting had subsequently been considered at the Council meeting held on the same date.

Members were asked to note that no recommendations had been made for Council's consideration at the meeting of Cabinet held on 25th March 2026. Therefore, Council was only due to consider recommendations arising from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 20th April 2026.

Recommendations on the following subjects were discussed during the meeting:

Revision of the Environmental Crime Enforcement Policy

The Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Community Safety presented proposed revisions to the Environmental Crime Enforcement Policy. Members were advised that the updates to the policy were designed to protect the local environment. This policy did not extend to addressing problems with abandoned vehicles or graffiti.

In considering the report, Members commented on the following points:

- The powers available to the Council to remove abandoned vehicles and which team dealt with this. Members were advised that a response would be provided to this query after the meeting.
- The wider equality impact assessment that was proposed for the policy update, who would be consulted when undertaking the assessment and the timescales for this consultation. Council was advised that further information would be provided in response to this query after the meeting.
- The responsibilities that everybody had in terms of disposing of waste appropriately and the value arising from Members notifying their residents of the need to check the licences of organisations that offered to dispose of waste on their behalf.

- The fines that could be issued against dog owners when their pets fouled in public places and they did not have access to an appropriate receptacle in which to dispose of the faeces.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor P. Whittaker and seconded by Councillor K. May.

RESOLVED that the Bromsgrove and Redditch Enforcement Policy be adopted and replace the previous Joint Environmental Enforcement Policy.

Introduction of Enforcement of Littering from Vehicles

The Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Community Safety presented a report that proposed the introduction of the enforcement of littering from vehicles.

The proposals detailed in the report would enable the Civil Enforcement Officers working in the District to issue Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) when people in vehicles were observed to be engaged in littering behaviour. Previously, this had been treated as a criminal offence and the burden of proof was onerous for this. By contrast, under the proposals before Members, Civil Enforcement Officers would have the power to act when littering was observed.

Members discussed the proposals and in doing so noted that the power to issue PCNs to people observed to be littering from vehicles was likely to be welcomed by many local residents. However, it was noted that often littering occurred from vehicles without this being observed. The suggestion was made that it might therefore be helpful to monitor the effectiveness of this approach in tackling litter moving forward.

Questions were raised about whether technical equipment could be used to enable officers to issue PCNs safely. It was noted that Civil Enforcement Officers unfortunately sometimes encountered aggressive behaviour amongst people when undertaking enforcement work and questions were raised about whether the issuing of PCNs on a face-to-face basis could place staff at risk. Confirmation was provided that remote issuing of PCNs, using electronic tools, was the method that would be adopted at the Council.

Reference was also made to Operation Snap, a police initiative whereby the public could offer the police dashcam footage when they investigated alleged crimes. Members queried whether dashcam footage provided by the public could be utilised by the Council's Civil Enforcement team. The Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Community Safety suggested that he would explore this idea further.

Consideration was given to the length of time available to offenders, of no more than 14 days, to pay a reduced fine when issued with a PCN for littering from a vehicle. By contrast, it was noted that offenders had no

more than 10 days to pay a reduced rate for fines issued under the Environmental Crime Enforcement Policy. Clarification was requested on the reasons for this discrepancy, although Members were asked to note that there were two different types of penalty notice.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor P. Whittaker and seconded by Councillor A. Dale.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Civil Enforcement of Littering from Vehicles be introduced;
- 2) The Civil Enforcement Team be given delegated authority to issue Litter Penalty Charge Notices;
- 3) The parking administration team be authorised to deal with appeals and enforcement matters in respect of Litter Penalty Charge Notices;
- 4) The Penalty Notice Charge be set at the level set by Council for Criminal offences where a Fixed Penalty Notice is served for Depositing Litter (section 87/88 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990) which for 2026/27 subject to Council approval are proposed to be set as:
 - a) £250; and
 - b) £125 for prompt payment (within 14 days); and
- 5) Authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Regeneration & Property to issue Penalty Notice Charges for Littering from Vehicles under The Littering From Vehicles Outside London (Keepers: Civil Penalties) Regulations 2018.

Climate Change Strategy 2026 to 2031

The Cabinet Member for Local Government Reorganisation, WRS and Climate Change presented the Climate Change Strategy 2026 to 2031.

