

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

**25TH FEBRUARY 2015 AT 6.00 P.M.**

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

72\14 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R. J. Deeming, S.J. Dudley, K.A. Grant-Pearce, R. Hollingworth and R. J. Shannon.

73\14 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following declarations of interest were made:

**Item 12 – Notice of Motion on Alexandra Hospital**

Councillor P. Lammas declared an other disclosable interest as a Member of the Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust (?)

Councillor J. S. Brogan declared a disclosable pecuniary interest as he was employed by the West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust.

Councillor J. R. Boulter declared a disclosable pecuniary interest as he was employed by the University Hospitals of Birmingham NHS foundation Trust.

Councillor D. W. P. Booth declared a disclosable pecuniary interest as his partner was employed by the Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust.

74\14 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 19th January 2015 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

75\14     **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN, THE CIVIC HEAD AND/OR HEAD OF PAID SERVICE**

The Civic Head referred to the recent Holocaust Memorial event which had taken place in Bromsgrove and thanked the Deputy Civic Head for her attendance, together with those Members who had supported the event.

The Civic Head also reminded Members that the Civic Dinner would be taking place at Hagley Hall on 30th April 2015 and invited all Members to attend.

76\14     **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER**

The Leader referred to the recent march through the Town of the Mercian Regiment to commemorate the regiment being granted the Freedom of the District.

The Leader drew attention to:

- The on going work with Worcestershire County Council in relation to improvements to the A38 infrastructure;
- the improved facilities for the market within the High Street; and
- the good progress made in relation to a number of town centre development sites

Councillor L. C. R. Mallett sought information on the progress of attracting additional stall holders and the Farmers Market to the High Street. The Leader gave updated information on this.

77\14     **MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES**

It was noted that Councillor C. R. Scurrall had replaced Councillor H. J. Jones as a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Board and that Councillor R. J. Laight had replaced Councillor Jones as Vice-Chairman of the Board.

78\14     **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET - MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2015/16 - 2017/18**

The Portfolio for Finance, Councillor M. J. A. Webb referred to the recommendations in respect of the Medium Term Financial Plan arising from the meetings of the Cabinet held on 4th and 25th February 2015. Councillor Webb proposed the recommendations from the two Cabinet meetings jointly. The recommendations were seconded by Councillor C. B. Taylor.

Councillor Webb referred to the background to the Medium Term Financial Plan process, including the significant reduction in the grant settlement received from central government over the past four years. He stated that despite this it had been possible to deliver a balanced budget, including the freezing of the Council Tax precept for the District, but which also protected the delivery of frontline services. This had been facilitated by budgeted

savings and through savings made through Shared Services and transformation work.

Councillor Webb welcomed the submission by the Labour and the Independent Alliance Groups of alternative Medium Term Financial Plans and he drew attention to the significant areas of agreement between the Controlling Group's budget and those budget proposals put forward by the two opposition Groups.

In proposing the recommendations from the Cabinet Councillor Webb referred to the significant investment which was on going within the Town Centre, together with the Parkside development and the Dolphin Centre replacement which would be of benefit to the District as a whole. In addition it had been possible to retain the existing level of car parking charges and to introduce free parking after 7.00pm.

Councillor Webb drew attention to the proposals arising from the work undertaken by the New Homes Bonus Working Group, to allocate £87,000 of the New Homes Bonus Grant to the New Homes Bonus Scheme.

Councillor L. C. R. Mallett responded to the recommendations and moved an amendment to the Medium Term Financial Plan (as attached to these Minutes) in the form of an alternative budget on behalf of the Labour Group, this was seconded by Councillor C. J. Bloore.

During the debate on the amendment Councillor Mallett made reference to proposed reduction in car parking charges and the introduction of free swimming for those under 16 or over 65, together with additional investments in Community projects and investment in the Arts and Tourism. It was the intention to fund the investment through a number of measures including reduction of expenditure on IT and Consultants and drawing down from balances.

As required under the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 a named vote was taken on the amendment.

