

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

**14TH JULY 2021, AT 6.00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Councillors R. J. Laight (Chairman), A. J. B. Beaumont (Vice-Chairman), S. J. Baxter (Until Minute Item No. 29/21), R. J. Deeming, G. N. Denaro, S. P. Douglas, A. B. L. English, S. G. Hession, C.A. Hotham, R. J. Hunter, H. J. Jones, A. D. Kent, A. D. Kriss, K.J. May, P. M. McDonald, S. A. Robinson (From Minute Item No. 21/21), H. D. N. Rone-Clarke, M. A. Sherrey, C. J. Spencer, P.L. Thomas, M. Thompson, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

Officers: Mrs. S. Hanley, Mrs. C. Felton and Mrs. J. Bayley-Hill

14\21 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors S. Colella, R. Jenkins, L. Mallett, M. Middleton, J. Till and K. Van Der Plank.

Members were advised that Councillors M. Glass and S. Robinson would be arriving late at the meeting and had submitted apologies due to the delay.

15\21 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

During consideration of Minute Item No. 30/21 Councillor H. Rone-Clarke commented that he worked for a public house. However, Officers confirmed that he did not have a disclosable pecuniary interest to declare on this occasion.

16\21 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 19TH MAY 2021**

The minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021 be approved as a true and correct record.

17\21 **TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND/OR HEAD OF PAID SERVICE**

There were no announcements from the Chairman or Head of Paid Service on this occasion.

18\21      **TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER**

There were no announcements from the Leader on this occasion.

19\21      **TO RECEIVE COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

There were no comments, questions or petitions from the public for Members' consideration.

20\21      **URGENT DECISIONS**

There were no urgent decisions for consideration on this occasion.

21\21      **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD'S ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21**

Councillor C. Hotham, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board for part of the 2020/21 municipal year, presented the Board's Annual Report for Members' consideration.

There had been a number of Task Group investigations during the year, including reviews of equalities, libraries and flooding in the District. The reports detailing Members' findings in respect of equalities and flooding had already been considered by the Cabinet whilst the report on the subject of Libraries would be discussed at a meeting of Cabinet in September 2021.

Councillor Hotham concluded his presentation by thanking the Democratic Services Officer with lead responsibility for Overview and Scrutiny, the former Senior Democratic Services Officer for Bromsgrove as well as all of the Officers and Portfolio Holders who had provided evidence to the Board for consideration during the year. Thanks were also extended to Councillor M. Thompson who had chaired the Board for part of the year.

Following the presentation of the report Members discussed the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Board and Scrutiny Task Groups during the year. It was noted that Overview and Scrutiny formed an important part of the Council's democratic process. Good scrutiny contributed to good decision making and was therefore welcomed by the Council.

During consideration of this item, reference was made to the Cabinet's response to the Impact of Flooding in the District Task Group. The former Chairman of this Task Group, Councillor R. Hunter, expressed concerns that the group's recommendations had not been approved and that the group had not been made aware of a separate ongoing review of land assets and flooding. It was noted that the scrutiny investigation of the subject had taken place over a period of months and had been very detailed. However, Members were also asked to note that Cabinet took flooding very seriously and it would be possible to determine what

further action should be taken once the separate report on this subject had been presented for Cabinet's consideration in September.

Reference was also made to the foreword to the report, which highlighted the role of the Board to scrutinise matters in an impartial and apolitical manner. Questions were raised about the extent to which the process was apolitical and the response received to recommendations made through the scrutiny process from the Cabinet. However, Members were advised that the Board and Task Groups aspired to be apolitical, in line with national best practice in Overview and Scrutiny, which enabled the Board to act as a counterbalance to the Cabinet.

In concluding the discussions, Members noted that there was a typographical error on page 10 of the report, which stated that Members had discussed matters at a meeting of the Board held in October 2021. Members agreed that this should have referred to a meeting in October 2020.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

22\21

**AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21**

In the absence of the Chairman of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee, the Vice Chairman of the Committee in 2020/21 presented the Committee's Annual Report. Members were advised that the report detailed the Committee's work during the year and had been submitted for noting.

