

Bromsgrove Centres Strategy 2023 - 2026



**Better
Bromsgrove**



**Bromsgrove
District Council**

www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

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Introduction

The habits and preferences of how communities use their town and local centres has been changing over many years now. These changes have accelerated during and following the Covid pandemic, particularly the lockdowns. With the added pressure of the current economic climate its vital that like centres across the country Bromsgrove establishes ways to reinvigorate its centres to create vibrant, sustainable, diverse, and welcoming environments for residents, workers, and visitors.

Bromsgrove District Council has recognised the need for a centres management function since 2017. The key focus of this role is to develop and implement centre strategies and Town Centre management initiatives that aim to improve the vitality and viability of the various centres, to identify and co-ordinate opportunities, to inject a new vibrancy and energy into Bromsgrove centres, strengthen communication and support local businesses.

This strategy is based upon eight centres across the district working to those boundary's outlined within the Bromsgrove Local Plan. The strategy will cover a three-year period with an action plan which will be reviewed annually.

The eight Bromsgrove centres managed as part of this strategy are:

- Bromsgrove Town Centre
- Rubery Village
- Barnt Green Village
- Hagley Village
- Catshill
- Wythall
- Alvechurch Village
- Aston Fields

This strategy will also complement and support the work of the Parish Councils, Business and Trader Associations and other key stakeholders in each of the centres with a focus on developing shared ambitions and actions. On the back of considerable investment made across the Bromsgrove centres the Bromsgrove Centres Strategy 2023-2026 sets out the vision and aspirations for the eight centres over the next three years. This strategy is flexible enough to adapt to the changing landscape of the district and surrounding developments whilst positively promoting Bromsgrove as a place to visit, work and live. This strategy is a roadmap; bringing together existing proposals and latest ideas to provide a clear, inspirational document supported by businesses and partners.

Purpose

The purpose of this Strategy is to:

- Understand the baseline performance of the Town Centre and local centres and the opportunities for change.
- Outline a vision for the Town Centre that is supported by key objectives.
- Identify the priorities for improvement and regeneration in the Town Centre and local centres in line with the key objectives.
- Develop an action plan that outlines the priorities needed and the mechanisms for delivery, including a co-ordinated Town Centre partnership approach that identifies the responsibilities of the District Council alongside other public sector partners, local Town Centre businesses and the local community; and
- Establish how performance will be managed and monitored.

Setting the Context

The British high street is set against an unfavourable economic backdrop which requires new, innovative solutions. Supply chain issues, skills and recruitment, energy and public health crisis resulting from Covid, and climate change are all challenges that are contributing to high inflation, a steep drop in living standards and reduced household spending. This position is not unique to Bromsgrove and the role of Councils in providing strategic place-based leadership is widely endorsed. The Government and the Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities has recently set out how the government wants every local Council to have a long-term vision in 'a ten, or twenty-year plan' for their Town Centres and that High Streets are an area 'which local Councils can, are and must lead.' The Town Centre had already experienced challenging market conditions prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, with the difficult trading conditions being further exacerbated by the current economic conditions and the wider impact of Ukraine conflict.

The Council has been responding to High Street challenges for several years with business support, provision of the outdoor retail market, events, and larger projects such as the new public realm in the High Street completed in 2014, Townscape Heritage Initiative and partial redevelopment of the Market Hall Site known as the Birdbox completed in 2020. These interventions have functioned as a platform to secure further funding for Town Centre regeneration through the Levelling Up Fund, detailed later in the Regeneration Section.

The main five areas of focus for the strategy going forward are:

1. Breathing new life into empty buildings
2. Supporting high street businesses
3. Improving the public realm
4. Creating safe and clean spaces
5. Celebrating pride in local communities

This strategy will be implemented over the next three years through the role of the Centres Manager whilst collaborating with stakeholders, elected members and internal service areas. The role places a real emphasis on co-ordination and communication and to manage expectations so businesses are clear about how and when the Council can support them for e.g. a business may be struggling with high rents which if in private ownership the council would be unable to reduce however as part of the centres management function there would be open dialogue with landlords and letting agents to look at comparable rental rates and signpost businesses to any assistance available.

Consultation

The following engagements have been undertaken:

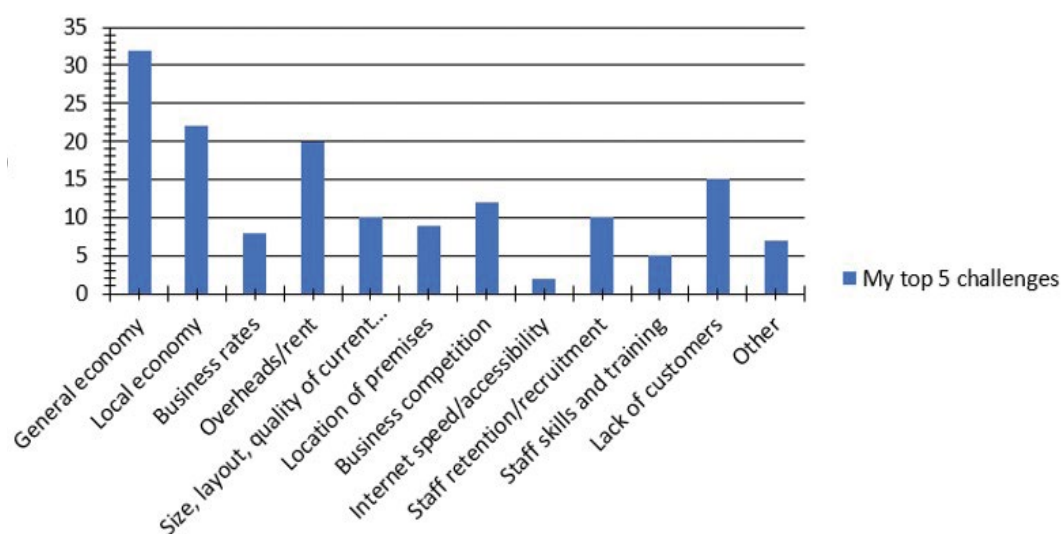
- BDC Council 'Business Consultation Survey (October 2022)
- Feedback from high street businesses (July 2022 – ongoing)
- Internal officer/service evidence gathering (Sept 2022 – ongoing).

