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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

TUESDAY 14TH APRIL 2026

AT 6.00 P.M.

PARKSIDE SUITE - PARKSIDE

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

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence and Named Substitutes**
2. **Declarations of Interest and Whipping Arrangements**

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 Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 24th March 2026 (Pages 7 - 18)**
4. **Heatwaves Preparedness - Yearly Update (Pages 19 - 26)**
5. **Envirocrime (to include Environment Crime update, Environmental Crime Enforcement Policy and Littering from Vehicles) (Pages 27 - 38)**
6. **Local Heritage Action List - Quarterly Update (Pages 39 - 40)**

7. **Permission to Revoke the First Homes Policy** (Pages 41 - 42)
8. **Renters Rights Act 2025** (Pages 43 - 50)
9. **Local Government Re-Organisation (LGR) update** (Pages 51 - 66)
10. **Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2026-26** (Pages 67 - 98)
11. **Finance and Budget Working Group - Update**
12. **Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) Update**

There will be no update for this item as the HOSC meeting is due to take place on 27th April 2026.

13. **Cabinet Work Programme** (Pages 99 - 104)
14. **Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme** (Pages 105 - 108)
15. **Overview and Scrutiny Action Sheet** (Pages 109 - 110)
16. **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.**
17. **To consider, and if considered appropriate, to pass the following resolution to exclude the public from the meeting during the consideration of item(s) of business containing exempt information:-**

RESOLVED: that under Section 100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of scheme 12A to the Act, as amended, the relevant paragraph of that part, in each case, being as set out below and that it is in the public interest to do so:-

Item No	Paragraph
18	3

18. **Levelling-Up Fund Programme (Quarterly Update)** (Pages 111 - 120)

J. Leach
Chief Executive

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

2nd April 2026

**If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact
Sarah Woodfield**

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please do not hesitate to contact the officer named above.**

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Notes:

Although this is a public meeting, there are circumstances when Council might have to move into closed session to consider exempt or confidential information. For agenda items that are exempt, the public are excluded .



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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

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

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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 10th 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 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

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- 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.
- 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

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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.

- 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.

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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 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

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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 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

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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.

- 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, 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.

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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 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

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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 11th February and 4th 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.

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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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Heatwave Preparedness 2026 Update

Overview and Scrutiny Board

Robin Church
April 2026



Agenda Item 4

Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Updates

- Continued participation in the Adverse Weather Planning Group on behalf of Bromsgrove and Redditch via Applied Resilience
Group aim: produce an LRF wide Adverse Weather Plan
- Worcestershire has an Adverse Weather Plan on a county level
- Bromsgrove and Redditch have an adverse weather response framework



Cool Hubs

Locations available for 2026 for use as cool hubs:

- Worcestershire County Council Libraries
- Church of England venues
- Bromsgrove and Redditch Day centres as part of BAU
- Leisure centres where venues are open ordinarily to the public the public can attend

Priority Services Register (PSR)

- Utility companies have a Priority Service Register for customers considered vulnerable
- Vulnerable residents are encouraged to register.

For more information please see this link:

<https://www.thepsr.co.uk>

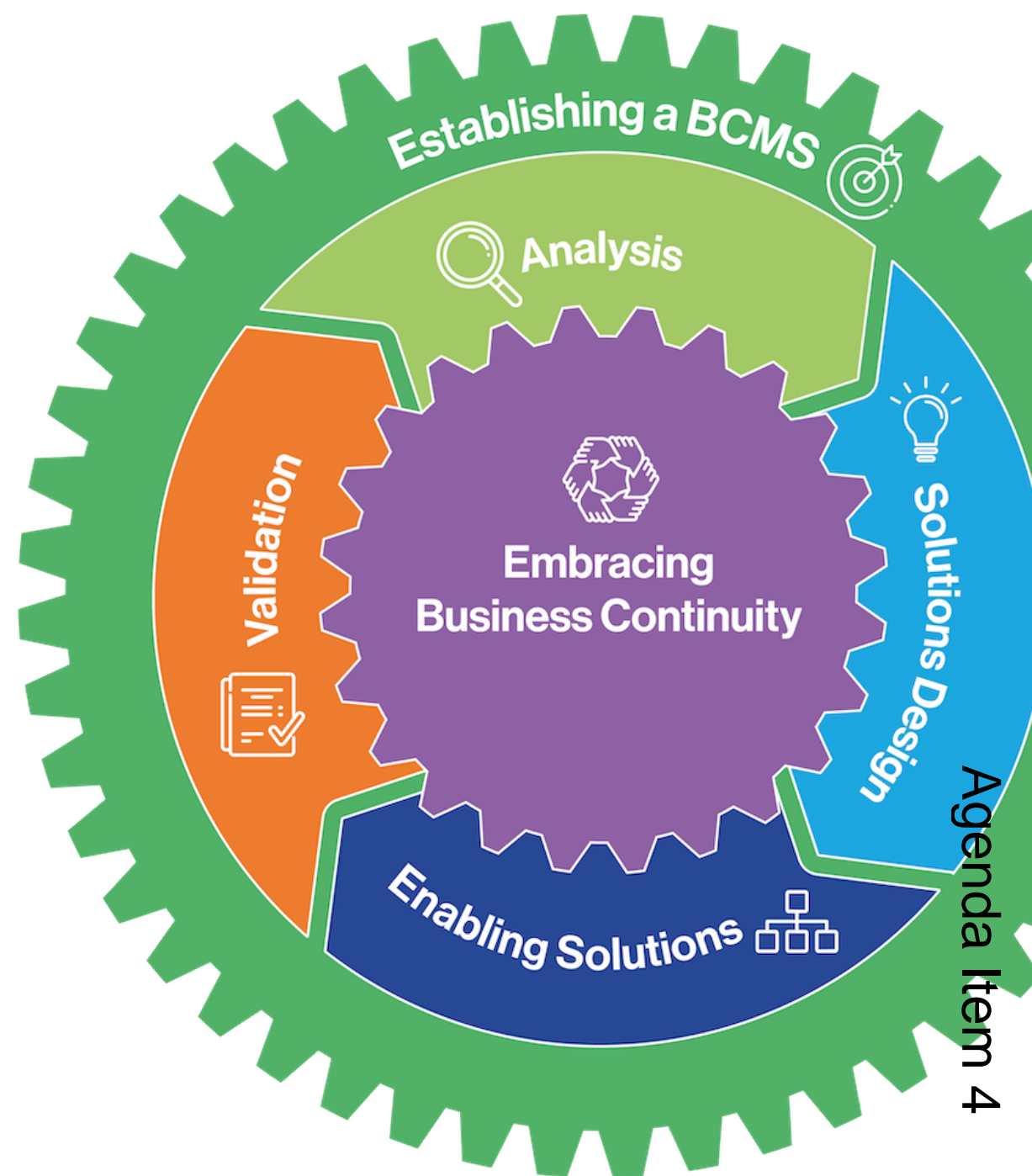
- This can be publicised at any time to residents.
- During a utility outage the various companies will prioritise those known to them, for example during a water outage, deliveries can be made to customers directly.
- Those vulnerable need to sign up **BEFORE** an incident.



Business Continuity

- Each service in within Bromsgrove and Redditch Council has a Business continuity Plan
- Each service plan has been completely updated in late 2025 and 2026
- This will best places Bromsgrove and Redditch council to continue to deliver services where possible

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Council Response

- Bromsgrove and Redditch staff are trained in order to respond to any emergency including adverse weather
- Upon notification of significant adverse weather including heat, all appropriate staff will be made aware
- The communications team will support the lead agencies with Warning and Informing
- Updates will be circulated to members as to multi agency and internal council activity (ordinarily amber and red heat health alerts)

Useful Links:

- Redditch and Bromsgrove have a duty to warn and inform for any incident. Councillors and communications team will be able to share the below:
- Within the adverse weather plan there are links to longstanding summer campaigns shown below Communications teams will be encouraged to promote these during periods of adverse heat.
- UK Gov - [Beat the heat](#). General advice as to how to keep safe during hot weather.
- NHS - [Heat exhaustion and heatstroke](#). Signs and symptoms, what to do if you or someone has these conditions and treatment.
- NHS - [Sunscreen and sun safety](#). Advice specifically for the benefits of using sunscreen and general safety in sunny conditions.
- NHS - [Keeping your baby safe in the sun](#). Specific advice for keeping babies in sunny / hot conditions.
- Royal Life Saving Society - [Cold water shock](#)
- [Safe Summer Swimming from RLSS](#). Advice regarding swimming and the potential for cold water shock.

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Introduction of 3 combined reports:

❖ Environment Crime Update

❖ Environmental Crime Enforcement Policy

❖ Littering from Vehicles

Environmental Crime Update

This paper provides an update for members in relation to enforcement activity on Environmental Crime since WRS took these functions forward on your behalf in June 2024.

There are no decisions/
recommendations

Environmental Crime Update

- WRS has been undertaking elements of environmental crime enforcement since June 2024.
- This includes work on fly tipping, littering, dog fouling and untidy land.
- At this time, the budget was amended to allow for a resource increase from 1 to 1.5 full time equivalent (FTE) posts to cover the Bromsgrove District Council area.
- For any enforcement action to be possible, evidence must be gathered that proves the identity of the perpetrator beyond a reasonable doubt
- Few incidents like fly-tips have the evidence required to do this.

Environmental Crime Update

- The volume of fly tipping incidents in Bromsgrove District are significant and outweigh most other WRS work areas in numbers.
- For example, there are more reported fly-tips in Redditch and Bromsgrove than WRS records nuisance complaints for the whole of Worcestershire
- Our intelligence led approach focuses on outcomes rather than targets.
- WRS intelligence unit identifies hot-spots, which help us to deploy targeted evidence gathering, as well as responding to fly-tips
- Other tactics and legal routes are used to identify offenders, especially businesses advertising waste disposal services on-line. The focus is not solely on residents!

Environmental Crime Update

Key points:

- **Table 3.8 on the next slide, from the report shows the levels of work this creates, and the enforcement activity undertaken.**
- **It highlights the difficulties of finding evidence in tips to link back to perpetrators**
- **WRS team works closely with Env Services team who will clear the tips. If there is no evidence, waste is removed quickly**
- **WRS Intelligence Officers use other investigative techniques to identify businesses who offer services then tip the waste illegally**



Environmental Crime Update

Action taken	2023	2024 (Jan-May)	2024 (Jun-Dec)	2025	2026 (Jan)
Number of fly tips reported	1905	925	1202	2392	146
Number of fly tips investigated	Not recorded	Not recorded	262	471	27
Number of littering offences reported	Not recorded	Not recorded	3	26	2
Number of dog fouling offences reported for investigation	Not recorded	Not recorded	7	10	0
Number of untidy land cases reported	Not recorded	'a couple'	21	12	2
Number of Fixed Penalty Notices for Fly tipping	0	0	0	28	6
Number of Fixed Penalty Notices for Littering	'a few'	0	1	7	1
Number of Fixed Penalty Notices for breach of CPN	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	1

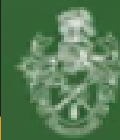
Environmental Crime Enforcement Policy

The Cabinet Committee RECOMMEND that:-

The revised Redditch BC and Bromsgrove DC Enforcement Policy be adopted and replace the current Joint Environmental Enforcement Policy.

Environmental Crime Enforcement Policy

- **Since the 1990's LAs have been required to use enforcement policies to shape responses to alleged offending**
- **They provide a framework for decision making and ensures consistency in actions**
- **Cover all responses from no action and informal advice up to formal action, notices, penalty notices or prosecution**
- **Normally, officers will look to resolve issues informally, working through the response levels to find resolution**
- **However, with serious matters, the council to go straight to formal action**



Environmental Crime Enforcement Policy

- **Policy mirrors current WRS one so is in line with wider process for regulatory law enforcement**
- **Puts environmental crime on same footing a food law, health and safety. etc.**
- **Provides council with defensible position in its decisions**
- **Demonstrates to council solicitors that officers have considered sufficiency of evidence and the public interest, especially for formal action**
- **Ensures formal action is only taken where it is both necessary and proportionate**

Littering from Vehicles

The Cabinet Committee RECOMMEND that:-

- **Civil enforcement of Littering from Vehicles be introduced.**
- **The Civil Enforcement Team be given delegated authority to issue Litter Penalty Charge Notices.**
- **The parking administration team be authorised to deal with appeals and enforcement matters in respect of Litter Penalty Charge Notices.**
- **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: £250; and £125 for prompt payment (within 14 days).**
- **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.**

Littering from Vehicles

- **Currently littering from vehicles is only enforced as a criminal offence,**
- **There is an alternative disposal available in law via civil penalty notice**
Since June 2024 this work has been part of Worcestershire Regulatory Services duties.
- **However, there are difficulties in proving littering offences, particularly around gathering sufficient evidence.**
- **In all but a few cases, having someone present when the incident occurs is the only way to catch this offending.**
- **Hence, proposal to include the Civil Enforcement Team and provide them with authority, so that if they witness littering from vehicles, they can take action.**

Littering from Vehicles

- **At the same time, introducing the penalty notice provides a proportionate response to this low-level offending, avoiding the need to go through the Court process.**
- **Parking administration team will need authorisation to deal with all appeals and enforcement matters in relation to these.**
- **WRS will continue also to issue FPN's to offenders via the criminal route available to them, and other action if required.**

Local Heritage List for Bromsgrove- Overview and Scrutiny Board Update

1st April 2026

- 1 To briefly reiterate, four parishes have adopted lists, draft lists have been prepared for Wythall and Bromsgrove, work continues on the lists for Lickey and Blackwell and Bournheath.
- 2 To remind members the conservation establishment has two positions of which one had been vacant from June 2025 until a new conservation officer started on 16th March. The shortfall, in terms of the Local Heritage List was managed by a conservation consultant whilst recruitment was progressed.
- 3 The part time Principal Conservation Officer continued to exclusively deal with the development management work, although some cases were sent out to external conservation consultants as this volume of work has been increasing.
- 4 This increase in DM work combined with the vacancy has resulted in the Principal Conservation Officer unable to take forward the Local Heritage List in a meaningful way.
- 5 In mid October we recruited a consultant for 2 days a week to work with us exclusively on the Local Heritage List. He has reviewed the work on the Bromsgrove area, the most densely developed area in the District, and looked at the streets which had not been previously considered, including Bromsgrove School. The draft list for Bromsgrove was completed in January 2026 and has been shared with relevant ward members.. The consultant then moved on to work on the list for Bournheath Parish and work on this list is nearing completion. The consultant will remain in post for another six months and will move onto the next parish on completion of the draft of the Bournheath list.
- 6 The new conservation officer will be allocated a parish/area shortly. Hopefully the recruitment of the new conservation officer will allow the Principal Conservation officer to spend more time on the Local Heritage List although in the short term this will depend on the amount of DM work.