For the amendment: Councillors C. J. Bloore, M. T. Buxton, L. C. R. Mallett, C. M. McDonald, P. M. McDonald, E. J. Murray, E. M. Shannon, S. P. Shannon and C. J. K. Wilson (9)

Against the amendment: Councillors S. J. Baxter, D. W. P. Booth, J. M. Boswell, J. R. Boulter, J. S. Brogan, M. A. Bullivant, R. A. Clarke, S. R. Colella, B. T. Cooper, R. L. Dent, P. A. Harrison, H. J. Jones, R. J. Laight, P. Lammas, B. Lewis, J. A. Ruck, C. R. Scurrrell, M. A. Sherrey, C. J. Spencer, C. B. Taylor L. J. Turner, M. J. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker (23)

The Chairman declared the amendment to be lost.

Councillor S. R. Colella then moved a further amendment to the Medium Term Financial Plan (as attached to these Minutes) in the form of an alternative

budget on behalf of the Independent Alliance Group, this was seconded by Councillor S. J. Baxter.

During the debate on the amendment Councillor Colella in particular drew attention to the proposals to suspend the redevelopment of the Dolphin Centre pending a review and investigation by the Overview and Scrutiny Board. The amendment also included a reduction in the Arts and Events budget and a review of engagement of consultants, agency and temporary staff. The amendment also proposed the extension of the New Homes Bonus Scheme.

As required under the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 a named vote was taken on the amendment.

For the amendment: Councillors S. J. Baxter, S. R. Colella, B. Lewis and L. J. Turner. (4)

Against the amendment: Councillors D. W. P. Booth, J. M. Boswell J. R. Boulter, J. S. Brogan, M. A. Bullivant, R. A. Clarke, B. T. Cooper, R. L. Dent, P. A. Harrison, H. J. Jones, R. J. Laight, P. Lammas, J. A. Ruck, C. R. Scurrill, M. A. Sherrey, C. J. Spencer, C. B. Taylor M. J. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker ( 19)

Abstentions: Councillors C. J. Bloore ,M. T. Buxton, L.C. R. Mallett, C. M. McDonald, P. M. McDonald, E. J. Murray, E. M. Shannon, S. P. Shannon and C. J. K. Wilson (9)

The Chairman declared the amendment to be lost.

As required under the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 a named vote was taken on the Medium Term Financial Plan 2015/16 - 2017/18.

For the recommendations: Councillors D. W. P. Booth, J. M. Boswell, J. R. Boulter, J. S. Brogan, M. A. Bullivant, R. A. Clarke, B. T. Cooper, R. L. Dent P. A. Harrison, H. J. Jones, R. J. Laight, P. Lammas, J. A. Ruck, C. R. Scurrill, M. A. Sherrey, C. J. Spencer, C. B. Taylor, M. J. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker (19)

Against the recommendations: Councillors S. J. Baxter, S. R. Colella, B. Lewis and L. J. Turner (4).

Abstentions: Councillors C. J. Bloore, M. T. Buxton, L. C. R. Mallett, C. M. McDonald, P. M. McDonald, E. J. Murray, E. M. Shannon, S. P. Shannon and C. J. K. Wilson (9)

**RESOLVED:**

(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**

- (h) that in relation to the freeze in Council Tax the following be released from balances:

2016/17 - £136,000  
2017/18 - £137,000

- (i) that the Capital Programme be approved as follows:

2015/16 - £712,000  
2016/17 - £573,000  
2017/18 - £822,000

- (j) that the Pay Policy as attached at Appendix 2 to the report (dated 25th February 2015) be approved.

79\14     **TO SET THE COUNCIL TAX FOR 2015/16**

Members received a report of the Executive Director , Finance and Corporate Resources with regard to the setting of the Council Tax for 2015/16.

Having been moved by Councillor M. J. A. Webb and seconded by Councillor D. W. P. Booth, it was

**RESOLVED** that the recommendations as set out as an appendix to these minutes, setting a Council tax for 2015/16 of £200.24 for a Band D unparished property be approved.

As required under the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) regulations 2014, a named vote was taken on the setting of the Council Tax for 2015/16.