Business Consultation Survey (October 2022)

The survey conducted in October included operational questions about the businesses themselves, challenges they face moving forward and their opinions on the centre in which they are located. The feedback from this was to ensure the priorities of the Council align with the businesses where possible and how we can drive footfall and vibrancy of the centres over the next 3 years. The positive from the results received are they support the actions put forward by the Centres Manager and projects proposed for external funding such as the shop front improvements programme and addressing empty properties.

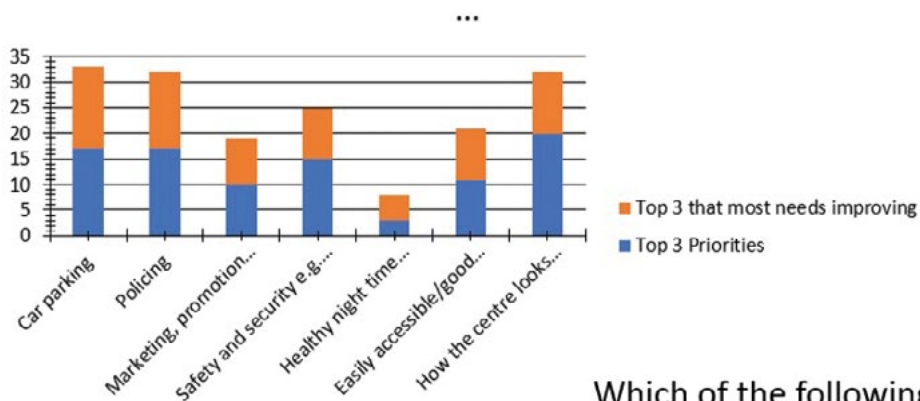
Results Headlines

What are the top 5 challenges your business is currently facing? Please select up to 5 options only from the following list and please leave the rest blank.

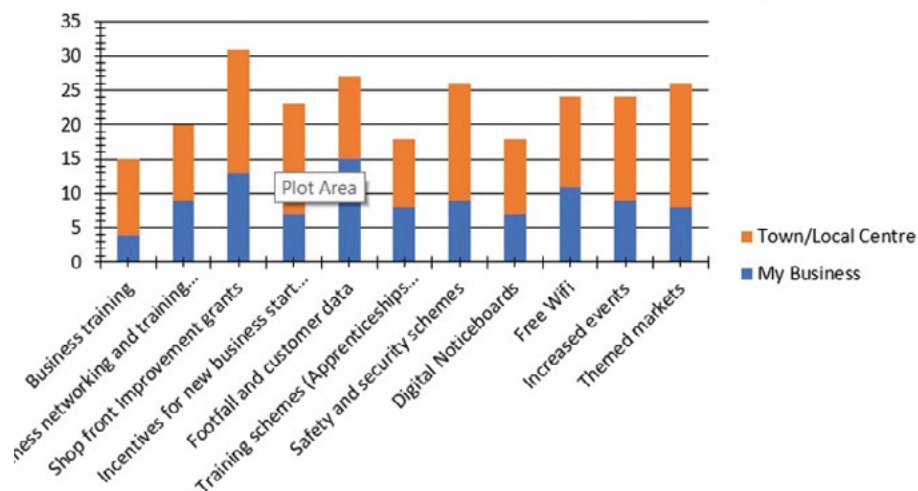


Thinking generally about the Town/Local Centre, which of the following would you consider to be a top priority and which most need improving?

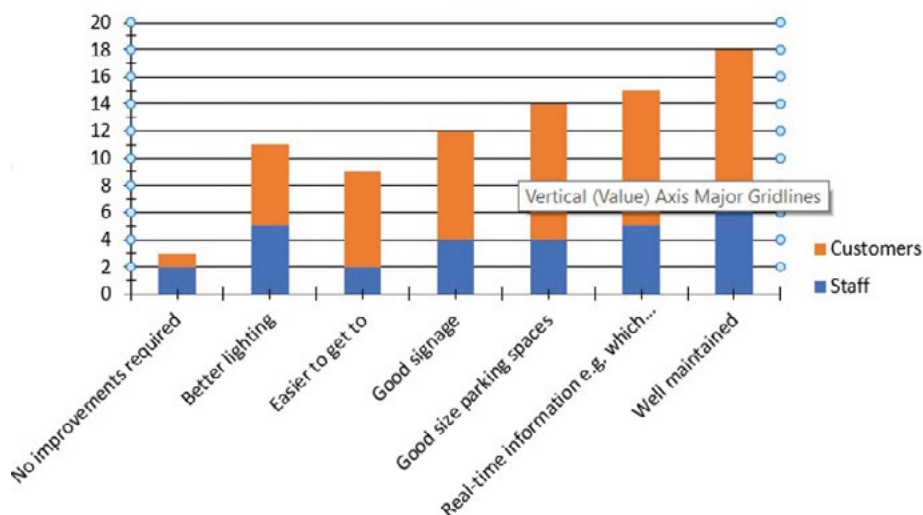
Please select up to 3 options only from each column.



Which of the following improvements do you think would benefit your business and/or the Town/Local Centre? Please tick all that apply



What, if anything, could be done to improve car parking in Bromsgrove Town Centre for both your staff and customers? Please tick all that apply



Centres Enhancement

Business feedback through the Centres Manager and survey has shown that whilst businesses are generally supportive of the large regeneration projects and improvements, operational issues on the ground such as street cleansing and addressing empty shops/derelict buildings rank highly. The High Street particularly needs to have a 'positive feel' where both businesses and customer feel safe, secure and the high street is an inviting place to spend time.