The strategy replaced the Council's previous Carbon Reduction Action Plan and it set out a clear, practical pathway to reduce emissions from the Council's operations by 50% by 2030, and achieve Net Zero by 2040. It also aligned with national and international commitments, including the UK Net Zero target and the Paris Agreement. The aim of the strategy was to deliver real, tangible improvements for local residents, the environment, and the local economy.

The strategy was designed to be ambitious but grounded, focused on the areas where the Council could make the biggest difference. Key highlights raised for Members' attention included:

- Improving energy efficiency and renewable generation in Council buildings;
- Supporting warmer, more efficient homes and tackling fuel poverty;
- Decarbonising transport, including the Council's fleet and Electric Vehicle (EV) infrastructure;
- Embedding climate considerations into planning and development;
- Enhancing biodiversity and green spaces;
- Reducing waste and rolling out weekly food waste collections; and
- Strengthening partnerships, governance and funding.

Members were asked to note that these were all areas where the Council had direct control or strong influence.

Council was advised that action had already been taken in respect of tackling climate change, in line with the authority's declaration of a climate emergency. This included:

- Over £284,000 invested in domestic retrofit since 2019, improving homes and reducing bills;
- Nearly 613,000 kWh of EV charging delivered, saving around 479 tonnes of CO₂; and
- A downward trend in energy use across the Council's estate, supported by solar Photovoltaic (PV) installations.

The strategy built on that foundation and was designed to scale it up.

The actions proposed in the strategy would benefit local residents by:

- Reducing energy bills and tackling fuel poverty;
- Improving air quality and public health;
- Creating warmer, healthier homes;
- Supporting local green jobs and skills; and
- Enhancing green spaces and biodiversity.

A key strength of the strategy was how it would be delivered. Members were asked to note that the strategy would be embedded into service business plans, ensuring ownership across the organisation. Progress

would be monitored annually and reported to Cabinet and Council. In addition, a new climate dashboard would track carbon impacts and outcomes.

Members were asked to note that the Council could not tackle climate change alone. Partnership working would instead be key to future success, which would involve working with:

- Worcestershire County Council and regional partners;
- Housing providers and businesses; and
- Community organisations and residents.

This collaboration would be essential to unlocking funding, delivering projects, and maximising the impact across the District.

There were challenges and risks that could potentially impact on progress with the implementation of the strategy. This included:

- Funding constraints;
- Market and supply chain pressures;
- Policy and regulatory change; and
- Local Government Reorganisation.

However, the strategy was designed to be flexible and resilient, so that the Council could adapt while maintaining momentum. Implementation of the strategy would support the Council's work to address the 'Green Thread' which underpinned all of the priorities in the Council's Plan.

Once the report had been presented, Members discussed the following points in detail:

- The extent to which it would be appropriate to apply targets to help monitor progress with the implementation of the strategy and the impact at the local level.
- The action that had already been taken to tackle carbon emissions and climate change in Bromsgrove District and the potential for this to be highlighted as a key legacy achievement during Local Government Reorganisation. In particular, the Council's work with Birmingham University on air quality was highlighted as a positive outcome of previous efforts to tackle carbon emissions.
- The Eight Hills Project and progress that had been achieved on this. Members were informed that the Council had made it to the last four applicants but had ultimately not been awarded any funding. However, work on this project would continue and had been built into the Local Plan.
- The action that was being taken to plant trees in the District.
- The action that could be taken to ensure that new homes were adapted to address issues arising from climate change and the

extent to which these adaptations could be made to affordable homes in the District. Members were advised that as part of the work on the Local Plan information would be included on the environment.

- The graph that had been included in the report relating to energy consumption. Further information on this subject was requested to be provided to Members after the meeting.
- The hard work of the Council's Climate Change Manager on developing this strategy. Members thanked him for his hard work.
- The positive impact that action to tackle climate change and carbon emissions would have on children and young people growing up in the District.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor K. Taylor and seconded by Councillor P. Whittaker.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The Council's Climate Change Strategy 2026–2031 be approved; and
- 2) An annual review of the Climate Change Strategy be reported to Council.

Empty Homes Strategy

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Strategic Housing presented the Empty Homes Strategy for Members' consideration.

