

# Public Document Pack



## **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **MEETING OF THE CABINET**

**MONDAY 20TH APRIL 2026**

**AT 6.00 P.M.**

**PARKSIDE SUITE - PARKSIDE**

**MEMBERS:** Councillors K.J. May (Leader), S. J. Baxter (Deputy Leader), S. T. Nock, K. Taylor, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

### **AGENDA**

1. **To receive apologies for absence**

2. **Declarations of Interest**

To invite Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Disclosable Interests they may have in items on the agenda, and to confirm the nature of those interests.

3. **To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 25th March 2026** (Pages 5 - 14)

4. **Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 24th March 2026** (Pages 15 - 28)

There are no outstanding recommendations contained in the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board included in this agenda pack.

If there are any recommendations as a result of the pre-scrutiny of any Cabinet reports due to be considered at the Boards's meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2026, these will be published in a supplementary papers pack to this agenda.

5. **Revision of Environmental Crime Enforcement Policy** (Pages 29 - 52)

6. **Introduction of Enforcement of Littering from Vehicles** (Pages 53 - 62)
7. **Community Investment Fund** (Pages 63 - 78)
8. **Climate Change Strategy 2026 to 2031** (Pages 79 - 134)
9. **Empty Homes Strategy** (Pages 135 - 158)
10. **Renters Rights Act 2025** (Pages 159 - 168)
11. **Quarter 3 2025/26 Finance and Performance Monitoring Report (including Financial Savings)** (Pages 169 - 210)
12. **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**

J. Leach  
Chief Executive

Parkside  
Market Street  
BROMSGROVE  
Worcestershire  
B61 8DA

10th April 2026

If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact  
Jo Gresham

Parkside, Market Street, Bromsgrove, B61 8DA  
Tel: (01527) 64252 Ext: 3031  
Email: [joanne.gresham@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:joanne.gresham@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)

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## **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **MEETING OF THE CABINET**

**WEDNESDAY 25TH MARCH 2026, AT 6.00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Councillors K.J. May (Leader), S. J. Baxter (Deputy Leader),  
S. T. Nock, K. Taylor, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

Officers: Mr. G. Revans, Ms. D. Goodall, Ms J. Willis,  
Ms. A. Delahunty and Mrs J. Gresham

87/25 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

88/25 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

89/25 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
OF THE CABINET HELD ON 6TH MARCH 2026**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2026 were submitted for Members' consideration.

Members raised that following the meeting an error had been identified in the following resolution which referenced a table that had included an error.

The Interim Director of Finance be authorised to make payments under section 90(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 from the collection fund by ten equal instalments between April 2026 to March 2027 as detailed below:-

|  | Precept (£)   | Surplus/Deficit on Collection Fund (£) | Total to Pay (£) |
|--|---------------|--|------------------|
| Worcestershire County Council                    | 67,631,975.84 | 76,853.64                              | 67,708,829.48    |
| Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia    | 11,772,603.70 | 13,865.63                              | 11,786,469.33    |
| Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority | 4,118,298.75  | 13,950.93                              | 4,132,249.68     |

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The correct table should have read: -

|  | Precept (£)   | Surplus/Deficit on Collection Fund (£) | Total to Pay (£)    |
|--|---------------|--|---------------------|
| Worcestershire County Council                    | 67,631,975.84 | 76,853.64                              | 67,708,829.48       |
| Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia    | 11,772,603.70 | 13,865.63                              | 11,786,469.33       |
| Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority | 4,118,298.75  | <b>4,862.25</b>                        | <b>4,123,161.00</b> |

This error had now been resolved and a Decision taken under Urgency Procedure Rules on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2026. Members requested that this be noted in the minutes for the Council meeting that also took place on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2026 prior to their publication.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2026 be approved as a true and accurate record.

90/25

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 10TH FEBRUARY 2026**

Members considered the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 10th February 2026. It was noted there were no outstanding recommendations from this meeting.

It was confirmed that no reports due for consideration at this Cabinet meeting were pre-scrutinised by the Board at its meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 10th February 2026 be noted.

91/25

## **SHARED HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2026-2031**

The Housing Development & Strategy Manager presented the Shared Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2026-2031 for Members' consideration.

In doing so the following was highlighted:

- The Homelessness Act 2002 required all housing authorities to have a homelessness strategy in place which was based on a review of all forms of homelessness in their local authority area.

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- It was intended that this Strategy would sit under the existing Worcestershire Strategic Housing Board Plan.
- In developing the Strategy, a comprehensive assessment of the nature and extent of homelessness across the local authority areas was carried out. This included engaging those who had a lived experience of homelessness, rough sleeping and domestic abuse. A consultation event was held on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025 with partners and stakeholders, to consider housing from both a strategic and client-based perspective. This event included partners from a variety of statutory and voluntary organisations. Going forward the approach to homelessness and rough sleeping would move from crisis to prevention.
- The new Shared Homelessness Strategy, in partnership with Redditch Borough Council, Malvern Hills District Council, Wychavon District Council and Wyre Forest District Council, built on the success of the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-25, which emphasised prevention, intervention, recovery and joined-up systems, which were core themes echoed in the new National Plan. Members were informed that Worcester City Council were not involved in this Strategy and had decided to implement a separate strategy designed to address the specific homelessness and rough sleeping situation experienced in Worcester City area. The local authorities aimed to eliminate unlawful use of Bed and Breakfast facilities for families (beyond statutory short stays) and improve the quality of temporary accommodation and aimed to halve long-term rough sleeping.
- Local authorities were expected to tackle the structural causes of homelessness by building more affordable and social homes and support the reform of the private rented sector by working with landlords and tenants to help them to sustain their accommodation where possible.
- The new Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant would provide funding to develop services to support the strategy. Members had previously considered a report which had provided detail on spending priorities for the next three years. Members queried the allocation for this grant. It was explained that the funding was allocated as follows:
  - Total allocation over three years - £1,636,130
    - Homelessness and Rough Sleeping allocation – £1,474,308
    - Domestic Abuse Grant allocation - £111,315
    - Renters' Rights Act allocation - £50,497

Members thanked Officers for the comprehensive report on such an important matter. It was noted that there was a typographical error contained within the report at paragraph 2.6. It was confirmed that the Councils involved in this Strategy were confirmed as Redditch Borough Council, Malvern Hills District Council, Wychavon District Council and Wyre Forest District Council.

Members noted that homelessness was a statutory duty for the Council, and the Strategy must be agreed, once the consultation had taken place, in order for the Council to continue to be compliant.

It was queried why Worcester City Council had opted out of this Strategy. Officers explained that the needs within the Worcester City area were specific, with greater numbers of homelessness and rough sleepers experienced. Worcester City Council required a more bespoke strategy that met specific needs. However, it was noted by Members that a collaborative approach would have been positive in order for Councils across Worcestershire to share experiences in terms of homelessness and rough sleeping.

In terms of the Action Plan contained within the Strategy there was a large number of actions that needed to be undertaken. Members queried how would this be implemented and how would the success of the implementation be measured? It was noted that a local action plan would be produced which would help to assess the more specific actions and outcomes for Bromsgrove.

Members were interested as to whether there would be an impact as a result of the new Renters' Rights Act legislation. Officers explained that there may have been more landlords exiting the market and serving Section 21 No Fault Eviction Notices prior to the implementation of the Renters' Rights Act but once in force the only way to end a tenancy would be through breaching the tenancy agreement for example rent arrears and anti-social behaviour or because the landlord wanted to sell or move into the property. This gave housing options services an opportunity to work with landlords to try, wherever possible to sustain the tenancy and avoid the household being made homeless. If a landlord did decide to sell the property there would be time limits on when a rental property could be let again following its removal from the rental market. Landlords would need to provide an

information sheet produced by the Government to their tenants to confirm the changes to their rights. There was some concern on how much awareness landlords had in terms of the details within the new legislation.

**RESOLVED** that the draft Shared Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031 and action plan be approved for public consultation for six weeks starting 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026.

92/25

## **PLANNING ADVISORY SERVICE REVIEW**

The Executive Director presented the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Review for the consideration of Cabinet. In doing so, the following was highlighted:

- The review covered the Bromsgrove District Council's Local Plan production and the Development Management decision making framework.
- PAS noted that the Planning service was operating in a complex environment in a District that was made up of eighty-nine per cent Green Belt and had only 2.4 years of housing land supply left which led to speculative development.
- The report noted that the Council was currently under No Overall Control (NOC). This had led to a greater need for cross party collaboration.
- Development Management processes were broadly very sound. However, early engagement between Members and Officers was not always consistent with regard to applications.
- The Review had noted that Planning was increasingly being viewed through a party-political lens rather than a shared Corporate Priority.
- Trust needed to be rebuilt between Members and Officers.
- There were significant obstacles in meeting the Local Development Plan timetable, not least in the absence of the national plan making regulations and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).
- There was a need to embed governance arrangements in order to foster cross-party consensus around the Local Plan. This would mean development of a compelling spatial vision, and the completion of the evidence base and working with key partners such as Worcestershire County Council.
- PAS noted that the Council must create an environment where behaviours reflected shared goals rather than individual political agendas.

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- The report made it clear that Planning was a key Corporate Risk.
- The political leadership and senior managers needed to support and enable Officers and Members to make difficult but necessary decisions.
- It was noted that Bromsgrove District Council's Planning service was at a critical juncture, and that leadership and senior management must have a clear opportunity to address the current risks but also set a new tone for how Councillors, Officers and senior leadership worked together, collectively taking responsibility for how Planning shaped the future of the District.
- As a result of the Review, fifteen recommendations were made - eight related to Development Management and the decision-making process and seven to the Local Plan development. The recommendations aimed to build consensus, develop an agreed vision, training, resources and improved partner relations. Officers had drawn up an action plan as to how the recommendations could best be delivered, these were included in Appendix 2 to the report.
- The PAS Review had been presented to Group Leaders at a meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2026. It was also pre-scrutinised by the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2026. The points raised by the Board were included in Appendix 3 to the report; and the recommendation in respect of joint Member and Officer Planning training was reflected in the action plan.
- A key recommendation from the Review in order to build political consensus, was that a cross-party Working Group be established with a defined, politically balance membership proportionate to Group size. Given it was important to move things forward – including responding to consultation on the National Planning Framework by Group Leaders - this Local Plan Cross Party Working Group (LPCPWG) should be established with immediate effect. It was highlighted that this had taken place and that the LPCPWG had already met twice.
- A meeting with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee had also taken place. This had resulted in some suggestions regarding the operation of the Planning Committee being agreed and implemented as soon as practicable. A number of other matters that needed more in-depth consideration had been referred to the Constitution Review Working Group.
- A draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) had been produced and sent to Worcestershire County Council (WCC), for comment and discussion.
- Resourcing requirements had been identified for both the Local Plan and Development Management areas. These had

recognised that additional staff were required in both areas and also due to the increase in Planning applications. These additional roles would be funded through Planning income or if necessary, from the Financial Resilience Reserve Fund.

- It should be noted that the Development Management element of the Review and report was paid for by the Planning Advisory Service and was therefore carried out at no cost to the Council. The Local Plan element cost a total of £17,744.
- Members were asked to note that failure to adopt a new Local Plan prior to LGR in April 2028 created uncertainty over Plan ownership, as the new Authority would have the final decision on adoption and implementation. The Council had written to Wyre Forest District Council regarding the potential for a North Worcestershire Local Plan and this was rejected in favour of a single District Plan for their area.
- A significant Risk Implications section had been included in this report.

Following the presentation of the report there was a detailed discussion which included:

- Governance of the LPCPWG – Cabinet was informed that a suggestion had been made by some Members that the membership of the Working Group be made up of two Members from each political group within the Council rather than it being politically balanced. However, it was noted that the PAS Review had stated that the new LPCPWG had a ‘defined membership proportionate to group sizes’ within the Council. In terms of the Chairman of the LPCPWG, there had been discussions regarding the potential of an Officer being appointed to this role. The PAS Review had however, suggested the possibility of the Working Group being chaired by the Leader of the Council (which was the current arrangement) or relevant Assistant Director. However, it was noted that the preferred arrangement was that this be a Member-led Working Group. Members discussed the possibility of the appointment of an ‘independent’ Chairman particularly as this matter was highly emotive for both Members and residents. Members queried whether it would be possible for a member of the PAS Review peer team or the Legal Counsel who currently provided advice to the Working Group to chair the meetings. It was suggested that this approach might provide a clear narrative and impartial advice in terms of the development of the Local Plan. Officers undertook to look into the chairing of the LPCPWG further and update Members regarding the options accordingly. It

was important for Members to understand if the external chairing approach was taken that it could incur significant costs for the Council and that governance arrangements in terms of Chairman's casting votes would need to be carefully considered.

- Members were clear that this matter must move forward quickly and appropriately. Particularly due to the deadlines imposed by the Government. It was noted that if a collective decision could not be made by Members, there was the risk of Government intervention in plan-making which would see decisions on the future direction of growth for Bromsgrove being taken away from the Council. Collective decision-making and cross-party working was key in order to provide the best outcomes for the residents of the District.
- A significant amount of pressure was currently being placed on Officers. This had been raised as part of the PAS Review which had highlighted Officer ill-health and burnout. This was something that must be avoided and Members should aim to be 'on the same page' in terms of the decisions making process going forward.
- Cabinet was keen that this be a transparent process. Meetings with individuals or small groups of Members should be avoided, as detailed in the PAS report, in order to ensure transparency of the process and encourage cross party working and collective decision making. It was important that decisions be made through the LPCPWG. If any specific areas needed to be discussed outside of these meetings they should be carried out at Group Leader level, in line with the usual approach taken in these matters. Discussions and decisions made by the LPCPWG could then be communicated to all Members at Planning Advisory Meetings open to all Members.
- Draft Terms of Reference (ToR) of the LPCPWG – These were still to be agreed, and Officers were undertaking work to move this forward. It was hoped that the draft ToR would be considered and agreed at the next meeting of the LPCPWG. It was noted that (as detailed in the previous bullet point) that the ToR should be agreed at a meeting of the LPCPWG.
- Timeline of decision making for the Local Development Plan – Members queried when the final decision for the Local Development Plan needed to be made. Although it was noted there was a Government deadline of December 2026, it was hoped that a collective decision be made by June 2026. This would ensure that the Council was in the best position to start the implementation of the Local Plan prior to LGR.

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- Adoption of the PAS Recommendations – it was noted that all recommendations made as a result of the PAS Review be adopted by the Council including those in respect of the Planning Committee. It was confirmed that this would be the case. Any recommendations that needed to be considered by the Constitution Review Working Group would be referred accordingly. In terms of Member and Officer training as detailed within the report, Officers were currently liaising with training providers for Green and Grey Belt training, and a Local Plan and Planning Committee workshops was also in the process of being arranged. It was hoped that most of these sessions would be completed prior to the start of the new municipal year. Officers will be meeting with the Planning Advisory Service to discuss the wider training programme that was recommended.
- The Cabinet Member for Planning, Strategic Housing and Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) had been approached by Ward Members who wished to discuss matters regarding the relevant Wards in order to better understand the process. These meetings could be facilitated with representatives from the Legal and Planning teams in attendance as appropriate.
- A typographical error was highlighted in paragraph 5.1 contained within the report.

Following the detailed discussion, Members thanked the PAS peer team for carrying out a robust and detailed review. Thanks were also extended to all Officers and Members involved in the review and preparation of the report.

## **RESOLVED** that

- 1) The findings of the Planning Advisory Service (“PAS”) Report dated January 2026 be noted.
- 2) The comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding consideration of the PAS Report noted.
- 3) The recommendations made by the PAS be accepted and implemented.
- 4) The progress made to date as set out in the report be noted and the Planning Advisory Service Recommendations Action Plan be adopted.

93/25

**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,**

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**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 on this occasion.

The meeting closed at 7.08 p.m.

Chairman

## **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

**24TH MARCH 2026, AT 6.00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Councillors P. M. McDonald (Chairman), A. M. Dale (Vice-Chairman), S. Ammar, A. Bailes, R. Bailes, D. J. A. Forsythe, B. Kumar, R. E. Lambert, S. A. Robinson and H. D. N. Warren-Clarke

Observers:

Councillor K. J. May – Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development and Enabling

Councillor S. J. Baxter – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Reorganisation and Climate Change

Councillor P.J. Whittaker, Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Community Safety

Councillor S.T. Nock – Cabinet Member for Finance

Councillor K. Taylor - Cabinet Member for Planning, WRS and Strategic Housing

Councillor E.M.S. Gray

Officers: Mr. G. Revans, Corredor, Ms J. Willis, Ms. B. Houghton and Mrs S. Woodfield

Other parties: Ch. Insp Dave King and Supt Gareth Morgan (Representatives of West Mercia Police)

102/23

#### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

Apologies for absence was received from Councillor J. Clarke. Apologies for absence were also received from Councillor J.D. Stanley and his named substitute was Councillor D.J.A. Forsythe.

103/23

#### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

There were no declarations of interest nor of whipping arrangements.

104/23

#### **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 10TH FEBRUARY 2026**

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Overview and Scrutiny Board  
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The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2026 were considered by the Board.

Members were taken through the minutes page by page and several points of clarification or requested amendments were raised as follows:

- A typographical error was highlighted which read, “Councillor J.W. attending as a named substitute” which should have read “Councillor J.W. Robinson attending as a named substitute”.
- An update was provided to Members concerning the Board’s request for the Council’s representative on the Police and Crime Panel to report to the Board following each panel meeting, with the Board being informed that the request was in progress.
- A typographical error was highlighted that the resolution for the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) agenda item should have read, “RECOMMENDED” and not “RESOLVED” (as the Board can only make recommendations and not final decisions).
- A request for further clarity to the bullet point which stated, “The report concluded that a strategic, place-based approach was required to support the Town Centre accessibility and economic activity, with further on-site counts recommended”. It was agreed that further clarification would be provided and circulated to all Members.
- A Member referred to the bullet point which stated, “Members expressed the view that future demands for parking had not been highlighted in the Local Plan”. It was suggested this should instead read, “Members expressed the view that future demands for parking had not been highlighted, in light of the Local Plan housing requirements”. This was to reflect that it was the parking study which had not fully allowed for the additional housing growth in the Local Plan, rather than the Local Plan itself omitting parking. In response the Chairman asked if Members were content to change the wording as suggested. No objections were raised and the Board agreed to amend the wording accordingly.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2026 including the preamble above be approved as a correct record.

105/23

## **CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY - ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE WORK OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP IN THE DISTRICT**

The Community Safety Manager provided an update on the progress of

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the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP) for the period January 2025 to January 2026.

The key priority areas were as follows:

- Public place violence and Serious Violence Duty
- Anti-social behaviour (ASB), nuisance and environmental issues
- Shoplifting and neighbourhood crime
- Protecting vulnerable communities
- Serious organised crime (SOCJAG model)

The key activity delivered were as follows:

- 'Right Path' youth violence intervention with 21 young people supported.
- Respect Programme engaging 250+ vulnerable young people.
- Redeployable Close Circuit Television (CCTV) deployments district-wide.
- Nominated Neighbour Scheme and targeted support for older/vulnerable residents.
- Domestic abuse support through R.U.N Our Space CIC.
- Significant partnership work with the Police on hotspot patrols, knife crime (Op Sceptre Week) and illegal vape enforcement.

Members were informed that overall progress was strong across priority areas, despite reduced Police Crime and Commissioner (PCC) ring-fenced funding of 15%. The Partnership continued to respond to complex ASB, crime prevention needs and safeguarding vulnerabilities.

After the presentation, discussions were carried out as follows:

- Members referred to the ASB tools table showing planning enforcement cases, where the outcome was recorded as "non compliance" and asked what happened next when someone failed to comply? – In response the Community Safety Manager explained that since Worcester Regulatory Services (WRS) had taken over planning enforcement, they follow a detailed, statutory process. This typically involved repeated contact with the individual who had contravened planning requirements, exploring options to resolve the breach and then considering escalation where necessary. Non-compliance could therefore take time to address. It was agreed that Officers would seek a more detailed explanation from the WRS Planning Enforcement Manager and provide this to Members.

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- A Member asked about the Bromsgrove Youth Hub utilisation, specifically whether young offenders or those known to Youth Justice Services attended and whether there was a dedicated mental health worker attached to the Hub? – It was advised by the Community Safety Manager that the Hub was an independent organisation. Some young people attending may be offenders or involved with the Youth Justice Service but for safeguarding and GDPR reasons, this information was not shared. Staff have expertise in special educational needs, mental health and trauma informed practice. The Hub effectively bridged a gap between corporate/clinical mental health services and the support offered by the voluntary and community sector.
- Members expressed the view that the Vulnerable and Older Person Pilot Project in Alvechurch was very worthwhile but queried how well it was publicised, noting that only residents had signed up despite a large potential audience. It was also queried how awareness and uptake could be improved? – In response it was explained that the pilot faced challenges around attendance and sign up, however, lessons were being used to refine the approach before rolling out to other areas. A key adjustment was shifting promotion to target relatives, friends and neighbours of vulnerable residents. The concept was that a trusted neighbour for example, provided support and early intervention before rogue traders or scammers could reach the vulnerable person. Additional online resources were being created for tech savvy relatives and neighbours to help them support older or vulnerable family members.

A Member from the Alvechurch Ward explained that describing events as being “for vulnerable adults” was off putting for some residents, as many older people did not see themselves as vulnerable. It was suggested that promoting events as a way to avoid scams and rogue traders might be more effective, citing a local case of a resident losing over £50,000 to a roofing scam. It was also queried how the project might link into women’s safety/“Real Women” initiatives? – The Board were informed that the Real Women event, led by the Hub with Safer Bromsgrove funding, had delivered a taster day, including information on personal safety, domestic abuse support and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). Further work was planned with the police on VAWG, with the Youth Hub seen as a key venue but additional venues and providers would also be considered to broaden reach.

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- A Member involved in the Alvechurch Nominated Neighbour pilot asked whether other target areas in Bromsgrove had been identified and what lessons were being taken forward? – Members were advised that Officers had been in contact with Councillor Ammar about piloting the scheme in their ward. The Housing partner Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) had also expressed interest in applying a similar model in some sheltered housing schemes, however, may require further financial outlay, potentially requiring cameras and other security measures.
- A Member requested clear guidance on redeployable cameras, noting there appeared to be two different schemes (for crime/ASB and for fly tipping). The Member asked what situations were suitable or not suitable for redeployable cameras, who operated which scheme and how could Members request cameras? - In response the Community Safety Manager explained that there were two distinct schemes which included a Community Safety redeployable CCTV scheme for crime and ASB and a WRS led environmental crime scheme for fly tipping, where more covert cameras could be used under different legal powers.

It was further explained that the community safety cameras must comply with the Code of Practice for Surveillance and the Information Commissioner's requirements, meaning the following:

- There must be evidence of a crime/ASB problem.
- A consultation with residents and stakeholders was required.
- Signage must be displayed.
- Cameras were usually mounted on County Council lampposts that must be structurally suitable.
- Cameras were typically deployed for 8–12 weeks, primarily as a deterrent but they also captured evidence for police or ASB enforcement.

Members also queried how long the consultation would last, what happened if residents object or if significant ASB or crime was captured during the 8–12 week deployment? – The Community Safety Manager advised that a consultation was typically for a period of 4–6 weeks. Objections did not automatically stop a deployment but significant local opposition might mean a camera couldn't be installed. Decisions to install permanent public space CCTV were separate and would be a matter for the Council, requiring discussion with senior officers, consideration of cost and

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inclusion in the Council's fixed CCTV scheme. The Police representative also added that from an operational standpoint, it was often better to rotate cameras rather than leave them permanently in one place, to avoid simply displacing the problem. Close collaboration with local Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT) was essential to ensure that qualitative and quantitative data supported any bid for a camera.

Members also queried if a Parish Council could fund a permanent camera of their own, requesting information on costs and equipment specifications, citing ongoing ASB and damage in their Ward and nearby areas. – In response the Police representative advised that historic costings for cameras had been prepared and could be shared with the Members. The police were aware of issues in the related areas and had tactical plans in place, including use of SmartWater at access points and joint work with rangers and other partners. These plans could be shared with the local Members to reassure residents.

- A Member praised an appendix provided as part of the agenda which gave an overview of Police-led ASB and Crime actions for the reporting period as an excellent summary but expressed the view that Members and residents did not usually see this level of detail. It was queried if the data covered her area which fell under a Rubery policing team and if further localised and regular data could be shared to inform residents? – The Police representative advised that the data covered the Bromsgrove District as a whole, inclusive of her ward, even though policing teams were split. The force was working to improve the ability to drill down by ward/area and to focus on more recent data to keep responses targeted. Officers were also encouraging more use of surgeries, surveys and newsletters to promote positive outcomes to residents who were not online.

Members also praised the brief reported, in particular, with regard to the County Lines Week of Action which highlighted 68 arrests in a week, seizing over £2.5 million worth of drugs and over £21,000 in cash. – In response the Police representative informed Members that since the reporting a new Police Inspector had been recruited, with further improvements carried out for this line of work. Members noted that regular crime action Newsletters were circulated through various methods (social media, medical centres and community centres).

- A Member explained difficulties obtaining crime statistics for South Bromsgrove / Blackwell via West Mercia's online tools, despite being

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able to access data for North Bromsgrove as residents had requested confirmation of burglaries and attempted burglaries in their area. – It was acknowledged that some online tools were postcode based and could be confusing where policing boundaries crossed areas but encouraged the Member to contact the local inspector.

- The Chairman queried the Safe Places scheme and expressed the view that many participating venues had frequent staff turnover and queried how often Safe Places were revisited and if staff were reminded of their responsibilities? – In response the Community Safety Manager advised that the scheme was coordinated by a Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisation based in Wyre Forest. It was aimed to revisit Safe Places approximately every 6–12 months to check arrangements and refresh training. Members were also informed that the scheme was originally developed for people with learning disabilities, who often participated directly in delivering the training to venue staff. There was a recognised challenge in keeping pace with staff changes but the partnership was working to maintain coverage.
- Members referred to the knife detecting poles and questions were raised as follows: what happened if someone walked through with a knife, did the equipment trigger automatically and if there was always a Police Officer present? – The Police representative and Community Safety Manager informed Members that knife arches and poles were only deployed as part of police led operations and informed Members that Police Officers were always present when the equipment was in use (e.g. at the Bromsgrove railway station). The equipment would alert officers if it detected metal and were positioned to intervene immediately. Often potential offenders seeing the arch/pole would try to discard weapons before passing through and these discarded items can also be recovered. The Police also supported national knife amnesty initiatives with surrender bins at police stations and Members were invited to attend future operations as observers.

The Portfolio Holder queried whether knife arches were used routinely at schools, given national media reports of knife crime? – In response the Police Representative advised that knife arches were not used routinely in schools and would only be considered if there was clear intelligence of a specific issue. It was also advised that routine use risked heightening fear and perception of crime among pupils and parents. The focus was instead on prevention and education, including district schools and police panels bringing all tiers of schools together with police which included youth workers and mentors in schools.

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- The Portfolio Holder and other Members raised concerns about social media driven “school wars” (e.g. red vs blue) and associated fears about weapons (including everyday items like scissors or protractors). Questions included: What intelligence existed locally, how were police and partners responding and how was this being tackled across schools and counties? – The Police representative and Community Safety Manager advised that the phenomenon was national, with images and messages generated by anonymous accounts, often outside the local area. Locally, West Mercia Police had worked closely with schools’ safeguarding leads, shared intelligence through school police panels and taken positive action where specific individuals could be identified. However, Members were advised that to date there had not been any reporting of this nature within the local areas.

It was also advised that through the Respect Programme and the Right Path project, mentors were in every middle and high school in Bromsgrove and the wider area, working with young people at risk of becoming involved in serious violence, they are referred by schools, social workers and the police and detached youth workers and youth providers were feeding intelligence back into multi agency forums.

A Member from the Rubery Ward advised of multiple issues involving noise, ASB, rogue traders, youth behaviour and shops supplying illicit products. It was asked how all of these strands (police, WRS, trading standards, housing etc.) were joined up under one umbrella and how multi agency working was coordinated? – Members were advised of the following: At district level the Safer Bromsgrove group met every 6 weeks, chaired by Community Safety, with attendance from the Police, WRS, housing, fire, parish reps and others with areas of concern were standing items. At North Worcestershire level, the NWCSP met regularly, chaired by the Executive Director, considering cross district issues and commissioning. At County level, the Safer Communities Board brought together North and South Worcestershire CSPs with the County Council and others to ensure learning was shared across Worcestershire. The police chaired a Multi-Agency Task and Enforcement Group (MATES) for the north of Worcestershire, bringing together WRS, Trading Standards, housing, fire and other agencies to tackle complex problems collectively.

- The cease and desist letters listed within the agenda was raised by Members and various questions were asked which included: What types of behaviour these letters were used for, whether they could be used in a case where a resident was persistently harassed by a

neighbour but the neighbour refused to answer the door to Police or Housing Officers and what enforcement options were available if the letter was ignored? – The Police representative advised that cease and desist letters were a low level, early intervention tool in the wider ASB toolkit. Where behaviour continued, the Police and Council could escalate through powers such as Community Protection Warnings and Community Protection Notices and in some cases Criminal Behaviour Orders. Residents experiencing ongoing harassment should ensure issues are reported to the local SNT.

**RESOLVED** that the progress made by the North Worcestershire CSP be noted.

106/23

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT RE-ORGANISATION (LGR) - UPDATE**

The Assistant Director Corporate Services and Transformation provided an update on LGR to Members. The report outlined Bromsgrove's position within the Government's seven stage LGR process which was currently at Stage 3 - Statutory Consultation and closed on 26th March 2026.

The key points presented were:

- Worcestershire remained at Stage 3 of The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) process.
- Workstreams on Finance, HR, Legal, IT and Services were progressing.
- The MHCLG "Listening Meeting" took place on 11th March, supported by KPMG.
- The devolution footprint discussions had advanced with Worcestershire Leaders agreeing to a joint position with Herefordshire and exploring alignment with Warwickshire/Gloucestershire.
- Future updates may be limited until Government decisions were carried out, which was due in Summer 2026.
- LGR and Devolution remained key Corporate Risks.
- District involvement in strategic planning spatial development strategies (SDS) would be retained until at least April 2028.

The Portfolio Holder also gave a member level perspective, drawing on a recent two-day LGR training programme for Councillors, emphasising that the period should be seen as an opportunity for Members to define what they want from LGR, particularly if a One Worcestershire option were selected. There was a need to develop a negotiating position,

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distinguishing what was essential for Bromsgrove's residents and communities from what was less critical. The Portfolio Holder explained she was keen to involve all Members in shaping these priorities and suggested that the Board, rather than an additional Cabinet Advisory Group (CAG), might be a suitable forum.

After the presentation the Board made the following comments:

- A Member expressed concern that the reference within the report to major infrastructure planning across wider geographies, highlighted how far Bromsgrove was behind in its own infrastructure planning and Local Plan work. Specific questions were asked which included what could practically be done to catch up and when Members would see a detailed project plan, including milestones and the role of any shadow authority? – In response the Leader and Executive Director reassured Members that, in relation to Foundation Strategic Authorities (FSA) and Spatial Development Strategies (SDS), Bromsgrove was not behind with progress. Government had not yet defined the precise FSA footprint and SDS responsibilities would initially lie with County/Unitary councils. The immediate priority was ensuring data and assets were in good order, that the Local Plan was progressed and key assets were on a sustainable footing.

Members were also advised that the Council had set aside funding for LGR and had the risk and resilience reserve (£1m in LGR and £2.5m in Risk and Reserve), which would help fund the implementation and sustain services, including staff who may move between organisations, following a government decision. This was recognised at national events as being relatively robust compared to many councils.

The Portfolio Holder explained also that a route map of the typical LGR stages (integration, then transformation over years 2–4) was available and would be shared with the Board.

- It was queried by Members what contingency plans were in place, should Government choose a single One Worcestershire unitary authority? – The Portfolio Holder and Assistant Director advised that whatever option the Government chose, the preparatory work was still required. Once Government announced its decision, a Joint Committee would be formed for the new unitary area to take legal and structural decisions. Shadow elections were expected in May 2027, with existing District Councillors continuing for an

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extra year to run their councils until vesting day in April 2028. The shadow authority would focus on establishing the new corporate structure, appointing senior officers and setting the first budget and Council Plan. Bromsgrove's priority would be to ensure its voice was heard in these discussions and to negotiate outcomes that were beneficial for the local residents.

Members expressed concern that a One Worcestershire model could be dominated by County interests and that areas such as Bromsgrove could potentially lose out on funding. Concerns were also expressed that Councillors from other parts of the County would be making decisions on areas they did not know well. - The Portfolio Holder acknowledged these concerns and agreed that understanding "what we do not want" is just as important as defining what we do want. The need to secure locality-based arrangements and local hubs was emphasised, ensuring decision makers had strong local knowledge and that budgets were allocated fairly across the County.

Members also queried whether Bromsgrove should make a strong case for the new northern unitary headquarters (HQ) (if there was a north/south split) to be located in Bromsgrove and if the Council could negotiate that a certain number of current district staff were taken into the new authority. – In response it was explained that staff would transfer to the shadow authority under TUPE and it would be for the shadow authority to then determine its structure and staffing. The location of any HQ would be subject to practical considerations and to negotiate between Councils and the Government. However, regardless of where any formal HQ might be, it was likely that hubs or local bases would be needed across the area to maintain accessible services.

- Some Members expressed scepticism about the effectiveness of past CAG meetings, feeling they had not delivered visible change and expressed the view that Overview and Scrutiny may be a better, more transparent environment for Member input. The Portfolio Holder and Chairman agreed that Overview and Scrutiny could play a central role and welcomed suggestions on how to involve all Members in shaping negotiating priorities.

After further discussions it was proposed and seconded that a LGR Task Group should be explored. It was also agreed that the

Portfolio Holder should play a pivotal role during discussions at the relevant meetings.

It was also agreed that LGR reporting remained a standing item on the Overview and Scrutiny Board agenda, with future reports supplemented by verbal updates from a Chief Officer as required.

A Member also suggested and it was agreed to explore the inclusion of the Corporate Risk Register as part of future LGR reporting, as it had been highlighted in the report that devolution and LGR were listed as a Corporate Risk.

**RESOLVED** that

- 1) The updates regarding the consultation responses and engagement activity; and
- 2) The overview of the current position and next steps regarding Devolution were noted.

107/23

**WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - UPDATE**

The Council's HOSC Representative, Councillor B. Kumar provided an update on the meetings which took place on 11<sup>th</sup> February and 4<sup>th</sup> March 2026 respectively.

Members were updated with the Annual Review of Public Health, including key population health trends, progress against Health and Wellbeing Board priorities and emerging risks. The Board were also provided with an overview for the West Midlands Ambulance Service, touching on performance, response times, pressures and improvement actions.

**RESOLVED** that the HOSC update be noted.

108/23

**FINANCE AND BUDGET WORKING GROUP - UPDATE**

There was no Finance and Budget Group update for this meeting.

109/23

**CABINET WORK PROGRAMME**

The Cabinet Work Programme was presented for Members' consideration.

**RESOLVED** that the content of the Cabinet Work Programme be noted as per the preamble above.

110/23

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme was considered by Members.

Members requested that the following items to be scrutinised at a future meeting:

- AI (uses and risks for the Council)
- Libraries “Unlocked”

**RESOLVED** that the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be noted as per the preamble above.

111/23

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD ACTION SHEET**

The Overview and Scrutiny Action Sheet was considered by the Board. Members highlighted the two actions under the Planning Advisory Service were incorrect and should read as “In Progress” rather than “Completed”. It was agreed that the action sheet would be amended accordingly.

**RESOLVED** that the Overview and Scrutiny Action Sheet be noted as per the preamble above.

112/23

**TO CONSIDER ANY URGENT BUSINESS, DETAILS OF WHICH HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED TO THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR 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.

The meeting closed at 7.50 p.m.

Chairman

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**Bromsgrove Environmental Crime Enforcement Policy**

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder  |  | Councillor Kit Taylor<br>Councillor Peter Whittaker          |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted   |  | Yes  |
| Relevant Assistant Director  |  | Simon Wilkes, Director<br>Worcestershire Regulatory Services |
| Report Author<br>Toni Ainscough  | Job Title: Principal Officer<br>Contact<br>email:toni.ainscough@worcsregservices.gov.uk<br>Contact Tel: 01562 738035 |  |
| Wards Affected   |  | All  |
| Ward Councillor(s) consulted   |  | N/A  |
| Relevant Council Priority  |  | Environment  |
| Non-Key Decision   |  |  |
| If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting. |  |  |

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Cabinet RECOMMEND that:-**

- 1.1 **The Bromsgrove and Redditch Enforcement Policy be adopted and replace the current Joint Environmental Enforcement.**

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Currently WRS's enforcement activities are being undertaken using the Joint Environmental Enforcement Strategy as in appendix 2.
- 2.2 The revised document in appendix 1 will only seek to cover activities that are enforced by Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS).