Members paid tribute to the work of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee in 2020/21. Particular reference was made to the Chairman of the Committee in that municipal year, Councillor L. Mallett, who was thanked for his hard work during the year.

During consideration of this item, questions were raised about the progress that had been achieved with the introduction of the Council's new ERP finance system, which had been discussed during a meeting of the Committee. Concerns were raised that, whilst the system had been due to be fully operational in January 2021, issues had been reported with the system. Officers agreed to obtain a written response for Members' consideration in respect of this matter.

**RESOLVED** that the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee's Annual Report 2020/21 be noted.

23\21

**OUTSIDE BODY APPOINTMENTS 2021/22**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling presented the Council's nominations to Outside Bodies for 2021/22. Members were advised that some Outside Body appointments were made in an ex officio capacity

whilst other appointments were nominations that had been made by political groups.

During consideration of this matter Members noted that it would be interesting to receive updates in respect of Members' work on the Outside Bodies from time to time. The suggestion was made that this might be a suitable topic for scrutiny.

The recommendation in respect of the Outside Body nominations 2021/22 was proposed by Councillor G. Denaro and seconded by Councillor K. May.

**RESOLVED** that Council approves the nominations to the Outside Bodies for 2021/22.

24\21

**CONSTITUTION REVIEW WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATION - PUBLIC SPEAKING AT PLANNING COMMITTEE IN RESPECT OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS (TPOS)**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling presented a report outlining proposals to introduce public speaking in respect of Tree Preservation Order (TPO) reports considered at meetings of the Planning Committee.

The Constitution Review Working Group had considered proposals to introduce public speaking for TPOs at the request of Members. The matter had been reviewed and no legal reason had been identified that did not permit public speaking to occur at Planning Committee meetings in respect of TPOs.

During consideration of this item questions were raised about the extent to which Parish Council representatives and ward Councillors would be permitted to register to speak on TPOs as part of this process. It was noted that the report had been in the public domain for some time, having previously been scheduled for consideration at a meeting of Council held in April 2021, and some disappointment was expressed that this question had not therefore been raised prior to the meeting. However, Members were advised that the public could register to speak both in support and in opposition to a TPO and it was likely that this option would also be available to ward Councillors and Parish Council representatives, though this would be confirmed after the meeting.

The recommendation in respect of the introduction of public speaking for the consideration of TPOs at Planning Committee was proposed by Councillor G. Denaro and seconded by Councillor P. Whittaker.

**RESOLVED** that the Planning Procedure Rules be amended to permit public speaking at meetings of the Planning Committee in respect of Tree Preservation Orders.

25\21

## **CONSTITUTION REVIEW WORKING GROUP - MEMBERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling presented a report proposing changes to the membership arrangements for the Constitution Review Working Group. These changes would result in the membership reflecting the political balance of the Council, though under the rules, the membership of the group could not form part of the formal political balance.

The report was subsequently discussed in some detail and Members queried the potential for the Constitution Review Working Group to be allocated formal decision-making powers. Officers explained that Council was the responsible body in terms of decisions about the authority's constitution and therefore the Constitution Review Working Group could only make recommendations.

Reference was also made to the potential for the membership of the Climate Change Working Group to be changed in a similar manner to the Constitution Review Working Group, and for the group to have decision making powers. Council was informed that the Constitution Review Working Group would have an opportunity to review membership arrangements for other Working Groups moving forward.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor G. Denaro and seconded by Councillor A. Kent.

### **RESOLVED** that

- (1) The membership of the Constitution Review Working Group be amended to reflect the Council's political balance; and
- (2) The Council's constitution be amended to require the membership of the Constitution Review Working Group to reflect the political balance.

26\21

## **BURCOT LANE REPORT**

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing and Health and Well Being presented a report updating Members on the former Council House site at Burcot Lane. Council was informed that the report detailed the next steps in the process for the disposal of the site for the development of affordable housing.