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First Homes Briefing Paper for Overview and Scrutiny

A report is being taken to Cabinet to revoke the First Homes Policy as it mandates the requirement for First Homes on all Section 106 sites that have an affordable housing requirement. This can lead to viability issues for registered providers as the shared ownership element which contributes towards the viability of sites is reduced. In additions First Homes can present an affordability issue for households particularly in high value areas such as Hagley.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The Government introduced a new affordable housing product known as First Homes to be provided by all local housing authorities from 28th March 2022 as 25% of the affordable housing on Section 106 sites. First Homes are discounted market sale units with the criteria set by legislation. They:

- a) must be discounted by a minimum of 30% against the open market value;
- b) are sold to a person or persons meeting the First Homes eligibility criteria;
- c) on their first sale, will have a restriction registered on the title at HM Land Registry to ensure this discount (as a percentage of current market value) and certain other restrictions are passed on at each subsequent title transfer; and,
- d) after the discount has been applied, the first sale must be at a price no higher than £250,000 (or £420,000 in Greater London).

1.2 An update to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) guidance 2024 has offered an opportunity to review this approach:

“The requirement to deliver a minimum of 25% of affordable housing as First Homes, as set out in 'Affordable Homes Update' Written Ministerial Statement dated 24 May 2021, no longer applies. Delivery of First Homes can, however, continue where local planning authorities judge that they meet local need. Except where a Mayoral, combined authority or high-level joint plan is being prepared as a framework for strategic policies at the individual local authority level; in which case it may be most appropriate for the local authority plans to provide the requirement figure.”

1.3 The First Homes policy was approved by the Council in September 2022 for Section 106 developer led sites. First Homes are restricted to First Time Buyers and are discounted by 30%. The Council included a local connection criterion to ensure that local households were prioritised. However, the increase in new build house prices has meant that first time buyers are less likely to be able to afford this product. Whereas shared ownership properties

sold at say at a 40% or 50% share, are more likely to meet local housing needs.

- 1.4 In addition, conversations with Registered Providers have indicated that the reduction in shared ownership properties in favour of First Homes compromises the viability of section 106 sites as the proportion of shared ownership to social/affordable rent is key to viability. This means that where the developer is also required to provide and sell First Home, Registered Providers are less able to afford to purchase the remaining affordable housing provided on site under Section 106 agreements.
- 1.5 One of the two sites with First Homes requirements in the Section 106 has been built out. Two of the three First Homes properties that were made available through the Section 106 agreement, were sold to applicants without a local connection to Bromsgrove. Subject to the policy being revoked, any section 106's required on future sites will require shared ownership or low cost discounted sale instead of First Homes.
- 1.6 The processing of First Homes places a greater burden on local authorities in terms of processing and agreeing applications from prospective purchasers. By removing the requirement for First Homes, this administrative burden will be removed.

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The Council's charge for administering a variation to the section 106 at £508.00 will be offset by the developer not having the First Homes properties valued by a RICS valuer. The developer will be able to continue to provide them should they so wish but future Section 106's will not include a requirement for First Homes to be provided.
- 2.2 The revocation of the policy will support those on lower incomes to access affordable home ownership and will support the viability of section 106 sites for Registered Providers.

It is recommended that Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that:-

- 1) the Council's First Homes Policy be revoked with immediate effect;
- 2) and that any development sites that currently include an element of First Homes provision be offered an opportunity to revert to shared ownership and other forms of affordable home ownership.

3. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background Papers

Bromsgrove First Homes Policy [Bromsgrove First Homes Policy](#)

Renters Rights Act 2025

Overview and Scrutiny
Katie Sharp-Fisher
Private Sector Housing Manager
April 2026

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Bromsgrove
District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk



Renters Rights Act 2025 - Overview

- Renters Rights Act 2025 received Royal Assent: 27th October 2025 and is considered the biggest reform in Private Rented Sector in a generation.
- The Act builds on the Housing Act 2004 and expands the Local Authorities enforcement duty from property conditions to tenancy regulation and consumer protections.
- The ONS [2021] estimates that there are 4,395 private rented properties in Bromsgrove, however this could be significantly more due to under reporting.

Renters Rights Act 2025

Implemented in 3 Phases: -

Phase 1 – 1st May 2026

- Abolition of Section 21
- Expanded possession grounds
- Introduction of Assured Tenancies
- Introduction of rent controls
- Anti-discrimination provision
- Rights for tenants to request a pet
- Enhanced investigatory powers for Local Authorities

Phase 2 (late 2027+)

- National Private Rented Sector Database (PRS)
- Landlord Ombudsman

Renters Rights Act 2025

Phase 3 – 2035-2037

- Introduction of the Decent Homes Standard in the private sector for the first time
- Proposals on Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards being a C rated or above
- Extend Awaabs law into the Private Rented Sector

All of these phases will have a direct operational impact on the authority particularly the Private Sector Housing Team and Housing Options.

The report highlights several key operational pressures: -

1. Increased Service Demand
2. Potential rise in homelessness presentations
3. Potential reductions in PRS stock if landlords choose to exit the market.
4. New areas of work for the PRS team

Operational Capacity

Operational

- The team has already been expanded from 3 FTE to 5 FTE, and significant training and upskilling is underway to prepare officers for their new duties.
- Funding has been secured to implement a regulatory case management system to meet new statutory reporting duties.
- The Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy will be updated and brought to a future meeting.

Financial Capacity

Financial Implications

The report explains that Bromsgrove has been allocated: -

- £16,575.66 in New Burdens funding for implementation
- £50,497.00 across 2026–2029 through the Homelessness, Rough Sleeping & Domestic Abuse Grant
- Expected costs to include IT upgrades, legal support and potential increase in TA.
- There is the potential that future income from civil penalties and a share of landlord registration fees however we await further government guidance on these elements.

Request to Resolve/Recommend

- The Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that
- The update provided in the report in respect of the Renters Rights Act 2025 be noted.
- The new burdens funding of £16,575.66 be noted.
- The Cabinet is asked to **RECOMMEND** that:-
 - 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

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Agenda Item 8

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Overview and Scrutiny

14th of April

2026

Report title

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Sue Baxter
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Hannah Corredor, Assistant Director Corporate Services and Transformation
Report Author	Job Title: as above. Contact email: Hannah.corredor@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Wards Affected	All
Ward consulted	Councillor(s) N/a
Relevant Council Priority	Local Government Reorganisation
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	
This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph(s) of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended	

1. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Overview and Scrutiny RESOLVE that:-

- 1) Note the updates regarding the refreshed guidance from MHCLG.
- 2) Note the new workstreams established by the LGR Preparations Board – Comms and a Data Hub.

2. **BACKGROUND**

Stage one: Inviting unitary proposals	Received November 2024
Stage two: Submission of formal unitary proposals.	Completed November 2025
➤ Stage three: Statutory consultation (MHCLG)	5 th of February to 26 th of March 2026. Consultation is now closed. We are advised by MHCLG to expect, 'meetings during May to begin discussions on the Structural Changes Order, and possible in person visits to your areas over the Spring'. We have not yet been contacted to arrange these.
Stage four: Decision to implement a proposal	Expected before summer recess, July 2026

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Stage five: Making secondary legislation – the Structural Changes Order (SCO).	Begins later in 2026 and ends with shadow elections in May 2027.
Stage six: Transition period	From decision to vesting day April 2028.
Stage seven: New unitary authority goes live	April 2028.

- 2.1 Attached in the appendix is a guidance document shared by MHCLG to help Councils understand the legislative framework that is in place to take us through to Vesting Day, once a decision is made to implement Local Government Reorganisation. It explains the respective roles and responsibilities of predecessor councils, implementation bodies (such as Joint Committees or Implementation Executives), Shadow Councils, and the Implementation Team during the period from the making of a Structural Changes Order (SCO) through to vesting day. We are advised to expect a draft by September 2026, and that it will take several months to formally pass through parliament.

- 2.2 The guidance sets out the two statutory transition periods, describes how implementation bodies are established and dissolved, and clarifies that predecessor councils retain their full legal powers and responsibilities for service delivery until vesting day. It also outlines the limited, preparatory nature of Joint Committees and Implementation Executives, emphasising that they support planning and coordination but take no decisions on behalf of the future unitary authority.

- 2.3 In addition, the guidance explains the purpose and role of the Implementation Team, made up of officers from predecessor councils, which operates throughout both transition periods to support the transfer of functions, staff, assets and information. The document is intended to provide clarity, consistency and good practice across LGR areas, while recognising that detailed arrangements will be set out locally through each area’s Structural Changes Order. We reviewed this document at our internal LGR Preparations Board and at our system-wide Chief Executives LGR Preparations Board and will base our implementation planning over the coming months on the structures described.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- 2.4 On 26 March 2026, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) issued an update to Chief Executives confirming Tranche 2 decisions on Local Government Reorganisation proposals. Decisions were confirmed for Essex, Hampshire, Norfolk and Suffolk,

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with further detail published on [GOV.UK for each area](#). The decisions confirm the Government's intention to proceed with reorganisation on the timeline described, even in the case of Sussex, with no delays to the assigned Vesting Day dates.

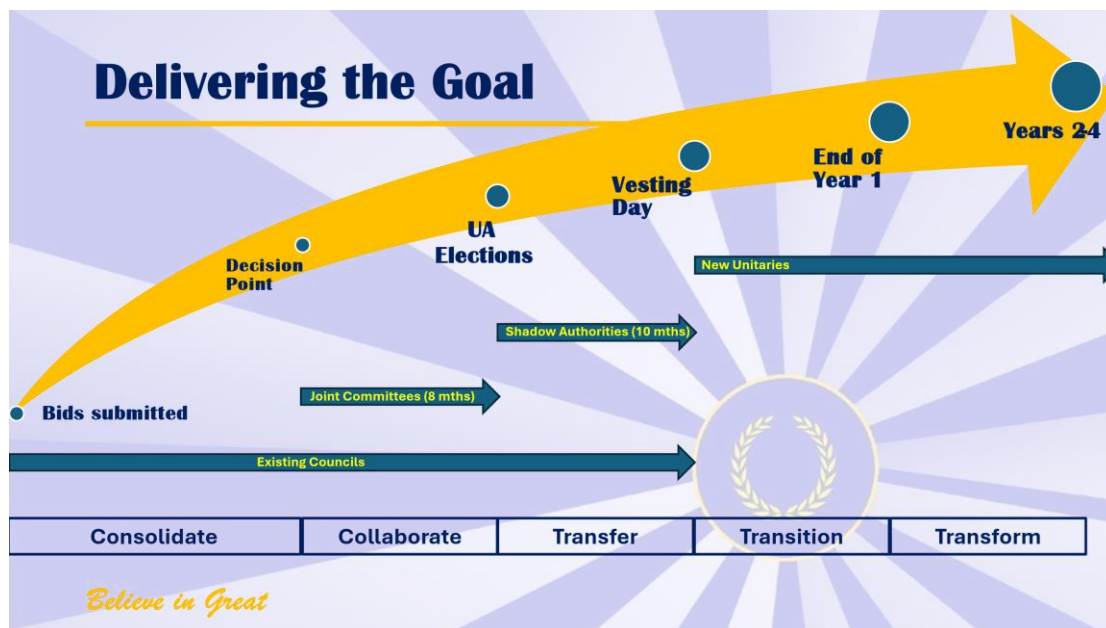
- 2.5 The decisions reflect a strong emphasis on smaller, locally-focused unitary councils. In most cases, the approved proposals involve district-led models of manageable scale, rather than very large single unitaries. The decisions also demonstrate a degree of flexibility in how the Government is applying earlier population thresholds when considering what constitutes a sustainable unitary authority. This provides further context that the Transforming Worcestershire proposal aligns with the range and scale of unitary models being taken forward nationally.
 - 2.6 The announcement also confirmed that decisions on Surrey and Sussex have been delayed, with MHCLG indicating that further consideration is required before determinations are made. This reinforces that decisions are being taken on a case-by-case basis, reflecting local complexity and the quality of proposals submitted. The Local Councils Network (LCN, previously known as the District Councils' Network - DCN) publicly welcomed the direction of travel emerging from the Tranche 2 decisions, stating: 'Our long-held view is that the best way to ensure LGR is successful is to create smaller unitary councils that are genuinely local. We are pleased that almost all the new unitary councils will have a population lower than 500k, as we have long campaigned for.'
 - 2.7 Alongside the decisions, MHCLG also confirmed further detail on the allocation of £63 million of Local Government Reorganisation transition funding. The Government has confirmed that it will provide at least £900,000 for each new unitary authority being established to support effective transition, service continuity and governance arrangements. Funding will be distributed 'fairly and as quickly as possible' through established channels.
 - 2.8 For Bromsgrove District Council, this provides early confirmation that transition funding will be available once decisions are made for Worcestershire. While funding will be paid to the future unitary authority, it will support county-wide transition activity during the shadow and implementation phases, including work currently being undertaken by district councils as part of LGR preparations.
3. **OPERATIONAL ISSUES**

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- 3.1 On 26 March 2026, a meeting of Chief Executives, Section 151 Officers, Monitoring Officers and senior officers from the Worcestershire councils was held in Pershore to review progress on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) preparations and to agree next steps for the programme. The meeting formed part of the ongoing county-wide arrangements to ensure effective coordination and readiness ahead of Government decisions. The agenda was 1) enhanced governance arrangements guidance from MHCLG Senior Sector Advisor (see appendix 1), 2) learning from Cumbria who have recently completed LGR and 3) adding two new workstreams.
- 3.2 A advice from MHCLG emphasised the importance of strong programme management, early focus on enabling services (HR, IT, Legal, Finance), a focus on *'safe and legal' transfer and transition, not transformation*, effective communication with staff, and the early establishment of robust arrangements for managing and assuring data.