"Digital noticeboards sounds like a progressive idea, however I feel that addressing the safety and security within the town first would be of benefit. It would be very disheartening to see money spent on ideas like this to then see them being damaged or vandalised."

"The high street is a mess - no cleaners, not enough bins and some businesses always get invited to things but no other businesses."

Business felt that the centres were generally a safe place during business hours however moving into the early evening/late night where there was an evening economy this changed with issues of antisocial behaviour, noise issues and parking problems.

Impact of the Multi story closing, car parks being filled with businesses/staff with no availability for customers and rates were raised through the survey and businesses through the centre management.

Communication and Networking

This was key for all centres with lack of information and events being advertised last minute as key areas for improvement.

"People stay at event and don't come down to us! And events planned down Worcester Road are always cancelled or permission is last minute so no planning or advertising can happen."

"More needs to be done with the business owners and shop managers so we are all working together and not against each other - regular meetings should take place to discuss issues and find out what plans are being discussed for the Town Centre."

"Communication would help support businesses in Bromsgrove and talking with Bromsgrove businesses as a group on a quarterly basis would also help."

This is not a fixed piece of work and will need constant review and evolution through regular communication and consultation processes with Ward Councillors, Parish Councils and local business and community representatives. Business and Customer Surveys will be conducted annually and reviewed as part of the action plan.

Vision and Strategic Objectives

Over the next three years we will work together to make all Bromsgrove centres a place that attract more businesses, shoppers, workers, residents, and visitors who can enjoy a varied and eclectic mix of outlets and venues. Our streets will be attractive, clean, and well connected in style and quality. Together we will deliver a strategic and operational plan of economic development initiatives, public realm improvements, events, and marketing promotions. Bromsgrove centres will be well prepared to respond to market challenges and fully capitalise on investment. The Bromsgrove Centres Strategy will be delivered through a network of action plans that interlink all the centres, respond to data from the Bromsgrove District Council Town Centre Healthcheck, share best practise and bring a new connectivity between Bromsgrove District town and villages, without losing their individual and unique characteristics.

Our towns and villages are at the heart of the community and as such their vitality and economic future should be supported, promoted, and enabled.

Outcomes

Accessibility

That Bromsgrove Centres are easily accessible by all sectors of the community.

Safety and Security

All Bromsgrove District Centres are a safe place for everyone to visit, live and work.

Marketing and Promotion

All centres have a clear branding, coherent marketing strategy and events calendar.

Markets

In addition to developing the Bromsgrove Town Centre outdoor market host one-off, seasonal and specialist markets throughout the year.

Business Support

Businesses have a clear and efficient pathway to business and grant support.

Public Realm

All our centres are clean and attractive with a high-quality environment and clearly defined gateways.

Historic Environment and Heritage

High quality and innovative urban design that protects the integrity of our centre's heritage assets and historical environment.

Climate Change

Aim towards reducing our Carbon footprint within the centres.

The Future

Secure external funding to support the plans of all centres.

Progress a Business Improvement District proposal for Bromsgrove Town Centre.

Regeneration

In March 2021, the government launched the Levelling Up Fund to support high value local investment priorities, including local transport schemes, urban regeneration projects and cultural assets. The amount of funding that each area receives was 'determined on a competitive basis to ensure value for money' and in November 2021, the government approved a £14,492,000 grant for Bromsgrove. The grant will support the redevelopment of the former Market Hall site and pre-development works (demolition and remediation) on the Windsor Street site to enable a future site redevelopment.

Former Market Hall Site

The redevelopment proposals for the site will deliver a landmark building offering flexible office space, business co-working spaces as well as a food and beverage at ground level. The project will also provide a facility for hosting exhibitions and cultural community events.

The design phase for the project has already commenced with planning submission expected in Spring 2023, works on site are programmed to commence in Oct 2023 with an anticipated duration of one year.

Windsor Street Site Redevelopment

This key abandoned brownfield site has been vacant for six years, the Levelling Up Fund element will remove derelict buildings and ensure the site is remediated by March 2024 to make way for future development.

Public Realm

The two development projects will also deliver associated public realm improvements on the High Street South and Chapel Street, helping to improve accessibility and connectivity between the sites and within the Town Centre.

The projects complement each other and represent a coherent set of interventions, as part of a holistic approach by addressing the following common objectives:

- Regeneration and repurposing of two prime Town Centre sites by introducing new uses (commercial, residential and leisure) other than retail.
- Increase Town Centre footfall by bringing more people to work, live and spend time in the centre.
- Improve Town Centre accessibility for pedestrians through public realm improvements and better connectivity between the former Market Hall site, Windsor Street site and the High Street.

School Drive Site (Former Dolphin Centre)

The Dolphin Centre site has been identified as the prime location for residential development, with potential office, workspace and a small scale F&B provision. The Site development options propose a high-quality, green, sustainable and pedestrian-friendly residential neighbourhood on School Drive and improved public realm addressing the needs of the future residents and users.

Bromsgrove Town Centre

Bromsgrove Town Centre is a key location within the Bromsgrove District providing a focus for retail, tourism, leisure, community and cultural activities. It is an important economic driver providing employment, business and development opportunities. Bromsgrove has extremely good road links and benefits from its central location and excellent connectivity to adjacent economies and markets.

Bromsgrove is a traditional market town and for the most part is an attractive and vibrant place to visit and work in. The main High Street is the prime retail area of the Town Centre and there is a good mix of national and independent retailers. The town also boasts unique and diverse secondary shopping areas in particular The Strand and Worcester Road.

A rich concentration of independent retailers and considerable investment the National Lottery Townscape Heritage Initiative has changed the dynamic and image of these areas and offers strong promotional opportunities that will encourage visitors to explore areas of the town otherwise sometimes overlooked.

Despite considerable investment made on the High Street previously Bromsgrove Town Centre will benefit from further regeneration and enhancement. This includes diversifying the overall mix of uses within the centre, including the provision of new homes, entertainment and leisure venues and strengthening the retail offer in the prime area whilst protecting and maintaining the diversity of secondary retail.