The Burcot Lane site and redevelopment plans were subsequently discussed in some detail. Concerns were raised about how earlier plans for redevelopment of the site had been debated at a previous Council meeting and the impact that this had had on the Council's working relationship with Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT). Concerns were also raised about the length of time that had elapsed in terms of the development of the site. However, Members were advised that the

Council continued to maintain a positive working relationship with BDHT and by approving the next steps in the process the development would be able to move forward.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor S. Webb and seconded by Councillor K. May.

On being put to the vote the recommendations were approved, with 2 Members voting against.

**RESOLVED** that

- (1) Officers appoint an external consultant to undertake a competitive exercise on behalf of the Council, for the disposal of the affordable housing units on the site to a registered provider; and
- (2) Delegated authority is given to the Head of Housing and the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services to negotiate the terms of disposal with the successful party and effect the disposal.

27\21

**RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET (TO FOLLOW)**

**Bromsgrove District Plan – Local Development Scheme**

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services presented the Local Development Scheme for Members' consideration. Council was advised that the report outlined the revised timetable for the Local Development Scheme but did not address wider areas of planning policy at this stage. Any proposed changes to the Bromsgrove District Plan would be reported for Members' consideration at meetings of the Strategic Planning Steering Group.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor A. Kent and seconded by Councillor K. May.

**RESOLVED** that Bromsgrove District Council Local Development Scheme 2021 is approved as the Council's programme for plan-making, effective as of 8<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

28\21

**TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON 7TH JULY 2021 (TO FOLLOW)**

Members considered the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

During consideration of this item, reference was made to the Cabinet's debate in respect of the Equalities Task Group's final report, as recorded at Minute Item No. 5/21. Concerns were raised by the former Chairman of the group, Councillor P. McDonald, that there would be no official appeal process available to staff in respect of decisions about secondment placements.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2021 be noted.

29\21

### **QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

The Chairman opened the item by explaining that 7 questions had been submitted for consideration at the meeting. For 2 of these questions, as permitted in the constitution, the questions would be asked by Members on behalf of those Councillors who had submitted the questions. There would be no subsidiary questions but the group leaders had agreed on this occasion that a maximum of 30 minutes would be allocated to consideration of Questions on Notice.

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

Councillor R. Hunter asked the following question on behalf of Councillor J. King:

“In January 2020, this council resolved to develop a new open spaces and Section 106 policy to establish a presumption that BDC will adopt land on new estates where it meets the adoptable standard as agreed by the Council. Could the Portfolio Holder for Planning please update council on progress made and advise when this policy will be published and implemented?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services responded by commenting that Council had debated this issue at some length and determined that its ability to influence the matter was limited. That said, in accordance with Council’s wishes, Officers had written to the Government requesting that they revisit the primary legislation that governed developers and third-party providers in respect of open space maintenance provisions. In addition, the work being undertaken by the Council in enabling the adoption of open spaces more generally, when and where appropriate, was on the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Board’s work programmes and would be considered in September 2021.

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

“The rapid growth in house prices in rural areas during the pandemic has been widely reported in the media. One analysis suggested that house prices had rocketed by an average of 27% in Bromsgrove over the last twelve months. Has the time come to rethink our approach to new housing development in this district, focussing more on affordability for local residents?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services responded by explaining that the current Bromsgrove District Plan had an Affordable Housing Policy (BDP8), which aimed to secure up to 40% affordable housing on greenfield sites and up to 30% on brownfield sites, for sites of 11 or more dwellings. These percentages secured homes to meet the

needs of local residents on the authority's Housing Waiting List. These percentages were set during the preparation of the current Bromsgrove District Plan and were subject to a Viability Assessment to ensure that what was required in terms of affordable housing provision was financially viable and therefore deliverable.

Since the start of the Plan period (1st April 2011), 665 affordable homes had been built, predominantly on sites allocated in the Plan. As of 1st April 2021, there were 280 affordable homes that had secured planning permission, some of which were under construction. This figure included 202 affordable homes at Whitford Road. The Perryfields site would secure an additional 394 affordable homes.