For the recommendations: Councillors S. J. Baxter, C. J. Bloore, D. W. P. Booth, J. M. Boswell, J. R. Boulter, J. S. Brogan, M. A. Bullivant, M. T. Buxton, R. A. Clarke, S. R. Colella, B. T. Cooper, R. L. Dent, P. A. Harrison, H. J. Jones, R. J. Laight, P. Lammas, B. Lewis, L. C. R. Mallett, C. M. McDonald, P. M. McDonald, E. J. Murray, J. A. Ruck, C. R. Scurrrell, E. M. Shannon, S. P. Shannon, M. A. Sherrey, C. J. Spencer, C. B. Taylor, L. J. Turner, M. J. A. Webb, P. J. Whittaker and C. J. K. Wilson (32)

80\14     **MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE CABINET HELD ON 3RD DECEMBER 2014, 7TH JANUARY 2015 AND 4TH FEBRUARY 2015**

The minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 3rd December 2014, 7th January 2015 and 4th February 2015 were received for information.

81\14     **REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL**

Members attention was drawn to a report of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) for Worcestershire District Councils setting out its recommendations to Bromsgrove District Council arising from its review of Members Allowances for 2015/16.

The Leader reported that the issues had been discussed with other Group Leaders and it was proposed by Councillor M. A. Sherrey and seconded by Councillor M. J. A. Webb and

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the Council has regard to the report and Recommendations of the IRP 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 Parish Councils in the District be noted;

- (c) that the recommendation relating to Basic allowances be 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 be not agreed , but continue at the current level for 2015-16, with the following exceptions:
  - (i) that having considered carefully the recommendations of the IRP, the Special Responsibility allowance for the Chairman of Licensing Committee be 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. This allowance to be based on the IRP's proposed multiplier and using the current basic allowance as a basis. This would result in a payment of £1, 082 per annum per leader. The current allowance for the Leader of the largest Opposition Party elected at the ballot box to 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.
- (e) that the Council's Members Allowances Scheme for 2015-16 be updated to take account of the changes referred to above.

82\14 **QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

There were no questions on notice.

83\14 **MOTION - TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIP**

Members considered the following motion submitted 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.”

The motion was moved by Councillor Bloore and seconded by Councillor E. J. Murray.

In proposing the motion Councillor Bloore referred to the importance of small and medium businesses to the local economy and of the need for good communication between this Council and representatives of those businesses and community organisations within the Town Centre. This approach was supported by other Members and reference was made of a similar Town Centre group which had existed previously.

Councillor R. L. Dent as Portfolio Holder for the Town Centre reported that there was a significant level of interest in the various development sites within the Town Centre and that a report with options for the future would be considered by the Cabinet shortly.

A number of Members expressed the view that whilst there was some merit in the idea behind the Notice of Motion, without clear terms of reference such a Group would be likely to be ineffective and may result in delays to the Town Centre project as a whole.

On a requisition under Council procedure 17.7, the following details of the voting were recorded:

For the motion: Councillors S. J. Baxter, C. J. Bloore, M. T. Buxton, S. R. Colella, B. Lewis, L. C. R. Mallett, C. M. McDonald, P. M. McDonald, E. J. Murray, E. M. Shannon, S. P. Shannon, L. J. Turner and C. J. K. Wilson (13)

Against the motion: Councillors D. W. P. Booth, J. M. Boswell, J. R. Boulter, J. S Brogan, M. A. Bullivant, R. A. Clarke, R. L. Dent, P. A. Harrison, H. J. Jones, R. J. Laight, P. Lammas, C. R. Scurrall, M. A. Sherrey, C. J. Spencer, C. B. Taylor and M. J. A. Webb (16)

Abstentions: Councillors B. T. Cooper and J. A. Ruck (2)

The Chairman declared the Motion to be lost.



84\14     **MOTION - PLANNING**

Members considered the following Notice of Motion submitted 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.”

The motion was moved by Councillor L. C. R. Mallett and seconded by Councillor C. J. Bloore.

In proposing the motion Councillor Mallett referred to the recent performance of the Council’s Planning Department in failing to meet planning decision target dates, which had resulted in the action of the Department of Communities and Local Government to place the Department into “special measures”. Councillor Mallett stated this would impact upon the Council’s ability to determine major planning applications within the District. During debate Members referred to perceived issues in respect of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan. There was concern expressed at arrangements for accommodating Planning officers which meant the majority were not based at Bromsgrove.

