

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 18TH MAY 2022, 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, M. Glass, C.A. Hotham, R. J. Hunter, R. E. Jenkins, J. E. King, A. D. Kriss, K.J. May, M. Middleton, P. M. McDonald, S. A. Robinson, 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, Mrs. C. Felton, Mrs. J. Bayley-Hill and Mrs J. Gresham

1\22

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN 2022/23

It was proposed by Councillor K. J. May and seconded by Councillor S. A. Webb and

RESOLVED that

Councillor R. J. Laight be elected Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year.

Councillor Laight signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and thanked Members of the Council for electing him to the Office of Chairman.

2\22

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN 2022/23

It was proposed by Councillor K. J. May and seconded by Councillor G. N. Denaro and

RESOLVED that

Councillor A. J. B. Beaumont be elected Vice Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year.

Councillor Beaumont signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and thanked Members of the Council for electing him to the office of Vice Chairman.

3\22 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors S. P. Douglas, A. B. L. English, S. G. Hession, H. J. Jones, A. D. Kent, L. C. R. Mallett and C. J. Spencer.

4\22 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

During consideration of this item Councillor H. Rone-Clarke commented that he worked at the Artrix Vaccination Centre. In addition to this, Councillor P. J. Whittaker stated that he was a member of the Artrix Holding Trust. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that, as there was no decision to be made in respect of the Artrix at this meeting, Members who had previously been appointed to the Artrix Holding Trust or those who worked there in its capacity as a vaccination centre did not need to declare an interest.

5\22 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 20TH APRIL 2022**

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 20th April 2022 were submitted.

Councillor P. M. McDonald queried when the additional information requested at the previous meeting would be made available to Members in respect of Equality Annual Report 2021 regarding the Household Support Fund and the Starting Well Partnership's Family Hubs as detailed in Minute Number 107/21. Councillor G. N. Denaro confirmed that this information had already been sent out by Officers for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the Council meeting held on Wednesday 20th April 2022 be approved as a true and correct record.

6\22 **TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND/OR HEAD OF PAID SERVICE**

The Chairman announced that, since the previous meeting of the Council, a Civic Dinner had taken place for the Chairman's charity, Primrose Hospice. All those who attended the dinner were thanked and Members were informed that £1,850 had been raised at this event.

During consideration of this item, the Chairman also informed Members of the Council that his charity for the ensuing year would continue as the Primrose Hospice.

The Chief Executive confirmed that he had no announcements to make on this occasion.

7\22 **TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER**

The Leader confirmed that she had no announcements to make on this occasion.

8\22 **TO RECEIVE COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

The Chairman advised that no comments, questions or petitions had been received from members of the public for consideration at the meeting.

9\22 **URGENT DECISIONS**

There were no urgent decisions for consideration on this occasion.

10\22 **APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES 2022/23**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance presented a report detailing the political balance for the 2022/23 municipal year. Members were informed that the recent reorganisation of the political groups within the Council had resulted in a change to the political balance.

The recommendations in respect of the political balance and appointments to Committees for 2022/23 were proposed by Councillor G. Denaro and seconded by Councillor K. May.

RESOLVED that

- 1) for the ensuing Municipal Year, the Committees as set out in the table in Appendix 1 of the report be appointed and that the representation of the different political groups on the Council on those Committees be as set out in that table until the next Annual Meeting of the Council, or until the next review of political representation under Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, whichever is the earlier; and

- 2) Members be appointed to the Committees and as substitute Members in accordance with the nominations to be made by Group Leaders; and
- 3) the terms of reference for the Boards and Committees be confirmed.

11\22

SCHEME OF DELEGATIONS

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance presented the Officer Scheme of Delegations for Members' consideration. Members were advised that the Council was required to review the content of the Scheme of Delegations on an annual basis, and this occurred at the Annual Council meeting.

A typographical error was highlighted for Members' attention in respect of the S106 Monies to the Value of £15k, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the Scheme of Delegations report. It was confirmed that the figure of £50k had been incorrectly included and that the details should have read as follows:

"Authority to spend S106 monies up to a value of £15k to spend in line with the S106 agreement which caused the receipt of the receipt of the S106 monies."