In addition to this, the current Bromsgrove District Plan had a Rural Exception Sites policy (BDP9), which could be implemented immediately if the policy criteria could be met. This policy was specifically in place to meet any housing needs in the District's smaller rural settlements in green belt areas which would, under any other circumstances, mean that development would be inappropriate in these locations. The Council was not aware of any development proposals that had drawn on this policy to date, but the mechanism was in place to facilitate meeting the affordability issues of the authority's local residents who lived in these locations.

As the Council progressed with the Bromsgrove District Plan Review, the supporting evidence base would include a piece of work called a Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA). This assessment would help to identify what the housing needs were across the District for the next Plan period, taking account of affordability and the wider range of affordable housing products that the Council would need to provide to open more avenues to home ownership. This was wider than just meeting the needs of local residents on the Council's Housing Waiting List and included initiatives such as 'starter homes', 'discounted market sales housing' and 'other affordable routes to home ownership'.

**Question submitted by Councillor S. Robinson**

"Can the leader please give an update to the council regarding the progress being made with regenerating the old Library and Fire Station which have now been empty for six and seven years respectively?"

The Leader responded by explaining that the Council had secured £100,000 from the One Public Estate scheme for a feasibility study and financial viability report, which would assess the regeneration options for the two sites. However, the Council did not have control over the sites, as they were owned by the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue Service and Worcestershire County Council, but Council officers were working with colleagues at the 2 organisations to explore the regeneration options for these sites. The feasibility and viability reports would be completed by November/December 2021.



**Question submitted by Councillor P. McDonald**

“Would the Leader do all she can to try and stop the 'West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre' from closing because of a lack of funding? It is the only specialist Sexual Violence Support Service in Worcestershire.”

The Leader responded by commenting that while the funding of this service was not a District Council function, the authority was aware that issues regarding the financial sustainability of this service had been raised at county level. These issues were being explored by the Director of Public Health on behalf of the region. The Leader had asked to be kept abreast of this matter and would keep Bromsgrove Members apprised of any developments.

**Question submitted by Councillor A. English**

“£250K was ringfenced from last year’s budget to provide a new electric community shuttle bus service linking Bromsgrove Railway station with the town centre and residential areas. A firm commitment was also made at Full Council that it would be rolled out to other areas, particularly areas such as Alvechurch and Beoley Parishes that do not have any bus services at all. I would like to ask the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration if he could give the council a progress report on how the £250K has been utilised so far and dates of when we can expect to see the services up and running.”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services explained that there had been a launch of the electric bus service on the day of the Council meeting. This launch had been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. There were 2 smaller buses that would form part of the service initially.

The £250,000 ring fenced funding remained ring fenced for the purpose that had been agreed at Council in February 2021. The service had been launched using the most energy efficient smaller buses available, but the aim was to invest in electric vehicles in due course.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services urged Members and the public to utilise the bus service. The greater the demand for use of the service the wider the area in which it would be possible to operate the service. Consequently, there was the potential in the medium to long-term for the new bus service to provide public transport to people living in rural areas which were not otherwise served by alternative bus routes.

**Question submitted by Councillor C. Hotham**

“It is now some five and a half years since this council vacated the old council house in Burcot Lane. A key aspect of the business case for the

costly move to Parkside was the value to be released from the future development of the site. The council is now the owner of a demolished council house. Disappointingly, as of the 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021 work has once again ceased. Bromsgrove is short of housing and in particular affordable housing. This is the one site where the council can have a direct impact on this shortage. Please could the cabinet member responsible give the council an undertaking that despite this so far lack lustre performance, this site will now be developed at pace and also provide a timeline for its completion and occupation?"