Councillor C. B. Taylor acknowledged that there had been some difficulties and that whilst an overall better service was being delivered to the public, the revised working procedures had unfortunately resulted in some target dates not being achieved.

Councillor Taylor refuted comments made in respect of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan which was going through the normal process as required by the Local Plan Inspector. He also confirmed that there were Planning Department staff based in Bromsgrove every day.

On a requisition under Council procedure 17.5, the following details of the voting were recorded:

For the motion: Councillors S. J. Baxter, C. J. Bloore, M. T. Buxton, S. R. Colella, B. Lewis, L. C. R. Mallett, C. M. McDonald, P. M. McDonald, E. J. Murray, E. M. Shannon, S. P. Shannon, L. J. Turner and C. J.K. Wilson (13)

Against the motion: Councillors D. W. P. Booth, J. M. Boswell, J. R. Boulter, J. S. Brogan, M. A. Bullivant, R. A. Clarke, B. T. Cooper, R. L. Dent, P. A. Harrison, H. J. Jones, R. J. Laight, P. Lammas, J. A. Ruck, C. R. Scurrall, M. A. Sherrey, C. J. Spencer, C. B. Taylor, and M. J. A. Webb (18)

The Chairman declared the motion to be lost.

85\14

**MOTION - WORCESTERSHIRE ACUTE HOSPITALS TRUST**

(Councillors, D. W. P. Booth, J. R. Boulter, J.S. Brogan and P. Lammas left the room during the consideration of this Notice of Motion )

Members considered the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor P. Lammas.

In the event the motion was proposed by Councillor R. J. Laight and seconded by Councillor L. C. R. Mallett.

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.

Following a debate the Chairman declared the Motion to be carried.

The meeting closed at 9.15 p.m.

Chairman

## **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 4<sup>th</sup> February 2015 and formal publicity of this invitation is made public.**

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

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.**

## 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
<b>Net Service Expenditure</b>	<b>11,106</b>	<b>11,149</b>	<b>11,345</b>
Investment Income	-36	-24	-24
Cost of Borrowing	259	419	836
Recharge to Capital Programme	-26	-25	-25
<b>Net Operating Expenditure</b>	<b>11,303</b>	<b>11,519</b>	<b>12,132</b>
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		
<b>Funding Total</b>	<b>-11,174</b>	<b>-11,485</b>	<b>-11,722</b>
Shortfall	128	33	410
Proposed Funding from balances	-128	-33	-410
<b>Final Position</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

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



**REVISED TABLE FOR INDEPENDENT ALLIANCE BUDGET  
PAPER  
AGENDA ITEM 7 – COUNCIL 25<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2015**

**Independent Alliance Alternative Budget 2015/16 - 2017/18**

	<b>2015-16 £000</b>	<b>2016-17 £000</b>	<b>2017-18 £000</b>
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
<b>Net Service Expenditure</b>	<b>11,106</b>	<b>11,149</b>	<b>11,345</b>
Investment Income	-36	-24	-24
Cost of Borrowing	259	419	836
Recharge to Capital Programme	-26	-25	-25
<b>Net Operating Expenditure</b>	<b>11,303</b>	<b>11,518</b>	<b>12,132</b>
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		
<b>Funding Total</b>	<b>-11,174</b>	<b>-11,485</b>	<b>-11,722</b>
Shortfall	252	364	916
Proposed Funding from balances	-252	-364	-916
<b>Final Position</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**BALANCES POSITION**

Proposed Cabinet draw down from Balances **£2.024m** leaving **£1.676m**

IAG Budget Proposed draw down from Balances **£1.532m** leaving **£2.168m**

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

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

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

## Council Tax Setting 2015/16

### REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FINANCE & RESOURCES

#### 1.0 PURPOSE

To seek approval of the appropriate formal resolutions to determine the levels of Council Tax for Bromsgrove District Council for 2015/16. The levels of tax take account of the requirements of Bromsgrove District Council, Worcestershire County Council, the Police & Crime Commissioner for West Mercia, Hereford and Worcester Fire & Rescue Authority and the various Parish Councils.