- 3.3 The role of Scrutiny Committees was discussed, as well as advice given around the use of Internal Audit. Guidance from both MHCLG and Cumbria was to enable Scrutiny to hold officers to account on the processes in place to safely implement LGR, particularly 'Safe and Legal' by 1st of April 2028. We also learned that on the appointment of the Shadow Authority in May 2027, a Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee is likely to also be put in place for the new authority. The group discussed how we can ensure each O&S Committee across the County is provided with shared information and opportunity. In addition, Internal Audit have begun to consider what audits they will recommend

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over the next two years to provide members with additional insight and assurance. MHCLG will also impose a formal assurance process with regular meetings.

3.4 **Communications:** The meeting agreed the creation of a separate Communications workstream within the LGR programme. This reflects recognition that communications activity is cross-cutting and underpins the success of all other workstreams. Communication was identified as requiring dedicated focus due to:

- The important of ensuring consistent and coordinated messaging across all councils;
- close interdependencies with HR, IT and service planning, particularly in relation to workforce engagement and change management;
- the importance of maintaining staff confidence, morale and wellbeing throughout the transition period;
- and the reputational risks associated with uncertainty, misinformation or inconsistent communication during LGR.

Establishing this as a standalone workstream is intended to reduce risk and ensure communications activity is proactive rather than reactive.

3.5 **Data Hub Workstream:** A Data Hub is a shared, secure way of bringing together key information from all councils in one place so that there is a single, trusted version of the data to support planning, decision-making and transition activity. This includes information on areas such as workforce, finances, contracts, assets, services and performance. It ensures efficiency and prioritisation, with a basic principle of COUNT: 'Collect Once Use Numerous Times'. Establishing a dedicated Data Hub workstream provides clear accountability, allows early baselining of services and resources, and reduces the risk of inconsistent or poor-quality data being used at later stages of the programme. This approach reflects best practice from recent LGR programmes and supports effective governance and compliance with data protection requirements.

3.6 Experience from Cumbria highlighted that the Data Hub is not primarily a technical ICT system, but a strategic function focused on:

- data quality, assurance and version control;
- common standards for data collection and analysis;
- data sharing agreements and information governance;
- providing programme-wide intelligence to support options appraisal and service design; and
- enabling informed, evidence-based decisions by leaders and members.

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- 3.7 It was agreed that this work is qualitatively different from the ICT workstream, which is already managing significant and time-critical activity such as infrastructure, cyber security, applications and systems alignment. Combining the two would risk overloading ICT capacity and delaying progress in both areas. A Data Hub workstream was approved for development and further updates will be brought in due course.
- 3.8 Other key lessons were taken away from the presentations, with a clear message to prioritise workplans, cull non-critical activity, focus on safe transition and prepare for extremely in depth, analytical work, particularly in the case of disaggregation. In the Cumbria example, service areas were disaggregated after Vesting Day due implementation complexities and capacity constraints – which agreements had to be come to early on in implementation planning. Elsewhere, a common decision is to split the ‘back-office’ and ‘front-office’ ICT requirements, with the focus on the resident front-facing elements such as the website, email and customer contact systems, with back-office left to post-Vesting. One example from Cumbria included the disaggregation of the winter maintenance budget, which required mapping of the entire length of every road in the county and its height above sea level, to agree the split of the gritting budget between the two new authorities. This illustrates the level of technical detail required, rather than indicating any specific implications for Worcestershire.
- 3.9 Finally, at the last O&S Committee, members agreed to stand-up a task group for their LGR activities. It has been agreed that the Terms of Reference for this group will be developed by the Chair and Portfolio Holder, for agreement with the group, with a meeting scheduled on the 13th of April to begin drafting of this ToR.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Financial implications will continue to arise as LGR progresses; however, these implications may relate to Bromsgrove District or the future Unitary, dependent on the time of arising. Please note the update from the Government regarding the finding for newly established unitaries.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Legal implications will continue to arise as LGR progresses. This committee will be updated as and when necessary.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

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Local Government Reorganisation

6.1 This is the subject of this report.

Relevant Council Priority

6.2 N/a

Climate Change Implications

6.3 N/a

Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.4 Significant equalities implications will arise from the redesign and redistribution of services across the County. Reports will be brought here once planning progresses to a stage where these can be considered.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 LGR is listed as a Corporate Risk in the Corporate Risk Register, owned by the Chief Executive Officer and lead by the Assistant Director of Corporate Services and Transformation. A copy of the LGR risk as reported on the Corporate Risk Register is included in the appendix below.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

- PDF: 'Implementation bodies and predecessor councils during local government reorganisation'
- Extract from Corporate Risk register below:

Reference	Risk Title	Risk Owner	Risk Lead	Status	Inherent	Residual
COR14	Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) prevents the Council from delivering business as usual and work	John Leach	Hannah Corredor	Open	Red	Amber

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Reference	Risk Title	Risk Owner	Risk Lead	Status	Inherent	Residual
	associated with LGR is also ineffective					

Mitigating Action

1. An LGR Preparations Board has been established internally, attended alternate meetings by portfolio lead members.
2. The LGR Board has supported regular updates to Members and staff during the development of the proposal stage. This work is to continue.
3. An Assistant Director for Corporate Services and Transformation has been appointed with responsibilities relating to LGR transition. The postholder commenced work on 24th November 2025.
4. Through the LGR Board and cross system LGR Preparations Board of Chief Executives, working with the other Councils, deliver against and an action plan that covers the framework of agreed activity in the “Transforming Worcestershire” proposal that was submitted to Government on 27th November (pages 164 – 173).
5. A Programme Management Office (PMO) across all seven councils has been agreed by Chief Executives, Monitoring Officers and Section 151 Officers. This will report to the Leaders Board.
 - The Programme Management Board has developed the following workstreams that are undertaking a “housekeeping exercise” to ensure all data is up to date in readiness for the outcome of the proposal assessment stage by Government (due before summer recess 2026): Finance, HR, ICT, Legal, Services, Data Hub, Communications.
6. The work of the PMO and the above workstreams are also aligning actions to LGA/MHCLG guidance issued to support the LGR prepare stage (November 2025 – June 2026).
7. Assistant Directors to ensure that Service Business Plans cover key priority areas for work activity (for example delivery of matters such as the Local Plan) classed also as business as usual whilst undertaking any LGR related work. The preparations are to include consideration in particular relating to HR (e.g. capacity, resilience and recruitment) and finance matters including bids for capacity. Each service business plan has to have an LGR specific section that links in to ensure BAU activities are safeguarded as much a possible and relates to each services risk register.
8. Assistant Directors provide quarterly assurance returns to SLT regarding delivery against the priorities for the service, finance, risk, capacity etc.
9. All decision reports through the councils governance arrangements include a section on the impact of LGR regarding any proposals so that decision makers are sighted on the implications of their decision.
10. Updates on LGR are provided to the LGR Portfolio Holder, Cabinet/Executive, Council and Scrutiny as appropriate.

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9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Baxter	01/04
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Hannah Corredor	13/03
Financial Services	Julie Lorraine	01/04
Legal Services	Claire Felton	01/04
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	Hannah Corredor	01/04
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	N/a	

Implementation bodies and predecessor councils during local government reorganisation

Introduction

1. This explanatory note is for all councils who were invited on 5 February 2025 to submit proposals for unitary local government under section 2 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the 2007 Act). Although operating on different timescales, this applies to all councils going through reorganisation.
2. This note describes the principles and expectations, focussing on the roles of the predecessor councils, implementation bodies and Implementation Teams during transition. The specific arrangements for each reorganisation will be set out in the Structural Changes Order (SCO) for each reorganisation. We expect to provide further guidance in due course, including on shadow councils.

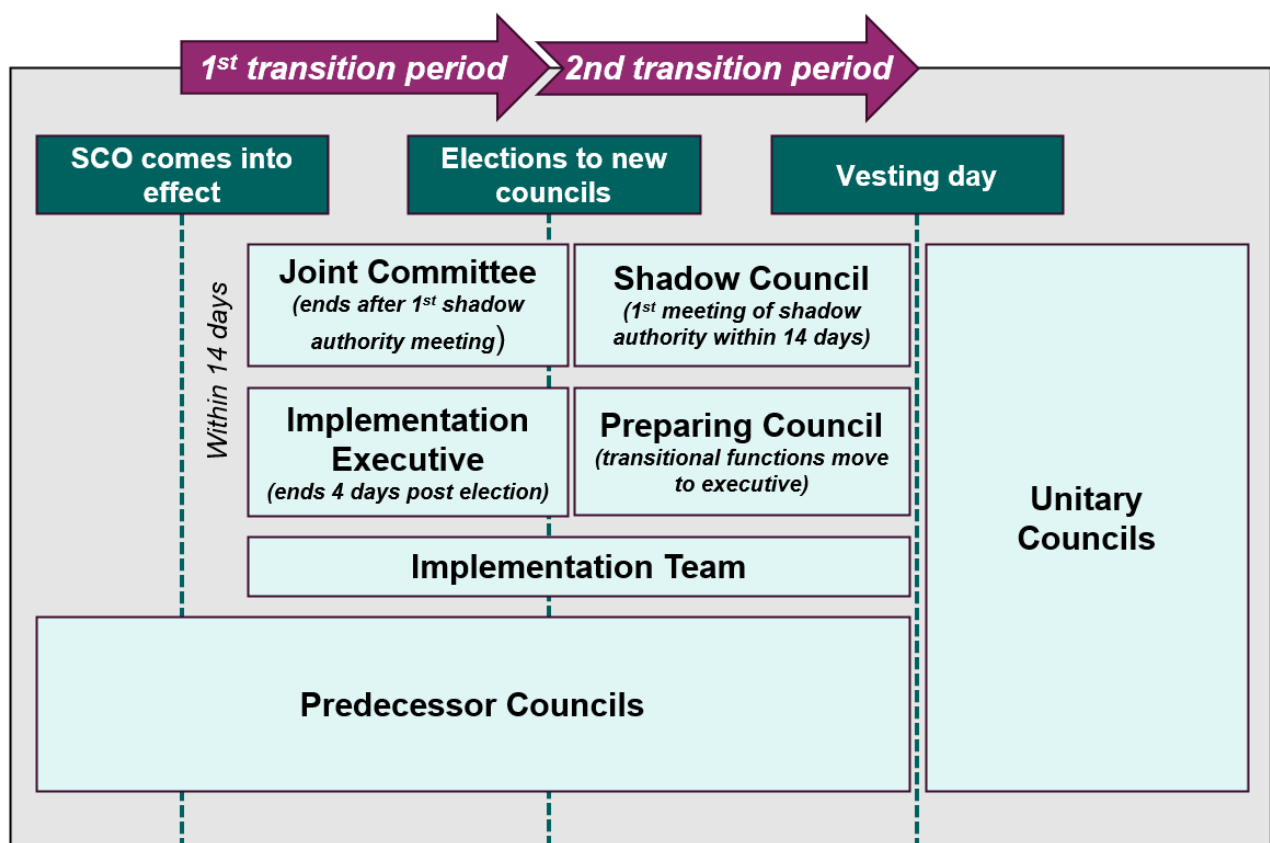
Transition periods and implementation bodies

3. We expect that for each reorganisation there will be two statutory periods of transition. The first transition period runs from when the SCO comes into force, up to the inaugural elections to the new council. The second transition period runs from a defined date following the inaugural elections, up to vesting day – referred to as the reorganisation date in the SCO. This is in line with the most recent reorganisations in North Yorkshire, Cumbria and Somerset and the approach we expect to take in this round, noting that other approaches have been used in the past.
4. The two transition periods, with different types of implementation body, will be established by the SCO, depending on the governance arrangements agreed for an area:
 - a. During the **first transition period** before elections to the new councils, there needs to be an implementation body representative of the existing councils in the area. Accordingly, the SCO that establishes the new councils will require the relevant existing councils to form an implementation body. For the first transition period, these bodies are mostly constituted as Joint Committees (one Joint Committee for each new unitary council). An Implementation Executive may instead be used if an existing council will in future assume the responsibilities, functions and staff of other councils that will cease to exist – referred to as a preparing council. The preparing council model is most appropriate (though not required) where the geography of the new unitary council matches that of one of the existing councils. The functions of a Joint Committee and an Implementation Executive are largely the same and Joint Committees would be required for many of the proposals submitted, were these to be implemented. Therefore, this note refers primarily to Joint Committees. The relevant SCO will specify the particular responsibilities of each Joint Committee.
 - b. For the **second transition period**, the Joint Committee will be dissolved and replaced by a new, different implementation body made up of the members elected in the inaugural elections to the new unitary council. This body is called a Shadow

Council, until vesting day, when it assumes all local government functions, full local authority powers and becomes the only council for the area. The councillors elected in the shadow period remain members of the new Council. The relevant SCO will specify the functions, powers and responsibilities of the Shadow Council. Where a preparing council model is in place, the Implementation Executive will be dissolved and replaced by the new executive of the preparing council following the inaugural elections.

- The transition periods are shown on the diagram below, with the Joint Committee or Implementation Executive operating for a defined period and with a specific remit. The predecessor councils continue to operate and have legal competence, independence and authority throughout both periods of transition. They deliver business-as-usual services and prepare for the transfer to new unitary councils. The Implementation Team, to be formed of officers from the predecessor councils, also operates throughout both periods of transition, to support the delivery of the new unitary councils up until vesting day. The relevant SCO will provide the detailed arrangements specific to each area, which may vary dependent on local circumstances.

Diagram: Transition periods and implementation bodies



The role and operation of a Joint Committee

- Joint Committees have preparatory functions, with one Joint Committee formed for each new unitary council (for ease, this is not shown in the diagram above). Their focus is to prepare the ground for matters that need to be in place on day one of the Shadow Councils. As such, they are not responsible for taking any decision on behalf of the new

councils and should act in a manner that does not fetter any decision the new shadow councils may wish to take.

