

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

**27TH MARCH 2019, AT 6.00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Councillors C. J. Spencer (Chairman), M. J. A. Webb (Vice-Chairman), S. J. Baxter, C. J. Bloore, M. T. Buxton, S. R. Colella, B. T. Cooper, R. J. Deeming, G. N. Denaro, R. L. Dent, M. Glass, C.A. Hotham, R. E. Jenkins, H. J. Jones, R. J. Laight, L. C. R. Mallett, K.J. May, C. M. McDonald, P. M. McDonald, S. R. Peters, S. P. Shannon, M. A. Sherrey, C. B. Taylor, P.L. Thomas, M. Thompson, L. J. Turner, K. J. Van Der Plank, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

90\18 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chairman invited Ms. P. Tansell, Chairman of the Bromsgrove Society to give a short presentation on the work of the organisation.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C. Allen-Jones and J. Griffiths. It was noted Councillor S. Colella would need to leave the meeting at 7.00 pm.

91\18 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor C. Hotham declared an other disclosable interest in respect of Councillor C. Bloore's notice of motion as his wife was a GP and also under the notice of motion from Councillor S. Colella as he was a private landlord.

92\18 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019 were submitted.

During consideration of the minutes the following areas were raised as a matter of accuracy:

- Councillor Thompson requested that on page 9 the word rhetorical be removed as he had expected to receive responses to the questions he had raised.
- On page 17 Councillor Thompson said there had been a number of other questions asked which were not recorded. However, he had not received notification from the Portfolio Holder in respect of the meaning of MATES. The Portfolio Holder for Leisure,

Culture, Environmental and Regulatory Services confirmed that this stood for Multi Agency Tasking Enforcement Strategy.

- Councillor B. Cooper advised that in respect of the question from Councillor S. Baxter detailed on page 18 of the minutes, he had responded to the question on behalf of the Leader.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019 be approved as a true record, subject to the pre-amble above.

93\18

**TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND/OR HEAD OF PAID SERVICE**

The Chairman advised that she had two announcements to make; the first was in respect of her attendance at the Young Enterprise Showcase event, with the winner going through to the County final on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2019 to be held at County Hall.

The second event was her annual civic dinner which would take place at Grafton Manor on 12<sup>th</sup> April with all proceeds going to her chosen charity, Bosom Friends Cancer Care.

94\18

**TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER**

The Chairman reminded everyone that under the Leader's announcements any questions should be in respect of clarification of items raised by the Leader. Any other matters should be directed to the Leader separately, and he has indicated he is happy to respond to these outside of the meeting, either by phone or email.

The Leader took the opportunity to thank all current Councillors, who were not standing in the May elections. He thanked them on behalf of the Council for giving up their time over the last four years to support this Council in carrying out its duties to the residents.

Councillor M. Thompson echoed the Leader's sentiments and also took the opportunity to suggest that the Leader may wish to provide an update in respect of the recent incident at the former council offices in Burcot Lane. The Leader confirmed that this was the subject of a Police enquiry and as soon as he had further information he would advise Members accordingly.

Councillor C. Bloore also asked if it was appropriate to suggest at this point that consideration should be given to allow Members to ask supplementary questions. The Leader advised that this would be considered at the next meeting of the Constitution Review Working Group.

95\18 **REPORT OF AN URGENT DECISION - COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION**

The Leader advised that this was a record of the Urgent Decision that was made in relation to an incorrect title of one of the precepting bodies. Officers had initially included the name 'Warwickshire and West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner' but the decision revised this to purely say Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia.

96\18 **TO RECEIVE COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Members were advised that there were no questions or petitions from members of the public on this occasion.

97\18 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET**

Cabinet Recommendations 13<sup>th</sup> March 2019

**Finance Monitoring Quarter 3 Report**

The recommendations from Cabinet in respect of the Finance Monitoring Quarter 3 Report were proposed by Councillor B. Cooper and seconded by Councillor G. Denaro.

In proposing the recommendations Councillor Cooper advised this report outlined the Council's financial position at the end of quarter 3 in December 2018. He commented that the Council was well on target to achieve a comfortable underspend for the full year. There were four financial matters relating to this report which needed Council's approval.

The first matter was in respect of £120k which had been earmarked for replacement parking machines, and which currently sat in the vehicle replacement programme budget. Council was asked to approve a virement of this into its own budget in 2018/19. This was an accounting exercise to aid clarity.

Councillor K. May confirmed that the current machines were due to be replaced and that a review was being undertaken of all machines, which included their location and how residents paid for car parking.

The second was in respect of increased grant funding received from the government for Disabled Facilities Grants, following the Budget announcement in Dec 2018. Council was asked to approve an increase in the 2018/19 capital budget of £102k for the Disabled Facilities Grant budget.

Councillor C. Hotham raised concerns that the funds for Disabled Facilities Grants seemed to be increasing and there was an urgent need for these funds to be spent.

The third asked Council to approve an increase of £390k in the 2018/19 capital budget for Bromsgrove combined footpath and cycleway network. The money had come from a grant from Worcestershire County Council.

