



## **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED to attend a MEETING of BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL to be held on Microsoft Teams at 6.00 p.m. on Wednesday 21st April 2021, when the business referred to below will be brought under consideration:-**

### **Welcome**

- 1. To observe a minute silence as a mark of respect for His Royal Highness, Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh**
- 2. To receive apologies for absence**
- 3. 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.

- 4. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 24th February 2021 (Pages 1 - 24)**
- 5. To receive any announcements from the Chairman and/or Head of Paid Service**
- 6. To receive any announcements from the Leader**
- 7. To receive comments, questions or petitions from members of the public (Pages 25 - 26)**

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.

- 8. Constitution Review Working Group - Recommendation (Pages 27 - 42)**

9. **Amendments to the Officer Scheme of Delegations (Report to Follow)**

10. **Urgent Decisions (Pages 43 - 52)**

Urgent decisions have been taken on the following subjects since the previous meeting of Council:

- a) The release of £105k from balances to support the continued operation of Bromsgrove Sports and Leisure Centre during January to March 2021 following the forced closure in January 2021.
- b) Approval of the Green Homes funding that has been allocated to Bromsgrove District Council. The report on this subject that was considered at meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021, and Cabinet, on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, has also been attached as background information.

Any further urgent decisions taken after the publication of this agenda pack will be circulated for Members' consideration in a supplementary pack.

11. **Recommendations from the Cabinet (Pages 53 - 54)**

To consider the recommendations from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

12. **Background Information on the recommendations from the Cabinet (Pages 55 - 76)**

13. **To note the minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 24th February and 31st March 2021 (Pages 77 - 88)**

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 - 100)**

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 the 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

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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## **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

**24TH FEBRUARY 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, 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, P.L. Thomas, M. Thompson, J. Till, K. J. Van Der Plank, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

Officers: Mr K. Dicks, Ms S. Hanley, Mrs C. Felton, Mr C. Forrester, Ms C. Flanagan, Mr D. Riley, Ms K. Goldey, Ms A. Scarce and Ms J. Bayley.

65\20 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors R. Jenkins and C. Spencer.

66\20 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors C. Hotham, H. Rone-Clare and P. Whittaker declared pecuniary interests in Minutes Item No x – Urgent Decisions. Their declaration was made in their capacity as trustees on the Artrix Holding Trust, as the urgent decision on the agenda related to an agreement regarding decarbonisation funding for the Artrix. However, Members were advised that, as the urgent decision had already been taken and no decision or debate on the item was required at Council, the Councillors did not need to leave the room.

During consideration of this item, the Monitoring Officer confirmed that Members the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee had previously granted all Members a dispensation to participate in the debate and vote on matters pertaining to the Council's budget and Council Tax, including in relation to Parish Councils.

67\20 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 20TH JANUARY 2021**

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021 were submitted.

During consideration of this item, the Leader advised that, following Council's decision to defer a decision on the disposal of the affordable housing units at the Burcot Lane development, Officers had been in discussions with Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT).

Unfortunately, it was not possible to advise Council further by the date of the meeting. However, Officers would be bringing forward a report for consideration by Council at the earliest opportunity. The Leader committed to arrange a briefing for Group Leaders in advance of any report to Council. Council was informed that the most respectful and beneficial way forward in both supporting BDHT and ensuring the Council secured best value in the provision of much needed affordable housing, was to have a proper informed debate and discussion when all positions were clarified.

There was a brief debate on the subject of the Burcot Lane development and the discussions that had been held at the previous meeting of Council. As part of this process, concerns were raised about how the debate on this subject had been handled at that meeting.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021 be approved.

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

The Chairman advised that Councillor C. Spencer was in hospital on the date of the meeting. Councillor Spencer's condition was reported to be improving and Members were advised to liaise with her family to provide any messages of support. Members noted their concerns and passed on their regards to Councillor Spencer and wished her a speedy recovery.

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

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

The Leader explained that the rate of Covid-19 in Bromsgrove District had reached 110 cases per 100,000 by the date of the meeting. By comparison, the average number of cases in Worcestershire was 142 cases per 100,000. The vaccination programme was progressing well, with 30 per cent of residents living in Herefordshire and Worcestershire having received their first vaccination by the date of the meeting. However, the Leader commented that it remained important for people to comply with the lockdown rules and she urged Members and residents to do so in order to remain safe.

Members welcomed the opening of the Artrix as a vaccination Centre since the previous meeting of Council. Questions were raised about the number of people who had been vaccinated at this centre. Council was informed that this data was not available, though the contract would be in place for a significant amount of time in order to enable residents to receive a vaccine over the following months.

During consideration of this item, the Leader led Members in paying tribute to the Senior Democratic Services Officer for Bromsgrove, Amanda Scarce, who was due to retire the following day. Council was informed that Amanda commenced employment with Bromsgrove District Council in September 2009. Initially, she was employed as a Committee Services Officer supporting the then Overview and Scrutiny Officer with the Overview and Scrutiny process at the Council. She subsequently became the lead support officer for Overview and Scrutiny in Bromsgrove and from 2012 worked as part of the Democratic Services team to deliver the shared Democratic Service for Bromsgrove and Redditch. In September 2017, Amanda was promoted to the position of Senior Democratic Services Officer for Bromsgrove and since then had both co-managed the team and co-ordinated the democratic process for Bromsgrove, taking a lead on Cabinet and Council. Over the years Amanda had supported Members and facilitated scrutiny reviews into a range of subjects, from car parking to equalities. As well as being a professional officer, the Leader commented that Amanda was kind, intelligent, had a great sense of humour and had been immensely supportive to both colleagues and Members across all groups and parties. The Leader concluded by noting that Amanda would be missed by all staff, particularly her team, as well as Members, and she wished her well for the future.

A number of Members subsequently commented on the Senior Democratic Services Officer's departure, starting with the group leaders. Members commented that Amanda had been particularly supportive to new Members, helping to inform them about the democratic process and responding to queries in a timely manner. Reference was made to the Senior Democratic Services Officer's experience, in terms of facilitating scrutiny reviews and ensuring that these operated effectively. The Senior Democratic Services Officer was cited as being instrumental in the introduction of the Finance and Budget Working Group and Measures Dashboard Working Group and Members agreed that both groups had had a positive impact on the governance arrangements in place at the Council.

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## **TO RECEIVE COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

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

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## **URGENT DECISIONS**

The Chairman advised that one urgent decision had been taken since the previous meeting of Council but he reminded Members that this was not scheduled for debate.

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## **INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL REPORT**

Councillor G. Denaro, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling, presented the Independent Remuneration Panel's (IRP) Report

regarding Members' allowances in the 2021/22 municipal year. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the IRP had chosen to focus on changes to the basic allowance for Members. The IRP was proposing that the basic allowance should increase by 2.75 per cent, which would result in a basic allowance of £4,650 per member. No changes were proposed to the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) at this point.

**RESOLVED** that the Basic Allowance for 2021-22 be £4,650 representing a 2.75 per cent increase.

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**RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET 17TH FEBRUARY 2020  
(TO FOLLOW)**

**Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2023/24**

Councillor G. Denaro, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling, introduced the Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2023/24 and in so doing commented that the budget had been prepared at a challenging time, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Councillor Denaro thanked the Head of Financial and Customer Services and the Financial Services team for their hard work in preparing the budget under these circumstances.

Members were informed that the Council had only received a one-year settlement from the Government for 2021/22. There remained substantial gaps in the budget for 2022/23 and 2023/24 which would need to be addressed moving forward. The external auditors had recognised that the Council was in a sound financial position but had commented that the Council would be in a challenging position in future years. Anticipated savings and income generation schemes would need to be delivered in order for the Council to avoid using reserves to balance the budget in the long-term. However, the auditors had provided the Council with an unqualified opinion on the Council's value for money arrangements.

An increase in Council Tax was proposed in order to help balance the budget in 2021/22. The Government had announced that District Councils could only increase Council Tax by a maximum rate of 1.99 per cent, or £5. In Bromsgrove, it was proposed that Council Tax should increase by £5 as this would result in a slightly higher rate of return to the authority. The Council Tax Base would be reducing for the first time in many years, as a consequence of changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme and as a result of fewer homes having been built than anticipated due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Additional pressures had been taken into account when preparing the budget. This included the loss of income from car parking during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, some of the losses in income had been offset by financial support that had been provided by the Government.

The Corporate Management Team (CMT) had reviewed the budget on a line-by-line basis and officers had identified a number of savings and



income generation opportunities by doing so. Many of the savings were relatively small but cumulatively, they contributed to a balanced budget for 2021/22. These savings and income opportunities had been discussed in more detail at a recent meeting of the Finance and Budget Working Group.

Funding from the New Homes Bonus (NHB) had reduced, so that the Council was left with £12,000 to distribute within the community. An additional £68,000 from Covid grant funding had been combined with this figure to create a community grants budget for 2021/22. Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) groups would be able to bid for up to £5,000 grant funding each for community projects under this scheme.

A list of revenue bids had been provided in the report for Members' consideration. This included a bid to fund a new Member Support Officer in respect of ICT services. Should this bid be successful, it was anticipated that the Officer would provide support to Members and would help address some of the technical issues Members experienced during meetings.

Savings had been proposed in the report but, despite the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, no cuts to services had been proposed. In total, the savings added up to £426,000 and contributed to the balanced budget position.

There had been a review of the Capital Programme and some capital bids had also been recorded in the report. Included within this was a bid for £250,000, for the operation of an electric bus service between Bromsgrove town centre and the railway station. The funding for this project would help to support the green agenda detailed in the Council Plan. Bids for electric charging points for vehicles had also been included in the report, though there was the potential that some of the costs arising from this would be offset by external grant funding.

The Council would be using £638,000 from earmarked reserves to help balance the budget in 2021/22. These reserves could only be used once. However, the Council's balances were in a healthy position. In 2021/22 it was proposed that £22,000 should be returned to balances, which would result in the authority having balances of £4.306 million. In the period 2022 to 2024 the Council could use £2.571 million of balances to balance the budget, though this would take balances below the minimum threshold of £2 million. Therefore, the budget gap would need to be addressed using additional income and savings.

The Covid-19 pandemic had added to uncertainty in relation to local government finances and it was difficult to predict how the pandemic would impact in the future. Furthermore, Brexit was adding to this uncertainty, particularly with regard to the potential implications for local businesses and the associated impact on the collection of local business rates.

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Councillor Denaro concluded by stating that the proposed budget would help to support the Council's strategic purposes and economic growth in the District, whilst enabling the Council to achieve a balanced position. He urged Members to therefore support the budget.

The recommendations in the Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2023/24 were proposed by Councillor G. Denaro and seconded by Councillor K. May.

During consideration of this item, Councillor P. McDonald proposed an alternative budget from the Labour Group, as detailed in the main agenda pack. The alternative budget from the Labour Group was seconded by Councillor H. Rone-Clarke.

In proposing the alternative budget, Councillor McDonald commented that the Council budget for 2021/22 would apply at a time when the country would only just be coming out of lockdown and many residents would still be on furlough or would have unfortunately lost their jobs. In this context, Councillor McDonald suggested that it was not an appropriate time to increase Council Tax, as many residents would struggle to pay the excess bill and the alternative budget therefore did not propose a Council Tax increase. The Council Tax bill for many residents was already due to increase as Worcestershire County Council and other precepting authorities were requesting an increase to their Council Tax contributions and an increase to the contribution for Bromsgrove District Council would add to this bill. Councillor McDonald expressed concerns that many residents on lower incomes would potentially enter into poverty as a result of increases to Council Tax.

Reference was made to the funding available to local government. Councillor McDonald commented that the Government needed to increase funding for Councils, rather than authorities having to rely on Council Tax rises to help balance the budget. Members were informed that funding could potentially be redirected by the Government from other areas, such as funding for management consultants.

Councillor McDonald expressed concerns that the most vulnerable children in the District were at crisis point. In particular, Councillor McDonald highlighted concerns that many families on low incomes were struggling to pay bills and this was impacting on their children.

Members were informed that, by not proposing an increase to Council Tax, there would be a gap in the budget of £180,000 in 2021/22. Councillor McDonald suggested that this gap could be addressed through savings in other areas. In particular, Members were asked to note that the Council paid Redditch Borough Council to host various services at Redditch Town Hall. Following the introduction of remote working arrangements, Councillor McDonald suggested that staff would be working more at home in future and those not working at home could be accommodated at Parkside. Members were informed that an estimated £65,000 could be saved from this change to working

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arrangements. Councillor McDonald also commented that the Council had spent £210,000 on management consultants, including Mott MacDonald. Councillor McDonald suggested that management consultants could be used less frequently, and that Mott MacDonald's assistance was no longer required by the Council. Members were therefore advised that £100,000 could be saved on management consultancy fees. Should these measures be taken, there would be a remaining gap of £16,000 in the alternative budget, which could be addressed using funding from reserves.

In seconding the alternative budget from the Labour Group, Councillor Rone-Clarke commented that the Labour Group could not support a rise in Council Tax during a global pandemic. Members were advised that an increase in Council Tax would place many people's finances on an unsustainable footing, especially as an increase to the Council Tax contribution from Bromsgrove District Council would be accompanied by increases to the Council Tax contributions for other precepting organisations. Councillor Rone-Clarke expressed concerns that there had been many years of austerity leading up to 2021 which had also impacted on residents' finances over the years and meant that people on lower incomes in particular did not have the resources necessary to pay larger bills. Councillor Rone-Clarke also commented that he thought it would be morally wrong to increase Council Tax bills for key workers, in occupations such as nursing or teaching.

Council subsequently discussed the Labour Group's alternative budget in detail. On the one hand, concerns were raised that use of funding from reserves, as proposed in the alternative budget, could impact on the long-term sustainability of the Council's finances. Members noted that Mott MacDonald continued to work for the Council on planning related matters, including in relation to traffic congestion, though this work would be reducing over the following years. Members also suggested that support could potentially be provided to vulnerable people on low incomes through the Council's Hardship Scheme. On the other hand, concerns were raised that many businesses were struggling during lockdown and this would inevitably impact on staff, both those on furlough and those at risk of redundancy. In such circumstances, it was suggested that the alternative budget, by not proposing an increase to Council Tax, would not create an additional burden for local residents on low incomes. The role of Mott MacDonald moving forward was also questioned and it was suggested that the advice of this company did not always inform Council policy and the advice of these consultants was not necessarily therefore needed moving forward.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 the alternative budget from the Labour Group was subject to a named vote.

Members voting FOR the alternative budget from the Labour Group:

Councillors L. Mallett, P. McDonald and H. Rone-Clarke. (3)

Members voting AGAINST the alternative budget from the Labour Group:

Councillors S. Baxter, A. Beaumont, S. Colella, R. Deeming, G. Denaro, M. Glass, S. Hession, R. Hunter, H. Jones, A. Kent, J. King, A. Kriss, R. Laight, K. May, M. Middleton, S. Robinson, M. Sherrey, P. Thomas, M. Thompson, J. Till, S. Webb and P. Whittaker. (22)

Members voting to ABSTAIN in the vote on the alternative budget from the Labour Group

Councillors S. Douglas, A. English, C. Hotham and K. Van Der Plank

The vote on the alternative budget from the Labour Group was therefore lost.

A further alternative budget, on behalf collectively of the Liberal Democrat group, the Bromsgrove Independent East District Group and the Bromsgrove Independents West and Central District Group, was proposed by Councillor K. Van Der Plank and seconded by Councillor R. Hunter.

