



## **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

**WEDNESDAY 24TH FEBRUARY 2021**  
**AT 6.00 P.M.**

### **VIRTUAL MEETING - TEAMS**

**MEMBERS:** Councillors R. J. Laight (Chairman), A. J. B. Beaumont (Vice-Chairman), S. J. Baxter, S. R. Colella, R. J. Deeming, G. N. Denaro, S. P. Douglas, A. B. L. English, M. Glass, S. G. Hession, C.A. Hotham, S. A. Robinson, R. J. Hunter, R. E. Jenkins, H. J. Jones, A. D. Kent, J. E. King, A. D. Kriss, L. C. R. Mallett, K.J. May, M. Middleton, P. M. McDonald, H. D. N. Rone-Clarke, M. A. Sherrey, C. J. Spencer, P.L. Thomas, M. Thompson, J. Till, K. J. Van Der Plank, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

## **AGENDA**

### **WELCOME**

1. **To receive apologies for absence**

2. **Declarations of Interest**

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

3. **To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 20th January 2021 (Pages 1 - 18)**

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

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

6. **To receive comments, questions or petitions from members of the public**

A period of up to 15 minutes is allowed for members of the public to make a comment, ask questions or present petitions. Each member of the public has up to 3 minutes to do this. A councillor may also present a petition on behalf of a member of the public.

7. **Urgent Decisions**

Should any urgent decisions be approved after the main agenda for this meeting has been published, the urgent decision will be included in a supplementary pack.

8. **Independent Remuneration Panel Report (Pages 19 - 32)**

9. **Recommendations from the Cabinet 17th February 2020 (to follow)**

To consider the recommendations from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021 (to follow).

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

(i) Alternative Budgets (Pages 33 - 34)

- Alternative Budget received from the Labour Group
- Further alternative budgets to follow

Members are asked to note that under the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, the Council is required to take a named vote when a decision is made on the budget calculation or Council tax at a budget decision meeting of the Council. This includes any votes in respect of any alternative budgets that are proposed.

10. **Background Information on the recommendations from the Cabinet (17th February 2021)**

(i) Council Tax Support Scheme (Pages 35 - 50)

(ii) Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 - 2023/24 (Pages 51 - 76)

(iii) Pay Policy Statement (Pages 77 - 88)

11. **To note the minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 17th February 2021 (to follow)**

12. **Recommendations from the Cabinet meeting held on 24th February 2021**  
(to be tabled)

To consider the recommendations from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021 (to be tabled at the meeting).

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

Under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, any Councillor who is 2 or more months in arrears with their Council tax payments cannot participate in any item at the Council meeting concerning the budget.

13. **Background Information on the recommendations from the Cabinet** (24th February 2021 - to follow)

(i) Council Tax Resolution (to follow)

14. **Questions on Notice** (Pages 89 - 90)

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

A period of up to 15 minutes is allocated for the asking and answering of questions. This may be extended at the discretion of the Chairman with the agreement of the majority of those present.

15. **Motions on Notice** (Pages 91 - 92)

A period of up to one hour is allocated to consider the motions on notice. This may only be extended with the agreement of the Council.

16. **To consider any urgent business, details of which have been notified to the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services, prior to commencement of the meeting and which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.**

K. DICKS  
Chief Executive

Parkside  
Market Street  
BROMSGROVE  
Worcestershire  
B61 8DA

16th February 2021



If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact  
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## **GUIDANCE ON VIRTUAL MEETINGS**

Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic Bromsgrove District Council will be holding this meeting in accordance with the relevant legislative arrangements for remote meetings of a local authority. For more information please refer to the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police Crime Panels meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

Please note that this is a public meeting conducted remotely by Microsoft Teams conferencing between invited participants and live streamed for general access via the Council's YouTube channel.

You are able to access the livestream of the meeting from the Committee Pages of the website, alongside the agenda for the meeting.

If you have any questions regarding the agenda or attached papers please do not hesitate to contact the officer named above.

### **Notes:**

As referred to above, the virtual Teams meeting will be streamed live and accessible to view. Although this is a public meeting, there are circumstances when Council might have to move into closed session to consider exempt or confidential information. For agenda items that are exempt, the public are excluded and for any such items the live stream will be suspended and that part of the meeting will not be recorded.



## **INFORMATION FOR THE** **PUBLIC**

### **Access to Information**

The Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 widened the rights of press and public to attend Local Authority meetings and to see certain documents. Recently the Freedom of Information Act 2000 has further broadened these rights, and limited exemptions under the 1985 Act.

- You can attend all Council, Cabinet and Committee/Board meetings, except for any part of the meeting when the business would disclose confidential or “exempt” information.
- You can inspect agenda and public reports at least five days before the date of the meeting.
- You can inspect minutes of the Council, Cabinet and its Committees/Boards for up to six years following a meeting.
- You can have access, upon request, to the background papers on which reports are based for a period of up to six years from the date of the meeting. These are listed at the end of each report.
- An electronic register stating the names and addresses and electoral areas of all Councillors with details of the membership of all Committees etc. is available on our website.
- A reasonable number of copies of agendas and reports relating to items to be considered in public will be made available to the public attending meetings of the Council, Cabinet and its Committees/Boards.
- You have access to a list specifying those powers which the Council has delegated to its Officers indicating also the titles of the Officers concerned, as detailed in the Council’s Constitution, Scheme of Delegation.

You can access the following documents:

- Meeting Agendas
- Meeting Minutes
- The Council’s Constitution

at [www.bromsgrove.gov.uk](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk)

## **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

**20TH JANUARY 2021, AT 6.00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Councillors R. J. Laight (Chairman), A. J. B. Beaumont (Vice-Chairman), S. J. Baxter, S. R. Colella, R. J. Deeming, G. N. Denaro, S. P. Douglas, A. B. L. English, M. Glass, S. G. Hession, C.A. Hotham, S. A. Robinson, R. J. Hunter, R. E. Jenkins, H. J. Jones, A. D. Kent, J. E. King, A. D. Kriss, L. C. R. Mallett, K.J. May, M. Middleton, P. M. McDonald, H. D. N. Rone-Clarke, M. A. Sherrey, C. J. Spencer, P.L. Thomas, M. Thompson, J. Till, K. J. Van Der Plank, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

### **WELCOME**

The Chairman welcomed Members to the virtual full Council meeting and reminded them of the protocol to be following during it. Members were reminded of the use of roll calls and that the detail of these would not be included within the minutes and if Members wished for a named vote to be taken, then this should be requested in the usual manner.

Members were also reminded that the meeting was being live streamed to the Council's You Tube channel to allow the public to view it.

### 50\2020 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

### 51\2020 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor R Hunter declared an other disclosable interest in respect of Minute No. 63/2020 in that he worked for a not for profit housing association.

Councillor M Thompson declared an other disclosable interest in respect of Minute No. 62/2020, Councillor S Baxter's question on notice. Reference was made to Bromsgrove School, who were his employer.

Following a number of declarations of interest being made in respect of Minute No. 62/2020 Councillor H. Rone-Clarke's motion on notice, it was suggested that a blanket exemption for the purpose of that item be put in place. It was therefore:

**RESOLVED** that a Council dispensation be granted for the purposes of Minute No 62/2020 in respect of being a past or present member of a union.

52\2020

## **MINUTES**

Members considered the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the full Council meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 be approved.

53\2020

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

The Chairman and Head of Paid Service confirmed that they had no announcements to make on this occasion.

54\2020

## **TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER**

The Leader explained that the current Covid-19 figures for Bromsgrove District, as at 10.00 am on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021, showed a total of 570 cases per 100,000 over the past 7 day period. This was a decrease of 15.7% on the previous 7 days. The national rate for England was 507 cases per 100,000 and for the West Midlands 568 per 100,000. She was pleased to see a decrease in the numbers, but as there were still very high it was still important that everyone adhered to the hands, face and space rules.

Councillor R Hunter thanked the Leader for the update and commented on the very sobering figures that had been provided. He also thanked the Leader for keeping Group Leaders up to date with the proposed Vaccination Centre being based at the Artrix, which everyone was keen to see opened to allow Bromsgrove to play its part in tackling the dreadful virus. He hoped that everyone could work together to make this as successful as possible.

The Leader responded that she, along with everyone else would be pleased to see this opened, but unfortunately it was not within her remit to make any announcements on this. It fell within the scope of the NHS and she had not been privy to any start date. She hoped that as many residents as possible could get vaccinated in the near future, and the economy could be kick started and residents get back to some sort of normality in their lives.

Councillor P McDonald asked the Leader whether she could advise of any arrangements that would be made regarding transport, as the residents from the outlying areas such as Rubery, would struggle to get to the Artrix without their own transport, as it was quite a distance for the elderly or less able to walk from the bus stop to the Artrix. Councillor



McDonald asked if there would be any specific arrangements made for that vulnerable group.

The Leader responded that she was not able to respond to the query raised but would ask the Chief Executive to raise this point with the NHS. She did however point out that there would be further vaccination centres in the whole of the district, and it would not solely be dependent on the Artrix. She was aware that some GP Practices and pharmacies were also coming on board for vaccination purposes, but she would ask for clarity on the issue of transport provision.

55\2020 **TO RECEIVE COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

There were no comments, questions or petitions from members of the public on this occasion.

56\2020 **URGENT DECISIONS**

The Chairman advised that there was one Urgent Decision and reminded Members that this was not for debate. It was confirmed that full details of the Urgent Decision had been made available on the Council's website when it had initially been signed off.

57\2020 **CONSTITUTION REVIEW REPORT**

Councillor G. Denaro, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources (including Governance/Policy and Performance/HR) presented the report and highlighted that the aim of this was to try and speed up the manner in which Section 106 monies reached the communities. He commented that in the past these had to go through the full committee process, so the request was for authority be given to the Section 151 Officer to spend in line with the agreements up to £50k, which would cover a lot of the S106 agreements.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Denaro and seconded by Councillor M Sherrey.

Councillor Hotham, whilst agreeing with the sentiment of the recommendation, proposed an amendment to include the consultation of the Ward Member for the area where the monies were to be spent. He felt that it was only reasonable that the Ward Member be consulted, whilst he appreciated that the monies were in many cases almost ring fenced, he believed there was some discretion to how it could be spent and therefore suggested that the recommendation be amended to include (after Section 151 Officer) in consultation with the Ward Member. The amendment was seconded by Councillor S. Baxter and she commented that certainly locally where there had been a little bit of discretion in S106 monies it was useful to be involved.

Councillor A Kent asked for clarification as to whether the amendment was legally permissible, and the Monitoring Officer confirmed that it was and highlighted that there were often delegations which were in place which included consultation with the relevant Ward Member. She confirmed that they would not be able to make the decision or influence it but could be consulted on what that decision was.

Councillor Denaro was happy to support the amendment and for it to be included within the recommendation and on being put to the vote it was

**RESOLVED that authority to spend S106 monies up to a value of £50k be delegated to the S151 Officer, after consultation with the Ward Member, to spend in line with the S106 agreement which caused the receipt of the S106 monies.**

58\2020

## **POLITICAL BALANCE REPORT**

The Chairman asked Members to disregard the report in the main agenda pack and referred them to the updated report in the supplementary pack on pages 1 to 6.

Councillor G. Denaro, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources (including Governance/Policy and Performance/HR) presented the report and explained that, as Members would be aware, if numbers in any party changed than a recalculation of the committee places was necessary. The schedule at the last page of the report showed the revised committee structures and had been agreed by the various Group Leaders outside of the meeting.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Denaro and seconded by Councillor K May.

### **RESOLVED that:**

- a) **for the ensuing Municipal Year, the Committees set out in the table in Appendix 1 of the report be appointed and that the representation of the different political groups on the Council on those Committees be as set out in that table until the next Annual Meeting of the Council, or until the next review of political representation under Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, whichever is the earlier be approved; and**
- b) **Members be appointed to the Committees and as substitute members in accordance with nominations to be made by Group Leaders and the details appended to the minutes of this meeting.**

59\2020

## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET

### Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board

Councillor A Kent, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services introduced the report and clarified that, due to the timing of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board (WRSB) meeting, which was held shortly before the Council's meeting in December, he had covered off the majority of the recommendations within the discussion at the December meeting. However, the main changes had been due to the deferment of the uplift which WRS had imposed at late notice in respect of the ICT accommodation charges and the ICT hosting charge. It was noted that all recommendations had been included for clarity.

Councillor Kent took the opportunity to recognise the sterling work which WRS were doing during the current situation. The Covid Marshalls were doing an excellent job and he recommended that any Members who received local information about difficulties in their areas, if they contacted WRS or himself, they would assist in alleviating any problems. He thanked them for their hard work in a very difficult time, which only highlight what a good service it was.

The Chairman requested that the Council's thanks be relayed back to WRS.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor A Kent and seconded by Councillor H Jones.

### RESOLVED that

- a) the additional partner liabilities for 2021/22 in relation to the increase in accommodation charges and ICT hosting from Wyre Forest District Council be approved as follows;

Bromsgrove District Council	£2k
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- b) partner authorities approve the following 2020/21:

- 1.1 the 2021/22 gross expenditure budget of £3,739k as shown in appendix 1 of the report;
- 1.2 the 2021/22 income budget of £529k as shown in appendix 1 of the report;
- 1.3 the revenue budget and partner percentage allocations for 2021/22 onwards –

	£'000	Revised %
Bromsgrove District Council	468	14.59

- 1.4 the additional partner liabilities for 2021/22 in relation to unavoidable salary pressure –

Bromsgrove District Council	£9k
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1.5 the additional partner liabilities for 2021/22 in relation to three technical officers.

	Tech Officer Income Generation £000	Tech Officer Animal Activity £000	Tech Officer Gull Control £000
Bromsgrove District Council	5	6	-

60\2020

**TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE CABINET HELD ON 13TH JANUARY 2020**

The Chairman referred Members to the supplementary agenda and explained that, unfortunately, there had been a technical hitch with the Cabinet minutes produced in the supplementary pack sent out to all Members on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021. The error referred to Minute No. 57/20 (which was shown as a repeat of Minute No. 58/20). It was confirmed that there were no recommendations to Council from that minute, so it did not impact on the recommendations for consideration at this meeting. It was further confirmed that the minutes had been updated on the Council's website and all Members have received an updated version via email.

61\2020

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

The Chairman highlighted to Members that an updated list of the questions had been provided in the supplementary pack and that a period of 15 minutes was allocated to the presenting and responses to, these questions. There would be no supplementary questions.

**Question Submitted by Councillor S Robinson**

“Can the portfolio holder inform me what enforcement is being carried out to stop cars parking on double yellow lines?”

