Executive Committee

Tuesday, 28th July, 2026

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Matthew Dormer (Chair), Councillor Craig Warhurst (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Brandon Clayton, Wanda King and Ashley Monk

Officers:

Matthew Austin, James Bevan, Matthew Bough, Paul Earley, Claire Felton, John Leach, Simon Parry and Katie Sharp-Fisher

Democratic Services Officers:

Eve Davies

19. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillor Gemma Monaco.

20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

21. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader asked Members to note that at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 27th July 2026, the following items had been pre-scrutinised:

- Housing Assistance Policy 2026
- Food Waste Collections Implementation

Following discussions, the Committee endorsed the recommendations set out in the reports. The Committee also proposed further recommendations in relation to the Housing Assistance Policy 2026, which were detailed in the 'Additional Papers 2' pack.

On behalf of the Executive Committee, the Leader thanked the Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their work in pre-scrutinising the reports.

22. HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY 2026

The Private Sector Housing Manager presented a report regarding the Housing Assistance Policy 2026.

The Committee was advised that the purpose of the policy was to support disabled and vulnerable individuals to remain living independently in their own homes. Assistance typically included adaptations such as stairlifts, level-access showers and extensions to facilitate ground-floor living arrangements.

Members noted that, whilst the majority of the elements of mandatory grants were prescribed by legislation, the Council was required to maintain a local policy to set out its approach to a number of discretionary elements for the application of discretionary funding. This included the provision of top-up funding where the cost of necessary adaptations exceeded the grant funding available.

The revised policy had been developed collaboratively by officers from all Worcestershire local authorities. The shared approach was intended to improve the customer experience, ensure consistency across the county and support preparations for Local Government Reorganisation.

The Committee was informed that the principal amendments to the 2024 policy had been made to achieve three key objectives:

- To establish a common policy across Worcestershire authorities and provide greater clarity and consistency of arrangements.
- To adopt nationally recognised performance targets in order to improve delivery timescales for urgent and non-urgent, as well as complex and non-complex, cases.
- To remove additional discretionary fees for high-value adaptations, thereby providing greater flexibility to approve exceptional cases.

Members also noted that the policy recognised the Armed Forces Covenant and set out how the Council would work with local organisations to ensure that serving personnel, veterans and their families received appropriate support where required.

In relation to funding, the Committee was advised that the revised policy would not place any additional financial burden on the Council. Funding for housing assistance was provided by Government through the Better Care Fund and through recycled funding arising from previous assistance cases where repayment conditions had been triggered.

In concluding the presentation, the Private Sector Housing Manager advised that the policy would enable the Council to meet its statutory responsibilities, provide a fair and transparent framework for housing assistance, support residents to remain independent in their homes, improve energy efficiency and help address service failures where identified.

Following presentation of the report, the Committee considered the recommendations that had been proposed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held the previous evening as set out below:

RECOMMENDED that

The following amendments be made to the Housing Assistance Policy 2026:

1) Wording be added to the first paragraph of section 13 – Decisions, Notifications and Redeterminations, to read: “The Council will do everything it can to fast track cases where applicants have rapidly progressing or terminal conditions.”

2) Information is set out at the beginning of the document on who is eligible to apply under the Policy (both for the Disabled Facilities Grant and any discretionary assistance set out under the Policy).

3) That the financial eligibility criteria (i.e. income and savings test limits and contribution thresholds for amounts above the limit) are clearly set out in the Policy and communicated through information on the Disabled Facilities Grant available on the Council’s website.

4) That the Policy is accessible in the languages of communities identified as being under-represented in accessing Disabled Facilities Grant.

In considering the recommendations proposed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Members were advised that arrangements were already in place to prioritise applications involving residents who were receiving end-of-life or palliative care, or who were living with a rapidly progressing illness. Occupational Therapists were able to award an additional thirty priority points at the start of the assessment process, enabling such cases to be fast-tracked where appropriate. Works would then be resolved within fifty-five days, where possible. It was acknowledged that the report could be amended to provide greater clarity regarding these arrangements and the role of Occupational Therapists in prioritising cases.