In proposing this alternative budget, Councillor Van Der Plank commented that the proposals detailed in the alternative budget were designed to support the administration's budget. The alternative budget proposed that some of the Covid-19 grant funding that had been received by the Council from the Government should be allocated to projects that would support the local community. The proposals would support the community, including through additional support for community groups, and would support the Council's green agenda whilst leaving some funds in reserves.

Members were informed that the 3 political groups welcomed information about the electric bus service that would operate between Bromsgrove town centre and Bromsgrove Train Station. However, Council was informed that more public transport was needed in the District, particularly to serve rural areas. Therefore, Councillor Van Der Plank explained that in the alternative budget it was proposed that 4 new bus services should be funded which would operate around the District. Further consideration would need to be given as to how these bus services would operate and the routes involved but the proposals in the alternative budget would establish a principle that these services were needed to connect the district. Members were advised that many rural communities would benefit from these additional services as they were cut off under existing arrangements.

Councillor Van Der Plank suggested that it was possible the Council would be able to secure grant funding for the proposed budget services, by working in partnership with other organisations, as this could have a beneficial impact on local vehicle emissions. Members were advised

that the proposals would also support the Council's efforts to tackle climate change.

Members were advised that the Covid-19 pandemic was having a significant impact on the mental wellbeing of local residents. Councillor Van Der Plank suggested that there needed to be investment in support for people in respect of their health and wellbeing, including in parks and open spaces. The alternative budget proposed investment of Covid grant funding to help tackle fly tipping in the District. The funding would be used to support the installation of CCTV cameras in areas where fly tipping occurred frequently. Funding was also proposed to support the museums in the District, to help promote these services and encourage visitors to these attractions once it was safe to reopen.

Council was asked to note that the Covid-19 grant funding provided the authority with a once in a lifetime opportunity to make a difference in the community. The grant funding was not ring-fenced and therefore the Council could spend the funds to support the community as proposed in the alternative budget.

In seconding the alternative budget, Councillor Hunter explained that the 3 groups had worked together to bring forward proposals that would support the wider community. The alternative budget supported the proposals from the administration but added expenditure of some of the Covid-19 grant funding that had been received by the authority. Councillor Hunter questioned why the Council had not yet brought forward proposals to spend this grant funding and he commented that the alternative budget's proposals would result in investment in the local community.

Members subsequently discussed this alternative budget in detail. Those Members speaking in favour of the alternative budget welcomed the opportunity to provide bus services in rural locations in the District, support to people who had experienced mental health difficulties as a result of the pandemic and funding for museums, which had struggled during the pandemic. Reference was made to the need to support the local economy to ensure its recovery and the potentially positive contribution that the proposals in the alternative budget could make to this process. Some Members also commented that there had been an increase in fly tipping in parts of the District during the pandemic and the proposed extra CCTV cameras would help the Council to address this. In concluding these remarks in favour of the alternative budget, some Members suggested that it would be appropriate to use the Covid grant funding for the purposes proposed in the alternative budget as the funding was designed to help with the recovery process locally in respect of Covid-19. Council was asked to note that the grant funding had not otherwise yet been allocated.

During consideration of this alternative budget, a number of Councillors spoke against the proposals. Concerns were raised that these proposals had been brought forward at a time when the Council was

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already working with partner organisations in respect of plans for a demand response transport system to be introduced in the District. There had been a lot of preparatory work in respect of this matter, including improvements to local infrastructure. The demand response system would provide a transport system that would serve multiple locations and would be trialled in Bromsgrove by Worcestershire County Council, with touch screens being made available to enable passengers to request specific journeys. In this context, it was suggested that the proposals in respect of the extra bus services were not necessary.

Other Members speaking against the proposals commented that the Covid grant funding was needed to help local businesses. Fly tipping was already being addressed by the Council as was additional funding for VCS groups, through continuing funding of a community grants scheme. Concerns were also raised that the alternative budget was contingent on the substantive proposals in respect of the budget, including a Council Tax increase, being approved. Some Members commented that they could not support the alternative budget for this reason.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 the alternative budget from the Liberal Democrat, Bromsgrove Independents East District and The Bromsgrove Independents West and Central District groups was subject to a named vote.

Members voting FOR the alternative budget from the Liberal Democrat, Bromsgrove Independent East District and The Bromsgrove Independent West and Central District Groups

Councillors S. Baxter, S. Colella, A. English, C. Hotham, R. Hunter, J. King, S. Robinson and K. Van Der Plank. (8)

Members voting AGAINST the alternative budget from the Liberal Democrat, Bromsgrove Independent East District and The Bromsgrove Independent West and Central District Groups

Councillors A. Beaumont, R. Deeming, G. Denaro, M. Glass, S. Hession, H. Jones, A. Kent, A. Kriss, R. Laight, L. Mallett, K. May, M. Middleton, P. McDonald, H. Rone-Clarke, M. Sherrey, P. Thomas, M. Thompson, J. Till, S. Webb and P. Whittaker (20)

Members voting to ABSTAIN in the vote on the alternative budget from the Liberal Democrat, Bromsgrove Independent East District and The Bromsgrove Independent West and Central District Groups

No Councillors (0)

The vote on the alternative budget from the Liberal Democrat, Bromsgrove Independents East District and The Bromsgrove Independents West and Central District groups was therefore lost.

Members subsequently returned to discussing the proposals in respect of the Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2023/24 detailed in the agenda. Councillor Denaro, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling, reintroduced the report and explained that the proposed budget would support the green thread in the Council plan and enhance public transport through the new proposed electric bus service operating between Bromsgrove town centre and Bromsgrove Train Station. There were also a number of important capital projects that would be funded should the budget be approved.

In seconding the proposed Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2023/24, Councillor K. May commented that the proposed budget was fiscally responsible. The budget would help to support local businesses as well as action that would have a positive impact on climate change, including the introduction of the electric bus service operating between Bromsgrove town centre and Bromsgrove Train Station. Members were advised that Councillor May intended, as the Leader of the Council, to lobby for more detail on the budget in future beyond a one-year settlement in order to create greater certainty about the budget position for local government moving forward.

During consideration of the Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2023/24 the following points were discussed in detail:

- The distribution of grant funding to local businesses and how this had progressed in Bromsgrove District. Councillor Denaro advised that a lot of grant funding had been provided and further information would be circulated after the meeting on this subject for Members' consideration.
- The additional capital funding that had been proposed for waste and recycling bins. Members were informed that this funding would be spent on additional commercial waste bins as the Council had gained an additional 170 customers for the commercial waste scheme.
- The purpose of the capital funding that had been proposed for car charges. Councillor Denaro explained that this was intended for personnel and the public in cases where there was no access to private driveways. There would be match funding available for this project.
- The funding for the play area in Sanders Park and the date when this work would be completed. Councillor P. Thomas, Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Community Services and Community Safety, explained that, subject to Members' approval, procurement would commence immediately and the aim would be to complete the project by May 2021.
- The extent to which the Council's budget was in a sustainable position, particularly with the use of reserves to balance the budget in 2021/22.
- The potential to use more of the Council's reserves to help balance the budget, as an alternative to Council Tax rises.

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- The need to use reserves in emergency circumstances and the potential to classify the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic as an emergency.
- The financial gaps in the Council's budget in 2022/23 and 2023/24 and the action that would need to be taken in order to balance the Council's budget in those years.
- The uncertainty about local government funding and the difficulties this created when trying to balance the budget.
- The minimum level of balances that could be sustained by the Council whilst also balancing the budget.
- The funding available for improvements to bus shelters and the extent to which it was likely this would need to be transferred to Worcestershire County Council as part of that authority's role in managing bus shelters.
- The Council's financial performance in the 2020/21 financial year and the availability of data in respect of the third quarter of the year. Councillor Denaro explained that the data for the third quarter was not yet available, though it was anticipated that by the end of the year the Council would be in a balanced position.
- The potential for residents living in rural wards to access bus services through the demand response transport system. Councillor A. Kent, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services, explained that there would be 3 buses operating in the District in this system and they would operate in a responsive manner, linked to key transport points. The buses would calculate routes in transit under this system.
- The proposals in the budget that would support the continuation of service delivery and the Council's green agenda.
- The potential for some of the Covid grant funding received by the Council to be allocated to supporting businesses and VCS groups in 2021/22.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 the Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2023/24 was subject to a named vote.

## Members voting FOR the Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2023/24

Councillors S. Baxter, A. Beaumont, S. Colella, R. Deeming, G. Denaro, S. Douglas, A. English, M. Glass, S. Hession, C. Hotham, H. Jones, A. Kent, A. Kriss, R. Laight, K. May, M. Middleton, M. Sherrey, P. Thomas, M. Thompson, J. Till, K. Van Der Plank, S. Webb and P. Whittaker. (23)

## Members voting AGAINST the Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2023/24

Councillors L. Mallett, P. McDonald and H. Rone-Clarke. (3)



Members voting to ABSTAIN in the vote on the Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2023/24

Councillors R. Hunter, J. King and S. Robinson. (3)

The vote on the Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2023/24 was therefore carried.

**RESOLVED** that

- 1) The Unavoidable costs be approved:

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

- 2) The Revenue Bids be approved:

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

- 3) The Identified Savings be approved:

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

- 4) The General Fund Capital Programme bids be approved:

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

- 5) The General Fund capital programme be approved:

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

- 6) The net general fund revenue budget be approved.

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

- 7) The increase of the Council Tax per Band D at £5 for 2021/22 be approved; and

- 8) The transfer to Balances of £22k for 2020/21 be approved.

## **Pay Policy Statement 2021/22**

Councillor G. Denaro, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling, presented the Pay Policy Statement 2021/22 for Members' consideration. Council was advised that there was a statutory requirement for the Pay Policy Statement to be considered every year. Due to the shared services arrangements that were in place, 50 per cent of the costs would be covered by Redditch Borough Council.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor G. Denaro and seconded by Councillor K. May.

**RESOLVED** that the Pay Policy Statement 2021/22 be approved.

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## **TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE CABINET HELD ON 17TH FEBRUARY 2021 (TO FOLLOW)**

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021 were noted.

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 24TH FEBRUARY 2021 (TO BE TABLED)**

The Chairman introduced the item and in doing so explained that a meeting of Cabinet had taken place earlier in the day at which recommendations in respect of the Council Tax Resolutions and Council Tax Support Scheme had been considered. As the meeting had taken place that day it had not been possible to draft the minutes of the meeting for Members' consideration at Council. However, the recommendations from the meeting had been published in a supplementary pack for the meeting.

## **Council Tax Resolutions 2021/22**

Councillor G. Denaro, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling, presented the Council Tax Resolutions, as printed in a second supplementary pack for the meeting.

The recommendations in respect of the Council Tax Resolutions were proposed by Councillor G. Denaro and seconded by Councillor K. May.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 the Council Tax Resolutions was subject to a named vote.

### **Members voting FOR the Council Tax Resolutions:**

Councillors S. Baxter, A. Beaumont, R. Deeming, G. Denaro, S. Douglas, A. English, M. Glass, S. Hession, C. Hotham, H. Jones, A. Kent, A. Kriss, R. Laight, K. May, M. Middleton, M. Sherrey, P. Thomas, M. Thompson, J. Till, K. Van Der Plank, S. Webb and P. Whittaker. (22)

Members voting AGAINST the Council Tax Resolutions:

Councillors L. Mallett, P. McDonald and H. Rone-Clarke. (3)

Members voting to ABSTAIN on the Council Tax Resolutions

Councillors S. Colella, R. Hunter, J. King and S. Robinson. (4)

The vote in respect of the Council Tax Resolutions was therefore carried.

**RESOLVED** that

- 1) The calculation for the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2021/22 (excluding Parish precepts) as **£8,664,624.08**.
- 2) The following amounts be calculated for the year 2021/22 in accordance with sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
  - (a) £43,940,922 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the Act (taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils) (*i.e.*, *Gross expenditure*);
  - (b) £34,224,101 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act. (*i.e.*, *Gross income*);
  - (c) £9,716,821 being the amount by which the aggregate of 1.2.2(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 1.2.2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act);
  - (d) £261.30 being the amount at 1.2.2 (c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1.1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts);
  - (e) £1,052,198 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34 (1) of the Act (as per the attached **Schedule 3**);
  - (f) £233.00 being the amount at 1.2.2 (d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 1.2.2 (e) above by Item T (1.1 (a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34 (2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council

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Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates;

- (g) The amounts shown in Column 3 of **Schedule 1**. These are the basic amounts of the council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of the Council's area shown in Column 1 of the schedule respectively to which special items relate, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act. (District and Parish combined at Band D);
- (h) The amounts shown in Column 5 of **Schedule 1** being the amount given by multiplying the amounts at 2.2.2(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands;
- 3) It be noted that for the year 2021/22, Worcestershire County Council, Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia and Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwelling in the Council's area as indicated below:

	Valuation Bands							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Worcestershire County Council	895.89	1,045.20	1,194.52	<b>1,343.83</b>	1,642.46	1,941.09	2,239.72	2,687.66
Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia	160.13	186.81	213.50	<b>240.19</b>	293.57	346.94	400.32	480.38
Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority	58.45	68.20	77.94	<b>87.68</b>	107.16	126.65	146.13	175.36

- 4) That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 1.2.2(h) and 1.2.3 above, that Bromsgrove District Council in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 hereby sets the amounts shown in Schedule 2 as the amounts of Council Tax for 2021/22. for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings;
- 5) The Executive Director Finance & Resources be authorised to make payments under Section 90(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 from the Collection Fund by ten equal instalments between April 2021 to March 2022 as detailed below:

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	Precept £	Deficit on Collection Fund £	Total to pay £
Worcestershire County Council	49,972,401.00	-183,950.00	49,788,451.00
Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia	8,931,837.44	-31,596.78	8,900,240.66
Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority	3,260,346.04	-12,065.05	3,248,280.99

- 6) The Executive Director Finance & Resources be authorised to make transfers under Section 97 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 from the Collection Fund to the General Fund the sum of £9,681,240 being the Council's own demand on the Collection Fund (£8,664,623.06) and Parish Precepts (£1,052,197) and the distribution of the Deficit on the Collection Fund (£35,580);
- 7) The Executive Director Finance & Resources be authorised to make payments from the General Fund to Parish Councils the sums listed on **Schedule 3** by two equal instalment on 1 April 2021 and 1 October 2021 in respect of the precept levied on the Council;
- 8) The above resolutions to be signed by the Chief Executive for use in legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court for the recovery of unpaid Council Taxes;
- 9) Notices of the making of the said Council Taxes signed by the Chief Executive are given by advertisement in the local press under Section 38(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992; and
- 10) That authority be delegated to the Head of Finance and Customer Services (Interim S151) following consultation with the finance portfolio holder to amend the resolution should the Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority Service not approve the estimated figure that is being used in this report. This is due to the Hereford and Worcester Authority Service having their approval meeting after this resolution report has been brought to Council.

## Council Tax Support Scheme 2021/22

Councillor G. Denaro, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling, presented the Council Tax Support Scheme 2021/22 for Members' consideration.

Council was informed that the proposed Council Tax Support Scheme 2021/22 would include 100 per cent relief for residents who were eligible for this support. By contrast, the existing scheme required every resident to make a contribution. Under the new scheme the relief would be tapered, calculated on the basis of household income.