The Leader responded that the Council's Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) routinely patrolled the District carrying out enforcement on all Traffic Regulation Orders including double yellow lines. Last financial year 426 Parking Contravention Notices (PCNs) were issued against vehicles parked on double yellow lines, this financial year due to COVID-19 restrictions the number of PCNs issued so far on yellow lines was 245. Unfortunately, it was not possible for CEOs to be everywhere all of the time, therefore if Members had any specific areas of concern, they could contact the Parking Team via email [bdcparking@bromsgrove.gov.uk](mailto:bdcparking@bromsgrove.gov.uk) who would do their best to increase monitoring of that area for a period of time.

## **Question Submitted by Councillor K Van der Plank**

“Many of our local businesses are really struggling especially as a result of this new lockdown. Please could the Leader confirm what business grants are still available to businesses in the District impacted by Covid. What is the process for applying for these and the deadline and how is this going to be communicated across the district?”

The Leader responded that the Council had received funding to provide support to any of its businesses that were closed during the November period of restrictions or had been forced to close during the current period of national restrictions. In addition, it had provided support to hospitality, hotel and leisure businesses that were open during December but were significantly impacted by the tier 2 and tier 3 restrictions that were in place.

The Council has developed a discretionary grant fund for businesses that were not required to close but were impacted by the restrictions. This scheme would provide support to hospitality and leisure supply chain businesses who would have lost income because their customer base was forced to close.

The schemes could be applied for on the Council’s website; and each application would be considered for eligibility for all the Government support schemes and were being promoted on-line and by social media. Where contact details were held, businesses would be contacted by text or email and urged to apply directly by the Council.

## **Question Submitted by Councillor R Hunter**

“Please could you update council on what is being done to support those local businesses worst affected by the pandemic. Can you confirm how many Bromsgrove businesses have received the Additional Restrictions Grant since November and how many Bromsgrove pubs have received their Christmas Support Grant?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources firstly, asked it to be put on record his thanks to all the teams that had been dealing with the grant applications at this exceptionally busy time. The Christmas Support Payment required an application from the ratepayer and evidence that the pub met the Government’s eligibility requirement. Officers had identified all the pubs which met the Government’s definition of a wet-led pub for the purposes of the Christmas Support Payment and contacted them by telephone requesting the information needed to award the grant. The payments to pubs will be made in bulk at the point the applications have been received and determined, which he understood to be imminent.

The Council had set aside £900,000 of funding to provide support to businesses that were excluded from support because they had not been

required to close and were ineligible for the mandatory grant schemes. The scheme was an application based scheme and officers would provide a briefing to Members on the operation of the scheme and current levels of support provided, in due course.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources explained that North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) was not involved in the direct delivery of the Covid-19 business grants; however, they were promoting them extensively via their website, in weekly newsletters and through their existing contacts. They were also providing tailored advice to businesses regarding the availability, eligibility and application process for the Covid-19 business recovery grants.

Partners including the Growth Hubs and Worcestershire County Council had provided a number of grants specifically aimed at supporting businesses through the pandemic including small business recovery grants for retailers and the visitor economy; pivot and prosper grants to help businesses adapt their trading models and sustain and grow to support businesses with resilience and transformation projects. All of the usual business support grants were also available, supporting business start-up and growth. These too were promoted extensively via NWEDR's website, in weekly newsletters and through their existing contacts. NWEDR were also providing tailored advice to businesses regarding the availability, eligibility and application process for these business grants. It was the intention to set up briefings for Members as soon as practicable.

### **Question Submitted by Councillor S Baxter**

"Please can the Leader update the Council on progress with the green borehole district heat network proposal to be sited at Bromsgrove School."

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services responded to this question on behalf of the Leader. She advised that the Council was successful in its bid to the Government Heat Network Development Unit for funding of a Detailed Project Development of the Bromsgrove Town Low Carbon Heat Network. A Project Management team had recently been appointed and they would oversee production of a full business case to inform the decision by Council and Stakeholders as to whether to progress to Commercialisation and Build. They would also bid for funding for the Commercialisation/Build phase.

The feasibility study had recommended an open loop ground source heat pump as the preferred option for a low carbon heat source and a location in the vicinity of Bromsgrove School had looked favourable. However, it was important to note that the Detailed Project Development would include a full assessment and refinement of that and all other aspects of the proposed network.

Bore-hole drilling (if that was still the preferred technology) would now take place at the Commercialisation Phase. This followed close liaison with Colchester, who were in the construction phase of an open loop ground source heat pump heat network. They had found that although an early test borehole was often recommended to de-risk the project, the benefits of this were outweighed by the following:

- the additional cost and practicalities of bringing drilling kit onto the site twice - once for a test borehole and again to continue with full construction.
- a single borehole could produce false pessimism or false optimism as it might be an outlier in terms of performance. Instead, the Project Managers would procure a specialist in open loop ground source heat pumps to assess the available information and design the system during the Detailed Project Development phase. There would then be an optional contract extension for those specialists to procure the drilling contractors and manage the borehole drilling and testing during the Commercialisation Phase, assessing and amending their detailed design depending on findings.

The Council aspired to reaching the Commercialisation in 2022 with the build out from 2023 onwards.

Councillor Baxter asked if she could ask a follow up question, but was advised that, as Notices of Motion were being considered again, supplementary questions were no longer being taken. The Chairman therefore suggested that Councillor Baxter speak to the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services outside of the meeting.

### **Question Submitted by Councillor S Douglas**

“Please can the Leader tell the Council what state of readiness any proposals are for the Bromsgrove Town Centres so that good supported applications can be made for future funding. If a proposal fits a grant criteria, readiness is a key to success. It is sad that we did not qualify for the recent large Government Grants for towns awarded recently.

These plans might include feasibility studies, concept designs/plans and viability appraisals.

Who is involved in these preparations?

What is the role of town centre councillors particularly in the early stages?

What more can be initiated locally towards implementation?”

The Leader responded that there were three key pieces of work currently being undertaken. The first was the development of a strategy for all Bromsgrove Centres, the second was the commissioning of urban design and viability advice related to Council owned land in Bromsgrove Town Centre and the third was the commissioning of a Bromsgrove

Town Centre 2040 Vision. Members would also be aware that the emerging Local Plan process included forming a vision for Bromsgrove Town Centre.

The Bromsgrove Centres Strategy was expected to be received from officers working in NWEDR by the end of February 2021. This study set out suggestions for the enhancement of key retail areas. The Leader confirmed that she would circulate this to all Members for comment.

In terms of the Council owned land in Bromsgrove Town Centre external support had been commissioned for the development of some proposals. These plans included feasibility studies, concept designs/plans and viability appraisals. This commission was being managed by officers in NWEDR. When the consultants had completed their tasks, NWEDR would be preparing a report for Cabinet and Council. The Leader also commented that it was worth noting that this was the current position and things may change, particularly given the current challenging circumstances, which town centres faced.

The work for the Bromsgrove Town Centre 2040 Vision had been tendered and the successful firm would be appointed by the end of January 2021. The work was co-ordinated by officers in NWEDR who would be supported by the external consultants. A programme of Member, stakeholder and public engagement would be put in place to ensure input from all local key stakeholders, residents, and businesses. The Leader encouraged all Members to engage with this process.

Members would also be aware from the recently approved Economic Recovery Strategy and also the Economic Strategy itself, that a key role for officers in NWEDR was horizon-scanning for future funding opportunities and Government grants. The Leader suggested that it was not always the case that worked up proposals improved eligibility for grants, as eligibility criteria were funding programme specific, so ready-made proposals may not necessarily fit the eligibility for a particular funding programme. However, when relevant and eligible, officers could use feasibility studies and viability appraisals, as part of the evidence base for funding applications.

It was the Leader's view that all Members had a role to play in ensuring the vitality and viability of Bromsgrove town centre and all its urban centres and the Leader hoped the centres would be well used by all residents. She encouraged Members to engage in the formal and informal opportunities for engagement which she had outlined in her response.

62\2020

## **MOTIONS ON NOTICE**

The Chairman explained that in respect of Councillor King's motion it had been agreed by the Leader and Officers had been tasked with investigating delivery of this Motion. In respect of Councillor Hunter's



motion, it had also been agreed and Officers again, had been tasked with investigating delivery of this Motion.

The Chairman confirmed that the final Motion, from Councillor H Rone-Clarke, which had been published in the supplementary agenda pack for Members' consideration, at page 27, would be debated in the usual way, with the time limit of one hour.

## **Trade Unions**

Members considered the following Motion on Notice, submitted by Councillor H Rone-Clarke:

### Background Information:

- i. People on lower paid jobs are less likely to be able to work from home, increasing their risk of exposure to Coronavirus.*
- ii. That research by the TUC has found unionised workplaces to be more 'Covid secure.'*
- iii. Union membership brings job security.*
- iv. Trade union membership will provide greater employment rights beyond the end of the pandemic.*

*Council sends congratulations to the Trade Union Congress on the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passing of the Trade Union Act and*

*Council requests Cabinet to do the following:*

- i. Commit to sending a representative of the Cabinet to attend trade union liaison meetings moving forward.*
- ii. Reaffirm its commitment to working/consulting with trade unions as it leads us through the Coronavirus crisis and beyond.*
- iii. Commit to promote trade union membership both as an employer and for the people of Bromsgrove.*

The motion was proposed by Councillor Rone-Clarke and seconded by Councillor P McDonald.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Rone-Clarke explained that there were two aspects to the preparation of his motion and firstly the motion was put together with the help and guidance of people in the Trades Union movement and secondly, an integral part of the motion was that the Cabinet engaged more robustly with the Trades Unions, particularly those who represented employees and staff working at this Council. He had been interested to hear at the beginning of the meeting the number of Members who had or continued to be members of a Trade Union. Councillor Rone-Clarke asked Members to ask themselves a key question before they made a decision as to whether to vote for or against the motion; "If you are a member of a trade union would you not want the same robust engagement with your employer or stakeholders

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related to your Trade Union?" He wanted to extend the same courtesy to the staff of this Council, so he urged Members to consider this when making a decision and hoped Members would vote in the right way.

Councillor S Colella raised a point of order and asked for clarification as to what exactly Members were being asked to vote on. The Chairman suggested that Members were considering points i), ii) and iii) in the concluding paragraph of the motion. This was confirmed as being correct by Councillor Rone-Clarke.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor P McDonald made the point that nobody in the chamber should ever forget those who had enabled them to be where they were today and had fought hard and sacrificed so much to make a strong economy which everyone benefited from. Councillor McDonald referred back to the Tolpuddle Martyrs, the Match Makers and many more to those struggling today to make a better economy for so many. Those who were organised were able to fight unscrupulous bosses who were using the pandemic as an opportunity to cut wages and worsen working conditions. Those that were organised in such a way were able to defend their hard earned rights. The evidence from the last century and a half was clear, stronger unions created a stronger economy, which in turn resulted in better paid jobs for all. It was highlighted that it was the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Trade Union Movement, which should remind everyone of the giant steps that have been made in improving working life, but not forgetting the challenges that also lie ahead. The last 150 years also showed that the strength of the economy went hand in hand with the strength of the Trade Unions and in the troubled economic times the Trade Unions are needed more than ever. Councillor McDonald highlighted a number of benefits that were available to those within a trade union, these were available due to workers joining together to negotiate with management in order to ensure workers were treated with respect and supported fairly. Unions worked hard to ensure workplaces were more inclusive to women, the LGBT community, black and minority workers, those with a disability and older workers. Where there was a trade union, workers were far less likely to face problems in relation to a number of areas such as sickness. They were also safer work places, with significantly lower injury rates and were also more Covid secure. They supported those who were injured and unfairly treated at work, in addition they supported workers in getting the skills they need to get better paid jobs. Most importantly they allowed the workers to have a voice at work and where unions were involved, often helped companies to survive difficult times. It was also noted that they also had an impact on non-union work places. It was further highlighted that during this pandemic there had been a rise in union membership, as people realised that being organised was the best way of ensuring they had a safe working environment. All the evidence over the last 150 years had demonstrated this country had a stronger economy from working with and along side the trade union movement.

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In responding to the Motion on Notice, the Leader made the following comments:

The Council had a long and productive relationship with the Trade Unions which had been particularly beneficial during the months of the current pandemic. The Council regularly engaged, involved, and discussed, with the Trade Unions, matters that affect the workforce. This had included discussions around the Council's approach and response to the pandemic.

The Council also held regular Informal Trade Union Liaison (ITUL) meetings that took place every eight weeks and had both local and regional Union representatives in attendance. All three Unions were represented at these meetings, UNISON, GMB and Unite and were chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive. All participants, management, and unions had an opportunity to put forward items for the agenda and at the end of every meeting any other business could be raised to ensure nothing was missed. The meetings provided and contributed to the effective working relationship that the Council had with all three trade unions. At the start of the pandemic the frequency of the meetings was discussed with the Trade Unions, to ensure all were comfortable with the dialogue that was being held, particularly in relation to the Council's response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The Council took the decision, early in March 2020, prior to the first formal lockdown, to ensure all staff who could work from home would do so until further notice. Only roles that were unable to be undertaken remotely had continued to be present within the workplace. This position had been maintained throughout the entire pandemic. Other safety measures had been put in place to protect the Council's workforce and ensure its workplaces were Covid Secure. Some of these measures included (this was not an exhaustive list):

- reviewing business continuity plans
- reviewing risk assessments
- separating public and employee access points into buildings
- mandatory signing in at all locations (or use of the NHS Track and Trace App)
- wearing of face coverings in communal areas of buildings
- sanitiser stations in all buildings
- limiting access to communal areas to one person at a time
- extensive cleaning regimes
- partitions for employees working in public areas.
- PPE for front facing employees.
- Regular production and updating of employee Frequently Asked Questions in line with Government guidance.
- Regular remote staff briefings with the Chief Executive Officer

In addition to the ITUL meetings the local Union representatives also attended the Corporate Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee, also

chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive, where employees, Councillor representatives and the Senior Health & Safety Officer discussed and actioned matters relating to corporate health and safety. The Council was committed to Health and Safety and the protection of its employees.

The Council also had a Wellbeing Group that met regularly to specifically discuss the wellbeing of its employees during the pandemic. The local UNISON Representative also attended this group. The meeting was again chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive and had representatives from Health and Safety, Human Resources, Equalities and Communications.

As the Leader had demonstrated; the Council was absolutely committed to working and consulting with the Trade Unions. However, she felt that it would be inappropriate for a member of the Cabinet to attend Trade Union liaison meetings as most matters discussed at the meetings were of an employment nature and which was an officer to officer matter.

The Leader advised that it was not the role of the Council to promote union membership to its workforce. Trade Union membership was a decision for an individual to make. The Council recognised and valued the important relationship it had with the Unions. Historically, when any of the three Unions have decided to hold a recruitment drive to attract new members, the Council had always been fully supportive of this activity and had provided space in its buildings for this activity to be undertaken. Events were also advertised and promoted on the ORB (Council Intranet) and the Council also funded a full time Union convenor who was the local UNISON representative.