The final recommendation was in respect of the existing sports hall, which was closed last month as it was no longer usable due to health and safety issues. The background to this was detailed in para 6.4 of the report. Members were reminded that they had agreed last July to release £734k for its demolition. The work had been put out to tender and the successful tender in terms of price and quality was for £1.05m, which was £346k more than was allocated in the budget. The reasons for the higher costs were outlined in para 6.4.2 of the report. Council is asked to approve an increase in the 2019/20 capital budget of £346k for the demolition of the Dolphin Centre including the sports hall and carrying out of associated car park work. It was confirmed that of the £346k, £202k was to be funded from capital receipts and £144k from balances.

Councillor M. Thompson asked if the recommendations could be taken individually rather than en bloc, which was agreed. He further suggested that the figures in respect of the demolition of the Sports Hall simply confirmed what had been discussed at previous meetings in that the option of either building a new Sports Hall or refurbishing the current one should have been the preferred option. He also questioned why this increased amount had not been included in the budget setting discussions at the previous Council meeting. Councillor Cooper advised that this could not have been included as it had not been agreed by Council at that time.

Members discussed a number of areas in more detail, this included the following:

- The increase in the cost of the demolition compared to the original quote and whether the original contractors were asked to provide an up to date quotation for the work. Councillor Cooper drew Members' attention to paragraph 6.4.2 of the report which provided details of the cost and reasons for the increase.
- The Executive Director, Finance and Resources also confirmed that the tender process had been undertaken by MACE on behalf of the Council.
- Members continue to be disappointed with the size of the increase as Members had made a decision based on the original business case presented to them, if the revised figures had been in that business case then Members may well have reached a different decision.
- Members questioned whether the revised costs would be measured against any future profit for the new Leisure Centre.
- Councillor Cooper confirmed that the business case had not been reopened but the matter could be scrutinised through the usual channels should Members so wish.

- The impact of the loss of the Sports Hall together with the additional cost and services that additional cost could have been used to support.
- By delaying the demolition this has enabled contractors to see how much was originally estimated for the cost and given them the opportunity to resubmit at a higher price. The business case should therefore have been resubmitted and new quotes obtained.

Councillor Thompson proposed an amendment, as this was such an important area, for recommendation d) of the report to be deferred until the next meeting of Council in order for a full and detailed business case to be prepared. The proposal was seconded by Councillor P. McDonald. Councillor McDonald explained he supported the deferral as it would give the Council the opportunity to revisit the business case and have the opportunity to save the Council some money.

A number of Members spoke in support of the amendment and commented that the cost was now over £1m which appeared excessive for the work that was being done. The matter had been going on for a long time and the original plan had been not to have a sports hall, but this had changed and Council had then been asked to consider whether it wanted a sports hall or not. Again it was reiterated that when the decision was made, if the current cost had been made available then, the decision made by Council may have been different.

Councillor Cooper advised Members that there had been a number of complaints from the public in respect of the parking around the current sports hall site, which was impacting on the car park usage and also the developer from the new Leisure Centre had raised concerns that the old site and its condition was having an impact on usage of the new centre.

Councillor Thompson reminded Members that the Save Our Sports Hall group continue to campaign for the facility which had been a great loss to the community and this was an opportunity for the Council to reconsider its decision and take account of its residents' views.

On being put to the vote the amendment was lost.

The substantive motion was then considered and after a short debate it was

**RESOLVED:**

- a) that the virement of £120k in 2018/19 for replacement parking machines currently held within the vehicle replacement programme budget be approved. This is to ensure clarity of the current spend under these project headings;
- b) that an increase in the 2018/19 Capital Budget of £102k for the Disabled Facilities Grant budget be approved. This is due to

additional grant funding being received following the budget announcement in December 2018;

- c) that an increase in the 2018/19 Capital Budget of £390k for a Bromsgrove combined Footpath and Cycle Way Network funded from a grant from Worcestershire County Council be approved; and
- d) that an increase in the 2019/20 Capital Budget of £346k for the demolition of the Dolphin Centre to be funded from Capital Receipts (£202k) and balances (£144k) following receipt of tender quotations be approved

### **Treasury Management and Capital Strategy**

The recommendations from Cabinet in respect of the Treasury Management and Capital Strategy were proposed by Councillor B. Cooper and seconded by Councillor G. Denaro.

Councillor Cooper advised Members that the Capital Strategy report was a new requirement for 2019/20, due to changes in guidance from the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

The reports were required by central government and were written in a prescribed format which made them very technical. The strategies set limits and indicators that embody the risk management approach that the Council believed to be prudent. The strategies were set against the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan, the context of the UK economy, and projected interest rates. The reports set treasury investment criteria and limits, which were (largely) unchanged. The investment strategy pulled together information on commercial property and loans to show the Council's risk management approach in those areas.

Each year, the Council was required to approve a Treasury Management Strategy, which concerned the management of the Council's cash flows, borrowing and investments and associated risks. The report included the Treasury Management Policy statement in appendix C to the report and the Annual Minimum Revenue Provision statement in appendix D.