#### 2.0 BACKGROUND

The Localism Act 2011 made significant changes to the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and requires the billing authority to calculate a Council Tax requirement for the year, not its budget requirement as previously.

#### 3.0 PRECEPTS AND LEVIES

Details have been received from the various precepting bodies to enable the Council to set the Council Tax for 2015/16. The amounts of the precepts are set out below:

	£
Worcestershire County Council	37,692,428.00
Police & Crime Commissioner for West Mercia	6,489,520.14
Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue Authority	2,670,332.76
Bromsgrove District Council	6,989,946.00
Parish precepts	741,390.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>54,583,616.90</b>

The Parish Council Precepts for 2015/16 are detailed in the attached **Schedule 3**.

#### 4.0 INFORMATION

Based on the recommendation from Cabinet, it is now necessary to formally set Council Tax levels throughout the area for the spending requirements of Bromsgrove District Council, Worcestershire County Council, the Police & Crime Commissioner for West Mercia, Hereford and Worcester Fire & Rescue Authority and the various Parish Councils. If the Council approves the recommendations set out below the average band D Council Tax in 2015/16 will be £1,563.65, made up as follows:

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**Council Tax Setting 2015/16**

Authority	2014/15 £	2015/16 £	Increase %
Bromsgrove District Council	200.24	200.24	0.00
Worcestershire County Council	1,059.22	1,079.77	1.94
Police & Crime Commissioner for West Mercia	182.28	185.90	1.99
Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue	75.06	76.50	1.91
Parish Councils (Average)	21.26	21.24	-0.10
<b>Total Council Tax</b>	<b>1,538.06</b>	<b>1,563.65</b>	<b>1.66</b>

The % increases all relate to the change from current year levels.

The necessary formal resolutions are set out below.

**The Council is recommended to resolve as follows:**

1. that it be noted at its meeting on 7th January 2015 the Cabinet calculated the Council Tax Base 2015/16
  - (a) for the whole Council area as 34,907.84 [Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")]; and
  - (b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates the amounts as shown in Column 4 of the attached **Schedule 1**.
  
2. Calculate the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2015/16 (excluding Parish precepts) is **£6,989,946**.
  
3. That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2015/16 in accordance with sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
  - (a) £47,357,626 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the Act (taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils) (*i.e. Gross expenditure*)

## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### Council Tax Setting 2015/16

- (b) £39,626,290 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act. (*i.e. Gross income*)
  - (c) £7,731,336 being the amount by which the aggregate of 3 (a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3 (b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).
  - (d) £221.48 being the amount at 3 (c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
  - (e) £741,390 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34 (1) of the Act (as per the attached **Schedule 3**).
  - (f) £200.24 being the amount at 3 (d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3 (e) above by Item T (1 (a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34 (2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.
  - (g) the amounts shown in Column 3 of **Schedule 1**. These are the basic amounts of the council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of the Council's area shown in Column 1 of the schedule respectively to which special items relate, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act. (District and Parish combined at Band D).
  - (h) The amounts shown in Column 5 of **Schedule 1** being the amount given by multiplying the amounts at 4(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands;
4. It be noted that for the year 2015/16 Worcestershire County Council, Police & Crime Commissioner for West Mercia and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwelling in the Council's area as indicated below:

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL  
Council Tax Setting 2015/16

	Valuation Bands							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Worcestershire County Council	719.85	839.82	959.80	<b>1,079.77</b>	1,319.72	1559.67	1,799.62	2,159.54
Police & Crime Commissioner for West Mercia	123.94	144.59	165.25	<b>185.90</b>	227.22	268.53	309.84	371.81
Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority	51.00	59.50	68.00	<b>76.50</b>	93.50	110.50	127.49	152.99

- Having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 4(h) and 5 above, that Bromsgrove District Council in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 hereby sets the amounts shown in **Schedule 2** as the amounts of Council Tax for 2015/16 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.
- That the Executive Director Finance & Resources be authorised to make payments under Section 90(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 from the Collection Fund by ten equal instalments between April 2015 to March 2016 as detailed below:

