



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 25TH FEBRUARY 2015, AT 6.00 P.M.

THE COUNCIL HOUSE, BURCOT LANE, BROMSGROVE

SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTATION

The attached papers were specified as "to follow" on the Agenda previously distributed relating to the above mentioned meeting.

Part of item 7 – Medium Term Financial Plan

- To consider an Alternative Budget 2015/16 and Medium Term Financial Plan from the Labour Group (attached Pages 1 - 6)

12. Motions (Pages 7 - 12)

K. DICKS
Chief Executive

The Council House
Burcot Lane
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B60 1AA

20th February 2015

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LABOUR BUDGET AMENDMENT: Full Council 25/2/15

1. The Labour Group proposes an amendment to the Conservative administration's MTFP. It is clear that the present budget from the Conservative administration fails to fairly and adequately address the needs of our town and District.
- 1.1 The Council's financial stewardship over the past fifteen years has been poor. Frequent criticism from our auditors as to the transparency of budgeting and the presentation of savings is well made. Over £25 million of capital receipts have been spent in the last decade with plans for borrowing to rise to over £20M to fund capital projects, for which money should have been put aside in the good times, rather than spent on failed IT and transformation programmes.
- 1.2 There is clearly a major job of work to rebalance the finances of BDC following fifteen years of Conservative maladministration of our Council's finances. This budget amendment is just the first step to redressing these issues and refocussing the activity of the Council to best meet the needs of our communities and the long term growth of our local economy.

Council Tax

2. Labour welcomes the last minute change of heart from the Cabinet to freeze council tax despite their previous stance against a freeze. It is notable that the Administration of the Council has increased tax twice since the last election, despite clear evidence that not a penny of this additional taxation has been spent on local services. In fact over the period the Council has charged £260,000 of tax rises whilst in fact generating unplanned surpluses of over £2.4M (including this year's projected outturn).
- 2.1 Labour believes that any rise in tax should be to protect front line services. Over the past four years local residents have footed an additional tax bill of £260,000, not to protect council services, but rather to increase civic coffers.

3. Investment into local services and communities

3.1 Over the three year lifetime of the MTFP Labour pledges an investment in front line projects and services targeted to:

- Grow the local economy and create new jobs
- Encourage business and retail to come to our District; promoting tourism and inward investment
- Improve the health and well-being of the community
- Support arts development and education in our town
- Give a fairer deal for our communities

3.2 The total investment in these projects and initiatives over the three year plan will be up to £1.5M.

	15/16	16/17	17/18
	£k	£k	£k
Improving Health and Wellbeing, Increasing leisure participation			
Introduce free Swimming for the U16's and Over 65's	52k (youth 25k, seniors 12.5k, families/passes/admin 14.5k)	52k	52k
Boosting our town centre economy by tackling the parking charges			
Parking: Free Sunday Parking	62k	62k	62k
Parking: Remove Blue Badge charges and add Over 65 residents' pass	50k	50k	50k
Parking: Evening Parking (extend after trial)	In budget	60k	60k
Giving a better deal to local residents			
Council Tax Freeze initially for 1 Year	In budget	In budget	In budget
A fairer deal on New Homes Bonus that ensures community development, jobs and economic growth across the District			
NHB: Business Rate Relief scheme and capital grants for new businesses in town and village	80k	80k	80k

centres			
NHB: Community and Economic Development Grants scheme (additional 87.5k – 175k total)	87.5k	87.5k	87.5k
NHB: Funding for Ward Member grant scheme to provide specific community projects and improvements	85k	93k	93k
NHB Allocation (inc 87.5k in MTFP) subject to annual review	340k	348k	348k
Investing in arts and education and safeguarding the Artrix			
Support for the Artrix and arts outreach programme (to provide an additional 30k – total 90k over first 3 years of a new 9 year settlement)	30k	30k	30k
Increasing tourism, promoting local business and educating young people			
Bromsgrove Food Festival (Investment net of income)	7.5k	5k	5k
Create apprenticeship opportunities in our Council and promote apprenticeships within the District			
Promote and enable additional apprenticeships	10k	10k	10k
TOTAL ADDITIONAL SERVICE & COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS	464k	530k	530k