7. The exact functions for the Joint Committee to undertake will be set out in the SCO and are expected to be limited to:
 - a. Formulating proposals for a code of conduct for the new unitary council
 - b. Creating a team of officers – known as the Implementation Team (see section below)
 - c. Preparing an implementation plan at a strategic level for the new authorities
8. In practice, the Implementation Team will undertake the preparations, with direction from the Joint Committee in the first transition period and decisions ultimately made by the Shadow Council in the second transition period.
9. The implementation plan should identify the key activities and timescales for their completion to facilitate each council's discharge of functions once the new arrangements are in place; and that budget provision for the delivery of the implementation plan is sufficient for the purpose. The Joint Committee needs to gather and later communicate sufficient financial information to inform early budget-setting decisions by the Shadow Council. The Joint Committees are required to have regard to the selected proposal and structure set out in the SCO in developing those plans. Implementation plans may be substantially amended by the Shadow Council once in place. The Cabinet of the Shadow Council (often referred to as the Shadow Executive) replaces the Joint Committee as the implementation body for the second transitional period and is responsible for reviewing and revising the implementation plan following the inaugural election.
10. As the Joint Committees are not responsible for implementation and their role is limited to preparing proposals and facilitating transitional arrangements, they **do not**:
 - a. Carry out recruitment or appointment to senior posts
 - b. Design or implement the operating model of the new organisation
 - c. Consider, set or develop budgets for the new council
 - d. Make decisions about service delivery or policy
11. However, they should be concerned that adequate arrangements are proposed for the new unitary council to undertake these activities effectively and efficiently. For example, they should be assured that the implementation plan they devise will allow each new unitary council to build and agree a budget for its first operating year (as a minimum) in accordance with the statutory timescales and requirements. While responsibility for setting the new council's budget lies with the shadow council, the Joint Committee is responsible for ensuring sufficient implementation budgets are in place in predecessor councils to enable the transition.
12. They should also prepare job profiles and key accountabilities for the Head of Paid Service, Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer that must be designated on an interim basis at the first meeting of the Shadow Council. The SCO will set out a requirement to appoint to these roles on a substantive basis by a certain date, as set out in the workforce guidance. They can also ensure that the necessary proposals are prepared for the new council to be able to agree a leader and cabinet governance

model, code of conduct and key interim appointments at its first meeting as required by the SCO as well as other key elements such as member allowances and a constitution as soon as possible. If these important preparations are not made, this could create an excessive workload and therefore limit the progress of the Shadow Council.

13. Typically, the Joint Committee must be established within 14 days of the SCO coming into effect. It is dissolved a short time after inaugural elections take place and after the first meeting of the Shadow Councils. In practice, this means that formally Joint Committees may only exist for a short period, sometimes only a few weeks dependent on the timing of the SCO coming into effect and elections to new councils.
14. Membership, Chair and voting arrangements for each Joint Committee will be set out in the SCO and will vary between areas. For example, if the Chair is not specified in the SCO, it is expected that the Chair will be selected via a vote during the first meeting of the Joint Committee. Membership is made up of specific numbers of councillor nominees from each of the predecessor councils in the area of the new unitary council to ensure sufficient representation.
15. Joint Committees have the authority to set their own rules of procedure. This can involve setting expectations such as:
 - a. Giving consideration to all options available and having regard to due consultation
 - b. Giving consideration to advice from officers
 - c. Having clarity of aims and desired outcomes
 - d. Having respect and regard for human rights and for the councils' Public Sector Equality Duties
 - e. A presumption in favour of openness, transparency and accountability
16. We expect that councils will set up a voluntary Joint Committee before the SCO comes into effect, after which point their establishment will become a requirement. Establishing voluntary Joint Committees in parallel with the SCO process, which mirror the forthcoming required governance arrangements, can provide more time for developing the implementation plan and proposals for the new authorities to consider. The specific timing of the establishment of voluntary Joint Committees is likely to vary between areas.

The role of predecessor councils

17. The predecessor councils continue to operate until vesting day, delivering business-as-usual services and preparing for the transfer to new unitary councils. During both the first and second transition periods, the SCO will place a duty for predecessor councils to:
 - a. Consult and co-operate with each other and with shadow authorities throughout the transition process to secure the economic, efficient and timely transfer of functions, property, rights and liabilities (which includes the transfer of staff)
 - b. Generally exercise their functions to further the purposes of the SCO
 - c. Provide any information reasonably requested by other relevant councils or shadow councils to support implementation

- d. Cooperate in the formation of the Implementation Team and release officials from normal duties as reasonably required
- 18. Predecessor councils are limited to the roles described above and are not responsible for implementation or designing new operating or delivery models in the new unitary councils.
- 19. Where a section 24 direction is applied, this would require the consent of the new shadow councils (or that of the Secretary of State) before predecessor councils enter into contracts or dispose of assets above a certain value.
- 20. There is also a suite of generic regulations that cover local government reorganisation that all councils need to have regard to, that set out requirements for staffing, assets, plans, continuity, and the exercise of certain functions in the transition period (such as the creation of town or parish councils).

The role of the Implementation Team

- 21. The Implementation Team is expected to be a single team across the area made up of officers of the predecessor councils. The SCO may specify membership and who must be the Implementation Team Leader (often known locally as the Senior Responsible Officer) and Deputies. Our expectation is that the Implementation Team Leader will work with all relevant councils to bring an Implementation Team together that meets the requirements of the SCO, to be agreed by the Joint Committee (or Joint Committees where there is more than one for the area). It is expected that the Implementation Team Leader is responsible for the management of the Implementation Team, including ensuring appropriate membership throughout the transition. The councils have a duty to cooperate in the formation of the Implementation Team and release officials from normal duties as reasonably required.
- 22. The Implementation Team – as formed by the Joint Committee in line with the specification in the SCO – will support the collection of data and transfer of functions, staff, property, rights, liabilities and information from predecessor councils. The rationale for this is that the Implementation Team holds expertise on these matters, which will be essential for both transition periods. The Implementation Team Leader will be responsible to the Joint Committees and later the Shadow Councils for the work of the Implementation Team (rather than the predecessor councils) and to ensure the Joint Committees are able to effectively fulfil their obligations.
- 23. The role of agreeing the Implementation Team is provided to the Joint Committees, with leadership from the Implementation Team Leader, and not the Shadow Council. Unlike the Joint Committees, which are to be dissolved on the day after the Shadow Council holds its first meeting, the Implementation Team is not time bound and remains in place throughout the whole transition period. It is the formal mechanism for the release of

council staff to work on preparations, given the duty on predecessor councils to cooperate and release staff. The designation and appointment of statutory officers, which is required in the SCO for the shadow councils, may support implementation but are not a replacement for the Implementation Team.

Implementation Executive

24. An Implementation Executive is typically used where an existing council (county or district) already operates on the same geography as the future unitary council and is designated as a preparing council which will become the new council. As with Joint Committees, specific arrangements for the Implementation Executive are set out in the SCO.
25. The main differences between the Joint Committee and Implementation Executive are that Implementation Executives are constituted as a committee of the preparing council's executive. Membership is made up of specific numbers of councillor nominees from all the former councils and the preparing council within the area of the new unitary council. Similar preparatory duties may be placed on it as a Joint Committee. An Implementation Executive is typically wound up within four days of the elections and its functions transfer to the executive of the preparing council.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL
LEGAL, DEMOCRATIC AND PROCUREMENT SERVICES



Overview and Scrutiny **ANNUAL REPORT**

2025 - 2026



Bromsgrove
District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

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FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN

This year has been as challenging as the previous year, including the number of task groups and workload in general. Once again, additional meetings were held to cope with the increase in work and of course calling upon Members to give up more of their free time. Ensuring scrutiny is carried out in an efficient and robust manner has led to the overwhelming recommendations from meetings and task groups being accepted by the Cabinet, which made it all worthwhile.

There is no doubt the following year will be just as challenging with Local Government Re-organisation (LGR) on the horizon, requiring the number of meetings to increase.

I would like to thank all Members of the Board who have committed their time and energy to the tasks we were confronted with and of course to all those who took part in task groups. I also realise the amount of work this has been placed on our Officers and I am thankful for their help and support.

Councillor Peter McDonald
Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board

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INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to present the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report which outlines our work during 2025-2026 (this covers the municipal year from May 2025 to April 2026) and provides general information on the overview and scrutiny processes at Bromsgrove District Council (BDC).

Overview and Scrutiny is a key part of the democratic decision-making process in local Councils, where elected Councillors outside of the Cabinet can contribute to shaping Council policy, community well-being and accountability. This is done by reviewing Council services and policies, community issues and key decisions and making recommendations for improvement.

The four key principles of Overview and Scrutiny, as defined by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) the lead organisation supporting Overview and Scrutiny in the country, are:

- provide constructive “critical friend” challenge
- amplify the voice and concerns of the public
- be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role
- drive improvement in public services

The Members of the Board consider these principles when selecting topics to investigate whether it is holding the Cabinet to account, reviewing policies, policy development or scrutiny of external bodies.

MEMBERSHIP

(The Board is made up of 11 Members)



**Councillor P. M. McDonald
(Chairman)**



**Councillor A.M. Dale
(Vice-Chairman)**



Councillor S. Ammar



Councillor A. Bailes



Councillor R.A. Bailes



Councillor J. Clarke



Councillor B. Kumar



Councillor R.E. Lambert



Councillor S. A. Robinson



Councillor J. D. Stanley



Councillor H.D.N. Warren-Clarke

THE ROLE OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Overview and Scrutiny is a key part of the Council's political structure and it plays a vital role in improving the services that people of the District use. It does not just look at the way the Council carries out its services, it can look at anything which affects the lives of people within the District and it allows citizens to have a greater say in Council matters.

Overview and Scrutiny allows Councillors to review and scrutinise decisions, look at existing practices and make recommendations to help ensure the residents of Bromsgrove District receive excellent services. The aim is to ensure overview and scrutiny adds value to the Council's decision-making process and makes a positive contribution towards policy development.

The detailed terms of reference and procedure rules for the Overview and Scrutiny Board can be found at Part 5 and Part 12 of the Council's Constitution. The Council's Constitution can be accessed by using the following link.

[Link to the Constitution of Bromsgrove District Council](#)

(Please click on the latest date to access the most recent version of the Council's constitution).

Meetings

Throughout 2025-26, Overview and Scrutiny Board meetings have been taking place in person and were open to the public to attend at Parkside Hall in Bromsgrove. Meetings are live streamed if there is significant local interest in the items being considered at Overview and Scrutiny Board meetings. Meetings of Scrutiny Task Groups and Working Groups continue to be held remotely, since these meetings are private.

REPORTS CONSIDERED BY THE BOARD

The Board continued to receive updates to monitor the progress of recommendations it had made, with the recommendations made throughout the year outlined in this report. This contains both recommendations put forward by Task Groups and accepted by the Cabinet, together with recommendations put forward by the Board itself. In respect of Task Groups, the Board does, where necessary, receive an update report 12 months following acceptance of its recommendations.

During the year the Board had made several recommendations. There has been continued support from the relevant Cabinet Members this year, with regular attendance at Overview and Scrutiny meetings in relation to reports concerning Cabinet Members' areas of responsibility. This has given the Cabinet an opportunity to hear first-hand the debate and any recommendations made by the Board. The Chairman of the Board attends Cabinet meetings to present any recommendations made. On several occasions, whilst the Board had not made any recommendations in respect of an item, it had endorsed and/or supported recommendations which were then considered by Cabinet at its meetings.

The Board is due to consider the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2025-26 at the meeting due to be held on 14th April 2026.

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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

During the course of the 2025/26 municipal year the following recommendations were suggested to Cabinet:

Bromsgrove Town Centre Recycling Bins

RECOMMENDED that the Officers proceed with preparing a budget bid to Cabinet to invest in new (recycling) bins for installation in Bromsgrove Town Centre.

Planning Enforcement

RECOMMENDED that Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) be introduced to measure Worcestershire Regulatory Services' (WRS) Planning Enforcement performance in Bromsgrove and that the KPIs be incorporated into monthly reporting to Members together with enhanced information on live enforcement cases data.

Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme

RECOMMENDED that the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board submit a request on behalf of the Board that Cabinet consider, as an item of urgent business, whether to extend the current public consultation period for the Local Plan.

Housing Task Group

Recommendation 1 – Housing Allocations

Officers approach Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) and jointly explore a startup crisis package for residents living in social housing including the potential of an increase in housing benefit payment to cover the costs of the crisis package. The findings to be completed in three months and reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

Recommendation 2 – Housing Allocations

Bromsgrove District Council's preference is for the mix of affordable housing contained within a new development be made up of social rent and shared ownership properties only and exclude outright sales of affordable homes.

Recommendation 3 – Asset Rich and Potentially Revenue Poor

Officers provide Members with costings of bad debt owed to the Council as a result of non – payment of Council tax by residents.

Recommendation 4 – Asset Rich and Potentially Revenue Poor

Officers monitor the number of residents claiming Council Tax Support in housing Bands F, G and H (with metrics built into the performance reporting framework).

Recommendation 5 – Section (S) 106 Contributions

Where a planning application has a material impact on the local community and there is a consideration for S106 contribution allocation, the Ward Member (and neighbouring Ward Member(s)) should be informed and consulted with prior to consideration of the application. A follow up consultation with the Ward Member (and neighbouring Ward Member(s)) should also take place.

Recommendation 6 - Fleeceholding

As part of the Local Government Reorganisation process, the Council:

- a) Notes that the Government is currently analysing the feedback from the consultation which sought views on proposals to implement aspects of the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024 and further reform related to the charges leaseholders and homeowners on freehold estates, pay and services they receive, which closed on 26th September 2025.
- b) Suggests that a new unitary authority continues to lobby Government on the matter of fleeceholding within Bromsgrove District.