Arriving at and moving around the Town Centre easily and efficiently is also key to the town's success. Enhancements to public transport, cycling and walking links, pedestrian accessibility and improved connectivity to Bromsgrove railway station would help its legibility - making sure the Town Centre is easy and convenient to access.

A strong and confident approach to reshaping structures with fresh ideas and approaches to the management of Bromsgrove Town Centre will send out the message that the town is in a good position to move forward and capitalise on the regeneration taking place in around the centre.

This strategy will align with the Bromsgrove Town Centre 2040 Vision to boost the delivery of high-quality housing, provide new flexible and multifunctional workspaces for creative industries, upgrade recreational spaces to increase visitor 'dwell' time, and enhance existing public realm and green infrastructure.

Access

Bromsgrove Town Centre is relatively compact with little change in levels and is interconnected with streets of defined character and history. The bus station is located within the Town Centre and easily accessible along with car parks predominantly Bromsgrove District Council owned. A key challenge for Bromsgrove Town Centre is to help people easily find their way around. Pedestrian and traffic barriers and poor “waymarking” does not encourage the visitor to “explore” the Town Centre.

Access is crucial to retaining the vitality of the Town Centre and the challenge is to maintain a balance between provision of quality public transport links and facilities, good car, including taxis and business delivery access along with well maintained pedestrian and cycle routes, access for those with limited mobility and children. The challenge now and in the next few years is dealing with increased road use, the impact of major development and highways work and promoting more sustainable methods of travel.

The High Street has benefited from significant investment with £2m of funding spend on new public realm. However, the quality of public realm as identified in other areas is poor in places. The experience of moving around the Town Centre is not attractive or interesting as it could be. Bromsgrove Railway station, whilst operationally delivering passengers close to the Town Centre the links on how to access the Town Centre and the approaching environment requires improvement, creating a true and attractive gateway.

Parking provision is an important part of the overall offer of the Town Centre. It must be high quality, safe and convenient for people arriving in Bromsgrove Town Centre. During 2022 works to improve and modernise parking services have increased payment options with a Cashless Payment System.

Outputs

- **Access and Parking**

We will continue to monitor parking and access for both business and customers throughout centres and reviews carried out as required.

- **Signage and Waymarking**

As part of the “declutter” and public realm works we will develop a clear strategy for signage, including digital signage and waymarking in the town to make it easy for people to get where they want to be.

- **Cycling Routes**

We will consider where cycle routes can be created and existing ones promoted to encourage cycling into the Town Centre, adopting a healthy lifestyle and reducing the number of cars accessing the Town Centre.

- **Public Transport**

Receive data from public transport providers and partnerships to monitor services and accessibility to the Town Centre to support customers and businesses.

- **Access For All Strategy**

We will work with and consult all sectors of the community including the Engagement and Equalities Partnership (Bromsgrove) to ensure all developments and improvements promote and provide access for all.

Making it easier for everyone to move around and explore Bromsgrove Town Centre

Safety and Security

Historically Bromsgrove Town Centres night time economy has not enjoyed a positive reputation and attracted negative press. A key priority of the Bromsgrove Centres Strategy is to support and enhance the night time economy offer.

The Bromsgrove town night time economy comprises of restaurants, bistro, bars, pubs which bring life and vitality to the Town Centre during the evening and into the night.

It is important that the strategy sets out ways in which the evening and night time economy can be strengthened and extends its appeal to a broad range of customers.

The relationship between the night-time and retail economy will be strengthened by improved communication and initiatives that provide all businesses with the confidence and assurance that it is safe and economically viable to do business in Bromsgrove Town Centre.

Through intelligent and pro-active interventions we can ensure that the Town Centre can move from the day-time to the night-time economy in a seamless transition to encourage visitors to stay in the town.

Outputs

- **Bromsgrove Town Centre Management Task Group**

This partnership brings together key decision makers including West Mercia Police, Worcestershire Regulatory Services, CCTV, Licensing and Community Safety to implement initiatives to tackle crime and positively promote the Town Centre.

- **Licensing SAVI Award**

Licensing Security and Vulnerability Initiative - Licensing SAVI is a self-

assessment tool designed to help the owners and operators of licensed premises provide a safe and secure environment for their managers, staff, customers and local communities and promoting its four Licensing Objectives:

- The Prevention of Crime and Disorder
 - Public Safety
 - The Prevention of Public Nuisance
 - The Protection of Children from Harm
- **Bromsgrove Town Centre Pubwatch Scheme**
Continued support for the Pubwatch scheme to promote a safe and vibrant night-time economy using the DISC platform.
 - **Bromsgrove Radio Link Scheme**
Town Centre radio link scheme will be upgraded to a digital system to improve and strengthen the sharing of intelligence and reporting crime to the Police with support from CCTV.
 - **Taxi Review**
Review the taxi provision in the Town Centre to make sure our visitors can get home quickly and safely.
 - **Taxi Marshal**
Introduction of a Taxi Marshal scheme to assist in the safe and swift dispersal of customers and visitors on a Friday and Saturday night.
 - **Tackling Crime and Anti-social Behaviour**
Partnership approach to new and bespoke initiatives to deal with existing and emerging issues around crime and anti-social behaviour.
 - **Bromsgrove Street Pastors Scheme**
Support the Street Pastors scheme as an integral part of the towns commitment to customers care and welfare in the Town Centre on a Friday and Saturday night.
 - **Business Training**
Provide access to training for businesses including conflict management and cyber crime.

**Everyone has a safe, happy evening time visit
and experience in our venues**

Markets and Festivals



Good quality and vibrant markets provide competition and choice for consumers. A busy and well-used on street market can be a good indicator of the vitality of the Town Centre. The market should provide platform for local enterprises to start, blossom and grow, adding to the sustainable mix of shops and services in Bromsgrove Town Centre.

The operation of Bromsgrove Town Centre Outdoor Market was brought back 'in-house' in 2018 and is now managed directly through the council. Since 2018 the market has undergone infrastructure improvements and the introduction of new policies and procedures.