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The proposed changes would impact on some residents who were already in receipt of support under the existing Council Tax Support Scheme. In total, 82 per cent of those who were impacted would receive an increase in support; 3 per cent would not be affected; 15 per cent would experience a reduction in support. Residents who were negatively affected by the changes could apply for additional support under the Council's Hardship Scheme.

During consideration of this item, Members discussed the proposed scheme and, in doing so, questioned how many residents would be impacted negatively and the amount of support they would lose. The exact amounts that each individual affected by the changes might lose could not be clarified at the meeting. However, Councillor Denaro explained that in total the lost support for that 15 per cent of affected residents was equivalent to £88,000. There was £85,000 available through the Hardship Scheme to support people and therefore it was anticipated that where necessary those affected could be helped.

As the full impact on each individual affected by the proposed changes could not be confirmed at the meeting, a deferral in respect of determining this matter was proposed by Councillor R. Hunter. This proposed deferral was seconded by Councillor S. Robinson.

In proposing the deferral of this item, Councillor Hunter commented that it would be helpful for Members to have access to this information before reaching a decision on the subject. Councillor Hunter suggested that the report should be referred back to Cabinet in order for Portfolio Holders to have an opportunity to consider the figures for all of the affected residents.

The proposed deferral was subsequently discussed in detail. On the one hand, Members commented that this would provide an opportunity to consider the number of people impacted by the changes to the scheme, the extent to which they would be impacted and the likely implications for demand for support from the Hardship Scheme moving forward. On the other hand, concerns were raised that changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme needed to be approved prior to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 and there would be limited time available to revisit the matter prior to that date. Reference was made to the potential to hold extraordinary meetings of both Cabinet and Council to consider the matter further, but concerns were raised about the delay that this might cause. Members were advised that the scheme would need to be reviewed again in 12 months' time and the issue raised by Members in respect of the number of people impacted by changes to the scheme could be investigated further at that time.

On being put to the vote, the proposal in respect of deferring a decision on the Council Tax Support Scheme was lost.

The recommendation in respect of the Council Tax Support Scheme was proposed by councillor G. Denaro and seconded by Councillor K. May.

**RESOLVED** that the introduction of 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.

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## **QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

The Chairman advised that 6 questions had been submitted for consideration at the meeting. There would be no subsidiary questions.

### **Question Submitted by Councillor S. Robinson**

“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?”

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services responded by explaining that since April 2020 the Council had collected 6,855 tons of garden waste up until the end of January 2021. There had been a reasonable usage of the Council's garden waste service through the extension in December and January, but with low tonnages of material collected (30% of average monthly tonnage in December, and 18% in January). The service would normally start again at the end of February.

Officers were still awaiting the February data, which was also part of the current extension to the service. This data would be reviewed, involving consideration of the carbon impact of the extension of the scheme against the benefit, the operational impact of continuing the service through this part of the year, and the financial considerations for residents as well as the Council. A report would be produced summarising the outcomes and any proposals for changes to the service later in the year. A decision would then be required on whether the service could be extended in future years. However, it was too early to say by the date of the meeting whether this would be possible, based on tonnage data.

### **Question Submitted by Councillor H. Rone-Clarke**

“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?"

The Leader responded by commenting that officers and members sat on many groups across the county and the region where engagement happened, including the Greater Birmingham and Solihull and Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnerships (GBSLEP and WLEP).

It had recently been announced that there would be £250,000 investment into further bus provision in Bromsgrove to ensure, that the bus and rail networks would work together to allow faster and easier access to the town centre and surrounding areas. The service would make it easier for many residents to access more sustainable modes of transport. This investment in a demand response transport system, followed 2 years of work by the Leader and Deputy Leader, in conjunction with Worcestershire County Council.

Further investment of £17.4 million had been made in the new Bromsgrove Train Station as well as £3.4 million investment in cycling and walking. In addition, there was over £50 million being invested into the A38 improvements for road, cycling and walking in Bromsgrove. In conclusion, the Leader commented that other areas needed to keep up with Bromsgrove.

### **Question Submitted by Councillor S. Colella**

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

The Leader confirmed that the Council was a member of both of these Local Enterprise Partnerships and that this was not in contravention of either organisation's terms of reference.

### **Question Submitted by Councillor P. McDonald**

"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?"

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services explained that the Council engaged with other authorities on a wide range of matters. The authority, working with Worcestershire County Council, was



investing in a Strategic Transport Assessment which would look at issues such as what was occurring in Birmingham. It was key for the district to make sure that there were opportunities for housing and employment locally to prevent the need for people to travel longer distances to Birmingham and beyond every day. More people living and working locally, using the town and village centres in the District, spending locally and keeping local centres viable and vibrant, was something the Council was committed to. Reducing the number of people who needed to work elsewhere was part of the solution.

Following the Council's recent announcement regarding demand response transport, new cycle ways and walkways, action would be taken to ensure that Bromsgrove residents could access the new train station for a commute into Birmingham.

Birmingham City Council had introduced a levy on vehicles which was designed to address emissions. As a consequence of this, some businesses that were based in Birmingham might consider relocating and there was the possibility that some of these businesses would choose to establish a base in Bromsgrove District.

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

"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?"

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling explained that there had been a total of 457 applications. For the main scheme in Bromsgrove, 68 applicants had been successful and under the discretionary scheme 68 applicants had been successful. Unfortunately, the majority of applicants had not been successful because they had not met the criteria.

### **Question Submitted by Councillor J. King**

"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?"

The Leader responded by advising Council that the bid included several work streams and outputs that had to be delivered in accordance with the grant guidance. Details would be considered once the Funding Agreement was issued by the GBSLEP.

One of the key outputs was for local creative businesses to be commissioned to deliver art and cultural activities in Bromsgrove town centre and the local centres. This aspect of grant guidance was more

flexible. Suggestions from officers in accordance with the grant guidance would be included in the Bromsgrove Centres Action Plan 2021-2022 that was in the process of being drafted by Officers in the North Worcestershire Economic Development Unit (NWEDR), for inclusion in the Cabinet Work Programme. There would be an opportunity for Members to input into this.

The Leader concluded by commenting that the Council welcomed a creative industries and culture led economic recovery that would support the recovery of Bromsgrove town centre and other local centres.

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## **MOTIONS ON NOTICE**

### **Climate Change**

Members considered the following Motion on Notice, submitted 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.*

The Motion was proposed by Councillor S. Robinson and seconded by Councillor R. Hunter.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Robinson explained that 2 years' previously she had suggested that a Climate Change Working Group should be established at the Council. At the time, Councillor Robinson had chosen not to set a target in respect of reducing emissions in the District and instead it had been agreed that Members would work together to ensure that this was achieved. However, since then, whilst proud of what the Council had already achieved, Councillor Robinson had concluded that targets should have been set.

Councillor Robinson commented that many members of the Climate Change Working Group felt that the group was not doing as much as it could. The group had not been provided with a budget and whilst well intentioned, Councillor Robinson suggested that it could be achieving more than at present. The Motion was not designed to remove the need for the group, or to cut it out from the process. Instead, the Motion compelled officers to work with the group to bring forward options, including information about the financial implications, that could be used to help the Council move forward. The Motion did not commit the Council to a particular date for action but would enable the authority to make changes in the future. Councillor Robinson concluded that the Motion, should it be approved, would provide Bromsgrove District with a useful plan to address climate change moving forward.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Hunter commented that it was designed to be constructive and to support the work of the Climate

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Change Working Group. Councillor Hunter commented that he was proud of all of the work that the Council had already undertaken to tackle climate change; he suggested that the Motion, if approved, would help to accelerate that progress. Officers would be supported by the proposals, as clear timeframes would be provided setting out when particular actions should be taken and milestones achieved. Members were advised that the Climate Change Working Group would benefit from a bit more direction and this Motion would provide that direction. Furthermore, Councillor Hunter suggested that the group needed to meet more frequently in order to have a greater impact on tackling climate change.

Members subsequently discussed the Motion in detail and during this debate the following points were raised:

- The role of the Climate Change Working Group and recent efforts to ensure that the group would meet more frequently than had been the case when it was first established.
- The extent to which the Motion could be considered to undermine the role of the Climate Change Working Group.
- The possibility that the issues raised in the Motion could be addressed at a meeting of the Climate Change Working Group.
- The Government's work to address climate change and the need to reduce emissions by 2030 in order to keep temperature rises at 1.5° C.
- The hard work of the Climate Change Officer and other staff working to address climate change in the District.
- The Council's previous decision to declare a climate emergency and the need to take action to demonstrate the authority's commitment to tackling climate change.
- The approach that had been adopted by other Councils in respect of setting targets to tackle climate change.
- The recent urgent decision that had been taken in respect of decarbonisation funding for the Artrix.
- The other action that was already being taken by the Council to address climate change, including funding for electric vehicle charging points and the introduction of an electric bus service operating between Bromsgrove town centre and the railway station.
- The role and responsibilities that the Council had invested in the Climate Change Working Group.
- The cross-party arrangements in place for the Climate Change Working Group.
- The potential benefits arising from having a plan in place in respect of tackling climate change.

On being put to the vote the Motion was lost.

The meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.

Chairman

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## Western Relief Road – Presented by Mr Bob Powell

The full text for the petition reads:

### **Bromsgrove Needs a Western Relief Road.**

**Bromsgrove wants a Western Relief Road to help solve our traffic problems and to support the local economy. We, the undersigned, call on Bromsgrove District Council and Worcestershire County Council to urgently put a western relief / distributor road for Bromsgrove into all relevant policies and plans.**

For almost fifty years local residents (and sometimes even the local council) have been calling for a Bromsgrove Western Relief Road (sometimes called the Western Bypass). Over that time the traffic congestion and air pollution in our town have got worse and worse. A Bromsgrove Western Relief Road would dramatically reduce congestion and improve air quality in the town centre and on the A38 (Eastern bypass).

Bromsgrove Council now wants to build our town out to the M5 motorway; without a Bromsgrove Western Relief Road, this risks total gridlock and rat running traffic through areas such as Catshill and roads to the west of the town centre. The council must put the Bromsgrove Western Relief Road into their transport assessment and local plans NOW.

If they do not do this now, the chance of a Bromsgrove Western Relief Road will be lost for ever. Developers want to build over the land needed to construct it and so get away without having to pay for the Western Relief Road that our town desperately needs.

Whitford Vale Voice ([Facebook Page Information](#)) is a community organisation campaigning on transport infrastructure and development in the west of Bromsgrove. We have been campaigning on these issues for over five years. We are independent of any political party and are funded entirely by community donations.

The link to the online petition can be found here: [Western Relief Road Petition](#)

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**REPORT TITLE: PLANNING COMMITTEE – PUBLIC SPEAKING RULES – TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS (TPOs)**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	
Report Author	Job Title: Senior Democratic Services Officer Contact <span style="float: right;">email:</span> <a href="mailto:jess.bayley@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk">jess.bayley@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk</a> Contact Tel: (01527) 64252 Ext: 3268
Wards Affected	N/A
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	An Effective and Sustainable Council
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Council is asked to RESOLVE that:-**

**The Planning Procedure Rules be amended as detailed at Appendix 1 to permit public speaking at meetings of the Planning Committee in respect of Tree Preservation Orders.**

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Following a request from the Planning Committee to investigate the option of allowing speakers in respect of TPOs, the Constitution Review Working Group (CRWG) asked Officers to investigate the matter further and review the procedures at other Councils.
- 2.2 The outcomes of this investigation by Officers was reported for Members' consideration at a meeting of the CRWG held on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. This investigation found that, whilst many Councils have a public speaking process in respect of planning applications advertised on their websites, there was little information available about public speaking in respect of TPOs.
- 2.3 However, during the meeting of the CRWG, Members noted that there was no logical reason why public speaking should not be permitted in respect of TPOs at Planning Committee. Therefore, given the potential for public interest in TPOs, the group recommended that the Planning Procedure Rules should be amended to permit public speaking at

meetings of the Planning Committee in respect of TPOs as highlighted in Appendix 1.

**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There are no specific financial implications.

**4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The law on TPOs is in Part VIII of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012 [the Regulations] and detailed Guidance in 'A Guide to the Law and Good Practice published by the Department of Communities and Local Government [DCLG – now Dept of Housing CLG]
- 4.2 There is no statutory requirement for objectors to speak at Planning Committees in respect of TPOs. Equally, there is no legal bar that would prevent the council from introducing public speaking arrangements for TPOs.
- 4.3 As with planning applications to develop land, there are consultation requirements imposed on the local planning authority when making and confirming TPOs. These are set out in regulation 5 of the Regs.
- 4.4 The main distinction between development applications and TPOs is that the former are submitted by external parties, with the Local Planning Authority [the LPA] processing them within the planning framework. Applications are referred to Planning Committee in some circumstances and certain parties can register to address the Committee.
- 4.5 TPOs however, are made within the Council by professional officers of the Council fulfilling their statutory responsibilities in respect of the protection of trees and woodlands and the TPO acts to prohibit any works to be undertaken to protected trees without permission from the local planning authority [LPA]. This may partly explain why there does not appear to be public speaking on TPOs at other LPAs.
- 4.6 TPOs are first made and then consulted upon. The Regulations set out the requirement to publicise the Order, notify parties that it has been made and allow 28 days for a relevant party to submit objections or representations in respect of the TPO to the LPA.
- 4.7 TPOs must be confirmed within six months of being made and only where objections have been received is the proposed confirmation referred to Planning Committee as offices do not have delegated



authority to confirm an Order where objections have been made.

4.8 At present the Tree Officer includes in their Report to Committee the details of the objection/s received and answers members' questions in relation to the Order and the objections.

4.9 The proposal in this report is that parties who had made such objections should be able to support their objection at the Planning Committee by addressing the Committee in the same way that parties can speak to the Committee in development applications.

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

#### **Relevant Strategic Purpose**

5.1 The proposal detailed in this report support the purpose 'An Effective and Sustainable Council'.

5.2 By agreeing the action recommended by the CRWG, Members will be enhancing the democratic process by enabling the public to participate in the debate regarding TPOs.

#### **Climate Change Implications**

5.2 There are no specific climate change implications.

### **6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

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

6.1 There are no equalities and diversity implications.

#### **Operational Implications**

6.2 TPO reports are only considered at meetings of the Planning Committee where an objection has been received by the Council in respect of the TPO. It is therefore proposed that public speaking should only be permitted in respect of a TPO where the public is registering to speak in opposition to the TPO.

6.3 Temporary planning procedure rules apply to meetings of the Planning Committee whilst these meetings are taking place virtually. The CRWG proposed the changes to speaking rules in respect of TPOs to start with immediate effect. Therefore, the amendments have been highlighted in track changes in both the permanent version of the

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Planning Procedure Rules, at Appendix 3, and in the temporary  
Planning Procedure Rules, at Appendix 4.

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**7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

7.1 No risks have been identified arising from the introduction of public speaking in respect of TPOs at meetings of the Planning Committee.

**8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix 1 – Planning Committee Procedure Rules – amended

Appendix 2 - Temporary Planning Committee Procedure Rules (during virtual meetings – amended)

**9. REPORT SIGN OFF**

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling (including governance arrangements)	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2021
Lead Director / Head of Service	Kevin Dicks, Chief Executive	April 2021
Legal Services	Clare Flanagan, Principal Solicitor	Various dates March and April 2021

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**APPENDIX 1- PLANNING COMMITTEE PROCEDURE RULES  
(amendments in track changes)**

**1. Terms of Reference of Planning Committee**

- 1.1 The Council will appoint a Planning Committee.
- 1.2 The Terms of Reference of the Planning Committee are set out in Part 5 of the Constitution.