Council was also required to approve the Capital Strategy report. This was a high-level overview of capital expenditure, capital financing, and treasury management activity that contributed to the provision of local public services, along with an overview of how associated risk was managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. A very important part of this report was the authorised limit and operational boundary for external debt set out. Appendix E contained the policy for the flexible use of capital receipts, which was a new requirement. The Treasury Management half yearly report was also included in the report and noted by Cabinet, but did not need approval at this meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

- a) that the Capital Strategy as an appropriate overarching strategy for the Council be approved and the flexible use of capital receipts as per appendix E; and
- b) that Council approve the Treasury Management Strategy for 2019/20 and the associated limits, MRP policy and treasury management policy (appendices C and D) and specific indicators included in this report.

**Investment and Acquisition Strategy 2019/20**

The recommendations from Cabinet in respect of the Investment and Acquisition Strategy 2019/20 were proposed by Councillor B. Cooper and seconded by Councillor G. Denaro.

Councillor Cooper advised Members that this was a new report for 2019/20, which met the requirements of the statutory guidance issued by the Government in January 2018. Members noted that some aspects of the Investment Strategy had also been covered in the Treasury Management and Capital Strategy reports that had just been approved by Council. Councillor Cooper confirmed that the Council invests its money for three broad reasons:

- It had surplus cash as a result of its day-to-day activities, for example when income was received in advance of expenditure. These were known as treasury management investments.
- To support local public services by lending to or buying shares in other organisations. These were service investments.
- To earn investment income. These were known as commercial investments where income was the main purpose.

It was confirmed that the strategy was relatively flexible, allowing the Council to invest for commercial activity, regeneration and development.

Councillor Thompson questioned the use of loans and whether this was linked to the proposed Housing Company to be set up for the Burcot Lane site redevelopment. It was also noted that investment in commercial property was highlighted but this was not referenced within the Medium Term Financial Plan. Councillor Cooper confirmed that as such matters would be commercially sensitive, it would not be appropriate to provide full details of any potential investments within it.

Members also briefly discussed the potential impact of Brexit on the work of the Council and any investments it made, which it was agreed was difficult to quantify at the current time.

**RESOLVED** that the Investment Strategy Report 2019/20 be approved and adopted.

## Cabinet Recommendations 27<sup>th</sup> March 2019

### **ERP Finance System**

The recommendation from Cabinet in respect of the ERP Finance System Report was proposed by Councillor B. Cooper and seconded by Councillor G. Denaro.

In presenting the report Councillor Cooper reminded Members that this system was scrutinised by the Finance and Budget Working Group in June 2018 and discussed by Council in July. The background information provided was that over recent years, weaknesses had been identified in the financial management, planning and forecasting capabilities of the systems that were currently in place in the Council. It had been reported by officers, by external and internal audit, and within the Corporate Peer Challenge, that the Council's finance systems did not enable the Council to make decisions based on accurate, timely or easily retrievable information. This would become increasingly important if the Council was to meet the future challenges in the commercial environment.

It was also recognised that there were a significant number of manual processes that had to be undertaken in payroll, payments and Human Resources to facilitate access to data that officers and external partners may require. Furthermore, there were no seamless links between systems and so, information had to be manually transferred between systems. This could cause problems related to data loss, consistency and reliability. It was worrying that managers were unable to see their budgets on the existing financial systems and had to rely on spreadsheets to undertake budget monitoring. This could lead to lack of ownership and accountability, and to poor forecasting and financial monitoring. Councillor Cooper advised that the Council's systems for finance and human resources were no longer fit for purpose. Another important consideration was that the licences for a number of the existing systems were due for renewal in the coming year.

Councillors were reminded that in July 2018, they had approved implementation of an Enterprise Resource Planning solution to provide an integrated Financial and Human Resources system for the Council, and had approved that the 2018/19 capital programme be increased by £198k to cover the implementation costs of the new system, which was to be paid from capital receipts. The Resources system was put out to tender and the process was summarized in paragraphs 3.2 – 3.4 of the report. As a result of the procurement process, a preferred supplier was identified.

The preferred system would cost a total of £736k for both Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils, and this Council would have to pay £368k an additional £170k above the amount already allocated. It was thought to be wise to add a contingency of 10% for unexpected costs, so that the total additional cost to Bromsgrove Council would be £207k. The



preferred supplier's price included an implementation cost based on the number of days that it estimated would be required for implementation of what was a complex system. If less implementation days were used by the supplier than were budgeted for by the Council, then there would be a consequential reduction in implementation costs. The Enterprise Resource Planning system would be funded by using capital receipts so there was no need for borrowing or a requirement for a return on the investment. No savings from implementation of the system were built into the current Medium Term Financial Plan, although it was anticipated that resources would be realigned to support the commercial and financial activities of the Council once the new system was fully functioning.

In the discussion at the Finance and Budget Working Group, there was focus on organisational change and potential job losses. It was acknowledged that this was an ambitious programme of change for the Council. However, no redundancies were planned. At present there were two vacant posts in the Finance Department whose salary costs would be used towards offsetting implementation costs. It was not likely that those posts would be filled when the new system was operational. It was envisaged that some roles within finance could change as indicated earlier. It was envisaged that implementation would start early in the new financial year and would be completed within 18 months.