The market has successfully returned to Bromsgrove High Street and survived the Covid pandemic where other local and national markets closed, this has resulted in the increase in demand for market stalls in Bromsgrove.

To complement the outdoor market and provide a new diversity to the Town Centre themed markets, food festivals and niche markets will be piloted to inject energy and colour into the Town Centre.

We have the opportunity to build on our cultural mix in Bromsgrove to build a unique offer and tap into the potential for the local community to become involved in shaping and delivering themed markets and festivals.

Outputs

- **Love Your Market**
The Love Your Market campaign run by NABMA is a two week campaign.
- **Outdoor Market**
Continue to grow the existing market to offer a mix of goods and food.
- **Themed Markets**
Provided one off themed market throughout the year.
- **Bromsgrove Christmas Festival**
Annual Christmas themed market and entertainment.

Mixing traditional with the new will create vibrant and exciting markets

Business Support

Bromsgrove Town Centre has many advantages as a place to start up and grow a business. With its excellent location and demographics Bromsgrove District is one of the highest areas in the country for attracting new independent entrepreneur's business start ups.

It is important that the Town Centre plan recognises the need for young thriving businesses to receive a wide menu of business support including marketing and promotion, grants and where to easily access information and help. Mentoring and support can be critical, especially for start-ups and young businesses. The provision of practical and accessible support, advice and guidance in specific areas has proved to be of huge benefit.

North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) look after and support businesses of all ages and stages across North Worcestershire with everything from grants to finding premises. Bromsgrove District Council is also founding member of the Local Economic Partnerships for both Birmingham & Solihull and for Worcestershire.

The strong partnership between NWEDR, Bromsgrove District Council and the Bromsgrove Centres Manager has established a clear route by which businesses can access information promptly to support the ongoing success of their business.

Partners will also work closely with local organisations and groups to develop a menu of business support for centres businesses including affordable bespoke training packages.

Outputs

- **Menu Of Provision**

Promote and sign post businesses to training and grant opportunities.

**Independent businesses are the trend setters
and creative entrepreneurs of our centres**

Public Realm

The public realm comprises of the gateways, streets, walkways and open spaces within the Town Centre. The public realm can be the first impression a visitor experiences and influences the enjoyment of the visitor experience. It creates a sense of place and identity and offers an attractive setting for a variety of activities whether it is sitting in the sunshine enjoying a coffee, attending events and markets or simply passing through.

Tourism, culture and the arts can make a significant contribution to the Town Centre and are key components of the economic prosperity of Bromsgrove. The involvement of artists and the creative sector from the outset of the design of any proposal, in the creation of both place and space, can transform the identity and quality of the design, broker new community engagement initiatives and support the importance of the creative industries.

Heritage and arts trails for example can be used to interpret the heritage of Bromsgrove Town Centre including notable buildings. We cannot underestimate the importance of our public realm in creating a character and positive image for Bromsgrove Town Centre.

Outputs

- **Public Realm Plan**

Achieve enhanced connectivity with the regeneration sites through a public realm improvement scheme.

- **Declutter**

Adopt a co-ordinated approach to the design of the public realm in Bromsgrove Town Centre to address the mix of materials, street furniture and planting schemes.

- **Design Quality**

Adopt a unified palette of street furniture and design to create a welcoming first impression.

- **Gateways**

To be improved to create attractive, defined and welcoming approaches to the Town Centre.

- **Biodiversity**

Will be a priority where practicable and achievable to maintain and restore the character of the Town Centre. Creation and protection of environmental assets.

- **Empty Properties and Shopfront Improvements**

Develop a strategy and grant programme to address the visual and economic impact of derelict properties and eyesores, pop up shops, art projects and promotion of new business opportunities

- **Enforcement**

Use the appropriate enforcement action to tackle long standing issues and offences which detract from the attractiveness and cleanliness of the Town Centre including derelict buildings.

- **Business Waste Management and Recycling**

Monitor and review business waste management arrangements in the Town Centre.

We will create a simple, unfussy, yet creative and colourful public realm to strengthen the identity of each centre



Historic Environment and Town Centre Heritage

The protection of the town's heritage is a key component of the plan and statutory protection is afforded to listed buildings and Conservation Areas within the Town Centre.



The established street pattern of many parts of the Town Centre contribute significantly to the character and identity of Bromsgrove which in turn enhances the attractiveness of the Town Centre for visitors, tourists, existing residents and workers.

In order to protect heritage and conservation interests the Town Centre management structure will support the refurbishment and reuse of listed buildings and enhancement to the public realm to make the most of our strong historical features. Bromsgrove Town Centre also boasts unique areas that are connected to the main High Street, in particular Worcester Road. We will seek to create a strong identity and brand through improved signage and public realm improvements that will draw visitors to the areas of strong historical and heritage interest.

An example of improvements already made was through the Bromsgrove Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI), this was a £1.6 million heritage-led regeneration grant scheme that ended in 2019. It aimed to contribute to the regeneration of the town centre by working in partnership with local businesses and partners to repair and enhance historic properties in a specific area of High Street and Worcester Road, using traditional techniques, methods of construction and high quality natural or traditional materials. The THI was jointly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Worcestershire County Council and Bromsgrove District Council.

We intend to build on this success and investment to protect and enhance our historical assets and celebrate this medieval market town.

Outputs

- **Planning**

Support the development of partnerships with local businesses to share information and consult on planning applications so that they share the town's vision and Bromsgrove District Council Local Plan for the protection of historical assets.

- **Interpretation**

As part of the public realm improvements and marketing of the area consider the installation of historical interpretation in paved areas and as mobile apps to celebrate the town's rich history and heritage.

- **Local Historical Societies and Community Groups**

Supported and involved in the promotion of the history and heritage of the Town Centre.

- **Events**

That celebrates our rich historical assets and key anniversaries.

- **Interactive Heritage Trail**

Inclusion of an interactive heritage trail using traditional signage, information and new technologies to bring history "alive".