During consideration of this item Councillor P.M McDonald drew Members' attention to areas in the Scheme of Delegations that he wished to be clarified. These were as follows:

- Appointment of Heads of Service delegated to Executive Directors – it was clarified that although the Appointments of Heads of Service had been delegated to the Executive Directors, an appointment would still be considered by the Appointments Committee on behalf of the Council.
- Early Retirement Payments – It was confirmed that the Chief Executive Officer had a legislative duty to inform Members of the numbers of staff within the Council. It was clarified that any early retirement payments that were made would not include any enhancements.
- Housing Association Nominations – Members were informed that the Council had a statutory duty to provide homelessness support. However, the Strategic Housing Manager would be able to provide further clarification in this area.

- Civil Injunctions – Further clarification was provided to Members, where it was explained that Ward Members would only be informed ‘where appropriate’ as detailed in the delegation, as any civil injunction might be part of a criminal investigation. In these circumstances it would not be appropriate to share information with the Ward Member due to its sensitive nature.
- Varying Charges for the Business Waste Collection and Recycling Service - It was confirmed that the Business Waste Collection and Recycling Service was a very competitive area, and that the potential 25% variance was necessary in order to compete with private companies.
- Police and Crime Panel Budget – Members were provided with information on the budget prior to its approval.
- Alteration of Polling Places – It was reported that this would be considered by the Electoral Matters Committee when necessary. It was noted that it was already included in the Constitution that the Committee could exercise powers and undertake functions relating to electoral matters and elections.
- Minor Amendments to a planning application and advertisements on roundabouts within the District – currently these were delegated to the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services. However, it was suggested that it would be more appropriate that these issues were referred back to the Planning Committee.
- Use of the Parkside Suite by charities – It was suggested that this would be an area that Members should make decisions on rather than it be delegated to officers.

In considering this matter, it was suggested by some Members that this was not the most appropriate setting to discuss the Scheme of Delegations in such detail. It was noted that it would be more appropriate being discussed at the Constitution Review Working Group meetings and would be included on the agenda for consideration at a future meeting of the Working Group.

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

RESOLVED that

the Scheme of Delegations be agreed.

In the absence of Councillor L. Mallett, Chairman of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee, Councillor P. Whittaker, Vice-Chairman of the Committee, presented the report in respect of the recommendation regarding the Member Code of Conduct, which was agreed at the meeting of the Committee held on 12th April 2022. Council was informed that the Committee had previously considered a number of reports and had expressed the preference of a Worcestershire wide Model Code of Conduct based on the new Local Government Association (LGA) new Model Code of Conduct. Councillor Whittaker reported that the Committee had been happy with the contents of the new Model Code of Conduct and had recommended at their last meeting that it be adopted by the Council.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor P. Whittaker and seconded by Councillor G. Denaro.

RESOLVED that

the Worcestershire-wide draft Model Code of Conduct be adopted by the Council.

13\22

APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES 2022/23

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance presented the Council's nominations to Outside Bodies for 2022/23.

During consideration of this matter, Members noted there had been very few changes from the previous Outside Bodies Appointments in 2021/22.

The recommendation in respect of the Outside Body nominations 2022/23 was proposed by Councillor G. Denaro and seconded by Councillor K. May.

RESOLVED that

Council approve the nominations to the Outside Bodies for 2022/23.

14\22

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The Chairman opened the item by explaining that 5 questions had been submitted for consideration at the meeting. There would be no subsidiary questions.

Question submitted by Councillor H. Rone-Clarke

“Could the leader or relevant portfolio holder update Council on the progress of the strategic transport assessment promised at last April’s full council meeting, following the debate surrounding the Whitford Road development?”

With the proposed development along Whitford Road, and the cut to the 144, this is now more important than ever.”

The Leader responded that the Strategic Transport Assessment (STA) was an important piece of evidence supporting the preparation of the emerging Bromsgrove District Plan Review. Consultants were commissioned in May 2021 and had been working on the following stages since this time:

- **Stage 1:** preparation of a Transport Evidence Base (TEB) which drew together available evidence on existing transport provision and movements within the District, the transport issues, and the potential infrastructure measures to mitigate impacts where they arise.
- **Stage 2:** definition of assessment criterion to assess six spatial option areas with regard to current and future transport connectivity.
- **Stage 3(a):** application of the assessment criterion to six spatial option areas to provide a high-level assessment of transport connectivity.
- **Stage 3(b):** refinement of the assessment criterion and application to more focused spatial option areas (‘clusters’ of potential development sites) with recommendations for infrastructure opportunities.

The earlier stages of this work were complete, with work currently ongoing between the consultants and Bromsgrove District Council and Worcestershire County Council officers to finalise stage 3(b). The final project was planned to be presented to the Strategic Planning Steering Group (SPSG) during the summer, with the dates still to be confirmed, and all Members were encouraged to attend for further detail on the STA outcomes.