Councillor L. Mallett as Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board and its Finance and Budget Working Group clarified that from the information available the Working Group had raised concerns at the significant increase in the cost of the system and that further information on the reasons for this was needed before a decision could be made, together with details of the impact on jobs within the various teams. Concerns had been raised as to the cost of the system in comparison to the "turnover" of the Council particularly in light of the significant increase. The Working Group had not been provided with clear detailed information around exactly what the system could do and whether the benefits of it outweighed the cost of it.

Councillor Cooper reiterated his previous comments in that all concerned had considered the initial report, which had agreed the system going forward. He appreciated that the savings to be made from the system were important, but as the current system was no longer fit for purpose it was more important to get a system in place which would carry out all the functions that were needed taking the Council forward. A Project Group had been set up, including staff from the IT team, who had initially given estimates on the potential cost of such a project. Councillor Cooper provided detail around the soft market testing which was carried out which had highlighted that the cost of a system to meet the Council's needs would take more time to implement than had been anticipated. Although there was the potential for any reduction in the implementation time to be refunded to the Council. The introduction of the system would allow for much tighter budgeting and control of the

Council's finances, which was something that had been highlighted a number of times through both the internal and external auditors.

A number of Members spoke in support of the system and the need for improvements going forward into a commercial environment, but continued to be concerned about the significant increase in the cost. It was felt that much more detail should have been included within the report in order for Members to make an informed decision. Further concerns were also raised that as the costs had already increased that once the work began, it would increase further. Councillor Cooper, whilst acknowledging this point, said he was not aware of the potential need for further funds, and that a 10% contingency had been built in to the amount now requested.

Councillor P. McDonald reminded Members of a previous project which had cost the Council dearly and suggested that it would be useful for the Overview and Scrutiny Board to receive regular updates on progress of the scheme to ensure that there were no additional cost incurred, without Members being aware of them. Members asked for this to be minuted to ensure that this was carried out.

**RESOLVED** that additional capital receipts to the value of £207k as detailed at 3.6 of the report be approved, to fund the system in 2019/20 and that the Capital Programme be updated to reflect this expenditure.

98\18 **TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE CABINET HELD ON 27TH FEBRUARY AND 13TH MARCH 2019**

The Minutes from the Cabinet meetings held on 27<sup>th</sup> February and 13<sup>th</sup> March 2019 were submitted for information and noted by Members.

99\18 **TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER A REPORT FROM THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HEALTH AND WELL BEING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

Councillor M. Sherrey, the Portfolio Holder for Health and Well Being and Environmental Services advised Members that she did not intend to present her report in detail, but was happy to respond to questions and would take the report page by page.

Members discussed a number of areas within the report in detail and raised the following questions:

- Whether the Portfolio Holder felt that the Council was taking its role as Corporate Parenting role seriously enough and whether training should be made mandatory. Councillor Sherrey was in agreement with this and highlighted that training had been arranged but there had been a very disappointing attendance at these sessions.
- The income made from the Lifeline service and whether this was appropriate or should the cost of the service be reduced. The

Portfolio Holder confirmed that any surplus made from the scheme was reinvested in the service.

- Whether the income made was solely from the Cannock Chase contract and whether the amount detailed was the overall income or just the portion for this Council.
- In respect of the section on young people, Members felt it would have been more useful to have received more data and outcomes of the services referred to in order to ensure that they were being of benefit to all concerned.
- Members were disappointed that there was no reference to the good work that was being carried out by a number of parishes in respect of dementia friendly communities. It was acknowledged that much of this work was being carried out by volunteers.
- The accessibility of the new leisure centre by the more vulnerable groups and whether this was acceptable.
- Whether there should have been reference to the failing services at Worcestershire County Council and this being the reason why there had been changes to the services detailed in the report. Particular reference was made to the Adult Social Care Services and the services provided for young people.
- No mention of sustainable travel, air quality or the grant for electric charging points – it was noted that air quality came under the portfolio of Councillor P. Whittaker.
- Whether electric charging points would be made available in all car parks in order to encourage residents to choose sustainable modes of transport. Councillor Sherrey confirmed that this was at the early stages but she was hopeful that they would be rolled out to car parks as a later date.
- Councillors C. Bloore and L. Mallett shared their disappointment that there was no reference to holiday hunger or the Active Kitchen scheme, which had been discussed at a previous Council meeting, or the causes of this, including the changes to the benefit system.
- Data in respect of those that attended the Active Kitchen sessions. Councillor Bloore advised Members that this scheme had been well publicised and the relevant Portfolio Holders had been quoted in the local press about the scheme. He felt that this should have been included within the report as it had an important role to play in the work of this Council.
- The role Members' played on the Children and Families Scrutiny Board at Worcestershire County Council and whether this was effective.
- The role of a Portfolio Holder and the work they were expected to carry out, including the presenting of these reports, which was an opportunity for other Members to hold the Portfolio Holders to account.
- The support Portfolio Holders received from officers.

