

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

15TH JULY 2026, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors J. Robinson (Chairman), S. Ammar, A. Bailes, R. Bailes, S. J. Baxter, J. Clarke, S. R. Colella, A. M. Dale, J. Elledge, S. M. Evans, D. J. A. Forsythe, E. M. S. Gray, C.A. Hotham, D. Hopkins, R. J. Hunter, M. Marshall, K.J. May, P. M. McDonald, B. McEldowney, S. T. Nock, S. R. Peters, S. A. Robinson, 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, Mrs. R. Bamford, Mr. M. Dunphy, Mrs. J. Bayley-Hill and Ms M. Bassett

21\26

TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

At the start of the meeting the Chairmen led Members in observing a minute's silence in memory of former MP and MEP, Ann Widdecombe, who had been murdered the previous week.

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors H. Jones, B. Kumar, R. Lambert, D. Nicholl and J. Stanley.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors S. Ammar and C. Hotham declared other disclosable interests in Minute Item No. 34/26 –Recommendations from the Cabinet – in respect of the Shared Homelessness Strategy 2026 – 2031 - and in Minute Item No. 35/26 – the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 17th June 2026, in their capacity as private sector landlords. They remained present during consideration of these items and voted thereon.

23\26

TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 25TH FEBRUARY, 6TH MARCH AND 20TH MAY 2026

The minutes of the Council meetings held on 25th February and 6th March 2026 and the minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 20th May 2026 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meetings held on 25th February and 6th March 2026 and the minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 20th May 2026 be approved as a true and correct record.

24\26

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

The Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman advised that his charity for the year would be Touchstones. Touchstones provided bereavement support to children living in Worcestershire. The Chairman advised that he had visited the charity and had felt touched by the information that he had received about their work the impact that this had had on children and their families.

Since the previous meeting of Council, the Chairman advised that he had attended Bromsgrove Carnival as well as the Wythall 10k run.

On behalf of the Council, the Chairman concluded his announcements by wishing the England Football team good luck in the semi-final of the football world cup against Argentina. The Chairman also commented that one of the English midfielders, Jude Bellingham, was from Bromsgrove District and he highlighted how proud the local community was of Mr Bellingham's achievements.

The Head of Paid Service's Announcements

The Chief Executive advised that it was anticipated that the government would announce its decision on local government reorganisation in Worcestershire the following day. A briefing with all Members on this subject was booked to take place on Thursday 23rd July 2026.

25\26

TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER

There were no specific announcements from the Leader on this occasion.

26\26

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

No comments, questions or petitions from the public were considered on this occasion.

27\26

URGENT DECISIONS

Members were advised that no urgent decisions had been taken since the previous meeting of Council.

28\26

REQUEST FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF CHARTER TRUSTEES IN THE STRUCTURAL ORDER FOR THE NEW UNITARY AUTHORITY

At the start of Members' consideration of this item, it was agreed to suspend the standing orders to permit the Senior Electoral Services Officer to speak at the meeting.

The Leader presented the report and in doing so commented that it was proposed that within the relevant Structural Changes Order for the Worcestershire Unitary Authorities there should be a proposal to introduce Charter Trustees in the unparished areas of Bromsgrove District.

Council was advised that this was an important matter to debate at a time when Members were considering whether to undertake a Community Governance review (CGR) in respect of the unparished areas in the District. Should Parish Councils subsequently be established in those locations, then the Charter Trustees would be abolished.

Reference was made to recent discussions of this subject that had occurred at a meeting of the Electoral Matters Committee. It was noted that there had not been unanimity in terms of views amongst Members in respect of the proposal to introduce Charter Trustees. Members also noted that, whilst Parish Councils made a valuable contribution to their local communities, there was limited time available for Members to undertake a CGR prior to Local Government Reorganisation and Charter Trustees would be a useful addition in the meantime.

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

RESOLVED that

- 1) The standing orders be suspended to permit the Senior Electoral Services Officer to speak at the Council meeting;
- 2) 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
- 3) 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.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN - SCOPING CONSULTATION

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning and Strategic Housing presented a report on the subject of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan – Scoping Consultation.

Council was informed that approval was sought for the Council to go out to consultation in accordance with the new national plan setting process.

In considering this matter, Members were asked to note that responses received in previous consultation exercises concerning the Local Plan had not been forgotten and would continue to inform the development of the plan. The scoping document was a new stage in the process and provided the Council with a chance to reflect on matters prior to progressing further with the new Local Plan.

The proposed consultation would not be considering potential development sites. Instead, the focus of the consultation was on the overarching scope of the Local Plan.