Finance & Budget Working Group

RECOMMENDED that future Quarterly Financial Outturn and Performance reports provide:

- i a detailed narrative in terms of variance for each specific service area
- ii for each area of high variance provide detail on the action(s) being taken to address the issue and the officer(s) responsible
- iii information on recharge amounts

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THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD'S WORK PROGRAMME

The following items were considered by the Board during the 2025/26 municipal year:

Overviews

- Local Government Re-Organisation All Member Engagement Session
- Installation of EV Chargers
- Local Plan Consultation Methods
- Bromsgrove Town Centre Re-cycling Bins
- Council Tax Recovery
- Planning Enforcement
- Windsor Street (Options Paper)
- Citizens Advice (Uses of Grant Funding)
- Strategic Overview of Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) Services
- Police and Crime Commissioner update
- Planning Advisory Service (PAS)
- Town Centre Parking and ANPR update
- EV Charger Profit Sharing Arrangements update

Pre-Scrutiny

- Contaminated Land Strategy
- Bromsgrove District Plan Consultation
- Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategic Framework
- Expansion of Commercial Waste Collection Services
- Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant
- Windsor Street Site
- Biodiversity Duty Report
- Homelessness Prevention, Rough Sleeper and Domestic Abuse Grants Funding 2027/28 and 2028/29
- Particulate Monitoring

Standard Updates

- Local Government Re-Organisation (LGR) (Regular)
- Local Heritage Action List (Quarterly)
- Levelling-Up Fund Programme (Quarterly)
- Crime and Disorder Scrutiny (Annually)
- Heatwaves Preparedness (Annually)
- Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2025/26

All Member Briefings

- Anti-Social Behaviour (Tools and Powers)

Task Group

In addition to the above, updates were provided throughout the year for the Housing Task Group. The final report which included recommendations was considered by the Board on 18th November 2025.

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OVERVIEWS

Local Government Reorganisation All Member Engagement Session Supported by Mutual Ventures

A stakeholder engagement process was being carried out to inform the appraisal process which included a public and local stakeholder engagement session. This stakeholder engagement session sought that all Members of BDC be invited to ensure that Members had an opportunity to provide their views to Mutual Ventures, who were supporting an appraisal of the options under consideration in Worcestershire for LGR.

The options appraisal process was to assess the performance of two options for a unitary structure in Worcestershire which consisted of a unitary council for the whole county of Worcestershire or two unitary councils in Worcestershire which would consist of a north and south divide.

Key lines of enquiry were discussed as part of the stakeholder engagement process to establish the performance of these options in comparison to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) criteria for LGR.

Installation of EV Chargers

The purpose of this report was to outline the Implementation of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure across BDC's owned car parks and land. Key objectives of the project were to increase the availability of EV charging points in public spaces, whilst supporting the Council's Carbon Reduction Strategy.

Bromsgrove Town Centre Recycling Bins

This item reported on recycling and waste collection arrangements in the Bromsgrove Town Centre. The report had been drafted to address a request from the Board raised in February 2025 for a review of the implications of no longer recycling waste on Bromsgrove High Street.

The Place Teams audit of the town centre recycling bins had shown poor levels of adherence to the use of each bin, with the contents of recycling bins showing that only one fifth of the entire waste collected was recyclable when sorting by hand was undertaken. The Council was not recycling any waste from Bromsgrove High Street bins because of the cross-contamination of waste.

It was agreed by the Board that a recommendation be put forward to Cabinet asking that Officers proceed with preparing a budget bid, with the view of investing in new (recycling) bins for installation in Bromsgrove Town Centre. The Board proposed the following recommendation:

RECOMMENDED that the Officers proceed with preparing a budget bid to Cabinet to invest in new (recycling) bins for installation in Bromsgrove Town Centre.

Council Tax Recovery

During consideration of this report, Council Tax debt recovery procedures was provided. This followed a request by the Board for a report to explain the legislative framework governing council tax recovery, outline the procedures applied by the Council for council tax recovery and the use of enforcement agents and which identified the actions the Council could take to improve the recovery process and the barriers to improvement.

It was noted that the Money and Mental Health Policy Institute (MMHPI) report entitled "In the Public Interest?" argued that legislation governing council tax collection required reform and identified four areas of improvement. The areas included communication with individuals in

debt, speed at which council debt escalated the over-reliance on automated procedures, lack of flexibility in dealing with debt cases and the enforcement action used. The report clarified and responded to these areas of concern, detailing how the Council managed its debt recovery process.

Planning Enforcement

For this reporting Members were reminded that the delivery of the planning enforcement was largely transferred to Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) on 1st June 2024, with investigation of cases the responsibility of WRS and input provided from planning officers where their professional expertise was required. It was highlighted that prior to the formal takeover of the planning enforcement function by WRS, there had been assistance provided to the Council's planning officers with the investigation officer role since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic.

There were 302 cases of alleged planning breaches in 2024/25 which required WRS to undertake investigations. Of these, 5 cases were assigned as priority 1 cases as they satisfied the criteria for this set out in the Enforcement Policy. Of the valid cases, 173 out of 175 were closed and resolved by informal compliance or no issue in 2024/25. There were 304 open planning enforcement cases as of September 2025.

It was stated that the backlog in open cases had fallen slightly from 320 to 304 over the most recent period. Progress in clearing the backlog was slowed by the need to establish and embed the team within Bromsgrove since 1st June 2024 and the complexity of some cases where evidence of harm (in planning terms) had been identified. The short-term additional resource available to WRS to work on clearing the backlog would end in June 2026.

In relation to the number of valid cases with Community Protection Warnings (CPWs) or Community Protection Notices (CPNs) served, it was stated that since April 2025, four additional CPWs and two additional CPNs were served.

Officers highlighted that planning policy allowed retrospective applications to be considered (i.e. applications after an action had been taken) which necessitated the maintenance of an informal approach to negotiate compliance with planning rules.

The benefits of the current approach to Planning Enforcement were set out including that this allowed Planning Officers to focus on planning matters whilst the investigation and enforcement cases were dealt with by WRS.

Following consideration of this item, Members agreed that it should be recommended that there be more information regarding Planning Enforcement cases including monitoring of the WRS performance through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). After consideration the following recommendation was agreed:

RECOMMENDED that Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) be introduced to measure Worcestershire Regulatory Services' (WRS) Planning Enforcement performance in Bromsgrove and that the KPIs be incorporated into monthly reporting to Members together with enhanced information on live enforcement cases data.

Windsor Street (Options Paper)

The purpose of this report was to inform the Board on the options for the delivery of housing on the Windsor Street site in Bromsgrove. It was noted that the Windsor Street site had stood derelict since 2014 and that the Council had been successful in obtaining £3,490,000 for the redevelopment of the site from various sources. No BDC funding had been used in the project to date.

It was noted that residential use was considered as most appropriate for the site and only development opportunities for housing had been considered in the report. The three potential delivery options were:

- Option A: Obtain outline planning permission and dispose of the site on the open market.
- Option B: Develop through Spadesbourne Homes Limited and retain market value properties (dispose of affordable units).
- Option C: Enter into partnership with a private developer or a registered social landlord (RSL).

Citizens Advice (Uses of Grant Funding)

During the meeting Members were updated on the uses of grant funding for the Citizens Advice Bromsgrove and Redditch (CABR) charity within the Bromsgrove District.

The following key points were presented to the Board:

- The four key support areas provided by CABR were Core Services, Household Support Fund Distribution, Affordability Assessments and Outreach Development Projects.
- The Funding contribution from BDC was £123,400 with Worcestershire County Council (WCC) adding £23,606 per year.
- BDC was the highest funding contributor in Worcestershire.
- The national average for funding the CABR was £1.34 per head in 2023/2024.
- CABR provided advice which was regulated by the Advice Quality Standard (AQS), Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and Money and Pensions Service (MaPS).
- The charity was supported by 50–60 volunteers. The call answer rate had improved from 24% in 2020 to 38% in 2025.
- In total, 4,710 households within the District received full advice and 773 households received light-touch advice.
- £388,601 income had been gained and £676,674 worth of debts had been managed for local residents.
- The Household Support Fund (HSF) costed £7,000 per annum to deliver with £50,000 of funds distributed.
- £2,745 had been provided a year to carry out affordability assessments for Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) clients.
- £62,000 had been provided by the Council for an Outreach project over 18 month with regular sessions held in the areas of Charford, Catshill, Rubery, Wythall, Alvechurch, Sidemoor and Clent.
- There were future challenges to consider such as increased demands, funding sustainability and the LGR implications.
- There were potential outsourcing opportunities for the follow-on funding from the HSF Scheme, including discretionary housing payments and tenancy support.

Strategic Overview of Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) Services

During this item Members were given a strategic overview of the BDHT Services within the Bromsgrove District which included the following key points:

- BDHT's objectives included being an excellent landlord, employer and a community-based Housing Association.
- Stock levels had grown to over four thousand homes, with a strong focus on the Bromsgrove District.
- Financial viability remained critical with all expenditure funded through rental income.
- Compliance and safety were highlighted as top priorities following national regulatory changes.
- Recruitment and retention of skilled staff were proving challenging.

- Complaints were increasing, partly due to external claim companies and rising customer expectations.

Police and Crime Commissioner (Update)

Following a request from a Board meeting held on 18th November 2026 the representative for the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), accompanied remotely by a local inspector provided a strategic update to the Board with the key points discussed as follows:

- Policing remained predominantly people based, however, pay pressures continued to exceed central grant increases.
- West Mercia Police had grown in officer numbers significantly but rising pay scales created budget strains.
- Civilian workforce reductions had been actioned but frontline focus was being protected.
- Overall crime continued to fall across the District but outcomes of successful investigations remained a key area for improvement.
- Focus centred on prompt investigations, file quality and improving justice outcomes for victims.
- The PCC emphasised the importance of cooperation with District Councils on community safety and early prevention.
- A renewed emphasis was placed on Councils to raise localised concerns directly.

Planning Advisory Service (PAS)

Following discussions at its Board meeting held on 6th January 2026, Members requested the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) findings report be provided. This session sought to include all Members of BDC to ensure they had an opportunity to hear the presentation and to provide their views and questions to the consultants in person.

An initial overview was provided and it was explained that the PAS review had been commissioned to assess governance, relationships, barriers to decision making and improvements required for Development Management, Local Plan preparation, Officer-Member working and Readiness for forthcoming planning reforms.

A presentation to discuss the Development Management Workstream was carried out with the key points highlighted as below:

- Procedures and protocols were generally sound.
- Key issues related to strained Officer–Member relationships.
- There was insufficient early engagement prior to Planning Committee.
- There was a need for a “reset” of working practices.

Recommendations included:

- Improved collaboration.
- Training on defensible decision making.
- Addressing relationships with WCC Highways.
- Review of enforcement processes.
- Improving Planning Committee focus.
- Reviewing livestream retention.
- Increasing Member involvement at pre application stage.
- Improving attendance at site visits.

A presentation was also provided to Members to discuss the Local Plan Workstream. The main points highlighted were:

- A significant divergence between Members on the draft development strategy.
- Lack of political buy in and sense of “ownership” of the plan.
- Insufficient shared vision for the District’s future.
- Evidence base gaps (e.g. Green Belt assessment, infrastructure planning).
- Poor relationships with WCC on transport and education.
- Requirement for clearer governance of the Strategic Planning Steering Group (SPSG).
- Importance of a 30-month statutory timetable under the new system.
- Emphasis on risk management, programme management and Member training.
- Need to develop a spatial vision and place making objectives.

Town Centre Parking and ANPR (Update)

During a Board meeting held on 18th November 2026, it was requested and agreed that a Town Centre Parking and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) update be provided.

During the Board’s meeting held on 10th February 2026 it was reported that Town Centre parking capacity remained sufficient, with peak demand significantly below the 1,013 available spaces. St John Street and Windsor Street car parks continued to experience the highest utilisation, while School Drive, North Bromsgrove and Stourbridge Road remained underused.

The Board noted the following redevelopment considerations:

- Churchfields remained closed due to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) risks, with high costs required for reopening and ongoing maintenance.
- Stourbridge Road was subject to an existing development agreement and observed usage indicated high weekday occupancy by season ticket holders.
- School Drive was identified as suitable for redevelopment due to consistently low usage and a potentially higher capital receipt.

Even with redevelopment of one or more sites, overall parking demand was predicted to remain comfortably met.

Sanders Park Car Park was being used by Town Centre workers for all day free parking, however, options were presented to introduce time limit charges or MiPermit only operation.

Season ticket usage at Parkside had raised concerns from local businesses. Survey findings indicated most users were season ticket holders rather than Council Staff. Options included amending which car parks accepted season tickets.

ANPR implementation was reported as not viable due to legal constraints, operational requirements for barriers, cost implications and no reduction in enforcement workload.

Out of town enforcement had met the agreed minimum requirement, with between 26% to 29% of patrol time spent outside the Town Centre. Increasing enforcement would require additional staffing at significant cost.

Financial implications were highlighted, including income levels, resurfacing costs and the financial impact of potential car park redevelopments.

The report concluded that a strategic, place-based approach was required to support Town Centre accessibility and economic activity, with further on-site counts recommended.

EV Charger Profit Sharing Arrangements (Update)

During a Board meeting held on 6th January 2026 Members raised frustrations regarding delays in progression for the update on Electric Vehicle (EV) Charger profit sharing arrangement negotiations which had been requested during previous Board meetings. Members noted that a meeting had been held with the Leader and relevant Officers to discuss progression and that a briefing paper would be provided to Members of the Board at the next meeting to be held in February 2026.

During the Board meeting held on 10th February 2026 an update was provided with the main points considered by the Board:

- The Council had sought to utilise its own land to provide Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) for financial viability.
- Zest Eco Limited procured the contract to undertake a further exploration to expand EVCI across land that were not covered by the taxi scheme.
- Three sites were identified as being viable; two sites had completed installation and one site was in progress.
- Following queries from the Board, a review had been carried out to explore the income terms and conditions of the contract.
- Barnt Green Parish Council advised that they had used the same Council supplier Equans as used for the Plug-in Taxi Programme.
- There were legal implications and both parties would need to agree to vary the agreement if seeking early payment. Alternatively, a break notice/termination clause within the contract was suggested as another option, however, compensation costs may be payable, given the expenditure incurred to date for installations.