Protect and celebrate our heritage assets and history whilst delivering high quality urban design



Local Centres

Alvechurch

Alvechurch Village Centre is a designated Conservation Area and host to a number of listed buildings originating from the 15th century.

The Village benefits from good transport links including the north/south A441 and the east/west M42, by rail the Redditch/Lichfield cross-city service, and the Worcester Birmingham canal.

Alvechurch Village has a cluster of businesses with a strong local offer including fresh produce, chip shop, cafe including a community run youth cafe, pubs, Parish Council offices and complementary services. Alvechurch Village has a strong historical identity and the square lends itself to the development of events and projects that reflect the areas heritage and celebrates the community spirit of the Village.



Outputs

- **Events**

In partnership with the Parish Council, local community groups and businesses develop the events offer.

- **Public Realm**

Improvement of the public realm to include car parking and access where possible.

- **Communication**

Ensure effective communication channels with the businesses and through Alvechurch Parish Council.

- **Business Support**

Businesses have a clear and efficient pathway to business support through the Business Growth Advisor.

Aston Fields

Aston Fields is a small village in the south of Bromsgrove and the site of Bromsgrove Railway Station. The village centre has become a hub of independents in recent years and hosts a variety of eateries, shops and pubs. There is a strong community spirit within the village and several events have been hosted in collaboration with the community group and businesses.



Outputs

- **Events**
In partnership with the Love Aston Fields Community Group and businesses develop the events offer.
- **Public Realm**
Improvement of the public realm to include car parking and access where possible.
- **Communication**
Ensure effective communication channels with the businesses.
- **Business Support**
Businesses have a clear and efficient pathway to business support through the Business Growth Advisor.

Barnt Green Village

Barnt Green Village retains a true rural feel surrounded by green belt land and the Lickey Hills Country Park. Strong business confidence and demand in the Village is evident by the lack of empty retail premises, well established businesses, and quick turnaround of void properties and relocation of existing businesses to larger units.

The public realm is generally of good quality with planters and hanging baskets being provided by Barnt Green Village Parish Council and maintained by businesses and volunteers. A key strength of the Village is the Barnt Green Railway Station. The Cross City Line Redditch to Lichfield and the Birmingham to Worcester via Bromsgrove Line offer opportunities to further promote the Village as a destination for its local offer in combination with a “Barnt Green Day Out” theme with popular local walking routes. The key priorities identified in Barnt Green Village are marketing and promotion including events.



Outputs

- **Events**
In partnership with the Parish Council, local community groups and businesses develop the events offer.
- **Public Realm**
Improvement of the public realm to include car parking and access where possible.
- **Communication**
Ensure effect communication channels with the businesses and through Barnt Green Parish Council.
- **Business Support**
Businesses have a clear and efficient pathway to business support through the Business Growth Advisor.

Catshill

With nearby access to the M5 and M42 motorways, Catshill is within commuting distance by car to both Worcester and Birmingham and as a result the population of the village has grown in recent years.

The local community is served by Catshill Centre, a parade of shops and services nestled in the community with a very local offer. Nationals such as Spar and Co-op have a presence, however the parade is predominantly independents and mainly fast food outlets, produce, a chemist and tattoo parlour.



There are no vacant premises within the parade of shops and businesses appear to be well established.

Many of the shop frontages are privately owned and offer an opportunity to engage the businesses in a public realm plan to improve the overall appearance of the Centre. The Village Hall sits opposite the shops and is widely used by the local community and voluntary groups. Again, this offers an opportunity for businesses to develop new events and establish a relationship with venues.

With its rich history and heritage and local appeal Catshill centre is well placed to strengthen its appeal and appearance to ensure the long-term sustainability of the area.

Outputs

- **Marketing and Promotion**

Develop a marketing and promotion plan for Catshill under the Better Bromsgrove branding for a co-ordinated and coherent approach.

- **Events**

In partnership with the Parish Council, local community groups and businesses develop the events offer.

- **Public Realm**

We will develop a public realm plan to further improve the overall appearance of the Catshill centre.

Hagley

The village lies at the foot of the Clent Hills and is served by its own railway station on the Kidderminster to Birmingham line. Hagley Village is a centre that offers a wide range of independents.

A strong community spirit and local pride is evident through the quality of public realm and presentation of shop frontages and window displays.

There are very few empty units and those that do become available are occupied quickly. The village is also served by key services, community centre, Church, Library, and benefits from playing fields that host a variety of events.



Outputs

- **Events**

In partnership with the Parish Council, local community groups and businesses develop the events offer.

- **Public Realm**

Improvement of the public realm to include car parking and access.

- **Communication**

Ensure effective communication channels with the businesses and through Hagley Parish Council.

- **Business Support**

Businesses have a clear and efficient pathway to business support through the Business Growth Advisor.

Rubery

Rubery Village is split between the Bromsgrove District of Worcestershire and Birmingham itself. The main arterial route to the South West the A38 leads from Birmingham city centre through Rubery, Bromsgrove and Worcester.

Rubery Village is a traditional local centre which has the presence of key national retailers alongside a strong and diverse mix of independent businesses.



The challenges for Rubery Village is the lack of large scale floorspace to attract national retailers or mixed use, the Longbridge development and Great Park which has a strong leisure offer.

The public realm in Rubery Village is poor and as most business frontages are privately owned difficult to manage. Previous audits have been carried out in association with the County Council however this does need revisiting with short-, medium- and long-term solutions for public realm enhancements.

Outputs

- **Rubery Village Public Realm**
- **Car Parking Review**
Review the car parking arrangements in Rubery Village.
- **Rubery Business Watch Scheme**
Implementation of the above scheme using the DISC platform.
- **Business Support**
Businesses have a clear and efficient pathway to business support through the Business Growth Advisor.
- **Communication**
Ensure effect communication channels with the businesses and through Rubery Village Association
- **Rubery Village Business Association**
Support the RVBA to widen their remit and membership to strengthen business communication. Improve communication with BDC through the Centres Manager. Regular network events.
- **Events**
In partnership with the RVBA, local community groups and businesses develop the events offer.

