
Request for the Establishment of Charter Trustees for Bromsgrove

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Karen May, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development and Enabling
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Claire Felton, Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services
Report Author	Melissa Bassett Job Title: Senior Electoral Services Officer Contact email: melissa.bassett@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 587014
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Council Priority	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 Council RESOLVE that:

- 1) A request be submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for provision to be included in the relevant Structural Changes Order for the establishment of Charter Trustees for the unparished areas of the current Bromsgrove District from the re-organisation date; and**
- 2) Authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Monitoring Officer, to agree the wording of the request and to take any necessary steps to progress the proposal through the Local Government Reorganisation process.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Local Government Reorganisation is expected to result in the abolition of Bromsgrove District Council and the transfer of local government functions to a new unitary authority from the reorganisation date,

subject to the final decision of Government and the making of the necessary legislation.

- 2.2 The detailed arrangements for the transition to the new authority will be set out in a Structural Changes Order. The Order will establish the new local government structure, provide for the abolition of the predecessor Councils and set out the principal transitional and implementation arrangements.
- 2.3 At the Annual Council meeting on 20 May 2026, Members considered and approved a motion relating to future local governance arrangements in Bromsgrove in the context of Local Government Reorganisation.
- 2.4 The motion recognised the importance of ensuring that Bromsgrove retains appropriate local governance, civic identity and local representation following the abolition of the District Council. As part of this, the motion requested that officers work with Members of the Electoral Matters Committee through a Working Group to investigate the matters raised.
- 2.5 The Electoral Matters Committee met on 11 June 2026 to agree the scope and timetable for the Working Group. The Working Group also met on 11 June 2026 to consider the proposed approach and next steps.
- 2.6 As part of that work, the Electoral Matters Committee recommended that a report be brought forward to Council to seek a resolution requesting the establishment of Charter Trustees for Bromsgrove through the Local Government Reorganisation process.
- 2.7 This report has therefore been prepared following the recommendation of the Electoral Matters Committee and in the context of the wider work being undertaken by the Working Group on future local governance arrangements. The Electoral Matters Committee will be reporting back to Council on wider local governance arrangements at its October meeting.
- 2.8 Officers have also consulted with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to clarify whether Charter Trustees could be established where no Royal Charter is currently in place. MHCLG confirmed that this would be possible through the Local Government Reorganisation process. However, as there is no current charter providing for a Mayor of Bromsgrove, the proposed arrangements would be limited to the preservation of relevant civic and

ceremonial property and traditions, rather than the continuation of a mayoralty.

- 2.9 The proposal to request Charter Trustees is separate from, but related to, the wider consideration of future local governance in Bromsgrove. It is intended to safeguard civic and ceremonial arrangements in the event that Bromsgrove District Council is abolished, while further work continues on options such as a Community Governance Review and any future parish or town council arrangements.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 Charter Trustees may be established through an order made as part of Local Government Reorganisation. Their purpose is to preserve the historic rights, privileges and traditions associated with an area where the existing Council is being abolished.
- 3.2 For Bromsgrove, the establishment of Charter Trustees would provide a mechanism to safeguard civic and ceremonial property and ensure continuity for civic traditions connected with the current District Council area, particularly in the unparished areas where there is no existing parish council in place to receive or continue those arrangements.
- 3.3 Charter Trustees would not replace the local government functions currently exercised by Bromsgrove District Council and would not operate as a further tier of local government. Their responsibilities would be limited principally to civic and ceremonial matters and the preservation of the Borough's historic rights and traditions.
- 3.4 The proposal would not determine the wider neighbourhood governance arrangements for Bromsgrove. It would not prevent a future Community Governance Review from considering whether parish or town council arrangements should be established for any part of the area.

Membership and operation

- 3.5 Charter Trustees are not normally appointed in the same way as appointments to outside bodies. Under the Charter Trustees Regulations 2009, the Charter Trustees would ordinarily be the councillors of the new unitary authority who are elected for electoral areas falling within the Charter Trustee area.