	Precept £	Surplus on Collection Fund £	Total to pay £
Worcestershire County Council	37,692,428.00	608,018.12	38,300,446.12
Police & Crime Commissioner for West Mercia	6,489,520.14	104,630.74	6,594,150.88
Hereford & Worcester Fire	2,670,332.76	43,086.38	2,713,419.14

- That the Executive Director Finance & Resources be authorised to make transfers under Section 97 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 from the Collection Fund to the General Fund the sum of £ 7,731,336 being the Council's own demand on the Collection Fund (£6,989,946), Parish Precepts (£741,390) and the distribution of the Surplus on the Collection Fund (£127,146).

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL  
Council Tax Setting 2015/16

8. That the Executive Director Finance & Resources be authorised to make payments from the General Fund to the Parish Councils the sums listed on **Schedule 3** by two equal instalments on 1 April 2015 and 1 October 2016 in respect of the precept levied on the Council.
9. That the above resolutions 3 to 5 be signed by the Chief Executive for use in legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court for the recovery of unpaid Council Taxes.
10. Notices of the making of the said Council Taxes signed by the Chief Executive are given by advertisement in the local press under Section 38(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

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**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL TAX  
INCLUDING PARISH PRECEPTS 2015/16**

**SCHEDULE 1**

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5 – by valuation band							
				Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H
Part of the Council's Area	Parish Band D £	Basic Amount of Council Tax Band D (District + Parish) £	Taxbase	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Alvechurch	46.67	246.91	2,248.75	164.61	192.04	219.48	246.91	301.79	356.66	411.52	493.83
Barnt Green	62.58	262.82	914.07	175.21	204.41	233.61	262.82	321.22	379.63	438.03	525.63
Belbroughton	55.43	255.67	1,172.63	170.44	198.85	227.26	255.67	312.49	369.31	426.12	511.34
Bentley Pauncefoot	34.37	234.61	185.81	156.40	182.47	208.54	234.61	286.75	338.88	391.01	469.21
Beoley	24.82	225.06	447.22	150.04	175.04	200.05	225.06	275.08	325.09	375.10	450.12
Bournheath	48.87	249.11	211.43	166.07	193.75	221.43	249.11	304.47	359.83	415.18	498.22
Catshill & Marlbrook	12.10	212.34	2,257.84	141.56	165.15	188.75	212.34	259.53	306.72	353.90	424.68
Clent	66.62	266.86	1,178.38	177.90	207.55	237.21	266.86	326.16	385.46	444.76	533.71
Cofton Hackett	31.53	231.77	838.84	154.51	180.26	206.02	231.77	283.28	334.79	386.28	463.53
Dodford with Grafton	26.37	226.61	387.98	151.07	176.25	201.43	226.61	276.97	327.33	377.68	453.21
Finstall	27.60	227.84	291.49	151.89	177.21	202.52	227.84	278.47	329.11	379.73	455.68
Frankley	38.36	238.60	48.22	159.07	185.58	212.09	238.60	291.63	344.65	397.67	477.20
Hagley	44.78	245.02	2,071.46	163.34	190.57	217.79	245.02	299.47	353.92	408.36	490.02
Hunnington	40.71	240.95	227.21	160.63	187.40	214.18	240.95	294.50	348.04	401.58	481.89
Lickey & Blackwell	20.62	220.86	2,093.28	147.23	171.78	196.32	220.86	269.94	319.02	368.09	441.72
Romsley	42.14	242.38	652.52	161.59	188.52	215.45	242.38	296.25	350.12	403.97	484.77
Stoke	30.91	231.15	1,667.92	154.09	179.78	205.46	231.15	282.51	333.88	385.24	462.29
Tutnall & Cobley	19.95	220.19	364.90	146.79	171.26	195.72	220.19	269.12	318.06	366.98	440.38
Wythall	22.50	222.74	4,557.08	148.49	173.24	197.99	222.74	272.24	321.74	371.23	445.48
Urban	N/A	N/A	13,090.80	133.49	155.74	177.99	200.24	244.74	289.24	333.73	400.48
<b>Taxbase Total</b>			<b>34,907.83</b>								

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