**2. Time and Place of Meetings**

- 1.1 There shall be at least 10 meetings of the Planning Committee each year.
- 1.2 The time and place of Planning Committee meetings will be determined by the Chief Executive and notified in the agenda.

**3. Composition of the Planning Committee**

- 3.1 The Planning Committee will comprise 11 Councillors.
- 3.2 Article 8.4 of the Articles at Part 2 of this Constitution applies to the Planning Committee.
- 3.3 Members of the Planning Committee who cannot attend a particular meeting may arrange for a substitute to attend in his or her place provided that they have completed the appropriate training.
- 3.4 The Leader of the Council cannot be a member of the Planning Committee and cannot sit as a substitute on the Planning Committee.

**4. Chairman**

- 4.1 The Planning Committee will appoint one of its members as Chairman at its first meeting following the Annual Council Meeting.
- 4.2 The Chairman of the Planning Committee cannot be a member of the Cabinet.

**5. Quorum**

The quorum for a meeting of the Planning Committee is 6.

**6. Application of Council Procedure Rules**

The Council Procedure Rules (as specified in Council Procedure Rule 22) will apply to all meetings of the Planning Committee except as modified by these Rules.

### **7 Procedure for Determining Applications for Planning Permission**

- 7.1 An officer will present the report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration Services.
- 7.2 Members of the public who have registered to speak may address the meeting when invited to do so by the Chairman and in accordance with the public speaking rules.
- 7.3 Ward members who have registered to speak may then address the meeting when invited to do so by the Chairman and in accordance with both the public speaking rules and these Procedure Rules.
- 7.4 The Chairman will invite members of the Committee to address the meeting. With the consent of the Chairman, members of the Committee are entitled to address the meeting more than once.
- 7.5 Before taking the vote the Chairman will read out the recommendation of the Head of Planning and Regeneration Services and ascertain if any member of the Committee wishes to put forward an alternative recommendation.
- 7.6 If no alternative recommendation is put forward the Chairman will proceed to the vote.
- 7.7 If one or more alternative recommendations are put forward the Chairman will:
- (a) request each member who puts forward an alternative recommendation to read out the alternative recommendation and specify the reasons for the alternative recommendation;
  - (b) invite the Head of Planning and Regeneration Services to advise the Committee on the extent to which the alternative recommendation and reasons for it fall within or outside planning policy;
  - (c) consider whether an adjournment is required to enable the member proposing the alternative recommendation to take advice from officers;
- and only then proceed to the vote.
- 7.8 Each member of the Committee may vote only once in favour of either the recommendation proposed by the Head of Planning and Regeneration Services or an alternative recommendation.

### 8. Public Speaking at Planning Committee

- 8.1 The Council has decided to introduce a public speaking scheme to allow members of the public and other parties to give their views in person about an application for planning permission which affects them when it is being considered by the Planning Committee.
- 8.2 The four classes of speaker who may exercise the opportunity to speak publicly at Planning Committee are:
- a. objector (or agent/ spokesperson on behalf of objectors);
  - b. applicant, or their agent (or supporter);
  - c. Parish Council representative (if applicable);
  - d. Ward Councillor
- 8.3 Any interested party wishing to address the Planning Committee must give notice to the Committee Services Team of his or her intention to do so by 12:00 noon on the day of the Planning Committee meeting.
- 8.4 A total of three minutes shall be allocated to the applicant and/or his/her agent (or to a member of the public) who wish speak in favour of a planning application; if more than one person wishes to speak the time will be allocated in accordance with the Council's Guidance for Public Speaking at Planning Committee.
- 8.5 A total of three minutes shall be allocated to members of the public who wish to speak against a planning application; if more than one person wishes to speak the time will be allocated in accordance with the Council's Guidance for Public Speaking at Planning Committee.
- 8.6 A total of three minutes public speaking time shall be allocated to the representative of the local Parish Council; if more than one Parish Council representative wishes to speak the time will be divided equally between them. The time limits for public speaking may be extended at the discretion of the Chairman but only in exceptional circumstances.
- 8.7 A total of three minutes shall be allocated to Ward Councillors who wish to speak in relation to a planning application in their ward; if more than one Ward Councillor wishes to speak the time will be divided equally between them. In the event that a Ward Councillor is unable for any reason to exercise their Ward Councillor speaking rights they may nominate a substitute member to represent the views of the ward residents.
- 8.8 Guidance for public participation at Planning Committee is published from time to time by the Council. The Chairman of the Planning Committee will retain the discretion to decide at the meeting in which order the public speakers will address the Committee.

- 8.9 The Chairman shall invite the representative of Head of Planning and Regeneration at the conclusion of public speaking on planning applications to correct any factual inaccuracies.
- 8.10 The Council has also decided to introduce a public speaking scheme to allow members of the public and other parties to give their views on the subject of an application in respect of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).
- 8.11 Only people submitting objections to a TPO will be permitted to register to speak publicly at meetings of the Planning Committee.
- 8.12 A person wishing to address in person the Planning Committee in respect of TPOs must give notice to the Democratic Services team in accordance with the timescales set out at paragraph 8.3.
- 8.13 A total of three minutes shall be allocated to a member of the public who wishes to speak in opposition to a TPO. If more than one person wishes to speak, the time will be allocated in accordance with the Council's Guidance for Public Speaking at Planning Committee.
- 8.14 Where a planning application is fully considered at Planning Committee and public speaking rights are exercised, in the event that Members decide to defer application there will be no further public speaking rights. This rule will apply to all classes of public speaker listed at paragraph 8.2. above.

### **9 Members of the Planning Committee with Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) or other disclosable interests and Public Speaking**

Any Member who considers they have a DPI or other disclosable interest in any planning matter, whether or not as a Planning Committee Member, should seek advice from the Monitoring Officer, deputy Monitoring Officer or a member of the Democratic Services Team at an early stage.



**APPENDIX 2: TEMPORARY PLANNING COMMITTEE  
PROCEDURE RULES –  
(amendments in track changes)**

**1. Terms of Reference of Planning Committee**

- 1.1 The Council will appoint a Planning Committee.
- 1.2 The Terms of Reference of the Planning Committee are set out in Part 5 of the Constitution.

**2. Time and Place of Meetings**

- 1.1 There shall be at least 10 meetings of the Planning Committee each year.
- 1.2 The time and place of Planning Committee meetings will be determined by the Chief Executive and notified in the agenda.

**3. Composition of the Planning Committee**

- 3.1 The Planning Committee will comprise 11 Councillors.
- 3.2 Article 8.4 of the Articles at Part 2 of this Constitution applies to the Planning Committee.
- 3.3 Members of the Planning Committee who cannot attend a particular meeting may arrange for a substitute to attend in his or her place provided that they have completed the appropriate training.
- 3.4 The Leader of the Council cannot be a member of the Planning Committee and cannot sit as a substitute on the Planning Committee.

**4. Chairman**

- 4.1 The Planning Committee will appoint one of its members as Chairman at its first meeting following the Annual Council Meeting.
- 4.2 The Chairman of the Planning Committee cannot be a member of the Cabinet.

**5. Quorum**

The quorum for a meeting of the Planning Committee is 6.

**6. Application of Council Procedure Rules**

The Council Procedure Rules (as specified in Council Procedure Rule 22) will apply to all meetings of the Planning Committee except as modified by these Rules.

### **7 Procedure for Determining Applications for Planning Permission**

- 7.1 An officer will present the report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration Services.
- 7.2 Members of the public who have registered to speak may address the meeting when invited to do so by the Chairman and in accordance with the public speaking rules.
- 7.3 Ward members who have registered to speak may then address the meeting when invited to do so by the Chairman and in accordance with both the public speaking rules and these Procedure Rules.
- 7.4 The Chairman will invite members of the Committee to address the meeting. With the consent of the Chairman, members of the Committee are entitled to address the meeting more than once.
- 7.5 Before taking the vote the Chairman will read out the recommendation of the Head of Planning and Regeneration Services and ascertain if any member of the Committee wishes to put forward an alternative recommendation.
- 7.6 If no alternative recommendation is put forward the Chairman will proceed to the vote.
- 7.7 If one or more alternative recommendations are put forward the Chairman will:
  - (a) request each member who puts forward an alternative recommendation to read out the alternative recommendation and specify the reasons for the alternative recommendation;
  - (b) invite the Head of Planning and Regeneration Services to advise the Committee on the extent to which the alternative recommendation and reasons for it fall within or outside planning policy;
  - (c) consider whether an adjournment is required to enable the member proposing the alternative recommendation to take advice from officers;and only then proceed to the vote.
- 7.8 Each member of the Committee may vote only once in favour of either the recommendation proposed by the Head of Planning and Regeneration Services or an alternative recommendation.

### 8. Public Speaking at Planning Committee

- 8.1 The Council has decided to introduce a public speaking scheme to allow members of the public and other parties to EITHER give their views in person OR in writing about an application for planning permission which affects them when it is being considered by the Planning Committee.
- 8.2 The four classes of speaker who may exercise the opportunity to speak publicly at Planning Committee are:
- a. objector (or agent/ spokesperson on behalf of objectors);
  - b. applicant, or their agent (or supporter);
  - c. Parish Council representative (if applicable);
  - d. Ward Councillor
- 8.3 A person wishing to address either in person or in writing the Planning Committee must give notice to the Democratic Services Team of his or her intention to do so by 12.00 noon two working days prior to the Planning Committee meeting in question. Members of the public registering to submit comments in writing must submit the written statement by the same deadline.
- Members of the public who register to address a meeting of the Planning Committee EITHER can do so verbally at the meeting OR by providing a written statement in advance of the meeting.
- 8.4 A total of three minutes shall be allocated to the applicant and/or his/her agent (or to a member of the public) who wish speak in favour of a planning application; if more than one person wishes to speak the time will be allocated in accordance with the Council's Guidance for Public Speaking at Planning Committee.
- 8.5 A total of three minutes shall be allocated to members of the public who wish to either speak or provide a written statement, against a planning application; if more than one person wishes to either speak or provide a written statement, the time will be allocated in accordance with the Council's Guidance for Public Speaking at Planning Committee.
- 8.6 Written statements will be read out by the Democratic Services Officer at the meeting. The written statement should be a length that would take no longer than the allotted time to read. The Democratic Services Officer when reading the written statement will not speak for more than the allotted time, when doing so.
- 8.7 A total of three minutes public speaking time shall be allocated to the representative of the local Parish Council; if more than one Parish Council representative wishes to speak the time will be divided equally

between them. The time limits for public speaking may be extended at the discretion of the Chairman but only in exceptional circumstances.

- 8.8 A total of three minutes shall be allocated to Ward Councillors who wish to speak in relation to a planning application in their ward; if more than one Ward Councillor wishes to speak the time will be divided equally between them. In the event that a Ward Councillor is unable for any reason to exercise their Ward Councillor speaking rights they may nominate a substitute member to represent the views of the ward residents.
- 8.9 Guidance for public participation at Planning Committee is published from time to time by the Council. The Chairman of the Planning Committee will retain the discretion to decide at the meeting in which order the public speakers will address the Committee.
- 8.10 The Chairman shall invite the representative of Head of Planning and Regeneration at the conclusion of public speaking on planning applications to correct any factual inaccuracies.
- 8.11 The Council has also decided to introduce a public speaking scheme to allow members of the public and other parties to EITHER give their views in person OR in writing on the subject of an application in respect of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).
- 8.12 Only people submitting objections to a TPO will be permitted to register to speak publicly at meetings of the Planning Committee.
- 8.13 A person wishing to address either in person or in writing the Planning Committee in respect of TPOs must give notice to the Democratic Services team in accordance with the timescales set out at paragraph 8.3.
- 8.14 A total of three minutes shall be allocated to a member of the public who wishes to speak or provide a written statement to be read out in opposition to a TPO. If more than one person wishes to either speak or provide a written statement, the time will be allocated in accordance with the Council's Guidance for Public Speaking at Planning Committee.
- 8.15 Where a planning application is fully considered at Planning Committee and public speaking rights are exercised, in the event that Members decide to defer application there will be no further public speaking rights. This rule will apply to all classes of public speaker listed at paragraphs 8.2. and 8.12 above.

### **9 Members of the Planning Committee with Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) or other disclosable interests and Public Speaking**

Any Member who considers they have a DPI or other disclosable interest in any planning matter, whether or not as a Planning Committee

Member, should seek advice from the Monitoring Officer, deputy Monitoring Officer or a member of the Democratic Services Team at an early stage.

### 10 Site Visits

During the pandemic, formal site visits will not be possible. Officers will endeavour to provide as much information as necessary, to assist members in their understanding of the site. Should any member of the Committee decide to go on a personal visit to see a site, then they must observe the following:

- Only view the site from the public highway (you do not have the authority to enter a site);
- Do not engage in any conversation with any person you may see at the site, nor disclose the purpose of your visit . If you are approached, explain that the purpose of the visit is to view the site and its surroundings and that you cannot enter into any discussion about the merits of the application.
- Do not take photographs or make recordings with any device including your phone.
- View alone - no third parties may accompany you. Someone can travel with you in your car, but must not be with you when viewing the site.

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## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN UNDER URGENCY PROCEDURES

**Subject:** COVID IMPACT – SUBSIDY TO LEISURE PROVIDER SLM (EVERYONE ACTIVE)

**Brief Statement of Subject Matter:**

On the 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021 the country went into another lockdown and Bromsgrove Sports and Leisure Centre had to close its doors once again. We are hopeful that the facility can re-open on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021 under similar restrictions to those in December 2020.

Continuing from the support the Council gave during 2020, we now need to agree additional support to cover the rest of the financial year, January 2021 through to March 2021

**Decision: To release £105k from balances to support the continued operation of Bromsgrove Sports and Leisure Centre during January to March 2021 following the forced closure in January 2021. The source of this funding in balances is the Covid-19 grant funding received from the Government to manage the impact of the pandemic on local services.** (Further detail for December to March payments, including the 30% agreed National Leisure Recovery Fund £150,000 and the additional one-off payment of £10,299 is highlighted in the table below.)

	Actuals		Forecast	
	Dec	Jan	Feb	March
Expenditure	11,410	51,557	51,548	45,499
Total Expenditure	160,014			
Grant income received	55,299			

Projected deficit	104,715
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**Date: March 2021**

**RESOLVED: That £105k is released from the Covid funding in balances, received from Central Government, to enable the subsidy to be made to SLM to ensure services are maintained to the end of March 2021.**

**Grounds for Urgency:**

As members are aware the Council agreed to make payments to SLM to reflect the costs associated with the forced closure period from April 2020 – 25<sup>th</sup> July 2020 and further payments through to December 2020, to ensure services could continue during periods of opening when the lockdown was lifted. SLM had a contractual entitlement to payments during periods of forced closure which arose as a result of a Change in Law.

Lengthy discussions and negotiations have taken place over the last 11 months to enable a position that is acceptable to the Council and SLM. During any period of opening the payments provided by the Council are on an open book basis with no profit accruing to SLM. The funding from January to March 2021 has been triggered by a Change in Law under the Leisure Operating Contract and, as during the other periods of forced closure, will be provided under an Interim Side Agreement. The funding is subject to an open book arrangement to enable officers of the Council to validate the accounts of SLM and agree any difference. This will be actioned on a monthly basis.