For the avoidance of doubt this **includes**:

- Fly tipping
- Littering
- Failure to dispose of waste appropriately
- Dog fouling

This revised enforcement policy **will not include**:

- Abandoned and nuisance vehicles and
- the enforcement of graffiti and fly posting

- 2.2 Officers are seeking to implement an enforcement document that reflects the current working strategies of enforcement practices and tools available to WRS.

### **3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES**

- 3.1 Officers at WRS are required when undertaking enforcement activities to have due regard to the current enforcement strategy. This document (appendix 2) does not include the enforcement options available to them.
- 3.2 An updated and current enforcement policy is required to enable Officers to make use of intelligence and use all suitable tools.

### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no financial implications. The proposed enforcement policy will align with WRS's approach to enforcement which covers the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices as an enforcement tool. This is used in lower-level offending to discharge the liability of the offence. Fines generate an income which is put back into the service

### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 As set out at paragraph 1.2 of the new policy (Appendix 2), legislation provides for local authorities to be able to take enforcement action in relation to enviro crime incidents such as littering and fly tipping which are harmful to the environment. Action can be in the form of issuing civil penalty notices, use of community protection notices or bringing formal prosecutions through the courts. The main pieces of legislation under which these powers can be exercised are the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (sections 43-58), the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 and the Control of Pollution (Amendment) Act 1989.
- 5.2 Alongside the legislative powers listed above, in order for successful enforcement action to be taken, it is necessary for the Council to have an up to date enforcement policy to set out the framework of rules it will adhere to when it investigates breaches of the legislation.

### **6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS**

#### **Local Government Reorganisation**

- 6.1 The implementation of this enforcement policy will strengthen the enforcement process now and in the future.

**Relevant Council Priority**

- 6.2 The proposal detailed within this report directly compliments Bromsgrove's Council Plan. The new strategy will assist the Council with addressing litter and dog mess and the impact of fly tipping and antisocial behaviour as part of the key objectives of the priority.

**Climate Change Implications**

- 6.3 This updated enforcement policy creates no material change to climate change implications but may offer minor environmental co-benefits to the district.

**Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 6.4 The proposed enforcement policy will apply to all scenarios. However, due consideration will be given to public interest tests throughout the investigations that are undertaken.
- 6.5 The proposed policy will have a positive equality implication through the protection of public health and safety, which will support vulnerable members of the community who may be at greater risk from health implications due to dog fouling or improper disposal of waste.
- 6.6 The policy also explicitly recognises the importance of fair, independent and objective decisions that do not treat people differently because of any protected characteristic.
- 6.7 Accessible communication and guidance is a key part of this policy, ensuring that everyone can access information and support.
- 6.8 A wider Equality Impact Assessment is being undertaken with assistance from the Policy Team at Bromsgrove District Council to support how this policy can be implemented.

**7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 There is a risk that the Council, if the policy is not adopted, will be failing to make use of the most efficient tools to enable Environmental Enforcement and this could undermine the efficacy of the service.

**8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**Cabinet**  
2026

20<sup>th</sup> April

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Appendix 1 – New Joint Environmental Enforcement Strategy.  
Appendix 2 – Bromsgrove and Redditch Environmental Crime  
Enforcement Policy.

**Cabinet**  
2026

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**9. REPORT SIGN OFF**

| <b>Department</b>  | <b>Name and Job Title</b>                         | <b>Date</b>              |
|--|---|--------------------------|
| Portfolio Holder   | Peter Whittaker PFH Env Services                  | 03.02.2026<br>Notified.  |
| Lead Director / Assistant Director                         | Simon Wilkes                                      | 24.02.2026.              |
| Financial Services   | Debra Goodall, AD Financial Services              | 13.02.2026<br>Consulted. |
| Legal Services   | Nicola Cummings, Principal Solicitor - Governance | 18/02/26                 |
| Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)             | Rebecca Green, Policy Manager                     | 06.03.2026               |
| Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply) | Matt Eccles, Climate Change Manager               | 23.02.2026<br>Consulted  |

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### **Joint Environmental Enforcement Strategy** Bromsgrove District Council & Redditch Borough Council

#### **1.0 Introduction – Why do we need a Strategy?**

- 1.1 In order to reduce crime and the fear of crime within a neighbourhood, signs of even low level crimes such as environmental crimes, need to be removed or reduced, as litter and dirty streets, graffiti, dumped rubbish and cars all give a feeling of unease whilst at the same time encouraging similar criminal behaviour. Environmental crimes have an adverse impact on the local environment and quality of life.
- 1.2 To mitigate against environmental crime, this Strategy focuses on not only the traditional aspects of environmental management, such as litter picking and sweeping and enforcement but also the softer elements such as advice giving and education (including both perpetrators and observers). However, by ensuring cases which do lead to enforcement are well publicised, a clear message will be sent out to other potential perpetrators of environmental crime.
- 1.3 Under the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) 1990, the Council has a duty to keep streets and public spaces clean and clear of litter and refuse. A range of powers for local authorities came into effect under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (CNEA) 2005. The CNEA has extended local authority powers to deal with issues that are considered environmental crime.
- 1.4 This Strategy supports Bromsgrove District Council's priorities of economic development, town centre and one community and all three Redditch Borough Council priorities – i.e. enterprising, safe and clean and green.

#### **2.0 What is classed as 'environmental crime'?**

- 2.1 The following are classed as environmental crimes and powers are given to Local Authorities to tackle these primarily through the EPA 1990, the CNEA 2004 and include:
- 2.2 **Litter**  
Includes the offence of dropping litter as well as litter emanating from a business or littered private land which is open to the public such as a retail park or train station. Litter can also emanate from a premises which is not containing refuse correctly.
- 2.3 **Fly-tipping**  
Varies in size from a single mattress or black bin bag to large-scale truck loads of construction, demolition and excavation waste. Some illegal dumps, whilst small in size, can be serious particularly if hazardous waste is involved. Waste is classed as a fly-tip if it is too large to be removed by a normal hand sweeping barrow. In simple terms, a single full bin bag upwards would constitute a fly-tip. Similarly several carrier bags full of rubbish dumped together would also constitute a single fly-tip. The majority of fly-tipping in Redditch is small amounts of domestic waste. In the more rural areas of Bromsgrove there are more instances of commercial loads of fly-tipping such as tyres, business or construction waste.

## Appendix A – Joint Environmental Enforcement Strategy

### 2.3 Dog fouling

Offences whereby owners allow their dogs to foul on public open spaces. Please note that this enforcement activity does not include dog control orders or stray dogs, these are dealt with by Regulatory Services.

### 2.4 Abandoned vehicles and nuisance vehicles

Councils have a duty to deal with abandoned vehicles and can issue Fixed Penalty Notices for the offence. Please note that this enforcement activity does not carry out enforcement activities in relation to parking offences. In Redditch there is also a local policy which deals with the problem of untaxed nuisance vehicles which are parked on Council land which can be extended across Bromsgrove.

### 2.5 Graffiti and fly-posting

We are currently working on a cross service/partnership approach to tackling graffiti and fly-posting where the responsibilities of the different agencies and land owners will be clarified. However, environmental enforcement officers and Anti Social Behaviour Officers will take enforcement action in relation to these issues.

### 2.6 Waste

Covers offences in relation to waste receptacles, such as leaving bins permanently on public land, and non compliance with the Statutory Notice issued to all householders in relation to the household waste service. Covers both household and commercial waste issues, e.g. checking on waste transfer notes or waste carrier's licences

## 3.0 Levels of Enforcement

3.1 The interface between giving advice and more serious enforcement action is critical. In Bromsgrove and Redditch a staged approach is used as outlined below:

|         |                      |
|---------|----------------------|
| Stage 1 | Advice given         |
| Stage 2 | Verbal warning       |
| Stage 3 | Written warning      |
| Stage 4 | Fixed penalty notice |
| Stage 5 | Court proceedings    |

3.2 Environmental Enforcement Officers are given complete discretion towards the severity of the penalty. It should also be noted it is not necessary to progress through the stages and offences can be taken to stage 5 on a first account if this is considered appropriate.

3.3 The authorities will use the power whereby a discount on a FPN can be offered for early payment – full details of the amounts for the various offences are set out in appendix C. The standard period for payment of fixed penalties is set in the legislation at 14 days. Once a FPN has been issued, an authority cannot prosecute for the alleged offence if the fixed penalty is paid within this period and this must be stated on the notice itself. For this reason, the period during which a discount for early payment is offered, must be less than 14 days and to avoid confusion, guidance recommends that it should not be more than 10 days.

### **4.0 Awareness raising**

- 4.1 An important part of the role of enforcement officers is to carry out proactive visible enforcement to tackle problems like littering and dog fouling.
- 4.2 Campaigning and the use of good quality promotional materials – statutory notices, standard letters, stickers, cards etc. plays an important part of this enforcement strategy. Additionally, regular publicity to promote our enforcement activities will take place, and we will ensure that we publicise successful outcomes in relation to a specific event.

### **5.0 Partnerships across the Council and with other Agencies**

- 5.1 Environmental enforcement work supplements and forms part of our street cleaning and waste collection services. It supplements the schedules which are in place to keep the streets and other public open spaces clean and tidy and household waste collection services.
- 5.2 Working together with other service areas and agencies like social landlords is a critical part of the approach to tackling environmental crime. For example, in Redditch there are regular walkabouts in conjunction with tenancy and ASB officers as well as community support officers and police. Support of and attendance at events like PACT meetings is also an important part of our Strategy.

### **6.0 How do we check that what we are doing is working?**

- 6.1 We will provide regular updates to Members on enforcement work and also report activities in relation to fly-tipping through the Flycapture database and any other such reporting systems that are required in the future.

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## **Bromsgrove and Redditch Environmental Crime Enforcement Policy.**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Since June 2024, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) has delivered some environmental crime functions on behalf of Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils. This enforcement policy outlines the approach to be taken to tackle those environmental crimes that the shared service has been asked to address.
- 1.2 The following legislative provisions contain provisions that create criminal offences and provide local authorities and their officers with powers to tackle these. Legislation includes the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Control of Pollution Act 1989, Clean Neighborhoods and Environment Act 2005; Environment Act 1995 and Anti-Social Behavior Crime and Policing Act 2014. The common specific offences included are:
- **Littering** to include the offence of dropping litter as and litter escaping from a business to include offences relating to public and private land.
  - **Fly tipping** from a single bin bag or mattress to large scale lorry-loads of waste. Most of the fly tipping in Redditch is single domestic waste items whereas Bromsgrove, being more rural, is more impacted by fly tipping by commercial enterprises.
  - **Failure to dispose of Waste appropriately** to include householder's and business's duty of care for how they manage and dispose of their waste. This includes any requirement to hold waste carriers licensing or requirements for waste transfer notes. The Duty of Care is a legal requirement for those dealing with certain kinds of waste to take all reasonable steps to keep it safe. It applies to anyone who is a holder of household, industrial and commercial waste, known as controlled waste.
  - **Dog Fouling** in public open spaces.
- 1.3 This policy supersedes the Joint Environmental Enforcement Strategy for Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council except for elements relating to abandoned and nuisance vehicles, and to the enforcement of graffiti and fly posting, which are outside of the scope of shared service activity and therefore also of this revision of the enforcement policy. These elements remain enforced by the Environmental Services team serving the two councils.
- 1.4 This Enforcement Policy explains how the Service will carry out its enforcement duties and, in addition, what business and citizens in the Bromsgrove and Redditch areas can expect. It will be applied by officers in relation to the functions listed in 1.2 above. It is distinct from any general Enforcement Policies of the individual local authority partners, which apply to other regulatory functions provided by them such as planning,



and from the general enforcement policy operated by the shared service covering its activities on behalf of the six district councils.

- 1.5 The primary outcome from service activities in this area is to ensure residents and businesses comply with legislation so that members of the public, businesses and their employees, and the environment are protected. The work should also ensure a level playing field for those involved in the commercial collection and disposal of waste. Fair, proportionate, and effective enforcement is essential to protecting the health, safety, and economic interests of all concerned, and there are a range of tools available to the Service to achieve this. Whilst in the main compliance will be achieved using advice and where needed, lower-level formal sanctions and actions, there will be a need to take people and businesses through the court process in some circumstances. These are outlined further in the policy.
- 1.6 In delivering these activities, the Service must also have regard to the various general duties imposed on the partner authorities e.g., section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act, and the general powers given to local government for the promotion of well-being under the various Local Government Acts. Officers are also obliged to ensure that their actions are in-line with provisions in the Human Rights Act 1998 when taking decisions relating to enforcement action.

## **2. Policy Scope**

- 2.1 The shared service is committed to providing an effective service with officers carrying out their duties in an equitable, practical, and consistent manner. To achieve this, officers and the service will have regard to the principles in a number of documents that provide guidance or act as codes of practice which must be given due regard. These include:
  - The Regulators Code (DBaT)
  - Local Government Regulation's Home Authority Principle,
  - Office for Product Safety and Standards' (OPSS) Primary Authority Principle
  - The Crown Prosecution Service Code for Crown Prosecutors (as amended.)
  - Human Rights Act 1998 and the European Convention on Human Rights.
- 2.2 The Policy applies to actions in relation to all the relevant legislation enforced by the Service. Enforcement action for the purposes of this policy includes any action taken by officers aimed at ensuring that individuals or businesses comply with the law and goes beyond just formal enforcement action such as prosecution.

## **3 General Principles**

- 3.1 Prevention is generally better than cure and the shared service's role therefore can involve actively working with householders and businesses to provide advice on and assist with achieving compliance. In line with its business methodology, where data



and intelligence identify a need for widespread educational or informative action to improve compliance, such actions will be delivered and prioritised as informal preventative measures. Where the service considers that formal action is necessary, each case will be considered on its own merits. However, there are general principles that apply to the way in which each case will be approached. These are set out in this Policy.

- 3.2 Regulatory matters will relate to both businesses and individuals. Both types of case will be treated in the same way and the general principles outlined around proportionality of action will be applied. Informal resolution will be tried before resorting to formal action and potentially the Courts, unless the law mandates that an authority must act in certain circumstances, or the circumstances are so serious that anything other than immediate formal action would be inappropriate. Even then, the service can use the discretion that all local authorities have as to the timeliness of taking formal action.
- 3.3 Enforcement decisions will be fair, independent, and objective and will not be influenced by issues such as ethnicity or national origin, gender, religious beliefs, political views or the sexual orientation of the suspect, victim, witness, or offender. Such decisions will not be affected by improper or undue pressure from any source. We will consider the views of any victim, injured party, or relevant person to establish the nature and extent of any harm or loss, and its significance, in making the decision to take formal action.
- 3.4 This enforcement policy helps to promote efficient and effective approaches to regulatory inspection and enforcement, which improve regulatory outcomes without imposing unnecessary burdens on business. We recognise the positive impact that the service can have on economic progress and growth in the local economy and see it as part of our role to encourage and support the growth of legitimate business activity within the legal framework provided by central government.

#### **4 Intelligence and Risk**

- 4.1 We will ensure that our resources are targeted where they will be most effective. We use intelligence, alongside the assessment of risk, to inform all aspects of our regulatory activity including:
  - Data collection and other information requirements.
  - Programmes of Inspection, Advice and support.
  - Enforcement activity and various forms of sanction.
- 4.2 Our approach to environmental crime will be intelligence-led and interventions will be driven by the assessment of data and information. Decisions on tactical actions will be influenced by:



- Compliance history (i.e., are there repeat offenders involved)
- Potential future risks (is there a likelihood of reoffending)
- Scale and severity (the size of incident, its wider impact, significance of the offence)

4.3 Intelligence will be used to direct inspection-based projects, targeting commercial sectors or businesses where there are known issues. Obviously, a complaint may also trigger a visit if that is the most appropriate response. We will review our approach to regulatory activities from time to time, to remove any unnecessary burdens from businesses.

## **5 Advice and Guidance**

5.1 We will provide general information, advice, and guidance to make it easier for householders and businesses to understand and meet their obligations in clear, concise, and accessible language, using a range of appropriate formats and media. Information will cover all legal requirements relating to our activities, as well as changes to legal requirements. We will continue to ensure householders and businesses are aware of their legal obligations and where changes are of great significance, we will look at the best ways of informing householders and businesses of these changes e.g., through press releases, newsletters, social media, community groups or letter drops.

5.2 WRS will promote self service via Bromsgrove and Redditch's website to report environmental crimes, and an acknowledgement will be provided. When offering advice to businesses, the service will clearly distinguish between statutory requirements and advice/ guidance, aimed at improvements above minimum legal standards. WRS recognises its advice should help achieve compliance but impose the minimum burden required on the business concerned. Advice will be confirmed in writing, if requested.

5.3 Where a business knows it has a problem and seeks advice to remedy the situation; this will not normally trigger enforcement action unless the impacts on the environment or the public are severe. Where appropriate WRS will seek to support the remedial action to prevent future problems however must reserve the right to take enforcement action in serious cases.

## **6 Inspection and other surveillance tactics**

6.1 WRS activity will be driven by intelligence. Inspection and other forms of market surveillance will inform us about problem areas or paint a picture of broader trends to help inform the deployment of resources.



6.2 WRS will focus its efforts where the assessment of intelligence or risk show there are areas where non-compliance is more likely or non-compliance poses a more serious risk to regulatory outcomes.

6.3 Where WRS and another law enforcement agency have a shared interest in an individual or business, we will seek to work together to tackle environmental crime. We will also share intelligence with other law enforcement bodies, where appropriate, to support regulatory outcomes. The service will also take account of the circumstances of smaller businesses, including any difficulties they may have in achieving compliance unless the non-compliance in question creates a serious risk.

## 7.0 Enforcement Action

7.1 In accordance with good practice, we will:

- Publish our Enforcement Policy,
- Report on our enforcement activities year on year to interested parties through an Annual Report,
- Follow-up enforcement actions where appropriate,
- Be transparent in the way in which we enforce requirements and, apply and determine penalties /sanctions/ formal actions (when such powers are made available.)

7.2 When considering what action should be taken, we will look to:

- Be proportionate to the nature of the offence and the harm caused,
- Change the behaviour of the offender,
- Eliminate any financial gain or benefit from non-compliance,
- Address the harm caused by regulatory non-compliance, where appropriate,
- Deter future non-compliance,
- Be responsive and consider what is appropriate for the particular offender and regulatory issue, and
- Avoid perverse incentives that might influence the choice of sanctioning response.

7.3 When considering formal enforcement action, we will, when appropriate, discuss the circumstances with those suspected of a breach and take these comments into account when deciding on the best approach, this will routinely form part of any investigation. Where a prosecution may be an option, the offender is likely to be offered an interview under the provisions of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, which will give an opportunity for the alleged offender to give their side of the story.

7.4 Where the outcome is a decision to send a file to the relevant legal service for them to consider prosecution, this will be reported to the potential defendants. For lesser



disposals, an explanation of the need for the action will be provided as soon as is reasonably practicable after the intervention.

## 7.5 Deciding what enforcement action is appropriate

In assessing what enforcement action is necessary and proportionate, consideration will be given to:

- The seriousness of compliance failure or offence.
- The individual or business's past compliance i.e. if this is a reoccurring issue.
- The scale and extent of the offence.
- The culpability of those involved i.e., was there guilty knowledge in the actions taken,
- Any official or professional guidance, legal opinions or case law.

## 7.6 Enforcement Options

There are many potential enforcement options in some legislative areas. The level of action taken will vary from no action/ verbal advice & assistance through to proceedings in Court. Examples of the main types of action that can be considered are shown below:

- No action/ verbal advice & assistance.
- Informal Action and Written Advice.
- Community Protection Warning
- Community Protection Notice
- Statutory Notice to produce information
- Fixed Penalty Notices
- Seizure of goods/equipment
- Simple Caution
- Prosecution
- Other Actions

## 7.7 No Action/ Verbal Advice or assistance

There will be circumstances where a contravention may not warrant action, or it may be inappropriate. Many minor contraventions can be dealt with via advice and/ or assistance. Where this is not appropriate, due to the behaviour of one party or where the complainant is from a vulnerable group, the service will consider the best option for intervention depending on the circumstances.

## 7.8 Informal Action and Written Advice

For minor breaches, we will give advice on how to put them right, including a deadline by which this must be done. The time allowed will be reasonable and take into account the seriousness of the contravention and the implications of the non-compliance.



Where the advice required is detailed, or there are potentially serious implications from the failure, the advice will be provided in writing. Failure to comply could result in further enforcement action.

Wherever possible we will advise alleged offenders about 'good practice', but we will clearly distinguish between what they must do to comply with the law and what is recommended best practice.

## 7.9 Community Protection Warning (CPW)

Issued under Part 4 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, CPW's are intended to address anti-social behaviour which unacceptably affects victims and the community. They act as a warning and must be issued prior to a Community Protection Notice (CPN) advising them to stop doing / do specific things and to take reasonable steps to achieve a specified result. A CPW or CPN can be served on an individual or a body such as a business. Failure to heed the warning contained within a CPW after giving a specified time frame where the effect continues may lead to service of a CPN. The purpose of a CPW is to prevent or reduce the effect of the conduct and the likelihood of it continuing or reoccurring.

## 7.10 Community Protection Notice (CPN)

Issued under the same legislation above, a CPN may be the next enforcement action should the warning of a CPW not be heeded. A CPN is appropriate where there are reasonable grounds to believe that a person or business's conduct:

- is having a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality, and
- is unreasonable, and
- the behaviour is of a persistent or continuing nature.

A CPN outlines what steps must or must be taken in a given time frame. Failure to comply with a CPN without reasonable excuse may result in the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) with the fine being £100 for failing to comply with the requirements of the CPN. Alternatively, a FPN may not be appropriate, and the situation deemed severe enough to proceed straight to Court depending on the impact and in consideration with the principles of this enforcement policy. Items used in the commission of the offence may be seized. There is a right to appeal a CPN to a Magistrates Court within 21 days of issue.

## 7.11 Statutory notice to produce information

Officers of the Service have the power under various pieces of legislation, or through delegation, to issue notices that require information to assist in their investigations. This could include but is not limited to waste carriers license and waste transfer notes.



Failure to respond and produce the requested documents could result in FPN or prosecution.

All notices issued will contain details of any Appeals process that may be available to the recipient.

## 7.12 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN's)

FPN's can be issued for the following offences:

- Littering - Depositing Litter (section 87/88 - Environmental Protection Act 1990)
- Failure to produce authority (Waste Carrier's Licence) (Section 5/5B Control of Pollution (Amendment) Act 1989)
- Failure to produce documentation (Waste Transfer Notes) (Section 34(5) and regulations made under it 34/ (6)/34A Environmental Protection Act 1990)
- Breach of Waste Duty of Care (section 34 Environmental Protection Act 1990)
- Fly Tipping - Depositing Controlled Waste (Section 34(1)(a) and Section 33(Z)(a) Environmental Protection Act 1990)
- Breach of Community Protection Notice (Section 52 of Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014)

FPN's are recognised as a low-level enforcement tool and avoid the defendant obtaining a criminal record. They will only be used in appropriate circumstances to give a fast and measured response to a situation. Where legislation permits an offence to be dealt with by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN), we may choose to administer a FPN on a first occasion, without issuing a warning. We will only issue a FPN if we are satisfied that there is enough evidence to consider prosecuting an individual for the offence the FPN is offered for as an opportunity to discharge their liability and avoid the risk of a criminal record. There may also be circumstances where it is considered that the offence is so severe and public interest tests (see later in 7.15 Institution of legal proceedings) require a case to be considered without the issue of an FPN.

## 7.13 Seizure of goods/equipment

We can seize a vehicle, trailer or mobile plant and their contents if it's believed it is being, has been or will be used to commit a waste crime such as fly-tipping. Vehicles and their contents can be seized under the Control of Pollution (Amendment) Act 1989 or the Environmental Protection Act 1990. A vehicle can be seized:

- If it is used in fly-tipping;
- If it is driven by somebody who is not registered as a waste carrier;
- If it is used to transfer waste to somebody who is not registered as the waste carrier;
- If it is being used at a site that is breaking the rules of an environmental permit;



There are also provisions in Section 51 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 to seize items used in the commission of offence. This legislation applies to the breaching of a CPN and can be undertaken prior to prosecution.

In both incidences such action is considered a last resort option where compliance has repeatedly not been achieved by other means and there are strict process measures that must be followed when carrying out this action.

## 7.14 The use of Simple Cautions

Where the public interest justifies it, the senior officer reviewing a case will consider offering a Simple Caution (or Reprimand/ Final Written Warning if the offender is below the age of 18.) In offering a Simple Caution, we will take account of the Home Office Guidelines in relation to the cautioning of offenders, and the Code for Crown Prosecutors. Where the offender is under 18 and a formal approach is being considered, appropriate bodies such as the Youth Offending Team will be consulted.

A Simple Caution requires an admission of guilt on behalf of the offender, however there is no sentence and there is no recorded conviction. A caution will remain on record for a period of 2 years and may be cited in Court should a further offence be committed and prosecuted during that time.

## 7.15 Institution of Legal Proceedings

Once an officer has completed their enquiries, a case report will be submitted to a senior officer, independent of the investigation, who will decide the most appropriate course of action using amongst other things, the criteria identified below.

Where the law has been broken, there is a range of enforcement options available and, under normal circumstances, a process of escalation will be used until either compliance is reached or there is no option other than to instigate proceedings. This approach would not be appropriate where there is a serious risk to public safety or the health of the environment, or the offences have been committed deliberately or negligently or involve deception, or where there is significant economic detriment or potential detriment caused by the activity. Each case is unique and will be considered on its own facts and merits.

The senior officer will take into consideration the requirements of the Code for Crown Prosecutors and other relevant codes before deciding whether to pass the file to the relevant legal officer for their review and the formal consideration of whether to authorise the institution of legal proceedings.

Before doing this, the senior officer will have to be satisfied that there is sufficient evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction against each defendant for each offence



identified. They must have concluded that a jury or bench of Magistrates, properly directed in accordance with the law, is more likely than not to convict the defendant of the charge alleged based on the evidence before them. To this end, the senior officer will look at all the available evidence, reliability of witnesses, supporting documentation and any other matters relating to the investigation. Only when this evidential test has been satisfied will the public interest to proceed with the prosecution be considered.

In deciding whether a prosecution will serve the public interest, the senior officer will balance factors for and against the prosecution carefully, fairly, and impartially. Some factors may increase the justification to prosecute whereas others may militate against. Below are some of the matters to be taken into consideration for and against criminal proceedings. This is not an exhaustive list and, as such, each case is taken strictly on its own individual merits:

### **Factors in Favour of Prosecution**

- The offender was in a position of control within a business;
- The offence was premeditated and/or planned;
- The offender acted dishonestly, wilfully, or negligently.
- The offender targeted a vulnerable group or person.
- The seriousness of the offence is significant;
- The offender has benefited from the criminal conduct;
- The offender has received advice or a warning concerning the circumstances of the offence or similar matters.
- The offender has previous convictions that are relevant.
- The offence, though not serious in itself, is widespread in the area where it was committed.
- There are grounds to believe that the offence is likely to be continued or repeated, for example by a history of recurring conduct.
- The outcome of a prosecution might serve an important, informative purpose or establish a legal precedent.

### **Factors which would mitigate against the need for a prosecution**

- The offence was minor in nature and because of a genuine mistake or misunderstanding, which did not involve significant negligence.
- The offender is vulnerable, for example through age-related issues, or was at the time of the offence suffering from significant mental or physical ill health, which contributed to the commission of the offence, and the offence was neither serious nor likely to be repeated.
- The offender put right the loss or harm caused prior to the intervention of the Service.
- The defendant was a youth at the time of the offence.
- There has been a long delay between the offence and any potential court action, unless either:



- (i) The offence is serious,
- (ii) The delay has been caused by the defendant or his/ her legal representatives,
- (iii) The offence has only recently come to light, or
- (iv) The complexity of the offence meant that there has been a long investigation.

## 7.16 Other Actions

Injunctive action is a civil law process that may be used to ensure that person or business desists from a particular pattern of behaviour or action. Whilst these are not the norm in dealing with regulatory matters, seeking an injunction may be the most appropriate method of disposal for an issue. A decision to seek an injunction would be taken by the legal officer for the relevant partner council and is most likely to be relevant where the normal legal processes such as the issuing of notices and prosecution have not led to resolution of a problem. WRS officers will work with the relevant partner legal team to develop such cases and support them being taken through the Court process.

If a CPN is breached, we can apply for a Remedial Order which may require the defendant to carry out specific works in line with the CPN or allow the work to be carried out on our behalf to remedy the breach. Refusing consent amounts to a breach of the Order which could possibly lead to further proceedings for contempt of court.

Some cases taken by the service can lead to applications being made under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA) for confiscation of assets, or a POCA investigation may run

alongside an investigation into breaches. These are likely to be the most serious cases, where there is persistence of offending over a long period of time or where the offences are deemed to be "lifestyle crime" under POCA. Their purpose is to recover the financial benefit that the offender has obtained from his criminal conduct. WRS will look to use these provisions in an appropriate manner.

## 8.0 Additional Information

The Senior Managers involved in making the more serious decisions will also have regard to legal advice from the relevant partner Head of Legal Services and will not instigate any legal proceedings without their authority.

## 8.1 Standards and Accountability

Where relevant WRS will create effective consultation and feedback opportunities to ensure we have continuing cooperative relationships with businesses and other interested parties. We will ensure our officers provide courteous and efficient services to residents and businesses. We will enable them to interpret and apply relevant legal requirements and ensure that they enforce requirements fairly and consistently in



similar situations. We will take account of comments from businesses and other interested parties regarding the behaviour and activity of our staff.

## 8.2 Liaison with other regulatory bodies and enforcement agencies

Where appropriate, enforcement activities within WRS will be coordinated with other regulatory bodies and enforcement agencies to maximise the effectiveness of any enforcement.

Where an enforcement matter affects a wide geographical area beyond the boundaries of Bromsgrove and Redditch Council areas involves enforcement by one or more other local authorities or organisations; where appropriate all relevant authorities and organisations will be informed of the matter as soon as possible and all enforcement activity coordinated with them.

WRS will share intelligence relating to wider regulatory matters with colleagues within the partner authorities, other regulatory bodies and enforcement agencies, and examples include:

- Government Departments and Agencies
- Police Forces and Fire Authorities
- Other Statutory Bodies
- Other Local Authorities

## 8.3 Obstruction of Officers

The areas of legislation covered by this policy make it a clear, that it is an offence to obstruct authorised officers in carrying out their roles. This includes offering the officer reasonable assistance in the conduct of their duties and investigations / inspections.

Section 6 and 7 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 and section 88 (8A) and (8B) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 make it an offence to fail to provide name and address or provide false or inaccurate name and address if an authorised officer proposes to give that person a fixed penalty notice in respect of nuisance parking an littering, respectively. These will be enforced, with Police assistance as required, to ensure that offences are dealt with at the lowest level possible.

The council regards the obstruction of, or assaults (physical and/or verbal) on, staff whilst lawfully carrying out their duties as a serious matter. Any instances will be referred to senior managers to determine the next steps, which may lead to legal proceedings against the perpetrator. Any threat or assault will not be tolerated.

## 8.4 Storage and Disclosure of Information

Information collected or recorded as part of the council's enforcement activities will be securely retained in a paper and/or electronic format for a period defined by legislation or



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Worcestershire  
**Regulatory Services**  
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required for future reference by the service. This information will include decisions taken about the choice of enforcement options.

The identity of a person providing the council with information about other people committing crime, will remain confidential unless prior agreement by the person is obtained, or its disclosure is authorised by law or by a court of law.

Personal data held manually or as computer records will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA). This information will be used in accordance with the council's

DPA registration. Exemptions to this include where information is disclosed to other agencies or used for another reason for the purposes of detecting or preventing crime. This will include the sharing of information between Council services and with the police and other enforcement agencies. Sharing of information relating to the Crime and Disorder Act will be undertaken in accordance with the appropriate information sharing protocol.

Right of access to information held by the council will be given on request, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information regulations 2004 unless the information is already publicly available (as described in the council's Publication Scheme). Exemptions can be found in the Act, Regulations and the council's publication scheme.

## **8.5 Appeals/Cancellation**

There is no appeal process against the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice. Any dispute relating to the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice may mean the appellant will be invited to attend an interview under caution in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. In the event of refusal to pay, then the matter will be considered for prosecution.

The Team Manager not previously involved in the case shall have the authority to cancel fixed penalty notices, but only if the notice is shown to have been wrongly served.

## **8.6 Further Information**

Anyone requiring further information on this policy should contact Worcestershire Regulatory Services by writing to:

Worcestershire Regulatory Services  
Wyre Forest House  
Finepoint Way,  
Kidderminster,  
Worcestershire  
DY11 7WF  
Or by e-mail to:  
[enquiries@worcsregservices.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@worcsregservices.gov.uk)

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**Cabinet**  
2026

20<sup>th</sup> April

### Littering from Vehicles

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder  | Councillor Kit Taylor<br>Councillor Peter Whittaker   |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted   | Yes   |
| Relevant Assistant Director  | Simon Wilkes, Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services  |
| Report Author<br>Toni Ainscough  | Job Title: Toni Ainscough, Principal Officer (Environmental Enforcement)<br>Contact email:<br>toni.ainscough@worcestershire.gov.uk<br>Contact Tel: 01562 738035 |
| Wards Affected   | ALL   |
| Ward Councillor(s) consulted   | N/A   |
| Relevant Council Priority  | Environment   |
| Non-Key Decision   |   |
| If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting. |   |

#### 1. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Cabinet Committee RECOMMEND that:-**

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

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Currently littering from vehicles is only enforced as a criminal offence and since June 2024 has been enforced by Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS). In line with the existing policy, enforcement has been discharged through informal action, Fixed Penalty Notices or consideration for prosecution. However, when littering occurs from a vehicle, to take formal enforcement action, there is a requirement to prove beyond reasonable doubt who committed the offence. Consequently, it can be difficult to identify the offender with sufficient certainty to take enforcement action.
- 2.2 On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018, The Littering From Vehicles Outside London (Keepers: Civil Penalties) Regulations 2018 gave powers to litter authorities to issue Penalty Charge Notices to the keeper of a vehicle when the Council has reason to believe that litter was thrown from that vehicle onto land within the Council's control. This includes any highways within the district for which Bromsgrove District Council are the litter authority.
- 2.3 It is recommended that the Council introduces Litter Penalty Notices at the earliest opportunity and that the Civil Enforcement Team are given delegated authority to issue Litter Penalty Charge Notices and the parking administration team are authorised to deal with all appeals and enforcement matters in relation to these. Should Cabinet be mindful to introduce this proposal, communications to residents regarding the policy will ensue.

## **3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES**

- 3.1 The Littering From Vehicles Outside London (Keepers: Civil Penalties) Regulations 2018 is a civil route based on the same model as the issue of a Penalty Charge Notice used for parking enforcement in Bromsgrove. Civil Enforcement Officers are in the District undertaking this duty on a day-to-day basis. If they are also able to issue a Penalty Notice Charge to a person depositing litter, this would be an effective use of time and resource whilst they are undertaking their parking enforcement duties.
- 3.2 Civil Enforcement Officers will only issue a Penalty Charge Notice if they witness the incident and will process this in a similar way to a system that is already in place (please see appendix 1 – flow chart).
- 3.3 Civil Enforcement Officers and parking administration team are already undertaking this service on behalf of Wychavon District Council.