4. Afforded through the following spending and budget reductions / income generation:

4.1 Labour is committed to cutting out the waste in the Council the programme of community and front-line business and economic support will be afforded through cutting back on consultancy (over 800k has been spent since the last election), on IT (presently IT expenditure at the Council is growing by

	15/16	16/17	17/18
Consultancy Spends – 50% reduction in all consultancy budgets	100k	100k	100k
IT Budget (15% saving to historic actuals less capital depreciation)	150k	150k	150k
Removal of 1-2 Cabinet Posts	7.5k	7.5k	7.5k
Drawdown and revision of excessive and redundant earmarked reserves	206k	152k	52k
Drawdown on the £2.4M of taxpayers' money added to balances over past four years	0k	120k	220k

5. Further amendments and action

- 5.1 Review of all **public arts and town centre promotional spending**. Under the Conservatives costs for activities such as the bonfire have grown out of proportion with attendance. A Labour administration will ensure better value for money for the taxpayer but also a higher quality public arts and better promotional offering.
- 5.2 Review of **Hardship and ELF provisions** in the light of recent legal rulings, the impact of the Conservative Government's 'Bedroom Tax' and the decision of the Administration to hit the poorest residents of Bromsgrove with a 20% tax hike in order to fund their failing transformation programmes.

- 5.3 Consider the impact of the business rate relief scheme to assess **potential revenue received as a result of more businesses setting up in the District.**
- 5.4 Following the move of the Council into a designated 'special measures' status for the second time in the past fifteen years this time in Planning, a key statutory function of the Council. Labour proposes an **urgent review of planning** by the Overview and Scrutiny Board including consideration of where investment and action to move planning out of critical is being placed.

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COUNCIL

25th February 2015

NOTICE OF MOTION – TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIP

The following Notice of Motion has been submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 11 by Councillor C. J. Bloore:

“ Council recognises that the future of the town centre and its regeneration is one of the most important challenges facing this Council.

Council recognises the important role of local small and medium sized businesses play in the future of our town centre and the economic development of Bromsgrove.

Council believes that a successful town centre and improved local economic activity can only be achieved by working together with local businesses and the public.

Council resolves to establish a Town Centre Partnership with immediate effect including a voting membership made up of elected members, the relevant Portfolio Holder and at least four representatives from local business and community organisations. The Council members forming part of the Town Centre Partnership will be representative of the political balance of the Council.

Council further resolves that the remit of the Town Centre Partnership will be to recommend, consider and monitor the strategy, plans and progress of the Council in respect of all matters relating to the Town Centre economy and regeneration.

Council agrees to make the necessary delegations to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Group Leaders and Portfolio Holder to implement the required constitutional and/or democratic changes to bring about the Town Centre Partnership as set out.”

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COUNCIL

25th February 2015

NOTICE OF MOTION – PLANNING

The following Notice of Motion has been submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 11 by Councillor L. C. R. Mallett:

“Council is deeply concerned about the state of planning operations and strategy at Bromsgrove District Council.

Council calls on Cabinet to urgently review the steps and measures in place to improve the performance of our planning responsibilities and to put in place and share with all Members key milestones and actions to redress the present issues.”

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COUNCIL

25th February 2015

NOTICE OF MOTION – WORCESTERSHIRE ACUTE HOSPITALS TRUST

The following Notice of Motion has been submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 11 by Councillor P. Lammas:

The Council is becoming increasingly concerned at the recent events at Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust including:

- the mass resignation of all the consultants in the Accident and Emergency Department at the Alexandra Hospital in Redditch;
- the Trust declaring “a level four “ – one down from a major incident;
- an expected £28 million deficit in January; and
- reports of bullying

Council endorses the action taken by the Leader of the Council in writing to the NHS Trust Development Authority in requesting they carry out an independent investigation into these recent developments as described above at the Alexandra Hospital.

In view of the importance of the Alexandra Hospital to the communities represented by Bromsgrove District council and given the above concerns it is requested that an urgent meeting is held with the Secretary of State for Health to discuss the option for University Hospitals Birmingham Foundation Trust or other Trust being allowed to deliver services from the Alex be investigated. “

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