Council was informed that the strategy was designed to respond to a growing housing challenge in the country. There were estimated to be over 5,000 empty domestic properties in the UK, including in excess of 600 empty homes in Bromsgrove District. At the same time, there were lots of households registered on local housing registers and waiting to secure suitable social housing, including within the District. Returning vacant properties back to use could help to address some of the demand for appropriate accommodation.

There were additional risks associated with empty housing that Members were asked to take into account. This included that vacant properties could attract squatters, anti-social behaviour, and pests. Empty properties, if left unoccupied for some time, could also have a negative impact on the physical appearance of the local environment.

There were many potential causes of properties becoming vacant. This included probate, following the death of a resident, financial arrears and emotional attachments to homes.

Councils had broader responsibilities in respect of empty homes. Since 2018, local authorities had been able to charge property owners extra

Council Tax for empty homes. Councils were encouraged to engage with relatives at an early stage to ensure that appropriate advice and support could be offered where needed.

After the report had been presented, Members discussed the content and in doing so referred to the potential for the return of empty homes into use to be taken into account as part of the Council's work to meet the Government's house building target for the District. Clarification was provided that this was treated as a separate matter.

Reference was made to the potential for data on empty homes to be provided broken down to ward level and distinguishing between private and social housing. In addition, questions were raised about the potential for an accurate figure to be provided in respect of the housing waiting list for residents based in Bromsgrove District. Members were informed that there were 3,749 households on the housing waiting list at that time, although there were due to be changes to arrangements in the future that would result in a change to the calculations. It was further noted that there could be a difference between households listed on the housing waiting list and those in desperate need of more suitable accommodation, which included people living temporarily in Bed and Breakfast (B&B) accommodation.

Members commented that they were aware of a number of cases where residents had passed away and the award of their estate had been contested. Questions were raised as to whether this was taken into account in the strategy as well as in respect of the flexibility available to officers to act in these circumstances. Council was advised that communication and engagement would be key to the implementation of this strategy and there would be a need to assess requirements on a case-by-case basis.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor S. Baxter and seconded by Councillor K. Taylor.

RESOLVED that the Bromsgrove District Council Empty Homes Strategy 2026 – 29 be adopted.

(Prior to consideration of the Empty Homes Strategy, Councillor C. Hotham declared an other disclosable interest in the item. Members were advised that a relative of Councillor Hotham was renovating a property located in the District and whilst this work was taking place the building was empty. Councillor Hotham took part in the debate and voted thereon.)

Renters Rights Act 2025

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Strategic Housing presented the Renters' Rights Act 2025 report.

The report provided an update on the implementation of the Renters Rights Act 2025, which received Royal Assent on 27th October 2025 and represented the most significant reform of the private rented sector in a generation. The Act fundamentally changed the relationship between tenants, landlords and local authorities and would have a direct operational impact on the Council, particularly the Private Sector Housing service.

Implementation was being introduced in three phases, with Phase 1 commencing on 1st May 2026. The introduction of the national landlord database in Phase 2 would provide a much clearer picture than at present of the sector locally.

From 1st May 2026, the Council had been required to enforce a number of major legislative changes. These included:

- The abolition of Section 21 “no fault” evictions;
- The introduction of assured periodic tenancies;
- Reforms to possession grounds;
- Restrictions on rent increases to once per year;
- The banning of rent bidding and excessive rent in advance;
- New protections preventing discrimination against families with children and tenants in receipt of benefits; and
- New rights for tenants to request pets.

The legislation also significantly strengthened local authority enforcement powers, including increased civil penalties and new reporting requirements.

Phase 2 of the legislation, expected from late 2026 onwards, would introduce a mandatory landlord database and a new Private Rented Sector Ombudsman.

Landlords would be required to register properties, provide key compliance information and pay an annual fee. This would increase transparency within the sector and expand the amount of regulated activity overseen by Councils.

Phase 3 would introduce the Decent Homes Standard into the private rented sector for the first time, alongside further anticipated reforms linked to energy efficiency standards and the future extension of Awaab’s Law.

The reforms would create significant operational pressures for the Council. The authority was anticipating:

- Increased enquiries from tenants regarding their rights;
- Additional enforcement activity; and

- Likely increases in homelessness approaches as some landlords would Exit the sector or issue notices ahead of implementation.