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health and Well Being responded by explaining that work had not ceased on the development following the demolition of the Old Council House and Burcot Hostel. There were several elements being completed as part of a normal development process, such as second phase ground inspections for foundation design, which could not be undertaken with the building in situ. The Council's contractor was coordinating the utility services diversion works that needed to be undertaken before construction could be started. There were a number of diversion works to be undertaken but all the utilities providers had been engaged and works would be aligned to the on-site utility provision. There were several enabling works to be undertaken, such as roads, drainage and sewers before the actual houses and flats would be constructed. The current development programmes had a 44 week build programme for the dwellings and a practical completion and handover of the development in August 2022.

**Question submitted by Councillor K. Van Der Plank**

Councillor S. Baxter asked the following question on Councillor Van Der Plank's behalf:

"Litter, including bagged dog waste, seems to be an increasing problem in our district. It blights our countryside and is a safety risk for animals and people.

Please could the leader tell me what measures are being put in place to address and whether there are plans to install more litter bins. Could the leader also tell me how many fines have been issued, for litter offences, over the last 3 years?"

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services responded to this question. Members were advised that the number of complaints from the public about Litter and dog waste had actually been reducing over the previous 3 years (by nearly half from what was received in 2018), and the experience of the Council's Place Teams was that, although litter was still an issue across the District, the authority's cleansing arrangements were preventing this from becoming a significant issue and the Council was maintaining a good standard for residents.

The Council would consider additional bins when necessary, and staff did highlight locations where they identified a need, though requests

were also received from the public and Members. However, these would be monitored to evidence the need for an additional bin before installation, and the Council also needed to consider adjustments to cleansing arrangements to reflect usage of areas. There was a good coverage of litter bins across the District, but they were often not a solution in isolation, and needed to be planned alongside the wider cleansing operation.

Members were urged to let the Place Team know if they believed there was an area that would benefit from a litter bin, and to provide any information on how regularly there was a problem there.

No fines had been issued for litter or dog fouling offences in the previous 3 years. However, the Council had signed up to a new Dog Fouling Waste campaign through Keep Britain Tidy for 2021 and had been using the campaign signs across the District, where issues with irresponsible dog owners were being highlighted. In addition, officers were reviewing all of the Council's enforcement options for environmental crime to improve the authority's ability to hold people accountable for their actions, both via the in-house team and through partnerships with third parties, and littering was part of that review. The Council would be in a position to share details for consideration on the future of environmental enforcement later in the financial year.

30\21

### **MOTIONS ON NOTICE**

The Chairman explained that 4 Motions on Notice had been received for consideration at the meeting. However, Councillor M. Thompson had withdrawn his Motion and Councillor J. Till had requested that her Motion should be considered at the following Council meeting. Group leaders had agreed prior to the meeting that up to 2 hours would be allocated to the consideration of Motions on Notice.

#### **Appealing discretionary grant scheme decisions**

Members considered the following Motion on Notice submitted by Councillor R. Hunter:

*“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.”*

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

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Hunter noted that the Council had received over £32 million funding from the Government which had been distributed amongst eligible local businesses that had been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, whilst some companies had successfully applied for grant funding other businesses had been unsuccessful. Councillor Hunter expressed concerns that some businesses did not appear to be aware of their right to appeal. In addition, he raised concerns about the eligibility criteria for the various forms of grant funding available to businesses and the extent to which these were meeting the needs of local companies.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Robinson commented that this was an important Motion. Councillor Robinson praised the work of the Financial Services team to date in distributing grant funding to businesses but noted that she was keen to ensure that the Council did everything possible to support all businesses impacted by the pandemic, including those companies which had not been successful in bidding for funding. The involvement of the Overview and Scrutiny Board in reviewing this matter would help to ensure that there was transparency in respect of the decisions on funding that had been made.

In responding to the Motion, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling noted that the Council had distributed over £32 million of Covid business grant funding to over 2,000 businesses. Where an application for a mandatory grant was unsuccessful, for example where a business which had been able to remain open had applied for a closure grant, the applicant was automatically considered for the discretionary grant schemes. An appeals process was also in place. The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling commented that he had ensured that action was taken to make people aware of the appeals process, for example through updating decision letters so that the appeal process was clearly set out within the decision and updating the website to make the process and requirements to appeal clearer. Information on the number of grant awards and monetary value of grants would be published on the website, following the conclusion of the restart grant scheme.

