



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED to attend a MEETING of BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL to be held in the Council Chamber at The Council House, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove at 6.00 p.m. on Wednesday 25th February 2015, when the business referred to below will be brought under consideration:-

The formal business will be preceded by a prayer.

1. **To receive apologies for absence**

2. **Declarations of Interest**

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

3. **To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 19th January 2015 (Pages 1 - 8)**

4. **To receive any announcements from the Chairman, the Civic Head and/or Head of Paid Service**

5. **To receive any announcements from the Leader**

6. **Membership of Committees**

Council is asked to note that

- (a) Councillor C. R. Scurrall has replaced Councillor H. J. Jones as a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Board; and
- (b) Councillor R. J. Laight has replaced Councillor H. J. Jones as the Vice- Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

7. **Recommendations from the Cabinet - Medium Term Financial Plan 2015/16 - 2017/18 (Pages 9 - 16)**

- To consider the recommendations from the meetings of the Cabinet held on 4th February 2015 (attached) and 25th February 2015 (to be tabled at the meeting) relating to the Medium Term Financial Plan 2015/16 – 2017/18

(The full Cabinet reports are enclosed for information at the back of the Council agenda book)

- To consider an Alternative Budget 2015/16 and Medium Term Financial Plan from the Independent Alliance Group (attached)
- To consider an Alternative Budget 2015/16 and Medium Term Financial Plan from the Labour Group (to follow)

Note: that under the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, the Council is required to take a named vote when a decision is made on the budget calculation or precept at a budget decision meeting of the Council.

Note: that under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, any Councillor who is 2 or more months in arrears with their Council Tax payments cannot participate in any item at the Council meeting concerning the budget. This statutory provision overrides any dispensation granted.

8. **To set the Council Tax for 2015/16 (The Proposed Statutory Resolutions will be tabled at the Meeting)**

Note: that under the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, the Council is required to take a named vote when a decision is made on the budget calculation or precept at a budget decision meeting of the Council.

Note: that under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, any Councillor who is 2 or more months in arrears with their Council Tax payments cannot participate in any item at the Council meeting concerning the budget. This statutory provision overrides any dispensation granted.

9. **To receive the minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 3rd December 2014, 7th January 2015 and 4th February 2015 (Pages 17 - 36)**

10. **Report and Recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel**
(Pages 37 - 54)

The Independent Remuneration Panel makes recommendations to the Council about the level of allowances, to which the Council “has regard”. The Panel’s report for 2015/16 is enclosed.

11. **Questions on Notice**

To deal with any questions on notice from Members of the Council, in the order in which they have been received.

12. **Motions (to follow if any)**

Background Information on Recommendations from the Cabinet on 4th February 2015 - Medium Term Financial Plan 2015/16 - 2017/18_(Pages 55 - 70)

Background Information on Recommendations from the Cabinet on 25th February 2015 - Medium Term Financial Plan 2015/16 - 2017/18_(Pages 71 - 90)

K. DICKS
Chief Executive

The Council House
Burcot Lane
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B60 1AA

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

19TH JANUARY 2015 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors J. M. L. A. Griffiths (Chairman), S. J. Baxter, C. J. Bloore, D. W. P. Booth, J. M. Boswell, J. R. Boulter, J. S. Brogan, M. A. Bullivant, R. A. Clarke, S. R. Colella, R. L. Dent, K. A. Grant-Pearce, P. A. Harrison, H. J. Jones, R. J. Laight, P. Lammas, B. Lewis, L. C. R. Mallett, E. J. Murray, C. R. Scurrrell, R. J. Shannon, S. P. Shannon, M. A. Sherrey, C. J. Spencer, C. B. Taylor, C. J. Tidmarsh, L. J. Turner, M. J. A. Webb, P. J. Whittaker and C. J. K. Wilson

60\14 **MRS M. W. V. FIRMINGER AND MR B. A. TAYLOR**

The Chairman held a minutes silence in memory of the late Mrs M. W. V. Firminger who was a former Chairman of the Council and Mr B. A. Taylor a former Member of the Council. Members and officers stood in silence in tribute to their memories.

61\14 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M. T. Buxton, B. T. Cooper, R. J. Deeming, S. J. Dudley, R. Hollingworth, C. M. McDonald, P. M. McDonald, J. A. Ruck and E. M. Shannon.

62\14 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

63\14 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 19th November 2014 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

64\14 **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN, THE CIVIC HEAD AND/OR HEAD OF PAID SERVICE**

The Deputy Civic Head drew Members' attention to the Holocaust Memorial Day event which would take place in the Council Chamber at 11.30am on Tuesday, 23rd January 2015. All Members were invited to attend the event.

65\14 **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER**

There were no announcements from the Leader on this occasion.

66\14 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 3RD DECEMBER 2014**

(i) **Finance Monitoring – Quarter 2 2014/15**

The recommendation from the Cabinet was proposed by Councillor M. J. A. Webb and seconded by Councillor M. A. Bullivant.

In proposing the recommendation Councillor Webb referred to the need to draw down from the Business Transformation Earmarked Reserve, the sum of £90,000 to meet the cost of works required to meet new guidelines in respect of the Public Service Network (PSN). All Councils were required to meet the new guidelines from Central Government.

During the debate Members raised a number of queries regarding the Council's expenditure to date to meet the requirements of the PSN, including the purchase of iPads and the necessary licences for the use of Members. A number of Members expressed the view that the iPads may not be providing value for money because of restrictions on their use and queried whether the decisions taken had achieved the best solutions.

Reference was made to the trial use of the iPads which had been undertaken by a number of Members and which had appeared to be satisfactory. However, the solution introduced because of the need for additional security in line with the PSN requirements, was less effective in the view of some Councillors. It was suggested that additional information was required before the Council agreed to the expenditure of £90,000.

Following discussion it was

RESOLVED that the sum of £90,000 be drawn down from a Business Transformation earmarked reserve to be utilised to help meet the capital costs of compliance with the Public Services Network Project.

(ii) **Environmental Services Transformation and Shared Services Businesses Case**

The Chairman stated that this recommendation would be considered at the end of the meeting as it was likely reference would be made to confidential or exempt matters.

67\14

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 7TH JANUARY 2015

(i) New Homes Bonus

It was proposed by Councillor M. J. A. Webb and seconded by Councillor M. A. Bullivant and

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the New Homes Bonus Allocation Scheme attached as an appendix to the report be approved; and
- (b) that consideration of an appropriate percentage/amount of New Homes Bonus to be allocated to the scheme be deferred until the next meeting of the Cabinet in order that it can be fully considered as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan process.

(ii) Council Tax Support Scheme 2015/16

The recommendations from the Cabinet were proposed by Councillor M. J. A. Webb and seconded by Councillor M. A. Bullivant.

In proposing the recommendations Councillor Webb referred to the background to this issue which had arisen from a reduction in funding for Council Tax Support from Central Government.

Since the new arrangements had come into force two years ago, this Council had introduced changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme which had avoided the need to cap entitlement to Council Tax Support. This was no longer a sustainable position and many other Authorities from across the Country had already introduced similar measures. Failure to take appropriate steps would result in a reduction in funding to Worcestershire County Council and there was a strong risk this would be clawed back by the County Council.

Councillor Webb also referred to the two extensive public consultations which had been undertaken, which had resulted in a disappointingly low response rate and to the Hardship Scheme which was proposed in order to alleviate some of the difficulties experienced.

During the debate the view was expressed that the Council should continue to protect the "working poor" by maintaining 100% Council Tax Support and by challenging the County Council on any proposals to claw back funding to this Council. It was also suggested that the changes would result in inequalities, lead to increased debt and would have a negative impact on the local economy.

Other Councillors expressed concern at the potential impact the changes would have but referred to the shortfall of £324,000 which could be clawed back by the other preceptors and the impact this would have on Bromsgrove residents.

Following discussion it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Council Tax Support Scheme as amended be approved, namely
 - (i) that entitlement to Council Tax Support be capped at 80% of Council Tax liability;
 - (ii) that provision for a second adult rebate be removed; and
 - (iii) that the future “uprating “ of some of the figures to take account of other national changes in benefits and allowances be approved.
- (b) that the proposed Hardship Scheme as attached as an appendix to the report be approved; and
- (c) that no changes be made to the provisions relating to non-dependents income.

(iii) Council Tax Base 2015/16

It was proposed by Councillor M. J. A. Webb and seconded by Councillor M. A. Bullivant and

RESOLVED that the amount calculated by Bromsgrove District Council as the Council tax Base for the whole area be approved at 34,907.84 as detailed at appendix 1 to the report to include the individual parish elements.

(iv) Medium Term Financial Plan Update – Parish Council Grant

The recommendations from the Cabinet were proposed by Councillor M. J. A. Webb and seconded by Councillor M. A. Bullivant

In proposing the recommendations Councillor Webb referred to the methods by which the Parish Council grant had been distributed in previous years. It was felt that the current proposal for distribution of the funding was an equitable system which would benefit both parished and non parished areas of the District.

During debate the main issues raised were:-

- that the entire sum of £38,000 should be distributed to the Parish Councils as other areas did not have a Council Tax base and so had no funding deficit to be met;

- that no evaluation had been undertaken of the operation of the Ward Members funding scheme which was currently in place. Some Members felt that the scheme had usefully enabled a number of small projects to be delivered within individual Wards and should be continued, especially in non-parished areas where no local precept was available..

Following discussion it was

RESOLVED that in relation to the Parish Council Grant receivable from Central Government for 2015/16, the estimated sum of £30,000 be allocated proportionately to the Parish Councils and the remaining £8,000 be shared with the non parished areas of the District.

(v) **Car Parking Charges – Evening Parking**

The recommendation from the Cabinet was proposed by Councillor M. A. Bullivant and seconded by Councillor R. J. Laight.

In proposing the recommendation Councillor Bullivant referred to the benefit which would accrue to the night time economy within the town of free parking within pay and display car parks after 7.00pm. There would be a need to meet the anticipated shortfall in car park income of approximately £60,000 from balances. It was intended that officers would seek to establish the benefits of the proposal to businesses following the twelve month trial period.

Councillor S. P. Shannon queried the timing of the Cabinet decision in view of the Overview and Scrutiny Board Short Sharp Review of car parking which would be likely to make a number of alternative recommendations to the Cabinet.

A number of Members made reference to other matters which it was felt should be considered such as free parking on Sundays; for the over 65's and for "Blue Badge" holders.

In response a number of Members welcomed the proposal and felt that there would be a benefit both to local businesses and to residents.

Following discussion it was

RESOLVED that the shortfall in projected income of £60,000 for the free car parking trial period be met from balances.

68\14

APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Council considered a report requesting the appointment of a representative and a substitute from the three North Worcestershire Districts to the Greater

Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership and the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership Local Transport Board.

The following appointments were proposed by Councillor M. A. Sherrey and seconded by Councillor C. B. Taylor

- (a) that Councillor J. P. Campion (Wyre Forest District Council) be appointed as this Council's representative on Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership with Councillor B. Hartnett (Redditch Borough Council) as a substitute representative;
- (b) that Councillor J. P. Campion be appointed as this Council's representative on the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership Local Transport Board with Councillor P. Mould (Redditch Borough Council) as a substitute representative.

It was proposed by Councillor Mallett and seconded by Councillor C. J. Bloore that Councillor M. J. A. Webb be appointed as this Council's representative on the two organisations.

Councillor Webb subsequently declined the nominations.

A number of Members expressed concern that there would not be a specific representative from Bromsgrove on these two organisations and that Bromsgrove's specific interests may be overlooked.

Councillor C. B. Taylor made reference to the current constitutions of the organisations, which required the election by all three North Worcestershire Councils of one representative (and one substitute member) for the three Councils. It was therefore not possible currently for the Leader to solely represent Bromsgrove District Council.

It was therefore

RESOLVED:

- (a) that Councillor J. P. Campion (Wyre Forest District Council) be appointed as this Council's representative on Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership with Councillor B. Hartnett (Redditch Borough Council) as a substitute representative; and
- (b) that Councillor J. P. Campion be appointed as this Council's representative on the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership Local Transport Board with Councillor P. Mould (Redditch Borough Council) as a substitute representative.

69\14

MOTION - MENTAL HEALTH PLEDGE

Members considered the following motion submitted by Councillor M. A. Sherrey:

That this Council supports the Time to Change pledge as follows:

To reduce the stigma of mental illness and support staff who are experiencing, or who may experience, personal or family mental health issues”

The Time to Change Pledge is a public statement of aspiration that an organisation wants to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination

- Any organisation can pledge and there are no restrictions around the size of the organisation or sector.
- An organisational pledge helps break the stigma and silence around mental health.
- Whilst there is a requirement to evidence that any organisational pledge has meaning, it is not a quality mark accreditation or endorsement as such.
- As an organisation Bromsgrove District Council will own the pledge and action plan. As such the Council will take responsibility for completing any actions to which the Council commits.

The motion was moved by Councillor M. A. Sherrey and seconded by Councillor R. J. Shannon.

In proposing the motion the Leader referred to the importance of raising awareness of mental health issues and of providing support to staff within the organisation through a variety of methods including support days, training for staff and the “Phone a Friend” support network.

In seconding the motion, Councillor R. J. Shannon reminded Council of the prevalence of mental health issues within the population and of the importance of addressing these openly and reducing prejudice and fear. It was very important that the Council as an employer played its part in this.

Having been put to the vote the Chairman declared the motion to be carried.

70\14

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

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 item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, as amended, the relevant paragraphs of that part being as set out below, and that it is in the public interest to do so:-

Minute No.
71/14

Paragraphs
1 and 4

71\14

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CABINET 3RD DECEMBER 2014 - ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES TRANSFORMATION AND SHARED SERVICE RESTRUCTURE BUSINESS CASE

Agenda Item 3

Council
19th January 2015

The recommendation from the Cabinet was proposed by Councillor M. A. Bullivant and seconded by Councillor M. J. A. Webb.

In proposing the recommendation Councillor Bullivant referred to the detailed discussions and Member briefings which had taken place. There was also ongoing consultation with staff involved. Councillor Bullivant also referred to the proposed new staffing structure which he was confident would ensure the delivery of improved services and would result in reduced costs.

During the debate Members expressed support for locality based working but it was suggested that the majority of the savings projected related to not filling a vacant post. Councillor Mallett also raised the following issues:

- the split between centralised teams and “Place” teams and the impact on service delivery;
- arrangements to cover sickness absence or the need for additional resources, particularly in view of the move from centralised working to “Place” working;
- potential changes to terms and conditions for staff

Councillor Bullivant confirmed that the new way of working would allow greater flexibility for the workforce and enable the service to respond more quickly to any incidents and to provide services which were requested by residents and Members.