Other Overview items due to be scrutinised at its April meeting are as follows:

- Envirocrime (to include Environment Crime update, Environmental Crime Enforcement Policy and Littering from Vehicles).
- Permission to Revoke the First Homes Policy
- Renters Rights Act 2025

PRE-SCRUTINY

Contaminated Land Strategy

During this meeting the Contaminated Land Strategy was presented with the key points discussed:

- The new inspection strategy aimed to replace the previous version and meet the requirements of the statutory guidance which was issued in 2012.
- The strategy outlined the process for the review of potential contaminated land sites within the District and the prioritisation methodology used.
- The report aimed to provide an overview of the framework that existed in respect of contaminated land.
- Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 placed a duty on Local Authorities to review and assess the significant possibility of harm to human health arising from contaminated land.
- Contaminated land legislation should only be used when there were no other alternative mechanisms available. However, the framework was predominately reviewed through the Planning and Development Control process.
- The revised report reflected the gradual reduction and withdrawal of funding from Central Government.
- To date no sites had been declared as “Contaminated Land” by BDC, however, several sites of concern had been subject to detailed inspection.
- Planning policies encouraged the reuse of Brownfield land.

Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategic Framework

A strategic framework for Bromsgrove Town Centre was presented to Members which had been developed in collaboration with the Portfolio Holder and shaped through two stakeholder workshops. The framework aimed to consolidate various existing policies and plans into a unified vision for the town centre’s future. It was designed to be inclusive and community owned, rather than solely a Council initiative, to ensure resilience and relevance post LGR.

The framework was grounded in placemaking principles and intended to guide regeneration activity, partnership engagement and investment priorities. It incorporated elements from the Bromsgrove Town 2040 Vision, Local Plan and regeneration projects funded through the Levelling-Up project.

Key strategic aims included:

- Transforming public spaces and connectivity
- Celebrating Bromsgrove’s unique identity
- Enhancing town centre links and visitor access
- Building a safe and inclusive community
- Cultivating a thriving local business ecosystem
- Creating vibrancy to attract more visitors

The vision had been previously considered by Stakeholders and Members during various group activities to ensure all the aims and objectives were included. An action plan encompassing the key strategic aims was to be developed under the oversight of a newly formed Town Centre Steering Group, comprising various stakeholders. This group would define Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), milestones, resource implications and explore the feasibility of establishing a Business Improvement District (BID). Progress would be monitored through an annual “State of the Town” health check which would link in with planning policies and quarterly reports would also be provided as and where necessary.

Expansion of Commercial Waste Collection Service

This report set out proposals for the expansion of the Council's commercial waste collection service. It was stated that with the provisions of the Environment Act 2021, businesses were required to separate food waste (and microbusiness due to be required to do the same from April 2027), which afforded increased opportunities for service growth as there would be growth in demand for commercial food waste services.

It was highlighted that the Council's Commercial Waste Collection Service had expanded considerably since its inception in 2015, however, in excess of an £800k annual income would be placed at risk if the Council could not provide a compliant service.

The commercial waste service had been a profit-maker for the Council and only recently saw increased costs as a result of wider fleet and maintenance issues within the service. The recommendations in the report were to address this with the purchase of two Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCVs) designed to reduce reliance on hire vehicles in the long term.

Homelessness Prevention Grant and Domestic Abuse Grant

The purpose of this report was to approve how BDC would allocate government homelessness related grants for 2026/27 and to seek delegated authority to manage any unallocated funding during the year.

Key Points were highlighted as follows:

- From 2026/27 Government would merge several homelessness grants into a single Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Grant, expecting to be in a three-year settlement.
- Around 51% of the current Homelessness Prevention Grant would be moved into a Revenue Support Grant but the Council proposed ringfencing this money for homelessness prevention.
- Total expected funding for 2026/27 included:
 - o Homelessness Grant: £112k
 - o Homelessness Prevention Grant: £349,018k
 - o Rough Sleeping Prevention & Recovery: £34,899k
 - o Domestic Abuse New Burdens Funding: £35,744k
 - o Total: £531,661k

Funding was allocated to a mix of temporary accommodation provision, voluntary sector partners, youth homelessness services, tenancy sustainment and support, debt advice, rough sleeper outreach, mental health work and commissioning specific posts.

The Homelessness Grant Allocation of approximately £495,917k included:

- BDHT Housing Agency staffing
- Temporary accommodation units
- Severe Weather Emergency Provision
- St Basils Foyer and Crash Pad
- Support for young people, ex-offenders, rough sleepers and tenancy sustainment
- CAB debt advice & affordability assessments
- Housing First/Housing Led model
- Empty Homes Officer (part-time)

The Domestic Abuse Grant of £35,744k included:

- County domestic abuse co ordinator and research officer
- Housing Options top up
- Furniture project (NewStarts)
- Basement Project support

Without this funding many voluntary sector services would cease, increasing homelessness and pressures on council services. Funding helped to maintain existing accommodation, reduce rough sleeping, mitigate financial hardship and enable victims of domestic abuse to access safe accommodation. The funding was provided as a recognition of affordability challenges, reducing housing turnover and limited social housing availability.

Windsor Street Site

The purpose of this report was to recommend that the Windsor Street brownfield site in Bromsgrove Town Centre be redeveloped for residential use and to identify the preferred delivery model. The site had been vacant since 2014, posing issues with vandalism and anti-social behaviour. Redevelopment had previously failed due to abnormal contamination costs and planning concerns.

The Council had successfully secured £14.5m of Levelling Up Funding with £3.49m allocated to Windsor Street, plus extra funding from UKSPF of £84k, One Public Estate (OPE) of £100k and Brownfield Land Release Fund (BLRF) of £722k.

Phase One remediation was completed, however were awaiting an Environment Agency review. Phase Two remediation works were expected to be completed in approximately 6 months' time. Housing delivery would not be delayed due to planning works which were still required to be completed.

The Board considered the various options, however, Option D - Partner with a Registered Social Landlord was considered the preferred option for the following reasons:

- Allowed 50% affordable housing, modern low carbon homes and better alignment with local housing need.
- Funding opportunity through Homes England.
- Construction was expected to begin early 2027.
- Regenerated a key town centre site.
- Met the housing need while protecting the Green Belt areas.
- Increased footfall and supported local businesses.
- Delivered environmental improvements through brownfield remediation.

Biodiversity Duty Report

This report outlined the statutory requirements under the Environment Act 2021 for all public authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Members noted that the Council was legally required to publish a Biodiversity Duty Report by March 2026.

The following key actions which had been completed included:

- Green Flag Awards for Sanders Park and Lickey End Recreation Ground.
- Grass verge biodiversity initiative.
- Tree planting programme with a target of 100,000 trees over 15 years.
- Pesticide reduction and alternative weed control.

- Integration of biodiversity monitoring into the Climate Change Strategy.
- Compliance with Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) monitoring for planning applications.

Homelessness Prevention, Rough Sleeper and Domestic Abuse Grants Funding 2027/28 and 2028/29

Reporting on the three-year Government grant for homelessness prevention, rough sleeper outreach and domestic abuse services was presented. The Board were informed that the funding had been more generous than anticipated, allowing for stability and potential expansion of services.

A summary of proposals was highlighted as follows:

- Confirmation of three-year funding for existing providers.
- Removal of temporary accommodation funding from this grant and would be covered by separate revenue funding.
- Government targets were to reduce rough sleeping by 50% and reduce families in bed and breakfast accommodation.

Particulate Monitoring

The Board were presented with options for additional particulate matter monitoring following a Council motion. Current provision included three low-cost sensors in the Bromsgrove District. The proposed options ranged from extending existing sensors to commissioning a source apportionment study with the University of Birmingham. The recommended option included a combination of extended sensors and a mobile “super site” study with an estimated cost of £150k.

STANDARD UPDATES

Levelling-Up Fund Programme (Quarterly)

During various meetings, updates on the Levelling Up Projects at Windsor Street, Nailers Yard (former Market Hall site) and the Public Realm works were discussed.

The following key areas were discussed during the course of the municipal year:

22 July 2025

Windsor Street

- Groundwater monitoring was ongoing until mid-August 2025. If PFAS/PFOS (per and polyfluorinated alkyl substances) levels were high, six months of remediation would follow which was due to finish in January 2026.
- The project remained on track and within budget.
- Options paper on future housing delivery was scheduled for September 2025 to the Board and in November 2025 to Cabinet.

Nailers Yard

- The project had been delayed six weeks due to ground obstructions.
- SCP Transport Planning were preparing a travel plan and welcome pack. Some planning condition wording could change due to WCC ending Modeshift STARS.
- GJS Dillon was appointed in December 2024 to market the commercial space with early interest reported.
- The Full Business Case (FBC) was being prepared to draw down £2.425m of former Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) funds which was expected in 2026/27.
- The programme budget was originally £16.103m with an additional £1.08m awarded and planned GBSLEP funding.
- The total estimated programme costs at this stage were £18.65m.

28 October 2025

Windsor Street

- Phase One remediation was completed and Environment Agency (EA) technical feedback was expected in October 2025.
- Phase Two remediation was likely with completion estimated in May 2026.
- Cabinet was due to review housing options in November 2025.

Nailers Yard

- Culvert works costs rose to £1.6m, increasing programme costs by £165k. An urgent decision was due in August 2025 which added £500k which included £335k contingency costs.
- Completion date had moved from January to 4th May 2026.
- Strong commercial interest continued and service charge arrangements were progressing.
- FBC for GBSLEP funding was ongoing.
- Total secured funding increased to £17.694m with an estimated final cost of £19.8m.
- Potential risks identified at both Nailers Yard were culvert, electrics and layout works and Windsor Street were EA sign-off with delivery options.

6 January 2026

Windsor Street

- Phase Two remediation required six months treatment plus six months monitoring.
- Cabinet approved redevelopment in partnership with a Registered Social Landlord (RSL).

Nailers Yard

- Construction was progressing towards May 2026 completion date.
- Bruton Knowles was appointed as the property management agent.
- The pavilion building operational model was under review.

Local Heritage Action List (Quarterly)

During various quarterly updates for the Local Heritage Action List the following key areas were considered:

22nd July 2025

Following the adoption of the first tranche earlier in the year the following were noted:

- Property owners had been notified.
- The website had been updated.
- Development Management colleagues had been briefed on the local list and its implications for planning applications.
- A draft list for Wythall had been completed with consultation planned post-Local Plan consultation completion.
- Work on Lickey and Blackwell and Bromsgrove continued but progress had slowed due to staff absences and departures.
- Engagement with the Bromsgrove Society was ongoing.
- Public outreach efforts included a talk at Lickey End. Nomination forms would also be made available as part of the engagement process.

28th October 2025

- Progress on the Local Heritage List had been delayed but there were mitigation steps in place at the application stage to identify any buildings of local significance.
- The first tranche of parishes had been adopted with the website updated and owners had also been notified accordingly.
- The draft list for Wythall had been completed and work was ongoing for the Lickey and Blackwell areas.
- There were staffing challenges as two Conservation Officers had resigned. The part-time Principal Conservation Officer remained to cover the work. A consultant had been appointed to assist with the Local Heritage Lists and recruitment was also underway to fill the vacant posts.

6th January 2026

- Four parishes had adopted local heritage lists.
- The Bromsgrove draft list was expected in mid-January 2026.
- Recruitment was underway for a full time Conservation Officer who was due to start in March 2026.
- There had been an increase in development management workload.

Worcestershire Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)

The Council's representative on the Worcestershire-wide Health Overview and Scrutiny must be a Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Board and is required to provide the Board with regular updates on the work being carried out. The Board's representative for the municipal year 2025-26 was agreed as Councillor B. Kumar.

During the year Councillor Kumar provided comprehensive and informed updates on meetings of HOSC and responded to questions from Members on matters including:

- Routine immunisation
- Engaging Neighbourhoods and Community in Health Improvements
- Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA)
- Winter Planning
- Annual review of Public Health
- Overview from West Midlands Ambulance Service
- Access to GP Appointments (including out of hours)
- Access to NHS Dental Services

Local Government Re-organisation (LGR) (Update)

During a meeting held on 6th January 2026 the Board requested that regular updates and progress on LGR be provided.

During a meeting held on 10th February 2026 an update was provided which included:

- Worcestershire remained at Stage Three of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) process.
- Two proposals had been submitted and the statutory consultation had been launched the previous week.
- A decision on implementation was expected in July 2026.
- A Countywide Programme Management Office (PMO) had been set up with Bromsgrove's Transformation Lead as Senior Responsible Officer (SRO). The focus areas included: Finance, Legal, HR, IT and Service Delivery (cross-cutting).
- An internal LGR Roots programme was supporting staff through change.
- Externally, District Councils had refreshed the partnership website for TransformingWorcestershire.co.uk.
- A new corporate LGR risk had been added to the Council's risk register.
- Residual risk was assessed as Medium, largely due to uncertainties in costings and capacity.
- Corporate risks had been redeveloped and would be reported to the Audit, Standards and Governance meeting which would be held on 17th February 2026.

During a meeting held on 24th March 2026, an update report outlined Bromsgrove's position within the Government's seven stage LGR process with Members noting were at the Statutory Consultation Stage 3, which closed on 26th March 2026.

The key points raised were as follows:

- Worcestershire remained at Stage 3 of the MHCLG process.
- Workstreams on Finance, HR, Legal, IT and Services were progressing.
- A MHCLG "Listening Meeting" took place on 11th March which was supported by KPMG.

- Devolution footprint discussions had advanced with Worcestershire Leaders having agreed a joint position with Herefordshire and exploring alignment with Warwickshire/Gloucestershire.
- Future updates may be limited until Government decisions were provided which were due in the Summer of 2026.
- LGR and Devolution remained a key Corporate Risk.
- District involvement in strategic planning (SDS) would be retained until at least April 2028.

Crime and Disorder (Yearly)

The annual statutory review outlined partnership activity from January 2025 to February 2026.

The key priority areas were outlined 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 outlined as follows:

- 'Right Path' youth violence intervention (with 21 young people being 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 (Sceptre Week) and illegal vape enforcement.