With regard to eligibility criteria, officers confirmed that the relevant information was already contained within the policy. However, it was recognised that further clarification could be incorporated to make the criteria easier for applicants to understand.

Members also considered comments relating to the financial eligibility criteria. Officers explained that the means-testing process was complex and assessed a range of factors, including household income, savings and pension arrangements. As a result, it was not possible to provide fixed income or savings thresholds within the policy. It was further noted that the means-testing framework was set by central Government and subject to periodic amendment. To assist applicants, officers suggested that links to further information regarding the means-testing process could be provided on the Council’s website.

Members also raised questions regarding the cost of translation services and the associated resource implications.

Following detailed discussions regarding the proposed recommendations, Members agreed to note the comments provided by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED that

1) The Housing Assistance Policy be approved and adopted; and

2) Delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to agree any revisions to the Housing Assistance Policy and in line with any legislative or government guidance updates.

23. FOOD WASTE COLLECTIONS IMPLEMENTATION

The Environmental Services Manager presented the Food Waste Collections Implementation report.

Members were advised that the requirement to introduce a separate food waste collection service had been established under the Environment Act 2021, with a compliance deadline of the end of March 2026. As part of the Act, the Government had committed to providing capital funding for vehicles and containers, together with ongoing revenue funding to support service delivery. Whilst capital funding had been received, the Government had delayed providing details of the ongoing revenue funding arrangements. Members were informed that no specific allocation for food waste collections had been identified within the Local Government Finance Settlement and there had been no significant increase in funding to support implementation costs.

It was reported that a number of local authorities had opted not to implement the service at this stage, including Wyre Forest District Council, due to concerns regarding funding.

The Committee was advised that Redditch Borough Council and Bromsgrove District Council had been working together to develop a joint service. A joint procurement exercise had initially been undertaken with Wyre Forest District Council because of limited depot capacity across the area and the intention to use a third-party provider to support delivery and share risk. However, following changes to the funding position, Wyre Forest District Council had withdrawn from the procurement process, meaning that the original proposal could not proceed.

As part of the Council’s financial planning, provision had been made within the Medium Term Financial Plan to address an anticipated shortfall in revenue funding. However, Members were informed that this funding would now be required to support the overall rollout of the service.

The Environmental Services Manager explained that the proposed approach would initially provide food waste collections to approximately fifty per cent of households in Redditch, commencing between late January and early February of the following year. Members noted that the collection vehicles had a lead time of approximately twelve months and were expected to arrive in December 2026. The service would therefore be introduced in phases, rather than being implemented across the whole Borough at once. This phased approach would enable the Council to ensure the service was operating effectively before extending it further.

It was highlighted that a number of local authorities, including Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, had implemented their services on a Borough-wide basis from the outset and had subsequently experienced significant operational difficulties. Members were advised that the phased rollout was intended to mitigate these risks, avoid disruption to existing recycling services and protect the Council’s reputation.

The report also outlined proposals for additional funding to support the eventual expansion of the service to all households. Members were informed that the Council was not currently compliant with its statutory duties in relation to food waste collections. However, commencing implementation would demonstrate progress towards compliance and reduce the risk of legal challenge. It was further noted that Government was not currently taking enforcement action against authorities that had yet to fully implement the service and that none of the Worcestershire local authorities were fully compliant at that stage.

The Committee was advised that the additional funding requirement identified within the report would enable the Council to recruit the necessary staff and deliver further collection rounds, with the aim of achieving full implementation of the service by summer 2028.

Members also noted that the delivery of food waste caddies would be undertaken by in-house staff. This approach was considered advantageous as staff had developed a detailed knowledge of the local area and would be able to support the rollout effectively from the outset.