- 3.4 These recommendations only concern littering from vehicles witnessed by Civil Enforcement Officers. All other officers of the Council or members of the public who witness littering from vehicles should report this to WRS using the report it form on the Council or WRS' websites or call WRS directly for investigation. Such reports will be investigated through the criminal route.
- 3.5 The legislation sets out that the Civil Penalty Notice Charge should be set the same as that level set by Council for Criminal offences where a Fixed Penalty Notice is served for Depositing Litter (section 87/88 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990). Subject to normal Council fees and charges setting processes the level is £250.00 reduced to £125.00 for prompt payment (within 14 days) from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The provision of Civil Enforcement Officers in Bromsgrove is through a contract with Wychavon District Council, managed by the Assistant Director of Economic Development, Property and Regeneration. The proposal is to expand the current Service Level Agreement (SLA) to include issuing of Penalty Notices for littering from vehicles The SLA variation itself will not incur any cost.
- 4.2 The Civil Enforcement Officers will be able to utilise their existing handheld devices, DVLA link and systems that they use. There are no additional equipment costs and only a small software set up cost which will be covered by the existing WRS Envirocrime budget.
- 4.3 The cost of each additional Penalty Notice that is served is negligible at 35 pence each. For any Penalty Notices that are unpaid, there is an additional £10 charge for debt recovery in line with the existing Service Level Agreement (SLA) arrangements for parking charges and will be covered by the current budget arrangements.
- 4.4 The current SLA arrangements set a contractual limit on Penalty Charges issued without additional costs. It is not anticipated that this limit will be exceeded. Publicity around the introduction of the enforcement will similarly reduce the likelihood of this.
- 4.5 The current team of Civil Enforcement Officers will be used and will be trained to monitor and report incidences of littering from vehicles during their parking duties. The parking administration team will be trained on the recovery of unpaid littering penalties with an added volume of correspondence to manage.

- 4.6 Intelligence collated in the course of the service delivery will be used to inform the targeted approach to the wider enviro-crime enforcement by WRS.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Littering from Vehicles (Outside London) Regulation 2018 derives from Section 88A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 which provides that the Secretary of State has the discretion to make regulations which may oblige the keeper of a vehicle to pay a fixed penalty to a litter authority where there is reason to believe that there has been littering in respect of the vehicle.

- 5.2 The legislation can be enforced by a local authority or charging authority for the offence of littering from a vehicle under Section 87 of the Environmental Protection Act. A person may be pursued through civil proceedings, where they throw down, drop or otherwise deposit any litter in respect of the vehicle and enforcement will be to a civil standard.

#### **6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS**

##### **Local Government Reorganisation**

- 6.1 None, other than the introduction of the enforcement of this legislation is consistent with neighbouring Wychavon District Council.

##### **Relevant Council Priority**

- 6.2 This proposal supports the Council's environmental priority as it will contribute to safeguarding the natural environment. The priority specifically advises that increased environmental enforcement to protect the environment of the district key and that we will not tolerate environmental crimes such as fly tipping. This proposal will assist the Civil Enforcement Officers to deliver on this priority.

##### **Climate Change Implications**

- 6.3 No direct implications, however raising the profile of appropriate behaviour with regard to the environment helps support our Climate Change priorities.

##### **Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 6.3 There are no specific equalities and diversity implications.

**7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 There is a risk of dilution of the CEO’s parking duties. Although reporting littering from vehicles can be undertaken during the course of their current duties, it may distract from parking enforcement. The impact of this will be monitored.

**8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Appendix 1 – Operational Flow Diagram.  
Appendix 2 – FAQs

**9. REPORT SIGN OFF**

| Department                         | Name and Job Title   | Date      |
|------------------------------------|--|-----------|
| Portfolio Holder                   | Kit Taylor PFH WRS<br>Peter Whittaker PFH Env Services   | Consulted |
| Lead Director / Assistant Director | Simon Wilkes   | Consulted |
| Financial Services                 | Debra Goodall  | Consulted |
| Legal and Democratic Services      | Nicola Cummings, Principal Solicitor – Governance<br>And Jess Bayley-Hill, Principal Democratic Services Officer | 25.02.26  |

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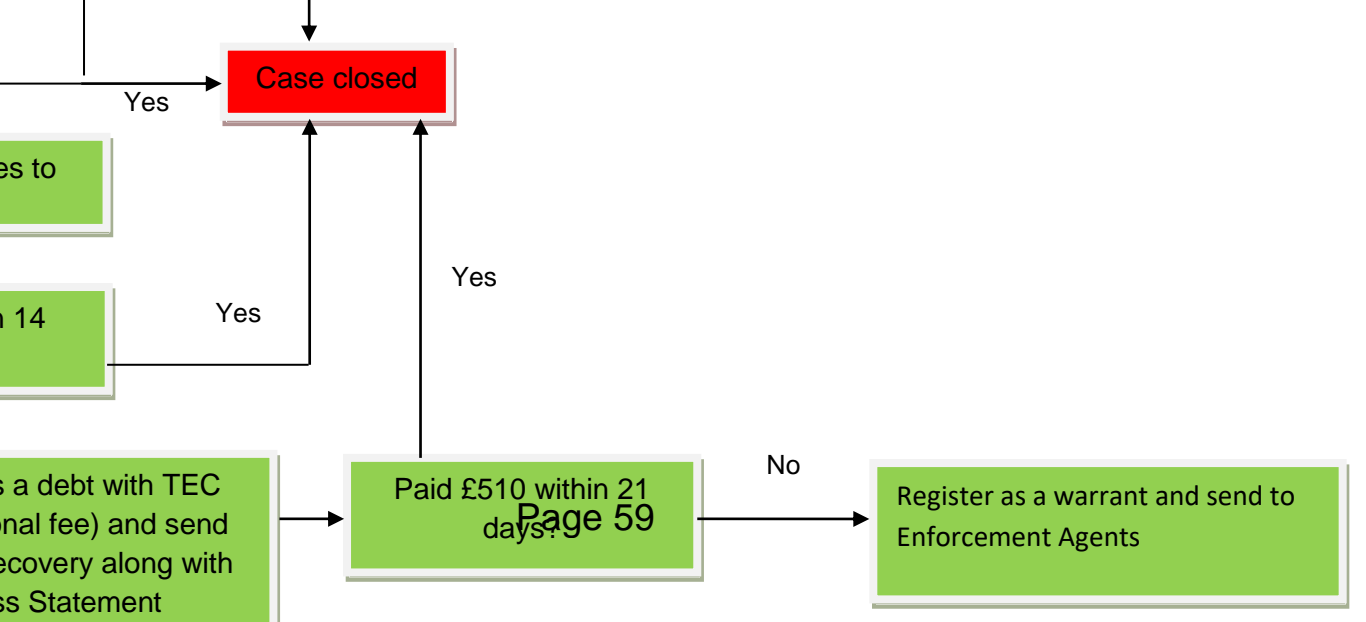
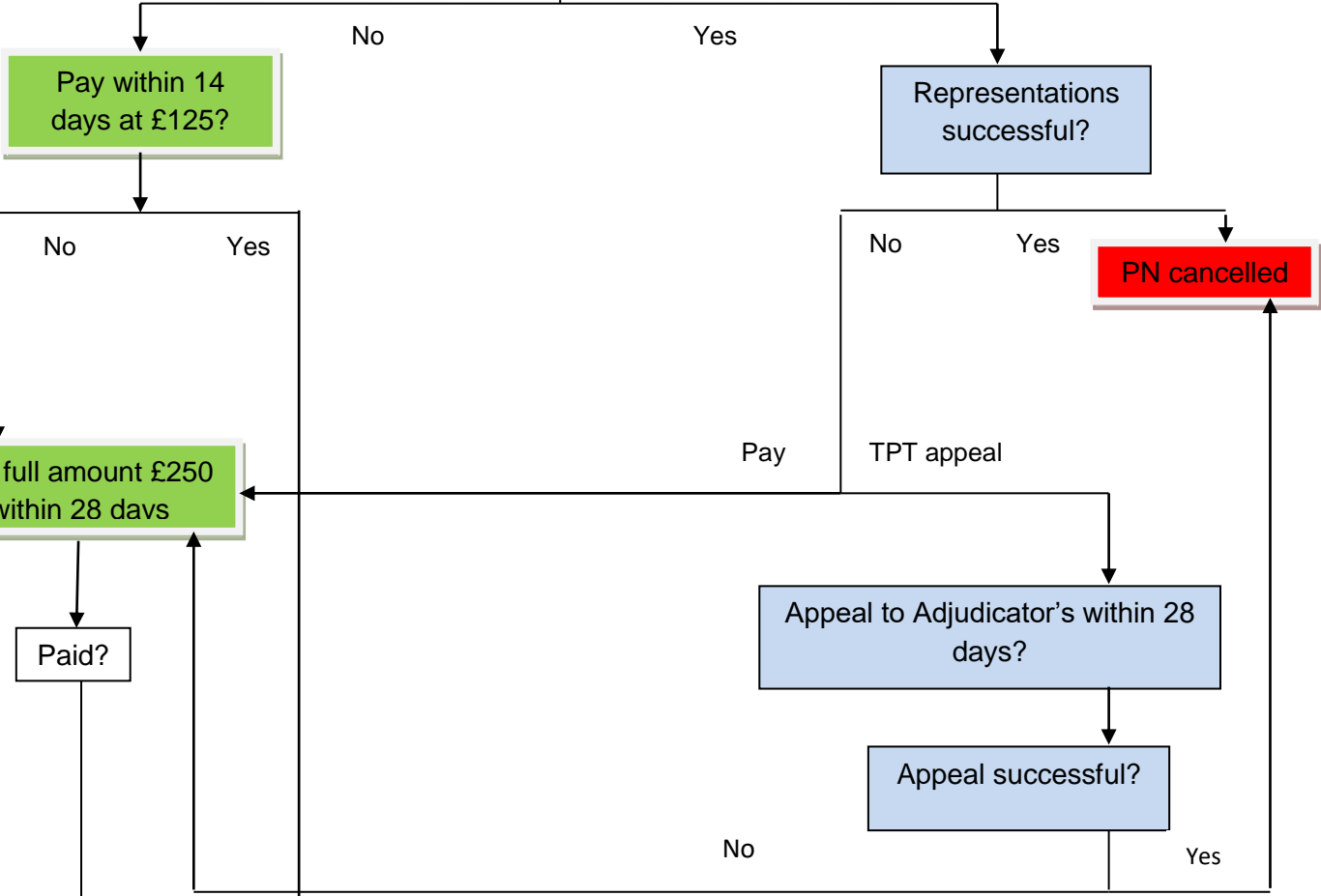
# Agenda Item 6

Appendix 1

Littering contravention.

DVLA keeper details obtained and Penalty Notice sent to the registered keeper of the vehicle

Written representations?



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## Appendix 2

### Frequently Asked Questions

❖ **Why do you need this route when you have the criminal route for littering?**

The criminal route requires the person who littered. In the criminal route, if the person who littered was the passenger and the registered keeper does not supply the details we are unable to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). This proposal seeks to empower the civil littering route where this clarification is not required. If a Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO) witnesses a littering from the vehicle, the registered keeper of the vehicle is responsible and would receive a Penalty Notice.

❖ **Will only Civil Enforcement Officers be able to issue Penalty Notices (PN)?**

Yes at this time.

❖ **What is the difference between a PN and FPN?**

Nothing as in effect they are the issuing of a fine.

❖ **Who will pursue the individual if left unpaid?**

The recovery of a PN is a set legislative process which is not dissimilar to that of a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN). There is a dedicated process and debt management system already in operation to process nonpayment of PCNs for parking charges a similar route will be used for the recovery of PNs. No investigation is required as the registered keeper is liable for the PN.

❖ **Are staff (CEOs) willing to issue PNs for littering offences?**

Staff are very willing and are currently frustrated that they are unable to issue Notices for the act of littering from vehicles when they see it on their patrols.

❖ **Will this proposal also cover people seen littering on the street?**

No, this proposal only applies to littering from vehicles. Any other littering witnessed would be reported to WRS to investigate via the criminal route.

❖ **Will there be scope to enable other Council Officers to use this route of compliance?**

Not at this time however if this proposal is approved it is something that could be considered in the future.

❖ **What is the additional cost?**

A small fee of 25p per PN will be due to fund the adjudication service (Traffic Penalty Tribunal) for cases that proceed to the independent tribunal service plus a DVLA enquiry cost per PN issued. If the PN is left unpaid and progresses, it will be

# Agenda Item 6

registered as a debt with the County Court at a cost of £10 per case. This amount is then added to the overall debt. It is not anticipated that many of these Notices will be issued (in Wychavon in 2025 only 5 were issued) but by approving the concept it gives Officers the option to issue.

### Cabinet

20 April

2026

#### Community Investment Fund

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder  | Councillor Karen May<br>Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development & Enabling                                    |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted   | Yes  |
| Relevant Assistant Director  | Rachel Egan<br>Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services   |
| Report Author  | Georgina Harris<br>UK Shared Prosperity Fund Manager<br>Contact email: Georgina.harris@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk<br>Contact Tel: 01527 534082 |
| Wards Affected   | No specific ward relevance   |
| Ward Councillor(s) consulted   |  |
| Relevant Council Priority  | Economic Development, Environment, Housing, Infrastructure   |
| Key Decision   |  |
| If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting. |  |

#### 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that:-

- 1) The Community Investment Fund policy be approved; and
- 2) Recommendations in relation to the Community Investment Fund to be received from the Assistant Director Regeneration and Property with delegated authority for spend, upon receipt of those recommendations, to be granted to the Executive Director Environment and Communities following consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development and Enabling and the Cabinet Member for Climate Change; and
- 3) £93,000 of the Community Investment Fund be allocated to Members' Ward Budgets; and

#### **4) Up to £43,792 of the Community Investment Fund be allocated to the cost of administering the fund**

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 As part of the preparation of the draft budget for 2026-27, a full review of reserves was undertaken by the Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Service to ensure that the reserves were still required for their original purpose. This review identified £5.944m of reserves that could be transferred to the general fund.
- 2.2 On 25 February 2026, the Council resolved to create a reserve of £1.25 million for a Community Investment Fund to enable agile investments to meet local community needs; supporting the Council's priorities both directly and through the authority's partners and community groups.
- 2.3 During the discussion of the Medium Term Financial Plan at the Council meeting on 25 February 2026, proposals were made to increase Members' ward budgets from £2,000 to £5,000.

### **3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES**

- 3.1 It is necessary to provide clear eligibility criteria for projects to qualify for the Community Investment Fund programme. The policy provides clarity to applicants and guidance in the assessment of project proposals.
- 3.2 It is anticipated that demand for funding will be high and decisions as to which projects are supported should be fair and transparent. The policy details the assessment criteria for each application and provides a robust governance framework for the programme.
- 3.3 The policy provides guidance on the types of organisations that can apply for funding and the projects that will be supported. Eligible projects must be aligned with the Council Plan and other published Council strategies.
- 3.4 Members will have the opportunity to act as sponsors for projects in their ward and the application form will include a section where they can provide additional information as to how the proposal may benefit the community.
- 3.5 It is proposed that applications will be evaluated against the assessment criteria in the policy and a scoring matrix based on these

criteria will be applied. A panel of at least 3 officers will independently assess each application, followed by a moderation process to review and align scores. The resulting list of proposed decisions will be reviewed by the Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services who will make recommendations to the Executive Director Environment and Communities. The Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnership, Economic Development and Enabling and the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate Change will then be consulted on the recommended decisions before applicants are informed of the outcome.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 A reserve of £1,250,000 has been created to fund the delivery of the Community Investment Fund.
- 4.2 The promotion and administration of the fund will be supported by the existing Economic Development team but will require the addition of 0.5 full time equivalent member of staff to support the administration of the fund which will be deducted from the total funds available. This will enable the Council to manage the Community Investment Fund efficiently and transparently by increasing capacity for application processing, due-diligence checks, applicant support and monitoring. It will also enable timely decision-making, stronger governance, and better evaluation of project outcomes, ensuring the Fund delivers maximum benefit to local communities.
- 4.3 The cost of the additional staffing, up to £43792, will be funded from the £1,250,000 reserve.
- 4.4 A further £93,000 of the reserve will be used for the uplift of Members' Ward budgets from £2,000 to £5,000 pa.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Delivery of the Community Investment Fund will require the Council to enter into contracts or other agreements with external organisations. The awarding of contracts or other agreements funded by the Community Investment Fund will be subject to the Council's procurement rules and subject to appropriate due diligence

#### **6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS**

##### **Local Government Reorganisation**

- 6.1 The fund will be fully allocated prior to Local Government Reorganisation

#### **Relevant Council Priority**

- 6.2 The investment plan supports delivery of the Council's priorities of Economic Development, Environment, Housing and Infrastructure.

#### **Climate Change Implications**

- 6.3 All funding applications will be assessed as to how well they align with the Council's priorities and the Council Plan. The Council's priorities are underpinned by the Green Thread; therefore, climate change implications will be considered in all assessments.
- 6.4 The funding will support projects that will improve green spaces and the investment in energy efficiency measures in community spaces.

#### **Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 6.5 Equality and diversity implications will be considered throughout the delivery of fund.

### **7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 There is a risk of low take-up of grants or inequitable take-up. The programme will be promoted to all Parish Councils, voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations, stakeholders, through the Council's website and press and social media. The geographical spread of the proposed projects may be considered when assessing the applications.
- 7.2 Potential misuse of funds will be mitigated against through close programme management. This involves coordinating the full lifecycle of the fund so that it is delivered transparently, efficiently and with measurable impact. It includes setting clear funding criteria, managing publicity and engagement, supporting applicants, and overseeing a structured assessment and decision-making process. It also involves coordinating governance, ensuring due-diligence checks are completed, issuing grant agreements, and monitoring project delivery to ensure funded organisations achieve their intended outcomes. Throughout, programme management provides consistent oversight, risk management, and reporting so that the fund remains accountable and delivers tangible benefits to the community. Funding recipients will be required to demonstrate compliance with procurement regulations

and funding will be paid upon receipt of invoices and evidence of payment. In exceptional circumstances, and by prior arrangements, funding may be provided in advance.

- 7.3 There is a risk that projects may experience delays or may not be completed within the deadline. To minimise this risk, applicants will be required to provide a project timeline detailing key milestones. Project officers will monitor the delivery of the project against these milestones so any delays can be identified early and addressed.
- 7.4 Community events could expose participants to unintended safety risks. All applicants will have to demonstrate that they have in place an appropriate risk assessment for their proposed event. Applicants will be required to have appropriate public liability insurance and to demonstrate that they have all the required permissions and licences.

#### **8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix 1 Community Investment Fund Policy

### Cabinet

20 April

2026

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#### 9. REPORT SIGN OFF

| Department   | Name and Job Title   | Date    |
|--|--|---------|
| Portfolio Holder   | Cllr Karen May, Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development and Enabling            | 30/3/26 |
| Lead Director / Assistant Director                         | Rachel Egan<br>Assistant Director<br>Regeneration and Property Services  | 30/3/26 |
| Financial Services   | Julie Lorraine<br>Interim Director of Finance & S151 Officer   | 30/3/26 |
| Legal Services   | Nicola Cummings<br>Principle Solicitor – Governance<br>And Jess Bayley-Hill, Principle Democratic Services Officer | 31/3/26 |
| Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)             | Rebecca Green<br>Policy Manager  | 25/3/26 |
| Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply) | Matthew Eccles<br>Climate Change Manager   | 25/3/26 |



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# Community Investment Fund Policy

**£ Community  
Investment Fund**

## 1. Introduction

Bromsgrove District Council is committed to investing in high-quality community activities and infrastructure that enhance neighbourhoods, supports community participation, and improves residents' quality of life. The Community Investment Fund (CIF) provides funding to support projects that deliver new or improved community assets and provides revenue funding to support community events and activities that increase footfall in the town centre, local centres and parks; enhance the vibrancy of public spaces, encourage local economic activity, strengthen community engagement and delivers positive outcomes for local people.

The Council recognises that strong social and community infrastructure contributes significantly to social, cultural, environmental, and economic wellbeing. This policy sets out how funding will be administered, assessed, and monitored, ensuring decisions are fair, transparent, and consistent with statutory responsibilities and the Council's corporate priorities.

## 2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all applications to the Community Investment Fund for projects delivered during the period **1 April 2026 to 31 March 2028**.

2.2 The programme provides capital funding, with a limited amount of related revenue expenditure permitted where it directly supports delivery of the capital project.

2.3 Revenue funding is available to support delivery of events and activities that benefit the community.

2.4 This policy applies only to the Community Investment Fund and does not cover other forms of Council funding, support, or commissioning.

## 3. Purpose of the Community Investment Fund

3.1 The purpose of the Community Investment Fund is to enable organisations to deliver projects that create, enhance, or modernise community infrastructure within Bromsgrove District; to support delivery of community services and activities that benefit local people; or to hold events that increase footfall and the vibrancy of the Town Centre, local centres and public parks.

3.2 Funding will be prioritised for projects that demonstrate clear alignment with the Council plan and other published Council strategies, and deliver defined, measurable community benefits.

3.3 Grant funding is available through three programmes:

- **Small Community Infrastructure Funding:**  
Grants from **£5,000 to £30,000** for neighbourhood-scale improvements.

- **Large Community Infrastructure Funding:**  
Grants from **£30,000 to £200,000**, with the potential for larger awards for **major projects** providing district-wide benefit or new community facilities.
- **Community Events and Activities Revenue Funding:**  
Grants from **£2,000 to £10,000** for events and activities that enhance the vibrancy of town and local centres and public parks by increasing footfall; or delivers community services and activities that benefit local people.

3.4 Projects must be outcome-focused and demonstrate a lasting positive impact on residents. We are particularly looking for projects to be delivered in areas experiencing greater need or limited existing provision

## 4. Available Funding

4.1 The fund will operate through competitive bidding rounds across the 2026–2028 programme period.

4.2 Funding may only be used for eligible purposes and must comply with statutory financial rules, subsidy control requirements, and the Council’s Procurement Policy (see section 12).

4.3 The Council may vary, pause, or withdraw the fund should budget or strategic circumstances change.

## 5. Who Can Apply

Applications will be accepted from:

- Parish Councils
- Registered Charities
- Community Interest Companies (CICs)
- Formally constituted, unincorporated community groups and associations
- Local Authority Trading Companies
- Bromsgrove District Council departments – subject to the agreement of the Assistant Director following consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder.

Eligible organisations must:

- Operate on a not-for-profit basis
- Have appropriate governance and financial controls
- Hold a bank account requiring at least two unrelated signatories
- Demonstrate the ability to deliver and manage the project

## **6. What Will and Will Not Be Funded**

### **6.1 Eligible Projects**

Eligible projects include the creation or improvement of:

- Public buildings including community centres, village halls, community libraries, public toilets
- Green or blue spaces including parks, gardens, woodlands, allotments, cemeteries, play areas
- Public realm including street furniture, wayfinding, car parks, visual amenity
- Arts, heritage, cultural, or sporting facilities
- Free to attend community events including music festivals, seasonal events such as a Christmas light switch-on, street entertainment, art and craft activities, sports tournaments
- Delivery of activities and services to local people on a non-commercial basis.

Projects must:

- Be located within Bromsgrove District, and
- Demonstrate that the primary beneficiaries will be Bromsgrove District residents

### **6.2 Ineligible Expenditure**

The CIF will not fund:

- Expenditure required to deliver statutory obligations
- Retrospective costs or items purchased before a grant agreement is in place
- Projects eligible for alternative Council funding, including Ward Councillor Fund where funding is still available
- Ongoing operational costs not directly related to project delivery
- Activities of a political or campaigning nature
- VAT reclaimable from HMRC
- Projects lacking necessary planning or regulatory approvals or licences
- Work that cannot be completed within the agreed timescales

## **7. Timescales**

7.1 The Council will publish the following for each round:

- Application opening date

- Application deadline
- Assessment period
- Expected decision date

7.2 All funding will be available in round 1 and any unallocated funding will go forward to the next round. Further rounds will only take place if there is funding available. The timing of rounds 1 - 3 are detailed in the table below:

| Funding Round | Open         | Close         | Awards Confirmed |
|---------------|--------------|---------------|------------------|
| Round 1       | 27/4/26      | 7/6/26        | 3/7/26           |
| Round 2       | 7/9/26       | 4/10/26       | 23/10/26         |
| Round 3       | January 2027 | February 2027 | March 2027       |

7.3 Decisions will normally be communicated within the published timescales.

## 8. Application Process

8.1 Applications must be submitted through the Council's online portal. There are separate application forms for the Small Community Infrastructure Funding, the Large Community Infrastructure Funding and the Community Events and Activities Funding.

8.2 Applicants must provide:

- A project proposal
- Evidence of alignment with the Council Plan or other published Council strategies
- Evidence of need for the project and the benefits that it will provide for the community.
- A detailed budget for the project and 3 quotations for any grant funded expenditure below £25,000 (see procurement requirements in Section 12 for expenditure over £25,000)
- A detailed delivery plan including key milestones
- Risk identification and mitigation (required for larger grants)

## 9. Assessment of Applications

9.1 All applications will be assessed against a scoring matrix. Applications will be scored against the following criteria:

- Alignment with the Council Plan and the Council's priorities
- Scale of the impact of the project
- Deliverability

- Value for money

9.2 The Council may consider previous performance in delivering funded projects when assessing applications.

9.3 The geographical spread of projects may be taken into account when assessing applications.

9.4 Incomplete applications will not be assessed.

9.5 The decisions of the funding panel are final and there is no right to appeal.

9.6 Applicants who are not successful may reapply in future rounds but only if they have made substantial changes to their proposal that address the reasons their previous application was declined.

## 10. Grant Conditions

10.1 Funding is awarded subject to a formal funding agreement, which must be signed before any payment is made.

10.2 Funding will generally be paid **on defrayed expenditure**, meaning applicants will be reimbursed for eligible costs paid after the date of the funding agreement. Larger grants may use phased payments linked to milestones. In exceptional circumstances, smaller funding amounts may be paid in advance.

10.3 All expenditure must be supported by:

- Evidence of compliant procurement (see Section 12)
- Invoices
- Proof of payment

10.4 There is no requirement to provide match funding; however, offering match contributions can strengthen an application and may positively influence the value for money assessment. Where match funding is included, an intervention rate will be set at that level meaning the funding will cover only a fixed proportion of the project's total cost up to a maximum value. If the project's actual costs are lower than those stated in the application the funding awarded will be reduced accordingly to maintain that same proportion.

10.5 All grants will be awarded in accordance with the Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) subsidy control regime or other appropriate subsidy control routes.

## 11. Risk Considerations in Awarding Funding

11.1 The Council must ensure its funding is used effectively and delivers value for money. Risks relating to deliverability, governance, financial management, planning constraints, and procurement compliance will be assessed as part of every application.

11.2 Large Infrastructure projects require:

- A project delivery plan with milestones
- A risk register outlining mitigation measures
- Demonstration of organisational capacity to deliver a capital project

11.3 Where risks are high, the Council may impose:

- Phased payment schedules
- Additional monitoring
- Conditions or restrictions in the grant agreement

## **12. Procurement Requirements**

12.1 To ensure value for money, all funded expenditure must follow the Council's procurement rules:

- Up to £3,000 per item: evidence of competitive enquiries undertaken
- £3,001 - £25,000 per item: 3 written quotations and record of how supplier is selected
- £25,001 - £50,000 per item: Advertise a request for quotation via a procurement portal or project deliverer's website
- £50,001+ per item: Issue an invitation to tender via a suitable procurement portal

12.2 Where quotations cannot be sourced due to market limitations applicants must provide evidence and justification.

12.3 Any queries regarding procurement requirements and approach should be sent to the CIF programme officers.

## **13. Monitoring**

13.1 Monitoring requirements will be proportionate to the size of the funding and will be set out in the funding agreement.

13.2 Monitoring may include:

- Progress reports
- Updated risk assessments
- Photographs of completed works
- A final evaluation

13.3 The Council reserves the right to withhold future payments or reclaim funding if:

- Monitoring requirements are not met
- Expenditure is non-compliant
- Delivery deviates from the approved proposal unless agreed in advance.

## **14. Branding Requirements**

14.1 Branding requirements relate to all communication materials and public facing documents including print and publications through to digital and electronic materials.

### **Use of Logos**

14.2 Project deliverers are required to include the Supported by Bromsgrove District Council and Community Investment Fund logos in all communication materials and public facing documents. The Supported by Bromsgrove District Council logo should be positioned in the upper left corner of documents with the Community Investment Fund logo in the bottom right corner.

14.3 Logos must not be stretched, squashed, broken up or reproduced in colours other than those provided. The logos must not be reproduced in a different typeface or be rotated. No additional wording or illustrations may be added to them.

### **Plaques**

14.4 For infrastructure projects, no later than 3 months after completion of the project, the project delivered shall put up a permanent plaque of significant size at a location readily visible to the public and the Council should be invited to unveil the plaque.

14.5 The plaque should include the Supported by Bromsgrove District Council logo and the Community Investment Fund logo and the following text:

The [Name of Project] is [funded/part-funded] by Bromsgrove District Council through the Community Investment Fund.

14.6 Plaques should be at least 250 x 200mm as a minimum. The cost of producing and installing the plaque is an eligible expense.

### **Digital Materials including Websites and Social Media**

14.7 Digital channels can provide a quick way to reach audiences and promote funded activities. Where details of funded activities are published on a website, a clear and prominent reference to the funding from the Community Investment Fund is to be included as follows:

This project is [funded/part-funded] by Bromsgrove District Council through the Community Investment Fund

14.8 When describing or promoting funded activities on social media, the relevant Bromsgrove Districts Council social media account should be tagged.

## **Press and Media including Press Releases**

14.9 The content of all press releases must be authorised by the district council prior to distribution. The district council retains the right to include a quote from a council representative in the press release to acknowledge its support.

14.10 Press releases must include a clear and prominent reference to the Community Investment Fund in the main body of the press release.

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#### Climate Change Strategy 2026-2031

|  |  |                       |
|--|--|-----------------------|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder  |  | Councillor Sue Baxter |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted   |  | Yes                   |
| Relevant Assistant Director  |  | Judith Wills          |
| Report Author  | Job Title: Climate Change Manger<br>Contact <span style="float: right;">email:</span><br>matthew.eccles@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk<br>Contact Tel: 07816112073 |                       |
| Wards Affected   |  | All                   |
| Ward Councillor(s) consulted   |  | N/A                   |
| Relevant Council Priority  |  | The green thread      |
| Non-Key Decision   |  |                       |
| If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting. |  |                       |

#### 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is asked to **RECOMMEND** that:-

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

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Bromsgrove District Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and committed to place climate considerations at the centre of decision-making. The proposed Climate Change Strategy 2026–2031 updates and replaces the previous Carbon Reduction Action Plan and sets out the pathway to Net Zero by 2040 for the Council's own operations, with a 50% reduction by 2030.
- 2.2 The Strategy aligns with the UK statutory target of Net Zero by 2050 and international commitments under the Paris Agreement; it also reflects the Council Plan's green thread, embedding climate action across services.
- 2.3 The Strategy focuses on priority themes where the Council has direct control or significant influence:
  - **Buildings – council estate** (energy efficiency & renewables),

- **Residential buildings** (retrofit & fuel poverty),
- **Transport** (fleet decarbonisation, EV infrastructure, active travel),
- **Planning & land use** (policies, Future Homes Standard readiness, district heat network feasibility),
- **Biodiversity** (BNG delivery, parks, nature recovery),
- **Waste & food** (recycling, weekly food waste collections, Anaerobic Digestion feasibility),
- **Collaboration & engagement** (partners, businesses, communities), and
- **Governance & finance** (training, procurement, reporting).

#### 2.4 **Evidence base highlights (baseline & progress):**

- **Domestic retrofit:** £284,430 invested since 2019; a further c. £285,123 anticipated via Warm Homes Local Grant over three years (subject to eligibility and take-up).
- **Public EV charging:** installation programme underway (including 10 taxi chargers and additional units in 2025); chargers on BDC car parks have dispensed 612,986 kWh, saving an estimated ~479 tCO<sub>2</sub> for EV users to date.
- **Council energy:** estate-wide purchased energy shows a downward trend since 2021 solar PV at the Depot and further PV at BSLC are reducing purchased energy and costs.
- **Area emissions context:** DESNZ local authority GHG statistics (2005–2023) provide the latest official picture for Bromsgrove and Worcestershire.

### 3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

3.1 **Delivery approach.** A cross-service programme will coordinate actions and contribute to delivering on the strategies milestones and outcomes, overseen by the Climate Change Manager. The Climate Change team also provide services with the expertise and guidance is required.

3.2 **Governance.** The Strategy will be embedded in the Council's performance framework with annual Cabinet reporting. Climate implications are already a standard section in committee reports; options to introduce a simple climate impact assessment tool for officers to utilise.

To ensure the Strategy moves from high-level ambition to operational reality, Service-specific SMART actions and milestones will be embedded directly into the relevant Service Business Plans. This ensures that Assistant Directors and Service Managers maintain full ownership over the delivery methods required to meet the Climate Change Strategies outcomes.

The Climate Change Manager will act as the central corporate auditor, responsible for the annual monitoring and reporting of these milestones to Cabinet. By aligning these targets within departmental business plans, the Council ensures that accountability is held at the point of delivery, while the Climate Strategy serves as the overarching framework for progress and risk escalation.

Furthermore, to support tracking progress with the strategies milestones and outcomes a dashboard is being developed to allow the council to see the impact of these actions in terms of carbon savings and impacts on our residents.

- 3.3 **Partnerships.** Continued collaboration with Worcestershire County Council (e.g., LEVI on-street charging), Everyone Active, BDHT/Registered Providers, Act On Energy, Midland Net Zero Hub, Worcestershire Regulatory Services, will maximise delivery capacity and funding leverage.
- 3.4 **Current Activity.** Key operational programmes include PV at Bromsgrove Sport and Leisure Centre and lighting upgrades across the estate; Warm Homes retrofit; expansion of EV charging (including support to WCC's LEVI rollout); preparation for separate weekly food waste collections; and biodiversity improvements (mowing regimes, equipment electrification).

#### 4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Strategy will be delivered through a mix of existing revenue budgets, invest-to-save business cases, Capital Programme bids, and external funding as required by service areas
- 4.2 Officers will work with Finance to profile costs, savings, and funding sources through the Medium-Term Financial Plan, ensuring robust whole-life business cases. Officers will explore funding opportunities and partnerships with both public and private sectors to attract investment into the borough where possible to deliver climate change projects.

#### 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).** Under the Environment Act 2021, a mandatory minimum 10% BNG applies to qualifying planning applications (major developments from 12 February 2024; small sites from 2 April 2024). The Strategy supports implementation through development management and local plan policy.
- 5.2 **Waste & recycling reforms.** The Government's Simpler Recycling requirements standardise collections nationally; separate household

food waste collections are required by 31 March 2026, subject to transitional provisions. Preparatory work is underway to ensure operational readiness (collection system, communications, and processing).

- 5.3 **Procurement & contracts.** Delivery will align with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and proposed sustainable procurement updates, incorporating whole-life carbon and social value where proportionate and lawful.

## **6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS**

### **Local Government Reorganisation**

- 6.1 Any structural changes will be monitored. Programme sequencing (e.g., fleet transition and depot infrastructure) will be reviewed to minimise stranded costs, maintain service continuity, and align with any future operating model.
- 6.2 The strategy is constructed in a way that will allow it to be adapted to the new unitary authority.

### **Relevant Council Priority**

- 6.2 The Strategy gives effect to the green thread within the Council Plan by reducing emissions, improving resilience, lowering energy costs, and supporting a greener local economy.

### **Climate Change Implications**

- 6.3 Approval will enable the Council's primary framework to reduce operational and area-wide emissions, improve air quality, and support adaptation and nature recovery.

### **Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 6.4 Actions are designed to reduce fuel poverty and improve health outcomes (e.g., domestic retrofit, air quality). Equality Impact Assessments will be completed for major programmes to ensure fair access and mitigate unintended impacts.
- 6.5 All documents will be produced accessibly in line with the Council's corporate accessibility guidance.

## **7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 **Funding availability & affordability** – *Mitigation:* phased delivery, external grant maximisation, robust invest-to-save business cases.  
**Market capacity & supply chain constraints** – *Mitigation:* early engagement, framework procurement, regional collaboration (e.g., Midlands Connect / MNZH).  
**Operational disruption during works** – *Mitigation:* programme planning around service needs, contractor management, stakeholder communications.  
**Policy & regulatory change** – *Mitigation:* horizon scanning, flexible delivery plans, governance oversight.  
**Data quality & benefits realisation** – *Mitigation:* climate dashboard, baselines and KPIs; regular monitoring and reporting.