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

Other Standard items to be heard at its April meeting were as follows:

Heatwaves Preparedness (Yearly)

The purpose of this yearly heatwave preparedness report is to ensure accountability, evaluate readiness and enhance the Council's response to rising extreme heat risks.

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2025/26

This annual report.

WORKING GROUPS

Finance & Budget Working Group (FBWG)

This Group met on six occasions during the year with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling in attendance at all the Group's meetings, together with the Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer) and the Head of Finance and Customer Services.

The list below contains some of the topics/reports which the Working Group had considered and gives an insight into the work that has been carried out:

- 2025-26 Budget
- Medium Term Financial Plan 2025-26 to 2027-28 – Tranche 1 and Tranche 2 Reports
- Finance and Performance Monitoring Reports
- The Financial Outturn Report
- Council Tax Empty Homes Discounts and Premiums report
- Council Tax Support Scheme
- Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates Discretionary Relief Policy
- Council Tax and Business Rates Yield 2025-26
- Financial Recovery Plan
- Blue Badge Holders Parking Proposal
- Ward Funds Proposal

During the course of the municipal year the following key areas were considered by the Board:

17th June 2025

Members received a report requesting for the Chairman and Members to be appointed to the Finance and Budget Working Group for the 2025/26 municipal year. Members that expressed an interest in joining the group were Councillors S. Ammar, R.J. Hunter, S.T. Nock and P.M. McDonald. The Board noted that Councillor C.A. Hotham also expressed an interest, should there be a relevant vacancy available.

22nd July 2025

With respect to membership of the Finance and Budget Working Group, it was acknowledged that interest in joining the Working Group had been expressed by Councillors S. Ammar and C. Hotham to date. The Board felt that a follow up communication was required to Members of the Overview and Scrutiny 'pool' (i.e. all elected members who were not represented on Cabinet) to ascertain if there were any further expressions of interest. It was commented that this would ensure all elected members had time to consider on whether they wished to sit on the Working Group. In this case, it was agreed that consideration of further appointments to fill vacant positions on the Working Group be deferred to the next meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Board.

The Quarter 4 Financial Outturn and Performance Monitoring Report was discussed, and Members of the Working Group had agreed that more detailed narrative was required in these reports going forward in order for Members and the public to better understand the content. The following was agreed as recommendations:

RECOMMENDED that future Quarterly Financial Outturn and Performance reports provide:

- i a detailed narrative in terms of variance for each specific service area
- ii for each area of high variance provide detail on the action(s) being taken to address the issue and the officer(s) responsible
- iii information on recharge amounts

9th September 2025

The update on membership of the Finance and Budget Working Group was discussed and Members were reminded that there were four Councillors currently represented on the Working Group as Councillors A. Bailes, E. Gray, P. McDonald and S. Nock and there remained three vacant seats. It was noted that since the last meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Board, three Councillors had expressed an interest in joining the Working Group as Councillors S. Ammar, S. Colella and C. Hotham. The Board considered these requests and on being put to the vote it was agreed that the Councillors were to be appointed to the Finance and Budget Working Group.

The Chairman of the Finance and Budget Working Group, Councillor P. McDonald, updated the Board on the recent meeting which took place on 5th September 2025.

18th November 2025

After consideration of the Finance and Budget Working Group Membership Report and terms of reference the Board agreed to maintain six Members on the Working Group. The Chairman explained that should the three current vacancies as reflected in the report remain after the Board had been approached, Members who did not sit on the scrutiny board and were also not a Cabinet Member may be appointed to fill the vacancies.

6th January 2026

After consideration of the Finance and Budget Working Group Membership report and terms of reference the Board agreed to the proposed membership of the working group for the 2025/26 municipal year. The newly appointed members included Councillors B. Kumar, C.A. Hotham and B.M. McEldowney.

10th February 2026

The Board received an update on information which was in progress for the forthcoming FBWG. Members of the Board agreed to a meeting prior the Cabinet meeting to be held on 18th February 2026 to discuss its recommendations.

TASK GROUPS

Housing Task Group

During various meetings the Board were informed of progress of the Housing Task Group. Members noted that the group were on track and had covered each of the terms of reference items for investigation in various meetings with Officers.

The Housing Task Group's final report was presented to the Board on 18th November 2025. The report would also be subsequently considered at the Cabinet meeting held in January 2026.

The following recommendations were included in the final report as follows:

Recommendation 1 – Housing Allocations

Officers approach Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) and jointly explore a startup crisis package for residents living in social housing including the potential of an increase in housing benefit payment to cover the costs of the crisis package. The findings to be completed in three months and reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

Recommendation 2 – Housing Allocations

Bromsgrove District Council's preference is for the mix of affordable housing contained within a new development be made up of social rent and shared ownership properties only and exclude outright sales of affordable homes.

Recommendation 3 – Asset Rich and Potentially Revenue Poor

Officers provide Members with costings of bad debt owed to the Council as a result of non – payment of Council tax by residents.

Recommendation 4 – Asset Rich and Potentially Revenue Poor

Officers monitor the number of residents claiming Council Tax Support in housing Bands F, G and H (with metrics built into the performance reporting framework).

Recommendation 5 – Section (S) 106 Contributions

Where a planning application has a material impact on the local community and there is a consideration for S106 contribution allocation, the Ward Member (and neighbouring Ward Member(s)) should be informed and consulted with prior to consideration of the application. A follow up consultation with the Ward Member (and neighbouring Ward Member(s)) should also take place.

Recommendation 6 - Fleeceholding

As part of the Local Government Reorganisation process, the Council:

- a) Notes that the Government is currently analysing the feedback from the consultation which sought views on proposals to implement aspects of the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024 and further reform related to the charges leaseholders, and homeowners on freehold estates, pay and services they receive, which closed on 26th September 2025.
- b) Suggests that a new unitary authority continues to lobby Government on the matter of fleeceholding within Bromsgrove District.

For Task Groups the detailed final reports of all these investigations can be found on the Council's website within the Overview and Scrutiny section.

CONCLUSION

A significant amount of pre-scrutiny work had been carried out by the Board throughout the year and based on detailed discussions, a number of recommendations had been made to Cabinet and Full Council. Some of these recommendations were subsequently approved by the decision-making bodies. In addition to this, the work of the the Finance and Budget Working Group has been useful in providing Members with an opportunity to look at complex finance reports in some considerable detail.

During the year the Housing Task Group had completed its final report along with recommendations which were considered at the Board meeting held on 18th November 2025 and subsequently considered at the Cabinet meeting held in January 2026.

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FURTHER INFORMATION

Overview and Scrutiny Board Meetings

Overview and Scrutiny Board meetings are open to the public. To find out more visit our website at <http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/council/the-council/overview-and-scrutiny.aspx> or telephone 01527 881288 and ask to speak to the Democratic Services Officer.

Public Involvement

If you would like to have your say on issues being considered by Overview and Scrutiny or to suggest a topic for consideration you can email scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk or complete the form on the Council's website at <https://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/council/the-council/overview-and-scrutiny/public-participation.aspx>

Giving Evidence

Members of the public or organisations with a special interest or knowledge about a particular topic being considered by Overview and Scrutiny can put forward evidence to a Committee or appear as a witness to give evidence for an investigation. If you think you or your organisation might be able to participate in an issue currently under review, please contact us.

If you have a personal issue with a Council service you may find it more useful to contact your local ward Councillor who can help you decide the best way to take it forward.

Contact Overview and Scrutiny

If you would like to find out more about any aspect of the Overview and Scrutiny Board then you can email scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk or telephone 01527 881288 and ask to speak to the Democratic Services Officer.

Overview and Scrutiny

Legal, Democratic and Property Services

Bromsgrove District Council

Parkside, Market Street, Bromsgrove B61 8DA

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CABINET LEADER'S WORK PROGRAMME

1 MAY 2026 TO 31 AUGUST 2026
(published as at 1st April 2026)

This Work Programme gives details of items on which key decisions are likely to be taken in the coming four months by the Council's Cabinet

The Work Programme gives details of items on which key decisions are likely to be taken by the Council's Cabinet, or full Council, in the coming four months. **Key Decisions** are those executive decisions which are likely to:

- (i) result in the Council incurring expenditure, foregoing income or the making of savings in excess of £200,000 or which are otherwise significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- (ii) be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the district;

If you wish to make representations on the proposed decision you are encouraged to get in touch with the relevant report author as soon as possible before the proposed date of the decision. Contact details are provided, alternatively you may write to the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services, Parkside, Market Street, B61 8DA or e-mail: democratic@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

The Cabinet's meetings are normally held every four weeks at 6pm on Wednesday evenings at Parkside. They are open to the public, except when confidential information is being discussed. If you wish to attend for a particular matter, it is advisable to check with the Democratic Services Team on (01527 64252 ext 3031) to make sure it is going ahead as planned. If you have any queries Democratic Services Officers will be happy to advise you. The full Council meets in accordance with the Councils Calendar of Meetings. Meetings commence at 6pm.

CABINET MEMBERSHIP

Councillor K J May	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development and Enabling
Councillor S. Baxter	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Local Government Reorganisation and Climate Change
Councillor S. Nock	Cabinet Member for Finance
Councillor K. Taylor	Cabinet Member for Planning, Worcestershire Regulatory Services and Strategic Housing
Councillor S. Webb	Cabinet Member for Health and Well Being, Leisure and Culture
Councillor P. Whittaker	Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Community Safety

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Bromsgrove Car Parks Key: Yes (New !)	Cabinet 17 Jun 2026	This report may contain exempt information that would need to be considered in private session	Report of the Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services	Rebecca McElliott, Regeneration Project Delivery Manager Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3333 Councillor K. J. May
Discretionary Council Tax Reduction Policy 2026/27 Key: No	Cabinet 17 Jun 2026 Council 15 Jul 2026		Report of the Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services	David Riley, Revenue Services Manager Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor S.T. Nock
Low Cost Housing Capital Receipts Key: Yes (New!)	Cabinet 17 Jun 2026		Report of the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services	Amanda Delahunty, Strategic Housing Officer Tel: 01527 881269 Councillor K. Taylor
Private Sector Housing Enforcement & Civil Penalty Notice Policy 2026 Key: No	Cabinet 17 Jun 2026		Report of the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services	Matthew Bough, Housing Development and Enabling Manager Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor K. Taylor

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Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Promotion of Business Support Key: No (New !)	Cabinet 17 Jun 2026		Report of the Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services	Georgina Harris, UK Shared Prosperity Fund Manager Tel: 01527 534082 Councillor K. J. May
Shared Homelessness Strategy 2026-2031 Key: No (New !)	Cabinet 17 Jun 2026 Council 15 Jul 2026		Report of the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services	Amanda Delahunty, Strategic Housing Officer Tel: 01527 881269 Councillor K. Taylor
Shareholders Committee Annual Report 2025/26 Key: No	Cabinet 17 Jun 2026 Council 15 Jul 2026		Report of the Assistant Director Environmental and Housing Property Services	Jess Bayley-Hill, Principal Democratic Services Officer Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor K. J. May
Windsor Street Delivery Options Key: Yes (New !)	Cabinet 17 Jun 2026	This report may contain exempt information that would need to be considered in private session	Report of the Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services	Rebecca McElliott, Regeneration Project Delivery Manager Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3333 Councillor K. J. May

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Audit, Standards and Governance Committee Annual Report 2025-2026 Key: No	Council 15 Jul 2026		Report of the Chairman of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee	Sarah Woodfield, Democratic Services Officer Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1605 Councillor E. M. S. Gray
Climate Change Strategy 2026 to 2031 Key: No	Council 15 Jul 2026		Report of the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services	Matthew Eccles, Climate Change Manager Tel: 01527 881259 Councillor S. J. Baxter
Empty Homes Strategy Key: No	Council 15 Jul 2026		Report of the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services	Maria Bailey, Senior Housing Strategy Officer Tel: (01527) 881327 Councillor K. Taylor
Introduction of Enforcement of Littering from Vehicles Key: No	Council 15 Jul 2026	This report may contain exempt information that would need to be considered in private session	Report of the Director of Worcestershire Regulatory Services	Toni Ainscough, Principal Officer (Environmental Enforcement) Tel: 01562 738035 Councillor K. Taylor

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Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2025/26 Key: No	Council 15 Jul 2026		Report of the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Board	Sarah Woodfield, Democratic Services Officer Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 1605 Councillor P. M. McDonald
Quarter 3 2025/26 Finance and Performance Monitoring Report (including Financial Savings) Key: No	Council 15 Jul 2026		Report of the Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services	Debra Goodall, Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3070 Councillor S.T. Nock
Renters Right Act 2025 Key: No	Council 15 Jul 2026		Report of the Assistant Director Community and Housing Services	Matthew Bough, Housing Development and Enabling Manager, Katie Sharp-Fisher, Private Sector Housing Manager (Interim) Tel: 01527 64252, Councillor K. Taylor

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Revision of Environmental Crime Enforcement Policy Key: No	Council 15 Jul 2026		Report of the Director of Worcestershire Regulatory Services	Toni Ainscough, Principal Officer (Environmental Enforcement) Tel: 01562 738035 Councillor K. Taylor

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD (2026-2027)

ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Date of Meeting	Subject	Lead Officer / Member
16 th June 2026	<u>Administrative Items</u> Election of Chairman	Democratic Services
	Election of Vice Chairman	Chairman
	WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Election of Representative	Chairman
	<u>Overview Items</u> Bromsgrove Sports Leisure Centre (Level of support provided by BDC)	Rachel Egan, Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services
	AI (Uses and Risks for the Council) (TBC)	Peter Bailey/Mark Hanwell, ICT
	Libraries “Unlocked” Update (TBC)	Hannah Perrott, Assistant Director for Communities, Worcestershire County Council
	<u>Substantive Item</u> LGR Task Group Report	Chairman of the Board
	<u>Information Items</u> LGR Update	Hannah Corredor, Assistant Director Corporate Services and Transformation
21 st July 2026	<u>Overview Items</u>	
	<u>Information Items</u> Local Heritage Action List (Quarterly Update)	Mary Worsfold, Principal Conservation Officer
	LGR Update	Hannah Corredor, Assistant Director Corporate Services and Transformation
	Police and Crime Panel Update (TBC)	Councillor Helen Jones/ Chief Inspector Dave King
	Levelling Up Fund Programme (Quarterly Update)	Rachel Egan, Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services
15 th September 2026	<u>Substantive Items</u>	