In summary, the Leader advised that her Group would not be supporting the motion; but in closing she stated that the Council would continue to support the constructive relationship that it had with Trade Unions and she hoped that this cordial and productive relationship continued.

The Leader acknowledged the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Trade Union Act and took the opportunity to formally thank everyone at Bromsgrove District Council for their hard work and co-operation during this pandemic.

Councillor A Kent raised a point of order as when the motion was presented Members had been told that the motion had been composed in conjunction with trade unions, he therefore wished to clarify whether any of the Councillors putting forward the motion had any financial interest from the trade unions as they did on occasion fund members of the Labour Group and whether this was the case for those presenting the motions. Councillor Kent asked the Monitoring Officer to confirm whether this was a matter which should have been declared under the relevant item on the agenda.

The Monitoring Officer responded that on the basis that there were interested declared in the context trade union membership, Members

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had sought a dispensation in this regard. Councillor Rone-Clarke responded that he had not taken any monies from any trade union during his one election campaign as had been inferred.

During the debate which followed a number of areas were discussed:

- It was commented that in 150 years there had been many changes, which were largely due to changes in legislation which protected the employee, which had been put in place by various governments.
- Clarity was requested in respect of the background information provided in the motion. Councillor Rone-Clarke confirmed that he would provide this to Councillor A Kriss outside of the meeting.
- The Leader of the Council was thanked for her detailed response as there had been initial concerns that the motion was aimed specifically at some concerns that may have been raised in respect of this Council in particular.
- Councillor L Mallett highlighted that it was clearly an important and appropriate time for such an item to be discussed. Whilst the Leader had set out the range of measures that were in place at the Council, it was welcomed to hear the support that the Council gave and therefore he could see no reason why the motion would not be supported, as it appeared not to be asking the Council to anything other than what it already did and was committed to doing.
- Councillor J Till commented on the Leader's response and the work that the officers did in line with the three unions. She highlighted that this had been discussed at the Equalities Task Group meeting, Members of which were present at this Council meeting, when it had been highlighted how well the Council and the unions worked together.
- Councillor R Hunter was pleased to support the motion and suggested it was important to look at what the motion was actually asking for, to reaffirm the Council's commitment to working with the trade unions and as had been highlighted there was excellent work already being carried out and therefore this should not be a problem, it also asked Council to promote the unions, which it appeared to already do. It was suggested that if the inclusion of a Member of the Cabinet at the meetings was not appropriate then the motion could be amended.
- The motion was an expression of gratitude to the work of the trade union movement, here in Bromsgrove and elsewhere. It was highlighted that the lowest paid employees were receiving the real living wage. The unions had a great tradition of peaceful wage bargaining, representing their members.

In summing up Councillor Rone-Clarke shared his disappointment in the responses he had received, and suggested Members were out of touch in these difficult times. The trade unions had made work places more Covid Secure and if, as had been suggested the Council was already doing so much, he saw no reason why Members should not support the

Motion and could not understand the reasoning behind their refusal to support it. He further clarified that he had written the motion after seeing that another local authority had passed a similar one and it was not one which had been issued at a regional or national level. He believed Members of the Cabinet represented these people as their employers, he had also spoken to a union representative who supported the motion and would be in agreement with it.

On being put to the vote the Motion was lost.

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## **BURCOT LANE REPORT**

Following presentation of the report by the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing and a lengthy debate, which included a number of points of order also being raised, a proposal to defer the item was put forward by Councillor R Hunter and seconded by Councillor P McDonald, on being put to the vote it was

**RESOLVED that the item be deferred.**

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## **CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

The Chairman asked if Members happy to take the confidential minutes as read, without discussion and the need to go into private session. Members were in agreement to put the confidential minutes straight to the vote.

**RESOLVED that the confidential minute of the full Council meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 be agreed as a true record.**

The meeting closed at 8.37 p.m.

Chairman

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## Bromsgrove District Council

### Composition of Committees 2020-21 (Revised 20/01/21)

Committee	Cons	Lab	B'grove Ind East	B'grove Ind West & Central	Liberal Dems	Comments
Overview and Scrutiny Board	<b>6</b> Deeming Spencer Till Beaumont Kriss Thompson  (Sub: Middleton, Whittaker, Jones, Hession)	<b>1</b> McDonald  (Sub: Rone- Clarke)	<b>2</b> Hotham Baxter  (Sub: Van der Plank, English)	<b>1</b> Colella  (Sub: Douglas)	<b>1</b> Hunter  (Sub: King)	<b>11 Members on Board</b>
Licensing Committee	<b>6</b> Jones Glass Spencer Kriss Sherrey Whittaker  (Subs: Webb, Thompson)	<b>2</b> McDonald  (Sub: Rone- Clarke)	<b>1</b> English  (Sub: Baxter)	<b>1</b> Douglas  (Sub: Colella)	<b>1</b> Robinson  (Sub: King)	<b>11 Members on Committee</b>
Planning Committee	<b>7</b> Deeming Thomas Whittaker Hession Beaumont Glass Denaro  (Subs: Spencer, Sherrey, Middleton, Kriss, Jones, Webb)	<b>1</b> McDonald  (Sub: Rone- Clarke)	<b>1</b> English  (Subs: Baxter, Hotham)	<b>1</b> Douglas  (Subs: Colella)	<b>1</b> King  (Subs: Robinson)	<b>11 Members on Committee</b>

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Audit, Standards and Governance Committee	<b>5</b> Whittaker Middleton Spencer Beaumont Kriss	<b>1</b> Mallett	<b>1</b> Van der Plank  (Sub: Baxter)	<b>1</b> Jenkins  (Sub: Douglas)	<b>1</b> King	<b>9</b> <b>Members</b> <b>on</b> <b>Committee</b>
Electoral Matters Committee	<b>4</b> Hession Middleton Glass Deeming	<b>1</b> Mallett	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b> Colella  (Sub: Douglas)	<b>1</b> Hunter	<b>7</b> <b>Members</b> <b>on</b> <b>Committee</b>
Appeals Committee	<b>3</b> May Denaro Kent	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b> Hotham	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b> King	<b>5</b> <b>Members</b> <b>on</b> <b>Committee</b>
Appointments Committee  (nominees made as and when necessary)	<b>3</b> TBA	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b> Baxter	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b> King	<b>5</b> <b>Members</b> <b>on</b> <b>Committee</b>
Statutory Officers  (nominees made as and when necessary)	<b>3</b> TBA	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b> English	<b>1</b> Colella  (Sub: Douglas)	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b> <b>Members</b> <b>on</b> <b>Committee</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>64 Places</b>



### MEMBERS ALLOWANCES – INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr May, Cllr Denaro
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services
Ward(s) Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	N/A

#### 1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

1.1 This report asks the Council to consider the report and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP); to decide whether or not to accept the IRP's report and to agree the Members Allowances scheme for 2021-22 arising from this.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council is asked to **RESOLVE**

**2.1 whether or not to accept all, some or none of the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for 2021-22;**

**2.2 having considered the Panel's report and recommendations, whether or not changes are required to the Council's scheme of allowances for Members arising from this.**

#### 3. KEY ISSUES

##### Financial Implications

3.1 If the Council makes changes to the current amounts of allowances there may be additional savings or costs. If the Council implements all the recommendations of the IRP costs across the year would be increased in the region of £7,500; if the current multipliers are used but the proposed basic allowance is accepted the increase will be approximately £5,600. This does not include Chairs of overview and scrutiny task groups as they are paid pro rata for the length of the task group.

##### Legal Implications

3.2 The Council is required to maintain a Panel of people from outside the Council to consider and recommend to it:

- the level of basic and special responsibility allowances paid to Councillors

and

- travel, subsistence and dependent carers' expenses for Councillors

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

- 3.3 If the Council wishes to change its scheme of allowances for Councillors it should do so prior to the start of the new financial year, having had regard to recommendations made by the Panel. If changes to the amounts of the allowances are agreed by the Council, then the scheme will be updated automatically.

#### **Service/Operational Implications**

- 3.4 The report in appendix 1 contains the allowances recommended by the Panel.

#### **Customer/Equalities and Diversity Implications**

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

#### **4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

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

#### **5. APPENDICES**

Report and recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel for 2021-22.

#### **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

#### **AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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**Independent Remuneration Panel  
for Worcestershire District Councils**

**Annual Report and Recommendations for 2021-22**

**Bromsgrove District Council**

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**December 2020**

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## **Recommendations**

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

- 1. That the Basic Allowance for 2021-22 is £4,650 representing a 2.75% increase**
- 2. That the Special Responsibility Allowances are set out in Appendix 1**
- 3. That travel allowances for 2021-22 continue to be paid in accordance with the HMRC mileage allowance**
- 4. That subsistence allowances for 2021-22 remain unchanged**
- 5. That the Dependent Carer's Allowance remains unchanged**
- 6. That for Parish Councils in the District, if travel and subsistence is paid, the Panel recommends that it is paid in accordance with the rates paid by Bromsgrove District Council and in accordance with the relevant Regulations**

## **Introduction**

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

The purpose of such allowances is to enable people from all walks of life to become involved in local politics if they choose.

The law requires each Council to 'have regard' to the recommendations of the Panel and we noted that Bromsgrove District Council implemented in part, by accepting the basic allowance (paid part way through the year) but kept the multipliers the same, the Panel's recommendation for 2020/21.

The work of the Panel in the current year has been significantly influenced by the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent demands it has placed on individual Councils. As important as the work of the Panel is, it was clearly recognised that there were greater priorities for Council Leaders and a need to be realistic about what was required and what could be achieved during 2020.

In view of the above, and in consultation with all constituent authorities it was decided that the report for 2021/22 would focus solely on recommendations in relation to the Basic Award and any consequential change to the value of existing Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs). The evidence base for the recommended changes is set out below.

This report reflects the above position and contains no new recommendations in relation to the range of wider SRAs (i.e. the multiplier values) for 2021/22. Such recommendations would need to have been supported by research within individual authorities and demanded the time and contribution from officers and members. Given the restrictions presented by Covid it was agreed that this would not be a useful use of resources. The Panel is hopeful, however of being able to undertake a review of SRAs during the reporting cycle leading to the 2022/23 report and in accordance with any previously published commitments.

The Panel acknowledges that in the current challenging times and financial climate there are difficult choices to be made. Whilst ultimately it is for the Council to decide how or whether to adopt the recommendations set out in this report, it is hoped that such recommendations serve as useful.

## **Background Evidence and Research Undertaken**

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

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

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

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- Analysed and considered the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) statistics for 2020 which gives the mean hourly wage rate for Worcestershire at £14.78.
- Benchmarked the Basic Allowance against allowances for comparable roles paid by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) "Nearest Neighbour" Councils for each authority
- Taken account of the National Pay Award (2.75%) for the majority of Local Government employees
- Considered the Consumer Price Index information as at November 2020

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

In 2015, Worcester City Councillors recorded time spent on Council business for a number of weeks. This enabled the Panel to confirm the number of hours per week for front line councillors, which is used to calculate the recommended basic allowance. More detail is given about this under the Basic Allowance heading later in the Report.

The figure being recommended by the Panel of £4,650 for the Basic Allowance appears reasonable and appropriate when compared to other Local Authorities.

Arising from our research, in **Table 1** we have included information showing the Members' allowances budget for Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances paid for 2019-20 as a cost per head of population for each Council. To give context, we have included details of the proportion of net revenue budget spent by each Council on basic and Special Responsibility allowances.

**Table 1 - Total spend on Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) as a cost per head of population 2019-20 figures**

<b>Authority, population<sup>1</sup> and number of Councillors</b>	<b>Total spend Basic Allowances</b>	<b>Total spend on SRA</b>	<b>SRA as a percentage of total Basic Allowance</b>	<b>Cost of total basic and SRA per head of population</b>	<b>Total of basic and SRA as a percentage of Net General Revenue Fund expenditure</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>%</b>
Bromsgrove DC (31) 94,744	139,656	64,823	46.42	2.05	1.759
Malvern Hills DC (38) 75,339	164,717	56,054	34	2.81	2.6
Redditch Borough (29) 84,521	126,046	88,189	69.96	2.51	2.523

<sup>1</sup>ONS population figures mid 2019. Totals for Basic and Special Responsibility allowances paid are as published by each authority for the 2019-20 financial year.

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Worcester City (35) 100,405	152,807	69,441	45.44	2.21	1.36
Wychavon (45) 118,738	198,782	85,594	43.06	2.23	1.77

In **Table 2** we show the average payment per member of each authority of the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances, which illustrates the balance between the level of Special Responsibility Allowances paid and the Basic Allowance.

**Table 2 - Average allowance per Member of each authority (Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances, 2019 – 20 figures)**

<b>Authority (number of Councillors)</b>	<b>Amount £</b>
Bromsgrove District (31)	6,596
Malvern Hills District (38)	5,810
Redditch Borough (29)	7,387
Worcester City (35)	6,349
Wychavon District (45)	6,319

## **Basic Allowance 2021 - 22**

### **Calculation of Basic Allowance**

The Basic Allowance is based on:

- The roles and responsibilities of Members
- Their time commitments – including the total average number of hours worked per week on Council business
- A public service discount of 40% to reflect that Councillors volunteer their time
- The Basic Allowance is paid to all Members of the Council

Whilst each Council may set out role descriptions for Councillors, the Panel accepts that each councillor will carry out that role differently, reflecting personal circumstances and local requirements. However, we consider the Basic Allowance to include Councillors' roles in Overview and Scrutiny, as any non-Executive member of the Council is able to contribute to this aspect of the Council's work. It is for this reason that we do not recommend any Special Responsibility Allowance for members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. We also consider that ICT could be included in the Basic Allowance as it is generally more readily available to individuals than in previous years. However, we are comfortable that specific local decisions may be made about how ICT support is provided.

As mentioned earlier, in 2015 Worcester City Councillors recorded the time spent per week on Council business for a number of weeks during the early autumn. This was considered to reflect an appropriate "average" period of time for meetings and other commitments. The results from this survey showed that the average input was 10 hours and 50 minutes



per week. This figure matches the one used for a number of years by the Panel, based on previous research with constituent councils, to calculate the basic allowance.

We reviewed the levels of wage rates for Worcestershire as set out in the ASHE data (details in appendix 2) and the benchmark information available to us from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) "nearest neighbours" authorities as part of our research into the level of basic allowance recommended. We are also aware that the majority of local government employees received an average of 2.75% increase in pay in April 2020 (dependent on scale).

The research information used in the consideration of the Basic allowance is set out at appendix 2.

## **Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) 2021/22**

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

For the reasons as set out in the introduction to the report, no recommendations have been made to change the SRA multiplier rates for 2021/22. As such the recommended rates remain as they were in the 2020/21 report and as detailed in Appendix 2.