8. **APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix 1 – Climate Change Strategy 2026 - 2031

**Cabinet**  
2026

20<sup>th</sup> April

**9. REPORT SIGN OFF**

| <b>Department</b>                  | <b>Name and Job Title</b>                         | <b>Date</b> |
|------------------------------------|---|-------------|
| Portfolio Holder                   | Councillor Sue Baxter                             | 19/02/2026  |
| Lead Director / Assistant Director | Judith Wills                                      | 12/02/2026  |
| Financial Services                 | Debra Goodall                                     | 12/02/2026  |
| Legal Services                     | Nicola Cummings, Principal Solicitor - Governance | 14/01/2026  |



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# Bromsgrove District Council Climate Change Strategy 2026-2031

Agenda Item 8



## Foreword: John Leach

This Climate Change Strategy is designed to support the goals of the wider Council Plan, as we align all our efforts to deliver high-quality, reliable services for our residents.

Our approach here is practical and service-led: making energy efficiency upgrades to homes, adding solar PV and heat pumps to council buildings to reduce our carbon emissions, and improving biodiversity and soil health through land-management strategies to ensure green spaces continue to thrive for the public.

We will continue to modernise the vehicle fleet that works for residents, expand local EV charging infrastructure, and embed sustainability into our planning and procurement, ensuring that our decisions support both service excellence and environmental responsibility.

It's not only about reducing emissions. We want to help create healthier homes, safer streets, and resilient communities. By aligning climate action with our organisational priorities - financial and organisational stability, strong governance, and community-focused delivery - we can make meaningful progress toward net zero while protecting the services people depend on.

As we look ahead, we recognise that Local Government Reorganisation will shape how services are delivered across the county. This strategy is designed to be adaptable: ensuring that our climate commitments remain central to decision-making, whatever the governance structure. We will work closely with partners to maintain continuity of projects, align priorities, and explore opportunities for joint procurement and shared infrastructure investment. By building flexibility into our approach, we can safeguard progress toward net zero while supporting a smooth transition for residents and staff.





## Foreword: Councillor Sue Baxter Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Local Government Reorganisation and Climate Change

I'm pleased to introduce our Climate Change Strategy, which plays a vital role in delivering the priorities set out in our Council Plan. Creating a cleaner, greener Bromsgrove is central to the thriving, forward-looking district we are building together. Our plan is ambitious but practical, focusing on what we can deliver now while preparing responsibly for the future.

Across the council we are already making good progress, upgrading our buildings, supporting greener travel, improving energy efficiency in homes, and protecting the natural environment. As with all our major projects, it is essential that we get this right for the long term, ensuring every step we take is safe, considered and benefits our communities.

Regeneration, improvement and climate action must go hand in hand. Towns and communities must keep moving to meet changing needs, and this strategy helps us do just that by reducing emissions, improving local places and strengthening resilience. It's all part of ensuring a green thread runs through all our decisions.

We know there is more to do, but this council continues to be energised, focused and determined. Working collaboratively across political groups, with partners and with our residents, we will keep delivering on our commitments and making Bromsgrove a district we can all be proud of.

# Background & Introduction

## What is climate change?

Climate change refers to the changing global and regional long-term weather patterns. Climate change is predominantly caused by the release of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere by human activity. These greenhouse gases trap heat from the sun warming the planet in a process called the enhanced greenhouse effect. Globally we are seeing severe consequences from more frequent and intense weather events such as droughts, heat waves, storms, rising sea levels and melting glacial ice, and we are seeing some of these impacts locally within the district (most notable intense droughts, heat waves and storms). These extreme weather events disrupt peoples' lives both in terms of physical and mental wellbeing and economically and have wider implications on communities and ecosystems.



Agenda Item 8

## Climate change in a local context

In 2015, the UK and 195 other countries signed the Paris Agreement<sup>1</sup>, where they agreed to limit mean global temperature rise to 1.5°C above preindustrial levels to avoid catastrophic impacts from climate change. In 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a report<sup>2</sup> warning that urgent action was required to cut greenhouse gas emissions to limit global warming to 1.5°C; in order to reach this limit, CO2 emissions need to decline by approximately 45% from 2010 levels by the year 2030, and reach net zero by approximately 2050.

The UK Government has committed to Net Zero by 2050. Local Authorities (LA) are key in taking and influencing action on climate change due to the services they deliver, their regulatory functions, strategic functions, procurement powers and responsibilities as major employers. Bromsgrove District Council has set targets to reduce carbon emissions by 50% by 2030 and achieve Net Zero by 2040.

Modelling using the IPCC methodology for calculating Net Zero indicates that, under a business as usual trajectory, Bromsgrove District Council would reach a 50% emissions reduction around 2042/43 and Net Zero by around 2045. This highlights that the Council will only meet its target of 50% reduction by 2030 and Net Zero by 2040 if the actions set out in this Strategy are delivered at pace.

<sup>1</sup> 2015 Paris Agreement: [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english\\_paris\\_agreement.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> 2018 IPCC report: <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

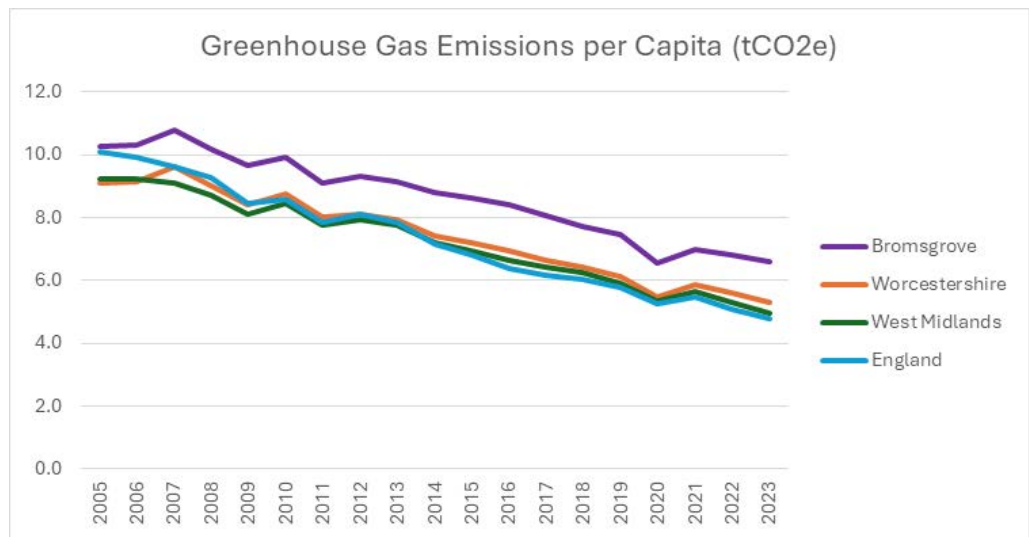
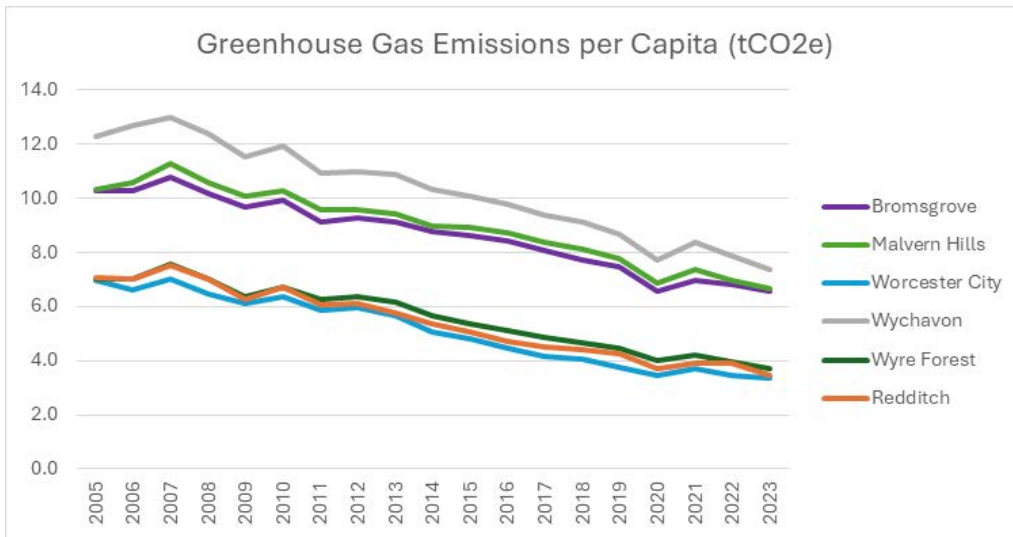


The programme of activity—including accelerated building upgrades, expansion of renewable energy generation, fleet decarbonisation, improved planning policy, biodiversity enhancement and reductions in Scope 3 emissions—provides a credible pathway to bring forward the projected dates.

Robust monitoring and transparent reporting of progress against the Strategy’s milestones will be critical to ensuring that delivery stays on track, enabling the Council to identify risks early, adjust approach where needed, and maintain momentum towards achieving its Net Zero target on time.

Improvements to the council’s emissions can be made on various levels, referred to as scopes. Scope 1 emissions are those that arise from the council’s combustion of fossil fuels - through the burning of gas in boilers and from internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles. Scope 2 emissions are those produced from electricity that the council purchases from the grid. Scope 3 emissions are those associated with products and services the council purchases (for example manufacturing and transport costs).

In 2023, the greenhouse gas emissions associated with Worcestershire were 3,253.5 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e. The district of Bromsgrove was responsible for 662.7 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e, and the emissions considered within the scope of the council’s influence totalled 356.6 kt CO<sub>2</sub>e.



The figures above show the per capita emissions of Bromsgrove to regional and national statistics<sup>3</sup>. Bromsgrove has consistently produced more emissions per person than Worcestershire, West Midlands and England averages. However, the district continues to reduce emissions, with an average of 6.6 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per capita.

Within Worcestershire, Bromsgrove's per capita emissions are lower than Malvern Hills and Wychavon. This is encouraging as Malvern Hills and Wychavon are similar districts in terms of demographics, socioeconomics and urban-rural spaces.

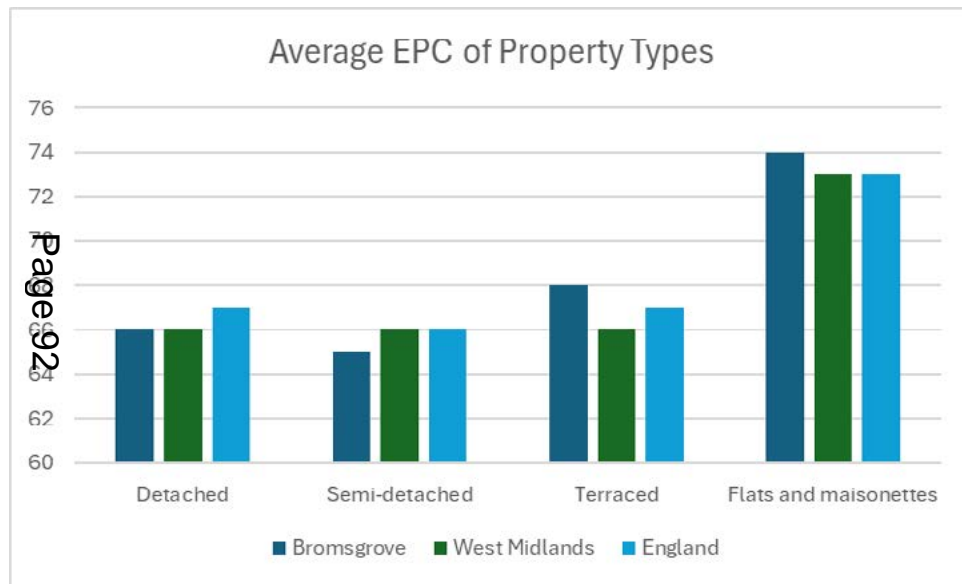
Bromsgrove District Council declared a climate emergency in 2019. Upon the declaration of this, the LA affirmed that it places the Climate Emergency at the centre of its decision-making process. A carbon reduction action plan was created with targets to assist in the reduction of carbon emissions, both from council functions and the wider sphere of influence. This action plan follows on from the carbon reduction action plan and considers actions the council will take to further reduce emissions (including carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases). This plan will be reviewed annually and refreshed after five years.

<sup>3</sup> Data for figures: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-statistics-2005-to-2023>

## Residential buildings

In Bromsgrove it is estimated that 71% of homes are owner occupied, with 14.3% private rented and 14.5% social rented including housing association properties. BDC has been looking to undertake a stock condition survey of homes across the district to best understand the housing stock and give officers an insight for future work in improving the energy efficiency of houses across the district.

Making homes more energy efficient helps to reduce bills, which helps to combat fuel poverty across the district. This has wider benefits as health risks from damp and mould are reduced, as well as reducing carbon emissions. Houses with higher EPC ratings are more energy efficient.



| Energy efficiency score | Energy efficiency rating band |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| More than 91            | A                             |
| 81 to 91                | B                             |
| 69 to 80                | C                             |
| 55 to 68                | D                             |
| 39 to 54                | E                             |
| 21 to 38                | F                             |

The graph above shows Bromsgrove's EPC ratings compared to the West Midlands and England. Bromsgrove is in line with national and regional trends; while there are slight discrepancies between EPC numbers, it always falls within the same EPC band.

Since declaring a climate emergency in 2019 BDC has utilised several government funding streams to support improving the energy efficiency of homes across the district. This has so far resulted in **£284,430.76** of investment across the district and seeing improvements made to **21** homes.



Currently BDC is utilising Warm Homes Local Grant Funding to provide retrofitting works to homes across the district, across both privately owned homes and affordable housing over the next 3 years and could see a further **£285,123.08** worth of investment into the district. This work includes adding measures to homes such as insulation which reduces the heat lost, further reducing the consumption of energy.

As part of the clean growth strategy<sup>4</sup>, the national government has set targets for all fuel poor homes to be upgraded to EPC C by 2030 with an aspiration for as many homes as possible to be EPC Band C by 2035 where practical, cost-effective and affordable. Within the clean growth strategy there is also an

aim to improve the energy performance of privately rented homes, with as many as possible upgraded to EPC C by 2030.

Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) have led projects to improved energy efficiency within properties they own. Bromsgrove District Council have also worked with Spadesbourne Homes to support the build of new housing (some of which is affordable housing). For example, the properties on Burcot Close are built to higher energy efficiency standards, with solar PV installed on the roofs and air source heat pumps as a standard. The council works with Act On Energy who provide advice and support to homeowners in making homes more energy efficient.

Burcot Lane is an £8.6m housing development delivered on behalf of Bromsgrove District Council. The scheme is the first of its kind for the council and included demolition of the original Bromsgrove Council House site, which has made way for 18, two and three-bed houses, 39, one-bed apartments and 4 two-bed maisonettes - a mixture of timber frame and steel frame dwellings.

<sup>4</sup> <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5ad5f11ded915d32a3a70c03/clean-growth-strategy-correction-april-2018.pdf>

The houses incorporated a number of renewable measures that resulted in EPC A rated scoring in excess of 100. Measures included air source heat pumps with underfloor heating to ground floors, MVHR, Waste Water Heat Recovery and PV and battery arrays. Air tightness achieved was below 3.5m<sup>3</sup>/m<sup>2</sup>.hr, which incorporated an energy efficient thermal fabric and high performance thermal bridge details.

The apartments also incorporated a number of renewable measures that resulted in EPC B rated scores in excess of 85. Measures included air source heat pumps with underfloor heating throughout, MVHR and PV arrays. Air tightness achieved was below 4.0m<sup>3</sup>/m<sup>2</sup>.hr, and like the houses, incorporated an energy efficient thermal fabric and high performance thermal bridge details.

The properties are a mixture of affordable rent, private rent, shared ownership and market properties.

Funding for the project came from both Bromsgrove District Council, alongside a grant from Homes England under its Local Authority Accelerated Construction Programme, with the project secured under the DPP3 Framework.



### Future Milestones:

| Actions  | Service area     | Milestone and data  | Timescale | Outcomes/targets   |
|--|------------------|---|-----------|--|
| Improve energy efficiency of new residential buildings across district | Planning/housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore feasibility of new homes to be built operationally net zero</li> </ul> | 2028      | <b>Outcomes:</b> Reduced energy bills<br>Warmer homes - fewer illnesses<br>Reduction in household carbon emissions |

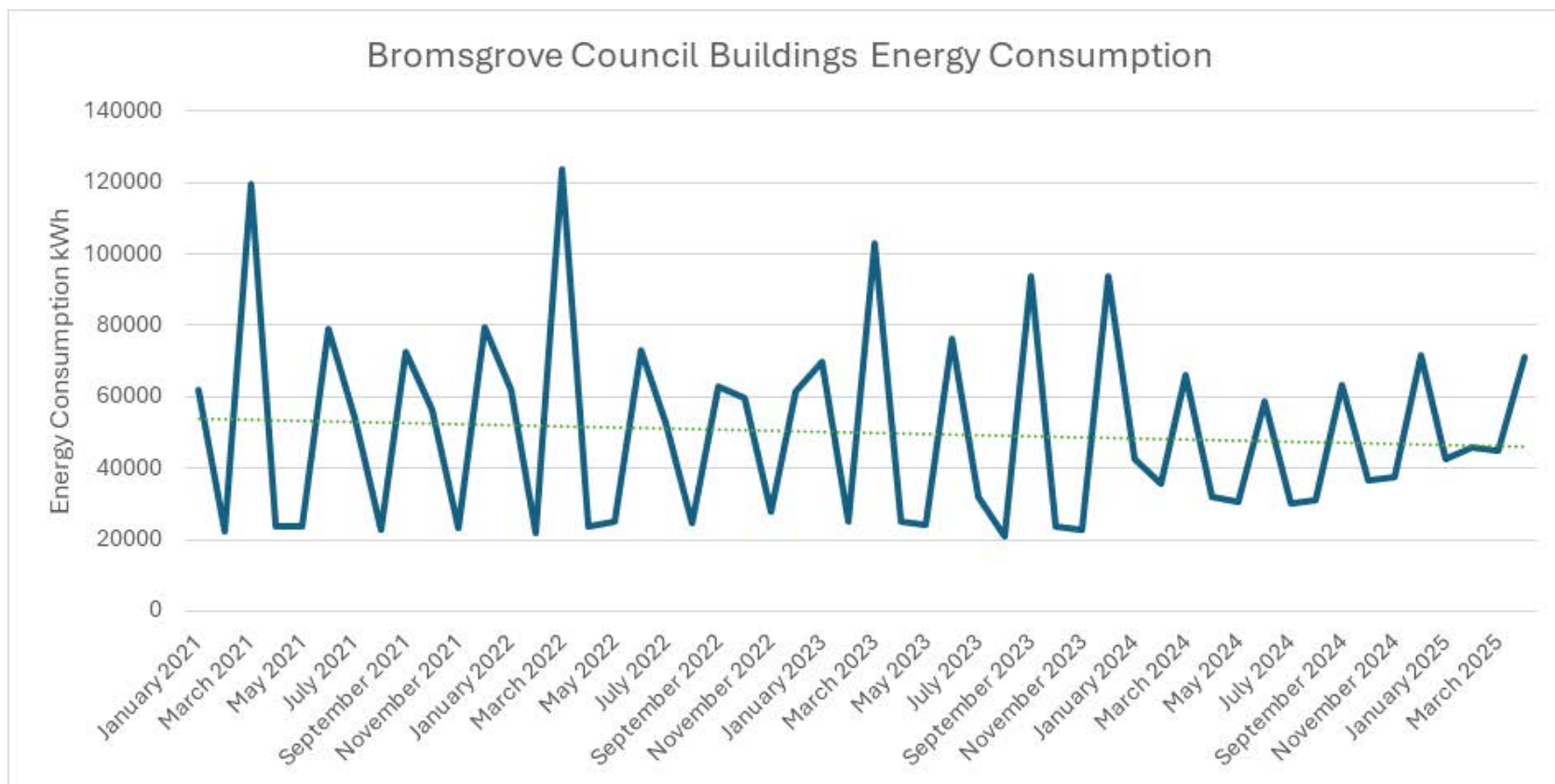
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|--|----------------|--|---|--|
| <p>Retrofit houses with lowest EPC</p> | <p>Housing</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the retrofitting of homes utilising the Warm Homes Local Grant (WHLG) funding</li> <li>• Secure funding for further retrofit projects in line with the Warm Homes Plan</li> <li>• Seek out partnerships to develop an offer for the able to pay market in line with government proposals in the Warm Homes Plan</li> <li>• With Energy Advice Service provider to support households needing support with energy bills to explore access to retrofit schemes and reduce fuel poverty</li> <li>• Identify and enable opportunities to retrofit listed buildings and residential properties in conservation areas by publishing heritage appropriate retrofit guidance and delivering at least three pilot or demonstrator projects in partnership with conservation officers and housing providers-appropriate retrofit guidance and delivering at least three pilot or demonstrator projects, in partnership with conservation officers and housing providers</li> </ul> | <p>2028</p> <p>2026-2031</p> <p>March 2028</p> <p>2026-2031</p> <p>March 2027</p> | <p><b>Outcomes:</b> Reduced energy bills<br/>Warmer homes and less instances of damp and mould which reduce associated health risks<br/>Improve each area’s average EPC score above the national/ regional average<br/>Reduction in fuel poverty<br/>Reduced household carbon emissions<br/>Increased local supply chain employment opportunities, increased local skills base, support the transition to green economy<br/><b>Target:</b> 20 Private Homes retrofitted under WHLG by 2028</p> |
|--|----------------|--|---|--|

|   |             |   |      |  |
|---|-------------|---|------|--|
| Council to actively support landlords with Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards of homes | Housing/WRS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support landlords to progress towards MEES compliance (EPC C by 2030) by providing advice, guidance and signposting to funding, retrofit support and exemption routes, and by working with partners to remove local barriers to delivery.</li> </ul> | 2030 | <b>Outcomes:</b> Reduced energy bills<br>Warmer homes and less instances of damp and mould which reduce associated health risks<br>Reduced household emissions |
|---|-------------|---|------|--|

## Buildings - council

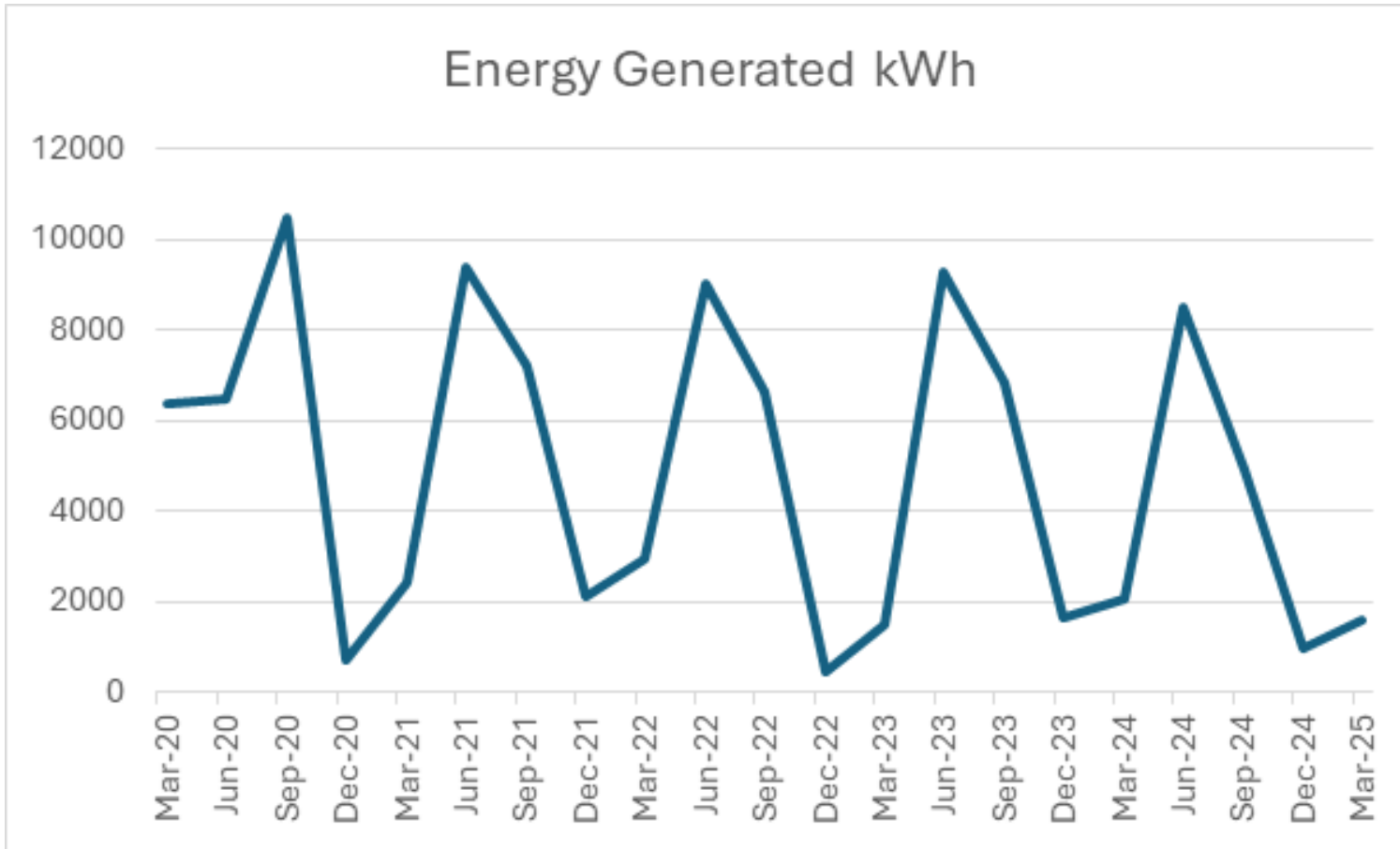
Reduction in energy consumption in council buildings reduces emissions released. The creation (and consumption) of renewable energy (e.g. from solar PV) reduced emissions further, as no greenhouse gases are released in the production of this energy. The council's buildings have undergone significant improvements to reduce emissions, such as retrofitting solar panels and heat pumps (e.g. at Bromsgrove District Council Depot). As a result, fewer emissions are released in the process of powering these buildings. Where surplus energy is created, this is transferred back into the grid, creating green energy for other consumers. There are also economic benefits as less energy is purchased from external providers. Where the council does buy energy, it is on a 100% green tariff, which also helps to reduce emissions.





The graph above shows purchased energy consumption from council buildings. Energy consumption varies throughout the year, but the average monthly consumption has reduced as shown by the trendline.

The trendline shows that energy consumption is decreasing on average, and since 2021 consumption has decreased by approximately 20% (based on trendline figures). Winter peaks have also decreased, indicating that less energy is being used in these months.



The graph above shows the energy generated by solar PV installed on the Bromsgrove District Council Depot. The seasonal dips are due to reduced levels of sunlight in winter, but even during these months energy is created by solar panels.

Currently there is work underway to install solar panels on Bromsgrove Sport And Leisure Centre along with a programme of ongoing lighting upgrades to more energy efficient LED lighting in other council buildings.

## Future Milestones

| Actions  | Service area             | Milestone and data   | Timescale  | Outcomes/targets  |
|--|--------------------------|--|--|---|
| <p>Improve efficiency/ renewable energy generation of council buildings</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 99</p> | <p>Property services</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and publish a strategic approach to identifying building improvement opportunities and funding sources, to inform future designs, planning decisions and capital investment.</li> <li>• Implement energy efficiency upgrades to priority buildings in line with the building’s improvement and funding strategy, where funding, approvals and business cases are in place.</li> <li>• Investigate opportunities to reduce energy demand in Council buildings, including through behavioural and operational measures such as reducing internal temperatures where appropriate.</li> <li>• Implement energy efficiency upgrades to Council-owned listed buildings and properties within conservation areas, where applicable, using heritage-appropriate measures and subject to funding, consents and technical feasibility</li> <li>• Continue to deploy renewable energy technologies on Council owned buildings where technically and financially feasible, prioritising sites identified through feasibility work and capital planning</li> </ul> | <p>2028</p> <p>2026-2031</p> <p>2026</p> <p>2027 - 2031</p> <p>2026-2031</p> | <p><b>Outcomes:</b> Carbon emissions and energy use from Council-owned buildings reduce through improved efficiency, low-carbon technologies and increased on-site renewables, improving resilience and value for money.</p> <p><b>Target:</b> Reduce carbon emissions from Council-owned buildings year-on-year, with an ambition to achieve EPC C or equivalent across the portfolio by 2030 where technically, financially and operationally feasible.</p> |

## Transport

The council's transport comprises of council owned vehicles (such as refuse collection lorries), vans and staff-owned vehicles. All of these vehicles have impacts on the environment, however, where possible a switch in fuel type or to electric reduces emissions released. Alongside council owned vehicles, across the borough emissions can be reduced by the public using electric cars. As well as releasing carbon emissions, petrol and diesel vehicles cause high rates air pollution, so switching to EV or public transport can help to reduce this.

Alongside council owned vehicles, across the district emissions can be reduced by the public using electric cars. As well as releasing carbon emissions, petrol and diesel vehicles cause high rates air pollution, so switching the EV or public transport can help to reduce this. Since 2020 Bromsgrove District Council has worked to install a number of public EV charging points with **10** being installed as part of a government funded taxi charging scheme, and a further 2 installed in 2025. To date the EV chargers on Bromsgrove's car parks have dispensed **612,986 KWh** of electricity which has resulted in **479 tonnes** of CO2 saved by EV drivers using our chargers. Work is ongoing to install further chargers across the district. This includes supporting Worcestershire County Council with delivery of their LEVI project which will see a number of on street chargers put in place to support those residents who don't have access to off street parking to charge their vehicles at home.



An air quality management zone is in place on the Worcester Road, and working with Worcestershire Regulatory Services strategies are in place to help to reduce air pollution

Bromsgrove On Demand (BOD) bus operates between the railway station, town centre and surrounding areas of Bromsgrove district. It is aimed at reducing congestion and improving public transport options for local residence. As this fleet is expanding, options for electric or hybrid vehicles are being considered in order to reduce emissions.

Bromsgrove Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan is being developed and will be published in summer 2026. This plan is being created to improve active travel. A key benefit of the LCWIP will be the enhanced safety of highways and footways for everyone, as well as less congestion and saving money on transport costs.



## Future Milestones

| Actions  | Service area | Milestone and data  | Timescale   | Outcomes/targets  |
|--|--------------|---|---|---|
| Supporting transition to zero emissions vehicles | All Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By the end of the strategy period, reduce staff business mileage by a further 10% compared to March 2026, through increased use of remote working, digital meetings and sustainable travel options.</li> <li>Identify and implement practical ways the Council can support staff to transition to electric vehicles, including policy review, infrastructure provision and incentives, where feasible</li> <li>By the end of the strategy period, increase uptake of public transport and active travel for Council business and commuting, through travel planning, policy support, communications and improved facilities where feasible</li> <li>Install electric vehicle charging infrastructure on suitable Council owned land, building on the current programme of work with Zest and supporting Worcestershire County Council in the delivery of the LEVI programme, where technically and financially feasible</li> </ul> | <p>2026-2028</p> <p>2026-2031</p> <p>2026-2031</p> <p>2026-2031</p> | <p><b>Outcomes:</b> Emissions from Councilrelated travel reduce as business mileage falls and cleaner travel choices are adopted, supported by EV charging on Council land to enable long-termtransport decarbonisation.</p> <p><b>Target:</b> Reduce staff business mileage by 10% by the end of the strategy period (2031), compared to the March 2026 baseline.</p> <p>Support the ongoing phased roll-out of electric vehicle charging infrastructure through the Zest partnership, contributing to delivery of up to 120 chargers across 30+ sites in Bromsgrove and Redditch, subject to feasibility and funding.</p> |

|  |   |   |  |  |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| <p>Support wider public with transition to zero emission transport</p> | <p>Climate Change and Comms<br/>Economic Development and Regeneration</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support residents and businesses to transition to electric vehicles by providing information, signposting to grants and infrastructure, and enabling access to charging where feasible</li> <li>• Encourage and enable increased use of public transport and active travel by residents through partnership working, information, and support for local improvements where feasible</li> <li>• Support the growth of green jobs and skills locally by working with partners, employers and training providers to enable employment opportunities linked to the low carbon transition.</li> <li>• Embed and support delivery of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), including the implementation of priority routes where funding and delivery mechanisms are in place (Bromsgrove's to be published June 2026)</li> </ul> | <p>2026-2031<br/>2026-2031<br/>2026-2031<br/>2026-2031</p> | <p>Transport emissions reduce as cleaner travel choices, including EVs, public transport and active travel, become more accessible, supporting improved air quality, health and growth in green jobs and skills.</p> |
| <p>De-carbonising of council's transport fleet</p>                     | <p>Environmental Services</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progressively reduce emissions from the Council's fleet by prioritising replacement with newer, more efficient and lower-emission vehicles through the fleet replacement programme, and by adopting zero-emission or alternative fuel vehicles (such as HVO) where infrastructure, funding and operational requirements allow</li> </ul>   | <p>2026-2031</p>   | <p>Fleet emissions reduce through phased replacement with more efficient, lower-emission and alternative-fuel vehicles, delivering lower fuel costs and improved air quality</p>                                     |

|                     |                                    |  |           |   |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|--|-----------|---|
| Improve air quality | Worcestershire Regulatory Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to work with Worcestershire Regulatory Services to implement the actions and recommendations of the Worcester Road Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP), supported by ongoing monitoring of particulate matter on Worcester Road and across the district.</li> </ul>   | 2026-2031 | <b>Outcomes:</b> Local air quality improves as transport-related pollution declines, supported by partnership working with WRS and the County Council to assess proportionate low-emission/low-traffic interventions, alongside behaviour-change measures that increase use of low-emission, active and sustainable travel. |
|                     |                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work in partnership with Worcestershire Regulatory Services and Worcestershire County Council to investigate the feasibility and potential benefits of low emission or low traffic interventions in Bromsgrove, where appropriate. emission or low-traffic interventions across the district, where appropriate.</li> </ul> | 2026-2031 |   |
|                     |                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support improvements in local air quality by promoting active travel, public transport and reduced car use, working with partners to encourage behaviour change.</li> </ul>   | 2026-2031 |   |



## Planning and Land Use

As land use develops/redevelops, the planning regulations have a huge impact on emissions and efficiency of buildings.

A significant proportion of emissions can be reduced through future planning and developments. By meeting stricter energy standards and constructing buildings to a higher energy efficiency/with technology such as solar PV already installed, the council can contribute to a reduction in emissions across the district.

The council considers the environmental impact of new developments when developing the local plan. While new developments cannot be built without creating emissions, the council seeks options which have the lowest impact on the environment.

The council is undertaking a feasibility study for a district heat network, which would reduce emissions and energy bills for those on the network.

Within the local plan<sup>5</sup> there is a green thread running through which includes new developments using an increased proportion of energy from renewable sources, improvements in air quality and reduced carbon footprint.

Bromsgrove's draft development plan<sup>6</sup> aims to meet the needs of the district in terms of economic development, housing, environment and infrastructure. The plan includes proposed housing developments in Bromsgrove, Alvechurch, Barnt Green, Catshill, Hagley, Wythall, Stoke Prior and Frankley. The plan states that when applications for planning permission are submitted, they will need to follow various policies, including a climate change policy. The council is committed to safeguarding the natural environment, addressing issues ranging from

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/media/samhiyxl/bromsgrove-district-plan-2011-2030.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/media/axrfhe4n/bdc\\_localplanconsultationdocjune25\\_webrev.pdf](https://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/media/axrfhe4n/bdc_localplanconsultationdocjune25_webrev.pdf)

biodiversity conservation (including on site biodiversity net gain) to climate change mitigation, supporting recycling to reducing waste production, all with the goal of enhancing the quality of life for current and future generations. As well as new housing developments, the council is creating new natural infrastructure such as canal towpath enhancements and connections into longer leisure routes; soft landscaping improvements; allotment improvements; on site provision of parks and recreation facilities/financial contributions to existing facilities; expand green spaces offer, on-site Biodiversity Net Gain; open spaces linked by green corridors to benefit both wildlife and pedestrians. The council plan also includes additional public transport across the district, bike/e-scooter rental and improved opportunities for active travel.