RESOLVED that the Business Case for the Transformation and Shared Service restructure of the Environmental and associated services attached as an appendix to the report be approved.

The meeting closed at 8.25 p.m.

Chairman

CABINET

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL

4TH FEBRUARY 2015

1. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2015/16 – 2017/18

The Cabinet has considered a report on the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2015/16 - 2017/18

It is therefore RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the following revenue bids be approved:

2015/16 – 2017/18

£30,000 in relation to providing financial support under the Essential Living Fund Framework

2015/16

£23,000 in relation to providing support to economic development projects to be funded from the income received from the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Business Rates Pool;

- (b) that the unavoidable pressures as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report be approved as follows:

2015/16 - £380,000

2016/17 – Nil

2017/18 - £45,000;

- (c) that the savings as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report be approved as follows:

2015/16 - £547,000

2016/17 - £222,000

2017/18 - £25,000;

- (d) that the Council Tax be frozen for 2015/16 and the net position of £63,000 be released from balances in 2015/16;

- (e) that 25% of the New Homes Bonus Grant be allocated to the NHB Scheme, with the 25% to be based on the District Council grant which will be received in 2015/16 which is attributable solely to the increase in funding from that received in 2014/15. This will equate to £87,000;

- (f) that £87,000 be released from balances to fund the New Homes Bonus Community Scheme; and

- (g) that the following be released from balances:

2016/17 - £59,000

2017/18 – 582,000

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INDEPENDENT ALLIANCE GROUP –2015/16 ALTERNATIVE BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The Independent Alliance Group (IAG) has great pleasure in presenting its alternative budget for 2015/16 to Bromsgrove District Council at its full Council meeting on the 18th February 2015.

Introduction

The IAG would like to thank the HO Financial Services, Ms Jane Pickering and her team for supporting the Group in this submission.

The IAG believes that this budget is fair and equitable across the whole of the district of Bromsgrove and seeks to present to the people of Bromsgrove an alternative budget and a Financial Strategy that safeguards the future of Bromsgrove District Council.

The tabled alternative budget presents a balanced budget for 2015/16 and sets in place recommendations that we believe are essential to future proof the Council services without relying on unsustainable government funding from the New Homes Bonus (NHB) and undue Council tax increases whilst at the same time supporting the district's many groups of volunteers and parish Councils in their local community governance and investment in community projects.

A significant risk to this Council is the burden from servicing its borrowing costs over a fifty year period; the burden of short term capital replacement costs; depleted capital reserves and pressure on front line services.

For these reasons the IAG is proposing that the Dolphin Centre redevelopment is suspended and Fleet replacement is reviewed as a matter of urgency as part of an overall review of this Council's waste collection services. The review of the waste collection service is to be undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

The IAG is concerned that it is only now that the true cost of borrowing and the repayment period runs into 2066 is exposed. To saddle this Council's future generations of Tax payers is an unacceptable risk and an unacceptable repayment burden.

For this reason the IAG is proposing that the redevelopment is suspended and a full review of the business case is undertaken by the leaders of the main groups with support from HO Service. The Leader led report is to be scrutinised by the Overview and Scrutiny Board by September 2015.

It is a concern of this Group that the forecast of the number of new houses built in any year causes surpluses in future years. Therefore we are recommending that a midyear review is carried out to consider the appropriate use of surpluses caused by the delivery of new houses in the district above the budgeted estimate.

Recommendations

The IAG is supporting a zero per cent district council tax rise.

The IAG believes that previous year's surpluses are partly as a result of efficiency savings. As a result IAG believes that a rise in the Council tax base is unwarranted and unnecessary.

1 Recommendation: 2015/16 District Council Tax rate to be held at the 2014/15 level to result in a zero per cent rise in 2015/16.

The IAG is asking this council to support a cut in the ICT budget by £100,000 in the year 2015/16.

The IAG believes that the cost of Transformation and ICT has had a significant impact upon both the Council's revenue budgets and reserves. For this reason this Group recommends that the HO Service reduces the ICT budget by £100,000.

2 Recommendation: The IT Budget is reduced by £100,000 in 2015/16.

The IAG supports the actions taken to improve the visitor numbers to the Town centre. However, the Group believes that a more effective 'free parking scheme' is 'Free Sunday parking'.

Previous motions presented to this chamber for 'free evening parking' failed to recognise work being done by an Overview and Scrutiny Task Group on Town centre car parking. For this reason this Group is recommending that this decision is reversed in favour of Sunday Free parking.

3 Recommendation: That the budget is reduced from £60,000 to £30,000 in 2015/16 to offset loss of income by introducing free Sunday parking for a six month period to be determined.

3a It is further recommended that pre and post surveys of the business, commercial, community and other users of the Town are undertaken to gauge the success or otherwise of the scheme.

The IAG is asking that this council supports a reduction of £147,000 from the Discretionary Arts and Events Budget in 2015/16.

This Group has reviewed the Events budget and believes that there are more cost effective ways of holding events in the district. Therefore it is recommended that the HO Service is asked to review the events calendar with a view to meeting the proposed budget reduction.

4 Recommendation: £147,000 is taken from the Events budgets from and including 2015/16.

The IAG has looked at the costs associated with the employment of consultants, temporary and Agency staff across the service. The Group considers that there are opportunities to reduce these costs in 2016/17.

It is recognised that there are unavoidable consultancy costs which the Council has to adopt. However, this group would like the HO Service to report to an Overview and Scrutiny task group into the impact of not employing temporary or agency staff before September 2015.

5 Recommendation: HO of the relevant Services to review these expenditures with a view to reporting to Overview and Scrutiny by September 2015 on the impact on services from a reduction in costs. The scope is to be confirmed with the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny and this Group before the end of the municipal year.

The IAG supports the intention of the Government’s New Homes Bonus scheme. This Group considers that there is significant scope within the NHB accumulated fund to support the district’s community champions without causing unnecessary risk to the balanced budgets, front line services or reserves.

This Group considers the use of the NHB as a positive community engagement, building pride and bringing inward investment into our communities.

An informed approach has been taken in proposing that a fixed percentage allowance based on the cumulative NHB receipts is introduced over the Medium Term Financial Plan.

6 Recommendation: This Group proposes that the Medium Term Financial Plan includes a fixed percentage of the forecast cumulative NHB over the years 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 (below) as prescribed under the current Government guidance.

6a Recommendation: It is further recommended that community groups across the district take up the Portfolio Holder for Finance’s offer to make formal bids for capital grants outside the NHB scheme as announced in the Cabinet meeting on the 4th February 2015 and formal publicity of this invitation is made public.

Financial year	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
NHB receipts (forecast)	£1,622,500	£1,942,500	£2,106,250
Percentage (fixed)	25%	20%	20%
NHB commitment	£406,000	£388,500	£421,250

This Group also recognises the imminent move to Parkside in the next financial year.

Plans for this move are advanced with the switch to Parkside targeted for post May election. Many financial decisions are underway. In order to minimise the 'pay back' period it is recommended that the HO Service is asked to consider options for this land to be sold at the highest market value.

7 Recommendation: It is recommended that a full range of options are presented to this Council in order that the highest market value for the Burcot Lane site is achieved to offset the cost of the move to Parkside.

A significant risk to this Council is the burden from servicing its borrowing costs over a fifty year period; the burden of short term capital replacement costs; depleted capital reserves and pressure on front line services.

For these reasons the IAG is proposing that the Dolphin Centre redevelopment is suspended and Fleet replacement is reviewed as a matter of urgency as part of an overall review of this council's waste collection services. The review of the waste collection service is to be undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

The IAG is concerned that it is only now that the true cost of borrowing and the repayment period runs into 2066 is exposed. To saddle this Council's future generations of Tax payers with an unacceptable risk and repayment burden is unacceptable.

For this reason the IAG is proposing that the redevelopment is suspended and a full review of the business case is undertaken by the leaders of the main groups with support from HO Service. The Leader led report is to be scrutinised by the Overview and Scrutiny Board by September 2015.

8 Recommendation: The IAG is proposing that the Dolphin Centre redevelopment is suspended and Fleet replacement is reviewed as a matter of urgency as part of an overall review of this Council's waste collection services. The review of the waste collection service is to be undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

8a The IAG is further recommending that the Dolphin Centre business case is reviewed by the leaders of the main groups with support from HO Service. The Leader led report is to be scrutinised by the Overview and Scrutiny Board by September 2015.

8b The IAG recommends that £60,000 is added to the Leisure budget in order to support leisure facilities in our communities.

Agenda Item 7

Independent Alliance Alternative Budget 2015/16 - 2017/18

	2015-16 £000	2016-17 £000	2017-18 £000
Departmental Expenditure (Starting Position)	11,314	11,322	11,368
Exclude impact of one off savings / pressures		80	40
Additional re pay award / incremental progression	123	188	140
Bids	53		
Unavoidable Pressures (new in year)	380	0	45
Savings (new in year)	-547	-222	-25
Additional bid - Leisure provision partnership working	60	60	60
Additional expenditure savings (see below)	-277	-280	-283
Net Service Expenditure	11,106	11,149	11,345
Investment Income	-36	-24	-24
Cost of Borrowing	259	419	836
Recharge to Capital Programme	-26	-25	-25
Net Operating Expenditure	11,303	11,519	12,132
Funding of borrowing costs for Dolphin Centre from balances	-123	-331	-506
Revenue Support Grant	-1,190	-1,058	-947
Business Rates Retention (Baseline Funding)	-1,585	-1,598	-1,598
Business Rates Growth	-176	-176	-176
Funding from Business Rate Pool	-23		
New Homes Bonus	-1,298	-1,554	-1,685
New Homes Bonus Community Scheme	406	389	421
Collection Fund Surplus (Council Tax)	-127	-	-
Council Tax	-6,989	-7,157	-7,231
Council Tax Freeze Grant	-69		
Funding Total	-11,174	-11,485	-11,722
Shortfall	128	33	410
Proposed Funding from balances	-128	-33	-410
Final Position	0	0	0

Additional proposed savings 2015/16		
	Current budget 2015/16 £000	Proposed reduction £000
Events, street theatre, Christmas lights, bonfire	£235	£147
IT budget (currently £1.9m)	£1,900	£100
Switch evening to Sunday free parking	£60	£30
Total	£2,195	£277

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

3RD DECEMBER 2014 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors M. A. Sherrey (Leader), C. B. Taylor (Deputy Leader),
M. A. Bullivant, R. L. Dent and M. J. A. Webb

Observers: Councillor R. J. Shannon

Invitees: Councillors L. C. R. Mallett and C. J. Spencer and Mr J. Dillon.

Officers: Mr K. Dicks, Ms. S. Hanley, Ms J. Pickering, Mr G. Revans, Mrs
S. Sellers, Mr R. Savory, Mr M. Ashcroft and Ms R. Cole.

52/14 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor D. W. P. Booth.

53/14 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

54/14 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 5th November were submitted.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 5th November 2014 be approved as a correct record.

55/14 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

The minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 25th September 2014 and 17th November 2014 were submitted.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that, in respect of Minute 47/14 the additional financial and budget data be provided in future Monitoring reports from 2015/16 Quarter 1 following the introduction of the new Financial System. In addition it was felt that it would be appropriate to request the Overview and Scrutiny Board to report back in due course on whether this information was useful to the Board;
- (b) that, in respect of Minute 50/14 the Constitutional Review Working Party be requested to include the Task Group/Short Sharp Procedure Guidelines within the Council's Constitution; and

- (c) that the remainder of the minutes be noted.

56/14 **AUDIT BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Audit Board held on 18th September 2014 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Board held on 18th September 2014 be noted.

57/14 **SHARED SERVICES BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Shared Services Board held on 6th November 2014 were submitted.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the minutes of the meeting of the Shared Services Board held on 6th November 2014 be noted; and
(b) that Members be encouraged to attend meetings of the Shared Services Board in order to become fully informed on Shared Service/Transformation issues.

58/14 **LEISURE PROVISION TASK GROUP REPORT**

The Cabinet received the report of the Leisure Provision Task Group. The Chairman of the Task Group, Councillor C. J. Spencer was present to introduce the report and to provide clarification on any matters raised by the Cabinet. Councillor Spencer outlined the work which had been undertaken by the Task Group and thanked Members and officers for their contributions.

The Cabinet then considered the recommendations of the Task Group in detail.

Recommendation 1

- (a) that charges for leisure facilities and services, such as the Dolphin Centre, should be used to promote usage and participation in leisure activities; and
(b) that the Council's concession scheme should be publicised where appropriate to ensure price is not a barrier to participation in leisure activities.

Cabinet Response

The Cabinet felt that the wording of (a) above should be amended slightly as set out below to clarify the intention behind the recommendation

“that the charging structure for leisure facilities and services be used to encourage usage and participation in leisure activities”

Recommendation (b) above was approved.

Recommendation 2

That Members should familiarise themselves with the leisure activities available within their Wards via the information provided by the Sports Development Team and visit activities as appropriate.

Cabinet Response

The Cabinet approved this recommendation.

Recommendation 3

- (a) that the noticeboard situated adjacent to Blockbuster be utilised;
- (b) that a noticeboard be included in the list of requirements for the Phase 2 Works of the Town Centre; and
- (c) that it was acknowledged that there were often problems with noticeboards being maintained and information displayed kept up to date, so to minimise this it be recommended that these be maintained by the Local Ward Councillor.

Cabinet Response

The Cabinet approved this recommendation.

Recommendation 4

Sports Hall Facility at the new Dolphin Centre

- (a) that officers continue negotiations with BAM and look for alternative funding sources to fund a Sports Hall moving forward; and
- (b) that if the negotiations with BAM are unsuccessful, then Cabinet reconsider and make recommendations to full Council for the facility to include a Sports Hall.

Cabinet Response

Recommendation (a) was approved.

With regard to recommendation (b) the wording was agreed as follows:

“ that if the negotiations with BAM are unsuccessful, then Cabinet reconsider options for the facility to include a Sports Hall”.

The Leader and the Portfolio Holder thanked the Task Group for their report.

59/14

DISPOSAL OF STOURBRIDGE ROAD CAR PARK

Prior to the consideration of this matter the Deputy Monitoring Officer explained that depending upon the content of Members' discussion, some

aspects of this item may need to be considered as an “exempt” matter.(In the event this was not necessary and the discussion took place in public session).