- 3.6 For Bromsgrove, this means that membership of the Charter Trustees would be expected to consist of those councillors elected to the new unitary authority for the area covered by the Charter Trustees. It would not normally include councillors elected for areas outside the Charter Trustee area.
- 3.7 The Regulations do, however, allow for additional Charter Trustees to be appointed in certain circumstances. This may include cases where the number of Charter Trustees for the area would otherwise be fewer than five, or where up to three additional Charter Trustees are considered desirable. Any additional Charter Trustee must be a councillor of the relevant council, which would be the new unitary authority.
- 3.8 The Charter Trustees would be required to establish appropriate administrative and governance arrangements, including arrangements for meetings, standing orders, financial administration, record keeping and the custody and use of civic property.

Civic and Ceremonial Property

- 3.9 The Charter Trustees Regulations 2009 provide for charters, insignia, plate and other property of a historic or ceremonial nature relating to the charter trustee area to vest in the Charter Trustees on the reorganisation date.
- 3.10 Further work will be required to identify and record the property which may be appropriate for transfer. This is expected to include any civic insignia, chains of office, regalia, plate and other items used in connection with the Council's civic and ceremonial traditions.
- 3.11 An inventory of relevant civic and ceremonial property will need to be prepared as part of the transition process. Legal advice may also be required where there is any uncertainty about whether a particular item falls within the definition of historic or ceremonial property.
- 3.12 The Charter Trustees would represent the unparished area of the current Bromsgrove District, unless a different area is provided for in the relevant Structural Changes Order.
- 3.13 Existing parished areas would not normally form part of the Charter Trustee area because they already have parish councils in place.
- 3.14 The precise boundary of the charter trustee area would need to be defined in the Structural Changes Order, normally by reference to the

relevant electoral areas or other geographical descriptions applying at the time the Order is made.

- 3.15 If all or part of the charter trustee area subsequently becomes parished through a Community Governance Review, the effect on the Charter Trustees would be governed by the relevant legislation. Where the whole charter trustee area becomes comprised within one or more parishes, the Charter Trustees would be dissolved and their property, rights and liabilities would transfer in accordance with the applicable statutory arrangements.

Electoral areas within the proposed Charter trustee area

- 3.16 The proposed Charter Trustee area would comprise the unparished areas of the current Bromsgrove District. The Council has identified the county divisions which, based on the proposed unitary electoral arrangements, include all or part of the unparished area of Bromsgrove. It is proposed that councillors elected to the new unitary authority for those electoral areas would become Charter Trustees for Bromsgrove, subject to the final provisions included in the Structural Changes Order.
- 3.17 On that basis, the following electoral areas are proposed to fall within the scope of the Bromsgrove Charter Trustee arrangements:
- Beacon
 - Bromsgrove Central
 - Bromsgrove East
 - Bromsgrove South
 - Bromsgrove West
 - Woodvale
- 3.18 The establishment, membership and detailed operation of the Charter Trustees would remain dependent on the final wording of the Structural Changes Order and any associated statutory provisions.

Structural Changes Order

- 3.19 The establishment of Charter Trustees would need to be provided for through the Structural Changes Order or other associated legislation made as part of the Local Government Reorganisation process.
- 3.20 It is therefore proposed that the Council submits a formal request to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government at the

appropriate stage, asking that provision for the Bromsgrove Charter Trustees be included within the relevant Order.

