
**Future Local Governance in Bromsgrove: Preparatory Work for
Community Governance Review**

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 is asked to RESOLVE that:

- 1) A budget of £30,000 be approved to fund specialist consultancy services and other associated costs to enable officers to develop a detailed report setting out the terms of reference, timetable and costs required to conduct a Community Governance Review for Council's consideration.**
- 2) If Council were minded to approve recommendation 1, that the £30,000 be allocated from reserves (having regard to the resulting financial consequences set out in section 4 of this report.)**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** At its meeting on 20 May 2026, Council agreed that a cross-party working group should undertake preparatory work to consider future local governance arrangements in Bromsgrove.

- 2.2 The Future Local Governance in Bromsgrove Working Group comprised members of the Electoral Matters Committee and other interested members. The matters considered by the working group included:
- the existing governance arrangements across parished and unparished areas of the District
 - the possible role of neighbourhood area committees within a future unitary authority
 - alternative local governance arrangements
 - the potential creation of (a) parish or town council(s) for currently unparished areas
 - the outcome of a public engagement exercise undertaken during July and August 2026.
- 2.3 Following this work, the working group concluded that there was sufficient justification to undertake further preparatory work towards a Community Governance Review.
- 2.4 Full details of the working group's work, the engagement findings and the matters considered are contained in the report presented to the Electoral Matters Committee on 24 September 2026, which is referenced as a background paper to this report.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 At its meeting on 24 September 2026, the Electoral Matters Committee considered the findings of the Future Local Governance in Bromsgrove Working Group and the proposed next steps.
- 3.2 Members discussed whether the preparatory work could be undertaken internally. The Committee was advised that officers had the necessary knowledge and experience, but that the Electoral Services team did not have sufficient capacity to undertake the work alongside the scheduled Bromsgrove District and Parish as well Redditch Borough elections in May 2027. The work was also specialist in nature and external support would provide additional capacity and an independent perspective.
- 3.3 The Committee considered the proposed initial budget of £30,000 and the work it would support. Members noted that officers would remain responsible for coordinating the project and that the initial funding would contribute towards the specialist support and additional resources needed to develop the terms of reference, timetable and detailed budgets.

- 3.4 Members also discussed the potential costs of conducting a full Community Governance Review and establishing a new parish or town council. It was confirmed that approval of the initial funding would not commit the Council to formally commencing the review. Should Members agree to progress this idea, a further report would be presented to Council at a later date setting out the proposed geographical scope, terms of reference, timetable and full financial implications before that decision was made.
- 3.5 The Committee noted that a Community Governance Review could cover the whole District or a smaller geographical area, with the scope affecting the likely cost. Members would therefore need to establish a clear vision for the area or areas to be included as part of the preparatory work.
- 3.6 Following consideration of the report, the Committee resolved to note the working group's findings and to continue the preparatory work through the established working group. This work will develop the detailed terms of reference, proposed timetable and full budget for Council's consideration.

Proposed approach and next steps

- 3.7 The proposal is to take forward the work in two stages.
- 3.8 In this initial stage, Council is not being asked to formally commence a Community Governance Review. Instead, Council is being asked to approve the initial preparatory work and the funding required to develop a complete proposal for its consideration.
- 3.9 The preparatory work will include developing the detailed terms of reference and timetable for the review. The terms of reference will provide the formal framework for the review and will need to define its purpose, geographical scope and the matters to be considered.
- 3.10 The preparatory work will also establish:
- the full budget required to undertake a Community Governance Review
 - the officer and specialist resources required
 - the proposed consultation arrangements
 - the potential financial implications of establishing (a) new parish or town council(s).
- 3.11 Once this work has been completed, a further report will be presented to Council. This will allow Council to consider the proposed terms of

reference, timetable and full financial implications together before deciding whether to formally commence a review.

- 3.12 If Council approves a review at that later stage, the terms of reference will be published, and the formal Community Governance Review will begin.

Timetable

- 3.13 The preparatory work would need to proceed promptly. The Government's Local Government Reorganisation programme is currently on pause and has the potential under various scenarios to impact any considered subsequent Community Governance Reviews to a lesser or greater extent depending on the timetable for LGR in Worcestershire. A CGR that is underway during the LGR transitional period would involve engagement with the shadow council.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 An initial budget of £30,000 is requested to undertake the preparatory stage of the work.
- 4.2 This estimate has been developed following initial consideration of the likely cost of specialist consultancy support. It would allow a consultant to be involved from the outset in developing the scope, terms of reference, timetable and detailed financial requirements for the review.
- 4.3 The funding would also provide for additional Electoral Services resources where required. This is necessary because the preparatory work will take place alongside the delivery of scheduled elections in Bromsgrove and Redditch in May 2027.
- 4.4 Once the preparatory work has been completed, a further report detailing the proposed terms of reference, timetable and funding required will be presented to Council for its consideration. This will enable Council to consider the scope, timescale and full financial implications before deciding whether to formally commence a Community Governance Review.
- 4.5 The £30,000 does not represent the full cost of conducting a Community Governance Review or establishing (a) parish or town council(s). Those costs will be assessed during the preparatory stage and figures will be presented to Council as part of any later report (as described at paragraph 3.11.)