Members considered the detailed report on the outcome of the recent marketing exercise in relation to the Council owned site at Stourbridge Road car park.

The Leader invited the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Councillor L. C. R. Mallett to report on the outcome of discussions on this matter at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board which had taken place immediately before the Cabinet meeting.

Councillor Mallett reported that the discussions of the Board had mainly focussed on getting the best value from the site, including parking and road issues. The Board had been keen to ensure that the development of the site went ahead within reasonable timescales and without unnecessary delay.

The Board were recommending therefore that consideration be given to putting in place some form of “financial lock in” or at least including explicit timescales for the development so that progress could be encouraged and some costs would be covered in the event of the development not going ahead as envisaged.

The Cabinet discussed the report together with the input from the Overview and Scrutiny Board. The intentions of the Board to ensure that development of the site proceeded as expeditiously as possible were appreciated and Members concurred with this view. It was felt however that the inclusion of any form of financial “ lock in” or penalty would not be useful and may in fact result in a reduction of this Council’s own flexibility. The inclusion of a timetable for the development with specific timescales was felt to be a useful measure and would enable this Council to explore alternative options at an earlier stage if necessary.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the contents of the report be noted;
- (b) that the disposal of the freehold land at Stourbridge Road Car Park as shown marked in red on the plan attached as Appendix 1 to the report to Cordwell Property Group be approved;
- (c) that delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director for Finance and Resources to agree the final terms for disposal of the land;
- (d) that delegated authority be granted to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services to enter into the necessary legal documents required for the disposal of the land in accordance with the terms agreed pursuant to (c) above;
- (e) that in accordance with the discussion referred to in the preamble a timetable for development stages be incorporated into the legal documents; and
- (e) that officers consider the loss of car parking income of approximately £12,000 as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

60/14 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

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 item of business the subject of the following minute on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of "Exempt Information" as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act the relevant part being as set out below and that it is in the public interest to do so.

<u>Minute No</u>	<u>Paragraph</u>
61/14	3

61/14 **DISPOSAL OF COUNCIL HELD ASSETS AT HANOVER STREET CAR PARK AND GEORGE HOUSE**

Members considered in detail the report on the options appraisal undertaken by officers since September 2014 following the decision of Opus not to proceed with the purchase of the Hanover Street Car Park and George House site. The Cabinet noted the view of officers that the site should now be re-marketed, together with the proposed timetable for the marketing exercise.

The Leader invited the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Councillor L. C. R. Mallett to report on the outcome of discussions on this matter at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board which had taken place immediately before the Cabinet meeting.

Councillor Mallett gave the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Board that the marketing exercise should proceed and that as part of the consideration of the scoring matrix to be drawn up for the project, due regard be given to the proposals of potential developers in respect of the Spadesbourne Brook as referred to in the Area Action Plan for the Town Centre.

Following detailed discussion it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the contents of the report be noted and that the option of remarketing the site as set out in Option 4 of the Options Appraisal attached at Appendix 2 to the report be approved;
- (b) that delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director for Finance and Resources to instruct the Council's appointed agent, GJS Dillon to remarket the site with immediate effect;
- (c) that when the scoring matrix in respect of this site is drawn up, due regard be given to the provisions of the Town Centre Area Action Plan in relation to the environmental enhancement of the site.

62/14 **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2015/16 TO 2017/18**

The Executive Director for Finance and Resources gave a brief presentation on the updated Budget Position for 2015/16 to 2017/18. It was reported that the current shortfall for 2015/16 was £305,000.

It was noted that a more detailed report, including the Capital Programme would be considered at the next meeting of the Cabinet in January 2015.

RESOLVED that the current position be noted.

63/14

FINANCE MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 2

The Cabinet considered a report on the Council's financial position for Revenue and Capital for the April to September 2014 - Quarter 2 2014/15.

The Executive Director for Finance and Resources drew attention to the overall predicted saving against budget of £210,000. It was noted this included a shortfall in income in relation to Environmental Services as the budget had originally included £250,000 income from the sale of the Trade Waste Service. This was now being reviewed whilst officers reviewed alternative options for the service delivery.

The Executive Director for Finance and Resources reported on the requirement to draw down £90,000 from a Business Transformation earmarked reserve in order to fund work necessary to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Public Services Network.

RESOLVED that the current financial position on Revenue and Capital as detailed in the report be noted.

RECOMMENDED that the sum of £90,000 be drawn down from a Business Transformation earmarked reserve to be utilised to help to meet the Capital costs of compliance with the Public Services Network project.

64/14

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

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 item of business the subject of the following minute on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of "Exempt Information" as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act the relevant part being as set out below and that it is in the public interest to do so.

Minute No
65/14

Paragraph
1 and 4

65/14

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES BUSINESS CASE

Cabinet considered a detailed report on the proposed Transformation and Shared Service restructure of Environmental and associated services.

Members referred to the benefits which had derived from a new way of working to transform service delivery and provide better services to residents.

Agenda Item 9

Cabinet
3rd December 2014

It was noted there would be a presentation to all Members prior to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board at 5.30pm on Monday, 15th December 2014.

RECOMMENDED that the Business Case for the Transformation and Shared Service restructure of Environmental and associated services attached as an appendix to the report be approved.

The meeting closed at 7.25 p.m.

Chairman

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

7TH JANUARY 2015 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors M. A. Sherrey (Leader), C. B. Taylor (Deputy Leader),
D. W. P. Booth, M. A. Bullivant, R. L. Dent and M. J. A. Webb

Observers: Councillors S. R. Colella, B. Lewis, S. P. Shannon and C. J.
Tidmarsh

Officers: Ms J. Pickering, Ms A. De Warr, Mr G. Revans, Mrs S. Sellers,
Ms A. Scarce and Ms R. Cole

66/14 **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence.

67/14 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

68/14 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 3rd December 2014 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 3rd December 2014 be approved as a correct record.

69/14 **WORCESTERSHIRE SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee held on 27th November 2014 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee held on 27th November 2014 be noted.

70/14 **NEW HOMES BONUS**

The Cabinet considered a report on the work undertaken by the New Homes Bonus Member Working Group to establish a scheme to enable community groups to apply for funding from the New Homes Bonus (NHB) grant received by the Council.

The Executive Director Finance and Resources outlined the work which had been undertaken by officers and Members following the submission to Council of the public petition in April 2014. This included a number of meetings of the NHB Working Group together with two public forums. There had been detailed consideration of feedback received from the public both at the public forums and responses received subsequently, a matrix of responses was attached as an appendix to the report. In addition the Group had considered the range of approaches taken by other Authorities to deal with NHB funding.

The report also contained a detailed breakdown of the funding received from the NHB scheme and a revised estimate of the funding for 2015/16.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor M. J. A. Webb referred to the draft scheme which had been developed by the Working Group to enable community groups to access grants from NHB funding. This draft scheme was attached as an appendix to the report. Members expressed support for the draft scheme. It was felt however that in view of the work which was on going in respect of the Medium Term Financial Plan, which would be fully considered at the next meeting of the Cabinet on 4th February 2015, it would be inappropriate at this stage to recommend to the Council a specific percentage of NHB funding to be allocated to the scheme.

Councillor Webb also referred to the discussion at the Council Meeting on 19th November 2014 relating to a Notice of Motion on NHB. There had been a request that the Cabinet consider as part of their discussion on any NHB scheme the inclusion of the additional revenue "surplus" generated in 2013/14. Councillor Webb anticipated that this would form part of the further consideration at the next Cabinet.

Members were reminded that it was open to any Councillor to make a request for funding to be allocated within the Medium Term Financial Plan and that this would be considered together with competing bids as part of the budget process.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the New Homes Bonus Allocation Scheme attached as an appendix to the report be approved; and
- (b) that consideration of an appropriate percentage/amount of New Homes Bonus to be allocated to the scheme be deferred until the next meeting of the Cabinet in order that it can be fully considered as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan process.

71/14

COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2015/16

The Cabinet considered a detailed report which informed Members of the outcome of public consultation on the draft Council Tax Support scheme following agreement of the draft scheme by Cabinet on 5th November 2014. The scheme had proposed that entitlement to Council Tax support should be capped at 80% of Council Tax liability, that the provision of the second adult

rebate be removed, that non-dependents income be taken into account and enabled the future “uprating” of some of the figures to take account of other national changes in benefits and allowances.

Members were reminded of the background to the proposed changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme which were required to be considered following Government changes to the Council Tax Benefit scheme. It was noted that the Council was required to implement a scheme which protects people of pensionable age, incentivises work and had provisions to support vulnerable people in financial hardship as a result of the scheme.

Members noted that a further 28 responses to the follow up consultation had been received, including a response from the Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) which was the same as that submitted previously in which the Trust expressed concern regarding changes to support for working age residents. The results of the consultation were attached as an appendix to the report.

Members were satisfied that the consultation had been undertaken on a thorough and fair basis although the response had been limited. It appeared that many other Authorities were adopting similar provisions to those proposed within their Council Tax Support Schemes.

The establishment of a Hardship Fund was supported by Members. It was noted that the proposed Hardship Policy had been drawn up in consultation with BDHT and with the benefit of experience from work undertaken by neighbouring authorities. Members requested to be kept informed on the operation of the Hardship Scheme.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the Council Tax Support Scheme as amended be approved, namely
 - (i) that entitlement to Council Tax Support be capped at 80% of Council Tax liability;
 - (ii) that provision for a second adult rebate be removed; and
 - (iii) that the future “uprating “ of some of the figures to take account of other national changes in benefits and allowances be approved.
- (b) that the proposed Hardship Scheme as attached as an appendix to the report be approved; and
- (c) that no changes be made to the provisions relating to non-dependents income

(Councillor C. B. Taylor requested that it be noted that he was a Member of Worcestershire County Council.)

72/14 **COUNCIL TAX BASE 2015/16**

Members received a report which contained details of the calculation of the District's tax base for Council Tax setting purposes.

Members noted that on this occasion there would need to be a recommendation to Council on this matter as the Council Tax Base would vary according to whether the recommendation contained within the previous minute in relation to the Council Tax Support Scheme was approved by Council.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that if the proposed Council Tax Support Scheme at a cap of 80% support is approved:

The amount calculated by Bromsgrove District Council as the Council Tax Base for the whole area for 2015/16 be approved at 34,907.84 as detailed at appendix 1 to include the individual parish elements; **or**

- (b) that if the proposed Council Tax Support Scheme at a cap of 80% is rejected:

The amount calculated by Bromsgrove District Council as the Council tax Base for the whole area for 2015/16 be approved at 34,638.82 as detailed at appendix 2 to include the individual parish elements.

73/14 **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN UPDATE 2015/16 TO 2017/18**

The Cabinet considered a report on the current financial position in respect of the revenue budget 2015/16 – 2017/18. It was noted that officers were continuing to work in order to review savings and that a report would be submitted to the Cabinet meeting on 4th February 2015. This would also include details of the Capital Programme.

The Executive Director Finance and Resources highlighted to some of the detailed issues contained within the report including the position on funding to be received from Central Government and the new localised regime on Business Rates.

Members were reminded of the previous decision to reduce the amount of funding provided to the Artrix from £120,000 which had been the annual funding arrangement since 2005, to £60,000. Following a review officers felt that £60,000 was sufficient funding to enable the Artrix to deliver a programme to support the Council's strategic purposes.

There was discussion in respect of the Parish Council Grant which had originally been allocated by Central Government with the intention of mitigating the impact on Parish Councils of a reduction in Council Tax base

arising from changes to the Council Tax Discount funding. This was no longer shown separately within the Government Settlement but was estimated for 2015/16 to be £38,000. Members considered in detail the options for use of this funding.

RESOLVED that the current position for 2015/16 – 2017/18 be noted and that officers be requested to review the savings that can be delivered in order to achieve a balanced budget.

RECOMMENDED that in relation to the Parish Council Grant receivable from Central Government for 2015/16, the estimated sum of £30,000 be allocated proportionately to the Parish Councils and the remaining £8,000 be shared within the non parished areas of the District.

74/14 **CAR PARKING CHARGES -EVENING PARKING**

The Cabinet considered a report on a proposal to introduce, on a twelve month trial basis, free evening parking on the following Town Centre Pay and Display car parks:

- Recreation Road North
- Stourbridge Road
- Parkside
- School Drive
- Windsor Street
- New Road
- Hanover Street

It was recognised that it was important to ascertain the outcome of the trial in terms of additional benefit to businesses within the Town Centre in addition to benefits to individual residents. Officers were in the process of determining the most appropriate method of undertaking an assessment.

It was noted that there would be a shortfall in projected income of £60,000 arising from the trial period and it was reported that this could be funded through the use of balances.

RESOLVED that for a twelve month trial period (February 2015 to February 2016) free evening car parking be introduced in Pay and Display car parks in Bromsgrove Town Centre from 7.00pm each day.

RECOMMENDED that the shortfall in projected income of £60,000 for the free evening car parking trial period be met from balances.

75/14 **APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

The Cabinet considered a report requesting that appointments be made to certain outside bodies.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the following appointments be made:

Worcestershire Local Transport Board (one representative and one substitute from the three North Worcestershire Districts) - Councillor P. Mould and Councillor J. Campion;

Worcestershire European Union Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) Committee (one representative and one substitute from the three North Worcestershire Districts) – Councillor M. J. A. Webb and Councillor J. Fisher;

Greater Birmingham and Solihull Union Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) Committee (one representative and one substitute from the three North Worcestershire Districts) – Councillor M. J. A. Webb and Councillor J. Fisher.

- (b) that the following appointment be noted:

Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) – Councillor M. Sherrey appointed on behalf of the 3 North Worcestershire Districts, as required by the LEP constitution.

The meeting closed at 7.05 p.m.

Chairman

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

4TH FEBRUARY 2015 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors M. A. Sherrey (Leader), C. B. Taylor (Deputy Leader),
D. W. P. Booth, M. A. Bullivant, R. L. Dent and M. J. A. Webb

Observers: Councillors S. R. Colella and L. C. R. Mallett

Invitees: Councillor S. P. Shannon

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Mr. J. Godwin, Mrs. S. Sellers Mr. D. Allen and
Ms. R. Cole

76/14 **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence.

77/14 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

78/14 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 7th January 2015 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 7th January 2015 be approved as a correct record.

79/14 **AUDIT BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Audit Board held on 11th December 2014 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Board held on 11th December 2014 be noted.

80/14 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 15th December 2014 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 15th December 2014 be noted.

81/14 **SHARED SERVICES BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Shared Services Board held on 12th January 2015 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Shared Services Board held on 12th January 2015 be noted.