Consideration was also given to the proposed leasing of land to support service delivery. The Committee was advised that the Council did not have sufficient space at its existing facilities and would therefore need to utilise privately leased land with sufficient space for vehicle storage and staff parking. Although efforts had been made to identify a single suitable site, negotiations were currently taking place in relation to two smaller sites which together would meet operational requirements.

Associated costs would be shared between Redditch Borough and Bromsgrove District Councils on a 60:40 basis, with Bromsgrove District Council meeting the larger proportion. The proposed lease arrangement would provide operational security whilst also recognising the uncertainty surrounding Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). A five-year lease with a three-year break clause was therefore proposed, providing flexibility to review requirements as LGR progressed and alternative sites potentially became available.

Following presentation of the report, Members had detailed discussions and made the following comments:

- Concerns were raised regarding potential hygiene and odour issues associated with food waste collections, together with questions about where the collected waste would be processed and any impact on local communities. Members were advised that food waste would be transported to an anaerobic digestion facility operated by Severn Trent Green Power in Kinver. Food waste would not be stored overnight in vehicles or at operational sites except in the event of a breakdown, and no adverse impacts on local residents were anticipated.
- The scheme would divert a significant proportion of food waste from the residual waste stream, reducing the volume sent for incineration. Approximately thirty per cent of the average household residual waste bin was estimated to consist of food waste.
- Household participation rates remained uncertain and planning assumptions were based on a fifty per cent uptake rate, reflecting national experience. A communications campaign, including letters and social media activity, would support the rollout and encourage participation.
- The initiative also aligned with wider waste minimisation objectives by encouraging residents to reduce food waste and maximise recycling.
- It was noted that disposal arrangements had only recently been finalised once implementation timescales became clearer. Whilst the preferred treatment facility had limited remaining capacity, local authority food waste was generally preferred by operators due to its varied composition and so would be prioritised.
- The phased implementation approach was welcomed as it would allow operational issues to be identified and resolved before the service was expanded Borough-wide. Lessons could also be learned from the experiences of other authorities that had encountered difficulties with full-scale implementation from the outset.
- The Chief Executive advised that correspondence had been submitted to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) outlining the Council’s circumstances and demonstrating that all

reasonable efforts were being made to comply with statutory requirements.

- It was emphasised that the implementation timetable set out in the report should be adhered to.
- Members were informed that food waste collections would take place on a weekly basis. Residents would receive a seven-litre kitchen caddy and a twenty-three-litre external food waste container, with food waste collected on the same day as residual waste.
- Existing assisted collection arrangements for elderly and disabled residents would be extended to include food waste collections, with further information to be provided as part of the communications campaign.
- Flats and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) would be included in a later phase of the rollout to enable lessons learned from the initial implementation to be applied.
- The external food waste containers would be fully sealed and fitted with locking lids to minimise spillages and reduce the risk of pests.
- The Council would provide food waste liners, with an initial supply delivered alongside the caddies and further supplies available on request rather than through blanket distribution.
- Providing liners was intended to increase participation and reduce concerns regarding cleanliness of kitchen caddies. Experience from other authorities indicated that the provision of liners resulted in higher usage rates. Approximately £8,000 had been allocated for the initial supply of liners, with a further £5,000 to £6,000 earmarked for future distribution.
- The liners would be manufactured from a plastic polymer rather than compostable material, as this was the preferred option at the treatment facility. Compostable liners could also interfere with processing and had a shorter storage life.
- Members noted that the proposed approach reflected a model that had been successfully adopted by a number of authorities nationally.

NOTED the progress made on food waste collection implementation.

RESOLVED that Authority be granted to the Assistant Director for Regeneration and Property Services to negotiate and finalise the terms of the lease for land identified to operate food waste collections from.

RECOMMENDED that an allocation of additional ongoing revenue of £376,311 for the expansion of the food waste collection service from 2027/28 is considered as part of the Medium-Term Financial Plan, with any decision deferred until the full financial implications are assessed alongside wider funding priorities through the budget process.

24. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN SCENE SETTING REPORT 2027/28

The Financial Services Manager presented the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Scene Setting Report.

Members were advised that the report represented the first stage in the process of preparing the 2027/28 budget and the Medium Term Financial Plan through to 2030/31. The report set out the proposed timetable, key assumptions and financial issues that would inform the development of future budget proposals.

It was noted that the report had been prepared during a period of significant change. Whilst the Government had provided a three-year financial settlement, uncertainty remained beyond that period. Members also recognised the implications of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and the approach of vesting day, which created additional uncertainty for long-term financial planning.

The Financial Services Manager highlighted three key messages arising from the report. Firstly, the Council continued to face a number of significant financial pressures. An initial review of the budget had identified pressures totalling approximately three million pounds. Members were advised that a number of savings and efficiency measures had yet to be delivered and that some one-off savings, including those achieved through vacancy management, had not been incorporated into the Council’s base budget. In addition, projected shortfalls within the Town Hall budget and other emerging pressures indicated that further action would be required to address the funding gap.

Secondly, Members were advised of the need to continue prudent financial planning. The assumptions underpinning the MTFP included provision for a two per cent pay award, annual increases in fees and charges, and Council tax increases in line with Government expectations and referendum limits. Despite these assumptions, the financial settlement did not fully offset rising costs, including pay, contractual commitments and inflationary pressures. The Council would therefore need to continue identifying efficiencies and opportunities to strengthen its long-term financial sustainability.

Thirdly, the report highlighted the uncertainty surrounding future local government funding arrangements as a consequence of LGR. As details continued to emerge, the Council's financial planning would need to take account of the associated risks and uncertainties.

In summary, the Committee noted that the report provided the framework for the development of the 2027/28 budget, set out the principal financial challenges and assumptions facing the Council, and established the timetable through which detailed budget proposals would be brought forward for Member consideration.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance highlighted the need to address the two point three million pound savings requirement. He stated that the administration would take greater ownership of the budget process moving forward and noted that additional pressures could arise if future pay awards exceeded the contingency included within the financial assumptions. He further commented that local government remained underfunded and advised that he would be working closely with the Director of Finance and the Finance team to identify savings and address emerging budget gaps.

In response to a query regarding the impact of national policy changes and the future of the New Homes Bonus, officers advised that the funding stream had not been confirmed as ending entirely. It was noted that the local government funding landscape remained highly fluid, making it difficult at this stage to identify with certainty which funding streams would continue beyond the current settlement period. Greater clarity was expected as vesting day approached.

RESOLVED that

1) **The budget process outlined in this report be followed for the 2027/28 annual budget and the Medium Term Financial Plan (2027/28 to 2030/31) subject to the impact of Local Government Reorganisation and vesting day on 1 April 2028.**

2) **The current pressures of £2.338m be noted for consideration as part of the budget process for 2027/28.**

25. TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT 2025/26

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance presented the Treasury Management Outturn Report for 2025/26.Members were advised that the report presented a positive position and confirmed that the Council had complied with its Treasury Management Strategy. The report also highlighted how the Council had managed treasury activity during a period of global market and economic uncertainty.

Members noted that the Council's investments remained in a positive position and that borrowing was well within approved limits. The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance commented that this demonstrated responsible financial management from a treasury perspective.

Officers clarified that the reported borrowing figure of one hundred and sixty million pounds included one hundred and twenty five million pounds relating to previous refinancing of the Housing Revenue Account.

RECOMMENDED that

1) **the Council's Treasury performance for the financial year 25/26 be noted.**

2) **the position in relation to the Council's Prudential indicators be noted.**

26. QUARTER 4 FINANCIAL MONITORING AND OUTTURN REPORT 2025/26

The Financial Services Manager presented the Quarter Four Financial Monitoring and Outturn Report for 2025/26.