# Agenda Item 10

The Council should be aware and may be reassured that the Leisure Operating Contract requires the operator to mitigate its losses and provide evidence of this and the requirements are fairly stringent. They may also be reassured to know that the Council is not alone in its approach and is in line with the approach that other Councils are taking. Officers have worked through and reviewed the figures presented by SLM to ensure mitigation is being undertaken.

It is worth noting that whilst the Council has received over £1m from Central Government for Covid related expenses, they have also been granted a National Leisure Recovery Fund. This has been allocated by HM Government through Sport England and will not only help support the costs of during the December to March period but also support the reopening and recovery from 12<sup>th</sup> April.

## DECISION APPROVED BY:

.....  
Chief Executive

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Dated

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Section 151 Officer

.....  
Dated

.....  
Monitoring Officer

.....  
Dated

.....  
Leader

.....  
Dated

.....  
Chairman, Overview & Scrutiny Board

.....  
Dated

.....  
Chairman

.....  
Dated



## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN UNDER URGENCY PROCEDURES

**Subject:** Green Homes Funding

**Brief Statement of Subject Matter:**

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) have allocated £59.95m of funding to Phase 2 of the Local Authority Delivery (LAD) element of the Green Homes Grant scheme, of which Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) have been allocated £474,150. This follows a previous allocation under Phase 1a of this scheme, which is currently being delivered targeting privately owned park home sites. The funding is for measures that improve the energy efficiency of properties with energy efficiency ratings of bands D, E, F and G or for static mobile homes (park homes), where the occupants of properties across the scheme need to be at above average risk of fuel poverty. The deadline for completion of funded projects is December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021, unless extended by the Midlands Energy Hub (MEH) with permission from BEIS and HM Treasury as required.

On signing the Award Letter or once MEH has received the funding from BEIS, whichever is later, an additional fixed cost of £2,750 is provide to the Council with their mobilisation payment for Stock Analysis or modelling requirements to support proposal development and future energy efficiency schemes. When combined with the grant allocated to Bromsgrove District Council this amounts to a total of £476,900.

**Decision:** To increase capital and revenue budgets to receive the Council's Green Homes Grant Scheme Local Authority Delivery Part 2 allocation of £476,900.

**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> April 2021

**RESOLVED that:**

- 1) The Capital and Revenue Budgets are increased to receive Bromsgrove District Council's Green Homes Grant scheme Local Authority Delivery Part 2 allocation of £476, 900.
- 2) Delegated authority is granted to the Head of Community and Housing Services following consultation with Portfolio Holders for Housing and Climate Change to administer the funding received in line with the grant conditions.

**Grounds for Urgency:**

The deadline to accept the allocation is 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021. (Insufficient detail was known before the last democratic cycle; however within this democratic cycle a Report has been approved at Cabinet on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and pre-scrutinised at and supported by a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

**DECISION APPROVED BY:**

.....  
Chief Executive

.....  
Dated

# Agenda Item 10

.....  
Section 151 Officer

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Dated

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Monitoring Officer

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Dated

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Leader

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Dated

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Chairman, Overview & Scrutiny Board

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Dated

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Chairman

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Dated

### Cabinet

### 31st March 2021

#### GREEN HOMES FUNDING

<b>Relevant Portfolio Holder</b>	Councillors Shirley Webb/ Margaret Sherrey
<b>Portfolio Holder Consulted</b>	Yes
<b>Relevant Head of Service</b>	Judith Willis
<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Name:</b> Kath Manning <b>Job Title:</b> Climate Change Officer <b>Contact email:</b> kath.manning@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk <b>Contact Tel:</b> Ext 3201, Ext 3044
<b>Wards Affected</b>	No specific ward relevance.
<b>Ward Councillor(s) consulted</b>	n/a
<b>Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Affordable and sustainable homes</li> <li>- Living independent, active &amp; healthy lives</li> <li>- Work and financial independence</li> <li>- Communities which are safe, well maintained &amp; green</li> </ul>
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

#### 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet **RECOMMEND** that:

- 1) The Capital and Revenue Budgets are increased to receive Bromsgrove District Council's Green Homes Grant scheme Local Authority Delivery Part 2 allocation of £476, 900.
- 2) Delegated authority is granted to the Head of Community & Housing Services in consultation with Portfolio Holders for Housing and Climate Change to administer the funding received in line with the grant conditions.

**Cabinet****31st March 2021**

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**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) have allocated £59.95m of funding to Phase 2 of the Local Authority Delivery (LAD) element of the Green Homes Grant scheme, which runs until December 2021.

The distribution of this funding is being managed via Local Energy Hubs (the Midlands Energy Hub in the case of Bromsgrove District).

The allocations have been calculated to reflect the number and proportion of EPC Band E, F and G properties within the Local Authority area: for Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) this will be £474,150.

The deadline to accept the allocation is 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Note this is before the next Full Council meeting and therefore if Cabinet agree the Recommendations, then a decision under Urgency Procedures will be required. (Insufficient detail was known before the last democratic cycle to be able to prepare a Report for Cabinet.)

- 2.2. Key requirements related to the grant scheme are as follows:

- Funded measures must improve the properties' energy efficiency, as measured by the Government's Standard Assessment Procedure for Energy Rating of Dwellings (SAP) ratings.
- Measures must be targeted at properties with the worst SAP ratings: Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) score D (up to 50% of properties), E, F and G. Alternatively for park homes, the local authority can outline why the stock is energy inefficient and high cost to the homeowner. Existing park home EPC and energy cost data will enable BDC to demonstrate this for their Part 2 proposal.
- Decarbonisation of energy systems is integral to the scheme, so no fossil fuel powered measures will be funded.
- The occupants of the properties in the scheme must be overall at above average risk of fuel poverty: across the scheme, most households must have an income of less than £30k or other proxies for fuel poverty risk such as receipt of means tested benefits can be used.
- The average capital works per property cannot exceed £10k.
- The deadline for completion of funded projects is December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021, unless extended by the Midlands Energy Hub with permission from BEIS and HM Treasury as required.
- Any tenures may be funded, though the proportion of funding differs between tenures (see 3. Financial Implications).

**Cabinet****31st March 2021**

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- 2.3. BDC took part in a successful Green Homes Grants LAD Part 1a bid to fund works to privately owned park homes, where there is a high proportion of vulnerable residents living in E, F or G rated properties, for which the completion deadline has been extended to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021. It is anticipated that the Part 2 funding will be used to continue the park home scheme, with the possibility of including other appropriate privately owned or social housing properties should funding allow. Regarding social housing properties, this could include any Housing Association stock in Bromsgrove District of a poorer energy efficiency, including but not limited to Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) as the largest holder of social housing in Bromsgrove District.

**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1. £435,000 is a capital grant for installation of 'Eligible Measures', in 'Eligible Households', by 'Eligible Contractors' each as defined in the MOU in Annex 1 and Annex 2 in accordance with the Midlands Energy Hub Green Homes Grant: Local Authority Delivery Phase 2 Guidance for Local Authorities.
- 3.2. An additional £39,150 of grant funding can be used for administration and enabling works and can be allocated to capital or revenue budgets at the discretion of the Council.
- 3.3. On signing the Award Letter or once MEH has received the funding from BEIS whichever is later, an additional fixed cost of £2,750 is provide to the council with their mobilisation payment for Stock Analysis or modelling requirements to support proposal development and future energy efficiency schemes.
- 3.4. A full project proposal and ongoing reporting (see Operational Implications) is required for receipt of the full Part 2 grant allocation.
- 3.5. Any owner occupier properties, such as the targeted park homes are required by BEIS to be fully funded using the grant monies. For privately rented or social housing properties, Green Homes Grant funding can only fund up to two-thirds of the cost of measures, up to a maximum of £5000.

**4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The general power of competence in s1 of the Localism Act 2011 empowers the council to undertake such a project.
- 4.2 Given the level of spend and timescale, an OJEU compliant framework will be used to procure delivery of the works (in progress).

### Cabinet

31st March 2021

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4.3 A legal review of the Grant Conditions will be undertaken prior to acceptance.

#### 5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS

##### Relevant Strategic Purposes

5.1 The funding aligns as follows:

- **Finding somewhere to live:** improving housing stock
- **Living independent, active & healthy lives:** healthier home environments
- **Aspirations, work & financial independence:** addressing fuel poverty
- **Communities which are safe, well maintained & green:** reducing carbon emissions

##### Climate Change Implications

5.2 This funding is specifically to reduce energy consumption with an emphasis on decarbonisation, so is key for addressing Climate Change.

#### 6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

##### Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.1. Allocation of the funding will be based on criteria set by BEIS and will not be based on personal characteristics other than related to income.

6.2. Equality and Diversity considerations particularly in relation to accessibility will be included in procurement of Contractors and the design of the project, with the Policy Team consulted as necessary.

##### Operational Implications

6.3 The Climate Change Officer will oversee delivery, working closely with:

- the procured Customer Journey support agency
- the organisation designated by the Midlands Energy Hub to oversee and monitor the scheme, including provision of technical support.

6.5 Once contractors are procured, detailed technical surveys, Retrofit Assessments and pricing will take place, to enable production of the proposal.

### Cabinet

### 31st March 2021

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#### 6.4 Key Dates:

15/4/21	Deadline to enable signing of award letter and enable release of mobilisation payment
24/5/21	Final deadline for submitting proposal and accessing full funding allocation
July	Interim report
December 31 <sup>st</sup> 2021	Delivery completion deadline

#### 7. RISK MANAGEMENT

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Effect</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
No funding	Benefits not realised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accept funding</li> </ul>
Timescales	Deadlines missed, funding not accessed or needs to be returned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation already in progress.</li> <li>• Close communication with Midlands Energy Hub regarding potential delays.</li> <li>• Any risks related to returning funding will be reviewed with legal once full Grant Conditions are available.</li> </ul>
Covid19	Transmission and resultant harm, impact on timescales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covid-secure practices.</li> <li>• Health and Safety involvement in project planning.</li> </ul>
Insufficient experience of low carbon technologies	Measures underperform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expert advice from PEEP and Midlands Energy Hub</li> </ul>

### Cabinet

### 31st March 2021

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#### 8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background papers:

- Midlands Energy Hub (MEH) Green Homes Grants Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Part 2 – Grant Letter Bromsgrove
- Midlands Energy Hub (MEH) Green Homes Grants Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Part 2 Guidance

#### 9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Shirley Webb Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing and Health and Well Being  Cllr Margaret Sherrey Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services (including Climate Change)	10/3/2021
Lead Director / Head of Service	Judith Willis Head of Community & Housing Services	10/3/2021
Financial Services	Kate Goldey Senior Business Support Accounting Technician  Chris Forrester Head of Finance and Customer Services	3/3/2021  11/3/2021
Legal Services	Clare Flanagan Principal Solicitor	4/3/2021
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	n/a	
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)	Kath Manning	Report author



## CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL

On 21<sup>st</sup> April 2021

### Cabinet meeting 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021

#### Finance Monitoring 2021/22 – Quarter 3 Report

#### **RECOMMENDED to Council that**

- 1) an increase to the Capital programme 2020/21 of match funding from PCC for digital upgrade of CCTV £19k be approved;
- 2) the increase in the capital programme of £30k for 2021/22, £20k 2022/23 for Welfare and business improvements at Bromsgrove Sporting be approved; and
- 3) an increase to the revenue budget by £4k, to be funded by reserves to help fund a school's financial literacy programme, be approved.

#### Green Homes Funding

(As the recommendations in respect of the Green Homes funding needed to be resolved by 15<sup>th</sup> April those recommendations were approved via the Council's urgent decision process).

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#### Finance Monitoring Quarter 3 2020/21

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling Services
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Chris Forrester Head of Finance and Customer Services
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.	

### 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

**That Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE and note –**

The current financial position in relation to revenue and capital budgets for the financial period April 2020 – December 2020.

**That Cabinet RECOMMENDS to Council the: -**

- 1.1 Approval of an increase to the Capital programme 2020/21 of match funding from PCC for digital upgrade of CCTV £19k **see 3.6.1**
  
- 1.2 Approval of the increase in the capital programme of £30k for 2021/22, £20k 2022/23 for Welfare and business improvements at Bromsgrove Sporting **see 3.6.2**
  
- 1.3 Approval of an increase to the revenue budget by £4k to be funded by reserves to help fund a school's financial literacy programme see **3.3.1**

### 2. BACKGROUND

To report to Cabinet on the Council's financial position for Revenue and Capital for the financial period April 2020 – December 2020.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 This report provides details of the financial performance of the Council for 2020/21. The report reflects the finances across the new strategic purposes to enable Members to be aware of the level of income and expenditure attributed to each area and how this compares to budget. The summary below shows the financial revenue position for the Council for the period April to December 2020/21.
- 3.2 Financial reports are sent to budget holders on a monthly basis. As part of this process a detailed review is undertaken with support from the finance team to ensure that all issues are considered and significant savings or cost pressures are addressed. This report explains the key variances to budget for 2020/21.
- 3.3 The £11.812m original budget as included in the table below is made up of the budget approved in February 2020.

In addition the Latest Budget 2020/21 of £11.902m includes the net transfers from reserves of £90k which is shown in **appendix 2**.

### Revenue Budget Summary – Overall Council Financial Year 2020/21

Please note figures have been rounded

Strategic Purpose	Original Budget 2020/21 £'000	Revised budget 2020/21 £'000	Budget to date 2020/21 £'000	Actuals to date 2020/21 £'000	Variance to date 2020/21 £'000	Projected outturn 2020/21 £'000	Projected Variance 2020/21 £'000
Affordable and sustainable home	695	863	683	656	-28	817	-46
Communities which are safe, well maintained, and green	4,922	4,857	3,322	3,483	161	5,130	273
Enabling the Authority	5,357	5,337	3,905	3,823	-81	5,308	-29
Living independent, active and healthy lives	377	457	245	184	-60	473	16
Run and grow a successful business	-51	-112	-117	487	604	733	845
Work and financial independence	512	501	-236	63	299	633	133
<b>Totals</b>	<b>11,812</b>	<b>11,902</b>	<b>7,803</b>	<b>8,697</b>	<b>894</b>	<b>13,094</b>	<b>1,193</b>
<b>Financing</b>	<b>-11,812</b>	<b>-11,902</b>	<b>-10,970</b>	<b>-11,090</b>	<b>-120</b>	<b>-12,002</b>	<b>-100</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-3,167</b>	<b>-2,393</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>1,093</b>	<b>1,093</b>

#### Financial Commentary:

It is important to note that the council has received £1,255k in COVID-19 grants in four tranches from central government to date of which £468k has been spent. This means that there is £786k remaining which can be used to mitigate some of the overspends/losses as shown above and explained in more detail below as appropriate. It has recently been announced that the Council will receive a fifth tranche of grant £411k which is still waiting to be received.

The Council has also filled in returns to central government with the expectation that a proportion of the losses the council has experienced detailed on the returns due to COVID-19 will be met by government which should reduce the deficit position detailed above. The Council has received the first quarter of this grant and has been factored into the above figures. The Council is still awaiting confirmation on the second quarter grant and if and when this will be received.

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There are a number of variances across the strategic purposes. The summary above shows the 2020/21 revenue position for the Council to the end of quarter 3 and the main variations are as a result of the below.

**Affordable and sustainable home (£46k projected underspend)**

The costs associated with homeless prevention, housing strategy and charges are all included in the strategic purpose.