82/14 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD SHORT SHARP REVIEW - CAR PARKING**

The Cabinet received the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Board Short Sharp Review on Car Parking.

The Leader invited the Chairman of the Short Sharp Review , Councillor S. P. Shannon to present the outcome of the review. Councillor Shannon gave a general introduction to the work which the cross party review had undertaken and. Councillor Shannon expressed the hope that the Cabinet would give serious consideration to the three recommendations .

In relation to Recommendation 1, it was stated that whilst the Review Group had noted the recent Cabinet decision to introduce free parking after 7pm, there had been some disappointment that this had been agreed before any outcome of the review was known. The Review Group, after some investigation and research had felt that free car parking on Sundays rather than in the evening would have a greater impact on footfall and therefore would bring more benefit to the Town and local businesses. Whilst a large number of restaurants and other businesses were already opening in the evening there were fewer businesses opening on a Sunday.

Recommendation 2 relating to the expansion of the Pay on Foot system into other car parks had also been a recommendation put forward by the Recreation Road South Car Park Task Group in August 2011.

Councillor Shannon also referred to Recommendation 3 which related to the re-introduction of a car parking permit for the over 65 year olds, which again it was considered would increase footfall into the Town Centre and contribute to the regeneration of the Town Centre. This had been supported by the Bromsgrove Older People's Forum.

The Portfolio Holder, Councillor M. A. Bullivant thanked the Review Group for their work but stated that the report did not examine the future needs of the Town Centre in the light of forthcoming developments in the area. In addition insufficient consideration had been given to the current financial position of the Council.

Members expressed concern over the cost of implementation of the Review Group's proposals and felt that there was still room for expansion in the Town Centre night time economy which would benefit from the introduction of free parking after 7.00pm. Reference was made to the substantial investment this

Council had made in the regeneration of the Town Centre together with the County Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The Cabinet then considered the recommendations of the Review Group.

Recommendation 1

That free car parking on a Sunday be introduced for a 6 month trial period, to include the summer period in order to encourage people to visit the town centre.

Cabinet Response

This recommendation was not approved in view of the cost involved and the introduction of free parking in the evening from 7.00 pm.

Recommendation 2

That the Pay on Foot system be expanded to other car parks as part of the Town Centre Regeneration Programme, for example at the Hanover Street Car Park and the Dolphin Centre.

Cabinet Response

This recommendation was not approved in view of the likely high costs involved and the lack of a Cost Benefit Analysis.

Recommendation 3

That a car parking permit scheme for the over 65 year olds be re-introduced in order to encourage people to visit the town centre on a more regular basis.

Cabinet Response

This recommendation was not approved in view of the lack of information available.

83/14

HOMELESSNESS GRANT FUNDING UPDATE AND BIDS FOR 2015/16

The Cabinet considered a report on the allocation of Homelessness Grant to specific schemes for 2015/16.

It was noted that the total amount available was £120,112 which included an underspend of £8,112 from 2014/15 arising from the unexpected termination of the MyPlace private tenancy scheme.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the submissions for the funding of schemes during 2015/16 as set out in table 2 within the report be approved and be funded from the Council's Strategic Fund for Homelessness for 2015/16;

- (b) that the Head of Community Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing, be granted delegated authority to
 - (i) allocate any underspend during the year; and
 - (ii) make any further adjustments necessary to ensure full utilisation of the Strategic fund for Homelessness for 2015/16 in support of new or existing schemes.

84/14

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2015/16 - 2017/18

The Cabinet considered a report on the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2015/16 – 2017/18.

The Executive Director Finance and Resources referred to the budget setting process to date. Members were updated on the various issues which had impacted on the financial position of the Authority and the matters which they would need to take into consideration when determining recommendations to be made to the Council on 25th February 2015.

The Executive Director Finance and Resources reported on the pressures facing the Authority including potential further reductions in the Government Grant Settlement and changes to welfare reform. It was noted that Bromsgrove had gained £23,000 from participation in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Business Rates Pool which had been included as funding for use by small businesses in 2015/16.

Members' attention was drawn to a number of unavoidable pressures which were included in Appendix 1 to the report. These included a reduction in funding from Worcestershire County Council of £26,000 in relation to funding for the Customer Services Centre and the shortfall in anticipated income from car parking and the garden waste collection service. In addition it was noted that following a required review of the charging mechanism, the proportion of the costs of the Building Control Service to be met by this Council would increase.

Members noted the work undertaken by officers to maximise savings through transformation and to continue to consider alternative ways of providing improved services to the Community. The Executive Director Finance and Corporate Resources stated that officers were aware of the need to continue to review budgets to avoid the shortfall predicted over the three years and to mitigate the financial risk to the Council.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance reported in detail on the New Homes Bonus Scheme and referred to the work undertaken by the New Homes Bonus Group which had taken into account views from the public via Public Forums and consultations.

It was reported that whilst the scheme for determining the distribution of New Homes Bonus Funding had been agreed, there was now a need to consider the level of funding to be allocated to the scheme during 2015/16. It was suggested that for 2015/16, 25% of the New Homes Bonus Grant be allocated to the New Homes Bonus Scheme with the 25% being based on the District Council grant which will be received in 2015/16, which is attributable solely to the increase in funding from that received in 2014/15. It was noted that this sum would be £87,000. The NHB scheme had provision for an Annual review to be undertaken.

Members expressed the view that all areas of the District should benefit from difficult decisions taken by the Authority in the past which had led to savings being made. These had to be taken into consideration together with the future impact of any decision not to increase Council Tax. It was noted that a Government Grant was available equivalent to a 1% rise in Council Tax for Councils who freeze their Council Tax in the next financial year.

Members noted the new funding arrangements in respect of the Artrix which involved a grant to the Artrix of £60,000 per annum. Under the previous agreement a sum of £120,000 per annum had been paid over the last ten years. Members expressed support for the work undertaken by the Artrix but wished to ensure that the best use was made of the proposed funding. It was understood that certain information had been requested from the Artrix in relation to what was to be provided for residents in future and it was felt that the funding should be "ring fenced" until this was received and the position clarified.

The Portfolio Holder expressed thanks to the officers for the work undertaken on the Medium Term Financial Plan.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the following revenue bids be approved:

2015/16 – 2017/18

£30,000 in relation to providing financial support under the Essential Living Fund Framework

2015/16

£23,000 in relation to providing support to economic development projects to be funded from the income received from the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Business Rates Pool;

- (b) that the unavoidable pressures as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report be approved as follows:

2015/16 - £380,000

2016/17 – Nil

2017/18 - £45,000;

- (c) that the savings as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report be approved as follows:

2015/16 - £547,000
2016/17 - £222,000
2017/18 - £25,000;

- (d) that the Council Tax be frozen for 2015/16 and the net position of £63,000 be released from balances in 2015/16;
- (e) that 25% of the New Homes Bonus Grant be allocated to the NHB Scheme, with the 25% to be based on the District Council grant which will be received in 2015/16 which is attributable solely to the increase in funding from that received in 2014/15. This will equate to £87,000;
- (f) that £87,000 be released from balances to fund the New Homes Bonus Community Scheme; and
- (g) that the following be released from balances:

2016/17 - £59,000
2017/18 - £58,000

85/14

PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY - 2015 - 2018

The Cabinet considered a report on the introduction of a revised Playing Pitch Strategy 2015-2018 for the District.

It was reported that the Playing Pitch Assessment had been developed in line with Sport England's Playing Pitch Guidance 2013 and had been supported and endorsed by National Governing bodies at the Regional level and by the Council's Strategic Planning section.

It was noted that the Assessment had been undertaken to establish whether there was sufficient playing pitch provision in Bromsgrove. The Strategy would provide this Authority with an evidence base to identify sources of future investment, identify planning gain and access external grant funding. Funding could then be allocated to increase the number of pitches and the quality of future provision for example by improvements to drainage and provision of changing rooms.

The Portfolio Holder thanked officers for what was a significant piece of work which would assist the Authority to improve Playing Pitch provision either directly through the use of planning gain funding or by officers working together with clubs and other organisations.

RESOLVED that the revised Playing Pitch Strategy 2015-2018 be approved and endorsed.

The meeting closed at 7.15 p.m.

Chairman

MEMBERS ALLOWANCES – INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Sherrey
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services
Ward(s) Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	N/A
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	Non-key

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 This report asks the Council to consider the report and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel and to agree a Members Allowances scheme for 2015-16 arising from this.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that

2.1 the Council considers whether or not to accept all, some or none of the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for 2015-16;

2.2 having considered the Panel's report and recommendations, the Council decides whether or not changes are required to the Council's scheme of allowances for Members for 2015-16.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The Council will reduce in size from 39 to 31 members following the local elections in May this year. If the amounts paid for, and number of, individual allowances remain unchanged from 2014-15, this will result in savings of approx £31,700 in 2015-16 and £34,600 in a full year.
- 3.2 If changes to the current amounts of allowances are made there may be additional savings or costs. Further detail is set out at paragraph 3.7 below.

Legal Implications

- 3.3 The Council is required to maintain a Panel of people from outside the Council to consider and recommend to it the level of basic and special responsibility allowances paid to Councillors and travel, subsistence and other expenses. The

Council is required to “have regard” to the recommendations of the Panel. However, it is not obliged to agree to them. It can choose to implement them in full or in part, or not to accept them.

- 3.4 The Council is also required to review its scheme of allowances for Councillors on an annual basis, prior to the start of the new financial year. If the changes suggested at paragraph 3.7 (d) are agreed then the allowances scheme for 2015-16 will be updated accordingly.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.5 The current allowances paid by the authority are shown in appendix 1 to the IRP’s report, together with the allowances recommended by the Panel.
- 3.6 The Council is deciding on the level of allowances payable to members from 1st April. Members will know that following the elections in May the number of Councillors will reduce from 39 to 31. Assuming no change to the current amount of the basic allowance paid to Councillors this would lead to a saving of £31,700 in the members allowances budget for 2015-16 and £34,700 in a full year.
- 3.7 As the Council is required to set an agreed budget for 2015-16 we have discussed informally with the political group leaders their views of the recommendations and any proposals for the new financial year. Suggestions received from them are:
- (a) That the Council has regard to the report and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel and accepts the recommendations relating to travel, subsistence and dependent carer’s allowances (paragraphs 3-5 of the Panel’s recommendations);
 - (b) That the recommendation relating to the Parish Councils in the District be noted;
 - (c) That the recommendation relating to Basic allowance is not agreed and that the Council continues to pay a basic allowance of £4,326 per annum for 2015-16;
 - (d) That the recommendations relating to Special Responsibility allowances are not agreed, but are continue at the current level for 2015-16, with the following exceptions:
 - (i) That having considered carefully the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, the Special responsibility allowance for the Chairman of Licensing Committee is based on the multiplier recommended by the Panel but using the current basic allowance for the Council. This results in an allowance of £1,298, a reduction of £4,326;

- (ii) That a new special responsibility allowance be introduced from the 2015-16 financial year for leaders of political groups with 4 or more members. It is suggested that this is based on the IRP's proposed multiplier and using the current basic allowance as a basis. This results in a payment of £1,082 per year per leader. The current allowance for the Leader of the largest Opposition party elected at the ballot box will remain. The leader of this party and the Leader of the Council will not be entitled to claim both allowances for the Group Leader positions. The total spent on this during the 2015-16 financial year will depend on the number of political groups which meet this requirement.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.8 There are no specific customer or equalities implications arising from this report.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 Payments to Councillors can be a high profile issue. The main risks are reputational. However, the Council is transparent about the decisions made on allowances. The Allowances scheme and sums paid to Councillors each year are published on the Council's website.

5. APPENDICES

None

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

7. KEY

IRP – Independent Remuneration Panel

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Independent Remuneration Panel for Worcestershire District Councils

Annual Report and Recommendations for 2015-16

Bromsgrove District Council

December 2014

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Recommendations

The Independent Remuneration Panel recommends to Bromsgrove District Council the following:

1. That the Basic Allowance for 2015-16 is £4,200.
2. That the Special Responsibility Allowances are as set out in Appendix 1.
3. That travel allowances for 2015-16 continue to be paid in accordance with the HMRC mileage allowance.
4. That subsistence allowances for 2015-16 remain unchanged.
5. That the Dependent Carer's Allowance remains unchanged.
6. That for Parish Councils in the District:
 - (a) parish basic allowance should not be paid to every member of a Parish Council;
 - (b) parish basic allowance should only be payable to the Chairman of a Parish Council with a precept of £15,000 or above, and that the amount of such allowance should be maintained at 11% (to the nearest round figure) of the basic allowance payable to Bromsgrove District Councillors;
 - (c) parish basic allowance should be paid to eligible Chairmen in preference to the 'historic' Chairman's Allowance and that a Chairman should not receive both payments*;
 - (d) the Panel will only undertake any further reviews on this matter in response to specific requests from Parish Councils or changes in legislation;
 - (e) Where paid, travelling allowances should be paid in accordance with the HM Revenue and Custom mileage allowance.

** 'historic' Chairman's Allowance is that payable under Section 15 (5) of the Local Government Act 1972 to meet the expenses of this position.*

Introduction

The Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) has been appointed by the Council to carry out reviews of the allowances paid to Councillors, as required by the Local Government Act 2000 and subsequent legislation. The Panel has carried out its work in accordance with the legislation and statutory guidance.

The law requires each Council to “have regard” to the recommendations of the Independent Panel and we noted that last year the Council did not accept our recommendations but decided to continue to pay a higher basic allowance and use different multipliers for calculation of the Special Responsibility Allowances.

Whilst the Panel was happy to meet with political group leaders and they with us, we agreed mutually that there were no general issues to discuss at this stage. The Panel notes that following a governance review of the District there will be 8 fewer Councillors (31) from the elections in May 2015. We are also aware that the Council is reviewing elements of its constitution to prepare for the smaller size of the Council. We will therefore review the situation in the light of the implementation of the new numbers next year.

The political group leaders did ask the Panel to review the payment to leaders of political groups. The current Members Allowances Scheme at Bromsgrove includes payment to the leader of the largest Opposition party elected at the ballot box, but does not allow payment to leaders of other political groups. The Panel’s recommendation relating to leaders of political groups is set out on pages 4-5 of this report and in the appendix.

At this point we would like to stress that our recommendations are based on thorough research and benchmarking. We have presented the Council with what we consider to be an appropriate set of allowances to reflect the roles carried out by the Councillors. The purpose of allowances is to enable people from all walks of life to become involved in local politics if they choose.