## Future Milestone

| Actions   | Service area                    | Milestone and data  | Timescale   | Outcomes/targets   |
|---|---------------------------------|---|---|--|
| <p>Ensure the new Local Plan embeds strong climate change, sustainability and adaptation policies—covering buildings, transport, biodiversity, energy and infrastructure—to support delivery of the Climate Change Strategy when adopted.</p> | <p>Planning, Climate Change</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By the next draft Local Plan stage, develop policy wording that embeds climate mitigation and adaptation requirements—such as Future Homes Standard (FHS) compliance for qualifying permissions—in line with national transition arrangements and the Council’s Climate Change Strategy.</li> <li>• From 2026 onwards, ensure ongoing collaboration between Climate Change, Planning Policy, and relevant service areas so that emerging Local Plan policies reflect current evidence, carbon-reduction priorities, adaptation needs and infrastructure opportunities.</li> <li>• By 2028, develop and update the Local Plan evidence base relating to climate change, including renewable energy opportunities, sustainable transport, green infrastructure, nature recovery and resilience, to support sound policy drafting and examination.</li> <li>• By 2029, progress the Local Plan to the adoption stage in line with the Council’s agreed timetable, ensuring climate-related policies are retained and strengthened through examination.</li> </ul> | <p>2026-2029</p> <p>2026-2029</p> <p>2028</p> <p>2029</p> | <p>The new Local Plan strengthens the planning framework so future development supports lower carbon buildings, sustainable transport and enhanced biodiversity, helping align planning decisions with the Climate Change Strategy and improve resilience across the district.</p> |

|  |                                 |   |  |  |
|--|---------------------------------|---|--|--|
| <p>Support the deployment of rooftop solar on commercial buildings through feasibility, partnerships and enabling delivery models (e.g., leases or PPAs), to reduce emissions and energy costs across the local economy.</p> | <p>Climate Change, Planning</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2027, identify and prioritise commercial buildings suitable for rooftop solar using desk-based screening (roof size/orientation/age), basic structural/red-flag checks, and indicative grid capacity and planning considerations.</li> <li>• From 2026 onwards, engage targeted owners, landlords and tenants to understand appetite, lease terms, roof access/maintenance responsibilities, and preferred commercial models (rooftop lease, landlord-funded CAPEX, third-party PPA).</li> <li>• By 2028, establish preferred delivery routes (e.g., framework/partner for financed PPAs; guidance for landlord-funded installs), including outline heads of terms, standard due-diligence (structural surveys, warranties), and grid application approach.</li> <li>• From 2028, support a first tranche of viable schemes to progress (subject to surveys, consents, roof condition, and DNO connection), focusing on sites with strong business cases and willing counterparties.</li> </ul> | <p>2027</p> <p>2026-2031</p> <p>2028</p> <p>2028</p> | <p>Increased deployment of rooftop solar on commercial buildings, supporting lower energy costs for businesses, reduced carbon emissions and greater local energy resilience through a growing pipeline of viable solar projects enabled by partnership working.</p> |
|--|---------------------------------|---|--|--|

|                                  |                                  |  |           |   |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|-----------|---|
| Bromsgrove District Heat Network | Planning/housing/ climate change | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By 2027, develop and agree the scope for a feasibility and options study for a potential district heat network in Bromsgrove, ensuring it reflects technical, financial, legal and stakeholder requirements.</li> </ul>       | 2027      | A viable pathway for a Bromsgrove district heat network is established through detailed feasibility work, business case development and partnership engagement, helping enable low-carbon heat, reduced emissions and long-term energy resilience if the scheme proceeds to delivery. |
|                                  |                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By 2028, complete a feasibility and options study to assess the viability of a district heat network, including potential heat sources, anchor loads, site options and delivery models.</li> </ul>                            | 2028      |   |
|                                  |                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From 2026 onwards, engage key internal and external stakeholders, including DESNZ/MNZH, Worcestershire partners and potential heat users, to support evidence development and explore collaborative opportunities.</li> </ul> | 2026-2031 |   |
|                                  |                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Between 2028 and 2030, identify appropriate funding routes and delivery pathways to support next steps if the district heat network is viable.</li> </ul>   | 2028-2030 |   |
|                                  |                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By 2031, prepare for next-phase business case development or early implementation steps where the scheme is shown to be viable and supported by funding, governance and partner agreement.</li> </ul>                         | 2031      |   |



## Governance and Finance

In order for the council to make key improvements in carbon emissions and reach net zero by 2040, a key aspect is ensuring that net zero and carbon reduction targets are embedded across the council's plans, and are then followed through.

Within the council staff there is a dedicated climate change team employing two FTE colleagues. As well as this within the elected members

of the council, Councillor Baxter is the portfolio holder for climate change. These roles ensure that climate change implications are considered within all aspects of council actions before they are passed.

All reports taken through the committee process have a required assessment of climate change implications included (we are exploring using a climate impact assessment tool to support officers with this process).

Carbon literacy training has been provided to all members of the senior managers, with ongoing training provided to elected members and officers within in the council. The council is looking to review the provision of carbon literacy training to include all staff at all levels.

The council continues to seek out funding to support the delivery and implementation of the climate change strategy.

The council are auditing the current scope 3 emissions created through their operations with an aim to reduce these. These emissions refer to those that are out of control of the council, through the transport and production of good that the council uses.

## Local Government Reorganisation

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is a key governance consideration that may impact the delivery of climate objectives and the implementation of this strategy.

The reorganisation of local government in Worcestershire presents both challenges and opportunities for delivering Bromsgrove's Climate Change Strategy. Structural changes could affect governance, funding streams, and service delivery models, which in turn may influence the pace and scope of climate action.

### Key Considerations:

**Continuity of Commitments:** Regardless of structural changes, Bromsgrove District Council remains committed to achieving Net Zero by 2040 and embedding climate action across all services.

**Risk Management:** Bromsgrove District Council will consider mitigations of delays that LGR could create for infrastructure projects (e.g., EV charging roll-out, depot upgrades) and planning policy updates. These risks and mitigations will be monitored through the Corporate Risk Register.

**Opportunities for Collaboration:** A reorganised authority could unlock economies of scale, shared expertise, and joint investment in large-scale projects such as district heat networks, renewable energy generation, and biodiversity enhancement.

**Alignment of Strategies:** Post-reorganisation, climate strategies across the new governance structure will need harmonisation to ensure consistent targets and reporting.



## Future Milestones

| Actions   | Service area   | Milestone and data  | Timescale  | Outcomes/targets  |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| <p>Reduction of scope 3 emissions through procurement, purchasing and audit</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 112</p> | <p>Legal, democratic Services, property, services, Economic Development and Regeneration</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review key day-to-day purchasing lines and suppliers to identify opportunities to reduce carbon impacts, waste and cost, and to inform more sustainable procurement decisions.</li> <li>Undertake proportionate environmental impact assessments of key suppliers to identify Scope 3 emissions hotspots and opportunities to reduce carbon impacts through procurement and contract management.</li> <li>Introduce a time-limited stationery amnesty while reviewing existing stock, to reduce unnecessary purchasing, minimise waste and use existing resources more effectively.</li> <li>Embed processes for the return, reuse or appropriate recycling of unused IT equipment and electronic items, to reduce waste and Scope 3 emissions from purchasing.</li> </ul> | <p>2026</p> <p>2026-2027</p> <p>2026</p> <p>2026</p> | <p>Scope 3 emissions are reduced through more sustainable procurement, improved use of resources and reduced waste across day-to-day Council operations</p> |

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| <p>Audit of server rooms and IT usage for scope 3</p>   | <p>Property Services and ICT</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete an audit of Council-owned server rooms and on-premise IT usage to establish a baseline for energy use, utilisation and Scope 3 emissions</li> <li>• Develop an action plan to reduce emissions from server rooms and IT usage, identifying priority actions, responsibilities and opportunities for efficiency, consolidation or decommissioning.</li> <li>• Improve understanding of emissions associated with cloud-based services and external data centres used by the Council, through supplier engagement and available reporting, to inform future IT and procurement decisions.</li> </ul> | <p>2026</p> <p>2027</p> <p>2027</p> | <p>Emissions associated with IT systems and data storage are better understood and reduced over time through improved efficiency, informed decision-making and supplier engagement</p> |
| <p>Accurately identify the risks of climate change to the local area within the council's Corporate Risk Register</p> | <p>Legal, democratic, property</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and assess the key climate-related risks to the local area and Council operations and incorporate these risks into the Council's Corporate Risk Register.</li> <li>• Regularly review and update climate-related risks within the Corporate Risk Register to reflect emerging evidence, local impacts and changes in policy or operations</li> </ul>   | <p>2026</p> <p>2026-2031</p>        | <p>Climate-related risks to the local area and Council services are clearly understood, monitored and managed through the Council's corporate risk framework</p>                       |

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| <p>Implement a sustainable procurement policy that supports areawide net zero ambitions and embeds tackling the climate emergency as a core procurement priority</p> | <p>Legal, democratic, property</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From 2026, implement updated procurement policy and guidance that encourages more sustainable and locally sourced procurement where appropriate, in line with legal and valueformoney requirements.</li> <li>• Work with Procurement to improve and consistently apply the Council’s procurement tools, ensuring climate and carbon considerations are embedded across purchasing decisions.</li> </ul>                     | <p>2026-2031<br/><br/>2026-2031</p> | <p>Procurement decisions increasingly support net zero ambitions by reducing Scope 3 emissions, strengthening local supply chains and embedding climate considerations into purchasing across the Council.</p> |
| <p>Strengthen internal governance of energy purchasing and on-site generation to support carbon reduction and value for money</p>                                    | <p>Property Services</p>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regularly review and monitor the Council’s energy purchasing arrangements, prioritising green tariffs and lowercarbon options where they offer value for money and security of supply.</li> <li>• Ensure solar photovoltaic systems on Council-owned buildings are appropriately maintained and optimised, including routine inspection and cleaning where required, to maximise performance and carbon savings.</li> </ul> | <p>2026-2031<br/><br/>2026-2031</p> | <p>Energy purchasing and on-site generation are effectively governed and optimised, supporting carbon reduction, resilience and value for money across Council operations.</p>                                 |

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| <p>Report transparently on the Council's greenhouse gas emissions to support accountability, decision-making and progress tracking.</p>   | <p>Property Services</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a climate change dashboard to report on the Council's greenhouse gas emissions and, where data is available, wider district-level emissions, to support transparency and informed decision-making.</li> <li>• Regularly monitor and report on the Council's greenhouse gas emissions to track progress against targets and inform future action.</li> <li>• Ensure the Council meets all relevant statutory and voluntary requirements for greenhouse gas emissions reporting, in line with national guidance and best practice.</li> </ul>   | <p>2026</p> <p>2026-2031</p> <p>2026-2031</p> | <p>The Council's greenhouse gas emissions are accurately monitored, transparently reported and used to inform decision-making and continuous improvement.</p>   |
| <p>Improve climate change awareness and carbon literacy across the Council through transparent leadership training and accessible learning opportunities for staff and Members.</p> | <p>HR</p>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish details of climate awareness training undertaken by senior management and relevant Members (including Cabinet Members and Committee Chairs), to support transparency and leadership by example.</li> <li>• Develop and embed ongoing climate change awareness training for staff and Members, including induction content for new starters, to support informed decision-making and action.</li> <li>• Provide an optional pathway for staff and Members to achieve a recognised carbon literacy certificate, where appropriate, to build organisational capacity for climate mitigation and adaptation.</li> </ul> | <p>2026</p> <p>2026</p> <p>2027</p>           | <p>Staff and Members are better informed and equipped to consider climate change impacts, mitigation and adaptation in decision-making, supported by transparent leadership and improved carbon literacy.</p> |

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| <p>Embed a consistent climate impact assessment approach into Council decision-making to ensure climate implications are considered across all policies and reports.</p> | <p>Climate change</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2026, review the current climate change commentary in committee reports and explore options for strengthening it into a proportionate climate impact assessment approach, including implications for officers preparing reports.</li> <li>• Pilot and embed a consistent climate impact assessment approach within committee and key decision reports, supported by guidance for officers.</li> <li>• From 2027 onwards, keep the climate impact assessment approach under review to ensure it remains proportionate, effective and aligned with best practice and organisational change.</li> </ul> | <p>2026</p> <p>2027</p> <p>2027</p> | <p>Climate implications are routinely and consistently considered in Council decision-making, supporting more informed, transparent and climate-aware outcomes.</p> |
| <p>Proactively identify and secure funding to support the delivery of climate change mitigation and adaptation activity.</p>   | <p>Climate change</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From 2026, proactively identify and track relevant external funding opportunities to support climate change mitigation and adaptation projects, working with internal and external partners where appropriate.</li> <li>• By the end of the strategy period, secure and deploy external funding, where available, to support priority climate change projects identified through the Climate Change Strategy and delivery plans.</li> </ul>   | <p>2026-2031</p> <p>2026-2031</p>   | <p>External funding is maximised to support the delivery of climate change priorities, reducing reliance on core Council budgets and enabling wider action.</p>     |

## Biodiversity

Biodiversity is intrinsically linked with the climate crisis. The natural environment to the health and wellbeing of society and provides 'ecosystem services' to regulate our environment, produce clean air and pollinate our crops. Through increased biodiversity and the conservation and restoration of natural spaces, it is possible to reduce emissions helping to mitigate climate change by absorbing carbon from the air. However, climate change is a significant cause of biodiversity loss, as species and ecosystems are affected by changes in weather patterns and extreme weather events. Significant carbon dioxide emissions are caused by land use change, which is also a key driver for biodiversity and ecological loss. In severe cases, entire species and/or ecosystems can be lost, which can have devastating effects on human health and economic stability. As a Local Planning Authority, Bromsgrove District Council is legally required to ensure that most new developments deliver Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) under the Environment Act 2021. This means that any qualifying planning application must demonstrate a minimum 10% increase in biodiversity value compared to the pre-development state of the site.

The district of Bromsgrove contains several areas of land ranked moderate to high value for conservation and wildlife, such as Lickey, Waseley and Clent hills which are important safeguarded heathlands. Corridors of land linking these areas are also important for the ecology of the area. Where the public has access, co-benefits such as improved health and wellbeing are also of importance, contributing to higher quality of life. Sanders Park and Lickey End Recreation Ground have both been awarded Green Flag status, an international quality mark for parks and green spaces, which ensures that the parks are accessible to the public, whilst also ensuring that the environment is protected.

The council has committed to mowing green spaces less in order to increase biodiversity, such as wildflower verges to help with insect populations. New planning



and development projects include biodiversity net gain to ensure that biodiversity conservation continues. Within the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and Management and Maintenance Plans actions are include which will conserve and enhance biodiversity.

The environmental services team for Bromsgrove and Redditch have begun the transition to electric power tools, moving away from 2-stroke petrol tools. This includes 9 short reach hedge cutters, 6 long reach hedge cutters and 3 strimmer's. Electric chainsaws and blowers are being trialled with an aim to these being replaced as well.

## Future Milestones

| Actions   | Service area                                 | Milestone and data   | Timescale | Outcomes/targets  |
|---|--|--|-----------|---|
| Reduce the Council's reliance on harmful pesticides by trialling alternative approaches, preparing for regulatory change, and adopting more environmentally responsible practices where feasible. | Property Services/<br>Environmental Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review current pesticide stock levels and usage across relevant services to establish a baseline and identify opportunities for reduction.</li> </ul>   | 2026      | The Council reduces its reliance on harmful pesticides over time through evidence-based trials, regulatory readiness and the adoption of lower-impact alternatives, supporting biodiversity and environmental protection. |
|   |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proceed with the purchase of equipment for non chemical or lower impact weed control methods following successful trial and monitoring effectiveness cost, and operational suitability.</li> </ul>                | 2026-2031 |   |
|   |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep pesticide use under review in response to emerging legislation and guidance on substances such as glyphosate, adapting practices as required to remain compliant and reduce environmental impact.</li> </ul> | 2026-2031 |   |
|   |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor developments in the market for alternative products, equipment and practices to further reduce reliance on harmful pesticides over time.</li> </ul>   | 2026-2031 |   |

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| <p>Progressively transition Council equipment and machinery to battery-powered or lower-emission alternatives where feasible.</p>  | <p>Environmental Services</p>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2026, complete a stock audit of Council-owned equipment and machinery to understand age, usage, fuel type and opportunities for transition to lower-emission alternatives.</li> <li>• From 2026 onwards, replace equipment and machinery with battery-powered or lower-emission alternatives at end of life, where operationally suitable and financially viable.</li> </ul>  | <p>2026<br/>2026-2031</p>                                  | <p>Council equipment and machinery become progressively lower-emission over time, reducing carbon impacts, noise and air pollution while maintaining service delivery.</p>     |
| <p>Improve biodiversity and carbon sequestration within Council-managed green spaces through changes to land management, including reduced mowing, habitat enhancement and improved soil health.</p> | <p>Planning, regeneration and leisure, Property Services</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify priority green spaces for biodiversity and soil-health improvements and secure funding, where available, to support changes in land-management and enhancement projects.</li> <li>• Implement biodiversity-led management of selected green spaces, including reduced mowing regimes and habitat creation, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Improve soil health within green spaces through appropriate management practices that enhance biodiversity and increase carbon sequestration, where feasible.</li> <li>• From 2027, implement and expand biodiversity and soil-health improvement projects where evidence, funding and operational experience support wider roll-out.</li> </ul> | <p>2026-2031<br/>2026-2031<br/>2026-2031<br/>2027-2031</p> | <p>Council-managed green spaces support richer biodiversity, healthier soils and increased carbon sequestration, while continuing to meet community and operational needs.</p> |

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| <p>Embed effective governance, monitoring and delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), while supporting opportunities to enhance biodiversity beyond statutory planning requirements.</p> | <p>Planning, regeneration and leisure</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce a clear mechanism to monitor, record and report on Biodiversity Net Gain outcomes from new developments, in line with national requirements and local planning processes.</li> <li>• Identify and support opportunities to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain beyond statutory planning requirements, including offsite provision, partnerships and Councilled land-management where appropriate.</li> <li>• Align Biodiversity Net Gain delivery with wider biodiversity, green space and climate objectives to maximise environmental benefits where possible.</li> </ul> | <p>2026-2031<br/><br/>2026-2031<br/><br/>2027-2031</p> | <p>Biodiversity Net Gain is effectively governed, monitored and delivered, contributing to enhanced biodiversity outcomes both through the planning system and wider voluntary action.</p> |
| <p>Report on Biodiversity actions and Outcomes in line with the Council's Biodiversity Duty, ensuring delivery, transparency and continuous improvement.</p>                              | <p>All services</p>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with relevant services to develop and implement action plans aligned with the priorities and actions set out in the Council's Biodiversity Duty Report.</li> <li>• By the next statutory reporting deadline, complete and publish the Council's Biodiversity Duty Report, setting out progress, outcomes and next steps.</li> <li>• From 2026, use biodiversity reporting to review progress, share learning and inform future policy, land-management and investment decisions.</li> </ul>   | <p>2026<br/><br/>2031<br/><br/>2026-2031</p>           | <p>The Council meets its Biodiversity Duty through clear reporting, coordinated delivery across services and continuous improvement in biodiversity outcomes.</p>                          |

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| <p>Increase and manage tree cover as part of a wider approach to biodiversity, soil health and nature-based climate action.</p> | <p>Leisure</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase tree cover in suitable locations and develop a long-term tree management plan to ensure trees are appropriately managed as they establish and mature.</li> <li>• Ensure new tree planting uses a mix of appropriate native and climate-resilient species to enhance biodiversity and reduce the risk of monoculture.</li> <li>• From 2026 onwards, integrate tree planting with soil-health and land-management practices that maximise biodiversity and carbon sequestration, recognising the role of healthy soils alongside tree cover.</li> <li>• From 2026 onwards, work with residents who wish to participate in greening initiatives, including tree planting and nature-friendly gardens, to support biodiversity and local environmental quality.</li> <li>• From 2026 onwards, provide public information and education on the role of trees in the district, including species choice, lifespan, management needs and their relationship to biodiversity and carbon reduction.</li> </ul> | <p>2026-2031</p> <p>2026-2031</p> <p>2026-2031</p> <p>2026-2031</p> <p>2026-2031</p> | <p>Tree cover increases in a planned and resilient way, contributing to biodiversity, place-making and public engagement, while being integrated with soil-based approaches that deliver effective long-term carbon sequestration.</p> |
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## Collaboration and Engagement

Bromsgrove District Council works alongside community partners including the Artrix and Everyone Active (BSLC). The Artrix has installed air source heat pumps and solar panels to reduce carbon emissions. Bromsgrove Sport and Leisure Centre has reduced the temperature of the water in the swimming pool, making significant reductions in emissions caused by heating. Bromsgrove Sport and Leisure Centre has also had solar panels installed on its roof. Bromsgrove District Council hosts an annual Green Fair. This is a family event to communicate the message of a low carbon future to the wider community as well as eco-friendly initiatives.

Climate officers are frequently working with those at risk from climate change, in particular lower income homes who are eligible for improvements to the energy efficiency of their homes through grants, often with the support of Act On Energy. This improves Bromsgrove's health economy by improving air quality within homes and reducing damp and mould.

The council works with external bodies to reduce emissions further across the district. Within the police force the exchange of evidence has become digitalised so that police staff take fewer journeys to collect evidence, thus reducing emissions and allowing officers to be available for more urgent needs.

Bromsgrove District Council is a member of Worcestershire Public Sector Sustainability Group, helping to reduce emissions across the county.



The council works with Worcestershire Regulatory Services to monitor air quality across the district and to try and improve areas where air quality is particularly poor.

As part of the leisure and culture strategy, the council will develop a partnership with the National Trust to deliver the 8 Hills project, creating a regional park that boosts nature, recreation, sustainable farming and active travel. This can help to improve Bromsgrove's health economy by encouraging people to become more active.

<https://moderngovwebpublic.bromsgrove.gov.uk/ielssueDetails.aspx?IId=35037&PlanId=0&Opt=3#AI32830> <sup>7</sup>

Outside of the public sector organisations BDC is an active member of the Better Environment group and works with 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations supporting residents across the district with environmental projects or access to funding a resources in managing through the cost-of-living crisis, fuel poverty community clean ups and accessing transport across the district.



## Future Milestones

| Actions  | Service area   | Milestone and data   | Timescale                         | Outcomes/targets   |
|--|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| Work with local educational institutions to support climate change awareness, skills and engagement among children and young people. | Climate Change | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By 2026, engage with local schools and educational institutions to identify opportunities for climate-related engagement and plan future events or activities.</li> <li>From 2026 onwards, deliver a rolling programme of climate change engagement activities with local schools and educational institutions, subject to capacity and partnership arrangements.</li> </ul>  | <p>2026</p> <p>2026-2031</p>      | Children and young people are better informed and engaged on climate change and sustainability, supported through partnership working with local educational institutions. |
| Engage with community groups to support, inform and shape local climate-related initiatives across the district.                     | Climate Change | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From 2026 onwards, engage with community groups through planned and proportionate meetings or forums to support local climate action and share information on Council priorities and activity.</li> <li>From 2026 onwards, ensure feedback and views from community engagement are captured, considered and, where appropriate, used to inform the Council's Climate Change Strategy delivery and action planning.</li> </ul> | <p>2026-2031</p> <p>2026-2031</p> | Community groups are actively engaged in climate action, with local knowledge and perspectives helping to shape and support delivery of the Council's climate priorities.  |

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| <p>Deliver inclusive community outreach to ensure those most affected by climate change are informed, heard and able to engage with local climate action.</p>                                    | <p>Climate Change</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From 2026 onwards, ensure community outreach and engagement activities are inclusive and designed to reach residents and groups most affected by climate change impacts.</li> <li>From 2026 onwards, deliver targeted community engagement workshops, where appropriate, to raise awareness, build understanding and support participation in local climate action.</li> </ul>   | <p>2026-2031</p> <p>2026-2031</p>                  | <p>Community outreach is inclusive and accessible, enabling those most affected by climate change to engage with and contribute to local climate action.</p>   |
| <p>Share best practice and collaborate with the County Council, neighbouring local authorities and public-sector partners to support delivery of net zero and climate resilience objectives.</p> | <p>Climate Change</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From 2026 onwards, engage in regular partnership working with Worcestershire County Council, neighbouring local authorities and public-sector organisations to share best practice and support delivery of climate and net zero initiatives (for example, EV infrastructure and LEVI delivery).</li> <li>From 2026 onwards, work with partners to ensure continuity of climate change activity, data and learning in the event of Local Government Reorganisation, supporting effective transition and shared approaches where required.</li> <li>Subject to the outcomes of Local Government Reorganisation, support the alignment of climate priorities, actions and reporting across new or revised governance arrangements.</li> </ul> | <p>2026-2031</p> <p>2026-2031</p> <p>2026-2031</p> | <p>Climate action is strengthened through effective collaboration, shared learning and continuity of approach across the county, neighbouring authorities and the wider public sector, including through periods of organisational change.</p> |

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| <p>Support the exploration and development of community energy initiatives, including potential community microgrids and district heat networks, in partnership with local communities and specialist organisations.</p> | <p>Planning/<br/>housing</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2027, seek external expertise to assess the feasibility of community energy opportunities within the district, including the potential for community microgrids or district heat networks and identification of suitable locations where appropriate.</li> <li>• By 2027, engage with community groups, parish councils and other local stakeholders to understand appetite for community energy projects and to raise awareness of potential opportunities and benefits.</li> </ul> | <p>2027<br/><br/>2027</p> | <p>Communities are supported to explore and develop locally led energy solutions, contributing to decarbonisation, energy resilience and local benefit where feasible.</p>                                       |
| <p>Engage and support local businesses to reduce emissions and improve energy efficiency, building on evidence from local decarbonisation studies and partnership working.</p>   | <p>Climate Change</p>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From 2027 onwards, use learning from local decarbonisation studies in Redditch and Worcester to inform wider engagement with local businesses on decarbonisation opportunities, including energy efficiency, low-carbon heat and renewable energy.</li> </ul>   | <p>2026-2031</p>          | <p>Local businesses are supported to understand and progress decarbonisation opportunities, building on evidence-based studies and partnership working to reduce emissions and strengthen the local economy.</p> |

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| <p>Work in partnership with other public-sector organisations to identify and support opportunities to improve the energy efficiency and de-carbonisation of public-sector buildings.</p> <p>Page 127</p> | <p>Property Services</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2027, identify opportunities to work with other public-sector organisations (such as the police, fire service, NHS and schools) where buildings are shared, co-located or in close proximity to Council assets, to explore joint energy efficiency or decarbonisation opportunities.</li> <li>• By 2027, work with partners to identify and pursue appropriate funding opportunities and delivery mechanisms to support energy efficiency and decarbonisation measures in shared or neighbouring public-sector buildings.</li> <li>• From 2028 onwards, support the implementation of joint energy efficiency and decarbonisation projects in public-sector buildings where funding, partner agreement and governance arrangements are in place.</li> </ul> | <p>2027-2031</p> <p>2027-2031</p> <p>2028-2031</p> | <p>Public-sector organisations work collaboratively to improve the energy efficiency and de-carbonisation of buildings, reducing emissions, costs and duplication across the local public estate.</p> |
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## Waste reduction and Food

The council operates weekly domestic waste collections, alternating between recycling and general waste collection. Commercial food waste is being collected by the council and in 2026 food waste bin collections will begin for households, which will reduce the amount of food waste going to landfill which releases vast amounts of methane. Bromsgrove District Council is a 'collection authority' and the disposal of waste collected is the responsibility of Worcestershire County Council. Currently the County Council has a Waste Core Strategy that covers the period to 2027, the Council is signed up to the Worcestershire & Herefordshire Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS). The JMWMS sets out our targets for the reduction and recovery of household waste and runs until 2034.

Reducing residential and commercial waste has huge benefits for the environment and economically. By seeking alternatives to buying new/replacing items straight away, few materials are required. This means that from the start of a product's life-cycle, there are fewer emissions involved in extracting materials, manufacturing and transport, as well as the use of earth's resources. Within the district, monthly repair cafes are held where broken items can be taken to be fixed, both saving money as well as reducing waste going to landfill.

With the statutory roll-out of weekly food waste collections by March 2026 under the Environment Act 2021, Bromsgrove District Council has an opportunity to align waste management with local energy generation. The implementation of separate food waste services not only supports national recycling targets but also unlocks the potential for anaerobic digestion - a technology that converts organic waste into renewable biomethane and biofertilizer.

Recent regional analysis, including work supported by the Midlands Net Zero Hub, has highlighted the potential role anaerobic digestion could play in Worcestershire as part of a wider, integrated approach to waste, energy and land management. Where appropriate, anaerobic digestion can support decarbonisation of the energy system, reduce reliance on fossil gas, and return nutrients to soils through digestate.

By supporting the effective capture and treatment of food waste, the Council can help enable opportunities to convert unavoidable waste into valuable energy and soil-enhancing products, contributing to emissions reduction, energy resilience and the growth of low-carbon infrastructure across the county.



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## Future Milestone

| Actions   | Service area         | Milestone and data  | Timescale   | Outcomes/targets  |
|---|----------------------|---|---|---|
| <p>Increase recycling rates across the district through improved communication, public engagement and targeted investment in recycling and waste reduction initiatives.</p> | <p>Environmental</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From 2026 onwards, deliver targeted communications to residents and businesses to improve understanding of what can be recycled, reduce contamination and encourage positive recycling behaviours across the district.</li> <li>From 2026 onwards, undertake public engagement activities to encourage increased recycling and waste reduction, using feedback to shape future communications and initiatives where appropriate.</li> <li>By 2031, increase the districtwide recycling rate to 50% of all household waste, supported by external funding where available and the delivery of community-led recycling and waste reduction projects.</li> <li>By 2027, work with waste and recycling contractors and service providers to improve understanding of recycling performance, data quality and operational practices, and identify opportunities to increase recycling rates and reduce residual waste.</li> </ul> | <p>2026-2031</p> <p>2026-2031</p> <p>2031</p> <p>2027</p> | <p>Recycling rates increase across the district as residents and communities are better informed, engaged and supported to reduce waste and recycle more effectively.</p> |

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| <p>Reduce overall waste arisings across the district through behaviour change, reuse initiatives and targeted support for waste prevention.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 131</p> | <p>Environmental and Climate Change</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From 2026 onwards, deliver targeted public communications campaigns to encourage waste reduction and reuse, including participation in national initiatives such as Plastic Free July.</li> <li>• From 2026 onwards, support initiatives that redistribute surplus food and reduce food waste, working with community organisations and partners where appropriate.</li> <li>• From 2026 onwards, support the development of community-led reuse initiatives, such as swap shops and furniture reuse schemes, to prevent waste and extend product lifespans.</li> <li>• From 2026 onwards, deliver regular internal communications and guidance to support staff in reducing waste in Council operations and in their own behaviours.</li> <li>• By 2031, reduce overall household waste arisings across the district by 10% compared to the baseline year.</li> </ul> | <p>2026-2031</p> <p>2026-2031</p> <p>2026-2031</p> <p>2026-2031</p> <p>2031</p> | <p>Overall waste arisings reduce as residents, communities and the Council are better supported to prevent waste, reuse materials and reduce consumption.</p> |
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|---|---|--|--|---|
| <p>Reduce food waste and associated emissions by supporting the roll-out of separate food waste collections and encouraging effective use by households and Council services.</p> | <p>Environmental, Property Services</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From 2026, support the distribution of food waste bins to households and relevant Council buildings across the district as part of the national food waste collection programme.</li> <li>• From 2026 onwards, deliver targeted communications and engagement to encourage residents and Council services to use food waste collections correctly, reducing the amount of food waste placed in general waste.</li> </ul>  | <p>2026-2031</p> <p>2026-2031</p>                  | <p>Food waste is increasingly diverted from general waste through effective collection, improved public participation and reduced methane emissions from disposal.</p>          |
| <p>Manage the green waste service in a phased and sustainable way to support waste reduction and composting, while managing operational capacity and demand.</p>                  | <p>Environmental Services</p>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From 2026 onwards, manage and optimise the existing green waste collection service, recognising current capacity constraints and reviewing performance and demand to inform any future changes where feasible.</li> <li>• From 2026 onwards, deliver targeted communications to support correct use of the green waste service and manage resident expectations.</li> <li>• From 2026 onwards, monitor green waste volumes, contamination and operational impacts to inform future service development where feasible.</li> </ul> | <p>2026-2031</p> <p>2026-2031</p> <p>2026-2031</p> | <p>Green waste is increasingly diverted from general waste through a well-managed, phased collection service that balances environmental benefit with operational capacity.</p> |

|   |                      |   |  |   |
|---|----------------------|---|--|---|
| <p>Support local food growing to improve food resilience, community wellbeing and environmental outcomes through engagement, demonstration and partnership working.</p> | <p>Environmental</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From 2026 onwards, encourage local food growing by sharing good practice, guidance and local growing initiatives through markets, communications and partnership working.</li> <li>• From 2026 onwards, support the delivery of local food growing demonstrations and learning opportunities, such as allotment or community garden demonstrations, where capacity and partnerships allow.</li> <li>• From 2026 onwards, seek and secure external funding (for example from the National Lottery and other grant programmes) to support local food growing, skills and community-led initiatives where available.</li> </ul> | <p>2026-2031</p> <p>2026-2031</p> <p>2026-2031</p> | <p>Local food growing is supported through community-led initiatives, improved skills and access to funding, contributing to resilience, wellbeing and more sustainable food systems.</p> |
|---|----------------------|---|--|---|

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### Cabinet

**20th April 2026**

#### Empty Homes Strategy

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder  | Councillor Kit Taylor  |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted   | Yes  |
| Relevant Assistant Director  | Judith Willis<br>Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services  |
| Report Author<br><br>Maria Bailey  | Job Title: Senior Housing Strategy Officer<br><br>Contact email: <a href="mailto:maria.bailey@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk">maria.bailey@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk</a><br><br>Contact Tel: 07768 307628 |
| Wards Affected   | No specific ward relevance   |
| Ward Councillor(s) consulted   | Not Applicable   |
| Relevant Council Priority  | Housing  |
| Non-Key Decision   |  |
| If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting. |  |

#### 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is asked to **RECOMMEND** to Council that: -

- 1) **The Bromsgrove District Council Empty Homes Strategy 2026 – 29 be adopted.**

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 According to the national council tax database for 2025, there were 542, 276 empty homes recorded in October across England, representing 2.1 % of all homes. Action to tackle empty homes has a significant potential to address national housing needs.
- 2.2 In October 2025, Bromsgrove District had 635 empty homes, of which 384 had been empty for more than 6 months. At the same time there were 3749 households on the housing register seeking affordable housing.
- 2.3 Bromsgrove District Council is committed to identifying empty homes and developing options for bringing them back into use as quickly as possible. The empty homes strategy sets out priorities and actions to

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tackle empty homes across the District and to use the most effective interventions to do so.

- 2.4 The aim of the strategy is to:
- help alleviate housing need
  - improve housing conditions
  - offer a wider choice of housing to residents
  - minimise the blight that can result where properties are left empty and neglected.
- 2.5 Empty homes can have a negative impact on a local area for several reasons, they:
- attract pests and vermin
  - can become a focal point for illegal activities such as anti-social behaviour, vandalism and fly tipping
  - increase the risk of squatting
  - fall into disrepair – increasing renovation costs and possible risks to the public if structures are unsafe
  - increase pressure on public resources.
- 2.6 An empty home is a dwelling which is unoccupied and substantially unfurnished. There are two main types of empty homes. Short term empty homes are dwellings which have been unoccupied for under six months. It is often the case that these are in the process of sale. Short term empty homes naturally occur as people's circumstances change, and they move between homes.
- 2.7 Long term empty homes are dwellings which have been unoccupied and are substantially unfurnished for six months or longer. Bringing long term, privately owned empty homes back into use is the focus of this strategy. Rather than representing a natural process of change, long term empty homes indicate there may be other factors leading to a property remaining empty.
- 2.8 Residential properties remain empty for various reasons, for example resolving legal ownership as part of an inheritance process. Other factors include new homes waiting for a buyer, owners abandoning properties, owners having a lack of funds for repairs and refurbishment,

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waiting for planning consent or decision, repossession and perceived difficulties in renting. There is also evidence that some owners have sentimental attachment to a property and are reluctant to part with it for emotional reasons.