The Committee was advised that the report set out the Council's final financial position for 2025/26, including performance against budget, explanations for key variances, and the impact on Council balances, reserves and the capital programme.

It was reported that the Council had closed the financial year with an overspend of £579,000. Members noted that this was significantly lower than some of the service pressures projected during the year. The overspend had been funded from the General Fund balance.

The largest service pressures were within Finance and Customer Services, this was largely as a result of a housing benefit subsidy shortfall of one point two million pounds. Additional budget pressures had arisen from the use of agency staffing and work relating to VAT. Environmental Services had also experienced an overspend, largely due to fleet maintenance costs and bereavement services. Members were informed that many of these pressures were one-off in nature and were not expected to recur. These issues, together with income shortfalls and recruitment challenges, would be reflected in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) scene-setting report.

The Committee noted that the Council had benefited from positive corporate finance outcomes during the year, including one point six million pounds in Section 31 grant funding and £541,000 of investment income.

Despite the year-end overspend, the Council remained in a relatively stable financial position, with a General Fund balance of £6.79 million. It was highlighted that these balances provided an important degree of financial resilience. Members also noted that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) position was broadly in line with budget and that the Council continued to invest in its housing stock, energy efficiency measures and the delivery of new homes.

In conclusion, Members noted that while an overspend had been recorded at year-end, the report provided a clear explanation of the underlying pressures and outlined the actions being taken to address them.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance commented that the Council's financial position had changed since Quarter Four, with overspends now anticipated in relation to both the Innovation Centre and the Town Hall. He advised that work was being undertaken with the Director of Finance to gain a clearer understanding of earmarked reserves and balances, including reviewing projects to ensure that resources were directed towards schemes that were deliverable. Where projects were no longer considered achievable, consideration would be given to reallocating resources accordingly.

RESOLVED that

1) **the updated procurements position set out in Appendix A to the minutes be noted, with any new items over £0.200m to be included on the forward plan.**

RECOMMENDED that

2) **The 2025/26 revenue outturn position is an overspend of £0.579m which will be funded by an allocation from the General Fund Balance.**
3) **The Ward Budget allocation for 2025/26 of £54,000 had approved allocations at £46,900 as at 31 March 2026, resulting in £7,100 which is transferred to General Fund reserves.**
4) **The General Fund Balance of £7.364m (as at 1 April 2025) being reduced to £6.792m as a result of the £0.579m overspend and the £0.007m net transfer from Ward Budget Reserves using the approach previously agreed with members**
5) **The outturn position in respect of the GF Earmarked Reserves is £20.957m and HRA Earmarked Reserves is £9.160m as at 31 March 2026.**
6) **The 2025/26 capital outturn position is £8.154m spend against a total estimated programme of £31.847m. The net balance of £23.693m will be carried forward and included for review within the 2026/27 capital programme.**
7) **HRA net operating expenditure is £0.397m, broadly in line with the revised budget, and is break even after a small variance in planned use of balances at year end. Capital Expenditure is net £1.326m more than budget and the balance be carried forward and included in the 2026/27 HRA capital programme.**

27. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Members considered the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 8th June 2026.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 8th June 2026 be noted.

28. MINUTES / REFERRALS - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, EXECUTIVE PANELS ETC.

There were no minutes or referrals from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or any of the Executive Advisory Panels on this occasion, other than those already detailed.

29. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 9th June 2026 be approved.

30. TO CONSIDER ANY URGENT BUSINESS, DETAILS OF WHICH HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED TO THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, DEMOCRATIC AND PROCUREMENT SERVICES PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE MEETING AND WHICH THE CHAIR, BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, CONSIDERS TO BE OF SO URGENT A NATURE THAT IT CANNOT WAIT UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING

There was no urgent business on this occasion

The Meeting commenced at 6.01 pm
and closed at 7.03 pm