## **Mileage and Expenses 2021-22**

The Panel notes that the Council has used the HMRC flat rate for payment of mileage for Councillors and recommends that this continues. It should also be noted that HMRC recommends a 4p per mile payment for electric business vehicles.

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

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

## **Allowances to Parish Councils 2021-22**

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

This year the Panel has not been asked to make recommendations on any matters by any Parish in Bromsgrove/Malvern Hills/Redditch/Worcester City/ Wychavon.

## **The Independent Remuneration Panel**

The Members' Allowances Regulations require Local Authorities to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel. The purpose of the Panel is to make recommendations to the authority about allowances to be paid to Elected Members and Local Authorities must have regard to this advice. This Council's Independent Remuneration Panel is set up on a joint basis with 4 of the other 5 District Councils in Worcestershire. Separate Annual Reports have been prepared for each Council.

The members of the Panel are:

**Caroline Murphy** – Caroline has over 20 years' experience of working in public and voluntary sector organisations, including three West Midlands Local Authorities and the Civil Service. She was a senior Education Manager at Wolverhampton City Council until 2011 developing and delivering a large part of the 14-19 Pathfinder, during which time her department was recognised as achieving Beacon Council Status. She has a wealth of experience at building partnerships. Caroline now works as freelance Education, Skills and Development Adviser supporting individuals and organisations with strategic management, quality assurance and improvement, safeguarding, regulation compliance, research and evaluation, data protection and developing policies and procedures. She has worked in a consultancy capacity for a number of organisations, specialising in those who support vulnerable young people. She also spent 14 years as the Vice Chair of Governors of a primary school in Birmingham.

**Jonathan Glover** – Jonathan has over 30 years experience working in central and local government. He has worked mostly in central government, in a range of departments and disciplines. These include: regional finance and accounts; building management; personnel management; contract management. At a local level he specialised in employment support for people with disabilities. Returning to a regional role, he ensured projects throughout the West Midlands region, which were receiving European Commission grants, complied with EC financial and regulatory compliance. Since leaving the civil service he has worked in both the public and private sector. Jonathan was a governor at his local junior school for eight years. He was vice chair of the full governing body, representing the school at Ofsted inspection and appeal panels; chair of its curriculum sub committee; and a member of personal and finance sub committees. He was a member of several recruitment and interview panels, including for a new headteacher.

**Reuben Bergman** – Reuben is a Fellow of the CIPD with significant senior HR leadership experience across a range of public sector organisations in both England and Wales. He currently runs a HR Consultancy Business in Worcestershire providing advice and support on managing change, employment law, HR policy development, mediation, management coaching and employee relations. Reuben has led successful equal pay reviews in three separate local authorities and is known for his successful work in managing change and developing effective employee relations. He is a qualified coach, mediator and a Shared Service architect. He has won national awards for his work on employee engagement and the development of an innovative Café style leadership development programme.

**Matthew Davies** – Matthew qualified as a Social Worker in 2008 and subsequently worked with children and young people in Worcestershire, Jersey and Manchester. Latterly he is employed as a Registered Manager of an independent fostering agency, supporting and supervising approved foster carers to care for children and young people in care.

The Panel has been advised and assisted by:

- Claire Chaplin and Margaret Johnson from Worcester City Council
- Darren Whitney, Amanda Scarce, Jess Bayley and Sarah Sellers from Bromsgrove & Redditch Councils
- Mel Harris from Wychavon District Council
- Lisa Perks from Malvern Hills District Council

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

**Reuben Bergman , Chair of Independent Remuneration Panel**

## Appendix 1

### Independent Remuneration Panel for District Councils in Worcestershire Recommendations for 2021/22

#### Bromsgrove District Council

Role	Rec Multiplier 2020/21 (IRP)	Current Multiplier 2020/21 (Council approved)	Rec Allowance (£) 2020/21 (IRP)	Current Allowance (£) 2020/21 (Council approved from 1 November 2020)	Rec Multiplier 2021/22 (IRP)	Rec Allowance (£) 2021/22 (IRP)
Basic Allowance for all Councillors	1	1	4,526	4,526	1	4,650
Special Responsibility Allowances:						
Leader	3	3	13,578	13,578	No change from recommendation in 2020/21	13,950
Deputy Leader	1.75	2	7,920.50	9,052	No change from recommendation in 2020/21	8,137.50
Executive Members (Cabinet Portfolio Holders)	1.5	1.3	6,789	5,883.80	No change from recommendation in 2020/21	6,975
Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Board	1.5	1.3	6,789	5,883.80	No change from recommendation in 2020/21	6,975

# Agenda Item 8

Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Task Groups	0.25	0.3	1,131.50	1,357.80, Paid pro-rata for length of task group	No change from recommendation in 2020/21	1,162.50
Chairman of Audit, Standards and Governance Committee	0.25	0.3	1,131.50	1,357.80	No change from recommendation in 2020/21	1,162.50
Chairman of Planning Committee	1	1.3	4,526	5,883.80	No change from recommendation in 2020/21	4,650
Chairman of Licensing Committee	0.3	0.3	1,357.80	1,357.80	No change from recommendation in 2020/21	1,395
Political Group Leaders	0.25	0.25	1,131.50	1,131.50	No change from recommendation in 2020/21	1,162.50
Chairman of Appointments Committee (BDC only)	0.03	0.03	135.78 per meeting	135.78 per meeting	No change from recommendation in 2020/21	139.50 per meeting
Chairman of Electoral Matters Committee (BDC only)	0.03	0.03	135.78 per meeting	135.78 per meeting	No change from recommendation in 2020/21	139.50 per meeting
Chairman of Appeals Panel (BDC only)	0.03	0.03	135.78 per meeting	135.78 per meeting	No change from recommendation in 2020/21	139.50 per meeting

## Appendix 2

### Summary of Research

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

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

- Stroud
- Lichfield
- Maldon
- South Staffordshire
- Harborough
- Tewkesbury

Information on the level of Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances was obtained to benchmark the levels of allowances recommended to the Council. The average basic award across all the "nearest neighbour" authorities was £5,377 as at November 2020.

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

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/contents.aspx>

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?reset=yes&mode=construct&dataset=30&version=0&anal=1&initse1=>

Published by the Office for National Statistics, the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) shows detailed information at District level about rates of pay. For benchmarking purposes, the Panel uses the levels for hourly rates of pay excluding overtime (currently £14.78 as at December 2020). This is multiplied by 11 to give a weekly rate, which is then multiplied by 44.4 weeks to allow for holidays. This was the number of hours spent on Council business by frontline Councillors which had been reported in previous surveys and substantiated by a survey with Worcester City Councillors in the autumn of 2015. The rate is then discounted by 40% to reflect the element of volunteering that each Councillor undertakes in the role. As a benchmark indicator this would produce a figure of £4,331 per annum

CPI (Consumer Price Inflation)

In arriving at its recommendations the Panel has taken into account the latest reported CPI figure available to it, published by the Office for National Statistics. This was 0.9% in November 2020.

Local Government Pay Award

The Panel was mindful of the latest Local Government pay award implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020. For the majority of Local Government employees this resulted in a pay increase of 2.75%.

## Labour Bromsgrove Labour Group Proposed Alternative Budget.

Labour Group Alternative Budget Proposals Result in a Council Tax Freeze while maintaining services.

Revenue generated by a Proposed 2.19% Increase £181,00

	Savings £	Cost £
Proposed Council Tax increase		181,000
Proposed spend/Budget for Mott MacDonald - £100k 21/22 be withdrawn	100,000	
The cost to the Council regarding rent/overheads with staff using premises at Redditch £130,000		
Allocation of staff to Parkside Charge reduced to	65,000	
From Reserves	16,000	
Total	= 181,000	181,000

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### **CABINET**

**Date 17 February 2021**

### **CHANGES TO THE COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME WITH EFFECT FROM 1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 2021**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Geoff Denaro
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Cllr Geoff Denaro
Relevant Head of Service	Chris Forrester
Ward(s) Affected	All wards
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	
Key Decision /	

#### **1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 Each year the council is required to review its Council Tax Reduction Scheme in accordance with the requirements of the schedule 1A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and to either maintain the scheme or replace it.
- 1.2 Council Tax Reduction (CTR) was introduced from 1 April 2013 when it replaced the central government funded Council Tax Benefit regime. From its inception, the funding available to the council from government has reduced year on year.
- 1.3 As with the majority of authorities within England, the council has changed its scheme each year to for a number of reasons including:
  - Adjust the level of support in line with the funding available from central government; and
  - To aid administration.
- 1.4 This report details the changes and makes recommendation to members for the 2021/22 scheme.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **The Cabinet is asked to RECOMMEND** the introduction a new income banded / grid scheme for working age applicants with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to implement a modern, future proofed scheme and reduce the administrative burden placed on the council by the introduction of Universal Credit

### 3. KEY ISSUES

#### Financial Implications

- 3.1 The current Council Tax Reduction scheme costs approximately £4.469m which is borne by the Council's Collection Fund. Costs are shared between the Council and the Major Precepting Authorities in proportion to the share of Council Tax.
  
- 3.2 The approach and 'shape' of the scheme is changing, and the overall approach will be to provide additional support to those households on the very lowest incomes. There is no intention to reduce the level of support available to other households. Based on current modelling, were the new scheme to be in place at the current time, the costs would be £4.605m.
  
- 3.3 Financial modelling has been undertaken and will continue to be undertaken throughout the project and this will be particularly important given the effect of the COVID-19 crisis on the incomes of households within the District Council's area.
  
- 3.4 Whilst the expected costs of the scheme for 2021/22 are slightly higher, the overall level of Council Tax Reduction as a proportion to Council Tax Base has reduced significantly year on year since 2013 as shown below. The overall proposed costs level for 2021/22 is considerably lower in terms of the percentage of the taxbase than when Council Tax Reduction was introduced in 2013.

Tax Year	Maximum % Reduction	Gross Council Tax £000s	Total CTR awarded £000s	CTR as % Gross CTax
2013/14	100	56,471	4,564	8.08
2014/15	100	58,103	4,441	7.64
2015/16	80	59,662	3,896	6.53
2016/17	80	62,371	3,878	6.22
2017/18	80	64,566	3,808	5.90
2018/19	80	68,110	3,831	5.62
2019/20	85	71,847	4,035	5.62
2020/21	85	74,910	4,469	5.97

**Legal Implications**

3.5 Schedule 1A (3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, states:

Before making a scheme, the authority must:

- (a) consult any major precepting authority which has power to issue a precept to it,
- (b) publish a draft scheme in such manner as it thinks fit, and
- (c) consult such other persons as it considers are likely to have an interest in the operation of the scheme.

3.6 In addition, in order to set a new scheme, the Council is obliged to make a resolution by 11<sup>th</sup> March of the year prior to the scheme coming into place.

3.7 The purpose of this report is to recommend that the new scheme be implemented with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021

**Background / Service Implications**

3.8 Council Tax Reduction (CTR) was introduced by Central Government in April 2013 as a replacement for the Council Tax Benefit scheme administered on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). As part of the introduction, the Government:

- Placed the duty to create a local scheme for **Working Age** applicants with billing authorities.
- Reduced initial funding by the equivalent of ten per cent from the levels paid through benefit subsidy to authorities under the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme; and
- Prescribed that persons of **Pension age** would be dealt with under regulations set by Central Government and not the authorities' local scheme.

3.9 Since that time, funding for the Council Tax Reduction scheme has been amalgamated into other Central Government grants paid to Local Authorities and also within the Business Rates Retention regime. It is now generally accepted that it is not possible to identify the amount of funding actually provided from Central Government sources.

3.10 The current Council Tax Reduction scheme administered by the Council is divided into two schemes, with pension age applicants receiving support under the rules prescribed by Central Government, and the scheme for working age applicants being determined solely by the local authority.

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- 3.11 Pensioners, subject to their income, can receive up to 100 per cent support towards their council tax. The Council has no power to change the level of support provided to pensioners and therefore any changes to the level of CTR can only be made to the working age scheme.
- 3.12 When Council Tax Reduction was introduced in 2013, for working age applicants, the Council broadly adopted the previous means tested Council Tax Benefit scheme as the basis of awarding support. Due to the reduction in funding from Central Government, the Council also required all working age applicants, even those on the lowest income, to pay a minimum payment of 20%.
- 3.13 Since that time the minimum payment required has reduced to 15% and other slight changes have been made to bring the scheme into line with either Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.

#### **The main issues with the current scheme**

- 3.14 There are a number of issues with the current scheme that will need addressing if the system is to continue to provide effective support to low income taxpayers and also if the Council is able to provide the service in an efficient manner. The main issues are as follows:
- The need to assist low income households and assist in the collection of Council Tax
  - The introduction of Universal Credit for working age applicants; and
  - The need for a simplification of the scheme;
- 3.15 Each of the above are examined in detail below.

#### **The need to assist low income households and assist in the collection of Council Tax**

- 3.16 Since 2013, the introduction of Council Tax Reduction, the majority of authorities, including the District Council have required all working age applicants to pay a minimum payment. Under the previous scheme (Council Tax Benefit) almost 75% of working age applicants would not have been required to pay any Council Tax and would have received full (100%) support.
- 3.17 As with a large number of authorities, there is a strong view that there should be an increase in the level of support to those households on the lowest of incomes. This view has gained momentum over the past few years but has been reinforced since the COVID-19 crisis which has had a major effect on incomes generally.
- 3.18 Whilst the principle of all working age households paying 'something' was initially thought to be an approach that would be central to the design of Council Tax Reduction, the reality is that, since it's introduction, low income taxpayers, the poorest households, have been unable to pay the balance leading to additional

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costs, court and enforcement action and, in some cases, the amounts demanded have been written off as uncollectable. For information, in 2019 Council Tax of approximately £694,000 has been demanded from working age Council Tax claimants and an amount of £234,000, 33% of the amount demanded is outstanding.

- 3.19 The costs of administration of these cases by the District Council has increased significantly over the years. These costs are borne solely by the District Council. With the difficulties experienced, the relatively low level of payment and the high administration costs incurred, it no longer makes the amounts economically viable to collect. Notwithstanding the negative effects to those poorest households.

**Council Tax Reduction and the roll out of Universal Credit**

- 3.20 The introduction of Universal Credit within the area has, as experienced in all other areas, brought a number of significant challenges to both the administration of Council Tax Reduction and also the collection of Council Tax generally. All Councils have experienced the following:

- The reluctance of Universal Credit claimants to make a prompt claim for Council Tax Reduction leading to a loss in entitlement;
- A high number of changes to Universal Credit cases are received from the Department for Work and Pensions requiring a change to Council Tax Reduction entitlement. On average 40% of Universal Credit claimants have between eight and twelve changes in entitlement per annum. These changes result in amendments to Council Tax liability, the re-calculation of instalments, delays and the demonstrable loss in collection; and
- The increased costs of administration through multiple changes with significant additional staff and staff time being needed.