- 3.21 The request should be made early enough to allow the proposed arrangements, geographical area and treatment of civic property to be considered during the preparation of the Order and before the reorganisation date.
- 3.22 Further reports will be required during the transition period to address the detailed operating arrangements, budget, civic programme, administrative support and transfer of property to the Charter Trustees.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The submission of a request for Charter Trustees is not expected to result in significant immediate expenditure. There will, however, be officer resource implications associated with identifying civic and ceremonial property, supporting the development of the Structural Changes Order and establishing the necessary governance arrangements.
- 4.2 Additional one off costs may arise during the transition period, including the preparation of inventories of civic property, legal advice relating to asset transfers and the establishment of financial and governance arrangements. These costs are not currently expected to be material and will be met from the Local Government Reorganisation reserve.
- 4.3 In the financial year in which the Charter Trustees are established, Charter Trustees may receive funding through arrangements established as part of the Local Government Reorganisation process, including the consideration of any existing civic budgets that transfer from Bromsgrove District Council.
- 4.4 Thereafter, Charter Trustees are able to issue a council tax precept on properties within the Charter Trustee area. This would be identified as a separate charge on council tax bills for residents within that area. The level of any precept would be determined annual by the Charter Trustees based on their approved budget.
- 4.5 Further reports will be required to determine the detailed budget, administrative support requirements and any ongoing costs associated with this.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Charter Trustees Regulations 2009 set out the principal arrangements applying to Charter Trustees established through Local Government Reorganisation. These include provision relating to the transfer and holding of historic and ceremonial property, membership, the appointment of additional trustees, meetings, financial administration and other procedural matters.
- 5.2 The Regulations provide that relevant charters, insignia, plate and other historic and ceremonial property relating to the charter trustee area vest in the Charter Trustees on the reorganisation date.
- 5.3 The Charter Trustees would consist principally of members of the new unitary authority elected for electoral areas within the charter trustee area. The statutory arrangements also allow for additional Charter Trustees to be appointed in specified circumstances.
- 5.4 The proposed Charter Trustees can only be established through the relevant statutory process. A resolution of Bromsgrove District Council would amount to a request for provision to be included in the Structural Changes Order and would not, by itself, establish the Charter Trustees.
- 5.5 Further legal advice will be required during the preparation of the Order and the transfer process, particularly in relation to the property to be transferred, the preservation of charter rights and the detailed governance arrangements.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 The proposal arises directly from Local Government Reorganisation and the expected abolition of Bromsgrove District Council. Establishing Charter Trustees would provide a mechanism to protect civic and ceremonial arrangements following the transfer to a larger unitary authority.
- 6.2 The detailed arrangements for the Charter Trustees would need to be developed alongside the wider Local Government Reorganisation transition programme and in consultation with MHCLG, the implementation body and, following its establishment, the shadow authority.
- 6.3 The proposal would not determine the wider neighbourhood governance arrangements of the new unitary authority and would not prevent a future Community Governance Review from considering parish or town council arrangements for Bromsgrove.

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.4 Work on local governance arrangements supports all the Council's current priorities.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.5 There are no direct climate change implications arising from the proposals detailed in this report.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.6 No direct equalities implications have been identified at this stage.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The principal risk is that, if no provision is made before the reorganisation date, Bromsgrove's civic and ceremonial traditions may not continue in their current local form.
- 7.2 There is also a risk that historic and ceremonial property may transfer to the new unitary authority without arrangements being in place for its continued local use and custody. This will be mitigated by making an

early request for Charter Trustees and preparing an inventory of relevant property.

- 7.3 Financial and administrative risks will be managed by developing a proportionate operating model and bringing forward further proposals once the future structure, membership and support requirements are clearer.
- 7.4 There is a further risk that the role of Charter Trustees could be misunderstood as creating a new tier of local government or determining the outcome of future local governance arrangements. This will be mitigated by making clear that Charter Trustees would have a limited civic and ceremonial role and would not prevent future consideration of parish or town council arrangements through a Community Governance Review.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background Papers

- *The Charter Trustees Regulations 2009*
- *The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007*
- *Report: Local Government Reorganisation: Implications for Local Governance in Bromsgrove, Electoral Matters Committee - 07 November 2025*
- *Report: establishment of a Working Group to Consider Future Local Governance Arrangements, Electoral Matters Committee – 11 June 2026*

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL
2026

15 July

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Karen May, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development and Enabling	
Assistant Director	Claire Felton, Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services	
Financial Services	Deb Goodall, Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services	03/07/2026