The strength of feeling that had been articulated in responses to the previous consultation on the draft Local Plan was recognised. In particular, key points had been raised in respect of infrastructure, including transport, the high streets, green spaces and the green belt in the District. A study of the green belt had been commissioned and was expected to also take into account the concept of a grey belt.

In this latest consultation exercise, the Council was keen to hear people's views. However, Members were asked to note that points raised in the previous consultation exercise would not need to be repeated.

A lot of work had been undertaken in preparing for this consultation exercise. Officers in the Planning Department were thanked for their hard work in respect of this matter.

Following the presentation of the report, Members discussed the content and in doing so noted that the subject of the consultation had been discussed in detail at meetings of the Local Plan Cross Party Working Group. It was acknowledged that the Council did not have a choice in respect of holding this consultation or on introducing a new Local Plan. The suggestion was made that the authority needed to work hard to progress with a Local Plan. This would help to address issues with speculative planning applications, which were causing concerns for Members.

During consideration of this item, reference was made to Worcestershire County Council's Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme. A request was made for Bromsgrove District Councillors to be kept appraised on work on the scheme, due to the implications for the Local Plan.

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

RESOLVED that the Bromsgrove District Local Plan Scoping Report be approved for consultation from the 24th July to the 4th September 2026 inclusive.

30\26

AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2025-2026

The Chairman advised that in advance of the meeting group leaders had agreed that the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee's Annual Report 2025/26 should be deferred for consideration at the following Council meeting due to take place in September 2026.

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2025 - 2026

The Chairman advised that in advance of the meeting group leaders had agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Annual Report 2025/26 should be deferred for consideration at the following Council meeting due to take place in September 2026.

32\26

TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER A REPORT FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING, LEISURE AND CULTURE

The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture presented an annual report to Council. Members were advised that, as an annual report focusing on the health and wellbeing remit of her portfolio had been considered at Council relatively recently, the report had focused on Leisure and Culture Services on this occasion only.

In presenting the report, the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture highlighted the following points for Members' consideration:

- There were a lot of events due to take place over the summer.
- The Parks and Open spaces team had been working on the Inclusive Play Policy.
- Sanders Park and Lickey End Recreation Ground had both been awarded green flag status.
- A £500,000 grant had been received from Arts Council England which would be allocated to the Renew Programme.
- Sports Development Officers continued to work in partnership with external organisations in respect of the delivery of sports services at leisure centres.
- A new Couch to 5k event was due to be introduced in the District.

Once the report had been presented, Members queried the extent to which works on the King George playing field were likely to proceed as previously agreed by the Council. Confirmation was provided that as this was a key park in the district these proposed works would be going ahead.

Reference was also made to the consultation event in respect of the switch on of Christmas lights in Bromsgrove and whether the outcomes of this engagement exercise had been reviewed. Members were advised that analysis of the feedback was ongoing and the suggestion

was made that further information would be provided in respect of this matter after the meeting.

33\26

**CONSTITUTION REVIEW WORKING GROUP - RECOMMENDATIONS
RELATING TO THE CONTENT OF THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION**

The Leader presented a recommendation that had been proposed at a meeting of the Constitution Review Working Group (CRWG) held on Friday 10th July 2026.

During the CRWG meeting, Members had discussed the process that could be followed in the event that two rival candidates for the position of Chairman of a Committee received an equality of votes. Members were asked to note that on the date of the Council meeting, there was nothing in the Council's constitution that addressed this point.

The group had discussed different available options. However, Members had agreed that should this stalemate occur again in future, lots should be drawn to determine the successful candidate. The CRWG's preference had been for this to take the form of the successful candidate's name being drawn from a hat.

Members were asked to note that, given the importance of a Chairmen's role on a Committee, the CRWG had felt that the drawing of lots would not be appropriate to determine the permanent appointment of a Chairman for a municipal year. Instead, the CRWG was proposing that, where there was an equality of votes for two rival candidates at a meeting, lots should be drawn to identify a Member who could Chair that meeting only. The appointment of a Chairman for the municipal year would then be revisited at the following meeting of that Committee, when there would be a further opportunity to achieve a majority vote on a permanent appointment.

The proposal involved amending the Council Procedure Rules in the Council's constitution. Therefore, Council was being invited to consider whether to endorse this amendment to the constitution.

Following the presentation of the report, reference was made to the hat that would be used in the process envisaged and questions were raised about whether a specific hat would need to be obtained. However, there was general agreement that this process should be introduced and that the constitution should be amended accordingly.