- 3.21 It is clear that the existing means tested Council Tax Reduction scheme, which is too reactive to change, will not be viable in the longer term now that Universal Credit has been rolled out fully within the area and with the massive increase in Universal Credit claimants due to the COVID-19 crisis. The move to a new more efficient scheme from 2021 is now imperative.

**The need for a simplified approach to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.**

- 3.22 The existing scheme is based on an 'old fashioned;' means tested benefit scheme. It has major defects namely:
- It is complex for customers to understand and is based on a complex calculation of entitlement;
  - The administration for staff is complex, with staff having to request significant amounts of information from applicants;
  - Staff have to undergo significant training to be proficient in processing claims;
  - The timescales for processing applications is lengthy, mainly due to the complexity and evidence required to support the applications; and
  - The administration of the scheme is costly when compared to other discounts for Council Tax.
- 3.23 Clearly there is a need now to simplify the scheme, not only to mitigate the effects of Universal Credit, but also make it easier for customers to make a claim and to significantly reduce the costs of administration.

**The recommended approach for the 2021/22 Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

- 3.24 In view of the problems being experienced with the current scheme, it is proposed that an alternative approach be taken from 2021/22. The approach has been to fundamentally redesign the scheme to address all of the issues with the current scheme and in particular;
- (a) The level of support available to the poorest households;
  - (b) The problems with the introduction of full-service Universal Credit; and
  - (c) The significant increase in administration costs due to the high level of changes received in respect of Universal Credit;
- 3.25 Work has been ongoing throughout this year on a new scheme which is now complete. Consultation now needs to be undertaken with the public and the precepting authorities. If accepted by the Council, the new scheme will take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.
- 3.26 The proposed new scheme has a number of features as follows:
- More support shall be given to those households on the lowest of incomes than in the current scheme ;
  - The changes can **only be made to the working age schemes** as the current schemes for pensioners is prescribed by Central Government;
  - The current means - tested schemes will be replaced by a simple income grid model as shown below:

Discount Band	Discount	Single Person	Single person with one child	Single person with two or more children	Couple	Couple with one child	Couple with two or more children
<b>Income Ranges</b>							
<b>Band 1</b>	<b>100%</b>	£0 to £95.00	£0 to £150.00	£0 to £210.00	£0 to £140.00	£0 to £195.00	£0 to £255.00
<b>Band 2</b>	<b>75%</b>	£95.01 to £115.00	£150.01 to £180.00	£210.01 to £240.00	£140.01 to £160.00	£195.01 to £225.00	£255.01 to £285.00
<b>Band 3</b>	<b>50%</b>	£115.01 to £135.00	£180.01 to £210.00	£240.01 – £270.00	£160.01 to £180.00	£225.01 – £255.00	£285.01 to £315.00
<b>Band 4</b>	<b>25%</b>	£135.01 to £155.00	£210.01 to £240.00	£270.01 – £300.00	£180.01 to £200.00	£255.01 to £285.00	£315.01 to £345.00
	<b>0%</b>	Over £155.00	Over £240.00	Over £300.00	Over £200.00	Over £285.00	Over £345.00

- It is proposed that the highest level of discount will be at a maximum level of liability (100%), Band 1, and all current applicants that are in receipt of a 'passport benefit' such as Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance (Income Based) and Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related) receive maximum discount;
- All other discount levels are based on the applicant's (and partner's, where they have one) net income;
- The scheme allows for variation in household size with the levels of income per band increasing where an applicant has a partner, and / or dependants
- There will be no charges made where an applicant had non-dependants living with them. This is a significant change and means that the administration of the scheme will be more straightforward whilst also protecting low income families where adult sons and daughters for example remain at home;
- To encourage work, a standard £25 per week disregard will be provided against all earnings This will take the place of the current standard disregards and additional earnings disregards. Where a family also receives a childcare disregard (for childcare costs not paid for by Central Government schemes), the income levels in the 'grid scheme' are set at a higher rate;
- Disability benefits such as Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Allowance will continue to be disregarded;

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- Where any applicant, their partner or dependant child (ren) are disabled, a further disregard of up to £40 will be given, thereby maintaining the current level of support to those with disabilities;
- Carer's Allowance and the Support Component of Employment and Support Allowance will be disregarded;
- Child benefit and Child Maintenance will continue to be disregarded;
- The total disregard on war pensions and war disablement pensions will continue;
- Extended payments will be removed;
- Second Adult Reduction will be removed; and
- Removal of the income taper and introduction of a capital limit of £6,000.

#### **How the new scheme will address the problems with the current Council Tax Reduction**

3.27 With the simplicity of the proposed new scheme and by taking a more 'Council Tax discount approach', it will address the problems associated with the increased administration caused by failings in the current scheme and Universal Credit as follows:

- **The scheme will require a simplified claiming process.** All applicants will see a significant reduction in the claiming process and, where possible, Council Tax Reduction will be awarded automatically. For Universal Credit applicants any Universal Credit data received from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will be treated as a claim for Council Tax Reduction. Where information is received from DWP, the entitlement to Council Tax Reduction will be processed automatically without the need to request further information from the taxpayer. These changes will have the following distinct advantages namely:
  - (a) **Speed of processing** – all claims will be able to be calculated promptly and largely automatically without the need to request further information which inevitably leads to delays;
  - (b) **Maximising entitlement to every applicant.** As there will no requirement for Universal Credit applicants to apply separately for Council Tax Reduction, and for all other applicants, the claiming process will be simplified significantly. Entitlement to Council Tax Reduction will be maximised with a reduced risk of loss of discount or the need for backdating;
  - (c) **Maintenance of collection rates** – the new scheme will avoid constant changes in discount, the need for multiple changes in instalments and



therefore assist in maintaining the high collection rates currently achieved. The increased level of discount will assist all those applicants on the lowest levels of income, again improving the overall collection rate;

- **The income bands are sufficiently wide to avoid constant changes in discount.** The current Council Tax Reduction scheme is very reactive and will alter even if the overall change to the person's liability is small. This is leading to constant changes in Council Tax liability, the need to recalculate monthly instalments and the requirement to issue a large number of Council Tax demands. The effect of this is that Council Tax collection is reduced. The new scheme, with its simplified income banding approach will have the following advantages:
  - Only significant changes in income will affect the level of discount awarded;
  - Council Taxpayers who receive Council Tax Reduction will not receive multiple Council Tax demands and adjustments to their instalments; and
  - The new scheme is designed to reflect a more modern approach, where any discount changes it will be effective from the day of the change rather than the Monday of the following week;

#### **Transition to the new scheme and the Exceptional Hardship Scheme**

- 3.28 The Council must be mindful that any change in scheme or a transition to a new scheme may have result in a change to the entitlement of certain applicants.
- 3.29 Inevitably, with any change in scheme, there will be some winners and losers although the proposed scheme has been designed to protect the most vulnerable. It is proposed that the new scheme will contain additional provisions to protect individuals who experience exceptional hardship. Where any applicant is likely to experience exceptional hardship, they will be encouraged to apply for an exceptional hardship payment. The Council will consider all applications for exceptional hardship on an individual basis, taking into account available income and essential outgoings. Where appropriate further support will be given to the applicant.
- 3.30 This approach will enable individual applicants to be dealt with in a fair and equitable manner. The Exceptional Hardship Scheme will form part of the Council Tax Reduction scheme and fall to be paid through the Collection Fund.

#### **Other Options considered**

- 3.31 The alternative to introducing a new scheme for Council Tax Reduction from 2021/22 is to leave the existing scheme in place. This would be a short-term option; lead to increasing costs of administration; and in the longer term, significantly affect the collection of Council Tax and the effectiveness of the scheme to support households within the District Council's area.

#### **Rationale and Impact of Proposed Changes**

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- 3.32 In preparation for consultation on the proposals to replace the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme modelling of the changes was completed. The modelling identifies the working age claimants that will be impacted by the changes. It is important to note that only working age applicants will be impacted by the changes as the discount for pensioner claimants will continue to be determined by reference to the national schemes for Council Tax Reduction.
- 3.33 The initial modelling indicated that of the 2,450 working age recipients of Council Tax Reduction 72%, almost 3 quarters, will receive an increase in the amounts of Council Tax reduction that they receive.
- 3.34 Where there is a reduction in the level of support a relative majority of these cases fall within the single person and childless couple client groups. The largest group seeing a reduction in support is the single person household, this is consistent with the general principle that Council Tax Reduction schemes should incentivise work, as this client group is that which is most able to return to employment.
- 3.35 The impact and rationale for each of the changes to the scheme is commented on below:

Increase of maximum support to 100% liability; and further discounts based on the applicant and partner's income.

- 3.36 The modelling of the proposed scheme identified that an increase in support from 85% of Council Tax liability to 100% liability, and the implementation of an income banded scheme would provide additional support to 72% of the CTR recipients.
- 3.37 The claimants seeing a reduction in support will be a minority and these claimants will be within the higher household income groupings.
- 3.38 An exceptional hardship scheme will remain in place, in-line with the current scheme and in appropriate cases the hardship scheme can be utilised to provide a transitional support for these claimants.

#### Removal of Non-Dependant deductions

- 3.39 Non-Dependant Deductions are applied where there are adult residents – other than the partner or claimant - within a property and they reduce the amount of Council Tax Reduction.
- 3.40 The current scheme's requirement to apply Non-Dependant deductions creates an administrative drag on the assessment of Council Tax Reduction. This slows the speed of assessment and prevents the movement to automate the assessment of Council Tax Reduction.
- 3.41 The removal of non-dependent deductions from CTR will increase the speed of assessment for all claimants and allow the automation of the initial award from receipt of the notification of universal credit.

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- 3.42 The data modelling of the new CTR scheme identified 346 of the 2,512 working age claimants had non-dependants resident within the household. The majority of these cases, 236 in total, have no non-dependant deduction applied as a result of the circumstances of the claimant. The removal of the non-dependant deduction for the remaining 110 cases will provide an average £7.06 increase in CTR, and a cost of £770 per week.

#### Removal of extended payments

- 3.43 Extended payments were a feature of the legacy Council Tax Benefit scheme. The payments were provided when a claimant moves from benefits into employment and were intended to smooth the transition into employment.
- 3.44 The introduction of universal credit and assessment of entitlement on a month to month basis has reduces the requirement to provide extended payments as universal credit is designed to integrate more smoothly with employment and changes to income.
- 3.45 The structure of the proposed banded reduction scheme provides a transparent assessment process for claimants and further reduces the requirement for extended payments to continue. As claimants increase their working hours, or return to employment the impact of their increased earnings on their CTR will be evident.

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Removal of the Income Taper and introduction of a capital limit of £6,000

- 3.46 The current CTR scheme applies a capital limit of £6,000; where a claimant has over £6,000 in capital a tariff income is applied to assume income of £1.00 per week for every £250 in capital up to £16,000 at which point eligibility for CTR is removed.
- 3.47 The use of tariff income requires the service to obtain evidence of a claimants capital and to periodically review the level of capital for these claimants. This creates an administrative drag on the initial assessment of support and a further burden in the requirement to carry out reviews on income.
- 3.48 The removal of tariff income and introduction of £6,000 capital limit will remove the administrative requirement.
- 3.49 Modelling of the scheme identified 25 applicants estimated to be impacted by the reduction in Capital Limits, with an average Council Tax Reduction of £14.00 per week. The scheme will include an exceptional hardship provision and capacity will exist within the fund to provide transitional protection to customers losing support due to the removal of the tariff income and introduction of the £6,000 capital limit.
- 3.50 It is important to note that the changes to the income taper and capital limits will only impact working age claimants. Pensioners who have accrued savings to meet their needs in retirement will continue to have their eligibility for discount determined by national rules.

Retention of disregards for:

- Carer's Allowance and Support Component of Employment Support Allowance
- Disability Benefits such as Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Allowance
- Child Benefit and Child Maintenance
- War Pensions and War Disablement Pensions

- 3.51 The identified disregards will be maintained within the proposed scheme and maintain the protections that these groups enjoy within the current CTR Scheme

### **CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION**

- 3.52 As required by the legislation, the Council has consulted with both major preceptors and also the public. In the case of the public consultation, a full consultation was undertaken until 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

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**Major Preceptors**

- 3.53 All major preceptors were requested for their views on the recommended new scheme. The Council received the responses shown in Appendix 3

**Public Consultation**

- 3.54 The public consultation produced 55 responses full details are provided in Appendix 2.

- 3.55 The Council suggested 11 options for changes and the overall responses were as follows:

**Option 1 – The introduction of an income banded scheme to replace the current scheme for all applicants of working age**

**Yes: 47.83%, No: 26.09%, Don't Know:26.08%**

**Option 2 - To limit the number of dependant children within the calculation for Council Tax Reduction to a maximum of two for all applicants**

**Yes: 60.87%, No: 30.43%, Don't Know:8.70%**

**Option 3 – To remove non-dependant deductions from the scheme**

**Yes: 47.83%, No: 26.09%, Don't Know: 26.08%**

**Option 4 – Disregarding Carers Allowance, the support component of the Employment and Support Allowance and the housing element of Universal Credit**

**Yes: 78.26%, No: 17.39%, Don't Know: 4.35%**

**Option 5 - To reduce the maximum limit of capital from £16,000 to £6,000**

**Yes: 69.57 %, No: 30.43%, Don't Know: 0%**

**Option 6 – Removing the current earnings disregards and replacing them with a standard £25 disregard for all working age applicants..**

**Yes: 56.52%, No: 21.74%, Don't Know: 21.74%**

**Option 7 - To allow further income disregards where an applicant, their partner or any dependant is in receipt of a disability benefit**

**Yes: 78.26%, No: 8.70%, Don't Know: 13.04%**

**Option 8 – Removing the Extended Reduction provision**

**Yes: 69.57%, No: 21.74%, Don't Know: 8.70%**

**Option 9 - Removal of Second Adult Reduction from the scheme**

**Yes: 72.73%, No: 18.18%, Don't Know: 9.09%**

**Option 10 – Any new claim or change in circumstances which changes Council Tax Reduction entitlement will be made from the date on which the change occurs, (rather than on a weekly basis as at present)**

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**Yes: 90.48%**, No: 9.52%, Don't Know: 0%

**Option 11 – Extending the ‘backdating’ provisions within the scheme**

**Yes: 90.48%**, No: 4.76%, Don't Know: 4.76%

- 3.56 It can be seen from the above that the overall response to the changes have been positive and that the consultees largely support the recommended new Council Tax Reduction scheme.

### **Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.57 A stage one Equality Impact Assessment is attached within Appendix 1 of this report.