Agenda Item 14

Date of Meeting	Subject	Lead Officer / Member
	<u>Information Items</u> Local Heritage Action List (Quarterly Update)	Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager
	LGR Update	Hannah Corredor, Assistant Director Corporate Services and Transformation
	Levelling Up Fund Programme (Quarterly Update)	Rachel Egan, Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services
17 th November 2026	<u>Substantive Items</u> 6-Month Review of Working Arrangements - Hybrid Leader and Cabinet Governance Model	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Democratic & Property Services (Monitoring Officer)
	<u>Information Items</u> LGR Update	Hannah Corredor, Assistant Director Corporate Services and Transformation
5 th January 2027	<u>Substantive Items</u>	
	<u>Information items</u> Local Heritage Action List (Quarterly Update)	Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager
	LGR Update	Hannah Corredor, Assistant Director Corporate Services and Transformation
	Levelling Up Fund Programme (Quarterly Update)	Rachel Egan, Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services
9 th February 2027	<u>Substantive Items</u>	
	<u>Information Items</u> LGR Update	Hannah Corredor, Assistant Director Corporate Services and Transformation
	Crime and Disorder Scrutiny – Annual Review of the Work of the Community Safety Partnership in the District	Bev Houghton, Community Safety Manager

Agenda Item 14

Date of Meeting	Subject	Lead Officer / Member
23 rd March 2027	<u>Substantive Items</u> Update on Heatwaves Preparedness (Yearly Update) (Impact of Heatwaves Task Group Recommendation).	Guy Revans, Executive Director
	<u>Information Items</u> Levelling Up Fund Programme (Quarterly Update)	Rachel Egan, Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services
	LGR Update	Hannah Corredor, Assistant Director Corporate Services and Transformation
	Local Heritage Action List (Quarterly Update)	Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager
13 th April 2027	<u>Substantive Items</u> Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2026-27	Chairman of the Board

FUTURE ITEMS FOR SCRUTINY (2026/27 municipal year)

Date of Meeting	Subject	Lead Officer / Member
	Capacity of the Minor Works Team (Requested 2/7/25 by Cllr McDonald) (TBA)	Rachel Egan, Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services

ALL MEMBER BRIEFINGS

Date of Meeting	Subject	Lead Officer / Member

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BDC Overview and Scrutiny Board - Action Sheet (2025/26)

10th February 2026

Subject	Action Required	Action Taken	Officer(s) Responsible	Other Comments	Status
Police and Crime Commissioner Update	1. The Board receive updates from the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel.	Emailed Councillor Helen Jones for comment 24/3/26	Sarah Woodfield		In Progress
Planning Advisory Service (PAS)	1. Training is provided for both Members and Officers to discuss aims and objectives to improve culture and behaviours for Planning Committee meetings.	11/2/26 – Emailed action to Officer	Guy Revans		In Progress
	2. The Action Plan for the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) recommendations is brought forward at its earliest convenience.	11/2/26 – Emailed action to Officer 5/3/26 – Requested update	Guy Revans		In Progress

24th March 2026

Crime and Disorder Scrutiny	1. To obtain a more detailed explanation from WRS on processes following “non-compliance” in planning enforcement cases and circulate this to Members	Emailed Officers 27/3/26	Bev Houghton		Outstanding
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	2. Police rep to share costings for cameras and details of existing tactical plans for the Rose Hill / Ten Ashes / Lickey Hills area with the relevant ward councillor(s).	Emailed Officers 27/3/26	Bev Houghton		Outstanding
LGR Update	1. To explore an LGR Task Group	Meeting to be set up with Hannah Corredor, Chairman of Board & PFH	Hannah Corredor/Sarah Woodfield		In Progress
	2. Explore the inclusion of the Corporate Risk Register as part of future LGR reporting to the Board	Emailed Officers 27/3/26	Hannah Corredor		Completed
Page 11	3. PFH to provide LGR route-map and key timeline for Member Circulation	Information was emailed to Members 25/3/26	Councillor Sue Baxter		Completed
	O & S Work Programme	To add AI (uses and risks for the Council) and “Libraries Unlocked” Update onto the work programme and liaise with relevant Officers	Emailed Officers 27/3/26	Sarah Woodfield	
O & S Action Sheet	To amend the PAS actions from Completed to In Progress		Sarah Woodfield		Completed

Overview and Scrutiny Board

14th April 2026

**LEVELLING UP REPORT – BROMSGROVE TOWN CENTRE
REGENERATION**

Relevant Portfolio Holder		Councillor Karen May
Portfolio Holder Consulted		
Relevant Head of Service		Rachel Egan – Assistant Director Regeneration and Property
Report Author	Rebecca McElliott Job Title: Regeneration Programme Manager email: Rebecca.Mcelllott@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk	
Wards Affected		All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted		No
Relevant Council Priorities		Economic Development Communities and Housing Infrastructure
Non-Key Decision		
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.		
This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended – Appendix A		

1. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Overview and Scrutiny Board is asked to **RESOLVE** that:

- 1) the update on the progress of the Levelling Up Fund projects be noted.

2. **BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a quarterly update on the continued progress of all regeneration schemes funded through the Levelling Up Fund (LUF).

Overview and Scrutiny Board14th April 2026

3. PROJECT UPDATES**Windsor Street Update**

- 3.1 Brownfield Solutions have successfully completed phase one of the remediation strategy. This included groundwater monitoring following the safe removal of contaminated soil. Results were submitted to the Environment Agency (EA) for technical review who provided feedback in November 2025, and it was determined that further remediation would be required.
- 3.2 Following feedback from the EA, the Project Manager met with City Demolition, Brownfield Solutions and Soilfix to agree the scope of works for phase 2 remediation which includes barrier injection works. This will take twelve weeks to complete, followed by a monitoring period of 12 months. The EA have confirmed that they are happy with the proposed phase 2 works but have advised that any future development on the site may require routine monitoring.
- 3.3 Phase 2 works will commence in April 2026 for a period of 12 weeks. This will be followed by the monitoring period which has an expected completion date of July 2027. Phase 2 is expected to cost approximately £464,000. The allocated funding for the Windsor Street project is £3,490,000. Phase 2 works will result in a project overspend of approximately £74,000. This will be funded by the LUF programme contingency budget.
- 3.4 The project team presented options for the future use of the site to Cabinet in November 2025, with a view to progress the preferred option following a decision. Cabinet resolved that their preferred option was to deliver housing on the site in partnership with a Registered Social Landlord (RSL). The Project Manager and Strategic Housing Services Manager have met with five RSLs that are actively seeking development sites in Bromsgrove to undertake some soft market testing. A report will be presented to Cabinet including their feedback with recommendations in June 2026. Officers will continue progressing enabling activities in parallel with remediation works to maintain strong project momentum.

Overview and Scrutiny Board

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Nailers Yard Site

- 3.5 Members will be aware that this project aims to regenerate a key brownfield site in Bromsgrove town centre by creating a vibrant new commercial and cultural hub on the former Market Hall site (which has been renamed Nailers Yard).
- 3.6 Construction works are progressing well, with both the Pavilion and Commercial buildings showing strong visible progress. Culvert works are ongoing with a new concrete base in place with concrete walls being installed. Heavy rainfall required temporary adjustments to pumping equipment. As a result of poor weather and a delay with the planning decision, there is a three-week delay which will result in a loss and expense claim by Kier. This has not yet been costed.
- 3.7 Part of the external works requires approval from Worcestershire County Council (WCC) under a S278 agreement. This approval was not secured by the original target date, which has caused a delay to the start of the external works. The project manager has continued to work closely with WCC to progress the outstanding technical requirements and has put in place an alternative route via a S184 licence to minimise further delay. The Council is also reviewing the circumstances surrounding the delay and will consider appropriate actions as required. A more detailed explanation of the issues and next steps is provided in Appendix A.
- 3.8 The project team carried out an options appraisal for the operation and management of the Pavilion building, considering both in-house delivery and the appointment of a third-party operator. It was agreed that, as the Council does not currently have the specialist expertise or capacity required to operate the facility, a third-party operating model would be the preferred approach.
- 3.9 Following this, a soft market testing exercise was carried out between 26th January and 9th February 2026 to seek early market insight from organisations interested in operating and managing the Pavilion Building at Nailers Yard. The brief was published on the Proactis portal. The Council received only one response from Rubicon Leisure Limited. Rubicon Leisure Limited is the Redditch Borough Council-owned company that runs Redditch's main leisure, culture, and community facilities — everything from the Abbey Stadium gym and pool to community centres, events, and arts venues.

Overview and Scrutiny Board

14th April 2026

- 3.10 Due to Rubicon Leisure Limited having the relevant expertise and experience operating similar facilities, approval was sought from the Levelling Up Fund Board to appoint them. Negotiations on the Service Level Agreement are progressing positively.

- 3.11 GJS Dillon continue to market the commercial building, with active interest and site viewings underway. One tenant has confirmed they require floors one and two. Once the lease is finalised, details of the tenant will be shared.

- 3.12 The full business case (FBC) for the former Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) funding was submitted to Birmingham City Council on 19th September 2025, culminating in Birmingham City Council Cabinet approval on 20 January 2026. This will enable funds to be paid in Quarter 1 of 2026/2027 towards the Nailers Yard project. This represents a major funding success and strengthens the financial position of the programme.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council has been given a further extension from the Government for the Levelling Up Fund to the end of March 2028. The funds have all been drawn down and will be spent within the current financial year.

- 4.2 The original budget for the programme was £16.103m which was made up of the Levelling Up Fund and the Council’s contribution. This was allocated to the following projects within Bromsgrove:

Project	Funding allocated
Windsor Street	£3,471,000
Nailers Yard (former Market Hall)	£10,399,000
Public Realm	£2,233,000

- 4.3 The public realm project was completed in early 2025 with a confirmed underspend of £927,335. The Nailers Yard and Windsor Street projects are ongoing.

- 4.4 Further to the Levelling Up Fund money (£14.5m) being awarded to Bromsgrove District Council, some additional funding was awarded to

Overview and Scrutiny Board

14th April 2026

the projects in Bromsgrove. These sums total £3,518,612 and are as follows:

Funding source	£ total received
UK Share Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) - Nailers Yard	224,364
Brownfield Land Release Fund	722,748
UKSPF - Windsor Street	84,000
Levelling Up Fund	62,500
GBSLEP	2,425,000
Total	3,518,612

- 4.5 Bromsgrove District Council originally agreed to contribute up to £1.6m to the programme. In August 2025, this was increased to £2.1m.
- 4.6 Thus the overall funding secured for the programme is £20,118,612 (£18,018,612 in external funding and £2,100,000 in Council funding).
- 4.7 The Windsor Street project is delayed due to a requirement for further remediation, and the revised completion date is July 2027. The current spend to date as of 17th February 2026 on site purchase, clearance and remediation is £3.105m.
- 4.8 The Nailers Yard project is likely to be delayed until Summer 2026 due to the delay in agreeing the S278 works. The current spend to date as of 16th March 2026 is approximately £14.347m.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are legal implications arising from the contracts between the Council and various third parties (consultants and contractors). They are specific to each contract and assessed by the Council's legal team.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation Implications

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14th April 2026

- 6.1 Following Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), any ongoing revenue income from the Nailers Yard development and Windsor Street site will transfer to the new Unitary Council.

Relevant Council Priorities

- 6.2 This project supports the following Council Priorities:

Economic Development, Communities and Housing and Infrastructure.

- 6.3 The work on this project supports economic development and regeneration as well as a balanced housing market.

- 6.4 The regeneration project at Nailers Yard provides workspace and will enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre with the extra food and beverage offer and the community space.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.5 Through the redevelopment of the Nailers Yard site, energy efficiency measures and Low and Zero Carbon technologies will be introduced with a view to reduce operational energy consumption and the associated carbon emissions targets. These include introducing U values better than Building Regulations Part L, mechanical ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR), natural ventilation where possible, utilising building thermal mass, high efficiency air source heat pumps and low energy LED lighting. The Nailers Yard site commits to achieving a minimum Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methodology (BREEAM) 'very good' rating on this site.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.6 There are no specific equalities and diversity implications.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 As part of the governance and reporting requirements, a risk register has been produced for each sub project. The five highest scoring risks for the Levelling Up programme are as follows:

Overview and Scrutiny Board

14th April 2026

Project	Risk	Comments
Nailers Yard	Culvert works	Potential cost and time implications.
Nailers Yard	Commercial units are not let – Council responsible for void costs	GJS Dillon actively marketing units.
Nailers Yard	S278 works	Potential cost and time implications.
Windsor Street	Remediation strategy	Environment Agency need to sign off prior to any development on site.
Windsor Street	Inability to partner with RSL (conflicting priorities and/or lack of interest)	Soft market testing ongoing prior to presenting options to Cabinet.

8. **APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The Levelling Up Programme has been reviewed at the following meetings:

- Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Levelling Up Programme update report October 2025
- O&S Levelling Up Programme update report July 2025
- O&S Levelling Up Programme update report February 2025
- O&S Levelling Up Programme update report November 2024
- Bromsgrove Town Centre Regeneration July 2024
- Bromsgrove Town Centre Regeneration – Cabinet, 14th February 2024
- Bromsgrove 2040 Vision, Cabinet 12th July 2023
- Market Hall Proposal – Cabinet 15th March 2023
- Market Hall Scrutiny – Overview and Scrutiny, 13th March 2023.
- Levelling Up Fund Update – Overview and Scrutiny, 24th October 2022.

Overview and Scrutiny Board

14th April 2026

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Karen May	1/4/2026
Lead Director / Head of Service	Rachel Egan AD Regeneration and Property	17/3/2026
Financial Services	Debra Goodall	19/3/2026
Legal and Democratic Services	Nicola Cummings, Principal Solicitor – Governance Jess Bayley-Hill, Principal Democratic Services Officer	31/03/26
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	Not Applicable	N/A
Climate Change Team	Matthew Eccles	19/3/2026

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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