The Private Sector Housing team would also need to take on entirely new areas of enforcement activity, including:

- Discrimination offences;
- Unlawful rent practices;
- Pet request disputes; and
- Misuse of possession grounds.

To support implementation, funding had already been secured for a new regulatory case management system to improve enforcement recording, statutory reporting and case management processes.

Additional New Burdens and Domestic Abuse Grant funding had already been received earlier in the year, which would help to assist with further implementation costs. Those costs included:

- Officer training;
- IT improvements;
- Legal support; and
- Increased homelessness pressures.

There was a need to amend the Scheme of Delegations to ensure that the Assistant Director for Community and Housing Services was formally authorised to exercise the Council's new enforcement powers under the Renters Rights Act 2025. This was necessary to enable officers to act lawfully, proportionately and efficiently when investigating offences, issuing notices and exercising the Council's new enforcement responsibilities.

Following the presentation of the report, Members discussed a number of points in detail:

- The Government's timeframes for landlords in the private rented sector to meet decent homes standards.
- The positive impact that decent homes standards had had on the quality of housing in the social housing sector.
- The number of residents in Bromsgrove District living in the private rented sector who were likely to benefit from decent homes standards.
- The important role of the Strategic Housing team at the Council in respect of the Council's use of powers granted under the Renters Rights Act 2025.

- The extent to which additional staff would be needed to enable the Council to meet its duties and utilise powers provided in the Renters Rights Act 2025.
- The sad circumstances leading to Awaab's Law and the impact that the quality and location of housing could have on a child's prospects in life.
- The challenges that had historically been encountered by residents when they had been subject to no fault evictions and the positive impact on the security of residents that would arise from ending this practice.
- The suggestion was made that the majority of landlords operating in the District were good landlords. However, Members noted that the powers provided under the Renters Rights Act 2025 would help the authority to tackle rogue landlords and protect vulnerable residents.
- The support that the CAB could provide to tenants and landlords in the event of difficulties arising.
- The benefits arising from further information about the work of the Private Sector Housing team being shared with Members.
- The extent to which conversations had been held with Housing Associations regarding this matter.
- The approach that the Council would adopt to communicate new rights available to tenants under the Renters Rights Act 2025.
- The extent to which there was a risk that some landlords might involve bailiffs and the courts as a first choice now that no fault evictions were no longer an option. Concerns were raised that this could result in tenants gaining a criminal record which might otherwise not have occurred.
- The number of landlords who were likely to dispose of their properties in response to the legislation and the impact that this could have on the supply of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector.
- The potential for the impact of the Renters Rights Act 2025 to be reviewed six months after the legislation came into effect.
- The previous Member briefing that had been delivered on the subject of private sector housing by the team and the benefits arising from delivering an updated version of that briefing.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor S. Baxter and seconded by Councillor K. Taylor.

RESOLVED that the Scheme of Delegations be amended to incorporate new powers under the Renters Rights Act 2025.

(During consideration of the Renters Rights Act 2025 report, Councillor S. Ammar declared an other disclosable interest as a landlord of a property located outside the District. She remained in the room during the debate and voted thereon.)

The Cabinet Member for Finance presented the Quarter 4 Finance and Performance Monitoring Report 2025/26 for Members' consideration.

Council was advised that the report detailed the Council's budget position as of the end of the third quarter which ended in December 2025. Members were asked to note that a more accurate overview of the position at the end of the financial year would emerge in the Quarter 4 report.

The report included the latest Treasury Monitoring report, which provided information about borrowing and financial resilience. The report was also proposing additional funding to address potholes on the road surface of the Aston Road Roundabout, which was on an unadopted highway.

During consideration of this item, questions were raised about the performance data that had been provided in respect of economic development and targets for fly tipping. However, Members were advised that this was not due to be considered at the Council meeting and instead it was suggested that information could be provided outside the meeting.

Questions were raised as to why Bromsgrove District Council was considering funding works to address potholes when highways functions were generally managed by Worcestershire County Council. Council was informed that because the highway had not been adopted, Worcestershire County Council's highways department was not responsible for the works and therefore Bromsgrove District Council had opted to cover the expenditure required.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor S. Nock and seconded by Councillor K. May.