- 4.6 Members will note that the likely costs of conducting a full Community Governance Review and establishing (a) new parish or town council(s) can only be indicative at this stage. This is because they will depend on the geographical scope of the review, the consultation arrangements and the final recommendations.
- 4.7 Based on the costs of reviews undertaken by other authorities and an assumption that the Council may need to write directly to electors who currently reside in unparished areas (approximately 28,000 electors), an initial planning estimate of around £60,000 has been identified for conducting a full Community Governance Review. This would be in addition to the £30,000 requested through this report for the preparatory stage.
- 4.8 If the review resulted in the creation of a new parish or town council, an indicative sum up to £150,000 may also be required to support its establishment. The actual amount would depend on the size and structure of a new Parish/Town Council, the services and assets involved, staffing requirements and other initial operating costs.
- 4.9 On this basis, the overall cost of the preparatory work, the full review and the potential establishment of a new parish or town council could be in excess of £240,000. This is an early planning estimate only. However, Council is being asked to approve £30,000 at this stage, with more detailed costs and proposed funding arrangements to be presented alongside the terms of reference before any review is formally commenced.
- 4.10 It should be noted that the Council's Earmarked Reserves are currently being reviewed as part of a wider budget review including revenue spend and savings, income generation and capital programme affordability. Currently that review is due to be concluded by November 2026. Committing the Council to unfunded expenditure that relies on an allocation from reserves would not be considered financially sustainable. Consequently, in approving the recommendations in this report, Council must acknowledge that reductions in service spending may need to be delivered to replace any allocations made from reserves.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The decision sought at this stage relates only to the preparatory work required to develop the proposed terms of reference, timetable and full budget. Approval of the recommendations would not formally commence a Community Governance Review.

5.2 A Community Governance Review would formally commence following approval and publication of its terms of reference. A further report will therefore be presented to Council before the review begins.

5.3 Any Community Governance Review must be undertaken in accordance with Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, relevant statutory guidance and the timetable set out in the published terms of reference.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

6.1 At the time of writing, local government reorganisation is paused, and the future timetable had not been confirmed by Government.

6.2 The Council's present working assumption is that elections to any shadow unitary authority will be deferred until May 2028. This remains subject to change.

6.3 On that assumption, there may be sufficient time for Bromsgrove District Council to undertake and complete a Community Governance Review before a future transitional period, including making any resulting Reorganisation of Community Governance Order.

6.4 To preserve that opportunity, the preparatory work will need to proceed promptly, with the intention of presenting the proposed terms of reference and full financial information to Council in early 2027.

6.5 If the Government's timetable changes, the proposed timetable and the Council's ability to complete or implement the review will need to be reconsidered. The work will therefore need to remain flexible and take account of any further legislation, guidance or transitional arrangements.

Relevant Council Priority

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

Climate Change Implications

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

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.8 There are no direct equalities implications arising from the preparatory work recommended in this report.
- 6.9 Equalities and accessibility will need to be considered when developing the proposed terms of reference and consultation arrangements for any future Community Governance Review. This will include ensuring that residents and stakeholders have a fair opportunity to participate and that consultation information is accessible and understandable.
- 6.10 A further report, should one be agreed to request approval to commence a Community Governance Review, will consider the equalities implications in more detail and, where appropriate, will be supported by an equality impact assessment.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 At the time of writing, the timetable for local government reorganisation remains uncertain. Any change could affect the Council's ability to complete and implement a Community Governance Review. This will be managed by progressing the preparatory work promptly and keeping the Government's timetable under review.
- 7.2 Both the delivery of scheduled elections and the conduct of a Community Governance Review are statutory processes with separate legal and procedural requirements. Insufficient capacity could affect the Council's ability to deliver either process lawfully and effectively. The proposed specialist support and additional Electoral Services resources are therefore required to ensure that both workstreams are appropriately resourced.
- 7.3 The full cost and scope of the review are not yet known. The preparatory stage will establish these before Council is asked to decide whether to formally commence the review.
- 7.4 Approval of the preparatory work does not commit the Council to any particular outcome. Any future recommendations will be informed by the statutory consultation and the evidence gathered during the review.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background Papers

Report: Electoral Matters Committee 24 September 2026 'Findings of the Future Local Governance in Bromsgrove working group and Finstall Parish CGR' [Electoral Matters Committee Report 24th September](#)

Minutes of the Electoral Matters Committee 24th September
Link: [Minutes 24th September 2026](#)

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL
2026

14 October

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	05/10/26
Assistant Director	Claire Felton, Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services	02/10/26
Financial Services	James Walton, Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer	05/10/26
Legal Services	Nicola Cummings – Principal Solicitor - Governance	29/09/26