- 2.9 There is no act of parliament that creates a duty on local housing authorities to tackle empty homes. However, Councils do have a general housing duty to review housing conditions and needs as laid out in the Housing Act 1985.
- 2.10 National policy focuses on empowering local authorities to bring vacant dwellings back in to use, guided by a local empty homes strategy. Local authorities have the discretion to charge empty home owners council tax premiums and have a range of legislative powers to tackle empty homes.
- 2.11 Since April 2013 local authorities have been able to charge a council tax premium on homes, empty for more than 2 years, that is, an amount charged on top of the council tax due. In April 2024, this was extended to properties empty for more than one year.
- 2.12 Some empty home owners are exempt from paying council tax. The key reasons for this are the owner: is deceased and the property is subject to probate, has moved to hospital or into a care home or the owner is a charity.
- 2.13 The Local Government Association (LGA) has developed good practice guidance for tackling empty homes. LGA good practice approaches focus on systematically identifying and recording empty homes in their areas and engaging, encouraging and using enforcement (where necessary) to bring homes back in to use. Legislative powers for tackling empty homes can be found in appendix 1 to this report
- 2.14 Across the wider West Midlands, the proportion of empty homes varies widely by local authority area. In October 2025, Stratford upon Avon had the highest number of long-term empty homes per 1000 dwellings at 18.38 and Solihull the least at 5.51. Bromsgrove featured amongst the lowest 10 local authorities at 8.88 empty homes per 1000 dwellings.

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- 2.15 The strategic approach to tackling empty homes and delivering on our commitment, is centred around three priority areas:

**Priority 1 - Develop systems, processes and multi-agency working**

**Priority 2 - Improve intervention pathways, resources and performance**

**Priority 3 - Strengthen early intervention, engagement and monitoring**

### 3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 This Empty Homes Strategy will be implemented by the Private Sector Housing Team and additional funding has been provided through Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant to increase an existing officer's part time role in order to provide a proactive approach to Empty Homes.

### 4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 A contribution of £7,680 from Bromsgrove District Council's Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant (26/27) has been agreed to support the funding of the part-time empty homes officer, referred to above in 3.1. Funding was agreed by Cabinet on the 7<sup>th</sup> January 26 (Homelessness Prevention, Rough Sleeper and Domestic Abuse Grants Funding 2026/27 Report).

### 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There is no act of parliament that creates a duty on local housing authorities to tackle empty homes. However, councils do have a general housing duty to review housing conditions and needs as laid out in the Housing Act 1985.

### 6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

#### Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 This Strategy meets the Government's requirement that local authorities continue to deliver high quality and sustainable services for residents during local government reorganisation.

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### **Relevant Council Priority**

6.2 Tackling Empty Homes positively impacts:

- Housing

### **Climate Change Implications**

6.3 Bringing Empty Homes back into use will include improvements to the condition and efficiency of the private sector housing stock within Bromsgrove which will positively impact on the Council's approach to mitigate Climate Change

### **Equalities and Diversity Implications**

6.4 No specific equalities and diversity implications have been identified

## **7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

7.1 This strategy aims to mitigate risks to the local community from neglected housing.

## **8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Bromsgrove District Council Empty Homes Strategy 2026  
– 29

### Cabinet

### 20th April 2026

#### 9. REPORT SIGN OFF

| Department  | Name and Job Title   | Date     |
|---|--|----------|
| Portfolio Holder  | Councillor Kit Taylor<br>Portfolio Holder for Housing  | 22.02.26 |
| Assistant Director  | Judith Willis Assistant Director<br>of Community and Housing<br>Services   | 26.02.26 |
| Financial Services  | Julie Lorraine, Director of<br>Finance   | 12.02.26 |
| Legal and Democratic<br>Services                                    | Nicola Cummings, Principal<br>Solicitor Governance and Jess<br>Bayley-Hill, Principal<br>Democratic Services Officer | 23.02.26 |
| Climate Change Officer (if<br>climate change<br>implications apply) | Matt Bough, Strategic Housing<br>and Business Support<br>Manager   | 13.02.26 |



# Bromsgrove District Council

## Empty Homes Strategy 2026 – 2029



**Bromsgrove**  
District Council

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[www.bromsgrove.gov.uk](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk)

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***Priority 1 - Develop systems, processes and multi-agency working***

***Priority 2 - Improve intervention pathways, resources and performance***

***Priority 3 - Strengthen early intervention, engagement and monitoring***

*Appendix 1 - Legislative Powers for Tackling Empty Homes*

*Appendix 2 – Strategy Action Plan*

I am delighted to introduce this new Bromsgrove Empty Homes Strategy. Addressing the issue of Empty Homes is a key priority for the Council as we want to ensure that we are maximising the use of our existing housing stock.

Safe and secure homes provide stability for people living across Bromsgrove District. However, empty homes in our communities diminish the quality of the environment overall and can lead to vandalism and other crimes. At a time of high housing need and increasing homelessness, empty homes are a waste of a valuable opportunity to provide a family with somewhere to build a successful future.

The aim of this strategy is to make the best use of all existing housing across our district, and it reflects a step change in our commitment to bringing empty homes back into use. Bromsgrove District Council already helps willing empty home owners with problems they may be experiencing. Now we plan to invest additional resources to provide a more proactive approach to enable us to contact owners of properties empty for more than 6 months and work collaboratively to find the right solutions to complex situations.

This strategy will not punish homeowners with valid reasons for vacancy (e.g. in care, serving in the armed forces), instead it targets those who allow assets to fall into disrepair, reducing housing availability for Bromsgrove residents.

The Council carefully monitors the number of empty homes across the district. We are committed to finding new ways of ensuring, wherever possible, all housing is brought back into use, including adopting best practice, learning from successful approaches elsewhere and talking to our empty home owners to find out what support they need.

We are looking forward to seeing this new approach to tackle the scandal of empty homes, bringing more of them back to life as warm safe places to live.

Councillor Kit Taylor  
Cabinet Member for Housing

## Introduction

In October 2025, Bromsgrove District had 635 empty homes, of which 384 had been empty for more than 6 months. At the same time there were 3,487 households on the housing register requiring affordable housing. This strategy lays out how the Council will address local empty homes, supporting home owners to bring properties back in to use as quickly as possible and to use enforcement where appropriate.

Bromsgrove District Council is committed to addressing the diverse housing needs of the local community and to ensure quality homes are available for residents and families. The council monitors the number of empty homes in the District and bringing empty homes back into use, is a key objective to support this commitment.

The aim of this strategy is to:

- help alleviate housing need
- to improve housing conditions
- to offer a wider choice of housing to residents, and
- to minimise the blight that can result where properties are left empty and neglected

Empty homes can have a negative impact on a local area for several reasons, they:

- attract pests and vermin
- become a focal point for illegal activities such as anti-social behaviour and vandalism
- increased risk of squatting
- fall into disrepair – increasing renovation costs and possible risk to the public if structures are unsafe
- increased pressure on public resources
- attracts fly tipping

## Our commitment

Bromsgrove District Council commits to work with owners of empty homes and develop options for bringing them back into use. The aim of this strategy is to bring long-term empty properties back into use by setting out clear empty homes' priorities across the District and to use the most effective and proportionate interventions.

## What is an empty home?

An empty home is a dwelling which is unoccupied and substantially unfurnished. There are two main types of empty homes. Short term empty homes are dwellings which have been unoccupied for under six months. It is often the case that these are in the process of sale. Short term empty homes naturally occur as people's circumstances change, and they move between homes.

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Long-term empty homes are dwellings which have been unoccupied and are substantially unfurnished for six months or longer. Bringing long-term, privately owned empty homes back into use is the focus of this strategy. Rather than representing a natural process of change, long-term empty homes indicate there may be other factors leading to a property remaining empty.

## **What are the reasons behind empty homes?**

Residential properties remain empty for various reasons, for example resolving legal ownership as part of an inheritance process. Other factors include new homes waiting for a buyer, owners abandoning properties, owners having a lack of funds for repairs and refurbishment, waiting for planning consent or decision, repossession and perceived difficulties in renting. There is also evidence that some owners have sentimental attachment to a property and are reluctant to part with it for emotional reasons.

Some owners do not engage with the council, and they may be unaware of the issues with their property and the effect it is having on the local area. These are often the properties which can fall into disrepair and stand empty for numerous years. It is essential that the council understands the reasons and intentions behind the properties remaining empty to be able to tailor an approach to support the owner in reaching the best possible outcome.

## **Advantages of bringing empty homes back in to use**

Advantages of bringing empty homes back in to use include:

- reducing and discouraging levels of anti-social behaviour, crime, fly-tipping and vandalism
- increasing the provision of affordable housing
- recovering debt owed to the council
- supporting corporate economic growth and development priorities, objectives and strategies
- improving an area, reducing environmental decline and local people's quality of life resulting from living near a long-term empty home
- reducing additional council tax premiums for home owners

## National Context

According to the council tax database for 2025, there were 542, 276 empty homes recorded in October across England, representing 2.1% of all homes. This number has risen by 8% since 2024. Of all empty homes, 309,856 were recorded as long-term empty, 57%.

Action to tackle empty homes has a significant potential to address national housing needs. At the end of June 2025, 86,650 households were in temporary accommodation across England and owed a main housing duty by the local housing authority.

National empty homes policy focuses on empowering local authorities to bring vacant dwellings back in to use, guided by a local empty homes strategy. Local authorities have the discretion to charge empty home owners council tax premiums and have a range of legislative powers to tackle empty homes (*appendix 1*). There is no act of parliament that creates a duty on local housing authorities to tackle empty homes. However, councils have a general housing duty to review housing conditions and needs.

## Council Tax Premiums

Since April 2013, local authorities have been able to charge a council tax premium on homes empty for more than 2 years, that is, an amount charged on top of the council tax due. From April 2021, local authorities could charge a premium of up to 100% for dwellings that had been empty for between 2 to 5 years, up to 200% for dwellings that had been empty for between 5 to 10 years, and up to 300% for dwellings that have been empty for 10 years or more. Since April 2024, local authorities have been able to charge a premium on properties empty for more than 1 year.

In 2025, 291 out of 296 authorities charged a premium on empty homes. Across England, 153,000 home owners were charged a premium, 28.2% of all empty homes. Some empty home owners are exempt from paying council tax. The key reasons for this are the owner:

- is deceased and the property is subject to probate
- has moved to hospital or into a care home
- is a charity

## Good Practice

The Local Government Association's (LGA) 2023 report, *A Practical Approach for Councils on Dealing with Empty Homes*, lays out recommendations for best practice identified through case studies and research exploring local authorities' empty homes approaches. LGA good practice approaches focus on systematically identifying and recording empty homes in their areas and engaging, encouraging and using enforcement to bring homes back in to use. Case studies in the report cover the benefits of well-trained and dedicated staff working to effective procedures.

## Local Context

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Bromsgrove is situated in the north of Worcestershire and has a population of 101,685. In December 2025, there were 3,487 people on the housing register in need of affordable housing. In October 2025, Bromsgrove District had 635 empty homes, of which 384 had been empty for more than 6 months. Bringing empty homes back into residential use, could contribute to meeting the district's housing needs.

National data shows that in October 2025 there were 33,215 long-term empty homes, across the wider West Midlands area (1), representing 1.26% of all dwellings or 12.6 per 1000 dwellings. Across the region, the number of empty homes increased by 4782 (16.8%) between October 2024 and October 2025.

The proportion of empty homes varies widely by local authority area. In October 2025, Stratford upon Avon had the highest number of long-term empty homes per 1000 dwellings at 18.38 and Solihull the least at 5.51. Bromsgrove featured amongst the lowest 10 local authorities at 8.88 empty homes per 1000 dwellings.

## Number of Long-Term Empty Homes in Worcestershire

| Local Authority | Per 1000 Dwellings | Number Long-erm Empty Homes 2025 | Number Long-Term Empty Homes 2024 | Change since October 2024 |        |
|-----------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|--------|
| Bromsgrove      | 8.88               | 384                              | 369                               | 15                        | 4.0 %  |
| Malvern Hills   | 15.97              | 621                              | 626                               | -5                        | -0.8 % |
| Redditch        | 8.43               | 320                              | 283                               | 37                        | 13.0 % |
| Worcester       | 14.53              | 698                              | 653                               | 45                        | 7.0 %  |
| Wychavon        | 13.71              | 857                              | 886                               | -29                       | -3.3%  |
| Wyre Forest     | 7.40               | 364                              | 337                               | 27                        | 8.0%   |
| Worcestershire  | 11.59              | 3244                             | 3154                              | 90                        | 2.9%   |

Source: Council Tax Base Oct 2025 & Oct2024

Wychavon achieved a reduction in the number of empty homes over the period, one of the top 5 highest reductions across the wider West Midlands. Rugby achieved the highest reduction, 212 empty homes brought back in to use since 2024. Birmingham saw the highest increase at 1,654 empty homes.

When the number of long term empty homes and all empty homes in Bromsgrove are compared with the number of dwellings in the area, we can see that approximately 61%, are 6 months or over empty. This indicates property owners may be facing challenges to bringing them back into residential use, once homes become empty. Bromsgrove is in line with Worcestershire and England statistics.

(1) In the context of the Council Tax Base, the wider West Midlands refers to Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Midlands and Worcestershire (ONS)

| Local Authority | All Empty Homes 2025 | Long-Term Empty Homes 2025 |
|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Bromsgrove      | 1.47%                | 0.89%                      |

# Agenda Item 9

|                |       |       |
|----------------|-------|-------|
| Worcestershire | 1.91% | 1.16% |
| England        | 2.10% | 1.20% |

In October 2025 there were 384 long-term empty homes in Bromsgrove. The table below shows how these were dispersed over council tax banding. Just over 56% of all empty homes are in bands A to C.

| Council Tax Banding | Number | Percentage |
|---------------------|--------|------------|
| A                   | 60     | 15.6       |
| B                   | 75     | 19.5       |
| C                   | 82     | 21.4       |
| D                   | 56     | 14.6       |
| E                   | 40     | 10.4       |
| F                   | 40     | 10.4       |
| G                   | 24     | 6.3        |
| H                   | 7      | 1.8        |

Of the 635 empty homes, 393 were paying full council tax. 178 were paying an empty homes premium, which constitutes 28.0% of all empty homes. This was above the county average of 19.3% and just below the average for England of 28.2%. There were 64 properties exempted from paying council tax. The reasons for this are varied but are most commonly that, the owner is deceased and their estate is in probate or that the owner has moved to receive or provide care elsewhere.

From April 2026, where an empty home owner does not qualify for an exemption, Bromsgrove District Council premiums will be charged as follows:

| Time Empty    | Council Tax Premium |
|---------------|---------------------|
| 1- 5 years    | 100%                |
| 5-10 years    | 200%                |
| 10 years plus | 300%                |

## Empty Homes Strategic Priorities

Our approach to tackling empty homes and delivering on our commitment, is centred around three priority areas:

### Priority 1

Develop systems, processes and multi-agency working

### Priority 2

Improve intervention pathways, resources and performance

## **Priority 3**

Strengthen early intervention, engagement and monitoring

The strategy action plan (*appendix 2*) lays out details of how each of the strategic priorities will be delivered.

## **Accountability**

Officers will implement the action plan, and progress will be monitored through regular performance reports.

Appendix 1 Legislative Powers for Tackling Empty Homes

| Legislation  | Summary of Power  | Lead Department   | Timescale                          | Priority Use                   | Notes / Practical Considerations   | If Owner Cannot Be Located  |
|--|---|---|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949</b>                    | Require owner to keep property free from rats/mice and remove accumulations of waste. | Private Sector Housing/<br>Worcestershire Regulatory Services | <b>Quick</b>                       | <b>First-line</b>              | Can be used immediately if infestations or waste are visible. Covers gardens and interiors. Cost recovery. | Serve notice to last known address, affix to property, and proceed with works in default if no response. Recover costs via local land charge.       |
| <b>Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 s.29</b> | Secure unsecured or dangerous empty building to prevent unauthorised entry.           | Private Sector Housing (with Legal & Property Services)       | <b>Quick</b>                       | <b>First-line / Escalation</b> | 48 hrs notice unless urgent. Works in default recoverable from owner.                                      | Affix notice to property and proceed to secure if no owner contact. Charge costs to property as a land charge.                                      |
| <b>Building Act 1984 s.77 &amp; s.78</b>                         | Order owner to make building safe (s.77) or take emergency action (s.78).             | Private Sector Housing/ Building Control                      | <b>Quick (s.78) / Medium (s77)</b> | <b>First-line / Escalation</b> | s.78 allows immediate works if imminent danger. Cost recoverable from owner.                               | Proceed under s.78 without owner consent if imminent danger. For s.77, serve notice to last known address and property. Charge costs as land charge |

| Legislation                                     | Summary of Power   | Lead Department  | Timescale                 | Priority Use                   | Notes / Practical Considerations  | If Owner Cannot Be Located   |
|---|--|--|---------------------------|--------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Building Act 1984 s.79</b>                   | Require repair/restoration or demolition of ruinous/dilapidated buildings affecting amenity. | North Worcestershire Building Control                  | <b>Medium</b>             | <b>Escalation</b>              | Limited to amenity impact. Can require rubbish removal from site.       | Serve notice to last known address and property. Works in default possible if no owner found. Costs recoverable.                   |
| <b>Town and Country Planning Act 1990 s.215</b> | Require improvement of land/building where condition harms local amenity.                    | Planning Enforcement                                   | <b>Medium</b>             | <b>First-line / Escalation</b> | Minimum 28 days compliance. Used for overgrown/derelict sites.          | Serve notice to last known address and affix to site. Works in default if no owner found; costs recovered as land charge.          |
| <b>Housing Act 2004</b>                         | Require works to remove Category 1 or 2 hazards under HHSRS.                                 | Private Sector Housing                                 | <b>Medium</b>             | <b>First-line / Escalation</b> | Enables works in default, fines. Powers of entry included.              | Serve to last known address and property. If no access, use power of entry (with warrant if needed). Works in default recoverable. |
| <b>Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO)</b>  | Take control of empty home to let/manage it.   | Private Sector Housing, Strategic Housing and Business | <b>Medium / Long-term</b> | <b>Escalation</b>              | Must be empty 6+ months. High capital and management resource required. | Can proceed even without contact, reasonable steps to locate owner   |

| Legislation                                     | Summary of Power  | Lead Department  | Timescale        | Priority Use                    | Notes / Practical Considerations  | If Owner Cannot Be Located  |
|---|---|--|------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|
|   |   | Development Manager (with Legal & Cabinet approval)  |                  |                                 |   | required, then apply to First-tier Tribunal.  |
| <b>Enforced Sale Procedure (LPA 1925 s.103)</b> | Force sale of property to recover debts over £1,000.                        | Legal Services (triggered by Private Sector Housing, Council Tax Recovery, or Housing Strategy)            | <b>Medium</b>    | <b>Escalation / Last resort</b> | Simpler than CPO. Can be linked to works in default or council tax arrears.             | Ownership not required for contact, sale can proceed based on registered title and debt charge.                         |
| <b>Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO)</b>         | Acquire property without owner consent to bring into use.                   | Private Sector Housing, Strategic Housing and Business Development Manager (with Legal & Cabinet approval) | <b>Long-term</b> | <b>Last resort</b>              | Cabinet approval required. Must show voluntary action attempts first.                   | Can proceed without contact, but must evidence reasonable attempts to trace owner. Notice published and posted on site. |
| <b>Housing Act 1985 s.17</b>                    | Compulsory purchase to improve housing stock or bring empty homes into use. | Private Sector Housing, Strategic Housing and Business Development Manager (with Legal & Cabinet approval) | <b>Long-term</b> | <b>Last resort</b>              | Needs Secretary of State approval. High cost. Disposal to RSL/developer/owner-occupier. | Can proceed without contact, but must evidence reasonable attempts to trace owner. Notice published and posted on site. |



### Empty Homes Strategy – Action Plan

This action plan has been developed in line with the Local Government Association’s Empty Homes Toolkit, which promotes a staged approach focused on accurate data, early engagement, proportionate enforcement and strong partnership working.

The plan reflects LGA best practice by prioritising the establishment of reliable data and governance arrangements first, followed by structured engagement and intervention pathways, and then scaling up early intervention and enforcement activity once systems are embedded.

The phased delivery model ensures the Council builds capability incrementally, demonstrates value for money, and uses enforcement powers proportionately and effectively to bring empty homes back into use.

#### Priority 1 – Develop systems, processes and multi-agency working.

| Action   | KPI / Measure  | Start                      | End                          | Key Milestones   | Responsible Team(s)   |
|--|--|----------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|
| Develop systems to record and track empty homes across the district          | Centralised empty homes system goes live, 100% of known empty homes logged and tracked | 1 <sup>st</sup> Aug 2026   | 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2027 | System design complete (1 <sup>st</sup> August 2026); Go-live (Jan 2027)   | Private Sector Housing (Lead), Council Tax  |
| Develop and embed data-sharing processes between PSH and Council Tax         | Data-sharing arrangement agreed; routine data transfer embedded as business as usual   | 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2026  | 1 <sup>st</sup> Sept 2026    | Data-sharing agreement signed (1 <sup>st</sup> July 2026); Automated / routine transfer in place (1 <sup>st</sup> Sept 2026) | Council Tax (Lead), Information Management, Private Sector Housing                      |
| Participate in joint departmental and agency working group for complex cases | Quarterly meetings held; minimum 5 complex cases reviewed and actioned per year        | 15 <sup>th</sup> June 2026 | Ongoing                      | First meeting attended (15 <sup>th</sup> June 2026)  | Private Sector Housing (Lead), Council Tax, Planning, Building Control, Legal Services, |

|  |   |                           |                           |  |  |
|--|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|--|--|
|  |   |                           |                           |  | Worcestershire Regulatory Services   |
| Review options for public reporting of empty homes | Online reporting route improved and promoted; baseline established for number of public referrals | 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2026 | 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2027 | Online updates completed (1 <sup>st</sup> Oct 2026); Communications campaign launched (Dec 2026) | Web Team (Lead), Private Sector Housing, Communications, Customer Services |

### Priority 2 – Improve intervention pathways, resources and performance

| Action   | KPI / Measure   | Start                          | End   | Key Milestones   | Responsible Team(s)   |
|--|---|--------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Review PSH processes using support, advice, incentives and enforcement | Baseline established for case progression times; standard empty homes case pathway approved and implemented | 1 <sup>st</sup> September 2026 | 1 <sup>st</sup> December 2026               | Process mapping completed (30 <sup>th</sup> Sep 2026); Pathway approved (1 <sup>st</sup> December 2026)    | Private Sector Housing (Lead), Legal Services, Finance, Strategic Housing |
| Identify range of support, incentives and enforcement options          | Menu of support and enforcement tools agreed and documented   | 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2026   | 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2027                  | Options appraisal completed (1 <sup>st</sup> December 2026); Toolkit approved (1 <sup>st</sup> March 2027) | Private Sector Housing (Lead), Strategic Housing                          |
| Develop scoring matrix aligned to LGA Empty Homes Toolkit              | Scoring matrix designed and applied to 100% of empty home cases   | 1 <sup>st</sup> November 2026  | 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2027                  | Draft criteria (1 <sup>st</sup> December 2026); Full implementation (1 <sup>st</sup> March 2027)           | Private Sector Housing (Lead)   |
| Analyse effectiveness of empty homes processes                         | Annual performance report produced; improvement actions agreed and tracked                                  | 1 <sup>st</sup> December 2027  | 1 <sup>st</sup> February 2028 (then annual) | Baseline dashboard (1 <sup>st</sup> November 2027); Year-end analysis (Feb 2028)                           | Private Sector Housing (Lead), Strategic Housing                          |

|  |  |                               |                             |  |  |
|--|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Identify and explore good practice to address barriers | Benchmarking completed; practice note adopted and implemented        | 1 <sup>st</sup> December 2027 | 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2028 | Desk research (Dec 2027); Peer engagement (Mar 2028); Practice adoption (Jun 2028) | Private Sector Housing (Lead), Strategic Housing, Empty Homes Regional Network |
| Develop targets to bring empty homes back into use     | Annual and strategy-level targets set; quarterly monitoring in place | 1 <sup>st</sup> Sept 2026     | 15 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2026   | Baseline agreed (Oct 2026); Draft targets (Nov 2026); Sign-off (Dec 2026)          | Private Sector Housing   |

### Phase 3 – Strengthen early intervention, engagement and monitoring

| Action   | KPI / Measure  | Start                      | End                        | Key Milestones   | Responsible Team(s)                        |
|--|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|--|
| Develop early intervention processes for newly identified empty homes                          | From go-live, 100% of newly identified empty homes contacted within 12 weeks | 1 <sup>st</sup> Nov 2026   | 28 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2027  | Workflow design complete (30 Nov 2026); Go-live (Feb 2027) | Private Sector Housing (Lead), Council Tax |
| Create survey to establish effectiveness of early intervention for previous empty homes owners | Survey designed and issued   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2027   | 31 <sup>st</sup> Mar 2027  | Survey design (Feb 2027)                                   | Private Sector Housing                     |
| Consult previous owners of empty homes   | Annual survey completed; action log agreed and monitored                     | 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2027 | 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2027 | Findings Report (June 2027)                                | Private Sector Housing (Lead)              |

|  |  |                          |                           |   |  |
|--|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|---|--|
| Monitor and report on homes brought back into use                                      | Annual empty homes performance report published                      | 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2027 | Ongoing                   | First annual report published (Apr 2027)                                      | Private Sector Housing   |
| Explore options to increase homes brought back into use (complex / multi-agency cases) | Options appraised annually; at least one new delivery option piloted | 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2027 | 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2027 | Long list (Mar 2027); Shortlist & pilots (Jul–Sep 2027); Appraisal (Dec 2027) | Multi-Agency Working Group (Lead), Legal, Finance, Registered Providers / Partners |

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#### Renters Rights Act 2025

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder  | Councillor Kit Taylor   |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted   | <b>Yes</b>  |
| Relevant Assistant Director  | Assistant Director Community and Housing Services   |
| Report Author: Katie Sharp-Fisher  | Job Title: Private Sector Housing Manager<br>Contact email: <a href="mailto:k.sharp-fisher@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk">k.sharp-fisher@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk</a><br>Contact Tel: 01527 881437 |
| Wards Affected   | All   |
| Ward Councillor(s) consulted   | N/A   |
| Relevant Council Priority  | Housing   |
| Non-Key Decision   |   |
| If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting. |   |

#### 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

**The Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that**

- 1) **The update provided in the report in respect of the Renters Rights Act 2025 be noted.**
- 2) **The new burdens funding of £16,575.66 be noted.**

**The Cabinet is asked to RECOMMEND that:-**

- 3) **The Scheme of Delegations be amended to incorporate new powers under the Renters Rights Act 2025 in accordance with the wording set out at Appendix 1**

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Renters Rights Act 2025 (RRA25) obtained Royal Assent on the 27<sup>th</sup> October 2025 with reforms being introduced through a phased approach with new investigatory power being implemented from the 27<sup>th</sup> December 2025. Phase 1 will commence on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2026. The RRA25 represents the most significant reform of the private rented sector in a generation with the aim to improve security, fairness, and standards for private tenants while strengthening enforcement powers for local authorities.

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2.2 The estimated private rented sector (PRS) in Bromsgrove is 4,395 (Office for National Statistics (2021 Census) and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Live Tables on Dwelling Stock.

### 3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

3.1 The Private Sector Housing Team currently investigates and enforces non-compliance under the Housing Act 2004, with a primary focus on the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), which addresses property disrepair and hazards.

3.2 The Renters' Rights Act 2025 will be implemented across three phases as set out below:

3.3 **Phase 1** will take effect from 1st May 2026 and includes the following elements:

- **Abolish section 21 'no fault' evictions** – landlords in the PRS will no longer be able to use section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 to evict their tenants.
- **Introduces Assured Periodic Tenancies** in the private rented sector – the vast majority of new tenancies and existing tenancies in the PRS will become Assured Periodic Tenancies. This means tenants will be able to stay in their property for as long as they want, or until a landlord serves a valid section 8 notice. Tenants will be able to end their tenancy by giving two months' notice.
- **Reform possession grounds** in the PRS so they are fair for both parties – landlords will only be able to evict tenants when they have a valid reason. Possession grounds will be extended to make it easier for landlords to evict tenants who commit anti-social behaviour, or who are in serious persistent rent arrears. (Appendix 2)
- **Limit rent increases** to once a year in the PRS – landlords will have to follow the revised section 13 procedure and provide the tenant with a notice detailing the proposed rent increase at least two months before it is due to take effect.
- **Ban rental bidding and rent in advance** – landlords and letting agents will not be able to ask for, encourage, or accept an offer that is higher than the advertised rent. Landlords and agents will also not be able to request more than one month's rent in advance.
- **Make it illegal to discriminate against renters** who have children or receive benefits – landlords and letting agents will not be able to do anything to make a tenant less likely to rent a property (or prevent them from renting it) because they have children or receive benefits. This includes withholding information about a property (including its

availability), stopping someone from viewing it, or refusing to grant a tenancy.

- **Require landlords in the PRS to consider tenant requests to rent with a pet** – landlords will have an initial 28 days to consider their tenant's request, and they will have to provide valid reasons if they refuse it.
- **Strengthen both local council enforcement and rent repayment orders** - civil penalties will be expanded, and there will be a new requirement for local councils to report on enforcement activity. Rent repayment orders will be extended to superior landlords, the maximum penalty will be doubled, and repeat offenders required to pay the maximum amount.

3.3 **Phase 2** will take effect from 2027 (specific dates to be confirmed) and includes the following elements across two stages:

3.4 Stage 1 involves the regional rollout of the database for Landlords and Local Councils. Signing up to the PRS Database will be mandatory for all PRS landlords and they will be required to pay an annual fee which will be confirmed closer to launch.

3.5 Regulations will mandate landlord registration, payment of a fee and the provision of key information by landlords including -

- The landlord's contact details. This will include capturing relevant information from all joint landlords.
- The property details including the full address, type of property (flat/house), number of bedrooms, number of households/residents and confirming whether the property is occupied and furnished, etc.
- Safety information – Gas, Electric and Energy Performance Certificates – so tenants are assured about the safety and energy efficiency of the property.

3.6 Stage 2 involves the further roll out of the database and introduction of the Ombudsman. Public access and data sharing will be enabled following the launch of landlord registration.

3.7 The Ombudsman will provide a redress service for private rented sector tenants when things go wrong. It will also support landlords with tools, guidance and training on handling complaints from tenants early. The Ombudsman scheme will be mandatory for PRS landlords. Landlords will be required to fund the service through a fair and proportionate charging model which is due to be confirmed closer to launch.

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- 3.8 Implementation of the Ombudsman will happen after the introduction of the database, and the government are exploring ways to share information between the database and the Ombudsman to minimise landlord sign-up burden.
- 3.9 The development of the Ombudsman will happen in stages:
- Stage 1 will happen at least 12-18 months before implementation. The Secretary of State will choose a scheme administrator to run the new service, which will then need time to scale up.
  - Stage 2 will require landlords to be members of the new service, expected to be in 2028, when the Secretary of State is confident the service is ready for delivery. We will make sure landlords are given sufficient notice in advance of requiring them to be members of the scheme.
- 3.10 **Phase 3** involves the introduction of a new Decent Homes Standard (DHS) in the PRS (dates of implementation to be confirmed following consultation but likely between 2035- 2037).
- 3.11 A DHS will be introduced to the PRS for the first time. This will ensure that all PRS properties meet a minimum standard of housing quality and provide local councils with powers to take enforcement action if PRS properties fail to meet it.
- 3.12 While the deadline for implementation may be some years away, the expectation is that landlords should commence works earlier wherever feasible, remaining mindful of the effect of property conditions on tenants.
- 3.13 In addition to these measures, the Government has consulted on plans to require all domestic privately rented properties in England and Wales to meet Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) of EPC C or equivalent by 2030 unless a valid exemption is in place. Further details will be set out surrounding this in due course.
- 3.14 As part of the pathway to applying the DHS to the PRS, the Housing, Health & Safety Hazard Rating System (HHSRS) will be reviewed.
- 3.15 Awaab's Law will also be extended to the PRS, setting clear legally enforceable timeframes within which PRS landlords must make homes safe where they contain serious hazards. This will empower tenants to challenge dangerous conditions in their homes.

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- 3.16 It should be noted that the Decent Homes Standard already applies to social housing and Awaab's law applies to social housing from 27<sup>th</sup> October 2025.
- 3.17 Under the RRA25, the Private Sector Housing Teams powers will expand to include investigation and enforcement of: -
- Tenancy agreement clauses
  - Illegal eviction and harassment
  - Breaches for grounds of possession e.g. re-letting property before 12 months if using sale as reason for possession
  - Time limits on possession grounds
- 3.18 As a result of new legislation, powers and tenants' rights, there are several new areas that the service has not dealt with before such as anti-discrimination, rent bidding and rent increases and unreasonable refusal of pet requests. This will require training to address knowledge gaps, upskilling staff as well as additional resources to respond to the demand and change of enquiries.
- 3.19 The primary anticipated impacts on the service relate to an increase in demand generated through enquiries from tenants surrounding their rights, the identification and enforcement of offences and an increase in homeless presentations as a result of section 21 notices being issued in the lead up to the implementation of phase 1 and a potential reduction in PRS accommodation post implementation.
- 3.20 The Private Sector Housing team is a shared service between Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council. The officers are able to undertake enforcement across all tenures, including private rented, socially rented, owner-occupied and empty properties.
- 3.21 Training, development and upskilling the workforce will be undertaken to ensure that key staff in the service have the knowledge and skillset to provide support, respond to and enforce the Act relevant to their role. This will ensure customers receive the best possible service and build trust and confidence with customers as well as key stakeholders.
- 3.21 To support compliance with the RRA25 Bromsgrove District Council has secured and allocated funding to implement a regulatory case management system. This system will play a crucial role in enabling the council to meet new statutory duties under the Act. Once operational the

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new system will provide robust data reporting to central government as required by the RRA

- 3.22 Officers will update the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy 2026 to align it with the new duties that have been implemented by the RAA25 and bring forward to a future committee. It is anticipated that this will be in June 2026.
- 3.23 In the meantime some updating to the Scheme of Delegations is required to enable officers to start taking on some of the new powers under the RRA25. Accordingly, Members are referred to the revised delegations at Appendix 1, and are asked to recommend to Council that the changes be approved.
- 3.24 By way of explanation, officers would comment on the proposed changes as follows: -
- Deletion of the first paragraph is to tidy up the wording and set out all the legislation in one list in the second paragraph.
  - The references to the RRA 25 in paragraph 2 will enable officers to use the new investigatory powers conferred on Local Housing Authorities and to report on statistics to the government.
  - The references to the RRA 25 in paragraph 3 will enable officers to investigate the new offences relating to discriminating against tenants and the requirement to state the rent.
- 3.25 Members are asked to note that once the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy has been finalised, there will be a further request to add delegations under the RRA25 details of which will be included in the next report coming to committee.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Government has provided New Burdens Funding 2025/26 to support Local Authorities with the implementation costs. Bromsgrove District Council has been allocated £16,575.66 to support the Council to undertake preparatory work for the new responsibilities around enforcement and reporting enforcement activity in private rented sector housing arising from the Renters' Rights Act 2025.
- 4.2 Once enforcement activity starts to take place under the Act there is potential for income to be received from the imposition of civil penalties. This will be from the issuing of Civil Penalty Notices (CPNs) and new style "financial penalties" for certain offences.

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The relevant government guidance states that: -

“Income received from civil penalties must be used by local housing authorities to meet costs and expenses incurred in or associated with their private rented sector enforcement functions. Income that is not used for this purpose must be paid to central government.”

- 4.3 Income may also be received following the establishment of the Landlord Database. This is due to be implemented in Phase 2 with guidance to be provided. However, it is expected that a share of the landlord registration fees will be provided to the local authority. This must be used for private sector housing activities.
- 4.4 The Government has also confirmed that the below amounts have been added to the Council’s final allocation of the Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse grant 2026-29 and is provided to support local housing authorities towards meeting their homelessness duties as a result of any new burdens linked directly to the Renters’ Rights Act 2025

|              |                |
|--------------|----------------|
| 2026/27      | £34,332        |
| 2027/28      | £16,165        |
| 2028/29      | £0             |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>£50,497</b> |

### 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Currently informal action is used in addition to the use of formal powers, and the provisions of the Act are likely to limit such informal action in the future.
- 5.2 The Council must ensure these duties and powers are exercised in accordance with the criteria outlined within the Act. This requires amendments to the Scheme of Delegation to cover the provisions of the Act (Appendix 1).
- 5.3 There are significant changes to the Council’s enforcement powers where landlords have not complied with their duties, have failed to keep the property in a decent standard and have carried out illegal evictions. The Private Sector Housing Enforcement and Civil Penalty Policy will require updating and will be brought to a future Executive Committee. It is expected that the MHCLG will produce guidance for debt recovery.

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#### **6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS**

##### **Local Government Reorganisation**

- 6.1 The RRA25 introduces new duties to local housing authorities and the unitary authority will take over these duties.