However, we acknowledge that in the current challenging financial climate there are difficult choices for the Council to make. Ultimately it is for the Council to decide how or whether to adopt the recommendations that we make.

Background Evidence and Research Undertaken

There is a rich and varied choice of market indicators on pay which can be used for comparison purposes. These include:

- National survey data on a national, regional or local level;
- Focussed surveys on a particular public sector;
- Regular or specific surveys
- Use of specific indices to indicate movement in rewards or cost of living.

As background for the decisions taken by the Panel this year we have:

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- Analysed and considered the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) statistics for 2014;
- Benchmarked the Basic Allowance against allowances for comparable roles paid by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) “Nearest Neighbour” Councils for each authority.

We give more details about these areas of research at the end of the report.

The figure being recommended by the Panel of £4,200 for the Basic Allowance does appear reasonable when compared to other Local Authorities.

Arising from our research we have included information showing the members’ allowances budget for Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances paid for 2013-14 as a cost per head of population for each Council. We also show the average payment per member of each authority of the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances, to give context to our recommendations.

Total spend on Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances as a cost per head of population 2013-14 figures

Authority and population¹	Total spend Basic Allowances 2013-14 £:	Total spend on Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) £:	SRA as a percentage of total Basic Allowance %:	Cost of total basic and SRA per head of population £:
Bromsgrove DC 94,744	168,074	64,150	38%	2.45
Malvern Hills DC 75,339	159,227	61,762	39%	2.93
Redditch Borough 84,521	97,020	39,928	41%	1.62
Worcester City 100,405	139,650	58,937	42%	1.98
Wychavon 118,738	188,650	70,096	37%	£2.18

Table showing average allowance per member of each authority (Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances, 2013 – 14 figures)

¹ ONS population figures mid 2013. Totals for Basic and Special Responsibility allowances paid are as published by each authority for the 2013-14 financial year.

Authority (number of Councillors)	Amount £
Bromsgrove District (39)	5,954
Malvern Hills District (38)	5,815.50
Redditch Borough (29)	4,722
Worcester City (35)	5,673.91
Wychavon District (45)	5,749.91

Basic Allowance 2015 - 16

Calculation of Basic Allowance

The Basic Allowance is based on:

- The roles and responsibilities of Members; and
- Their time commitments – including the total average number of hours worked per week on Council business.

We then apply a public service discount of 40% to reflect that Councillors volunteer some of their time to the role.

Having reviewed the levels of wage rates and the benchmark information available to us from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) “nearest neighbours” authorities, we do not recommend any increases in the Basic Allowance for 2015-16.

Further analysis of relevant research data indicates that there is no justification for increasing the basic allowance from the £4,200 recommended.

Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) 2015-16

General Calculation of SRAs

The basis for the calculation of SRAs is a multiplier of the Basic Allowance as advocated in the published Guidance.

The Panel has reviewed the responsibilities of each post, the multipliers and allowances paid by similar authorities. As in last year, the Panel has benchmarked the allowances against those paid by authorities listed as “nearest neighbours” by CIPFA.

Appendix 1 to this report sets out the allowances recommended for 2015-16.

1. Leaders of Political Groups

In the legislation, a Political Group on a Local Authority consists of 2 or more Councillors.

In most cases the Leader of the Council also leads the main political group on the authority. In the past the IRP for South Worcestershire had recommended payments to political group leaders on a per head basis, based on the number of Councillors in each group. Whilst this reflected changes in group sizes and

allowed for flexibility following changes in political balance, we were persuaded to change this approach for one Council and to recommend a lump sum allowance for the Leader of the Opposition Group. We received a similar request from another Council in 2013.

We noted that in some cases the Allowances Scheme for their authority did not enable a Leader to receive any support for the Group Leader role.

We considered carefully evidence from the data we collected and checked the Statutory Guidance about the potential to be paid more than one SRA. We are content that Councillors can be in receipt of more than one. Therefore, we are have recommended that Leaders of all Political Groups are entitled to an allowance of 0.25 of the Basic Allowance, recognising that they all have an important role to play in the governance of the Council.

2. Deputy Leader

We are recommending that the multiplier for the Deputy Leader role be 1.75 x the Basic Allowance as recommended for 2013-14.

3. Portfolio Holders on the Cabinet

We are recommending that the multiplier for Portfolio Holders be 1.5 x the Basic Allowance as recommended for 2013-14.

4. Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Guidance on Members Allowances for Local Authorities in England states that Special Responsibility Allowances may be paid to those members of the Council who have “significant additional responsibilities”, over and above the generally accepted duties of a Councillor. It also suggests that if the majority of members of a Council receive a Special Responsibility Allowance, the justification for this may be questioned.

We consider the Basic Allowance to include Councillors’ roles in Overview and Scrutiny, as any non-Executive member of the Council is able to contribute to this aspect of the Council’s work. For this reason we recommend that payments to members of Task and Finish groups are not appropriate.

5. Chairman of Standards Committee

Changes to the arrangements for governing the behaviour of Councillors were set out in the Localism Act 2011 and were introduced in July 2012. Councils are no longer required to appoint an Independent Chairman for the Standards Committee. Instead, Councils are required to appoint an Independent Person whose role is to deal with complaints against Councillors and act as a mediator to try and encourage early and local resolution of complaints. Remuneration for this role is outside the terms of reference for the Independent Panel although it is known that an honorarium is frequently paid. Where the Council

decides to retain a Standards Committee, as at Bromsgrove, the Chairman is now appointed from among the Councillors.

Last year we reviewed the work of the Standards Committee since the changes. We checked the number and length of meetings of the Committee and the role and responsibilities of the Chairman.

Having completed this review we consider our previous recommendation of a multiplier of 0.25 x the Basic Allowance for the Chairman's Special Responsibility Allowance is appropriate and we continue this recommendation.

6. Chairmen of Committees

The Panel draws to the attention of the Council the disparity between the multiplier of the Basic Allowance for the Chairman of Licensing Committee recommended by the Panel (0.3) and that used by the Council (1.3). The Panel's recommendation has been based on the volume of applications coming before the Councillors in Bromsgrove compared to the volume in other authorities. We have not seen any evidence to show that the level of applications considered by Councillors substantiates a higher level of Special Responsibility Allowance than that recommended by the Panel.

7 Mileage and Expenses 2015-16

The Panel notes that the Council has used the HMRC flat rate for payment of mileage for Councillors and recommends that this continues.

The Panel is satisfied that the current levels of subsistence allowances are set at an appropriate level and recommends that these continue.

The Panel notes that the Council's Scheme of Members' Allowances provides that Dependant Carer Allowances are payable to cover reasonable and legitimate costs incurred in attending approved duties and recommends that this provision continues.

Allowances to Parish Councils

The Independent Remuneration Panel for Worcestershire District Councils acts as the Remuneration Panel for the Parish Councils in each District.

This year the Panel has not been asked to make recommendations on any matters by any Parish in Bromsgrove. In the past the Panel which covered the District made specific recommendations regarding basic, travel and subsistence allowances and we are content to repeat these recommendations.

The Independent Remuneration Panel

The Members' Allowances Regulations require Local Authorities to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel. The purpose of the Panel

is to make recommendations to the authority about allowances to be paid to Elected Members and Local Authorities must have regard to this advice. This Council's Independent Remuneration Panel is set up on a joint basis with 4 of the other 5 District Councils in Worcestershire, the decision having been taken during 2010 to follow the principle previously established by having a joint Panel in the South of the County. Wyre Forest District Council withdrew from the arrangement in 2014. Separate Annual Reports have been prepared for each Council.

The members of the Panel are:

- Rob Key, the Chair of the Panel – Rob has 42 years' experience of working in District Councils in a variety of operational and management roles, including senior positions at Worcester City, Wychavon District and Wyre Forest District. He was an Independent Chair for the Strategic Health Authority for Continuing Care and sits on County Council Appeals Panels for School Preference Appeals and Service Complaints.
- Elaine Bell, JP, DipCrim – Elaine has been a Magistrate for 18 years on the South Worcester Bench. She was Deputy Chair of the Bench for 5 years, standing down in July 2014 when bench boundaries changed. She was Chair of the Bench Training and Development Committee for 9 years, and sat on the Magistrates Advisory Panel for 9 years (interviewing and selecting applicants for appointment as Magistrates). She sits as Chair in both Adult and Family courts in the newly constructed Worcestershire Bench stretching geographically from Hereford, Kidderminster, Redditch and Worcester. She is also Chair of the Lloyds Educational Foundation, past member of Sytchampton School Appeals Panel; Past Hon Treasurer of Ombersley and Doverdale Tennis Club and a Past Governor of Ombersley Primary School.
- Bill Simpson MBE JP – Bill spent 30 years in Further Education culminating in 11 years as Principal of Pershore College. He then entered the private sector as Director of two national Horticultural Societies, one being the Royal Horticultural Society. He served as a magistrate for 9 years until retirement. He is a Trustee of several charities including chairing Thrive between 1993 and 2008. Currently he is Vice Chair of Governors of Red Hill CE Primary School Worcester and a Chair/Member of the County Council and Diocesan Panels for Schools Preference and Exclusions Appeals.
- Terry Cotton - Terry spent 34 years working in central and local Government, mostly managing regeneration programmes across the West Midlands. Until May 2011 he worked at The Government Office for The West Midlands where he was a Relationship Manager between central and local Government and a lead negotiator for local performance targets. Following voluntary early retirement in May 2011, he worked part-time in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter, setting up a new business led community development trust and currently works part-time for Worcestershire County Council on sustainable transport initiatives. He is also a trustee of a small charitable trust providing grants to grass roots community initiatives in deprived communities.

- Don Barber – After several Human Resources and Productivity Improvement Management roles in Industry, Don became Chief Executive of a change management facilitating consultancy. Over the last 20 years he has been an independent consultant and advisor on a number of United Nations, European Commission, and World Bank transition projects, in particular in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australasia. He also operates in an advisory role to other consultancy groups seeking EU contracts. This experience has included the development of national civil service/public sector reform programmes including aspects of the effect of legislative change for central and local government and, in the U.K., working for the Office of Manpower Economics (advisors to the Prime Minister) on Public Sector Pay, in particular relating to: Civil Service Pay Reform, UK Armed Forces and the Medical Professions.

The Panel has been advised and assisted by:

- Claire Chaplin from Worcester City Council;
- Sheena Jones from Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils;
- Mel Harris from Wychavon District Council;
- Matthew Box from Malvern Hills District Council.

The Panel wishes to acknowledge its gratitude to these officers who have provided advice and guidance in a professional and dedicated manner.

Rob Key

Chairman of Independent Remuneration Panel

Appendix 1

Independent Remuneration Panel for District Councils in Worcestershire Recommendations for 2015-16

Bromsgrove District Council

Role	Recommended Multiplier	Current Multiplier	Recommended Allowance £	Current Allowance (paid) £
Basic Allowance – all Councillors	1	1	4,200 ²	4,326
Special Responsibility Allowances:				
Leader	3	3	12,600	12,978
Deputy Leader	1.75	2	7,350	8,653
Portfolio Holders	1.5	1.3	6,300	5,624
Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Board	1.5	1.3	6,300	5,624
Members of Overview and Scrutiny Task Groups	0	0.03	0	130 Payable on completion of task
Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Task Groups	0.25	0.06	1,050 paid pro-rata for the length of the Task Group	260
Chairman of Audit Board	0.25	0.29	1,050	1,254
Chairman of Planning Committee	1	1.3	4,200	5,624

² This figure takes into account a public service discount of 40%

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Role	Recommended Multiplier	Current Multiplier	Recommended Allowance £	Current Allowance (paid) £
Chairman of Licensing Committee	0.3	1.3	1,260	5,624
Chairman of Standards Committee if paid	0.25	0.29	1,050	1,254
Political Group Leaders	0.25	0.29	1,050	1,254 X 1 (Leader of the largest Opposition party elected at the ballot box)
Chairman of Appointments Committee	N/A	N/A	126 per meeting	130 per meeting
Chairman of Electoral Matters Committee	N/A	N/A	126 per meeting	130 per meeting
Chairman of Appeals Committee	N/A	N/A	126 per meeting	130 per meeting

Summary of Research

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) “Nearest Neighbour” authorities tool.

No two Councils or sets of Councillors are the same. Developed to aid local authorities in comparative and benchmarking exercises, the CIPFA Nearest Neighbours Model adopts a scientific approach to measuring the similarity between authorities. Using the data, Bromsgrove’s “nearest neighbours” are:

- Lichfield
- South Staffordshire
- Maldon
- Stafford
- Tewkesbury
- Wychavon

Information on the level of Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances was obtained to benchmark the levels of allowances recommended to the District Council.

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) Data on Pay 2014

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/ashe/annual-survey-of-hours-and-earnings/2014-provisional-results/index.html>

Published by the Office for National Statistics, the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) shows detailed information at District level about rates of pay. For benchmarking purposes the Panel uses the levels for hourly rates of pay for the County residents excluding overtime. This is multiplied by 11 to give a weekly rate. This was the number of hours spent on Council business by frontline Councillors which had been reported in previous surveys. The rate is then discounted by 40% to reflect the element of volunteering that each Councillor undertakes in the role.

CPI (Consumer Price Inflation)

In arriving at its recommendations the Panel has taken into account the latest reported CPI figure available to it, published by the Office for National Statistics. This was 1% for November 2014.

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CABINET

4th FEBRUARY 2015MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2015/16 – 2017/18

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Michael Webb
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Jayne Pickering (Exec Director)
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor Consulted	None specific

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 To enable Members to recommend the revenue budget for 2015/16 – 2017/18.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS**2.1 Cabinet is asked to recommend to Full Council****2.1.1 The approval of the revenue bids :****2015/16 – 2017/18**

- £30k in relation to providing financial support under the Essential Living Fund framework

2015/16

- £23k in relation to providing support to economic development projects to be funded from the income received from the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Business Rates Pool

2.1.2 The approval of the unavoidable pressures as detailed at Appendix 1 of :

2015/16 £380k
2016/17 -Nil
2017/18 £45k

2.1.3 The approval of the savings as detailed at Appendix 2 of :

2015/16 £547k
2016/17 £222k
2017/18 £25k

2.1.4 The approval of the increase in Council Tax of 1.9% for 2015/16**2.1.5 An amount to be agreed in relation to funding from New Homes Bonus (NHB) to be allocated to the NHB Community Scheme****2.1.6 The release of balances of**

2016/17 £59k
2017/18 £438k

2.1.7 The release of balances to meet the costs associated with the NHB allocation

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

3.1 The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) provides the framework within which the revenue and capital spending decisions can be made over a 3 year period. The plan addresses how the Council will provide financial funding to the Strategic Purposes and ensure residents receive quality services to meet their needs in the future. The Purposes that drive the financial considerations are :

- Help me find somewhere to live in my locality
- Provide good things for me to see, do and visit
- Help me live my life independently
- Help me run a successful business
- Help me be financially independent
- Keep my place safe and looking good

3.2 When reviewing the budget projections officers consider the impact of demand on service and the costs associated with this demand. This may result in additional costs (associated with maintaining current service delivery) or reductions in anticipated income revenue over the next 3 years.