- The main variance is within Land charges **27k**. This is due to receiving additional income against the budgeted target along with a reduction in fees we pay Worcester County Council which is due to some fees now no longer being rechargeable.

**Communities which are safe, well maintained and green (£273k projected overspend)**

These budgets include those relating mainly to environmental services, planning, CCTV and other activities to deliver against the purpose ensuring an area is both safe and attractive for the community.

- Bereavement services have received less income than expected from burial fees going in to the third quarter of **£36k** due to the pandemic restrictions that have been in force stopping some service items such as cremated remains burials. It is therefore projected this will continue for the foreseeable future and projected shortfall in income will be **£46k** by the end of the financial year 2020/21.
- Building Control have seen an increase in activity in the local construction sector after the initial lockdown in quarter 1 with a significant upturn in demand once matters normalised. This appears to have plateaued and introduced a false peak. Some concern is felt regarding the negative effect of any future local lock down. Whilst the sector is expected to continue the winter months often see a decrease in demand. The forecasted shortfall in income is projected therefore at **£52k**.
- Core Environmental operations have some underspends on salaries. It is expected they will be filled going into the final quarter of the year and it is projected to show an overall saving for 2020/21 of **£29k**.
- Development Control have a shortfall in income in quarter 3 of 2020/21 due to the profiled budget **£69k**. It is therefore projected this will continue for the remainder of the financial year and its expected shortfall for the year is **£74k**.
- Environmental services management and support teams have made savings on training budgets which is due to Covid-19 and also on ICT budgets as now a later than planned implementation of the new environmental services system **£32k**.

- 
- Environmental services Place teams have some underspends on salary savings **£11k**. This is due a review of service requirements and it is hoped after delayed recruitment due to COVID-19 these posts will be filled into the third quarter and projected therefore by year end to show savings of **£16k**.
  - Stores and Depot have increased costs due to security issues which will be resolved later in the year. This will see a projected overspend by the end of the year of **£43k**.
  - There is an underspend in strategic planning due to temporary salary vacancies. These are planned to be filled going into the new financial year **£57k**.
  - There are some salary savings in the Tree management team following a services delivery review **£80k**. While some posts have been recruited too there are some that remain vacant. It is therefore projected there will be a underspend by year end **£102k**.
  - Waste management have some additional commercial Waste Disposal Costs. A Business case has been put forward to address this going forwards in the budget. There are also increased costs from Severn Trent on disposal of septic waste which is being challenged and overspends on additional overtime due to out of Hours Callout costs, which is also being reviewed corporately. This has now been addressed and amended in the budget for the new financial year **£301k**.

#### **Enabling the Authority ( £38k projected underspend)**

All support services and corporate overheads are held within the enabling purpose. These include IT, HR, Finance, Management team and other support costs.

- There is a variance in Commercialism due to some additional costs required in 2020/21 **£26k**.
- There is a variance in Corporate services which is due to a vacancy management factor target to be met. This will be reallocated from other services by the end of the financial year. See savings monitoring at point 4 to this report **£86k**.
- Corporate services also have an overspend due to higher than originally budgeted for pension costs. Officers are currently looking into how this deficit can be mitigated **£129k**
- Customer Services, Democratic Services and member support and ICT have temporary salary underspends projected **£151k**.
- Legal services expenditure for external support for commercial projects has reduced over the past 12 months due to lockdown and a reduction in working times. This is likely to return in the coming months **£32k**.
- Training and organisational development have underspend on the corporate training budget due COVID-19 having had a direct impact on our ability to continue with all training, some training was paused, and we are currently

reviewing how we will continue to provide the necessary training in light of the pandemic, including moving to remote training as appropriate **£47k.**

#### **Living independent, active & healthy lives (£16k projected overspend)**

There are a number of budgets relating to the delivery of the strategic purpose including Lifeline, Community Transport and Disabled Facilities Grants.

- There is a variance within Business development – Leisure service due to not receiving the first and second quarter income fee for BSLC which is due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have made a claim to the Government for the loss of fees and charges and are currently awaiting an update as to whether we be claim a proportion of the lost amount. This will be allocated to the shortfalls in income for BSLC should the Council receive these monies **£193k.**

Members will also be aware of additional payment made to everyone active in terms of the losses incurred during the forced closure of the site. This has been reflected as transfer from the COVID-19 grant and therefore does not show as an overspend within Business development.

- There are some savings in CCTV & Lifeline and Community transport due to temporary salary vacancies **£25k.**
- Sports & Arts Development and Parks & events have some underspends due to events not taking place in the first and second quarters also due to Covid **£110k.**

#### **Run and grow a successful business (£845k projected overspend)**

The budgets within the strategic purpose include economic development, car parking, all licenses and costs associated with the town and other centres within the District.

- The main overspend is within car parks which is due to the temporary suspension of car parking charges and the reduced income levels throughout this financial year so far which is anticipated to continue to the year end and beyond because of COVID-19 **£694k.** The government have announced a compensation scheme for lost fees and charges income and officers have worked through an application for the second quarter for these funds and are awaiting confirmation.
- Assets & Facilities management have a projected overspend due to the Parkside building only being partially open and therefore a reduction in the SLA (service level agreement) has been received **£81k.**
- There is also a variance on markets which again is due to the impact of COVID-19 **£60k**
- Licences has a shortfall of income in the going into the third quarter of 2020/21 **£23k**

#### **Work and Financial independence (£133k projected overspend)**



The strategic purpose includes all costs relating to the support of benefits and the administration and delivery of Council Tax services and business rates in the District.

- Benefits subsidy has is showing an overspend due to not all the housing benefit overpayments being recovered against the estimated budgeted amount requires **£136k**.
- Revenues has a variance due to a pending service review which is currently underway **£8k**.

#### **Corporate Financing (£100k projected underspend)**

- It is expected that additional costs will be incurred for a Levy payment to the Worcestershire Pool due to the growth of Business Rates in the area from what we had predicted in the initial Government Return at the start of the year. Some of this will be re-distributed back to the Council which would not have been the case if we weren't part of a pooling arrangement.
- This has been netted off against savings on MRP and interest due the Capital programme having delays on certain projects.

#### **3.3.1 Schools Financial literacy programme**

As request at 1.3 £4k is required to help support schools financial literacy programme. The 'Money Wise' financial literacy programme has helped over 1500 11-16 year olds across Waseley Hills High School and Woodrush High School on all aspects of financial education over the academic year, and has allowed young people to leave school with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour to manage their money well. Because of the simple nature of the programme and the way it is designed, it has helped teachers across both schools to develop a cohort approach to the delivery of financial education.

The programme has been taught as a stand-alone subject as well as complementing other parts of the curriculum. For example, careers programme where the aim is to provide students with the skills and confidence for employability in line with the current employment expectations and once in employment the individual will have financial responsibility e.g. setting up bank accounts, paying bills and saving money.

Through utilising the resources over the academic year, 11-16 years olds know; -

- 1) Where money comes from, keeping it safe and the importance of managing it efficiently
- 2) How money plays an important part in the peoples' lives
- 3) Manage risks and emotions associated with money
- 4) How to make informed choices
- 5) Failure to understand risks i.e. loan sharks
- 6) How personal financial choices can affect oneself and others

It has also met, and is being utilised as part of the Gatsby Benchmark of Good Career Guidance as; -

- A stable careers' programme
- Learning about careers and labour market information
- Linking curriculum learning to careers
- Personal guidance

The programme has been taught along the following lines: -

Years 7, 8 & 9 - Learners talked about future aspirations and careers and the monetary as well as educational planning implications linked to various careers - looking at healthy lifestyles and Relationships and linking this into discussions on the living costs of difficult lifestyles.

Years 10 & 11 - Teaching staff stepped up the emphasis on preparing the learners about their life outside school. They began to partake in work experience and learnt how to use bank accounts, budgeting, student life and revisit the financial implication of various lifestyles.

The schools see the 'Money Wise' programme as being of the utmost importance in helping to send their learners out in the 'Big Wide World' with a comprehensive tool kit of techniques for success to benefit not just the individual student but also the community as a whole.

As many of the pupils involved in the programme live in areas of pockets of deprivation, the 'Money Wise' programme has had a knock-on effect of students being able to advise and educate their parents about financial responsibilities.

As per previous years, the Children's Safety Education Foundation will be responsible for endorsing each of the resources with your local and mission statement.

Bromsgrove District would be continuing to support the 'Money Wise' financial literacy programme at Secondary schools of choice at a cost of £4k, especially at this time when mental health and young people's well-being are of particular importance during these times of uncertainty and change.

#### 3.4 **Savings Monitoring**

The medium-term financial plan included £510k of savings identified to be delivered during 2020/21. The breakdown of these savings is attached at **appendix 2**. £45k of these identified savings is in relation to reductions in enabling costs.

To quarter 3 £373k in identified savings have been realised against the budgeted April to December savings of £382k.

In addition to the above officers have been required to find further savings throughout the financial year 2020/21 to meet the vacancy factor (£170k) and the enabling services (£45k) targets. At quarter 3 additional savings (above those identified) have been realised of £438k.

#### 3.5 **Cash Management**

##### **Borrowing**

As of the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2020, there were no short-term borrowings. Within the quarter, there had been £7k of short-term interest paid and there was no long-term borrowing.

An interest payable budget had been set of £386k for 2020/21 due to expenditure relating to current capital projects.

##### **Investments**

On 31st December 2020 there were £7.5m investments held. During the quarter, the council received £1,357.85 in interest from treasury investments. The council also incurred negative interest rates charges of £12.88. It has been necessary to make some negative interest rate investments to spread the risk of the council's investment portfolio and adhere to the treasury management strategy's maximum investment limits. Negative interest deposits have only been made with the Government's Debt Management Office deposit facility when the maximum investment limit has been reached with the higher yielding Money Market Fund and when bank balances have been above the £2m risk level.

An interest receivable budget has been set of £161k for 2020/21 for any investments we make

### 3.6 Capital Budgets

#### Capital Budget Summary – Overall Council Financial Year 2020/21

Please note figures have been rounded

Strategic Purpose	Original Budget 2020/21 £'000	Revised budget 2020/21 £'000	Budget to date 2020/21 £'000	Actuals to date 2020/21 £'000	Variance to date 2020/21 £'000	Projected outturn 2020/21 £'000	Projected Variance 2020/21 £'000
Communities which are safe, well maintained, and green	3,481	8,327	6,298	1,530	-4,768	1,913	-6,414
Enabling the Authority	55	392	330	194	-136	218	-174
Living independent, active, and healthy lives	835	1,643	1,232	539	-693	910	-733
Work and financial independence	0	5	3	0	-3	0	-5
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4,371</b>	<b>10,367</b>	<b>7,864</b>	<b>2,263</b>	<b>-5,600</b>	<b>3,041</b>	<b>-7,326</b>

#### Financial Commentary:

#### Communities which are safe, well maintained and green

These budgets include those relating mainly to Environmental services – Fleet replacement, Finance and Customer Services – Burcot lane and the Regeneration fund and Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services to deliver against the purpose ensuring an area is both safe and attractive for the community.

- The Olev/Ulev Scheme is showing a slight underspend to date but will be expected to be completed by the end of the financial year **£200k**.
- The fleet replacement program is showing an underspend to date and will be projected to still be the case by year end **£416k**. A request to move £95k into

2021/22 to cover the replacement of a tractor as the specification has not been agreed in time and the procurement of a new washbay ramp has proved difficult as a suitable framework has not yet been found. All other vehicles will have been replaced by the end of March 2020/21. Any residual funds in the budget can therefore remain.

- The Infrastructure Works and the depot have been postponed due to the future of site still to be determined. This will be reviewed going into the last quarter of the financial year **£252k**.
- The regeneration fund has had delays this financial year due to the current pandemic and it is therefore hoped this will resume in the new financial year **£4.350m**
- Due to COVID-19 there has been a delay in delivery of the re-landscaping of the recreation ground scheme. This scheme will commence in quarter 2 of the new financial year and a request is made to carry the existing budget into the new financial year **£211k**.

### Enabling the Authority

These budgets include those relating mainly to Environmental services – Computer Systems and Finance and Customer Services – New Enterprise systems to deliver robust and efficient enabling services.

- The variance for this quarter relates to the Fleet management computer system and the Environmental Services Computer system. Suitable systems are being finalised prior to procurement taking place via a Framework **£174k**.

### Living independent, active & healthy lives

There are a number of budgets relating to the delivery of the strategic purpose including Funding for Disabled Facilities Grants, CCTV and Home repairs Assistance.

- The main underspend relates to the Disabled Facilities grant budget (DFG's) there has been little activity on this project in the first year of using a new agency and due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It will be requested to carry forward the balance remaining into the new financial year 2021/22.

### Work and Financial independence

- This budget relates to the Energy Efficiency grant received for Worcestershire county council it is anticipated this will now be spent in the new financial year and it will be requested to carry forward the budget into 2021/22.

#### 3.6.1 CCTV infrastructure

As requested at 1.1 West Mercia PCC has made available a further £19k CCTV capital grant to support the current digital infrastructure upgrade to the North Worcestershire CCTV scheme.

This further funding is to join the already approved scheme which CCTV Community Services are currently co-ordinating. This will further enhance the CCTV infrastructure upgrade as opposed to the purchase of replacement analogue cameras and once implemented the digital infrastructure will reduce transmission costs from the revenue budget.

Following the successful digitization of the CCTV infrastructure project at Redditch and Bromsgrove and other collaborative initiatives across West Mercia the PCC were keen to make further investment in CCTV across the region, enabling Councils to further enhance and improve the CCTV provision, of which the Police force is a primary beneficiary.

#### 3.6.2 Bromsgrove Sporting football club limited

It is requested at 1.2 for an increase in the capital programme of £50k across the financial years 2021/22 and 2022/23 for funding to support Bromsgrove Sporting FC Ltd.

Bromsgrove Sporting FC Ltd is committed to improving football facilities for all members of the community and fully embraces the need for inclusivity within the sport regardless of age, income, ethnicity, gender, ability, disability, sexual, religious, or moral beliefs. Their intention is to continue to embed the football club within the community through the Community Charter Standard requirements and to ensure that they provide the best possible environment for players, officials, and spectators to enjoy the game whether it be at the First Team level or Junior and Colts levels and is safe, inclusive, and welcoming for all sections of the community to participate.

Furthermore, by working in partnership with the County Football Association, Bromsgrove Council, the Bromsgrove Sporting Supporters Society, local football clubs and other interested parties, we will continue to enhance our ability to provide coaching, training, education, management, and the infrastructure to meet the needs of football in the Bromsgrove area.

They require a total of £50,000 if agreed with the Council to be paid over the financial years 2021/22 and the remainder in financial year 2022/23.

Their proposals are divided into two areas, 'welfare' and 'business improvement'.

**Welfare expenditure as follows:**

Disabled Toilet and New Toilet block

Disabled Persons Viewing Area

Refurbishment of the First Aid Room  
Designation of Disabled Car Parking Spaces.

**Business Improvement as follows:**

Provision of Roller Shutters for two main snack bars  
Refurbishment of Main Bar 'behind house' facilities

These are all dependent on the schedule of funds being released by the Council.

**3.7 Earmarked Reserves**

The position as of 30<sup>th</sup> December 2020/21 is shown in **Appendix 1**.

**3.8 General Fund Balances**

The General Fund Balance as at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 is £4.408m. A balanced budget was approved in February 2020 to include identified savings which have been built into individual budget allocations. This also included a planned return to balances for 2020/21 of £170k.