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

RESOLVED that the Council Procedure Rules in the Council's constitution be amended to require a name to be drawn from a hat to appoint a Chairman to preside at that meeting of a Committee in the event of an equality of votes being returned for two rival candidates for the position of Chairman of the Committee for that municipal year.

34\26

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET

Shared Homelessness Strategy 2026 – 2031

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Strategic Housing presented the Shared Homelessness Strategy 2026 – 2031.

Council was informed that the strategy had been developed collaboratively by all the District Councils in Worcestershire, with the exception of Worcester City Council. Local people who had experienced homelessness had been consulted during the development of the strategy.

The aims of the strategy were to ensure that homelessness was rare, brief and non-recurring. Members were asked to note that homelessness was linked to issues with health and wellbeing as well as wider economic factors.

Preventing homelessness was an overriding objective of the Council. The prevention of homelessness required early intervention and strategies to keep people living in their own homes.

An action plan had been developed for the strategy. This action plan detailed clear priorities and targets which would be monitored over time.

Following the presentation of the report, Members discussed the various potential causes of homelessness. The suggestion was made that medical conditions associated with mental ill health could contribute to homelessness and questions were raised about whether this could be reflected in the strategy. Members were thanked for this suggestion and the Cabinet Member for Planning and Strategic Housing commented that she would raise this suggestion with relevant Council officers.

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

RESOLVED that the Shared Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031 be approved.

(Prior to consideration of this item, Councillors S. Ammar and C. Hotham declared other disclosable interests in respect of the Shared Homelessness Strategy 2026 – 2031 in their capacity as private sector landlords. They remained present during consideration of the item and voted thereon.)

Enforcement and Civil Penalty Policy

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Strategic Housing presented the Enforcement and Civil Penalty Policy report for Council's consideration.

Members were informed that this item followed a report that had been considered at the Annual Council meeting in respect of the Renters' Rights Act 2025. The report proposed that Members agree changes to the Scheme of Delegations in respect of enforcement of civil penalty notices for private rented sector functions. The content of the policy was based on national best practice and proposed proportionate steps underpinned by the legislative position.

The policy addressed a range of issues relating to landlord and tenancy compliance. Areas such as risk and harm were also taken into account.

The proposed delegations to officers would enable them to act on the Council's new legislative powers and duties. This would also incorporate delegations that had previously been agreed in respect of electrical safety. The delegations would ensure that enforcement activities were lawful and proportionate.

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

RESOLVED that

- 1) Delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to update the Policy in line with any legislative or government guidance updates; and
- 2) The Scheme of Delegations be updated to reflect the adoption of the Policy and the new Enforcement powers under the Renters Rights Act 2025 in accordance with the wording set out in Appendix 1 (of the minutes).

35\26

TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON 17TH JUNE 2026

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 17th June 2026 were submitted for Council's consideration.

(Prior to consideration of this item, Councillors S. Ammar and C. Hotham declared other disclosable interests in respect of the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 17th June 2026, in their capacity as private sector landlords. They remained present during consideration of the item.)

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QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The following Questions on Notice were submitted for consideration at the meeting.

Business Prospectus

Councillor S. Ammar addressed the following Question on Notice to the Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development and Enabling:

“Please could you provide an update on the development of the Council’s business prospectus, including when you expect it will be published?”

Members were advised that a written response would be provided to this question.

Traveller Pitches

Councillor J. Clarke addressed the following Question on Notice to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Strategic Housing:

“According to the Council’s own assessment, 17 Gypsy and Traveller pitches are needed by the end of 2028/29 and a further 20 over the period to 2029/2042. How many pitches have been provided since the last assessment?”

Members were advised that a written response would be provided to this question and to subsequent comments made by Councillor Clarke in respect of the subject of his question.

Road Sweeping

Councillor S. Evans addressed the following Question on Notice to the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Community Safety:

“Could you please confirm why each ward is only due to have one visit from the road sweeper each year with some wards not now due another sweep until May 2027?”

Members were advised that a written response would be provided to this question.

Councillor Evans subsequently asked the following supplementary question:

“Given we’re sharing services with Redditch Borough Council, why do they get multiple sweeps when we get the one?”

Members were advised that a written response would be provided to this question.

Parks and Playgrounds

Councillor S. Robinson addressed the following Question on Notice to the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture:

“Please could you set out how the Council is planning to spend the £1.5m allocated in February’s budget to improving parks and playgrounds?”

Members were advised that a written response would be provided to this question.

(The written responses are attached at Appendix 2 to these minutes.)

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MOTIONS ON NOTICE

There were no Motions on Notice for discussion at the meeting.

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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 6.44 p.m.

Chairman