Members subsequently discussed the Motion and in so doing considered the following points:

- The appeals process that was already in place in respect of grant funding for businesses.
- The hard work that had been undertaken by Officers during the pandemic to distribute grant funding to eligible businesses.
- The information that was available about the grants, including the appeals process, on the Council's website.
- The need for the Council to abide by Government guidance when distributing the grant funding amongst eligible businesses.

- The prudent approach that had been adopted by the Council in distributing the grant funding. Members commented that in other parts of the country local authorities had made mistakes when distributing the funds and to address this had needed to provide additional financial support from Council reserves.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 18.3 a recorded vote was taken and the voting was as follows:

Members voting FOR the Motion:

Councillors S. Baxter, S. Douglas, A. English, C. Hotham, R. Hunter, P. McDonald, S. Robinson and H. Rone-Clarke (8).

Members voting AGAINST the Motion:

Councillors A. Beaumont, R. Deeming, G. Denaro, S. Hession, H. Jones, A. Kent, A. Kriss, K. May, M. Sherrey, C. Spencer, P. Thomas, M. Thompson, S. Webb and P. Whittaker (14).

Members voting to ABSTAIN on the Motion:

No Councillors (0).

On being put to the vote the Motion was therefore lost.

### **Street Furniture**

Council considered the following Motion on Notice submitted by Councillor S. Robinson.

*“When renewing street furniture, such as car park street lighting, this council will aim, wherever possible, to replace heritage style components with modern heritage style equivalents, seeking to ensure modern standards are met without downgrading the quality of the street scene.”*

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

In introducing the Motion Councillor Robinson praised the Car Parking Strategy for Bromsgrove town centre and the wider District. However, Councillor Robinson commented that Bromsgrove was a historic market town and it would be helpful to ensure that when it was upgraded, street furniture, including in the car parks in the District, was replaced with modern street furniture that was of a style in keeping with the historic nature of the town. This was important to ensure that the town remained attractive and continued to display historic features, which would help to attract visitors to the town.

In seconding the Motion Councillor Hunter commented that there had been some excellent work undertaken in respect of the Council’s Car

Parking Strategy. There had been a consultation process in respect of work on the upgrade to car parks and feedback had been provided regarding suitable lighting for the car parks. Members were asked to note that street furniture could be upgraded in a manner that had a positive impact on climate change whilst also supporting the heritage of the District.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services responded to the proposed Motion by commenting that it was important for Members to understand that whilst the Council was responsible for street furniture on the authority's land, responsibility for street furniture on the highway was split between the Council and Worcestershire County Council. From a Bromsgrove District Council perspective, over the following 4 years, the authority was planning to replace the lights in the authority's car parks with LED lights which would reduce the Council's energy costs and contribute to meeting climate change reduction plans. As part of this work, the Council would need to replace the existing columns due to their age and condition. Heritage lamp columns were more expensive than standard columns and, in a challenging financial context for local government, the authority would be using a black column with a heritage lamp fitting in the Parkside Car Park, as it was located within the Conservation Area as well as in Crown Close, which was also in the conservation area. In all other car parks, the authority would use black painted steel columns, with black lamps similar to those used by Worcestershire County Council, thereby providing enhanced lighting capabilities. With regard to other street furniture that the Council was responsible for, it would depend on the location, including whether the street furniture was in a conservation area, where the Council would aim to install heritage style street furniture. However, in other locations the authority would install street furniture that was suitable for that location.

Members subsequently discussed the Motion in detail and it was noted that some street furniture was owned by Parish Councils, rather than the District or County Council. In particular, Parish Councils often invested in new street lighting and could help to ensure that high standards continued to be applied in the District.

On being put to the vote the Motion was lost.

The meeting closed at 7.28 p.m.

Chairman