RESOLVED that

- 1) That the Balance Sheet Monitoring Position for Q3 is noted – which is the Treasury Monitoring Report and required to be reported to Council; and
- 2) That £120k capital funding be approved for work on fixing potholes on the Aston Road roundabout and the road leading to the depot.

17\26

TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF CABINET HELD ON 6TH MARCH, 25TH MARCH AND 20TH APRIL 2026

The minutes of the meetings of Cabinet held on 6th March, 25th March and 20th April 2026 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of Cabinet held on 6th March, 25th March and 20th April 2026 be noted.

18\26

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Members were advised that there were no Questions on Notice for consideration at this meeting.

19\26

MOTIONS ON NOTICE - MOTION 2

The following Motion on Notice was submitted by Councillor S. Evans for Members' consideration:

“Council resolves to establish a cross-party working group, comprised of members of the Electoral Matters Committee together with any other interested Members, to undertake preparatory work to determine, in the context of Local Government reorganisation, future local governance arrangements within Bromsgrove District. The working group will consider the most appropriate arrangements for future local governance within Bromsgrove District, including the option to undertake a Community Governance Review and will report back to Council within six months with its findings and recommendations.”

The Motion was proposed by Councillor Evans and seconded by Councillor R. Hunter.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Evans commented that his District Council ward was completely unparished, so he had had limited involvement with Parish Councils in his District Councillor capacity. However, as a County Councillor, he represented a division containing a number of Parish Councils and he had therefore learned over the last year about how effective and valuable they could be.

There was the potential for the Electoral Matters Committee to consider whether there was a need for a Community Governance Review in Bromsgrove District. Many other Councils had undertaken Community Governance Reviews in the build up to Local Government Reorganisation and Councillor Evans expressed the view that this had been a useful exercise. However, the Motion would not commit the Council to setting up new Parish Councils. Instead, the Motion committed the Council to undertaking a review of the available options.

Members subsequently discussed the Motion and in doing so commented on the following:

- The benefits of an inclusive approach.
- The valuable contributions made by Parish Councils.
- The potential for more clarity to be provided in the Motion about what the Council was seeking to achieve.

- The time required from officers to work on a review of whether to launch a Community Governance Review and whether this represented best use of resources given the ongoing work required on Local Government Reorganisation.
- The aim of the Government for each Unitary Authority to have Neighbourhood Area Committees to bring decisions about services closer to residents and the extent to which confusion could arise if both these Committees and Parish Councils were introduced in currently unparished areas.
- The extent to which it was appropriate for Bromsgrove District Council to make decisions about new Parish Councils rather than the new Unitary Authority.
- The other duties of Councillors who would be appointed to Neighbourhood Area Committees and whether they would be able to dedicate the same level of support to the work of these Committees as Parish Councillors elected to serve on a Parish Council.
- The value of making decisions based on the available evidence.
- The fact that Bromsgrove town was one of the few locations in Worcestershire that was not represented by a Parish or Town Council.
- The potential for residents to be consulted about whether to introduce Parish Councils in unparished areas. Members noted that residents in these areas would need to be aware of a requirement to pay a parish precept if a Parish Council was introduced.
- The extent to which there was a risk that Bromsgrove District Council's assets, once inherited by a new Unitary Authority, might be sold to help address any financial challenges and the implications for the District's heritage.
- The fact that a Parish Council could own assets whilst a Neighbourhood Area Committee would be unable to own assets.
- The extent to which it was appropriate for the Electoral Matters Committee to be called upon to conduct the proposed review. Confirmation was provided that this was an appropriate role for the Electoral Matters Committee, although it was noted that for previous reviews, the Electoral Matters Committee had extended an invitation to other Councillors who were not Members of the Committee to participate in review work.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried.

RESOLVED to establish a cross-party working group, comprised of members of the Electoral Matters Committee together with any other interested Members, to undertake preparatory work to determine, in the context of Local Government reorganisation, future local governance arrangements within Bromsgrove District. The working group will consider the most appropriate arrangements for future local governance within Bromsgrove District, including the option to undertake a

Community Governance Review and will report back to Council within six months with its findings and recommendations.

20\26

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 for consideration on this occasion.

The meeting closed at 9.40 p.m.

Chairman