100\18

## **QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

### **Question submitted by Councillor M. Thompson**

“There has been an increase in drivers using areas of the town as race tracks. Will the leader - or the appropriate portfolio holder - raise this as an issue at the next meeting of Safer Bromsgrove. Nothing - not even time - can heal the wounds made by dangerous drivers and I hope he will support me in this endeavour.”

The Leader responded that this matter would be raised at the next meeting of Safer Bromsgrove and he would support Councillor Thompson in this endeavour.

### **Questions submitted by Councillor M. Buxton**

“The hoarding around the Market Hall is an increasingly unattractive view in the town. If work is not going to start on this site any time soon could the Council consider improving the look of the area by organising an Art competition for local Schools to paint the hoardings and brighten the area?”

Councillor K. May, the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, the Town Centre and Strategic Partnerships responded to Councillor Buxton’s question. In so doing she took the opportunity to say she had enjoyed working with Councillor Buxton and advised that the current agreement in respect of this site was coming to an end and she was looking at a number of improvements to the area including ‘meanwhile’ use of the site in order to brighten up the area.

### **Question submitted by Councillor S. Baxter**

“Following the lengthy debate at the last Council meeting on litter picking which highlighted the effort that our community volunteers put into trying to keep our streets clean and tidy, I was very pleased to see that Bromsgrove has been awarded a Government ‘Clean up our high street’ grant of £17,108.

According to the government press release:

‘Councils in partnership with existing community groups will be able to use this one-off funding to support volunteers. They will be able to buy tools such as litter pickers, gloves and brushes and provide training for residents on how to remove graffiti or tackle fly-tipping, as well as organise events to encourage more families to get involved’.

Please can the portfolio confirm that this money will be spent on items as described above to support the work of our community groups and that the ‘Adopt An Area To Keep Bromsgrove Tidy’ scheme is being funded separately to recognise the work that they do.”

Councillor M. Sherrey, Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing and Environmental Services responded to Councillor Baxter's question and advised Members that the Adopt an Area scheme was being funded from existing budgets and proposals were being drawn up in respect of projects to be funded by the Government Grant.

**Question submitted by Councillor S. Webb**

"Please could the leader give an update on Bromsgrove's position regarding libraries following a request for assistance from Worcestershire County Council."

The Leader had been advised by the County Council that there were no libraries within Bromsgrove District that were under fear of closure in the next financial year (2019/20).

Notwithstanding this his aim was to keep all the libraries in the District open and the Council would be looking to work with County Council colleagues to fully assess the opportunities afforded by these facilities in the provision of services to the District. Any proposals would need to be the subject of business cases which would enable Members to consider any financial impact as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2020/21.

The Council was fully committed to supporting the library service and would welcome consideration of this later in the year.

101\18

**MOTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Action against Knife Crime**

Members considered the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor L. Mallett:

"Council notes the recent triple stabbing incident over the Birmingham border in Northfield, as well as incidents in our District and the growing rate of knife crime across the UK.

Council believes that key to tackling knife crime is integrated working across services including the police, education, health and youth services. Council is concerned about the impact of cuts to youth services and policing upon the ability to tackle this growing problem.

Council calls on the Leader and Cabinet to:

- a) Write to Sajid Javid and the PCC to ask them to address Council on the issue of knife crime and police funding
- b) To reaffirm our funding for youth projects in Bromsgrove and to encourage our partners to support knife crime reduction programmes.

- c) To call on Worcestershire County Council to reinstate funding for publicly funded youth services in the District, and to support initiatives in education to keep knives out of our schools. “

The Motion was proposed by Councillor L. Mallett and seconded by Councillor C. Bloore.

In proposing the Motion Councillor Mallett firstly, confirmed that he was a trustee of a local youth charity, but did not believe that this was an interest which needed to be declared. He went on to highlight that there were hundreds of young people who had lost their lives from the growing knife crisis. Statistics showed that this was a crime, which had been on the rise and since 2015 had almost doubled to 40,000 per annum. This was a serious issue and he hoped that Members could reach a consensus as they had the ability to be able to do something about the growing problem. He believed that the cuts at both national and County Council level had impacted on this, in particular with the cuts to youth provision. The library cuts would further impact on the services, as many libraries were also used as a meeting place for many members of the community. The reduction in early intervention services had also played its part in isolating those in most need of support. The issue had been compounded by the reduction of Police officers, whilst it was acknowledged that the Police and Crime Commissioner was hoping to put more Police on the streets, this would in reality only take the County back to its position in 2010 before the cuts had begun to take effect. There had been a drastic cut in the number of youth workers and a clear link had been shown between the cuts and an increase in the level of crime.

Councillor Mallett went on to make reference to the recent knife attack in Northfield which was on the board with the District and that there had been arrests in Bromsgrove for possession of knives and that it was likely that there would soon be an incident where someone was injured in Bromsgrove if action was not taken soon. The Council had the ability to take action now, before it was too late and to show its residents that it was prepared to do what it could to address the growing problem.