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#### 4. RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 The following risks are associated with the project:

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
<b>Property</b> <i>No risk</i>	N/A	N/A
<b>Community Support</b> <i>Potential Changes to the support of some working age applicants</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where an applicant may receive less Council Tax Reduction, they may apply for additional support under the Council's Exceptional Hardship Fund</li> <li>In cases, where applicants have the lowest income, they may receive more support under the proposed scheme.</li> </ul>	There is an opportunity to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modernise the current scheme;</li> <li>Enable a scheme that will be fit for purpose; and</li> <li>Reduce administration.</li> </ul>
<b>Timescales</b> <i>It will be essential to meet project timescales if the new scheme is to be introduced for the 2021/22 financial year.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The work has already been completed with scheme design and extensive modelling.</li> </ul>	
<b>Project capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resources have already been allocated to the project which are sufficient</li> </ul>	
<b>Financial / VfM</b> <i>Changes to the scheme could potentially lead to changes in overall scheme costs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extensive modelling has been undertaken to estimate the costs of the scheme. This will continue throughout the life of the project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council has indicated that it is not looking to make savings from scheme changes. The Council will provide additional support to those households on the very lowest of incomes</li> </ul>
<b>Legal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project has been undertaken strictly in</li> </ul>	

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Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
<i>Failure to set the scheme in accordance with the legislation and failure to comply with the legal requirements for developing a new CTR scheme</i>	accordance with legislative requirements	
<b>Innovation</b> <i>Failure to maximise the potential of change and automation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Throughout the implementation, we will look to take advantages of the latest automation of claims and the gathering of data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There will be more opportunity to enhance customer's online experience by receiving immediate decisions of discounts being granted.</li> </ul>
<b>Reputation</b> <i>Failure to implement the new scheme on time or failure to deliver a comprehensive and robust scheme</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The project is following previous successful implementations by other Local Authorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is an opportunity for the Council to enhance its reputation by developing an up to date an effective Council Tax Reduction scheme</li> </ul>

### 5. APPENDICES

**Appendix 1 – First & Second Stage Equality Impact Assessment;**

**Appendix 2 – Results from the public consultation document**

**Appendix 3 – Responses from the Major Preceptors**

### AUTHOR OF REPORT

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#### MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2021/22 – 2023/24

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Chris Forrester
Report Author	Name: Kate Goldey Job Title: Senior Business support accounting technician Contact email: k.goldey@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 881208
Wards Affected	none
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	n/a
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	All
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	
This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph(s) of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended	

#### 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet RECOMMEND that Full Council: -

1) Approve the Unavoidable costs as attached at Appendix 1:

2021/22 £524k  
2022/23 £340k  
2023/24 £409k

2) Approve the Revenue Bids as attached at Appendix 2:

2021/22 £65k  
2022/23 £48k  
2023/24 £25k

3) Approve the Identified Savings as attached at Appendix 3:

2021/22 £426k  
2022/23 £474k  
2023/24 £405k

## **CABINET** 2021

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- 4) Approve the General Fund Capital Programme bids as attached at Appendix 4:

2021/22 £578k  
2022/23 £1.123m  
2023/24 £1.018m

- 5) Approve the General Fund capital programme at Appendix 5:

2021/22 £13.323m  
2022/23 £4.867m  
2023/24 £2.906m

- 6) Approve the net general fund revenue budget.

2021/22 £11.988m  
2022/23 £11.673m  
2023/24 £11.683m

- 7) Approval the increase of the Council Tax per Band D @ £5 for 2021/22.

- 8) Approve the transfer to Balances of £22k for 2020/21.

## 2. **BACKGROUND**

To enable members to consider the Medium-Term Financial Plan for the period 2021/22 – 2023/24 to include General Fund Revenue and Capital together with the budget proposals. The report includes recommendations to Council to enable a balanced budget to be set for 2021/22 and the proposed Council Tax for 2021/22. In addition, members are asked to note the position for future years 2022/23-2023/24. The recommendations will then be presented to Council on

22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 together with the resolutions once we have received all the precepting bodies Council Tax calculations.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) provides the framework within which the revenue and capital spending decisions can be made. This year a 3-year plan is proposed to 2023/24. The plan addresses how the Council will provide financial funding to the Strategic Purposes and ensure residents receive quality services to meet their needs in the future. The Purposes that drive the financial considerations are:

- Run and grow a successful business
- Work and financial independence
- Living independent, active & healthy lives
- Affordable and sustainable homes
- Communities which are safe, well maintained, and green

3.2 Members and officers have reviewed the services provided by the Council over the last 6 months to consider the levels of funding available to the Council and identified where potential savings can be made or additional income generated.

3.3 In addition, a financial framework was approved to enable an overarching strategy to be in place to support the future financial position of the Council. Considering the financial pressures, the Council faces the strategy aims to provide a framework in which the Council can become financially sustainable whilst delivering the priorities to our communities. The key objectives are:

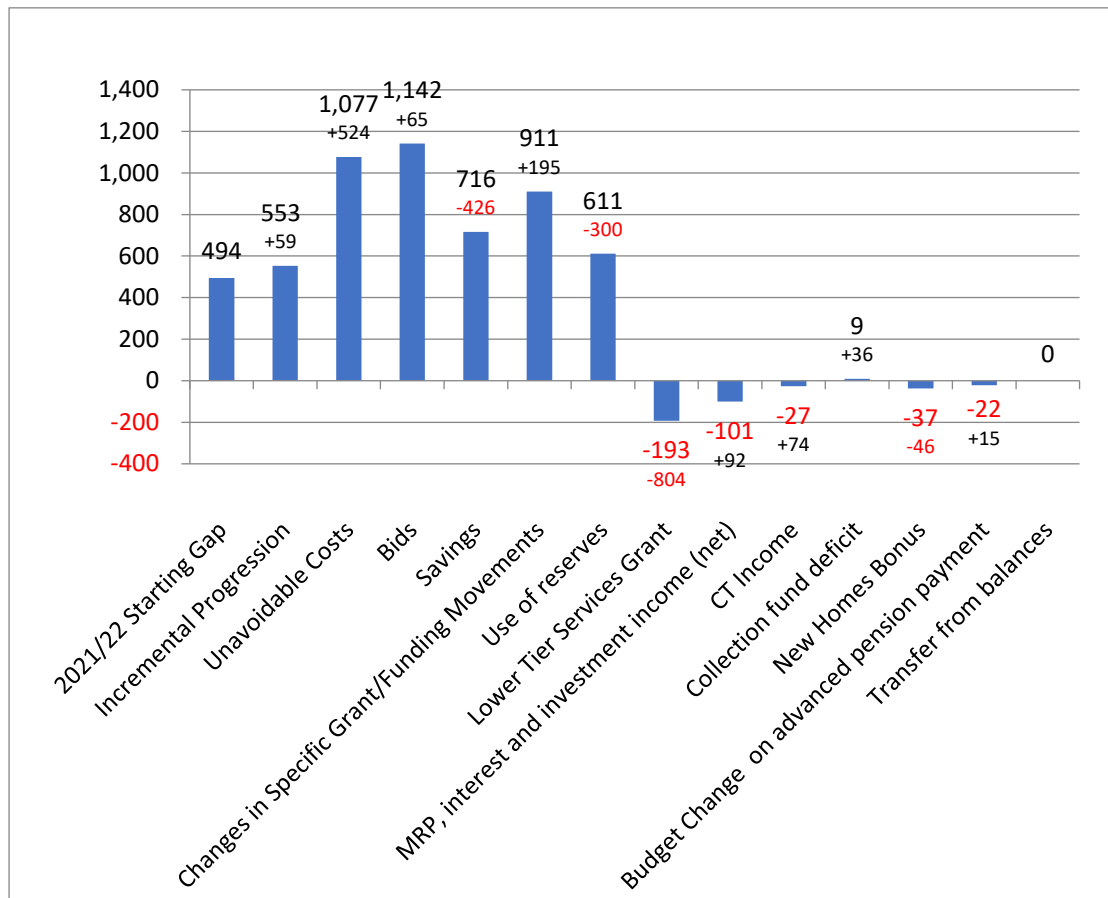
- To ensure resources are directed to the council's strategic purposes
- To set financially sustainable budgets over the 3-year period
- To maintain balances at £2m to ensure funds are available for future projects and to mitigate threats.
- To maximise income opportunities whilst supporting the vulnerable
- Identify and disinvest in non-priority areas

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- To ensure all savings are achievable and developed with robust data
  - To reduce overheads & direct costs over the 3-year period
  - To maximise use of assets and disinvest surplus or non-performing assets
  - To further develop the commercial culture within the Council
  - To consider and adapt to the uncertain future financial climate
  - To work with the public, members and staff to engage and inform partners on the impact of the financial pressures of the Council
- 3.4 When reviewing the budget projections officers consider the impact of demand on service and the costs associated with this demand. This may result in additional costs (associated with maintaining current service delivery) or reductions in anticipated income revenue over the next 3 years.
- 3.5 Over the last 12 months the Finance and Budget working group, as established by the Overview and Scrutiny Board has met on a regular basis to review costs, fees and charges and the capital programme and have made a number of recommendations to Cabinet.
- 3.6 Officers have factored in a number of assumptions into the Medium-Term Financial Plan to update it in line with revised calculations and information from officers and Government.
- 3.7 The table below demonstrates the changes in the financial projections and budget gap for 2021/22 based on the original estimation of a £494k gap as presented in February 2020. Following the table there are explanations of the reasons for the changes resulting in an achieved balanced budget for 2021/22.



### Incremental progression (£59k)

- 3.8 One of the pressures to the budget is general inflation on utility costs along with additional costs in relation to pay. The additional costs relating to pay inflation are above that initially forecast. The original budget included 1% pay award however the final agreed pay award was 2.75% for 2020/21 which is therefore included in the estimated future position above.

### Unavoidable Costs (£524k)

- 3.9 When proposing the budget officers have also identified several budget pressures that have been deemed “unavoidable”. Unavoidable includes the ongoing effects of pressures identified during 2020/21 together with any issues that have been raised as fundamental to maintaining service provision as part of the budget process. In addition, income

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shortfalls that cannot be managed by improved marketing or price increases have been addressed during the budget planning. The pressures and income shortfalls are identified at Appendix 1.

**Bids (£65k)**

- 3.10 In addition to the unavoidable pressure's revenue bids have been identified and included at Appendix 2. Bids relate to new funding requests made by officers to improve service delivery or to realise future efficiencies.

**Identified Savings/additional income (£426k)**

- 3.11 Identified savings and additional income are detailed at Appendix 3. These are proposed to ensure that budget pressures can be met and demonstrate the additional income that the Council is generating.

**Changes in Specific Grant/Funding Movements (£195k)**

- 3.12 An assessment of the council's pension liabilities has seen an increase to the pensions added years payments for this financial year.

**3.13 Reserves (£300k)**

This figure relates to a number of reserves that are able to be released this financial year as they have been confirmed as no longer being required.

**Lower Tier Services Grant (£804k)**

- 3.14 The finance settlement in December announced that we are due to receive a new grant called the Lower Tier Services Grant in 2021/22. This grant is intended to compensate those local authorities whose core spending power has not increased as a result of the finance settlement. In Bromsgrove District Councils case the reduction in spending power is due to the expected reduction in New Homes Bonus. Core Spending Power is a measure of the resources available

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to local authorities to fund service delivery. It sets out the money that has been made available to local authorities through the Local Government finance settlement.

**MRP, interest costs and investment income (net) (£92k)**

- 3.15 This change is due to a re-profiling of the capital programme to reflect more accurately planned spend which has moved expenditure into future years. There was also a reduction in budgeted spend at outturn for 2019/20 which has moved MRP and borrowing costs into future years. The investment income has also been revised to take account of the actual spend this financial year, 2020/21

**Council Tax (£74k)**

- 3.16 As part of the Financial Settlement the Council is allowed to increase Council Tax by up to 2% or £5 whichever is higher without the need for a referendum. This is less than the previous assumptions of 2.99% and therefore there is a projected loss of income for 2021/22 – 2023/24. The current projections include A £5 increase for 2021/22 and the demand on the collection fund to meet the Council's own needs will be £8.640m. The Council Tax relating to the Councils services will rise from £228 to £233 for band D properties.
- 3.17 In addition the Council pay a parish precept estimated at £944k which is funded from Council tax income from the specific parish area. These will form part of the resolutions to Council on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

**New Homes Bonus (NHB) (£46k)**

- 3.18 The amount of NHB for 2021/22 has been confirmed as £656k, which is £46k more than anticipated in the MTFP. This is due to the Government funding an additional year of New Homes Bonus. However, the financial settlement stated this would be for one year only and would not attract future legacy payments.

An assumption has been made that the Community Bid scheme will continue at a level of 25% per annum based on the additional New Homes Bonus payable for the year. For 2020/21 this equates to £12k along with a decision to increase to £80k with the use of the Councils general COVID-19 grant which is available.

**Council Tax Deficit (£36k)**

- 3.19 This is the estimated deficit based on the latest 2020/21 collection fund information

**NNDR Income – no change**

- 3.20 The Council is currently participating in a pan-Worcestershire Business Rates Pool (WBRP) pilot for the 75% Business Rate Retention for 2020-21 financial year. This one-year arrangement is at no detriment to our financial position in comparison to if we had not entered the pool. As part of the Finance Settlement approval was granted for the Council to be a member of a Worcestershire Pool for 2021-22 that also includes the Fire Authority. Again, there is no detriment to the Council in joining this pool and whilst the position for the Council has been projected at a baseline from the current position for future years it is expected that additional growth may be generated which will be reported in the quarterly financial reports. The position in relation to further appeals and resultant uncertainty due to the impact on performance of the Pool remain a concern; this is being managed by the S151 Officer in conjunction with the other treasurers within the Pool.

**Future Years**

- 3.21 As expected a one-year provisional local government settlement was announced on 17 December 2020 following the October announcement of a one-year Spending Review. The Government will seek to find a new consensus for broader reforms for local government when the post-COVID future is clearer. We can hopefully expect multi-year settlements from 2022-23 but the Government will need to consider the economic circumstances.