3.3 As Members are aware there continue to be considerable pressures facing the Council over the next 3 years as a result of a number of issues including:

- Continued reduction in Government Grant
- Reduction in Council Tax Benefit Grant received
- Changes to welfare reform and the impact on the Council from residents service need
- Transfer from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit

3.4 Officers will continue to work with our partners to identify the costs that may be associated with some of these changes.

Formula Grant / Localised Business Rates

3.5 The provisional settlement that was received recently by the Council for 2015/16 was as indicated previously at £2.814m. However this confirms the £500k reduction in the grant allocated for 2014/15. The

grant includes a number of allocations that were previously received as separate funding streams and therefore the cut is across all funding received by Central Government.

- 3.6 Forecasting Government funding beyond 2015/16 is challenging, the key issue will be the outcome of the next Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), due for publication after the General Election in May 2015. Recent Government and opposition announcements indicate that the austerity measures are set to continue into future years, in line with the Government's objective of achieving a budget surplus. Further estimated reductions on Formula Grant are therefore factored into the MTFP, in line with previous estimates.
- 3.7 The new localised regime on Business Rates (BR) took effect in April 2013. Bromsgrove is part of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Business Rates Pool, set up as a mechanism to retain more BR growth funding within the area, and to manage risk on BR losses on a shared basis.
- 3.8 In the first year of this new regime, all members of the pool benefited financially from being in the pool. A net £750k growth levy was retained in the area which would have been returned to Central Government and following allocation of £307k to the LEP Growth Fund and payment of a Safety Net contribution to one of the Councils Bromsgrove gained £23k from the pool which has been included as funding for use I 2015/16. This is higher than the comparable income that would have been available from the Worcestershire Pool.

New Homes Bonus

- 3.9 The Council has received notification that the New Homes Bonus (NHB) total grant for 2015/16 will be £1.298m. This includes the 2015/16 grant of £348k which is significantly higher than the £126k included in the original budget estimates. This is due to the number of properties in the District increasing during 2014/15. A review of future years has been made and additional properties have been included in the medium term plan calculations. The Finance team will work more closely with Planning in the future to ensure that a more accurate estimate is used for projections.
- 3.10 As Members are aware all income received from New Homes Bonus grant is currently used within the General Funds of the Council and is utilised to offset the pressures facing the Council over the medium term. The petition to Council in April 2014 requested members look at the opportunity of allocating New Homes Bonus to the communities that were affected by housing growth.

- 3.11 A scheme for distribution of NHB funding was agreed at Cabinet and Full Council in January. At present no funding level has been decided and therefore the budget projections include all NHB income in the general budget. It is proposed that Members agree a percentage / value to be allocated during 2015/16 at this Cabinet meeting and that funding is released from balances to meet this requirement.

Council Tax

- 3.12 To ensure that necessary levels of funding are available given the large reductions in government grant highlighted above, the Council Tax increases will have to be sufficient to ensure that funding is available for the services that create value to the customer have appropriate levels of financial resource.
- 3.13 The government have offered a grant equivalent to a 1% rise in Council Tax for 2015/16 for councils who freeze their Council Tax in the next financial year. Acceptance of this freeze grant will cost the Council £140k pa once the grant ceases (assuming Council Tax would otherwise rise by 1.9% in 2015/16). The budget projections include an increase of 1.9% each year. It is therefore proposed that the Council Tax is increase by 1.9% and this has been built into the projections.

Transformation

- 3.14 The significant reductions in funding are not anticipated to improve for a number of years and therefore officers have looked at alternative ways to deliver savings whilst improving services to the community. As previously reported the services provided by the Council are undergoing transformational change using a different approach to assessing the value provided by the service. This work will focus on the purpose of services to the community and will aim to realise savings and protect those services that create value to our customers.
- 3.15 Members will be aware of the recent review to the provision of some services across a locality /place and the significant savings that have been identified whilst improving and enhancing the services to the community. In addition the work across customer services and departments continues to develop to ensure that an expert is on hand to support our residents.
- 3.16 Officers are focused on reducing costs of services that do not provide front line services to support the Strategic Purposes and will continue to drive out waste and redesign provision to reduce costs.

Current Position

3.17 Officers have also identified a number of budget pressures that have been deemed “unavoidable”. Unavoidable includes the ongoing effects of pressures identified during 2014/15 together with any issues that have been raised as fundamental to maintaining service provision as part of the budget process. In addition income shortfalls that cannot be managed by improved marketing or price increases have been addressed during the budget planning. These pressures are detailed in Appendix 1 and include :

- Shortfall in car parking income £62k resulting from a significant reduction in income from fixed penalty notices together with the impact of not increasing the charges in line with inflation (the initial budget included an element of inflationary increase)
- Shortfall in garden waste income of £63k due to the increase in charge to £38 being less than the £45 originally anticipated
- Reduction in funding from Worcestershire County Council in relation to funding for the customer service centre (HUB) of £26k.
- Additional staffing resource within the Planning Service to meet demand

Building Control

As members are aware the Council currently hosts the Building Control Shared service which covers North Worcestershire. The service has been operating under this arrangement since December 2011. When the service was established the financial charging mechanism was based on the budget allocation that was passed over to Bromsgrove by each Council. A requirement of the legal agreement for the shared arrangement stated that the financial mechanism had to be reviewed to ensure that costs were being allocated on an activity basis rather than the initial budget method to reflect actual levels of service received rather than relying on historical budget information. An exercise has recently been undertaken and the resulting allocation as attached at Appendix 3 shows that Bromsgrove have a significantly higher proportion of applications and activity than Wyre Forest or Redditch Borough Councils. Therefore it is proposed that the partner share percentage is revised with effect from 1st April 2015. The resulting pressure for Bromsgrove is included within the unavoidable pressures on the Appendices to this report. The legal agreement will need to be updated to make reference to the outcome of the review and the change to partner contributions, including the negative financial impact on Bromsgrove, and these changes and any future changes will need to be incorporated into the original agreement. Officers propose that this is achieved by the parties signing a Variation Agreement.

3.18 In addition to the unavoidable pressures two revenue bids have been identified.

- **Essential Living Fund £30k** - to continue to support this fund which will no longer be supported from any external grant allocations. The bid is for £20k will enable the Council to continue to provide support to the most vulnerable residents, through the provision of:
 - Short term help to pay energy costs;
 - Emergency food, clothing or other essentials; and
 - Basic furniture and/or electrical goods where a critical need has been identified.

In the last 2 years the funding received from County via the Government was £180k which was fully utilised. There remains pressure on the Government to reinstate the funding and officers will advise Members should any additional funding be made available.

- **Economic Development Projects £23k** – as part of the pooling arrangement with Greater Birmingham and Solihull the Council received £23k in 2014/15 from the levy allocation. It is proposed that this fund be allocated to support Economic Development activities across the District.

3.19 Officers have spent time reviewing how services are delivered across the Council to ensure that waste is eliminated and services are redesigned to reduce cost whilst ensuring that front line services adding value to the residents are protected. The schedule at Appendix 2 details the savings proposed to include:

- Reviews with Customer Services / Fraud £126k
- Place review – Environmental & Community Services £144k
- Reduction in election costs as shared with General Election £60k

Financial Position

3.20 The current summary position at 3.21 includes the financial impact of the above in addition to the following assumptions:

- 2.2% pay award in relation to the National Agreement in place
- General inflationary increases in relation to contract arrangements
- A estimate of reduction for 2016/17 (10%) & 2017/18 (5%) in Central Government Grant
- 3% increase in fees and charges (where appropriate)

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- Borrowing costs for the development of Parkside and the new Leisure Centre
- Borrowing costs of new fleet and plant for the Depot Services
- An estimation of the New Homes Bonus income
- Additional growth income estimated in relation to the Business Rates receivable by the Council
- A new funding arrangement for the Artrix at £60k pa following the completion of the previous 10 year agreement

3.21 The revised position is shown below.

	2015-16 £000	2016-17 £000	2017-18 £000
Departmental Expenditure (Starting Position)	11,314	11,323	11,369
Exclude impact of one off savings / pressures		80	40
Additional re pay award / incremental progression	123	188	140
Bids	53		
Unavoidable Pressures (new in year)	380		45
Savings (new in year)	-547	-222	-25
Net Service Expenditure	11,323	11,369	11,569
Investment Income	-36	-24	-24
Cost of Borrowing	384	750	1,198
Recharge to Capital Programme	-26	-25	-25
Net Operating Expenditure	11,645	12,070	12,718
Funding of borrowing costs for Dolphin Centre from balances	-123	-331	-506
Revenue Support Grant	-1,190	-1,058	-947
Business Rates Retention (Baseline)	-1,585	-1,598	-1,598
Business Rates Growth	-176	-176	-176
Funding from Business Rate Pool	-23		
New Homes Bonus	-1,298	-1,554	-1,685
Collection Fund Surplus (Council Tax)	-127	-	-
Council Tax	-7,123	-7,294	-7,367
Funding Total	-11,645	-12,011	-12,280
Shortfall	0	59	438
Proposed Funding from balances	0	-59	-438
Final Position	0	0	0

- 3.22 It is proposed that there is a release from balances to meet the shortfalls in 2016/17 – 2017/18. In addition any funds allocated for the New Homes Bonus Scheme will be released from balances. This will ensure that the Council has a sustainable funding position over the 3 year financial plan but officers will continue to review services with the aim to redesign them to meet customer demand and reduce costs.

General Fund Balances

- 3.23 The level of the general fund balance is currently £3.7m. As previously agreed over £1m will be used to support the first 2 years borrowing costs for the new Leisure Centre. The use of balances for 2016/17 and 2017/18 will reduce the level by a further £565k to £2.2m. The remaining level of balances will be sufficient to cover the increased risks that will be placed upon the Council in the short term. However reliance on the balances is not sustainable in the longer term.
- 3.24 The estimated level of government funding over the MTFP will reduce more rapidly than the increase in Council Tax revenues. Consequently, there will be a continuing focus on transforming service delivery to reduce waste and to ensure that the funding available is aligned to the services that create value to the community of Bromsgrove.

Capital Programme

- 3.25 The Capital Programme is a 3 year rolling programme and officers are currently working to ensure that the level of expenditure falls within the current estimated project allocation. The majority of new schemes are funded from S106 and Reserves and therefore have no financial implications for the Council. The borrowing costs of the fleet replacement plan have been included in the projections and a schedule of all Capital projects will be reported to the next meeting of Cabinet to be included in the final budget approval report for 2015/16 – 2017/18.

Legal Implications

- 3.26 The Council has a statutory responsibility to set the level of Council Tax and a balanced budget for the following financial year. This will be presented to the next Cabinet and Council in late February 2015.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.27 The MTFP will enable services to be maintained and, where achievable, improvements to the community.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.28 The impact on the customer has been reduced due to the savings being realised by reduction of waste in the services and ensuring that all service that create value to the customer are resourced.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 To mitigate the risks associated with the financial pressures facing the Authority regular monitoring reports are presented to both officers and Members to enable proactive action being undertaken to address any areas of concern.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Unavoidable Pressures (including income shortfalls)

Appendix 2 – Savings Proposed

Appendix 3 – Building Control Revised Allocation

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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APPENDIX 1

STATEMENT SHOWS THE IMPACT OF THE NEW PRESSURES FOR EACH FINANCIAL YEAR

UNAVOIDABLE PRESSURES	2015/16 £'000	2015/16 £'000	2015/16 £'000	Comments
ENABLING				
Neighbourhood Referendum costs to the District	10	-	-	<i>To provide for the costs associated with the neighbourhood referendum - one year only</i>
Reduction in HUB funding from WCC	26	-	-	<i>Reduction in income resulting from further cuts from Worcestershire County Council on HUB funding</i>
Business Rate Increase - across number of buildings	10	-	-	<i>Various increases in Business Rate Liability across the Council owned assets</i>
Individual Electoral Registration	20	-	-	<i>Additional cost to be incurred in respect of Individual Electoral Registration</i>
Postage - additional postage costs	15	-	-	<i>Additional postage costs incurred to meet demand for information being sent across the District</i>
KEEP MY PLACE SAFE AND LOOKING GOOD				
Planning Staff	79	-	-	<i>To ensure capacity within the team to deliver service to customers</i>
Building Control	95	-	-	<i>To revise the charging mechanism for Building Control Shared Service to allocate costs based on activity</i>

UNAVOIDABLE PRESSURES	2015/16 £'000	2015/16 £'000	2015/16 £'000	Comments
Land Charges	-	-	45	<i>The Government is currently looking at changing the way land charges are provided from 2017/18 which may mean the income is no longer received by BDC</i>
Shortfall in garden waste income (£45 - £38)	63	-	-	<i>To meet the shortfall in income following decision to revise the charge for garden waste to £38 per year from the £45 included in the original budget projections</i>
HELP ME RUN A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS				
Car Parking Income - no inflationary increase	32	-	-	<i>The budget includes an element of inflationary increase - the charges are not increasing for 2015/16 therefore there will be a shortfall to the estimated income</i>
Car Parking Income - reduced income from enforcement	30	-	-	<i>There is a projected shortfall in income relating to enforcement as drivers are now parking in a more compliant way</i>
TOTAL PER SUMMARY ABOVE	380	0	45	

STATEMENT SHOWS THE IMPACT OF THE NEW SAVINGS FOR
EACH FINANCIAL YEAR

STRATEGIC PURPOSE SAVINGS	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Comments
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
ENABLING				
Customer Access & Financial Support - Service Review Fraud / Customer Services / General savings	-126	-	-	<i>Savings / additional income realised from service reviews to reduce the enabling costs of the Council including Fraud Customer services (£30k is for one year only)</i>
Elections - Sharing the election costs with General Election	-60	-	-	<i>Reduction in the budget requirement for the District Election as this can now be shared with the General Election - (one year only)</i>
Service Review of Resources within Enabling Services; HR, Legal & Democratic, Finance, IT, Business Transformation	-135	-100	-	<i>Restructure of the resources that provide enabling services / management across the organisation</i>
WRS Savings		-50	-	<i>Savings from further efficiencies in WRS</i>
KEEP MY PLACE SAFE AND LOOKING GOOD				
Place Review - Environmental Services & Community savings	-144	-47	-	<i>As part of the review of how the services can be delivered across the District meeting the needs of a locality / place significant savings can be made - Environmental Services</i>