**4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 No Legal implications have been identified.

**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 borough and

our communities. Our Financial monitoring and strategies are integrated within all of our Strategic Purposes.

**Climate Change Implications**

- 5.2 The green thread runs through the Council plan. The Financial monitoring report has implications on climate change and these will be addressed and reviewed when relevant by climate change officers to ensure the correct procedures have been followed to ensure any impacts on climate change are fully understood.

**6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

**Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 6.1 No direct implications as a result of this report.

**Operational Implications**

- 6.2 Managers meet with finance officers monthly to consider the current financial position and to ensure actions are in place to mitigate any overspends.

**7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 The financial monitoring is included in the corporate risk register for the authority.

**8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix 1 - Earmarked Reserves 2020/21

Appendix 2 - Savings Monitoring 2020/21

Appendix 3 – Capital programme – slippage request to 2021/22



**Cabinet**  
2021

31<sup>st</sup> March

**9. REPORT SIGN OFF**

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

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# FINANCIAL RESERVES STATEMENT 2020/21

Appendix 1

Please note these figures have been rounded

Description	Balance b/fwd 1/4/2020	Budgeted Release /New reserves 2020/21	Revised Balance b/fwd 1/4/2020	Transfers in existing reserve 2020/21	Transfers out existing reserve 2020/21	New Reserve 2020/21	C/fwd 31/3/2020	Planned use for 2021/22 Budget	Comment
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Building Control	(7)	0	(7)	0	0	0	(7)	0	To Fund the mobile working project
Building Control Partnership	(69)	0	(69)	0	0	(18)	(87)	0	Partnership income has to be reinvested back in to the service.
Commercialism	(10)	0	(10)	0	10	0	0	0	To help fund costs in relation to commercialism projects
Community Services	(43)	0	(43)	0	21	0	(22)	0	To help towards a district network feasibility study and unauthorised trespass prevention.
Economic Growth Development	(1,342)	150	(1,192)	0	3	(155)	(1,344)	350	To fund the Economic Development opportunities across the District
Election Services	(96)	50	(46)	(5)	0	0	(51)	0	To support the delivery of individual electoral registration and to set aside a reserve for potential refunds to government
Financial Services	(479)	0	(479)	(25)	0	0	(504)	0	A number of reserves / grants have been set aside to support residents through the changes to welfare reform along with a reserve to support our Business continuity plans. This also includes funds to support the new enterprise system
Corporate Financing	(2,784)	(1,122)	(3,906)	0	0	0	(3,906)	100	The reserve has been created to offset the loss on Business rates collection and appeals in 2019/20.
Housing Schemes	(475)	0	(475)	0	145	0	(330)	142	To support the feasibility and implementation of housing schemes across the district
ICT/Systems	(87)	0	(87)	0	7	0	(80)	0	To provide replacement ICT and systems across the authority.
Leisure/Community Safety	(291)	0	(291)	0	121	0	(169)	0	Grant received and reserves set aside to support a number of leisure and well-being schemes across the District
Local Neighbourhood Partnerships	(16)	0	(16)	0	0	0	(16)	0	Grant received in relation to liveability schemes
Other	(115)	0	(115)	0	6	0	(109)	44	General reserves including - support for apprentices, set up costs and Brexit reserve.
Planning	(108)	0	(108)	0	0	(20)	(128)	0	Reserves in relation to a custom build grant to provide support to the council towards expenditure lawfully incurred in relation to the provision and maintenance of a self-build register, along with reserves to help towards future planning appeals.
Regulatory Services (Partner Share)	(35)	0	(35)	0	0	0	(35)	0	BDC Share of WRS grant related reserves
Shared Services Agenda	(311)	0	(311)	0	0	0	(311)	0	To fund potential redundancy and other shared costs
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>(6,268)</b>	<b>(922)</b>	<b>(7,190)</b>	<b>(30)</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>(193)</b>	<b>(7,100)</b>	<b>638</b>	

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## SAVINGS &amp; ADDITIONAL INCOME - BDC

APPENDIX 2

Department	Service	Strategic Purpose	Description of saving	2020-21 £'000	2020-21 Apr - Dec £'000	Quarter 3			
						On target Y/N	Additional (add to to in yr savings) £'000	below target Y/N	Pressure £'000
Community & Housing Services	Lifeline	Living independent, active & healthy lives	New Lifeline Digital Upgrade	-11	-8	Y			
Chief Executive	Printing & Reprographics	Enabling	Additional Savings from New Print Contract	-5	-4	Y	-4		
Chief Executive	Corporate Services	Enabling	Management Review	-54	-41	Y			
Chief Executive	Corporate Services	Enabling	Reduction in enabling costs - 1% per annum	-45	-34	Y			
Chief Executive	Corporate Services	Enabling	Saving on the estimated payment to the Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership	-150	-113	Y			
Finance and Customer Services	Customer Services	Work and financial independence	Full Service review	-30	-23	Y			
Environmental Services	Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	Income from Worcestershire County Council (WCC) for design services provided by Engineering & Design Team	-2	-2	N		Y	2
Environmental Services	Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	Inflation on WCC income for verge maintenance	-2	-2	Y			
Environmental Services	Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	Garden waste income	-25	-19	Y			
Environmental Services	Bereavement Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	Additional income from new structure re commercialism	-11	-8	N		Y	8
Finance and Customer Services	Finance	Enabling	Insurance contract saving	-130	-98	Y			
Legal, Democratic & Leisure Services	Facilities Management	Run and grow a successful business	Historic Budgets no longer required.	-2	-2	Y			
Legal, Democratic & Leisure Services	Facilities Management	Run and grow a successful business	Historic Budgets no longer required.	-1	-1	Y			
Legal, Democratic & Leisure Services	Facilities Management	Run and grow a successful business	Additional income in relation to rents for land around the district	-4	-3	Y			
Legal, Democratic & Leisure Services	Business Development	Enabling	Extra income for rental of the Parkside rooms	-1	-1	N		Y	1
Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Sports and Arts Development	Living independent, active & healthy lives	Reduction in Sports Development budgets	-5	-4	Y			
Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Business Development	Run and grow a successful business	Reduction in NNDR budgets for Town centre Market stalls	-7	-5	Y			
Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Parks and Events	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	Reduction in Tree Works Budgets	-5	-4	Y			
Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Development Control	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	Savings on car mileage budgets	-4	-3	Y			
Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Development Control	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	Various general supplies and service budgets savings	-2	-2	Y			
Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Strategic Planning	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	Savings on employee Expenses budgets and other supplies and service budgets	-6	-5	Y			
Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Strategic Planning	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	Savings on consultant fee budgets	-1	-1	Y			
Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Building Control	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	Savings on photocopying & Print budgets	-2	-1	Y			
Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Building Control	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	Savings on ICT budgets	-1	-1	Y			
Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Building Control	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	Savings on marketing budgets	-2	-1	Y			
BDC Reg Client	BDC Reg Client	Run and grow a successful business	Inflationary increase	-2	-2	Y			
BDC Reg Client	BDC Reg Client	Run and grow a successful business	Inflationary increase	-2	-2	N			2
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>-510</b>	<b>-382</b>		<b>-4</b>		<b>13</b>

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Description	Department	Strategic Purpose	Revised Full Year Budget 2020-21 £	Projected Outturn 2020-21 £	Projected Variance £	Request for Slippage to 2021/22 £	Comments
OLEV ULEV Taxi infrastructure scheme	Community & Housing GF Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	400,000	200,000	-200,000	200,000	The project was due to be completed in December but was delayed due to the 2nd lock down. It will now be completed during Quarter 4 and going in to the first quarter of 2021/22.
Bus Shelters	Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	18,000	0	-18,000	18,000	Work to be completed May 21. Would like this moved to 2021/22. Unfortunately the volume of work expected by the engineering team has meant that this work has slipped, due to time needed to renew the bus shelter framework contract with procurement.
Cemetery Extension infrastructure at at North Bromsgrove Cemetery Phase Two	Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	8,000	3,696	-4,304	4,000	New plinths installed but not needed to use the additional amount at this time. Possible pressure to come in final quarter of year due to increased death rate.
Fleet Replacement	Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	1,536,253	1,120,069	-416,184	95,000	Request to move £95,000 into 2021/22 to cover the replacement of a tractor as the service area did not agree the specification in time and the procurment of a new washbay ramp has proved difficult as a suitable framework has not been found yet. All other vehicles will have been replaced by the end of March 21.
Replacement lighting at the Depot	Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	23,000	3,642	-19,358	19,358	£3.6k spent on lighting for security cameras. Move £19k to 2021/22 Delayed while depot discussions take place.
Infrastructure Works Bdc Depot	Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	252,000	0	-252,000	252,000	Move to 2021/22 Delayed while depot discussions take place
Replacement Parking machines	Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	120,000	12,000	-108,000	108,000	Figure now included in new car park 5 year capital scheme. New Road Lighting - £11,000 Virtual Permit scheme - £1000 CCTV - Contractor cant complete before April. Metric machines are on hold due to issues with the new finance system and compatability
Regeneration Fund	Financial & Customer Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	4,350,000	0	-4,350,000	4,350,000	Due to current conditions, projects hopefully resume in 2021-22
Re-landscaping of Recreation Ground	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	211,000	0	-211,000	211,000	Due to Covid and vacant post within Leisure there has been a delay in delivery of scheme. This scheme will be programmed to commence with in 2021/22 Q2 and 3
Bittell road recreation ground	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	62,000	44,000	-18,000	18,000	18k roll forward into 2021/22 for fitness equipment ongoing project to be completed Q1 2021
Rubery Redevelopment Works	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	32,738	0	-32,738	32,738	The project has various quotes in place for some work on the Rubery public toilet block, however due to other priorities this hasn't happened. We're also looking at various other projects, including additional green space, community signage and communications, which unfortunately haven't materialised this year due to the change in personnel and Covid-19
Fleet Management Computer System	Environmental Services	Enabling the Authority	16,600	0	-16,600	16,600	Move to 2021/22 - framework contract due to be completed early next financial year
Environmental Services Computer System	Environmental Services	Enabling the Authority	157,200	0	-157,200	157,200	Contract to be signed at the beginning of March. It is unlikely that payments will be made this financial year. Request funding is moved to 21/22
Funding for DFGs	Community & Housing GF Services	Living independent, active & healthy lives	1,103,101	600,000	-503,101	503,101	Spend based on information from Millbrook Agency
Home Repairs Assistance	Community & Housing GF Services	Living independent, active & healthy lives	91,221	30,000	-61,221	61,221	Spend based on information from Millbrook Agency
CCTV	Community & Housing GF Services	Living independent, active & healthy lives	167,376	100,000	-67,376	67,376	The project has been delayed due to covid and works will continue in Q4 and roll into 2021/22
Energy Efficiency Installation	Community & Housing GF Services	Living independent, active & healthy lives	95,988	30,000	-65,988	65,988	Low spend last year due to change of contract £12k allocated already this year, predicted further approx £30k spend this year (likely increased because of Covid19).
Sanders Park Play Area - Replacement for Tripod Swing (Health and Safety)	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Living independent, active & healthy lives	35,000	0	-35,000	35,000	will take place Q1 2021
Energy Efficiency	Community & Housing GF Services	Work and financial independence	5,000	0	-5,000	5,000	
			<b>8,684,477</b>	<b>2,143,407</b>	<b>-6,541,070</b>	<b>6,219,582</b>	

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## **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **MEETING OF THE CABINET**

**24TH FEBRUARY 2021, AT 4.30 P.M.**

PRESENT: Councillors K.J. May (Leader), A. D. Kent (Deputy Leader),  
G. N. Denaro, M. A. Sherrey, P.L. Thomas and S. A. Webb

Observers: Councillor A. B. L. English

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Mrs. S. Hanley, Mrs. R. Bamford,  
Mr C. Forrester, Ms. C. Flanagan, Mr D Riley, Ms K. Goldey and  
Ms. J. Bayley

70/20 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

71/20 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

72/20 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
OF THE CABINET HELD ON 17TH FEBRUARY 2021 (TO FOLLOW)**

The Chairman advised that the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021 would be considered at the following meeting of Cabinet in March.

73/20 **ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE - THE VILLAGE INN, BEOLEY**

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services presented a report which nominated The Village Inn, at Holt Hill, Beoley as an Asset of Community Value. Cabinet was informed that there had been a lot of preparatory work undertaken in respect of the nomination and this proposal was supported.

During consideration of this item Councillor A. English, as the ward Councillor for Beoley, spoke in support of the nomination of The Village Inn as an Asset of Community Value. Members were informed that by providing The Village Inn with the status of Asset of Community Value, the Parish Council would be able to make a bid for the building.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet support the listing of The Village Inn, Holt Hill, Beoley, B98 9AT as an Asset of Community Value

74/20

## **COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION (TO FOLLOW)**

The Head of Financial and Customer Services presented the Council Tax Resolutions 2021/22. Cabinet was advised that there had been a delay to the publication of this report as the Council had been waiting for information from all of the precepting authorities about their settlements. Assumptions had been incorporated into the Council Tax Resolutions in respect of the Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority, as the authority had not yet held a meeting to determine their requirements. Therefore, a request had been made in the report for authority to be delegated to the Head of Financial and Customer Services to amend the resolutions should the Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority agree a settlement that differed from the assumptions in the report.

During consideration of this item, Members discussed the proposed increase in Council Tax for Bromsgrove District Council. Officers confirmed that District Councils could increase Council Tax by a maximum of either 1.99 per cent or by £5. Officers were proposing that Council Tax should increase by £5 in Bromsgrove, as this would result in a slightly higher rate of return to the authority.

**RESOLVED** to NOTE that at a meeting of Cabinet held on 13th January 2021 Members approved the calculated Council Tax Base 2021/22 as:

- (a) for the whole Council area as 37,186.55 [Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")]; and
- (b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates the amounts as shown in Column 4 of the attached Schedule 1.