Wythall

Wythall is situated in the north east corner of Worcestershire within the District of Bromsgrove and the County of Worcestershire. The village shares borders with Solihull and Birmingham with a population of over 12,000.

Wythall Parish Council produces a twice-yearly newsletter which is informative and promotes a wide range of community initiatives and achievements indicating a strong local pride and community spirit.

Wythall has a small centre of shops with a very local offer. The Bromsgrove Centres Manager provides a point of contact for businesses and Wythall Parish Council for advice and support.



Outputs

- Bromsgrove Centre's Manager to be a point of contact for businesses and Wythall Parish Council.
- **Business Support**
Businesses have a clear and efficient pathway to business support through the Business Growth Advisor.

Action Plan and Responsibilities 2023/24

Bromsgrove Town Centre					
Objective	Output	Delivery Responsibilities	Timescale/ Milestone	Funding	Performance Indicator
Bromsgrove Town Centre Management Group	Meets regularly to pro-actively determine priorities, address issues and works closely with Bromsgrove Pubwatch. Reports to Safer Bromsgrove.	BDC Centres Manager	Every 6 weeks	n/a	Regular attendance at meetings
Bromsgrove Pubwatch	Licensing SAVI Initiative.	Pubwatch WRS BDC Centre Manager	Every 8 weeks	TC Budget	Regular attendance at meetings Increase of venues joining Implementation of scheme
Radio Link Scheme	New radio scheme in conjunction with Redditch.	BDC Centres Manager BDC CCTV	TBC	External Funding	Implementation of scheme No of users actively using radios
Street Pastors	Continues to support and help the night-time economy. Regular catch-up meetings and an integral part of the Pubwatch forum.	Street Pastors Team BDC Centres Manager	Attendance at Pubwatch and receipt of weekly reports	n/a	Regular attendance at meetings
Taxi Marshal Scheme	Provide Taxi Marshalling service for night-time economy on key dates throughout the year - to be agreed by TC Management Group.	BDC Centres Manager	Yearly as required	TC Budget	Feedback from businesses/street pastors
Bromsgrove Town Centre Steering Group	Support newly formed steering group, attend meetings and widen communication.	BDC Centres Manager	Every 6 weeks	n/a	Regular attendance at meetings

Bromsgrove Town Centre

Objective	Output	Delivery Responsibilities	Timescale/ Milestone	Funding	Performance Indicator
Digital High Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate WiFi and other digital opportunities to implement on the High Street. Digital signage would be a good way of providing vital information to the community as well as generating advertising income for Bromsgrove District Council. 	BDC Centres Manager	2023/2024/ alignment with Public Realm Phase 2	External Funding	Business Case compiled
Public Realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase 2 Public Realm concept designs. PR audit. Street furniture. 	BDC Centres Manager NWEDR BDC Env. Services WCC	Throughout 2023-2025	LUF External Funding	Update provided to members yearly. Improved perception through customer and business surveys.
Traffic Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the need and apply if applicable for a revised TRO on the High Street. Explore alternative barrier solutions. 	BDC Centres Manager WCC	Implement by end of financial year	TC Budget	Reduced number of vehicles accessing the High Street. Feedback from businesses/ Monitoring Centre.
Shop Local and Independent Campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small Business Saturday. Great British High Street. Love Your Market. 	BDC Centres Manager TC Steering Group Pubwatch BDC Leisure	Throughout the year	TC Budget	Calendar of events and marketing strategy. Increased footfall on event days.
Business Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shopfront Improvement Grant. Empty Shops Assist Grant. Growth support. Start up support. F&B Sector support. 	BDC Centre Manager BDC Business Advisor NWEDR Growth Manager	Throughout the year	External Funding	No of businesses in receipt of financial and non-financial business support.

Bromsgrove Town Centre

Objective	Output	Delivery Responsibilities	Timescale/ Milestone	Funding	Performance Indicator
Town Centre Events Programme	<p>Collaborate with Market/ Leisure teams and external stakeholders to create an attractive and engaging cultural and events programme. Events could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food, drink and music festivals/events. • Outdoor cinema/screenings. • Bromsgrove Festival events. • Street Theatre performances. • Halloween event. • Christmas Lights Switch On. • Christmas Market (& events). 	<p>BDC Centres Manager</p> <p>BDC Comms</p> <p>BDC Leisure</p> <p>TC Steering Group</p>	Throughout the year	External Funding & Revenue Budgets	<p>Production of online calendar</p> <p>Increased footfall on event days.</p>
Communication & Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build up TC database of contacts. • Quarterly networking events. • Possible newsletter. 	<p>BDC Centres Manager</p> <p>BDC Comms</p>	Ongoing	TC Budget	<p>Increase communication with businesses.</p> <p>No of businesses attending network events.</p> <p>Increased responses to business surveys.</p>
Landlords Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Database of landlords/ agents. • Update emails. 	BDC Centres Manager	Ongoing	n/a	No of agents active.

Rubery Village

Objective	Output	Delivery Responsibilities	Timescale/ Milestone	Funding	Performance Indicator
Public Realm	Audit of existing public realm & future improvements.	BDC Centres Manager WCC	Ongoing	External Funding	Improved perception through customer and business surveys.
Communication & Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build up TC database of contacts. • Quarterly networking events. • Possible newsletter. 	BDC Centres Manager	Ongoing	TC Budget	Increase communication with businesses. No of businesses attending network events.
Rubery Business Watch	Implementation of scheme using Disc platform.	BDC Centres Manager RBVA	Ongoing	TC Budget	No of businesses actively using the Disc Platform.
Events	Develop events offer for 2023.	BDC Centres Manager RBVA	Ongoing	TC Budget	Increased footfall on event days.