STRATEGIC PURPOSE SAVINGS	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000	Comments
HELP ME LIVE MY LIFE INDEPENDENTLY				
Community Transport - renegotiation of contract	-16	-	-	<i>Saving offered from prior year renegotiation of contract</i>
Staffing Review across the Strategic Purpose	-20	-	-	<i>Savings estimated as a result of a review into the resource supporting the strategic purpose</i>
PROVIDE GOOD THINGS FOR ME TO SEE, DO AND VISIT				
Sports Dev Partnership change in arrangements for delivery of service to private organisation	-6	-	-	<i>No further payments to be made as the service is to be provided in an alternative way to support a number of sports and health activities across the County</i>
Staffing Review across the Strategic Purpose	-	-25	-25	<i>Review resources and service delivery across the Locality to link with the Strategic Purpose</i>
Dolphin Centre	-40	-	-	<i>Reduction in costs relating to the Dolphin Centre</i>
TOTAL AS PER SUMMARY ABOVE	-547	-222	-25	

Building Control Shared Service - partner share allocation

Appendix 3

BUDGETS	Original Budget Baseline £		2012 / 2013 £		2013 / 2014 £		2014 / 2015
Bromsgrove	181,527	30%	154,645		146,565		129,855
Redditch	194,950	32%	166,072		157,395		147,399
Wyre Forest	225,100	37%	191,744		181,725		164,341
	601,577		512,461		485,685		441,595
APPLICATIONS	2012/13 No of Applications	% of Total	2013/14 No of Applications	% of Total	2013/14 No of Applications (to 2nd Q)	% of Total	Average %
Bromsgrove	601	48%	885	59%	337	47%	51%
Redditch	264	21%	259	17%	155	22%	20%
Wyre Forest	386	31%	363	24%	227	31%	29%

SUMMARY

	Original % Share	2014/15 Budget £	Revised % Share	Revised Payment - based on 2014/15 £	Difference £
Bromsgrove	30.18%	129,855	51.00%	225,213	95,358
Redditch	32.41%	147,399	20.00%	88,319	-59,080
Wyre Forest	37.42%	164,341	29.00%	128,063	-36,278
		441,595		441,595	

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25^h FEBRUARY 2015MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2015/16 – 2017/18

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Michael Webb
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Jayne Pickering (Exec Director)
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor Consulted	None specific

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 To enable to consider the final revenue position and the Capital Programme for 2015/16 – 2017/18.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS**2.1 Cabinet is asked to recommend to Full Council**

- 2.1.1 The approval of the release from balances of :**
2016/17 £136k
2017/18 £137k

- 2.1.2 Approve the Capital Programme as attached at Appendix 1:**
2015/16 £712k
2016/17 £573k
2017/18 £822k

- 2.1.3 Approve the pay policy as attached at Appendix 2**

3. KEY ISSUES**Financial Implications**

- 3.1 The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) provides the framework within which the revenue and capital spending decisions can be made over a 3 year period. The plan addresses how the Council will provide financial funding to the Strategic Purposes and ensure residents receive quality services to meet their needs in the future. The Purposes that drive the financial considerations are :

- Help me find somewhere to live in my locality
- Provide good things for me to see, do and visit
- Help me live my life independently
- Help me run a successful business
- Help me be financially independent
- Keep my place safe and looking good

- 3.2 When reviewing the budget projections officers consider the impact of demand on service and the costs associated with this demand. This may result in additional costs (associated with maintaining current service delivery) or reductions in anticipated income revenue over the next 3 years.
- 3.3 As Members are aware there continue to be considerable pressures facing the Council over the next 3 years as a result of a number of issues including:
- Continued reduction in Government Grant
 - Reduction in Council Tax Benefit Grant received
 - Changes to welfare reform and the impact on the Council from residents service need
 - Transfer from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit
- 3.4 Officers will continue to work with our partners to identify the costs that may be associated with some of these changes.

Formula Grant / Localised Business Rates

- 3.5 The provisional settlement that was received recently by the Council for 2015/16 was as indicated previously at £2.814m. However this confirms the £500k reduction in the grant allocated for 2014/15. The grant includes a number of allocations that were previously received as separate funding streams and therefore the cut is across all funding received by Central Government.
- 3.6 Forecasting Government funding beyond 2015/16 is challenging, the key issue will be the outcome of the next Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), due for publication after the General Election in May 2015. Recent Government and opposition announcements indicate that the austerity measures are set to continue into future years, in line with the Government's objective of achieving a budget surplus. Further estimated reductions on Formula Grant are therefore factored into the MTFP, in line with previous estimates.
- 3.7 The new localised regime on Business Rates (BR) took effect in April 2013. Bromsgrove is part of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Business Rates Pool, set up as a mechanism to retain more BR growth funding within the area, and to manage risk on BR losses on a shared basis.
- 3.8 In the first year of this new regime, all members of the pool benefited financially from being in the pool. A net £750k growth levy was retained in the area which would have been returned to Central Government and following allocation of £307k to the LEP Growth Fund and payment of a Safety Net contribution to one of the Councils

Bromsgrove gained £23k from the pool which has been included as funding for use I 2015/16. This is higher than the comparable income that would have been available from the Worcestershire Pool.

New Homes Bonus

- 3.9 The Council has received notification that the New Homes Bonus (NHB) total grant for 2015/16 will be £1.298m. This includes the 2015/16 grant of £348k which is significantly higher than the £126k included in the original budget estimates. This is due to the number of properties in the District increasing during 2014/15. A review of future years has been made and additional properties have been included in the medium term plan calculations. The Finance team will work more closely with Planning in the future to ensure that a more accurate estimate is used for projections.
- 3.10 As Members are aware all income received from New Homes Bonus grant is currently used within the General Funds of the Council and is utilised to offset the pressures facing the Council over the medium term. The petition to Council in April 2014 requested members look at the opportunity of allocating New Homes Bonus to the communities that were affected by housing growth.
- 3.11 A scheme for distribution of NHB funding was agreed at Cabinet and Full Council in January. It was proposed at the Cabinet meeting on 4th February 2015 that 25% of the £348k new funding for 2015/16 be allocated towards the NHB Scheme. This would equate to £87k and would be funded from balances in 2015/16. The scheme would be reviewed on an annual basis and agreement reached on an annual basis as to how much would be allocated to the scheme.

Council Tax

- 3.12 To ensure that necessary levels of funding are available given the large reductions in government grant highlighted above, the Council Tax increases will have to be sufficient to ensure that funding is available for the services that create value to the customer have appropriate levels of financial resource.
- 3.13 The government have offered a grant equivalent to a 1% rise in Council Tax for 2015/16 for councils who freeze their Council Tax in the next financial year. It was proposed at the Cabinet meeting on 4th February 2015 that the Council would freeze Council Tax for 2015/16 and accept the freeze grant from Government. The net cost of £63k for 2015/16, £136k for 2016/17 & 2017/18 would be funded from balances.

Transformation

- 3.14 The significant reductions in funding are not anticipated to improve for a number of years and therefore officers have looked at alternative ways to deliver savings whilst improving services to the community. As previously reported the services provided by the Council are undergoing transformational change using a different approach to assessing the value provided by the service. This work will focus on the purpose of services to the community and will aim to realise savings and protect those services that create value to our customers.
- 3.15 Members will be aware of the recent review to the provision of some services across a locality /place and the significant savings that have been identified whilst improving and enhancing the services to the community. In addition the work across customer services and departments continues to develop to ensure that an expert is on hand to support our residents.
- 3.16 Officers are focused on reducing costs of services that do not provide front line services to support the Strategic Purposes and will continue to drive out waste and redesign provision to reduce costs.

Current Position

- 3.17 Officers have also identified a number of budget pressures that have been deemed “unavoidable”. Unavoidable includes the ongoing effects of pressures identified during 2014/15 together with any issues that have been raised as fundamental to maintaining service provision as part of the budget process. In addition income shortfalls that cannot be managed by improved marketing or price increases have been addressed during the budget planning. The pressures were agreed at the Cabinet meeting of 4th February and included :
- Shortfall in car parking income £62k resulting from a significant reduction in income from fixed penalty notices together with the impact of not increasing the charges in line with inflation (the initial budget included an element of inflationary increase)
 - Shortfall in garden waste income of £63k due to the increase in charge to £38 being less than the £45 originally anticipated
 - Reduction in funding from Worcestershire County Council in relation to funding for the customer service centre (HUB) of £26k.
 - Additional staffing resource within the Planning Service to meet demand
 - Additional costs relating to the review of charging for Building Control

3.18 In addition to the unavoidable pressures two revenue bids were agreed by Cabinet at 4th February.

- **Essential Living Fund £30k** - to provide funding for vulnerable members of the community when they need urgent financial support. County Council will provide match funding of £30k for 2015/16 and have recommended approval of £53k from a recent allocation from Central Government for welfare assistance and social care. This will enable funds of £113k to be made available for 2015/16.
- **Economic Development Projects £23k** – as part of the pooling arrangement with Greater Birmingham and Solihull the Council received £23k in 2014/15 from the levy allocation. It is proposed that this fund be allocated to support Economic Development activities across the District.

3.19 Officers have spent time reviewing how services are delivered across the Council to ensure that waste is eliminated and services are redesigned to reduce cost whilst ensuring that front line services adding value to the residents are protected. Savings were agreed at the Cabinet meeting on 4th February and include:

- Reviews with Customer Services / Fraud £126k
- Place review – Environmental & Community Services £144k
- Reduction in election costs as shared with General Election £60k

Financial Position

3.20 The final position at 3.21 includes the financial impact of the above in addition to the following assumptions:

- 2.2% pay award in relation to the National Agreement in place
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- A estimate of reduction for 2016/17 (10%) & 2017/18 (5%) in Central Government Grant
- 3% increase in fees and charges (where appropriate)
- Borrowing costs for the development of Parkside and the new Leisure Centre
- Borrowing costs of new fleet and plant for the Depot Services
- An estimation of the New Homes Bonus income
- Additional growth income estimated in relation to the Business Rates receivable by the Council
- A new funding arrangement for the Artrix at £60k pa following the completion of the previous 10 year agreement

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3.21 The revised position is shown below.

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
	£000	£000	£000
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Exclude impact of one off savings / pressures		80	40
Additional re pay award / incremental progression	123	188	140
Bids	53		
Unavoidable Pressures (new in year)	380		45
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Recharge to Capital Programme	-26	-25	-25
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Business Rates Retention (Baseline Funding)	-1,585	-1,598	-1,598
Business Rates Growth	-176	-176	-176
Funding from Business Rate Pool	-23		
New Homes Bonus	-1,298	-1,554	-1,685
New Homes Bonus Community Scheme	87		
Collection Fund Surplus (Council Tax)	-127	-	-
Council Tax	-6,989	-7,157	-7,231

Council Tax Freeze Grant (1% 2015/16 only)	-69		
Funding Total	-11,493	-11,874	-12,144
Shortfall	150	196	718
Proposed Funding from balances	-150	-196	-718
Final Position	0	0	0

- 3.22 It is proposed that there is a release from balances to meet the shortfalls in 2016/17 – 2017/18. In addition any funds allocated for the New Homes Bonus Scheme will be released from balances. This will ensure that the Council has a sustainable funding position over the 3 year financial plan but officers will continue to review services with the aim to redesign them to meet customer demand and reduce costs.

General Fund Balances

- 3.23 The level of the general fund balance is currently £3.7m. As previously agreed over £1m will be used to support the first 2 years borrowing costs for the new Leisure Centre. The use of balances for 2015/16 - 2017/18 will reduce the level by a further £1m to £1.7m. The remaining level of balances will be sufficient to cover the increased risks that will be placed upon the Council in the short term. However reliance on the balances is not sustainable in the longer term.
- 3.24 The estimated level of government funding over the MTFP will reduce more rapidly than the increase in Council Tax revenues. Consequently, there will be a continuing focus on transforming service delivery to reduce waste and to ensure that the funding available is aligned to the services that create value to the community of Bromsgrove.

Capital Programme

- 3.25 The Capital Programme is a 3 year rolling programme and officers are currently working to ensure that the level of expenditure falls within the current estimated project allocation. The majority of new schemes are funded from S106 and Reserves and therefore have no financial implications for the Council. The borrowing costs associated with any schemes not funded by grant or S106 have been factored into the summary statement. The Capital Programme is attached at Appendix 1 for consideration.

Pay Policy

- 3.26 The Localism Act requires English and Welsh local authorities to produce a Pay Policy Statement ('the statement'). The Act requires the statement to be approved by Full Council and to be adopted by 31st March 2015 for the financial year 2015/16. The Pay Policy Statement for the Council is included at Appendix 2.

The statement must set out policies relating to—

- (a) the remuneration of its chief officers,
- (b) the remuneration of its lowest-paid employees, and
- (c) the relationship between—
 - (i) the remuneration of its chief officers, and
 - (ii) the remuneration of its employees who are not chief officers.

The provisions within the Localism Act bring together the strands of increasing accountability, transparency and fairness in the setting of local pay

Legal Implications

Local Government Act 2003

- 3.27 There are a number of requirements that the Council's Section 151 Officer (the Council's designated Senior Finance Officer) has to include in the budget report. These are set out below, together with S.151 comments on each of the issues:

- a) The level and use of reserves to be formally determined by the Council must be informed by the judgement and advice of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO).

Section 151 Officer's comments: Review of general fund balances included above in report (3.23).

- b) The CFO to report the factors that have influenced his/her judgement in the context of the key financial assumptions underpinning the budget, and ensure that his/her advice is formally recorded. Where that advice is not accepted, this should be formally recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Section 151 Officer's comments: The main assumptions included in the calculation of the budget are included within the report. The budget updates and considerations at previous Committee meetings have been formally recorded.

- c) The report should include a statement showing the estimated opening balance on general fund reserves for the year ahead,

any contribution to/from the fund, and the estimated closing balance.

Section 151 Officer's comments: statement included in this report (3.23)

- d) The report should show the extent to which reserves are financing ongoing expenditure.

Section 151 Officer's comments: included in the report. Proposal to utilise balances over 3 year period to support financial position of the Council.