##### **Relevant Council Priority**

- 6.2 The implementation of the RRA25 enables Bromsgrove District Council to meet one of the Council's priorities of 'Community & Housing'. The legislation directly impacts upon the residents throughout the community by ensuring that houses are safe and warm enabling the residents to be happy and Bromsgrove a safe place to live.

##### **Climate Change Implications**

- 6.3 No direct impact on climate change, although changes to the Decent Homes Standard are likely to require improvements to the energy efficiency of homes which will have a positive impact.

##### **Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 6.4 Equalities and diversity implications have been considered as part of the process to introduce new legislation by the Government.

#### **7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 The following risks and opportunities have been identified to inform planning and mitigation.
- Increased enquiries to both PRS and housing options:
    - Provide clear, consistent information to all internal and external partners through website information, landlord emails and internal scripts for all teams.
  - Short implementation timescales:
    - Develop early workflows and deliver training to all relevant staff ahead of Phase 1.
  - Some landlords may choose to exit the PRS due to perceived regulatory burden, leading to a reduction in available rental stock
  - Reduced PRS availability, rising evictions, and higher demand for homelessness support may increase Temporary Accommodation placements and expenditure

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- Increased workload for PSH, Housing Options, and Legal Services may require additional budget for staffing, training, legal costs, and system improvements.
- Increased enforcement activity and financial penalties may lead to higher levels of debt to recover, requiring additional administration and legal oversight.

**8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix 1 – Proposed amendments to Scheme of Delegations

**9. REPORT SIGN OFF**

| Department                         | Name and Job Title   | Date       |
|------------------------------------|--|------------|
| Portfolio Holder                   | Cllr Kit Taylor  | 26/02/2026 |
| Lead Director / Assistant Director | Judith Willis<br>Assistant Director Community and Housing Services   | 17/02/2026 |
| Financial Services                 | Deb Goodall<br>Assistant Director Financial Services   | 17/02/2026 |
| Legal and Democratic Services      | Nicola Cummings, Principal Solicitor – Governance and<br>Jess Bayley-Hill, Principal Democratic Services Officer | 25.02.26   |

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## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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### Q3 Finance and Performance Report 2025/26

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder  | Councillor Nock – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance   |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted   | Yes   |
| Relevant Head of Service   | Debra Goodall   |
| Report Authors   | Debra Goodall – Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services<br><a href="mailto:debra.goodall@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk">debra.goodall@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk</a> |
| Wards Affected   | All Wards   |
| Ward Councillor(s) consulted   | No  |
| Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)  | All   |
| Non-Key Decision   |   |
| If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting. |   |

#### **SUMMARY**

Regular budget monitoring, reporting forms the basis of good governance and best practice in budget management. Councillors and committees should be able to rely on the information provided to assist in sound decision making around budgets and spending plans for the Council.

#### **1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that the following are noted:

- 1) The current Revenue position of **£314k** adverse variance.
- 2) The current Capital spending of **£13.593m** against a revised budget of **£21.876m** as set out in **Appendix A**.
- 3) The current savings delivery is **£1.457m** against an annual target of **£1.213m** for 2025/26. This is included in the above Revenue position
- 4) The Earmarked Reserves balances of **£11.266m** as set out in Appendix B.
- 5) The Ward Budget allocation position to date is 22 approved allocations at £23,433.59, leaving a balance of £38,556.41 to be allocated before year end as set out in Appendix C.
- 6) There is an updated procurements position set out in appendix D, with any new items over £200,000 to be included on the forward plan.
- 7) The position on Council Tax and Business Rates be noted.
- 8) The position on benefits processing be noted.
- 9) The Q3 position on Corporate Performance Indicators be noted.

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The Executive is asked to **RECOMMEND** that:

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

## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 This Quarter 3 Financial and Performance Monitoring Report provides a comprehensive overview of Bromsgrove District Council's finance and performance for the period April to December 2025. It outlines the Council's revenue and capital positions, savings delivery, procurement pipeline, and progress on key strategic projects, along with performance against key indicators.
- 2.2 As of the end of Q3, the Council is forecasting a **£314k revenue overspend** for the full financial year. This compares to a £336k revenue overspend forecast in 2024/25 at Quarter 2. The £514k is primarily driven by costs relating to Waste Management due to the aging fleet and associated agency costs, offset by increased income in waste services and additional costs within Finance relating to agency cover for vacancies and consultancy costs for Section 151 Officer and VAT support. These costs have been offset by vacancy management and underspends in Corporate Financing together with the recognition of £200k of Revenue Grants Received in Advance in 2024/25.
- 2.3 There has been a positive movement of £22k relating to increased street naming and numbering income (Business Transformation and Organisational Development) of £76k and increased UKSPF grant funding of £23k offset by an increase in fleet costs (Environmental Services) of £77k. These movements are explained within the body of the main report.
- 2.4 The Council has delivered **£1.457m of its £1.213m savings target**, exceeding the full-year target by £0.224m as at Quarter 3. Capital expenditure to date stands at **£13.593m** against a revised budget of **£21.876m** proposed to support ongoing commitments. This budget includes £14.891m of carry forwards from 2024/25.
- 2.5 Key capital projects include the **Levelling Up-funded Windsor Street and Nailers Yard schemes**. The Windsor Street scheme has completed phase one remediation works and discussions are being held with the Environment Agency regarding any required remediation works under phase two. The Nailers' Yard scheme construction stage is now progressing with a revised completion date of 6<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

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- 2.6 The Council's **collection rates** for Council Tax and Business Rates remain strong, with Q3 performance close to or exceeding national averages. Benefits processing times are within expected parameters, despite increased complexity in cases retained by the Council.
- 2.7 The report also includes updates on **ward budget allocations, earmarked reserves, and treasury management performance**, with no new borrowing undertaken and **£6m in short-term investments** held at quarter-end.
- 2.8 The Council continues to monitor its financial position closely, with regular engagement between service managers and finance officers to address emerging risks and ensure delivery of strategic priorities.

### 3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the Council's draft Revenue and Capital Outturn position for the first 9 months of the financial year (April – December 2025) and associated performance data. This report presents:
- The Council's forecast yearly outturn revenue monitoring position for 2025/26 based on data to the end of Quarter 3 including delivery of the savings targets and fees and charges income as set out in the 2025 MTFP.
  - The position in respect of balance sheet monitoring as requested by the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee including the Treasury Management Report.
  - The spending as at Q3 of Ward Budget Funds.
  - The updated procurement pipeline of Council projects to be delivered over the next 12 months in order to properly resource plans for the delivery of these projects.
  - The Council's performance against the strategic priorities outlined in the Council Plan Addendum, including operational measures to demonstrate how the council is delivering its services to customers is the subject of separate report elsewhere on the agenda.

### 4. **DETAILED PERFORMANCE**

#### **Financial Performance**

- 4.1 As part of the monitoring process, a detailed review has been undertaken to ensure that issues are considered, and significant savings and cost pressures are addressed. This report sets out, based on the position at the end of Quarter 3, the projected revenue outturn position for the full 2025/26 financial year and explains key variances against budget.

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- 4.2 The £15.3m full year revenue budget included in the table below is the budget that was approved by Council in February 2025.

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|  |  | <b>2025-26<br/>Approved<br/>Budget</b> | <b>2025-26<br/>Revised<br/>Budget</b> | <b>2025-26<br/>Revised Q3<br/>Budget</b> | <b>Q3<br/>Adjusted<br/>Spend</b> | <b>Full Year<br/>Projected<br/>Forecast</b> | <b>Full Year<br/>Projected<br/>Variance<br/>Q2</b> | <b>Movement in<br/>Projected<br/>Variance<br/>Q2 to Q3</b> | <b>Full Year<br/>Projected<br/>Variance<br/>Q3</b> |
|--|--|--|---------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Service Description</b>                             | <b>Service Lead</b>                                    |  |                                       |  |                                  |   |  |  |  |
| Business Transformation and Organisational Development | Assistant Director Transformation & Corporate Services | 2,197,136                              | 2,002,731                             | 1,453,447                                | 1,456,157                        | 1,979,217                                   | -42,285  | 18,771   | -23,514  |
| Community and Housing GF Services                      | Assistant Director of Communities                      | 1,471,273                              | 1,368,117                             | 975,121                                  | 1,118,412                        | 1,653,900                                   | 148,686  | 137,097  | 285,783  |
| Corporate Services                                     | Chief Executive  | 817,413                                | 1,976,228                             | 1,559,634                                | 827,792                          | 1,112,077                                   | -606,126   | -258,025   | -864,151   |
| Environmental Services                                 | Assistant Director Environment                         | 4,266,050                              | 4,073,736                             | 3,007,223                                | 3,476,349                        | 4,957,528                                   | 360,445  | 523,347  | 883,792  |
| Financial and Customer Services                        | Assistant Director Finance & Customer Services         | 2,387,557                              | 2,318,978                             | 1,871,061                                | 2,296,143                        | 2,993,129                                   | 317,163  | 356,988  | 674,151  |
| Legal, Democratic and Elections Services               | Assistant Director Legal Democratic & Procurement      | 1,178,898                              | 1,182,406                             | 880,181                                  | 870,034                          | 1,240,726                                   | 94,379   | -36,059  | 58,320   |
| Planning and Leisure Services                          | Assistant Director Planning                            | 1,248,863                              | 1,024,576                             | 711,997                                  | 644,845                          | 1,017,237                                   | 48,819   | -56,158  | -7,339   |
| Regeneration & Property                                | Assistant Director Regeneration & Property             | 1,101,406                              | 784,445                               | 667,543                                  | 788,291                          | 961,277                                     | 169,704  | 7,128  | 176,832  |
| Regulatory Client - Commissioning Role                 | Head of Regulatory Services                            | 646,139                                | 646,139                               | 484,604                                  | 561,835                          | 745,498                                     | 76,699   | 22,660   | 99,359   |
| <b>Grand Total</b>                                     |  | <b>15,314,735</b>                      | <b>15,377,356</b>                     | <b>11,610,811</b>                        | <b>12,039,858</b>                | <b>16,660,589</b>                           | <b>567,484</b>                                     | <b>715,749</b>   | <b>1,283,233</b>                                   |
|  |  |  |                                       |  |                                  |   |  |  |  |
| <b>Service Description</b>                             |  | <b>2025-26<br/>Approved<br/>Budget</b> | <b>2025-26<br/>Revised<br/>Budget</b> | <b>2025-26<br/>Revised Q3<br/>Budget</b> | <b>Q3<br/>Adjusted<br/>Spend</b> | <b>Full Year<br/>Projected<br/>Forecast</b> | <b>Full Year<br/>Projected<br/>Variance<br/>Q2</b> | <b>Movement in<br/>Projected<br/>Variance<br/>Q2 to Q3</b> | <b>Full Year<br/>Projected<br/>Variance<br/>Q3</b> |
| Corporate Financing                                    | Interim Director of Finance                            | -15,314,735                            | -15,377,356                           | -11,489,095                              | 3,266,196                        | -16,346,906                                 | -231,265   | -738,285   | -969,550   |
| <b>Grand Total</b>                                     |  | <b>-15,314,735</b>                     | <b>-15,377,356</b>                    | <b>-11,489,095</b>                       | <b>3,266,196</b>                 | <b>-16,346,906</b>                          | <b>-231,265</b>                                    | <b>-738,285</b>  | <b>-969,550</b>                                    |
| <b>TOTALS</b>  |  | <b>0</b>                               | <b>0</b>                              | <b>121,716</b>                           | <b>15,306,054</b>                | <b>313,683</b>                              | <b>336,219</b>                                     | <b>-22,536</b>   | <b>313,683</b>                                     |

\* Note on Corporate Financing included in body of the report

#### *Budget Variances*

- 4.3 The draft position is set out in the above table.
- 4.4 Overall, the Council is currently forecasting a full year revenue overspend of £314k at Quarter 3 as explained in the Executive Summary. This position will continue to be reviewed particularly given the impact of the increasing costs linked to inflation and further updates will be provided to Councillors throughout 2025/26. This includes service projections as follows:

#### **Business Transformation £24k underspend**

- 4.4.1 Business Transformation & Organisational Development are forecasting an underspend of £24k due to increased street naming and numbering income of £10k and Training savings of £45k offset by additional costs of Apprenticeship Levy of £31k.

#### **Community and Housing GF Services £286k overspend**

- 4.4.2 Community & Housing Services are forecasting a £286k overspend.

There are £98k increased charges from BT which is an uncontrollable charge. There is also £178k in additional bed and breakfast costs which have been offset by a reduction in other net variations of £27k.

There are additional charges of £37k relating to increased utility bills.

#### **Corporate Services £864k underspend**

- 4.4.3 Corporate Services is forecasting an £864k underspend

There has been an £886k net underspend due to over achievement on vacancy management, corporate efficiencies other savings in inflation and utility budgets across the whole Council offset by £7k communication costs relating to Local Government Reorganisation, £21k additional postage costs across the whole council and other costs of £16k. Additionally, there was an extra cost due to a Local Government Reorganisation appraisal report of £59k, which was partially offset by grant income of £37k.

There are other net underspends of £44k.

#### **Environmental Services £884k overspend**

- 4.4.4 Environmental Services are forecasting a £884k above budget.

This variance above budget is due to an overspend on Waste Management of £919k

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additional costs on maintenance of the aging fleet and hire costs of vehicles to maintain service– these costs will reduce with the introduction of the new fleet as previously reported.

There are also agency costs of £416k to cover vacant posts and a mixture of long and short term sickness. This has been offset by a £193k contribution to the current vacant post salary savings to corporate.

Additional disposal costs of £238k arose from additional business on Commercial Services that is linked to additional income of £654k, for which a business case to formally expand the service and adjust budget lines for 2026/27 has now been approved.

Aside from Waste Management there is a £64k pressure for Wyre Forest Contract - North Worcestershire Water Management Group in Land Drainage.

There has also been additional costs of £94k in Stores and Depot for their Building Maintenance and Property Costs (To reflect the age of the buildings and increase cost a Capital bid has been submitted to address the issue)

### **Financial and Customer Services £674k overspend**

- 4.4.5 Finance & Customer Services are forecasting an overspend of £674k due to £90k on VAT support from PS Tax on the VAT returns to HMRC, £50k to Bruton Knowles for Insurance Property valuations for the Statement of Accounts, £225k on Agency staff due to cover for vacancies, and a housing subsidy budget re-alignment of £402k and other net variations of £6k. All of the above is offset by a VAT receipt of £99k.

A review of resourcing arrangements is ongoing.

### **Legal, Democratic and Elections Services £58k overspend**

- 4.4.6 Legal, Democratic and Property Services are forecasting a £58k overspend due to miscoding of £9k Landlord costs on the Artrix charged to Legal in error and £41k Ward Budget miscoded to Democratic Services. This will be corrected as part of the budget setting process. There are also increased Civica license costs of £8k which are expected to be reimbursed..

### **Planning and Leisure Services £7k underspend**

- 4.4.7 Planning and Leisure Services are forecasting a net £7k underspend

This is due to £85k additional staffing costs as a result of increased costs of agency staff due to maternity cover. At Quarter 3 there was £58k underachieved income in Building Control and Arts and Development.

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There have been savings in salaries on Parks and Events of £63k and Planning and Policy of £67k due to a planned review of Leisure services. There are other additional net variations of £6k.

Final projected outturn figure has changed from £1.15m to £1.01m. This is mainly due to the fact that planning income is now achieving budgeted target income figure due to the unusually high value transactions in Dec. The overall forecast is showing a forecasted underspend of roughly £7k. The change in outturn is mainly to do with development management planning income target now being achieved.

### **Regeneration & Property £177k overspend**

- 4.4.8 Regeneration and Property are forecasting a £177k overspend due to an overspend on the carpark service which analyses as a shortfall in car parking revenue of £72k as a result of the first half hour being free, £27k due to unforeseen rental costs, £27k of additional MiPermit charges, £43k overspend on recharges to Wychavon DC due to higher shared service costs, £27k additional rent on St John's car park, £13k road surfacing costs and £7k enforcement overspend. This has been offset by a £16k underspend on Multistorey Car Park due to site being unoccupied.

Within Economic Development, there are £46k savings from UKSPF staffing vacancy offset by £20k shared service recharges.

This has been offset by additional income at Parkside of £34k offset by one-off costs for Road Maintenance of £32k and £5k additional bus shelter costs.

### **Regulatory Client £99k overspend**

- 4.4.9 Regulatory Services are forecasting an overspend of £99k due to £48k underachieved income in Taxi Licencing as a result of lower than anticipated licencing volumes and default works of £39k. This is a re-occurring year on year pattern and will be addressed in the 2026/27 budget setting process. There are minor net overspends of £5k

There are also budgeted efficiency savings of £7k which due to the nature of the service will not be met.

### **Corporate Financing £970k underspend**

- 4.4.10 Corporate Financing is showing additional income of £970k due to £427k Grant Income, £187k Investment Interest Income, £281k savings on Interest Payable and £200k of Revenue Grants Received in 24/25 now recognised in 25/26 offset by £125k in underachieved Fees & Charges Income which will be addressed in the budget setting process.

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### **Savings Targets**

4.4.11 The Council had £1.213m of savings targets in 2025/26. The Council has delivered £1.457m of these savings in Q3, therefore the target has been exceeded by £0.244m. A review is currently being undertaken of vacant posts. Savings against target are shown in the table below:

|                                    | <b>2025/26<br/>£m</b> | <b>Adjusted<br/>2025/26<br/>£m</b> | <b>Total<br/>2025/26<br/>£m</b> | <b>Savings<br/>identified as at<br/>Quarter 3 £m</b> |  |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|
| Service Reviews                    | (0.405)               | 0.405                              | 0                               |  | Consolidated corporately   |
| Finance Vacancies                  | (0.100)               | 0.100                              | 0                               |  | Consolidated corporately   |
| Environmental Services Partnership | (0.050)               |                                    | (0.050)                         | 0  | Work ongoing   |
| <b>2023/24 Items</b>               | <b>(0.555)</b>        | <b>0.505</b>                       | <b>(0.050)</b>                  | <b>0</b>   |  |
| In year corporate target           |                       | (0.913)                            | (0.913)                         | (1.231)  | £1.147m from vacancy management and £0.084m from efficiencies. Expected to be met in full. |
| Directorate savings                |                       | (0.250)                            | (0.250)                         | (0.226)  | There is an expected outturn of £226k in savings.  |
| <b>2025/26 Items</b>               | <b>0</b>              | <b>(1.163)</b>                     | <b>(1.163)</b>                  | <b>(1.457)</b>                                       |  |
| <b>Total Savings</b>               | <b>(0.555)</b>        | <b>(0.658)</b>                     | <b>(1.213)</b>                  | <b>(1.457)</b>                                       |  |

### **4.5 Cash Management**

#### Borrowing

- As of the 31st December 2025, there were no short-term borrowings. The Council has no long-term borrowings.

#### Investments

- On 31st December 2025 there were £6m short-term investments held.

### **Capital Monitoring**

4.6 A capital programme of £17.352m was approved in the Budget for 2025/26 in February 2025. This has been fully reviewed as part of the MTFP using actual data as at the end of December 2024. The table below and detail in **Appendix A** set out the Capital Programme schemes that are approved for the MTFP time horizon. At this stage, additional grants of £3.916m had been received, resulting in a total capital budget of

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£21.268m. At Quarter 3, additional grants of £4.524m have been received in year revising the total capital budget for 2025/26 to £21.876m.

4.7 Many of these schemes are already in partial delivery in the 2025/26 financial year. By approving this list, the Council also agreed sums not spent in 2024/25 (and 2023/24 by default if schemes originated earlier than 2024/25 as sums have been carried forward through to the 2024/25 MTFS Report) to be carried forward into 2025/26. The table also splits amounts by funding source, Council or third party.

| Year      | Total Programme   | Revised Total     | Council Funded | Grant Funded |
|-----------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------|
| 2024/5    | <b>6,376,987</b>  | <b>21,267,936</b> | 10,996,671     | 10,271,265   |
| Carry Fwd | <b>14,890,949</b> |                   |                |              |
| 2025/6    | <b>17,351,727</b> |                   | 8,017,369      | 9,334,358    |
| 2026/7    | <b>3,222,841</b>  |                   | 2,422,841      | 800,000      |
| 2027/8    | <b>2,469,459</b>  |                   | 1,669,459      | 800,000      |
| 2028/9    | <b>2,310,531</b>  |                   | 1,510,531      | 800,000      |
| 2029/30   | <b>2,373,749</b>  |                   | 1,573,749      | 800,000      |

4.8 Included in this funding the Council also have the following Grant Funded Schemes which are being delivered in 2025/26:

- The two Levelling Up schemes – Windsor Street (formerly project titled as ‘Old Fire Station’) and Nailers’ Yard (formerly known as ‘Market Hall’) are funding via £14.5m of Levelling Up funding, UKSPF funding, £2,425m of monies held in trust by Birmingham City Council on behalf of the former Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) and up to £2.1m funded by the Council.
- For the Nailers’ Yard Scheme:
  - Construction is progressing on site. The revised completion date is 6th May 2026 (previously 26th January 2026) due to culvert works. The cost of the scheme has increased as a result of this.
  - GJS Dillon have received several enquiries for office space and GF food and beverage unit. They have prepared the service charge schedules for the commercial building. Bruton Knowles are instructed as property management agents for the commercial building. The operator of the Pavilion building will be appointed by April 2026.
- For the Windsor Street Scheme:
  - Brownfield Solutions have completed phase one ground water monitoring on site. Phase two is due to commence in March 2026 which will involve barrier injection works to reduce the levels of PFAS and PFOS further. This will take five weeks to install followed by 12 months of monitoring. By April 2026, the Council will have a clean site that is ready to be redeveloped.
  - Cabinet agreed the delivery option for residential use on the site in November 2025. The regeneration team are undertaking soft market testing with RSLs to gauge interest in the site.

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- Public Realm work is now fully completed, and the underspend is approximately £925k

The final business case for GBS LEP funding was signed off by Birmingham City Council on 20th January 2026. The grant funding agreement for £2.425m will now be put in place from April 2026. Therefore, BDC may have to use short-term borrowing or reserves until the funding is available.

- In December 2025, the Government announced that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) would be extended by 6 months. No additional funding has been provided but the 2025/26 allocation of £917,878, made up of a mix of capital (£286,083) and revenue (£631,795), now needs to be spent by 30/09/2026. The funds are being spent in line with the approved UKSPF Investment Plan with £540,215 defrayed to the end of Q3.

- 4.9 The outturn spend is £13.593m against the revised capital budget totals £21.876m and is detailed in **Appendix A**. It should be noted that as per the budget decision carry forwards of £14.891m will be rolled forward from 2024/25 into 2025/26 to take account of slippage from 2024/25.

### **Earmarked Reserves**

- 4.10 The updated position, taking account of the now submitted draft accounts for 2024/25, are set out in **Appendix B**. As part of the MTFP all reserves were thoroughly reviewed for their requirement and additional reserves set up as per that report. At the 31st December 2025, based on the present MTFP that was approved by Council on the 25 February, the Council holds £11.266 million of Earmarked Reserves and is forecasting to hold £12.245m by 31 March 2026.

### **Ward Budgets**

- 4.11 This report is for the first nine months showing what has been spent to date on Ward budgets. Each Ward Member has £2,000 to spend on Ward Initiatives subject to the rules of the Scheme which were approved by Council. As of the 31<sup>st</sup> December there have been applications from 22 Members approved totalling £23,443.59. There are still 9 Members who have not allocated any funding and overall, £38,556.41 is still to be allocated. This year's funding allocations must be spent by the 31<sup>st</sup> March. Full detail is set out in **Appendix C**.

### **Balance Sheet Monitoring Position**

- 4.12 There has been the request from Audit Committee that the Council include Balance Sheet Monitoring as part of this report.

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4.13 This initial balance sheet reporting is set out as the Q3 Treasury Report which is attached as **Appendix D**. This report sets out the Councils debt and borrowing position for Q3 2025/26. Included in this is how the Council is using its working capital as well as measurement of the Councils Prudential Indicators, this appendix will need to be noted and approved that Council note the position.

### Procurement Pipeline

4.14 The Procurement pipeline is shown in **Appendix E**. The Council’s Procurement Pipeline includes details of contracts expected to be reprocured and new procurement projects expected to be undertaken in the future. Those happening in the next 12 months and over £200k will need to be put on the Forward Plan. The pipeline is refreshed quarterly.

- There are 11 contracts that are over the key decision threshold of £200k
- There are 9 contracts procured by Redditch Borough Council on behalf of Bromsgrove District Council.

### Collection Fund

4.15 The Council acts as collecting authority for itself, other major preceptors and the parishes for Council Tax. The Council also collects business rates on behalf of central government, the County Council and for itself. The Council’s own precept accounts for about 11% of monies collected from Council tax and about 40% of business rates collected after paying government levies, additional tariff to central government and 10% across to Worcestershire County Council.

4.16 The Council aims to collect 98.5% of Council Tax receipts (national average is 95.8%) which equates to a total sum of £87.505 million. Performance against this target for this financial year is shown in the table below:

|           | Target %age<br>(cumulative) | Actual %age<br>(cumulative) | Amount collected<br>(cumulative)<br>£ millions |
|-----------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Quarter 1 | 28.95                       | 28.80                       | 25.605   |
| Quarter 2 | 56.74                       | 56.58                       | 50.261   |
| Quarter 3 | 84.63                       | 84.95                       | 75.495   |
| Quarter 4 | 98.5                        |                             |  |

4.17 Due to the use of ten monthly collections the percentage for each quarter is not a simple 25%. Government reforms are proposing enforcing a move to monthly collections (in twelfths).

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- 4.18 The Council aims to collect 98.0% of business rate receipts (national average is 95.8%) which equates to a total sum of £31.132m. Performance against this target for this financial year is shown in the table below:

|           | Target %age<br>(cumulative) | Actual %age<br>(cumulative) | Amount collected<br>(cumulative)<br>£ millions |
|-----------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Quarter 1 | 26.00                       | 28.34                       | 9.082  |
| Quarter 2 | 55.66                       | 56.82                       | 18.051   |
| Quarter 3 | 80.73                       | 79.65                       | 25.838   |
| Quarter 4 | 98.0                        |                             |  |

### Benefits

- 4.19 Benefit claim statistics are summarised in the table below:

| <b>New claims</b>        | Qtr 1   | Qtr 2   | Qtr 3   |                               | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|---------|-------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Average processing time  | 20 days | 16 days | 11 days | Number processed this quarter | 95    | 83    | 614*  |
| <b>Changes to claims</b> |         |         |         |                               |       |       |       |
| Average processing time  | 10 days | 9 days  | 5 days  | Number processed this quarter | 1215  | 1095  | 1862* |

\* These figures have been temporarily inflated due to rent frequency changes by Bromsgrove District Housing Trust.

- 4.20 Recent changes to benefits has meant that many of the simpler claims have been transferred to DWP, leaving the more complex cases with local authorities – this has impacted on average processing time. DWP expect new claims to be processed within a 30-day timeframe.

### Performance

- 4.21 Corporate Performance Indicators are included as Appendix F to this report.

## 5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 These are contained in the main body of the report.

## 6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 No Legal implications have been identified.

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### 7. Strategic Purpose Implications

#### Relevant Strategic Purpose

7.1 The Strategic purposes are included in the Council's corporate plan and guides the Council's approach to budget making ensuring we focus on the issues and what are most important for the borough and our communities. Our Financial monitoring and strategies are integrated within all of our Strategic Purposes.

#### Climate Change Implications

7.2 The green thread runs through the Council plan. The Financial monitoring report has implications on climate change, and these will be addressed and reviewed when relevant by climate change officers to ensure the correct procedures have been followed to ensure any impacts on climate change are fully understood.

### 8. **Other Implications**

#### Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

8.1 None as a direct result of this report.

#### Operational Implications

8.2 Managers meet with finance officers to consider the current financial position and to ensure actions are in place to mitigate any overspends.

### 9. RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 Items identified in the Finance and Performance monitoring is included in a number of the Corporate Risks. These are listed below. The mitigations to these risks are set out in the Risk Report, of which the Quarter 1 Report is reported to Audit, Governance and Standards Committee in July:

- COR 10 - Decisions made to address financial pressures and implement new projects.
- COR16 – Management of Contracts.
- COR17 – Resolution of the Approved Budget Position.
- COR19 – Adequate Workforce Planning.
- COR20 – Financial Position Rectification.
- COR22 - Delivery of Levelling Up and UK SPF Initiatives
- COR23 – Cost of Living Crisis
- COR25 – The new Environment Bill

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**10. APPENDICES**

- Appendix A – Capital Outturn
- Appendix B – Reserves Position
- Appendix C – Ward Budget Position
- Appendix D – Treasury Management Position
- Appendix E – Procurement Pipeline
- Appendix F – Quarter 3 Corporate Performance Indicators

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

Name: Debra Goodall – Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services  
E Mail: [Debra.Goodall@bromsgroveandredditchbc.gov.uk](mailto:Debra.Goodall@bromsgroveandredditchbc.gov.uk)

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### Appendix A - Capital Outturn

| Capital Project | Description   | 2025/26 Total<br>(Original)<br>£ | 2025/26 Total<br>(Incl C/F's)<br>£ | 25/26 Spend<br>£  |
|-----------------|---|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|
|                 | <b>Large Schemes</b>  |                                  |                                    |                   |
|                 | <b>Levelling Up Fund</b>  |                                  |                                    |                   |
| 200072          | - Market Hall   | 9,228,000                        | 11,555,322                         | 8,879,315         |
| 200073          | - Ex-Fire Station/Windsor Street  | 0                                | -54,247                            | 113,508           |
|                 | <b>UK Shared Prosperity Fund</b>  |                                  |                                    |                   |
| 200086          | (UKSPF Funding BDC 2024/2025)   | 918,000                          | 938,000                            |                   |
| 200082          | CCTV Digital Upgrade (UKSPF)  | 0                                | 33,668                             |                   |
| 200083          | Centres Public Realm Improvement Programme (UKSPF)  |                                  |                                    |                   |
|                 | <b>Other Schemes</b>  |                                  |                                    |                   |
| 200008          | Funding for DFGs  | 1,285,847                        | 1,442,899                          | 838,651           |
| 200009          | Home Repairs Assistance   | 50,000                           | 215,602                            |                   |
| 200010          | Energy Efficiency Installation  | 0                                | 212,190                            |                   |
| 200019          | Fleet Replacemnet new line  | 1,265,000                        | 3,173,318                          | 2,030,833         |
| 200022          | Replacement Parking Machines  | 100,000                          | 94,134                             | 5,000             |
| 200030          | Wheelie Bin Purchase  | 120,000                          | -48,671                            | 1,401,234         |
| 200033          | Bus Shelters  | 18,000                           | 34,345                             |                   |
| 200045          | Greener Homes   | 0                                | -6,125                             |                   |
| 200069          | Cisco Network Update  | 34,877                           | 34,877                             | 32,185            |
| 200070          | Server Replacement  | 18,500                           | 188,049                            | 67,038            |
| 200071          | Laptop Refresh  | 5,000                            | 36,249                             | 20,263            |
| 200075          | Sanders Park  | 0                                | -103,763                           | 24,727            |
| 200102          | Fleet Replacement cost  | 15,000                           | 24,400                             |                   |
| 200103          | Wheely Bin Increases  |                                  | 85,000                             |                   |
| 200076          | Play Area, POS and Sport improvements at Lickey End Recreation Ground in accordance with the S106 Agreement | 0                                | 30,582                             | 104,455           |
| 200079          | Footpaths   | 75,000                           | 32,020                             | 75,811            |
| 200104          | Buildings   | 100,000                          | 262,426                            |                   |
| 200105          | Initial Play Audit Requirements   | 0                                | 451,000                            |                   |
|                 | Updated Play Audit Requirements (Dec 24)  | 166,242                          | 166,242                            |                   |
| 200106          | New ongoing Cyber security budget   | 25,000                           | 50,000                             |                   |
| 200107          | Artrix - Landlord Obligations   | 20,000                           | 22,414                             |                   |
|                 | Wild Flower Machinery   | 0                                | 62,000                             |                   |
|                 | Food Waste Collection - fund for Vechicles and containers   | 902,511                          | 902,511                            |                   |
|                 | Replacement Wheeled Bins  | 2,200,000                        | 2,200,000                          |                   |
|                 | Parkside - Requirement for a firewall   | 9,750                            | 9,750                              |                   |
|                 | Laptops for new Starters  | 25,000                           | 25,000                             |                   |
|                 | Salary Capitalisation   | 750,000                          | 750,000                            |                   |
| 200016          | New Finance Enterprise system   | 20,000                           | 40,000                             |                   |
|                 |   | <b>17,351,727</b>                | <b>21,876,441</b>                  | <b>13,593,020</b> |

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### Appendix B - Earmarked Reserves

|  | Balance at 31/3/25 | Transfers in 2025/26 | Transfers out 2025/26 | Balance at 31/3/26 | Transfers to general fund at 31/03/2026 | Transfers from general fund at 31/03/2026 | Balance at 31/3/26 |
|--|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|---|---|--------------------|
| <b>General Fund Reserve</b>                  | <b>13,381</b>      | (2,216)              | 145                   | <b>11,310</b>      | 5,944                                   | (4,852)                                   | <b>12,402</b>      |
| <b>General Fund Earmarked Reserves:</b>      |                    |                      |                       |                    |   |   |                    |
| Building Control Other                       | 7                  |                      |                       | 7                  | (7)                                     |   | 0                  |
| Building Control Partnerships                | 82                 |                      |                       | 82                 |   |   | 82                 |
| Community Services - Climate Change          | 196                | 65                   |                       | 261                | (20)                                    |   | 241                |
| Local Plan Enquiry                           | 487                |                      |                       | 487                |   |   | 487                |
| Economic Growth Development                  | 911                |                      |                       | 911                |   |   | 911                |
| Election Services                            | 85                 |                      |                       | 85                 |   |   | 85                 |
| Environmental Vehicles                       | 27                 |                      |                       | 27                 |   |   | 27                 |
| Financial Services - Business Rate Retention | 3,476              |                      |                       | 3,476              | (2,476)                                 |   | 1,000              |
| Pension Reserve                              | 200                |                      |                       | 200                |   |   | 200                |
| Finance Contingency                          | 330                | 70                   |                       | 400                |   |   | 400                |
| Finance Revenues Reserve                     | 0                  |                      |                       | 0                  |   |   | 0                  |
| Community Services - CAB                     | 181                |                      |                       | 181                |   |   | 181                |
| Localising Council Tax                       | 107                |                      |                       | 107                |   |   | 107                |
| ELF funding                                  | 138                |                      |                       | 138                |   |   | 138                |
| DWP Grant (Benefits)                         | 128                |                      |                       | 128                |   |   | 128                |
| Universal Credit / Benefits System / Grants  | 164                |                      |                       | 164                | (164)                                   |   | 0                  |
| Housing Schemes                              | 455                |                      | (67)                  | 388                | (388)                                   |   | 0                  |
| DCLG Homeless Grant                          | 267                |                      |                       | 267                |   |   | 267                |
| Housing Welfare Reform                       | 112                |                      |                       | 112                |   |   | 112                |
| Disabled Facilities Grant                    | 30                 |                      |                       | 30                 |   |   | 30                 |
| ICT Refresh Reserve                          | 81                 |                      |                       | 81                 |   |   | 81                 |
| ERP Systems                                  | 116                |                      |                       | 116                |   |   | 116                |
| Leisure/Community Safety                     | 115                |                      |                       | 115                | (55)                                    |   | 60                 |
| Local Neighbourhood Partnerships             | 16                 |                      |                       | 16                 |   |   | 16                 |
| Other  | 81                 |                      |                       | 81                 | (81)                                    |   | 0                  |
| Planning & Regeneration                      | 599                |                      |                       | 599                | (68)                                    |   | 531                |
| Regulatory Services (Partner Share)          | 86                 |                      |                       | 86                 | (4)                                     |   | 82                 |
| Shared Services (Severance Costs)            | 311                |                      |                       | 311                | (311)                                   |   | 0                  |
| Ward Budget Initiative                       | 0                  | 234                  | (78)                  | 156                |   |   | 156                |
| Council Tax Hardship Fund                    | 79                 |                      |                       | 79                 |   |   | 79                 |
| Artrix Holding Trust                         | 29                 |                      |                       | 29                 |   |   | 29                 |
| EPR Funding Allocation                       | 0                  | 1,004                |                       | 1,004              |   |   | 1,004              |
| Covid-19 (General Covid Grant)               | 766                |                      |                       | 766                | (766)                                   |   | 0                  |
| Covid-19 (Collection Fund)                   | 1,604              |                      |                       | 1,604              | (1,604)                                 |   | 0                  |
| Ukrainian Support                            | 0                  | 785                  |                       | 785                |   |   | 785                |
| Social Prescribing                           | 0                  | 57                   |                       | 57                 |   |   | 57                 |
| Shopmobility Donations                       | 0                  | 1                    |                       | 1                  |   |   | 1                  |
|  |                    |                      |                       |                    |   |   |                    |
| <b><u>New Reserves - MTFP 2026</u></b>       |                    |                      |                       |                    |   |   |                    |
| Risk and Resilience Reserve                  |                    |                      |                       |                    |   | 2,500                                     | 2,500              |
| LGR Reserve                                  |                    |                      |                       |                    |   | 1,000                                     | 1,000              |
| Community Investment Fund                    |                    |                      |                       |                    |   | 1,250                                     | 1,250              |
| Particulate Monitoring                       |                    |                      |                       |                    |   | 102                                       | 102                |
|  |                    |                      |                       |                    |   |   |                    |
| <b>Total General Fund</b>                    | <b>11,266</b>      | <b>2,216</b>         | <b>(145)</b>          | <b>13,337</b>      | <b>(5,944)</b>                          | <b>4,852</b>                              | <b>12,245</b>      |

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### Appendix C - Ward Budget Spending Q3 - Funds Allocated to 31 December

#### Councillor Ward Fund Balances – 25/26

| Activity                  | Spend    | Balance<br>£2,000 |
|---------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Cllr Alan Bailes          | 300.00   | 1,700.00          |
| Cllr Ruth Lambert         | 1,978.80 | 21.20             |
| Cllr Sam Ammar            | 2,000.00 | 0                 |
| Cllr Ester Gray           | 1,700.00 | 300.00            |
| Cllr Peter McDonald       | 1,850.00 | 150.00            |
| Cllr Harrison Rone-Clarke | 0        | 2,000.00          |
| Cllr Anita Dale           | 1,500.00 | 500.00            |
| Cllr Webb                 | 2,000.00 | 0                 |
| Cllr Hunter               | 524.79   | 1,476.21          |
| Cllr Rachel Bailes        | 2,000.00 | 0                 |
| Cllr Sue Baxter           | 500.00   | 1,500.00          |
| Cllr J Clarke             | 250      | 1,750.00          |
| Cllr Stephen Colella      | 0        | 2,000.00          |
| Cllr J Elledge            | 0        | 2,000.00          |
| Cllr Derek Forsythe       | 500.00   | 1,500.00          |
| Cllr D Hopkins            | 683.00   | 1,317.00          |
| Cllr Charlie Hotham       | 750.00   | 1,250.00          |
| Cllr Helen Jones          | 0        | 2,000.00          |
| Cllr B Kumar              | 1,900.00 | 100.00            |
| Cllr M Marshall           | 1,000.00 | 1,000.00          |
| Cllr Karen May            | 907.00   | 1,093.00          |
| Cllr Bernard McEldowney   | 1,350.00 | 650.00            |

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| Activity              | Spend            | Balance<br>£2,000 |
|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Cllr D Nicholl        | 250.00           | 1,750.00          |
| Cllr Simon Nock       | 500.00           | 1,500.00          |
| Cllr S Peters         | 500.00           | 1,500.00          |
| Cllr J Robinson       | 0                | 2,000.00          |
| Cllr S Robinson       | 0                | 2,000.00          |
| Cllr J Stanley        | 500.00           | 1,500.00          |
| Cllr Kit Taylor       | 0                | 2,000.00          |
| Cllr Peter Whittaker  | 0                | 2,000.00          |
| Cllr S Evans          | 0                | 2,000.00          |
| <b>Overall Totals</b> | <b>23,443.59</b> | <b>38,556.41</b>  |

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### Appendix D - Q3 Treasury Management Position

**1. SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to set out a quarterly update on the Council's Capital and Treasury Management Strategies, including all prudential indicators.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Cabinet are asked to:**

- **Note the Council's Treasury performance for Q3 of the financial year 25/26.**
- **Note the position in relation to the Council's Prudential indicators.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

**Introduction**

3.1 The Authority has adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice* (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Authority to approve, as a minimum, treasury management semi-annual and annual outturn reports.