Barnt Green Village

Objective	Output	Delivery Responsibilities	Timescale/ Milestone	Funding	Performance Indicator
Public Realm	Audit of existing public realm & potential future improvements.	BDC Centres Manager WCC	Ongoing	External Funding	Improved perception through customer and business surveys.
Communication & Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build up database of contacts. • Regular communication with PC and Traders. 	BDC Centres Manager	Ongoing	TC Budget	Increase communication with businesses. No of businesses attending network events/ actively engaging.
Events & Promotion	Establish event support and promotional ideas.	BDC Centres Manager BGPC	Ongoing	TC Budget	Increased footfall on event days.

Alvechurch Village

Objective	Output	Delivery Responsibilities	Timescale/ Milestone	Funding	Performance Indicator
Public Realm	Audit of existing public realm.	BDC Centres Manager WCC	Ongoing	External Funding	Improved perception through customer and business surveys.
Communication & Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build up database of contacts. Regular communication with PC and Traders. 	BDC Centres Manager	Ongoing	TC Budget	Increase communication with businesses. No of businesses attending network events/ actively engaging.
Events & Promotion	Establish event support and promotional ideas.	BDC Centres Manager APC		TC Budget	Increased footfall on event days.

Hagley Village

Objective	Output	Delivery Responsibilities	Timescale/ Milestone	Funding	Performance Indicator
Public Realm	Audit of existing public realm & potential for future improvements.	BDC Centres Manager WCC	Ongoing	External Funding	Improved perception through customer and business surveys.
Communication & Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build up database of contacts. Regular communication with PC and Traders. 	BDC Centres Manager	Ongoing	TC Budget	Increase communication with businesses. No of businesses attending network events/ actively engaging.
Events & Promotion	Establish event support and promotional ideas.	BDC Centres Manager HPC	Ongoing	TC Budget	Increased footfall on event days.

Catshill

Objective	Output	Delivery Responsibilities	Timescale/ Milestone	Funding	Performance Indicator
Public Realm	Audit of existing public realm.	BDC Centres Manager WCC	Ongoing	External Funding	Improved perception through customer and business surveys.
Communication & Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build up database of contacts. • Regular communication with PC and Traders. 	BDC Centres Manager	Ongoing	TC Budget	Increase communication with businesses. No of businesses attending network events/actively engaging.
Events	Establish event support.	BDC Centres Manager CPC	Ongoing	External Funding	Increased footfall on event days.

Wythall

Objective	Output	Delivery Responsibilities	Timescale/ Milestone	Funding	Performance Indicator
Public Realm	Audit of existing public realm & potential for future improvements.	BDC Centres Manager WCC	Ongoing	External Funding	Improved perception through customer and business surveys.
Communication & Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build up database of contacts. • Regular communication with PC and Traders. 	BDC Centres Manager	Ongoing	TC Budget	Increase communication with businesses. No of businesses actively engaging.

Aston Fields

Objective	Output	Delivery Responsibilities	Timescale/ Milestone	Funding	Performance Indicator
Public Realm	Audit of existing public realm & potential for future improvements.	BDC Centres Manager WCC	Ongoing	External Funding	Improved perception through customer and business surveys.
Communication & Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build up database of contacts. Regular communication with Love Aston Fields Community Group and traders. 	BDC Centres Manager	Ongoing	TC Budget	Increase communication with businesses. No of businesses actively engaging.
Pubwatch and Radio Link scheme	Determine infrastructure requirements.	BDC Centres Manager BDC CCTV	TBC	TBC	No of active users on DISC
Marketing & Events	Establish event support and promotional ideas.	BDC Centres Manager	Ongoing	TC Budget	Increased footfall on event days.

KPI	Frequency	Responsibility
Hotspots Using the Geolytix system monitor centres hotspots/footfall.	As Required	Bromsgrove Centres Manager
Vacant and Derelict Properties and Sites Visual survey will be made of all the vacant properties and derelict sites in each of the centres. The survey will include data on the length of time the property/site has been vacant. Properties and sites will be categorised by their class to determine any areas with greatest issues or challenges to occupation.	Quarterly	Bromsgrove Centres Manager Commercial Agents
Rental Values Review the rental value of properties in each of the centres. This can demonstrate the demand for property in the centres.	Annually	Bromsgrove Centres Manager Commercial Agents
Car Park use and Revenue Income The use and revenue yield of off-street paid Bromsgrove District Council owned car parks.	Quarterly	Bromsgrove District Council
Crime Data Collection and analysis of crime and anti-social behaviour statistics for each of the centres. It is important to consider the changing ways in which the Police Authority record actual crime when making comparisons year-on-year.	Quarterly	West Mercia Police Safer Bromsgrove Partnership
Leisure, Culture and Tourism Ticket sales, visitor numbers, events held etc. for Bromsgrove District Council owned venues and facilities.	Quarterly	Bromsgrove District Council
Visual Appearance Built into customer surveys.	Annually	Bromsgrove Centres Manager
Visual surveys with Bromsgrove District Council Place Team and Bromsgrove Centres Manager.	Bi-monthly	BDC Place Team Bromsgrove Centres Manager
Visitor Numbers and Events Visual estimate of visitor numbers including a sample survey of businesses regarding performance and takings.	At each event	Event Organiser
Social Media Likes, follows and shares on social media sites.	Quarterly	Bromsgrove & Redditch Comms Team
Business/Customer Survey Business and Customer survey of all centres.	Annually	Bromsgrove Centres Manager Bromsgrove BDC Parish Council
Bromsgrove Town Centre Database Categorised by class to determine sector representation and gaps in retail offer.	Quarterly	Bromsgrove Centres Manager
Bromsgrove Markets Occupancy rates, quality, offer and management of markets provision.	Quarterly	Bromsgrove Market Team
Business Support Number of new business start-ups. Number of businesses accessing business support - advice and grants. Number of SMEs accessing rate relief schemes. Number of businesses participating in network groups and accessing peer learning opportunities.	Quarterly	Bromsgrove Centres Manager Bromsgrove Business Advisor NWEDR Growth Manager

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