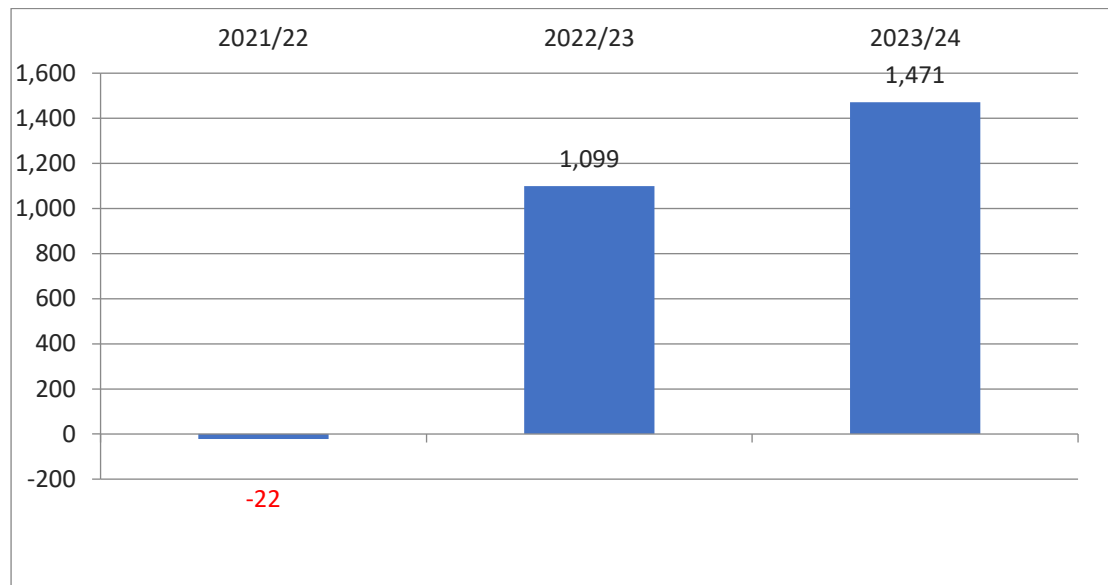
In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council received £1.255m Covid-19 Emergency funding and a further 5th tranche of this grant will be paid in 2021/22 of £411k. Officers are working through how to ensure this is allocated in the coming months and into the new financial year to ensure the Council has a robust action plan of recovery.



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3.22 The medium-term financial gap to 2023/24 is as follows:



3.23 Whilst it is important to see the steep improvement in the budget projections for 2021/22, there remain significant savings to be made over the Financial Planning period. There is a need to consider how these savings can be made and it is proposed that officers consider the following areas to present options available to reduce costs and grow income to Members in the Autumn. The areas to consider include:

- Improving income through commercial activities and income from regeneration investments
- Increase in income and reduction in spend on Environmental Services

## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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2021

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### General Fund

3.24 The proposed budget is summarised in the table below:

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
	£000	£000	£000
<b>Departmental base budget</b>	11,571	11,511	11,325
Incremental Progression/Inflation on Utilities	59	50	74
Unavoidables Pressures	524	340	409
Revenue Bids & Revenue impact of capital bids	65	48	25
Savings and Additional income	-426	-474	-405
Changes in Specific Grant/Funding Movements	195	197	254
<b>Net Revenue Budget Requirement</b>	<b>11,988</b>	<b>11,673</b>	<b>11,682</b>
<b>Financing</b>			
Funding from reserves	-638	-100	0
Lower Tier Services Grant	-804	0	0
Business Rates Net Position	-2,474	-2,510	-2,510
New Homes Bonus	-656	-295	0
Collection Fund Deficit (Council Tax)	36	0	0
Council Tax	-8,665	-8,924	-9,243
Investment Income	-150	-250	-333
Interest Payable	444	527	529
MRP (Principal)	1,025	1,193	1,387
Discount on advanced pension payment	-128	-214	-40
<b>Funding Total</b>	<b>-12,010</b>	<b>-10,573</b>	<b>-10,211</b>
<b>General Balances</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Opening Balances 20/21 (projected)	4,284	4,306	3,206
Contribution (from) / to General Balances	22	-1,099	-1,472
<b>Closing Balances</b>	<b>4,306</b>	<b>3,206</b>	<b>1,735</b>

### Collection Fund

3.25 The anticipated collection fund deficit is £263k, which will be distributed amongst the major preceptors using the prescribed formulae. This Councils share of the deficit payable as a one-off sum is £36k.

### Precepts

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- 3.26 The precepts from Worcestershire County Council, Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority and the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner are due to set their precepts in the week commencing 8<sup>th</sup> February. This will enable the Council to set the Council Tax on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021. The precepting bodies Council Tax requirements will be included in the formal resolutions which will also be presented to Cabinet and Council on 24<sup>th</sup> February.

#### **Capital Programme**

- 3.27 The Capital Programme has been considered to propose any new bids required to deliver services to the community. These are included at Appendix 4 with the proposed complete Capital Programme at Appendix 5. The borrowing costs have been factored into the revenue budget for the financial plan. There are detailed business cases available for all capital projects should members wish to consider them further.

#### **4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 As part of the budget and the Council Tax approval process, the Council is required by the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to make specific calculations and decisions in approving a balanced budget for the following financial year and setting the Council Tax Level. These will be included in the resolutions and presented to Cabinet and Council on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

#### **5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS**

##### **Relevant Strategic Purpose**

- 5.1 The Strategic purposes are included in the Council's corporate plan and guides the Council's approach to budget making ensuring we focus on the issues and what are most important for the District and our communities. Our MTFP and strategies are integrated within all of our Strategic Purposes.

##### **Climate Change Implications**

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- 5.2 The green thread runs through the Council plan. The MTFP has implications on climate change and these will be addressed and reviewed when relevant with the climate change officers to ensure the correct procedures have been followed.

#### **6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

##### **Equalities and Diversity Implications**

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

##### **Operational Implications**

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

#### **7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

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

- Reductions in government funding leading to a reduction in the level of services delivered to the public
- Reductions in business rates income as a result of appeals or reduction in the rateable value leading to a lower level of income for the Council.
- Identification of sufficient and ongoing revenue savings to deliver a balanced budget.
- Allocation of sufficient resources to meet the needs of service delivery and the Councils priorities.
- Maintain adequate revenue and capital balances as identified in the MTFP to ensure financial stability.

The regular financial monitoring by Officers and Cabinet will provide a framework to mitigate the above risks.

#### **Covid-19**

Throughout 2020/21 the Council has received a number of Government grants to manage the impact that the pandemic has had on the District and to offset the additional costs and income shortfalls over the last year as well as the distribution of the local business support grants. These have been provided to give financial support to businesses severely impacted by the loss of trade due to national lockdowns we have faced.

It is certain that we will face a continuation of restrictions going into 2021/22. The Council will endeavour to continue to support local businesses although it is difficult to assess when the economy of the District will be back to pre-pandemic levels. With uncertainties in the level of business rate support and relief that will be given to business over the next 12 months it is important for the Council to ensure sufficient funding is in place to provide appropriate financial support.

#### **Brexit**

There are a number of areas in which the Brexit deal may affect local government finances however there is no clarity as to what the associated costs will be. Whilst the Brexit deal mitigates a number of the challenges that may have been faced by the changes in legislation, the current economic crisis continues to obscure the situation and therefore the impact of the Country leaving the EU remains still very uncertain. The impact of Brexit is included in the Council's Corporate Risk Register and whilst the uncertainties remain the Council will support businesses and its communities to meet future challenges.

#### **Other Risks:**

**Risk Management - Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Opinion on the Estimate Process and Reserve Levels.**

Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the CFO to report to the Council when it is making the statutory calculations required to determine its Council Tax or precept.

Government guidance states, '*The authority is required to take the report into account when making the calculations. The report must deal with the robustness of the estimates included in the budget and the adequacy of the reserves for which the budget provides. What is required is the professional advice of the CFO on these two questions. Both are connected with matters of risk and uncertainty. They are interdependent and need to be considered together.*'

#### **Section 25: Report of the CFO - Robustness of the Estimates**

The Chief Financial Officer's opinion is that the estimates are robust, although there are a number of risks and uncertainties as set out below.

Whilst relevant budget holders are responsible for individual budgets and their preparation, all estimates are scrutinised by Financial Services staff and Management Team prior to submission to Members.

The Council's revenue and capital budgets are 'joined up', both for next year's budget and for the longer term. This means that the full cost of the proposed Capital Programme is reflected in the revenue estimates. Both revenue and capital budgets include the funding needs of the Council.

The main risks in the 2021/22 budget relate to:

- The delivery of income and managing the impact of savings proposed. Mitigating actions are in place within departmental risk registers to ensure managers are aware of any variances to budget.
- Business Rate Income – whilst this is essentially part of Central Government funding, the actual income received will vary depending on actual Business Rates income. It is difficult to predict the likely income with accuracy. It will be affected by many variables beyond the Council's control, for example, the level of appeals by ratepayers against their rating assessments. The funding mechanism gives a degree of in year protection against volatility but this only defers the impact of variances to future years.

- Central Government Funding – the MTFP shows income from NHB reducing to zero in 2023/24. The provisional local government finance settlement announced New Homes Bonus Year 11 allocations and legacy payments from Years 8 to 9 giving a total payable to Bromsgrove District Council of £657k in 2021/22. It is expected that a final New Homes Bonus payment will be made the following year in relation to legacy payments for Year 9 and then will cease and this is reflected in the MTFP. There is currently no information about a replacement scheme.

#### **Adequacy of Reserves**

- 7.2 The Financial Framework proposed a level of balances at £2m for General Fund activity over the next 3 years. Before the pandemic the Council was in a good financial position with reasonable general fund balances. Since the pandemic the Council has largely been able to mitigate losses through Government funding however the medium- and long-term effect on council tax and business rates is still unknown and it would be prudent to set aside any windfall revenue into reserves to cover any future shortfalls.

The reserves position will allow the Council to be robust and make coordinated plans to address the deficit position.

Taking account of the above, and the level of risk within the budget, the S151 Officer judges that reserves are at an appropriate level throughout the period of the MTFP. This will need to be reviewed if there are any major unplanned calls on reserves, for example, to fund capital expenditure.

#### **8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Appendix 1 - Unavoidable costs
- Appendix 2 - Revenue Bids
- Appendix 3 - Identified savings
- Appendix 4 - Capital bids
- Appendix 5 - Proposed Capital programme

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#### **9. REPORT SIGN OFF**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Name and Job Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Portfolio Holder	Geoff Denaro, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling	Various
Lead Director / Head of Service	Chris Forrester, Head of Finance and Customer Services	Various
Financial Services	Chris Forrester, Head of Finance and Customer Services	Various
Legal Services	Claire Felton	Various
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	n/a	
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)	n/a	



## UNAVOIDABLE PRESSURES - BDC

Appendix 1

Department	Strategic Purpose	Description of Pressure	2021-22 £'000	2022-23 £'000	2023-24 £'000
Building Control	Affordable and sustainable Homes	Under acheived income - partly offset with Sales fees & Charges grant	52	0	0
Corporate Services	Enabling Services	New Homes Bonus - Community funding increase due to additional New Homes Bonus being received 21/20	80	0	0
Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	Increase in fees from WFDC for NWWM SLA	6	6	6
Environmental Services	Run and Grow a successful Business	Reduced numbers of car parking in the town - partly offset with Sales fees & Charges grant	120	0	0
Environmental Services	Communities which are safe , well maintained & green & Run & grow a successful business	Correction to Disposal budget on Commercial Waste as highlighted in Business Case September 2020	190	250	310
Environmental Services	Communities which are safe , well maintained & green & Run & grow a successful business	Increase of Water budget to reflect increased costs from Severn Trent	45	48	51
Environmental Services	Communities which are safe , well maintained & green & Run & grow a successful business	Funding of Joint Role as part of Joint Herefordshire and Worcestershire Waste Strategy to influence and implement changes to services arising from proposed Environment Bill.	8	8	8
Environmental Services	Communities which are safe , well maintained & green & Run & grow a successful business	Management Restructure - Linked to Saving	10	10	10
Democratic Services	Enabling Services	Members National Insurance	5	5	5
Regulatory Services - BDC	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	WRS Salary Pressures	8	13	19
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>524</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>409</b>

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**NEW REVENUE BIDS - BDC**

**Appendix 2**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Strategic Purpose</b>	<b>Description of revenue bid</b>	<b>2021-22 £'000</b>	<b>2022-23 £'000</b>	<b>2023-24 £'000</b>
Democratic Services	Enabling Services	Members ICT Training	2	2	2
ICT	Enabling Services	Member Support Officer	22	23	0
ICT	Enabling Services	Corporate GIS support	32	23	23
ICT	Enabling Services	Polygonisation of BLPUs	9	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>65</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>25</b>

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## SAVINGS & ADDITIONAL INCOME - BDC

Appendix 3

Department	Strategic Purpose	Description of saving	2021-22 £'000	2022-23 £'000	2023-24 £'000
Building Control	Communities which are safe well maintained and green	Car Mileage, print and Professional fees budget savings	-3	0	0
CCTV/Lifeline	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green & Living independent, active & healthy lives.	various amendments overall budgets - reduction of general supplies budgets	-7	-7	-7
Corporate Services	Enabling Services	Grant funding received from MHCLG for loss of sales, fees and charges income due to the pandemic.	-77	0	0
Corporate Services	Enabling Services	Management review savings	0	-125	-125
Corporate Services	Enabling Services	Future Operating Model / Alternative Services Delivery	0	-75	-75
Corporate Services	Enabling Services	New Homes Bonus - Community group funding from General Covid grant received in 2020/21.	-80	0	0
Development Management	Communities which are safe , well maintained & green.	Mileage savings	-1	-1	-1
Elections	Enabling Services	Individual Electoral registrations (IER) Budget savings	-27	-27	-27
Environmental Services	Communities which are safe , well maintained & green.	Additional Income within Trade waste services	-10	-10	-10
Environmental Services	Communities which are safe , well maintained & green.	Repairs and maintenance of vehicles budget savings	-7	-7	-7
Environmental Services	Communities which are safe , well maintained & green.	Fixtures & Fittings budget savings	-2	-2	-2
Environmental Services	Communities which are safe , well maintained & green.	Car Mileage, print and stationary budget savings	-4	-4	-4
Environmental Services	Communities which are safe , well maintained & green.	Vehicle Hire budget savings	-57	-57	-57
Environmental Services	Communities which are safe , well maintained & green.	Garden Waste Income Service Level Agreement	-28	-28	-28
Environmental Services	Communities which are safe , well maintained & green.	New post deferred until 2023/24	-54	-56	0
Equalities	Enabling Services	Reduction in hours on post within the Equalities team	-8	-8	0
Housing GF	Affordable and sustainable home	Various amendments overall budgets - reduction of general supplies budgets	-9	-9	-9
Human Resources	Enabling Services	Salary Savings	-16	-16	-16
Human Resources	Enabling Services	Mileage and Professional fees Savings	-1	-1	-1
ICT	Enabling Services	ICT Savings	-15	-25	-25
Policy	Enabling Services	Savings on payments to other Local Authorities	0	-1	0
Policy	Enabling Services	Reduced hours on post within the policy team	-4	-4	0
Parks and open spaces	Living independent, active & healthy lives	Various amendments on general supplies budgets	-1	-1	-1
Parks Team	Living independent, active & healthy lives	Salary Savings	-3	-3	-3
Sports development	Living independent, active & healthy lives	External funding received to fund part a post in the team	-5	0	0

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Agenda Item 10b

Department	Strategic Purpose	Description of saving	2021-22 £'000	2022-23 £'000	2023-24 £'000
Sports development	Living independent, active & healthy lives	Reduction in general expenditure budget	-5	-5	-5
Sports development	Living independent, active & healthy lives	Reduction in car mileage budgets	-1	-1	-1
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>-426</b>	<b>-474</b>	<b>-405</b>