**RECOMMENDED** that

- 1) The calculation for the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2021/22 (excluding Parish precepts) as **£8,664,624.08**.
- 2) The following amounts be calculated for the year 2021/22 in accordance with sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
  - (a) £43,940,922 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the Act (taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils) (*i.e.*, *Gross expenditure*);
  - (b) £34,224,101 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act. (*i.e.*, *Gross income*);

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- (c) £9,716,821 being the amount by which the aggregate of 1.2.2(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 1.2.2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act);
  - (d) £261.30 being the amount at 1.2.2 (c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1.1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts);
  - (e) £1,052,198 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34 (1) of the Act (as per the attached **Schedule 3**);
  - (f) £233.00 being the amount at 1.2.2 (d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 1.2.2 (e) above by Item T (1.1 (a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34 (2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates;
  - (g) The amounts shown in Column 3 of **Schedule 1**. These are the basic amounts of the council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of the Council's area shown in Column 1 of the schedule respectively to which special items relate, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act. (District and Parish combined at Band D);
  - (h) The amounts shown in Column 5 of **Schedule 1** being the amount given by multiplying the amounts at 2.2.2(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands;
- 3) It be noted that for the year 2021/22, Worcestershire County Council, Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia and Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwelling in the Council's area as indicated below:

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	Valuation Bands							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Worcestershire County Council	895.89	1,045.20	1,194.52	<b>1,343.83</b>	1,642.46	1,941.09	2,239.72	2,687.66
Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia	160.13	186.81	213.50	<b>240.19</b>	293.57	346.94	400.32	480.38
Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority	58.45	68.20	77.94	<b>87.68</b>	107.16	126.65	146.13	175.36

- 4) That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 1.2.2(h) and 1.2.3 above, that Bromsgrove District Council in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 hereby sets the amounts shown in Schedule 2 as the amounts of Council Tax for 2021/22. for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings;
- 5) The Executive Director Finance & Resources be authorised to make payments under Section 90(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 from the Collection Fund by ten equal instalments between April 2021 to March 2022 as detailed below:

	Precept	Deficit on Collection Fund	Total to pay
	£	£	£
Worcestershire County Council	49,972,401.00	<b>-183,950.00</b>	49,788,451.00
Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia	8,931,837.44	<b>-31,596.78</b>	8,900,240.66
Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority	3,260,346.04	<b>-12,065.05</b>	3,248,280.99

- 6) The Executive Director Finance & Resources be authorised to make transfers under Section 97 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 from the Collection Fund to the General Fund the sum of £9,681,240 being the Council's own demand on the Collection Fund (£8,664,623.06) and Parish Precepts (£1,052,197) and the distribution of the Deficit on the Collection Fund (£35,580);
- 7) The Executive Director Finance & Resources be authorised to make payments from the General Fund to Parish Councils the sums listed on **Schedule 3** by two equal instalment on 1 April 2021 and 1 October 2021 in respect of the precept levied on the Council;
- 8) The above resolutions to be signed by the Chief Executive for use in legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court for the recovery of unpaid Council Taxes;

- 9) Notices of the making of the said Council Taxes signed by the Chief Executive are given by advertisement in the local press under Section 38(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992; and
- 10) That authority be delegated to the Head of Finance and Customer Services (Interim S151) following consultation with the finance portfolio holder to amend the resolution should the Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority Service not approve the estimated figure that is being used in this report. This is due to the Hereford and Worcester Authority Service having their approval meeting after this resolution report has been brought to Council.

75/20

**TO CONSIDER ANY URGENT BUSINESS, DETAILS OF WHICH HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED TO THE HEAD OF LEGAL, DEMOCRATIC AND PROPERTY SERVICES PRIOR TO THE 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**

### **Council Tax Support Scheme 2021/22**

Cabinet considered the Council Tax Support Scheme 2021/22 as urgent business, having deferred the item at a meeting held on Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

The Financial Support Manager presented the Council Tax Support Scheme 2021/22 report and in so doing highlighted the following points for Members' consideration:

- The Council Tax Support Scheme was reviewed on an annual basis.
- The amended scheme had been considered by Cabinet in draft form earlier in the municipal year and had subsequently been subject to public consultation.
- The majority of people who had responded in the consultation process had been broadly supportive of the proposed changes.
- The new Council Tax Support Scheme would be an income banded scheme.
- Where residents were in particular need, there would be the option for them to receive 100 per cent relief in relation to Council Tax. This compared favourably with the existing scheme, whereby everybody, regardless of income, had to make a Council Tax contribution.
- The support available to residents was tapered and took into account residents' income.
- The Overview and Scrutiny Board had pre-scrutinised the scheme at a meeting held on Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021, where a number of issues had been raised.
- In response to the points raised at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting, Officers had undertaken remodelling work.

- Through that remodelling work, Officers had identified that 82 per cent of people who received support through the scheme would receive an increase in support, 3 per cent would remain unaffected and 15 per cent would experience a reduction in support.
- Additional assistance would be available for the 15 per cent of people who would experience a reduction in support, through the Hardship Scheme.
- The proposed changes would result in an increase in costs to the Council of £136,000. However, this was less than the costs to the authority in 2014/15 when Council Tax Support Schemes were first localised.
- People in receipt of Universal Credit would be eligible for support under the scheme. The Council would be notified by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) about new Universal Credit applicants, which would make the scheme simpler for the customer.
- The new scheme would require less administration by the Council and would be less bureaucratic for residents.
- The new scheme would also make it easier for residents to plan their expenses and manage their household budgets.
- Housing benefit payments would no longer be taken into account under the new scheme.

Following the presentation of the report, Members discussed the number of people who would be impacted by the changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme. Officers confirmed that only 375 applicants out of a total 2,709 would be negatively impacted and they would be eligible to apply for support under the Hardship Scheme. Further information had been provided in a breakdown of the different client groups, based on averages, to help demonstrate the potential consequences for different households.

Reference was made to the Hardship Scheme and Members questioned how this was accessed and advertised to the public. Officers advised that the Hardship Scheme was promoted on the Council's website. Staff working in the Council Tax department would also promote the scheme to eligible residents where it was identified that people were struggling to make payments.

**RECOMMENDED** the introduction of 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.

The meeting closed at 4.50 p.m.

Chairman

## **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **MEETING OF THE CABINET**

**31ST MARCH 2021, AT 6.00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Councillors K.J. May (Leader), A. D. Kent (Deputy Leader), G. N. Denaro, M. A. Sherrey, P.L. Thomas and S. A. Webb

Observers:

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, J Howse, Mr C. Forrester, Ms J. Willis and Ms. J. Bayley

76/20 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

77/20 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

78/20 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE CABINET HELD ON 17TH FEBRUARY AND 24TH FEBRUARY 2021**

The minutes of the meetings of Cabinet held on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021 and 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021 and 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021 be approved as a true and correct record.

79/20 **FINANCE MONITORING 2021/22 - QUARTER 3 REPORT**

The Head of Finance and Customer Services presented the Financial Monitoring Report for the third quarter of the 2020/21 financial year.

Members were advised that Officers were projecting an estimated £1.093 million overspend by the end of the financial year. This was primarily caused by lost income, particularly in relation to parking charges, during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the Government had confirmed that the Council would be receiving a further £468,000 to help cover lost income and that an additional contribution would be made to the authority to cover any further losses.

Funding had been placed in reserves in respect of business rates payments. This fund was intended to help cover the costs arising from any appeals that might be submitted by eligible businesses and it was considered prudent to have a reserve to cover these costs if needed. However, should the appeals not materialise then this reserve could be released to help balance the Council's budget position moving forward.

The Council had agreed particular savings and additional income for inclusion in the budget in 2020/21. Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council had made good progress in respect of delivering savings and this would help the authority to achieve a balanced position at the end of the financial year.

There was a significant underspend in the capital programme. This was primarily due to delays to project work caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Officers were reviewing the capital programme to ensure that the profile was accurate moving forward. This review would take into account the likely continuing impact of Covid-19.

**RESOLVED** that the current financial position in relation to revenue and capital budgets for the financial period April 2020 – December 2020 be noted.

**RECOMMENDED** that

- 1) an increase to the Capital programme 2020/21 of match funding from PCC for digital upgrade of CCTV £19k be approved;
- 2) the increase in the capital programme of £30k for 2021/22, £20k 2022/23 for Welfare and business improvements at Bromsgrove Sporting be approved;
- 3) an increase to the revenue budget by £4k, to be funded by reserves to help fund a school's financial literacy programme, be approved.

80/20

## **COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling Services presented a report which detailed proposals for a new Community Grants Scheme.

Cabinet was informed that the Council would receive £12,000 in New Home Bonus (NHB) funding that could be allocated to a community grants scheme. A decision had been taken by Members, when setting the budget in February 2021, to allocate an additional £68,000 to this figure in order to create a new Community Grants Scheme.

The new Community Grants Scheme would be slightly different to the previous NHB funding scheme. The report detailed how the scheme would work, including the application process. A timeline for the scheme had also been provided for Members' consideration.



During consideration of this item Members discussed the potential, through this grants scheme, to support community groups that had been negatively impacted by the Covid-9 pandemic. Members suggested that the impact of Covid-19 should be taken into account in respect of the eligibility criteria for grant funding.

**RESOLVED** that delegated authority be given to the Head of Finance and Customer Service following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources in respect of the detail of the Community Grants Scheme, which will be based on the principles of the New Homes Bonus Community Grants Scheme.

81/20

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 15TH FEBRUARY 2021**

Cabinet welcomed the recently appointed Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Councillor C. Hotham.

Members were advised that at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021 the Equalities Task Group's final report had been considered. The Board had endorsed the group's proposals.

82/20

## **EQUALITIES TASK GROUP**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling Services proposed that the Cabinet should postpone consideration of the Equalities Task Group's final report until the following meeting of Cabinet in June 2021. This delay had been proposed in order to provide time for further information to be gathered in relation to the proposals detailed in the report. The Chairman of the Task Group, Councillor P. McDonald, had been notified of this proposal prior to the meeting.

83/20

## **GREEN HOMES FUNDING**

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing, Health and Wellbeing presented a report detailing the Green Homes Funding that was available to Bromsgrove District Council.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) had allocated £60 million to a green homes grant scheme. The allocations that had been made to local authorities as part of this process had been calculated based on the proportion of properties in each authority area that were listed as having energy efficiency ratings at bands E, F or G. In total, £474,000 green homes funding had been allocated to Bromsgrove District Council for this purpose.

The funding would need to be spent on improving the energy efficiency of eligible properties with energy efficiency ratings of bands E, F and G or for static mobile homes. In order to be eligible to receive funding for a

property the occupants needed to be at above average risk of fuel poverty. The deadline for completion of all works funded by the grant was 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021.

During consideration of this item Cabinet was advised that the report had been pre-scrutinised at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021. At this meeting, Members had requested further information about the number of properties in Bromsgrove District that had energy efficiency ratings in bands E, F and G. Officers explained that data for the period encompassing the fourth quarter of 2008 to the second quarter of 2020 revealed that 20% of properties were in band E, 5% of properties were in band F and 1.4% of properties were in band G. This compared to 45% of properties that were in band D, which was the highest rating. However, Members were asked to note that not all properties had received an EPC rating and therefore the data could only be based on the information that was available but was inevitably incomplete.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Councillor Hotham, was invited to speak in respect of the Board's discussion of the Green Homes Funding report. Councillor Hotham explained that the Board had broadly welcomed the proposals detailed in the report. In particular, Members had been pleased to learn that the first part of the scheme had already begun and that as part of this process residents in 40 (out of 120 eligible properties) had indicated that they were willing to take part. More residents would have an opportunity to take part in the scheme as it was rolled out across the District.

Cabinet was advised that during the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting Members had discussed the potential for the subject of green homes funding to be referred to the Climate Change Working Group for consideration. This proposal had not been agreed as a recommendation and Cabinet noted that there were tight timescales in which the decision on this matter needed to be taken as well as strict criteria for the distribution of the funding, which would make it difficult for Members to alter the arrangements through further discussion.

Reference was briefly made to the potential for properties that did not have an EPC rating to obtain one and then apply for support under the scheme. Officers confirmed that this would be possible and any residents in this position were urged to contact Officers for further information.

**RECOMMENDED** that

- 1) the Capital and Revenue Budgets are increased to receive Bromsgrove District Council's Green Homes Grant scheme Local Authority Delivery Part 2 allocation of £476, 900.
- 2) delegated authority is granted to the Head of Community and Housing Services following consultation with Portfolio Holders for

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Housing and Climate Change to administer the funding received in line with the grant conditions.

The meeting closed at 6.26 p.m.

Chairman

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**Bromsgrove District Council – 21st April 2021  
Item - Member Questions**

**1. From Councillor P. McDonald  
Question for the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling**

The Institute for Employment Rights (IER) report, compiled by 11 specialists in occupational health and safety and labour law, claims that Covid-19 guidance is not being properly enforced by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

The government's approach to enforcing its guidance in the workplace has been underfunded, light-touch and run by an understaffed HSE. As a result, researchers claim that workplace risk has not been managed properly, and is not in line with the government's claim that is making workplaces Covid-secure. Researchers said there has been widespread failure to control risks of airborne and surface transmission in workplaces, shown by the emergence of infection clusters.

Considering this what action is the Council taking to ensure the Council is Covid secure?

**2. From Councillor R. Hunter  
Question for the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services**

Please could you clarify what this council's policy is on grass mowing and how regularly residents of estates that are maintained by this council can expect mowing to take place?

**3. From Councillor S. Robinson  
Question for the Leader of the Council**

With High Street shops reopening this month, in order to entice shoppers back to support our High Streets, please may we have an update about when the promised car park refurbishments will be completed?

**4. From Councillor J. King  
Question for the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services**

At a time when residents' interest in the progress of our council's work to mitigate climate change is very high, could the council website and social media be used much more effectively to communicate the achievements and progress made to date please?

**5. From Councillor K. Van Der Plank  
Question for the Leader of the Council**

On 20<sup>th</sup> March a new 'Welcome Back Fund' was announced by Government to help boost the look and feel of high streets and prepare for the safe return of shoppers. I see from the government website that Bromsgrove have been allocated £88,668. Please can the leader tell me how this fund is going to be used and how we are going to make sure it reaches all of our high streets – especially those on the outskirts of our district, not just the main Bromsgrove town centre.

**6. From Councillor A. English  
Question for the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services**

Could the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services please inform the council of how many Planning Enforcement cases we have active at the moment and how many are more than two years old?

**NOTICE OF MOTION**

The following Notice of Motion has been submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 10 by Councillor L. Mallett.

**A Western Distributor Road for Bromsgrove**

Council notes the WCC JMP Western Bypass Report, 2015. This report was subsequently discredited as a basis for understanding the feasibility of such a scheme in research commissioned by Bromsgrove Council in 2018.

Council resolves to urgently review the case and formally assess the feasibility of the Western Distributor /Relief Road. This would allow the incorporation of this scheme, should it be found to be feasible, into all relevant planning documents and funding opportunities, at the earliest opportunity.

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**NOTICE OF MOTION**

The following Notice of Motion has been submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 10 by Councillor M. Thompson.

Following the huge success of the vaccination programme - and the excellent work done by the key workers and volunteers throughout Bromsgrove district - this council calls upon the leader to write to the Government, on behalf of the council, acknowledging the hard work of the volunteers and key workers, and thanking the Government for their support in enabling this council to have rolled one of the most successful local vaccination programmes in the country.

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**NOTICE OF MOTION**

The following Notice of Motion has been submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 10 by Councillor J. Till.

The countryside in Bromsgrove District is a stunning asset for the residents and visitors to our district. Many residents have taken advantage during the lockdown to walk and even run around our lanes, canals and footpaths. This is vitally important not just in terms of activity and leisure but also health and mental well being. This motion requests that Council explore the opportunities to promote routes that are suitable for people of all ages to either walk, jog, cycle and run considering both the physical and mental health benefits for our residents as well as the potential for an economic uplift from encouraging visitors to experience what we have to offer.

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**NOTICE OF MOTION**

The following Notice of Motion has been submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 10 by Councillor P. McDonald:

The consequences of charging for parking on the Waseley Hills Country Park is that of neighbouring roads becoming congested, hindering in some cases the Emergency Services. In addition, Bromsgrove residents are being discriminated against as no other country park in the ownership of the County Council charges for parking.

Therefore, this Council calls upon

Worcestershire County Council to withdraw all parking charges from the Waseley Hills Country Park.

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**NOTICE OF MOTION**

The following Notice of Motion has been submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 10 by Councillor R. Hunter.

**Appealing discretionary grant scheme decisions**

Council welcomes the introduction of an appeals process for local business owners who have unsuccessfully applied to discretionary grant schemes such as Additional Restrictions Grant and Wet Led Pubs grant

Council notes that this is not well known within communities and resolves to publish more detailed information including on the website and in outcome letters.

Council further resolves to report on the volumes and outcomes of appeals to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, for at least the next 6 months, or longer if the committee believes this is required.

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