3.2 This quarterly report provides an additional update and includes the requirement in the 2021 Code of quarterly reporting of the treasury management prudential indicators. The non-treasury prudential indicators are incorporated in the Authority's normal quarterly revenue report.

**External Context**

3.3 **Economic background:** Early in the first quarter was dominated by US trade tariffs and the negative impact on equity and bond markets. While this was reversed somewhat in the second quarter with equity markets making gains, it also saw a divergence in US and UK government bond yields. UK yields persisted at higher levels as investors demanded higher returns in the form of term premia due to the more uncertain UK fiscal and economic position.

3.4 The latter part of the period included the government's November autumn Budget. Despite much speculation and drip-feeding of potential policies in the weeks leading up to the event, what was ultimately announced was generally deemed more muted than had been anticipated, helping ease investors' fears of significantly higher government borrowing.

3.5 UK consumer price inflation (CPI) inflation was 3.2% in November 2025, down from 3.6% in the previous month and lower than the 3.5% expected, but still well above the Bank of

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England (BoE) target. Core CPI eased to 3.2% from 3.4%, against forecasts of it staying at 3.6%.

- 3.6 According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the UK economy expanded by 0.7% in the first quarter of the calendar year, by 0.3% in Q2 and by 0.1% in Q3. Of the subsequent monthly figures, the ONS estimated that GDP fell by 0.1% in October.
- 3.7 The labour market continued to ease over the period as unemployment rose, vacancies fell and inactivity remained flat. In the three months to October 2025, the unemployment rate rose to 5.1%, higher than the level previously expected by the BoE, while the employment rate slipped to 74.9%.
- 3.8 The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted 5-4 to cut Bank Rate to 3.75% in December 2025, as was expected. Policymakers wanting a cut judged that disinflation was established while those preferring to hold Bank Rate at 4% argued that inflation risks remained sufficiently material to leave it untouched at this stage.
- 3.9 The November BoE Monetary Policy Report projected GDP would expand by a modest 0.2% in calendar Q4 2025. Estimates of inflation in the report were quickly out of date when CPI fell quicker than expected in November. Predictions of a modestly growing economy were echoed by the Office for Budget Responsibility in its Economic and Fiscal Outlook published with the Autumn Statement which revised down its estimate of annual GDP to around 1.5% between 2025 and 2030.
- 3.10 Arlingclose, the authority's treasury adviser, held a central view that Bank Rate would be cut further in 2025/26 with most BoE policymakers remaining more worried about weak GDP growth than higher inflation. In line with Arlingclose's central forecast, Bank Rate was reduced to 3.75% in December. Further cuts are expected in 2026, with the central forecast being that Bank Rate will be eased to around 3.25%.
- 3.11 The US Federal Reserve continued cutting rates, reducing Fed Funds Rate target range by 0.25% at its December meeting to 3.50%-3.75%. The meeting minutes noted that most policymakers judged that further rate cuts would be likely in 2026 if inflation continues to ease, however they were still divided in their assessment of the risks between inflation and unemployment.
- 3.12 The European Central Bank (ECB) held its key interest rates in December for a fourth consecutive meeting, maintaining the deposit rate at 2.0% and the main refinancing rate at 2.15%. The ECB maintained that future policy decisions will remain data-dependent, that inflation is close to its 2% target and that the euro area economy continues to

expand despite a challenging global environment, including heightened geopolitical risks and trade tensions.

- 3.13 **Financial Markets:** After declining sharply early in the period, sentiment in financial markets has been mostly buoyant, but risky assets remained volatile. Bond yields initially declined early in the period, but increasing uncertainty around the UK's economic and fiscal outlook caused medium and longer yields to rise. Yields remained elevated until the third quarter when the potential negative impact of the UK Budget were deemed less than expected and yields eased modestly.
- 3.14 Equity markets gained the previous declines seen in the April sell-off and have continued to rise, even in the face of ongoing uncertainty around the existence of an AI-related 'bubble' and concentration in US and global stock markets.
- 3.15 Over the period, the 10-year UK benchmark gilt yield started at 4.65% and ended at 4.48%. However, these nine months saw significant volatility with the 10-year yield hitting a low of 4.39% and a high of 4.82%. It was a similar picture for the 20-year gilt which started at 5.18% and ended at 5.11% with a low and high of 5.05% and 5.55% respectively. The Sterling Overnight Rate (SONIA) averaged 4.10% over the nine months to 31<sup>st</sup> December.
- 3.16 **Credit review:** Arlingclose maintained its recommended maximum unsecured duration limit on most of the banks on its counterparty list at 6 months. The other banks remain on 100 days.
- 3.17 Earlier in the period, Fitch upgraded NatWest Group and related entities to AA- from A+ and placed Clydesdale Bank's long-term A- rating on Rating Watch Positive. Fitch later upgraded Clydesdale Bank and HSBC, but downgraded Lancashire CC and Close Brothers.
- 3.18 In May, Moody's downgraded the United States sovereign long-term rating to Aa1 and affirmed OP Corporate's rating at Aa3. Moody's later upgraded Transport for London, Allied Irish Banks, Bank of Ireland, Toronto-Dominion Bank, DZ Bank, Nordea and HSBC and downgraded Close Brothers.
- 3.19 S&P upgraded Clydesdale Bank, Allied Irish Banks and Bank of Ireland, and assigned Warrington Council a BBB+ rating.
- 3.20 After spiking in April following the US trade tariff announcements, UK credit default swap (CDS) prices trended down before picking up modestly in October and November. They

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declined again in December and ended the year in line with levels seen in the first half of the year and most of 2024.

- 3.21 European banks' CDS prices have generally been flatter and lower compared to the UK, as have Singaporean and Australian lenders while some Canadian bank CDS prices have remained elevated since the beginning of the period in part due to ongoing trade tensions with the US.
- 3.22 At the end of the period CDS prices for all banks on Arlingclose's counterparty list remained within limits deemed satisfactory for maintaining credit advice at current durations.
- 3.23 Financial market volatility is expected to remain, and CDS levels will be monitored for signs of ongoing credit stress. As ever, the institutions and durations on the Authority's counterparty list recommended by Arlingclose remain under constant review.

**Local Context**

- 3.24 On 31st December 2025, the Authority had £16.89m net borrowing arising from its revenue and capital income and expenditure. The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while balance sheet resources are the underlying resources available for investment. These factors are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Balance Sheet Summary

|                              | <b>31.9.25</b> | <b>31.12.25</b> |
|------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
|                              | <b>Actual</b>  | <b>Actual</b>   |
|                              | <b>£m</b>      | <b>£m</b>       |
| General Fund CFR             | 31.26          | 31.26           |
| <b>Total CFR</b>             | <b>31.26</b>   | <b>31.26</b>    |
| Less: External borrowing**   | 0              | 0               |
| <b>Internal borrowing</b>    | <b>31.26</b>   | <b>31.26</b>    |
| <b>Less: Usable reserves</b> | <b>-11.27</b>  | <b>-11.27</b>   |
| Less: Working capital        | -3.10          | -3.10           |
| <b>Net borrowing</b>         | <b>16.89</b>   | <b>16.89</b>    |

\* Finance leases, PFI liabilities and transferred debt that form part of the Authority's total debt

\*\* shows only loans to which the Authority is committed and excludes optional refinancing

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3.25 The treasury management position at 31<sup>st</sup> December and the change over the quarter is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Treasury Management Summary

|                           | 30.9.25<br>Balance<br>£m | Movement<br>£m | 31.12.25<br>Balance<br>£m | 31.12.25<br>Rate<br>% |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Long-term borrowing       |                          |                |                           |                       |
| Short-term borrowing      | 0                        | 0              | 0                         |                       |
| <b>Total borrowing</b>    | <b>0</b>                 | <b>0</b>       | <b>0</b>                  |                       |
| Short-term investments    |                          |                |                           |                       |
| Cash and cash equivalents | 7.0                      | -1.0           | 6.0                       |                       |
| <b>Total investments</b>  | <b>7.0</b>               | <b>-1.0</b>    | <b>6.0</b>                |                       |
| <b>Net investments</b>    | <b>7.0</b>               | <b>-1.0</b>    | <b>6.0</b>                |                       |

### Borrowing Strategy and Activity

3.26 As outlined in the treasury strategy, the Authority’s chief objective when borrowing has been to strike an appropriately risk balance between securing lower interest costs and achieving cost certainty over the period for which funds are required, with flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Authority’s long-term plans change being a secondary objective. The Authority’s borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio. At the present time short term interest rates are higher than long term interest rates.

3.27 Policy interest rates have risen substantially since 2021 although they have largely plateaued over the last year. Over the last quarter gilt yields have risen slightly overall, having had a number of peaks and troughs. There has been downward pressure from lower inflation figures, but also upward pressure from unexpectantly positive economic data. Data from the US continues to impact global markets including UK gilt yields.

3.28 The PWLB certainty rate for 10-year maturity loans was 5.38% at the beginning of the period and 5.34% at the end. The lowest available 10-year maturity certainty rate was 5.17% and the highest was 5.62%. Rates for 20-year maturity loans ranged from 5.71% to 6.30% during the period, and 50-year maturity loans from 5.46% to 6.14%. The cost of

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short-term borrowing from other local authorities has been similar to Base Rate during the period at 4.0% to 4.5%.

3.29 CIPFA’s 2021 Prudential Code is clear that local authorities must not borrow to invest primarily for financial return and that it is not prudent for local authorities to make any investment or spending decision that will increase the capital financing requirement and so may lead to new borrowing, unless directly and primarily related to the functions of the Authority. PWLB loans are no longer available to local authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield unless these loans are for refinancing purposes. The Authority has no new plans to borrow to invest primarily for financial return.

3.30 **Loans Portfolio:** At 31st December the Authority held no loans, with no movement from 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025 as per table 3 below, as part of its strategy for funding previous and current years’ capital programmes.

Table 3: Borrowing Position

|                                | 31.9.25<br>Balance<br>£m | Net Movement<br>£m | 31.12.25<br>Balance<br>£m |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Public Works Loan Board        |                          |                    |                           |
| Banks (LOBO)                   |                          |                    |                           |
| Banks (fixed term)             |                          |                    |                           |
| Local authorities (long-term)  |                          |                    |                           |
| Local authorities (short-term) | 0                        | 0                  | 0                         |
| <b>Total borrowing</b>         | <b>0</b>                 | <b>0</b>           | <b>0</b>                  |

### Treasury Investment Activity

3.31 The CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes (revised in 2021) defines treasury management investments as investments that arise from the organisation’s cash flows or treasury risk management activity that ultimately represents balances that need to be invested until the cash is required for use in the course of business.

3.32 The Authority does not hold any invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. During the period, the Authority’s

investment balances ranged between £3.5 and £11.5 million due to timing differences between income and expenditure. The investment position is shown in table 4 below.

Table 4: Treasury Investment Position

|   | 30.9.25<br>Balance<br>£m | Net<br>Movement<br>£m | 31.12.25<br>Balance<br>£m | 31.12.25<br>Income<br>Return<br>% | 31.12.25<br>Weighted<br>Average<br>Maturity<br>days |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Banks & building societies (unsecured)        |                          |                       |                           |                                   |   |
| Banks & building societies (secured deposits) |                          |                       |                           |                                   |   |
| Covered bonds (secured)                       |                          |                       |                           |                                   |   |
| Government                                    | 0.0                      | 0.0                   | 0.0                       | 0.0                               | 0.0   |
| Local authorities and other govt entities     |                          |                       |                           |                                   |   |
| Corporate bonds and loans                     |                          |                       |                           |                                   |   |
| Money Market Funds                            | 7.0                      | -1.0                  | 6.0                       | 2.8%                              | 30  |
|   | <b>7.0</b>               | <b>0.0</b>            | <b>6.0</b>                |                                   |   |

3.33 Both the CIPFA Code and government guidance require the Authority to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its treasury investments before seeking the optimum rate of return, or yield. The Authority’s objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income.

3.34 As demonstrated by the liability benchmark in this report, the Authority expects to be a long-term investor and treasury investments therefore include both short-term low risk instruments to manage day-to-day cash flows and longer-term instruments where limited additional risk is accepted in return for higher investment income to support local public services.

3.35 Bank Rate was reduced to 3.75% in December 2025 and remained at that level through the rest of the quarter. Short-term interest rates largely followed this trend, staying close

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to the Bank Rate. The rates on DMADF deposits have been constant at 3.95%.

### Non-Treasury Investments

- 3.36 The definition of investments in the Treasury Management Code now covers all the financial assets of the Authority as well as other non-financial assets which the Authority holds primarily for financial return. Investments that do not meet the definition of treasury management investments (i.e. management of surplus cash) are categorised as either for service purposes (made explicitly to further service objectives) and or for commercial purposes (made primarily for financial return).
- 3.37 Investment Guidance issued by the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and Welsh Government also includes within the definition of investments all such assets held partially or wholly for financial return.

### Treasury Performance

- 3.38 The Authority measures the financial performance of its treasury management activities both in terms of its impact on the revenue budget and its relationship to benchmark interest rates, as shown in table 5 below.

Table 5: Performance

|                                   | Actual<br>£m | Budget<br>£m | Over/<br>under | Actual<br>% | Benchmark<br>% | Over/<br>Under |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Total borrowing</b>            | 0.0          | 0.0          | 0.0            |             |                |                |
| PFI and Finance leases            | 0.0          | 0.0          | 0.0            |             |                |                |
| <b>Total debt</b>                 | 0.0          | 0.0          | 0.0            |             |                |                |
| <b>Total treasury investments</b> | 6.0          | 0.0          | 6.0            |             |                |                |
|                                   |              |              |                | n/a         | n/a            | n/a            |

### MRP Regulations

- 3.39 On 10<sup>th</sup> April 2024 amended legislation and revised statutory guidance were published on Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). The majority of the changes take effect from the 2025/26 financial year, although there is a requirement that for capital loans given on or after 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024 sufficient MRP must be charged so that the outstanding Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) in respect of the loan is no higher than the principal outstanding less the Expected Credit Loss (ECL) charge for that loan.
- 3.40 The regulations also require that local authorities cannot exclude any amount of their CFR from their MRP calculation unless by an exception set out in law. Capital receipts cannot

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be used to directly replace, in whole or part, the prudent charge to revenue for MRP (there are specific exceptions for capital loans and leased assets).

### Compliance

- 3.41 The Director of Resources and Section 151 officer reports that all treasury management activities undertaken during the quarter complied fully with the principles in the Treasury Management Code and the Authority’s approved Treasury Management Strategy. Compliance with specific investment limits is demonstrated in table 6 below.

Table 6: Investment Limits

|   | 2025/26<br>Maximum | 31.12.25<br>Actual | 2025/26<br>Limit | Complied?<br>Yes/No |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Any single organisation, except the UK Government       | £4m each           |                    |                  |                     |
| UK Central Government                                   | Unlimited          |                    |                  |                     |
| Unsecured investments with banks and building societies | £2.5m in total     |                    |                  |                     |
| Loans to unrated corporates                             | £1m in total       |                    |                  |                     |
| Money Market Funds                                      | £20m in total      | 6.0m               |                  | Yes                 |
| Foreign countries                                       | £5m per country    |                    |                  |                     |
| Real Estate Investment Trusts                           | £2.5m in total     |                    |                  |                     |

- 3.42 Compliance with the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary for external debt is demonstrated in table 7 below.

Table 7: Debt and the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary

|                        | Q3<br>2025/26<br>Maximum | 31.12.25<br>Actual | 2025/26<br>Operational<br>Boundary | 2025/26<br>Authorised<br>Limit | Complied?<br>Yes/No |
|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Borrowing              | 0m                       | 0m                 | 55,000                             | 60,000                         | Yes                 |
| PFI and Finance Leases | Nil                      | Nil                | 1,000                              | 1,000                          | Yes                 |
| <b>Total debt</b>      | <b>0m</b>                | <b>0m</b>          | <b>56,000</b>                      | <b>61,000</b>                  |                     |

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- 3.43 Since the operational boundary is a management tool for in-year monitoring it is not significant if the operational boundary is breached on occasions due to variations in cash flow, and this is not counted as a compliance failure

#### **Treasury Management Prudential Indicators**

- 3.44 As required by the 2021 CIPFA Treasury Management Code, the Authority monitors and measures the following treasury management prudential indicators.

#### **Liability Benchmark**

- 3.45 This indicator compares the Authority's actual existing borrowing against a liability benchmark that has been calculated to show the lowest risk level of borrowing. The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term investor in the future, and so shape its strategic focus and decision making. It represents an estimate of the cumulative amount of external borrowing the Council must hold to fund its current capital and revenue plans while keeping treasury investments at the minimum level of £2m required to manage day-to-day cash flow

|                              | <b>31.3.25</b> | <b>31.3.26</b>  | <b>31.3.27</b>  | <b>31.3.28</b>  |
|------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                              | <b>Actual</b>  | <b>Forecast</b> | <b>Forecast</b> | <b>Forecast</b> |
| Loans CFR                    | 31.26          | 34.54           | 36.26           | 38.12           |
| Less: Usable Reserves        | -11.27         | -11.14          | -10.42          | -9.86           |
| Less: Working Capital        | -3.10          | -3.10           | -3.10           | -3.10           |
| <b>Net loans requirement</b> | <b>16.89</b>   | <b>20.30</b>    | <b>22.74</b>    | <b>25.16</b>    |
| Plus: Liquidity allowance    | 0.20           | 0.20            | 0.20            | 0.20            |
| <b>Liability benchmark</b>   | <b>17.09</b>   | <b>20.50</b>    | <b>22.94</b>    | <b>25.36</b>    |
| <b>Existing borrowing</b>    | <b>0</b>       | <b>6.20</b>     | <b>11.10</b>    | <b>12.95</b>    |

- 3.46 Following on from the medium-term forecast above, the long-term liability benchmark assumes capital expenditure funded by borrowing of £12.95m, minimum revenue provision on new capital expenditure based on a 40-year asset life and income, expenditure and reserves all increasing by inflation of 2.0% p.a. This is shown in the chart below together with the maturity profile of the Authority's existing borrowing. Presently borrowing has been delivered through the use of internal resources and the Council has no long-term borrowing.

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### Maturity Structure of Borrowing

3.47 This indicator is set to control the Authority’s exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of all borrowing were:

|                                | Upper Limit | Lower Limit | 31.12.25 Actual | Complied? |
|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Under 12 months                | 50%         | 0%          | 0%              | Yes       |
| 12 months and within 24 months | 50%         | 0%          | 0%              | Yes       |
| 24 months and within 5 years   | 50%         | 0%          | 0%              | Yes       |
| 5 years and within 10 years    | 50%         | 0%          | 0%              | Yes       |
| 10 years and above             | 100%        | 0%          | 0%              | Yes       |

3.48 Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment.

### Long-term Treasury Management Investments

3.49 The purpose of this indicator is to control the Authority’s exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The prudential limits on the long-term treasury management limits are:

|   | 2025/26 | 2026/27 | 2027/28 | No fixed date |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------------|
| Limit on principal invested beyond year end | £0.5m   | £0.5m   | £0.5m   | £0.5m         |
| Actual principal invested beyond year end   | Nil     | Nil     | Nil     | Nil           |
| Complied?                                   | Yes     | Yes     | Yes     | Yes           |

3.50 Long-term investments with no fixed maturity date include strategic pooled funds, real estate investment trusts and directly held equity but exclude money market funds and bank accounts with no fixed maturity date as these are considered short-term.

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**Additional indicators**

**Security:**

- 3.51 The Authority has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to credit risk by monitoring the value-weighted average credit rating of its investment portfolio. This is calculated by applying a score to each investment (AAA=1, AA+=2, etc.) and taking the arithmetic average, weighted by the size of each investment. Unrated investments are assigned a score based on their perceived risk.

|                                 | 2025/26<br>Target | 31.12.25<br>Actual | Complied? |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Portfolio average credit rating | A                 | UK Govt            | Yes       |

**Liquidity:**

- 3.52 The Authority has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to liquidity risk by monitoring the amount of cash available to meet unexpected payments within a rolling three-month period, without additional borrowing.

|  | 31.12.25<br>Actual | 2025/26<br>Target | Complied? |
|--|--------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| Total cash available within 3 months                     | Nil                | Nil               | Yes       |
| Total sum borrowed in past 3 months without prior notice | Nil                | Nil               | Yes       |

**Interest Rate Exposures:**

- 3.53 This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to interest rate risk.

| Interest rate risk indicator   | 2025/26<br>Target | 31.12.25<br>Actual | Complied? |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>rise</u> in interest rates | 500,000           | 0                  | Yes       |
| Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>fall</u> in interest rates | 500,000           | 0                  | Yes       |

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3.54 For context, the changes in interest rates during the quarter were:

|   | <u>30/09/25</u> | <u>31/12/25</u> |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| Bank Rate                                   | 4.00%           | 3.75%           |
| 1-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans  | 4.58%           | 4.37%           |
| 5-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans  | 4.95%           | 4.78%           |
| 10-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans | 5.53%           | 5.34%           |
| 20-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans | 6.14%           | 5.88%           |
| 50-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans | 5.98%           | 5.71%           |

3.55 The impact of a change in interest rates is calculated on the assumption that maturing loans and investment will be replaced at new market rates.

#### **4. IMPLICATIONS**

##### **Legal Implications**

4.1 A number of statutes governing the provision of services covered by this report contain express powers or duties to charge for services. Where an express power to charge does not exist, the Council has the power under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 to charge where the activity is incidental or conducive to or calculated to facilitate the Councils statutory function.

##### **Service / Operational Implications**

4.2 Monitoring is undertaken to ensure that income targets are achieved, with Treasury Management activities taking place on a daily basis.

##### **Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

4.3 The only impact of treasury transactions is in respect of ethical investment linked to the Councils investment counterparties. Presently the Council has a limited counterparty list based on financial risk to the Authority.

#### **5. RISK MANAGEMENT**

5.1 There is always significant risk in relation to treasury transactions, this is why Councils appoint Treasury advisors, which in the case of Bromsgrove is Arlingclose. In addition, there is the requirement in this area to provide an Annual Strategy report containing indicators/limits that must be met, a quarterly update and closure report all of which must be reported to full Council.

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**6. APPENDICES**

None

**7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

MTFP 2025/26 – February 2025 which contains this year's Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy and MRP Policy.

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

Name: Debra Goodall – Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services  
(Deputy S151)

E Mail: [Debra.Goodall@bromsgroveandredditchbc.gov.uk](mailto:Debra.Goodall@bromsgroveandredditchbc.gov.uk)

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### Appendix E - Procurement Pipeline to 31 December 2025

| <b>Title</b>  | <b>Council</b> | <b>Contract Value £</b> |
|---|----------------|-------------------------|
| Fleet Replacement   | Bromsgrove     | 2,846,000               |
| Wheeled Bin Purchase, Delivery and Collection for Recycling of Existing V | Bromsgrove     | 2,200,000               |
| Refuse and Recycling Products   | Bromsgrove     | 700,000                 |
| Replacement Parking Machines  | Bromsgrove     | 517,000                 |
| Microsoft Licenses  | Bromsgrove     | 483,000                 |
| PROVIDE Kennelling of Dogs  | Bromsgrove     | 450,000                 |
| Planning/GIS/Gazeteer   | Bromsgrove     | 400,000                 |
| Supply of HVO Fuel  | Bromsgrove     | 300,000                 |
| Air Quality Analysers   | Bromsgrove     | 250,000                 |
| Data Access Services  | Bromsgrove     | 200,000                 |
| Supply of Fuel  | Bromsgrove     | 820,000                 |
| Software for Lifeline Site  | Joint          | 257,300                 |
| Property Asset Management System  | Joint          | 250,000                 |
| Domestic Food Waste Collection Contract                                   | Joint          | 23,000,000              |
| Hybrid Mail Solution - Sending Letters                                    | Joint          | 2,500,000               |
| Corporate Building Electrical Contract                                    | Joint          | 2,500,000               |
| Food Caddy Purchase and Delivery  | Joint          | 1,300,000               |
| Public Space CCTV Maintenance   | Joint          | 400,000                 |
| Lifeline Call Handling  | Joint          | 200,000                 |
| eFinancials RTU Extension   | Joint          | 208,598                 |

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Agenda Item 11

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## Economic Development

| Measure name  | Type | Q3 24/25   | Q4 24/25    | Q1 25/26 | Q2 25/26  | Q3 25/26         | Target     | Average | Aim | Trend |
|---|------|------------|-------------|----------|-----------|------------------|------------|---------|-----|-------|
| <b>Business grant funding awarded</b>   | £    | £92,420.66 | £175,836.56 | £0.00    | £2,599.39 | <b>£8,804.00</b> | £23,869.80 |         | ⬆️  |       |
| This is the cumulative amount of grant paid for 2025/26. In Q3 grants were paid to an IT company and a manufacturer.  |      |            |             |          |           |                  |            |         |     |       |
| <b>Business grant funding- % spent</b>  | %    | 37%        | 70.30%      | 0%       | 2.20%     | <b>7.40%</b>     | 20%        |         | ⬆️  |       |
| 28% of the total grant pot has been allocated. 2 grants were paid this quarter - an elevate growth grant and an innovation grant. The businesses receiving the grant are an IT company and a manufacturing company. |      |            |             |          |           |                  |            |         |     |       |

## Environment

| Measure name  | Type   | Q3 24/25 | Q4 24/25 | Q1 25/26 | Q2 25/26 | Q3 25/26      | Target | Average | Aim | Trend |
|---|--------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---------------|--------|---------|-----|-------|
| <b>% household waste recycled or composted</b>                    | %      | 41.34    | 36.79    | 53.36    | 44.79%   | <b>44.00%</b> |        | 44%     | ⬆️  |       |
| <b># of flytips</b>   | #      | 484      | 568      | 635      | 668      | <b>524</b>    | 650    |         | ⬇️  |       |
| <b>Average time taken to remove fly-tipping reported</b>          | # days | 5.7      | 4        | 3        | 3        | <b>3</b>      | 5      |         | ⬇️  |       |
| <b># active environmental enforcement cases</b>                   | #      |          |          | 126      | 124      | <b>80</b>     |        |         |     |       |
| <b># environmental enforcement fixed penalty notices</b>          | #      | 0        | 6        | 4        | 15       | <b>22</b>     |        |         |     |       |
| <b>No. of households supported by energy advice service (AoE)</b> | #      | 320      | 240      | 377      | 382      | <b>213</b>    |        |         | ⬆️  |       |

## Housing

| Measure name   | Type | Q3 24/25   | Q4 24/25   | Q1 25/26   | Q2 25/26   | Q3 25/26   | Target | Average | Aim | Trend |
|--|------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------|---------|-----|-------|
| % of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks (or agreed extension)      | %    | 78.5       | 84.6       | 92.8       | 86.6       | 94         | 60%    |         | ⬆️  |       |
| % of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks (or agreed extension)       | %    | 88.5       | 87.2       | 87.7       | 88         | 89         | 70%    |         | ⬆️  |       |
| No. of planning enforcement actions taken- cases opened                                | #    | 29         | 14         | 41         | 24         | 26         |        |         |     |       |
| No. of planning enforcement actions taken- cases closed                                | #    | 31         | 16         | 48         | 63         | 53         |        |         |     |       |
| % of Building Control applications determined within 5 weeks (or 8 weeks on agreement) | %    | 100        | 100        | 100        | 97         | 95         | 85     |         | ⬆️  |       |
| Number of threatened with homelessness preventions                                     | #    | 8          | 8          | 12         | 7          | 12         |        |         |     |       |
| No. of households in temporary accommodation- snapshot                                 | #    | 23         | 33         | 34         | 26         | 37         |        |         | ⬇️  |       |
| Cost of B & B placements   | £    | £50,241.62 | £42,711.24 | £31,132.64 | £46,503.28 | £21,307.00 |        |         | ⬇️  |       |

## Infrastructure

| Measure name             | Type | Q3 24/25 | Q4 24/25 | Q1 25/26 | Q2 25/26 | Q3 25/26 | Target | Average | Aim | Trend |
|--------------------------|------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------|---------|-----|-------|
| % of green flags awarded | %    | 50       | 50       | 50       | 50       | 50       | 75     |         | ⬆️  |       |

Work continues with Green Flag applications for Sanders Park, Overdale and Lickey End.

## Community Safety

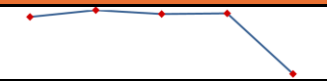
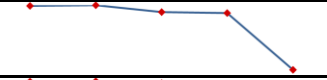

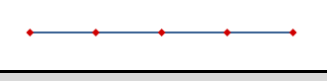
| Measure name                      | Type | Q3 24/25 | Q4 24/25 | Q1 25/26 | Q2 25/26 | Q3 25/26           | Target | Average | Aim | Trend |
|-----------------------------------|------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------------------|--------|---------|-----|-------|
| # crimes recorded (excluding ASB) | #    | 1329     | 1275     | 1396     | 1418     | Data not available |        |         | ⬇️  |       |
| ASB                               | #    | 208      | 238      | 301      | 267      | Data not available |        |         | ⬇️  |       |

\*there is a lag with this data as it is obtained using verified figures from Police.uk and they are not currently available.

## Organisational Priorities

| Measure name   | Type           | Q3 24/25 | Q4 24/25 | Q1 25/26 | Q2 25/26 | Q3 25/26 | Target | Average | Aim | Trend |
|--|----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------|---------|-----|-------|
| % of media enquiries responded to within agreed timescales   | #              | 100      | 100      | 100      | 100      | 100      | 100    |         | ↑   |       |
| Council Tax Collection Rate  | %              | 84.14%   | 98.12%   | 28.80%   | 56.58%   | 85.00%   | 84.46% |         | ↑   |       |
| Business Rates Collection Rate   | %              | 81.06%   | 98.18%   | 28.34%   | 56.82%   | 80.00%   | 80.23% |         | ↑   |       |
| Housing Benefit: Speed of processing new claims  | # days         | 17       | 11.7     | 19.7     | 12       | 11       |        | 20      | ↓   |       |
| Housing Benefit: Speed of processing change of circumstances   | # days         | 9.3      | 4.7      | 9.7      | 8.3      | 11       |        | 8       | ↓   |       |
| Housing Benefit: Local Authority error rate  | %              | 0.31     | 0.26     | 0.48     | 0.16     | 0        | 0.48   |         | ↓   |       |
| # complaints received  | #              | 11       | 17       | 11       | 33       | 25       |        |         |     |       |
| Average working days to respond to complaints  | # days         | 6.6      | 16.6     | 18.2     | 4.7      | 6        | 10     |         |     |       |
| % complaints answered within 10 days   | %              | 72.7     | 68.8     | 75       | 96.8     | 84       | 95%    |         | ↑   |       |
| Performance reduced in the following directorates: Environmental and Housing Property Services (73%) & Planning & Leisure Services (83%) |                |          |          |          |          |          |        |         |     |       |
| Staff turnover rates   | %              | 8.50%    | 9.80%    | 10.20%   | 9.20%    | 12.40%   |        | 13.40%  | ↓   |       |
| Sickness absence- long term  | # days per FTE | 5.03     | 6.4      | 2.88     | 3.19     | 3        |        | 7.8     | ↓   |       |

## SLM Leisure Data

| Measure name  | Type | Q3 24/25 | Q4 24/25 | Q1 25/26 | Q2 25/26 | Q3 25/26      | Target  | Average | Aim | Trend   |
|---|------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---------------|---------|---------|-----|---|
| Total no. of visits including EA cards and non-card holders | #    | 92,060   | 102,739  | 96,589   | 97,569   | Not available | 168,332 |         | ↑   |  |
| No. gym members   | #    | 2,716    | 2,749    | 2,460    | 2,414    | Not available | 3,750   |         | ↑   |  |
| Swimming lessons - children enrolled on scheme              | #    | 1,236    | 1,242    | 1,206    | 1,171    | Not available | 2,400   |         | ↑   |  |
| RIDDOR reportable events                                    | #    | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        | Not available | 0       |         | ↓   |  |

The centre's targets follow the 2017 contract award but have been affected by increased local competition. Although visits fell this quarter, engagement and retention remain strong, with average length of stay 23% above the regional average and attrition consistently low. Ongoing performance reporting and quarterly reviews support joint work between Council Officers and Everyone Active to deliver the best outcomes at Bromsgrove Sport and Leisure Centre.

\*there is a one quarter lag with this data

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