**CAPITAL BIDS - BDC**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Strategic Purpose</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Funding Source i.e. Grant, Borrowing, Reserve, S106</b>	<b>2021-22 £'000</b>	<b>2022-23 £'000</b>	<b>2023-24 £'000</b>
Strategic Housing	Living independent, active & healthy lives	BDC Home Repairs Assistance Lifetime Loans	Borrowing	0	50	50
Strategic Housing	Living independent, active & healthy lives	BDC Disabled Facilities Grant	Govt Grant	163	913	913
Strategic Housing	Living independent, active & healthy lives	Energy Efficiency Installation (Bromsgrove Energy Efficiency Fund)	Borrowing	0	110	0
Strategic Housing	Communities which are safe, well-maintained and green	BDC 7kW electric vehicle charge-points	Borrowing & grant £40k	120	0	0
Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	Purchase of Wheeled Bins for Commercial Waste Service	Borrowing	45	50	55
Planning & Regeneration	Living independent, active & healthy lives	Purchase of New Electric Bus for Town Centre	Borrowing	250	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>578</b>	<b>1,123</b>	<b>1,018</b>

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Description	Department	Strategic purposes	Funding detail	2021/22 Total £'000	2022/23 Total £000	2023/24 Total £'000
Home Repairs Assistance	Community & Housing GF Services	Living independent, active & healthy lives	Long Term Debtors	50	50	50
Energy Efficiency Installation	Community & Housing GF Services	Living independent, active & healthy lives	Capital Receipts/Borrowing	0	110	0
Funding for DFGs	Community & Housing GF Services	Living independent, active & healthy lives	Grant income WCC	913	913	913
New Digital Service	Community & Housing GF Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	Borrowing	34	34	34
BDC 7Kw electric vehicle charge points	Community & Housing GF Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	Borrowing	120	0	0
Burcot Lane	Financial & Customer Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	Public works loan board and grant homes england	9,275	0	0
Bus Shelters	Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	Borrowing	18	18	0
Cemetery Extension infrastructure at at North Bromsgrove Cemetery Phase Two	Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	Capital Receipts/Borrowing	8	7	0
Fleet Replacement	Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	Capital Receipts/Borrowing	481	1,591	204
Wheelie Bin Purchase	Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	Capital Receipts/Borrowing	139	144	55
Regeneration Fund	Financial & Customer Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	Borrowing	2,000	2,000	1,650
Sanders Park Play Area - Replacement for Tripod Swing (Health and Safety)	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Living independent, active & healthy lives	Borrowing	35	0	0
Electric Bus	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Living independent, active & healthy lives	Borrowing	250	0	0
				13,323	4,867	2,906

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**Cabinet**  
2021

17<sup>th</sup> February

**Pay Policy Statement 2020/21**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro
Portfolio Holder Consulted	yes
Relevant Head of Service	Chris Forrester
Report Author	Name: Chris Forrester Job Title: Head of Finance and Customer Services Contact email: chris.forrester@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 881673
Wards Affected	Not applicable
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	Not applicable
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	All
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	
This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph(s) of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended	

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Cabinet Committee is asked to RECOMMEND to Full Council that: -**

- 1) The Pay policy as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.**

**2. BACKGROUND**

The Localism Act requires English and Welsh local authorities to produce a Pay Policy statement ('the statement'). The Act requires the statement to be approved by Full Council and to be adopted by 31<sup>st</sup> March each year for the subsequent financial year. The Pay Policy Statement for the Council is included at Appendix 1.

The Statement must set out policies relating to-

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

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

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 All financial implications have already been included as part of the budget setting process and posts are fully budgeted for.

The information provided is based on the current pay structure.

### **4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 These are already included in the report.

### **5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The pay policy covers all officer's remuneration and therefore includes all strategic purposes of the Council.

#### **Climate Change Implications**

- 5.2 There are no implications in relation to this report.

### **6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

#### **Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 6.1 There are no implications in relation to this report.

#### **Operational Implications**

- 6.2 There are no implications in relation to this report.

### **7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 There are no implications in relation to this report.

### **8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix 1 - Pay Policy 2020/21

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**9. REPORT SIGN OFF**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Name and Job Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Portfolio Holder	Geoff Denaro, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling	Various
Lead Director / Head of Service	Chris Forrester, Head of Finance and Customer Services	Various
Financial Services	Chris Forrester, Head of Finance and Customer Services	Various
Legal Services	Claire Felton	Various
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	n/a	
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)	n/a	

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### **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL PAY POLICY STATEMENT**

#### **Introduction and Purpose**

1. Under section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the “power to appoint officers on such reasonable terms and conditions as authority thinks fit”. This pay policy statement sets out the Council’s approach to pay policy in accordance with the requirements of Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011. It shall apply for the financial year 2020 and each subsequent financial year, until amended. The information provided is based on a proposed model that is still subject to approval and consultation.
2. The purpose of the statement is to provide transparency with regard to the Council’s approach to setting the pay of its employees by identifying;
  - a. the methods by which salaries of all employees are determined;
  - b. the detail and level of remuneration of its most senior staff i.e. ‘chief officers’, as defined by the relevant legislation;
  - c. the Committee(s) responsible for ensuring the provisions set out in this statement are applied consistently throughout the Council and for recommending any amendments to the full Council
3. Once approved by the full Council, this policy statement will come into immediate effect and will be subject to review on a minimum of an annual basis, in accordance with the relevant legislation prevailing at that time.

#### **Legislative Framework**

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

#### **Pay Structure**

5. The Council’s pay and grading structure comprises grades 1 – 11. These are followed by grades for Managers 1 - 2, Head of Service 1, Head of Service 2, Head of Service 3, Executive Director, Deputy Chief Executive and then Chief Executive; all of which arose following the introduction of shared services with Redditch Borough Council.
6. Within each grade there are a number of salary / pay points. Up to and including grade 11 scale, at spinal column point 43, the Council uses the nationally negotiated pay spine. Salary points above this are locally determined. The Council’s Pay structure is set out below.

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Grade	Spinal Column Points		Nationally determined rates	
			Minimum £	Maximum £
1	1	2	17,842	18,198
2	2	5	18,198	19,312
3	5	9	19,312	20,903
4	9	14	20,903	23,080
5	14	19	23,080	25,481
6	19	24	25,481	28,672
7	25	30	29,577	33,782
8	30	34	33,782	37,890
9	34	37	37,890	40,876
10	37	40	40,876	43,857
11	40	43	43,857	46,845
Manager 1	Hay evaluated	43%	57,284	59,618
Manager 2	Hay evaluated	45%	59,597	62,066
Head of Service 1	Hay evaluated	51%	68,128	70,910
Head of Service 2	Hay evaluated	61%	81,754	85,091
Head Of Service 3	Hay evaluated	68%	91,208	94,546
Executive Director	Hay evaluated	74%	98,994	102,888
Deputy Chief Executive	Hay evaluated	80%	N/A	111,230
Chief Executive	Hay evaluated	100%	N/A	139,038



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

### **Senior Management Remuneration**

12. For the purposes of this statement, senior management means 'chief officers' as defined within S43 of the Localism Act. The posts falling within the statutory definition are set out below, with details of their basic salary as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 (assuming no inflationary increase for these posts).
13. Bromsgrove District Council is managed by a senior management team who manage shared services across both Redditch Borough and Bromsgrove District Councils. All of the posts listed below have been job evaluated on this basis, with the salary costs for these posts split equally between both Councils.

<b>Title</b>	<b>% of Chief executive salary</b>	<b>Pay range (minimum) £</b>	<b>Pay range (maximum) £</b>	<b>Incremental points</b>	<b>Cost to Redditch Borough Council</b>
Chief Executive	100%	133,586	139,038	3	50%
Deputy Chief Executive	80%	109,017	111,230	3	50%
Executive Director of Finance and Resources. (Also S151 Officer)	74%	98,994	102,888	3	50%
Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services	68%	91,208	94,546.69	3	<i>This is a shared post across 6 district Authorities</i>
Head of Finance and Customer Support	61%	81,754	85,091	3	50%
Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services	61%	81,754	85,091	3	50%
Head of Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Services	61%	81,754	85,091	3	50%
Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	61%	81,754	85,091	3	50%

Head of Environmental and Housing Services	61%	81,754	85,091	3	50%
Head of Community and Housing Property Services	61%	81,754	85,091	3	50%

### **Recruitment of Chief Officers**

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

### **Performance-Related Pay and Bonuses – Chief Officers**

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

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

17. In addition to the basic salary for the post, all staff may be eligible for other payments under the Council's existing policies. Some of these payments are chargeable to UK Income Tax and do not solely constitute reimbursement of expenses incurred in the fulfilment of duties. The list below shows some of the kinds of payments made.
  - a. reimbursement of mileage. At the time of preparation of this statement, the Council pays an allowance of 45p per mile for all staff, with additional or alternative payments for carrying passengers or using a bicycle;

- b. professional fees. The Council pays for or reimburses the cost of one practicing certificate fee or membership of a professional organisation provided it is relevant to the post that an employee occupies within the Council.
- c. long service awards. The Council pays staff an additional amount if they have completed 25 years of service.
- d. honoraria, in accordance with the Council's policy on salary and grading. Generally, these may be paid only where a member of staff has performed a role at a higher grade;
- e. fees for returning officer and other electoral duties, such as acting as a presiding officer of a polling station. These are fees which are identified and paid separately for local government elections, elections to the UK Parliament and EU Parliament and other electoral processes such as referenda;
- f. pay protection – where a member of staff is placed in a new post and the grade is below that of their previous post, for example as a result of a restructuring, pay protection at the level of their previous post is paid for the first 12 months. In exceptional circumstance pay protection can be applied for greater than 12 months with the prior approval of the Chief Executive.
- g. market forces supplements in addition to basic salary where identified and paid separately;
  - h. salary supplements or additional payments for undertaking additional responsibilities such as shared service provision with another local authority or in respect of joint bodies, where identified and paid separately;
  - i. attendance allowances.

## **Payments on Termination**

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

## **Publication**

- 21. Upon approval by the full Council, this statement will be published on the Council's website. In addition, for posts where the full time equivalent salary is at least £50,000, the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts will include a note on Officers Remuneration setting out the total amount of:
  - a. Salary, fees or allowances paid to or receivable by the person in the current and previous year;

- b. Any bonuses so paid or receivable by the person in the current and previous year;
- c. Any sums payable by way of expenses allowance that are chargeable to UK income tax;
- d. Any compensation for loss of employment and any other payments connected with termination;
- e. Any benefits received that do not fall within the above.

## **Lowest Paid Employees**

- 22. The Council's definition of lowest paid employees is persons employed under a contract of employment with the Council on full time (37 hours) equivalent salaries in accordance with the minimum spinal column point currently in use within the Council's grading structure. As at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 this is £17,842 per annum.
- 23. The Council also employs apprentices (or other such categories of workers) who are not included within the definition of 'lowest paid employees' (as they are employed under a special form of employment contract; which is a contract for training rather than actual employment).
- 24. The relationship between the rate of pay for the lowest paid and chief officers is determined by the processes used for determining pay and grading structures as set out earlier in this policy statement.
- 25. The statutory guidance under the Localism Act recommends the use of pay multiples as a means of measuring the relationship between pay rates across the workforce and that of senior managers, as included within the Hutton 'Review of Fair Pay in the Public Sector' (2010). The Hutton report was asked by Government to explore the case for a fixed limit on dispersion of pay through a requirement that no public sector manager can earn more than 20 times the lowest paid person in the organisation. The report concluded that "it would not be fair or wise for the Government to impose a single maximum pay multiple across the public sector". The Council accepts the view that the relationship to median earnings is a more relevant measure and the Government's Code of Recommended Practice on Data Transparency recommends the publication of the ratio between highest paid salary and the median average salary of the whole of the authority's workforce.
- 26. As part of its overall and ongoing monitoring of alignment with external pay markets, both within and outside the sector, the Council will use available benchmark information as appropriate.

## **Accountability and Decision Making**

- 28. In accordance with the Constitution of the Council, the Council is responsible for setting the policy relating to the recruitment, pay, terms and conditions and severance arrangements for employees of the Council. Decisions about individual employees are delegated to the Chief Executive.
- 29. The Appointments Committee is responsible for recommending to Council matters relating to the appointment of the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive),

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Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and Chief Officers as defined in the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations 2001 (as amended);

30. For the Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and the Chief Finance Officer, the Statutory Officers Disciplinary Action Panel considers and decides on matters relating to disciplinary action.

**Bromsgrove District Council – 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021  
Item 14 - Member Questions**

**1. From Councillor S. Robinson  
Question for the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services**

Can the portfolio holder please update the council on how many tonnes of garden waste we have collected from households this winter and whether or not there are plans for this to continue next year?

**2. From Councillor H. Rone-Clarke  
Question for the Leader**

After announcing plans for the city to be carbon neutral by 2030, myself and Cllr McDonald met with the relevant Birmingham City portfolio holders and identified half a dozen areas of cooperation between our two authorities, including: buses, active transport and country parks. Soon, transport into Birmingham by car will be heavily regulated, meaning residents of Bromsgrove may struggle to get to work. Similarly, citizens of other districts will be incentivised to shop local, due to active transport schemes; this would squeeze our already struggling high street to breaking point.

We don't wish to hear that the council 'already engages' with our neighbours, as our Birmingham counterparts agree that Bromsgrove is failing to keep up.

So, in terms of a promise of concrete action, here and now, how does the administration plan to engage more robustly with our neighbours (including but not limited to Birmingham) in order to ensure Bromsgrove is not left behind?

**3. From Councillor S. Colella  
Question for the Leader**

Can the Leader confirm that BDC is part of both Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) and Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP) and whether this is not in contravention of the terms of reference for each LEP?

**4. From Councillor P. McDonald  
Question for the Leader**

With Birmingham City becoming a low emission city what action is being taken by this Council to ensure residents who travel into the city for work and have to use their own transport, will not lose their jobs because of falling foul of the regulations?

**5. From Councillor R Hunter  
Question for the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling**

How many applications has Bromsgrove District Council received for the £500 Test and Trace Support grant to help people who need to self-isolate? How many of these applications were successful and what were the reasons for any applications being turned down?

**6. From Councillor Janet King  
Question for the Leader**

I wish to congratulate the council on the award of a grant for £50,000 from the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) for use in our town centre. May I ask the leader to outline how it will be spent or, if not decided, to invite creative and positive suggestions from members and other interested parties?



**NOTICE OF MOTION**

The following Notice of Motion has been submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 10 by Councillor S Robinson:

This Council calls on officers to present a report to the Climate Change Working Group by the end of 2021 which shows how Bromsgrove District Council can become carbon neutral by 2030, 2035 and 2040, along with a cost analysis for each proposal.

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