A number of Members spoke in favour of the motion and in so doing highlighted the following:

- The impact of the significant cuts to youth services and the need for these to be properly funded.
- The need for appropriate funding to be provided in order to address the problems faced.
- The reintroduction of Youth Clubs in order for there to be somewhere for the most vulnerable to go and seek help and support. This type of support had proved to be a very effective way of dealing with issues.
- The importance of appropriate support being in place in order to ensure young people feel safe and have someone to talk to, and somewhere to go.

- The need for young people to be given a purpose and future and to be able to contribute positively to society.

Councillor P. Whittaker responded to the Notice of Motion and advised that 27 teenagers had lost their lives so far this year and he saw no reason for anyone to carry a knife. He believed that the Police had a bigger role to play in the matter and discussed the work of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (of which he was a member in his role as Portfolio holder). It was important that the Police and Police and Crime Commissioner were held to account. He also spoke about “county lines” and the growing issue of cross boarder crime, which impacted on the District. He advised that the Metropolitan Police Commissioner had only recently addressed Parliament about the issues and the need for action to be taken. There were a number of projects across England and Wales which had been set up specifically to try and deal with the problems. The Home Secretary and Police and Crime Commissioner were therefore very much aware of the problem and concerns of everyone. Councillor Whittaker therefore proposed an amendment, which was seconded by Councillor G. Denaro, as detailed below:

Council calls on the Leader and Cabinet to:

- a) Write to Sajid Javid and the PCC to ask them to address Council on the issue of knife crime and advise of the current progress.
- b) (To remain as per Councillor Mallett’s original Notice of Motion.)
- c) To support initiatives in education to keep knives out of our schools.

Councillor Mallett thanked Councillor Whittaker for putting forward the amendment but advised that he was unable to accept it, as he believed the reduction in youth services at Worcestershire County Council played a large part in compounding the issues and that funding was a vital part to addressing the matter.

Councillor Denaro spoke in support of the amendment and highlighted that he was not belittling the importance of the issue in any way. He commented on the assertions that the lack of Police and youth funding was a factor in the increase in stabbing incidents and that he had noted that the Chief Constable for the West Midlands had set out to the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee the previous day his three reasons for the increase in the area, these were, the drug trade, other crime including car theft and the proliferation of weapon carrying (the fist fight had become a knife fight). He had observed that young people at the moment felt under protected. When asked what he would do if more funding were provided, the Chief Constable had responded that visibility around school closing times, safe routes for young people to travel in areas were the strategies he would employ.

Councillor Denaro believed that a multi-stranded approach was essential to tackling serious violence and involved a range of partners across different sectors. It was also crucial that that the issue was understood and owned locally in order for all relevant partners to tackle the issue. The role of the Police and Crime Commissioner was a pivotal one, by working with community Safety partnerships and other local partners, in order to prioritise tackling serious violence at a local level.

Members were advised that the Government had made available new rounds of the anti-knife crime Community Fund for 2018-19 and 2019-20 to help communities tackle knife crime and which had funded 68 projects so far. The Government would also continue to provide match funded support for local and regional reviews in England and Wales to respond to “county lines” and gang related problems. Early Intervention Youth Funding was already supporting 29 projects in England and Wales and funding had already been allocated to projects delivering interventions to young people at risk of criminal involvement, gang exploitation and “county lines”.

The Safer Bromsgrove Group via North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership had provided £20k to fund a dedicated worker at the Bromsgrove Youth Hub, based in the Baptist Church, alongside this the Hub had received substantial funding from the Ward Member, the PCC, the New Homes Bonus Scheme and the Heart of England Baptist Church alongside multiple donations, in-kind donations and match funding from a range of businesses, stores and local organisations.

Councillor Denaro further advised that WCC had informed him that all Positive Activities organisations that were receiving funding had had confirmation of a further year’s allocation to March 2020 at current levels. The YMCA ran positive activities provision in the Bromsgrove District and were also members of the Children and Young People’s Providers consortium that developed the Bromsgrove Youth Hub, alongside the delivery of other youth activities. Discussions would take place about the future programme in alignment with the development of the 0-19 Early Intervention Strategy.

Following the tabling of the proposed amendment, number of Members spoke to it and made a number of points, including:

- Disappointment that the proposed amendment had not been discussed prior to the meeting.
- The benefits of youth services and the opportunities they provided.
- The lack of understanding by WCC in respect of the impact of youth services.
- Concerns that young people in some areas are frightened to leave their homes and the worries parents faced when they did.
- The need for investment in young people and the need for the Council to be able to help, as those that were affected were unable to vote.



- The need to make people throughout the district aware of what actions were being taken to give them confidence that the Council was doing all it could.
- Holding those responsible to account – it was understood that the PCC was attending an event in Hagley and suggested that he might have been better attending a Council meeting.
- The need for the Council to do more and the need for the focus to be on preventative work which was where the youth services became invaluable.
- That WCC seemed to be looking at the taking action when it was too late, rather than at the earlier stages, again this was where more adequate youth services would be able to help.
- Whether it was appropriate for the Youth Hub to be based at the Baptist Church and the need for such services to be more accessible to all.
- The need for action to be taken before it was too late and there was a fatality in the district due to knife crime. It was noted that there had been an incident recently in Sanders Park.