- e) The report should include a statement from the CFO on the adequacy of general reserves and provisions both for the forthcoming year and in the context of the medium term financial plan.

Section 151 Officer Comments: the Council holds adequate reserves to manage future liability and financial constraints as detailed in 3.23.

- f) The report should include a statement on the annual review of earmarked reserves showing:
- i) list of earmarked reserves
 - ii) purpose of reserve
 - iii) advice on appropriate levels
 - iv) estimated opening / closing balances
 - v) planned additions / withdrawals.

Section 151 Officer's Comments: The current reserves are reported on a regular basis through the financial monitoring reports .

- 3.28 The Council has a legal responsibility to set a balanced budget under the Local Government Act 2003.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.29 The MTFP will enable services to be maintained and, where achievable, improvements to the community.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.30 The impact on the customer has been reduced due to the savings being realised by reduction of waste in the services and ensuring that all service that create value to the customer are resourced.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 To mitigate the risks associated with the financial pressures facing the Authority regular monitoring reports are presented to both officers and Members to enable proactive action being undertaken to address any areas of concern.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Capital Bids 2015/16 – 2017/18

Appendix 2 – Pay Policy 2015/16

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Tel: 01527-881400

NEW CAPITAL BIDS

Description	Funding	Department	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000	Commentary (link to priorities etc)
Vehicle Replacement Program	Borrowing /Reserve	Environmental Services	0	0	219	To meet the needs of replacing the fleet
Disabled Facilities Grant	Borrowing /Grant	Community Services	523	523	523	We receive £323k government grant £200k is from capital receipts.
	Capital receipt/Grant Total		523	523	742	
SAN (Storage Area Network)	Earmarked reserve	Business Transformation	75	0	0	To replace old electronic storage device (10 years old).
PSN compliance	Earmarked reserve	Business Transformation	10	10	30	Ongoing Public Service Network compliance costs
Fibre switches for SAN	Earmarked reserve	Business Transformation	20	0	0	Electronic storage solution and need replacing
Server infrastructure	Earmarked reserve	Business Transformation	0	0	50	To replace the corporate servers that will be 7 years old.
Upgrade Backup Solution	Earmarked reserve	Business Transformation	0	40		The backup solution will be over 10 years old at this time and needs to be updated to match the increasing capacity of electronic storage.
	Earmarked reserve Total		105	50	80	
Play provision for Town centre recreation	S106 play area & open places	Leisure Services	84	0	0	To improve the play provision in the Town Centre .
	S106 play area & open places Total		84	0	0	
	Grand Total		712	573	822	

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Bromsgrove District Council PAY POLICY STATEMENT

Introduction and Purpose

1. Under section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the “power to appoint officers on such reasonable terms and conditions as authority thinks fit”. This pay policy statement sets out the Council’s approach to pay policy in accordance with the requirements of Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011. It shall apply for the financial year 2015 – 2016 and each subsequent financial year, until amended.
2. The purpose of the statement is to provide transparency with regard to the Council’s approach to setting the pay of its employees by identifying;
 - a. the methods by which salaries of all employees are determined;
 - b. the detail and level of remuneration of its most senior staff i.e. ‘chief officers’, as defined by the relevant legislation;
 - c. the Committee(s) responsible for ensuring the provisions set out in this statement are applied consistently throughout the Council and for recommending any amendments to the full Council
3. Once approved by the full Council, this policy statement will come into immediate effect and will be subject to review on a minimum of an annual basis, in accordance with the relevant legislation prevailing at that time.

Legislative Framework

4. In determining the pay and remuneration of all of its employees, the Council will comply with all relevant employment legislation. This includes the Equality Act 2010, Part Time Employment (Prevention of Less Favorable Treatment) Regulations 2000, The Agency Workers Regulations 2010 and where relevant, the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Earnings) Regulations. With regard to the equal pay requirements contained within the Equality Act, the Council ensures there is no pay discrimination within its pay structures and that all pay differentials can be objectively justified through the use of equality proofed Job Evaluation mechanisms. These directly relate salaries to the requirements, demands and responsibilities of the role.

Pay Structure

5. The Council’s current pay and grading structure comprises grades 1 – 6, S01 – S02, and M01 – M04. There are also grades for Managers 1 - 4, Head of Service 2, Head of Service 1, Director, Executive Director, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Executive; all of which arise from the introduction of shared services with Bromsgrove District Council and which specifically accommodate the joint management team for shared services.
6. Within every grade there are a number of salary / pay points (spinal column points). Up to and including spinal column point 49 (at scale M04) the Council uses the nationally negotiated pay spine. Salary points above this are locally determined. This current complete pay structure is set out below.

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Grade	Spinal Column Points		Nationally determined rates	
			Minimum £	Maximum £
1	5	9	13,500	14,075
2	9	14	14,075	16,231
3	13	17	15,941	17,372
4	17	22	17,372	20,253
5	21	25	19,742	22,212
6	25	30	22,212	26,293
7	30	36	26,293	30,978
8	35	40	30,178	34,746
9	39	43	33,857	37,483
10	42	46	36,571	40,217
11	45	49	39,267	39,267

Manager 1	Hay evaluated	43%	52,530	54,672
Manager 2	Hay evaluated	45%	54,672	56,916
Manager 3	Hay evaluated	46%	56,916	58,905
Manager 4	Hay evaluated	48%	58,905	61,812
Head of Service 2	Hay evaluated	51%	62,475	65,025
Head of Service 1	Hay evaluated	61%	74,970	78,030
Director	Hay evaluated	68%	83,640	86,700
Executive Director	Hay evaluated	74%	90,780	94,350

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Deputy Chief Executive	Hay evaluated	82%	99,960	102,000
Chief Executive	Hay evaluated		122,500	127,500

7. All Council posts are allocated to a grade based on the application of a Job Evaluation process. Posts for Managers are evaluated by an external assessor using the Hay Job Evaluation scheme. This scheme identifies the salary for these posts based on a percentage of Chief Executive salary. Where posts are identified as being potentially too 'large' and 'complex' for the majority scheme, they are double tested under the Hay scheme, and where appropriate, are taken into the Hay scheme to identify levels of pay.
8. In common with the majority of authorities the Council is committed to the Local Government Employers national pay bargaining framework in respect of the national pay spine and annual cost of living increases negotiated with the trade unions.
9. All other pay related allowances are the subject of either nationally or locally negotiated rates, having been determined from time to time in accordance with collective bargaining machinery and/or as determined by Council policy. In determining its grading structure and setting remuneration levels for all posts, the Council takes account of the need to ensure value for money in respect of the use of public expenditure, balanced against the need to recruit and retain employees who are able to meet the requirements of providing high quality services to the community; delivered effectively and efficiently and at all times those services are required.
10. New appointments will normally be made at the minimum of the relevant grade, although this can be varied where necessary to secure the best candidate. From time to time it may be necessary to take account of the external pay market in order to attract and retain employees with particular experience, skills and capacity. Where necessary, the Council will ensure the requirement for such is objectively justified by reference to clear and transparent evidence of relevant market comparators, using appropriate data sources available from within and outside the local government sector.
11. For staff not on the highest point within the salary scale there is a system of annual progression to the next point on the band, which can be made subject to satisfactory performance.

Senior Management Remuneration

12. For the purposes of this statement, senior management means 'chief officers' as defined within S43 of the Localism Act. The posts falling within the statutory definition are set out below, with details of their basic salary as at 1st January 2015.
13. Bromsgrove District Council is managed by a senior management team who manage shared services across both Redditch Borough and Bromsgrove District Councils.

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All of the posts listed below have been job evaluated on this basis, with the salary costs for these posts split equally between both Council's.

Title	% of Chief executive salary	Pay range (minimum)	Pay range (maximum)	Incremental points	Cost to Bromsgrove District Council
Chief Executive	100%	£122,500	£127,500	3	£62,500
Director of Leisure, Environment and Community Services. (Also Deputy Chief Executive / Executive Director (Council 'lead officer'))	82%	£99,960	£102,000	3	£50,490
Director of Finance and Resources. (Also section 151 Officer and Council 'lead' officer)	74%	90,780	94,350	3	£46,282
Head of Customer Access and Financial Support	61%	74,970	78,030	3	38,250
Head of Planning and Regeneration	61%	74,970	78,030	3	£38,250
Head of Transformation and Organisational Development	61%	74,970	78,030	3	£38,250
Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services	61%	74,970	78,030	3	£38,250
Head of Environmental Services	61%	74,970	78,030	3	£38,250

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Head of Leisure and Cultural Services	61%	74,970	78,030	3	£38,250
Head of Community Services	61%	74,970	78,030	3	£38,250

Recruitment of Chief Officers

14. The Council's policy and procedures with regard to recruitment of chief officers is set out within the Officer Employment Procedure Rules as set out in the Council's Constitution. When recruiting to all posts the Council will take full and proper account of its own equal opportunities, recruitment and redeployment Policies. The determination of the remuneration to be offered to any newly appointed chief officer will be in accordance with the pay structure and relevant policies in place at the time of recruitment. Where the Council is unable to recruit to a post at the designated grade, it will consider the use of temporary market forces supplements in accordance with its relevant policies.
15. Where the Council remains unable to recruit chief officers under a contract of service, or there is a need for interim support to provide cover for a vacant substantive chief officer post, the Council will, where necessary, consider and utilise engaging individuals under 'contracts for service'. These will be sourced through a relevant procurement process ensuring the council is able to demonstrate the maximum value for money benefits from competition in securing the relevant service. The Council does not currently have any Chief Officers under such arrangements.

Performance-Related Pay and Bonuses – Chief Officers

16. The Council does not apply any bonuses or performance related pay to its chief officers. Any progression through the incremental scale of the relevant grade is subject to satisfactory performance which is assessed on an annual basis.

Additions to Salary of Chief Officers (applicable to all staff)

17. In addition to the basic salary for the post, all staff may be eligible for other payments under the Council's existing policies. Some of these payments are chargeable to UK Income Tax and do not solely constitute reimbursement of expenses incurred in the fulfilment of duties. The list below shows some of the kinds of payments made.
- reimbursement of mileage. At the time of preparation of this statement, the Council pays an allowance of 45p per mile for all staff, with additional or alternative payments for carrying passengers or using a bicycle;
 - professional fees. The Council pays for or reimburses the cost of one practicing certificate fee or membership of a professional organisation provided it is relevant to the post that an employee occupies within the Council.
 - long service awards. The Council pays staff an additional amount if they have completed 25 years of service.
 - honoraria, in accordance with the Council's policy on salary and grading. Generally, these may be paid only where a member of staff has performed a role at a higher grade;
 - fees for returning officer and other electoral duties, such as acting as a presiding officer of a polling station. These are fees which are identified and

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- paid separately for local government elections, elections to the UK Parliament and EU Parliament and other electoral processes such as referenda;
- f. pay protection – where a member of staff is placed in a new post and the grade is below that of their previous post, for example as a result of a restructuring, pay protection at the level of their previous post is paid for the first 12 months. In exceptional circumstance pay protection can be applied for greater than 12 months with the prior approval of the Chief Executive.
 - g. market forces supplements in addition to basic salary where identified and paid separately;
 - h. salary supplements or additional payments for undertaking additional responsibilities such as shared service provision with another local authority or in respect of joint bodies, where identified and paid separately;
 - i. attendance allowances.

Payments on Termination

18. The Council's approach to discretionary payments on termination of employment of chief officers prior to reaching normal retirement age is set out within its policy statement in accordance with Regulations 5 and 6 of the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) Regulations 2006 and Regulations 12 and 13 of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Benefits, Membership and Contribution) Regulations 2007.
19. Any other payments falling outside the provisions or the relevant periods of contractual notice shall be subject to a formal decision made by the full Council or relevant elected members, committee or panel of elected members with delegated authority to approve such payments.
20. Redundancy payments are based upon an employee's actual weekly salary and, in accordance with the Employee Relations Act 1996, will be up to 30 weeks, depending upon length of service and age.

Publication

21. Upon approval by the full Council, this statement will be published on the Council's website. In addition, for posts where the full time equivalent salary is at least £50,000, the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts will include a note on Officers Remuneration setting out the total amount of:
 - a. Salary, fees or allowances paid to or receivable by the person in the current and previous year;
 - b. Any bonuses so paid or receivable by the person in the current and previous year;
 - c. Any sums payable by way of expenses allowance that are chargeable to UK income tax;
 - d. Any compensation for loss of employment and any other payments connected with termination;
 - e. Any benefits received that do not fall within the above.

Lowest Paid Employees

22. The Council's definition of lowest paid employees is persons employed under a contract of employment with the Council on full time (37 hours) equivalent salaries in accordance with the minimum spinal column point currently in use within the

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Council's grading structure. As at 1st January 2015 this is £13,500 per annum, which relates to the lowest point within the current grading structure. The grading will be subject to the implementation of the revised job evaluation scheme and pay model.

23. The Council also employs apprentices (or other such categories of workers) who are not included within the definition of 'lowest paid employees' (as they are employed under a special form of employment contract; which is a contract for training rather than actual employment).
24. The relationship between the rate of pay for the lowest paid and chief officers is determined by the processes used for determining pay and grading structures as set out earlier in this policy statement.
25. The statutory guidance under the Localism Act recommends the use of pay multiples as a means of measuring the relationship between pay rates across the workforce and that of senior managers, as included within the Hutton 'Review of Fair Pay in the Public Sector' (2010). The Hutton report was asked by Government to explore the case for a fixed limit on dispersion of pay through a requirement that no public sector manager can earn more than 20 times the lowest paid person in the organisation. The report concluded that "it would not be fair or wise for the Government to impose a single maximum pay multiple across the public sector". The Council accepts the view that the relationship to median earnings is a more relevant measure and the Government's Code of Recommended Practice on Data Transparency recommends the publication of the ratio between highest paid salary and the median average salary of the whole of the authority's workforce.
26. The current pay levels within the Council define the multiple between the lowest paid (full time equivalent) employee and the Chief Executive as [1:10.5] and; between the lowest paid employee and average chief officer as [1:5.8]. The multiple between the median (average) full time equivalent earnings and the [Chief Executive] is [1:6.7] and; between the median (average) full time equivalent earnings and average chief officer is [1:3.8].
27. As part of its overall and ongoing monitoring of alignment with external pay markets, both within and outside the sector, the Council will use available benchmark information as appropriate.

Accountability and Decision Making

28. In accordance with the Constitution of the Council, the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Board are responsible for decision making in relation to the recruitment, pay, terms and conditions and severance arrangements in relation to employees of the Council.

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