Question submitted by Councillor P. M. McDonald

"When will the Council purchase its first electric vehicle?"

In response to this question, the Leader explained that Bromsgrove District Council had requested the assistance of the Energy Savings Trust (EST) to assess the efficiency of its current vehicle fleets in terms of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, energy consumption and operating costs.

The report had provided a good overview of the fleet, but further work was being commissioned to look at each of the vehicles in detail in order to advise what the best vehicle solution was for the work undertaken and the distances travelled.

Procurement of the services of a specialist who could offer the Council the detailed advice needed to progress was currently underway. The areas where advice and support would be sought would be in relation to vehicle availability, suitability, emerging technology, the right time to invest, grant funding availability, fuel type, infrastructure systems and energy suppliers. Once the detailed information was available, a report would be produced that would provide a plan for the vehicle replacement for the following ten years and assist with the Council's aim to be carbon neutral.

The Leader informed Members that it was anticipated that the replacement of the fleet with ultra-low emission vehicles would commence in 2023/24.

Question submitted by Councillor S. Robinson

"Do you agree that the latest proposal for the 144, which sees the route continue from Catshill to Longbridge but not onwards to Birmingham, is still inadequate and will you continue to lobby Worcestershire County Council to provide a full reinstatement of this vital service?"

The Leader commented that she would continue to lobby Worcestershire County Council to seek to provide full bus cover, to include Sundays and further evening services, for this route.

Question submitted by Councillor R. Hunter

“How many households in Bromsgrove that are eligible for the council tax rebate had received their payment by the end of April and how many have received it to date?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance responded that the estimate of eligible households on 8th May 2022 was 27,454 and that the number paid by 30th April 2022 was 15,793 which amounted to 57.5% of eligible households. It was also reported that a further 4,042 payments had been made on 8th May 2022 and that to date 19,835 payments had been made which equated to 72% of households within Bromsgrove.

Question submitted by Councillor J. King

“Did Bromsgrove receive any payment from the NHS for the use of the Artrix as a vaccination centre and if so, can the funds be put towards securing a sustainable future for the Artrix building as a thriving centre for arts and cultural activities in Bromsgrove?”

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Climate Change commented that Bromsgrove District Council had been supporting the Holding Trust by providing facilities management support. This in turn enabled the NHS to use the building as a vaccination site. Council had been advised previously that the Artrix Holding Trust had the care and control of the building whilst work continued by the Holding Trust to determine the future of the venue. The Council had been advised by the Holding Trust that they were in receipt of funds from the NHS for the use of the building.

15\22

MOTIONS ON NOTICE

The Chairman explained that 1 Motion on Notice had been received for consideration at the meeting.

Plaque of Remembrance.

"That this Council erects a plaque in remembrance of those who died from Covid and the tremendous work carried out by key workers throughout the pandemic."

The Motion was proposed by Councillor P. M. McDonald and seconded by Councillor H. Rone-Clark.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor P. M. McDonald noted that all parties within the Chamber would agree that the sacrifices made by key workers, including those in retail and transport, along with NHS workers, throughout the Covid-19 pandemic had been significant. It was with this in mind that Councillor McDonald thought an appropriate tribute would be for a tree to be planted in honour of those key workers and those who had sadly died as a result of Covid-19. Councillor P. M McDonald explained that many people living with a disability had also been affected and continued to be affected by Covid-19 and that this tree would also provide a way to continue to reflect on the ongoing challenges that some members of the community faced. Councillor McDonald suggested that the decision as to where the tree be situated should be delegated to officers.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Rone-Clarke echoed Councillor McDonald's sentiments regarding the sacrifices that were made by key workers during the pandemic, particularly of those who had dealt with threats whilst carrying out their work. In addition to this, it was considered that this kind of memorial would be a fitting tribute to those who had lost their lives as a result of Covid-19. It was noted by Councillor Rone-Clarke that this kind of memorial had already been undertaken by some other local authorities and that Bromsgrove District Council should provide this public memorial to pay tribute to residents who had all experienced difficulties during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Councillor K. May responded to the Motion and agreed wholeheartedly that this was a fitting memorial and that potentially Sanders Park would be an appropriate place to locate the plaque and the tree of remembrance.

On being put to the vote the Motion was carried.

RESOLVED that

this Council erect a plaque in remembrance of those who died from Covid-19 and the tremendous work carried out by key workers throughout the pandemic.

The meeting closed at 7.02 p.m.

Chairman