A proposal was put forward and seconded, for the amendments to be voted on individually, rather than as a whole. Following a brief, 5 minute, adjournment to consult with the Monitoring Officer on the logistics of this, it was agreed that the amendments to a) and c) would be voted on individually.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 18.3 a recorded vote was taken in respect of the amendments to a) and b) of the Motion and the voting was as follows:

- a) Write to Sajid Javid and the PCC to ask them to address Council on the issue of knife crime and advice of the current progress.

For the Motion Councillors Cooper, Deeming, Denaro, Dent, Glass, Jenkins, Jones, Laight, May, Peters, Sherrey, Taylor, Mike Webb, Shirley Webb, Whittaker, Spencer (16)

Against the Motion Councillors Baxter, Bloore, Mallett, Peter McDonald, Christine McDonald, Shannon, Thompson, Turner, Van der Plank (9)

Abstaining from the Motion (0)

- c) To support initiatives in education to keep knives out of our schools.

For the Motion Councillors Cooper, Deeming, Denaro, Dent, glass, Jenkins, Jones, Laight, May, Peters, Sherrey, Taylor, Thomas, Mike Webb, Shirley Webb, Whittaker, Spencer (17)

Against the Motion Councillors Baxter, Bloore, Hotham, Mallett, Peter McDonald, Christine McDonald, Shannon, Thomson, Turner, Van der Plank (10)

### Abstaining from the Motion (0)

The Chairman declared a) and c) of the amended motion to be carried.

On summing up part b) of the substantive motion Councillor Mallett he expressed his disappointment in Members reaction and decision to “water down” the main body of his motion. He reiterated his concern that the reduction in Youth Services had and would continue to impact on the young people in the District and inevitably the problem of knife crime would continue.

On being put the vote the Chairman declared b) of the substantive motion to be carried.

### **Funding of the NHS**

The Chairman confirmed that there was 10 minutes remaining from the allotted time for consideration of Notices of Motion. Councillor C. Bloore proposed an extension of time to 9.00 p.m. to allow his Motion to be discussed. As there had been an adjournment earlier in the proceedings, and with Council’s agreement the time allotted to consider Notices of Motion was extended by 10 minutes to 9.00 p.m.

Members considered the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor C. Bloore:

#### **“Council Notes**

- Secretary of State for Health Matt Hancock’s recent visit to the Royal Worcester Hospital, to discuss the ongoing problems facing healthcare services in Worcestershire.
- The publication of the government’s long-term ten-year plan for the NHS.
- The shared view of the Office for Budget Responsibility and the Institute for Fiscal Studies was that 4% was the annual increase needed by the NHS to reverse its decline.
- That instead of meeting the identified 4% target, the government has proposed 3.4% (£20.5bn over five years) investment in funding for the NHS.
- Since this announcement cuts to public health spending – including on alcohol and sexual health clinics funded by councils – means the true size of the increase in health spending is still lower: just 2.7% in 2019-20.
- The woefully inadequate targets for mental health diagnosis, support and treatment contained in the ten-year plan.
- The current 100,000 vacancies in the NHS workforce and the absence of a specific workforce plan as part of the report.
- The publication of the government’s green paper on Adult Social Care has been delayed several times: from an original publication date of “summer 2017” and then to “the end of” 2017, a revised timeframe of “before the summer [Parliamentary] recess” (i.e. 25

July 2018) was announced. In June 2018, the then Health and Social Care Secretary announced a further delay to the “autumn” of 2018 following the announcement that a ten-year plan for the NHS would be developed; this was later tweaked to “before the end of the year”.

### **Council Believes**

- That the NHS is the jewel in the crown of our public services and the public expect it to be funded properly which means the government should follow the advice of the Office for Budget Responsibility to increase funding by 4% annually.
- The continued failure and postponement of the government’s green paper on the funding of adult social care is having a drastic effect on local health services. And until Hospitals can discharge patients safely into the community or back home with the appropriate car packages, hospital beds will remain oversubscribed.
- That it is imperative for any long term plan for the NHS to include a specific workforce plan that tackles the likely loss of clinical staff through Brexit and clearly identifies how it will train, retain and attract 100,000 new staff to the NHS
- That if Mental Health is truly to gain parity of esteem with physical conditions then targets for Mental Health diagnosis and treatment must reflect those of physical conditions.

### **Council Resolves**

- To write to the Secretary of State for Health Matt Hancock to call for the government to increase annual funding to the NHS by 4%
- Noting the comments of Simon Trickett (NHS accountable officer) that between 250 and 300 EU nationals currently work in the NHS in Worcestershire. To write to the Secretary of State for Health Matt Hancock for clarification on plans in place to deal with the potential loss of staff due to Brexit in Worcestershire.
- To write to the Secretary of State for Health Matt Hancock to urge him to raise targets for mental health diagnosis and treatment found within the plan.
- To write to the Secretary of State for Health Matt Hancock urging him to publish the governments green paper on Adult Social Care funding so that the NHS, local authorities and families can properly plan for the plan.
- To write to the Secretary of State for Health Matt Hancock to show its support for ‘competitive tendering introduced by 2012’s Health and Social Care Act to be scrapped’.”

The Motion was proposed by Councillor C. Bloore and seconded by Councillor L. Mallett.

In proposing the Motion Councillor Bloore reiterated the areas covered within his Notice of Motion and discussed a recent meeting of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) which

he had attended and where the NHS 10 Year Plan had been discussed. It appeared from that, that the ongoing problems were not addressed and that there had been a missed opportunity to deal with this. A number of areas were highlighted, including the aging population in the district, the fact that there was no plan in place to deal with staffing issues post Brexit and any plans in place to address the inability to fill the current vacancies. Councillor Bloore also raised concerns in respect of problems within the Adult Social Care service and its cost. It was apparent to him that HOSC was not able to deal with the issues raised and it was therefore important that this Council took action before it was too late.

Councillor K. May proposed an amendment to the Notice of Motion, which was seconded by Councillor M. Sherrey. In proposing the amendments Councillor May advised that she believed that the figures quoted were incorrect and elements of the 'notes' section and the Council 'believes' section were factually incorrect. She therefore proposed the following amendments:

Council Notes:

- a) The Secretary of State for Health Matt Hancock's recent visit to the Royal Worcester Hospital, to discuss the ongoing problems facing healthcare services in Worcestershire.
- b) The publication of the Government's long term ten year plan for the NHS.
- c) The shared view of the Office for Budget Responsibility and the Institute for Fiscal Studies was that 4% was the annual increase needed by the NHS to bring stability.
- d) That instead of meeting the identified 4% target, the government has proposed 3.4% (£20.5bn over five years plus £12bn already allocated) investment in funding for the NHS, with the balance being made from efficiency in the long term plan.
- e) The inadequate targets for mental health diagnosis support and treatment contained in the ten-year plan.
- f) The current 100,000 vacancies in the NHS workforce and the absence of specific workforce plan as part of the report.
- g) The publication of the Government's green paper on Adult Social Care has been delayed several times; from an original publication date of "summer 2017" and then to "the end of" 2017, a revised timeframe of "before the summer [Parliamentary] recess" (i.e. 25<sup>th</sup> July 2018) was announced. In June 2018, the then Health and Social Care Secretary announced a further delay to the "autumn" of 2018 following the announcement that a ten-year plan of the NHS would be developed; this was later tweaked to "before the end of the year".

Council Believes:

- a) That the NHS is the jewel in the crown of our public services and the public expect it to be funded properly which means the Government should follow the advice of the Office for Budget Responsibility to increase funding by 4% annually.

- b) The continued failure and postponement of the Government's green paper on the funding of adult social care is having an effect on local health services, but notes there is no evidence that County Council delayed discharges are having any effect on the system; since they are amongst the lowest delays in the West Midlands.
- c) That it is imperative for any long term plan for the NHS enacts the plan for workforce contained in Chapter 4, which builds on the 5,000 extra doctors and 8,000 extra nurses employed in the service since 2010.
- d) That if Mental Health is truly to gain parity of esteem with physical conditions then targets for Mental Health diagnosis and treatment must reflect those of physical conditions.

Council Resolves:

- a) To write to the Secretary of State for Health, Matt Hancock, to welcome £32bn of investment into the NHS, and ask him to review the formula of distribution of funds since changes made under Labour administrations would appear to disadvantage counties like Worcestershire. This change would enable the counties health system to be on a long term secure footing.
- b) Noting the comments of Simon Trickett (NHS Accountable Officer) that between 250 and 300 EU nationals currently work in the NHS in Worcestershire.
- c) To write to the Secretary of State for Health, Matt Hancock, for clarification on plans in place to deal with the potential loss of staff due to Brexit in Worcestershire.
- d) To write to the Secretary of State for Health, Matt Hancock, to urge him to raise targets for mental health diagnosis and treatment found within the plan.
- e) To write to the Secretary of State for Health, Matt Hancock, the Shadow Chancellor John MacDonald and the Shadow Secretary for Health urging them to work on a cross party basis so progress can be made on Adult Social Care funding to ensure local authorities and families can properly plan for the future.

Councillor Bloore accepted the amendments and reiterated his concerns in respect of the workforce and the need for a separate plan in future year. Due to the time constraints he was happy for the amended motion to be put to the vote.

On being put the vote the Chairman declared the amendment to the Notice of Motion to be carried.

The Chairman confirmed that the remaining motions would be carried over to the next full Council meeting.

### **Local Volunteers**

Motion submitted by Councillor M. Thompson.

**Living Wage – Contractors**

Motion submitted by Councillor P. McDonald.

**Private Sector Landlords**

Motion submitted by Councillor S. Colella.

**Committee Governance System**

Motion submitted by Councillor C. Hotham.

**Anti-Semitic Behaviour**

Motion submitted by Councillor M. Glass.

The meeting closed at 9.00 p.m.

Chairman