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Council
15th May 2024

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

15TH MAY 2024, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors S. Ammar (Chairman) B. Kumar (Vice-Chairman) and Councillors A. Bailes, R. Bailes, S. J. Baxter, S. R. Colella, J. Elledge, D. J. A. Forsythe, E. M. S. Gray, C.A. Hotham, D. Hopkins, R. J. Hunter, H. J. Jones, M. Marshall, K.J. May, P. M. McDonald, B. McEldowney, S. T. Nock, D. J. Nicholl, S. R. Peters, J. Robinson, S. A. Robinson, H. D. N. Rone-Clarke, J. D. Stanley, D. G. Stewart, K. Taylor, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker.

Officers: Mrs S. Hanley, Mr P. Carpenter, Mr G. Revans, Mrs C. Felton, Ms. N Cummings, Mrs J. Bayley-Hill and Mrs J. Gresham.

1\24

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN 2024/25

Councillor S. Ammar was not present at the commencement of the meeting.

Councillor B. Kumar, Vice-Chairman, welcomed everyone to the meeting and sought nominations for Chairman of the Council.

Councillor P. McDonald nominated Councillor S. Ammar as Chairman for the 2024-25 Municipal Year. Councillor K.A May seconded the nomination. On being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED that Councillor S. Ammar be elected Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year.

Councillor Ammar was invited into the meeting. She signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, thanked Members of the Council and stated that it was an honour and privilege to be elected to the Office of Chairman for a second term of office.

2\24

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN 2024/25

Councillor K.A. May nominated Councillor B. Kumar as Vice-Chairman of the Council. Councillor P. Whittaker seconded the nomination. Following a vote it was

RESOLVED that Councillor B. Kumar be elected Vice-Chairman of the Council for the ensuing municipal year.

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

3\24 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Dale, S. Evans and R. Lambert.

4\24 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

5\24 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 10TH APRIL 2024**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th April 2024 were presented for Members' consideration.

With reference to minute number 104/23, it was noted that Councillor Nicholl had declared an interest as a member of Worcestershire Wildlife Trust and not Councillor A. Bailes.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 10th April 2024 be approved as a correct record subject to Councillor A. Bailes being replaced by Councillor D. J. Nicholl in minute number 104/23 relating to membership of Worcestershire Wildlife Trust.

6\24 **TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND/OR HEAD OF PAID SERVICE**

Chairman

The Chairman announced that the Chairman's Golf Tournament had raised approximately £1,700 for charity and she thanked all Councillors who had supported the event and the other Chairman's events held during the Municipal Year.

Head of Paid Service

There were no announcements from the Head of Paid Service.

7\24 **TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER**

The Leader reported that Councillor C. Hotham had asked to step down from the Cabinet. The Leader thanked Councillor Hotham for his work over the past year, in particular in the review of governance arrangements.

The Leader reported that as a consequence there were changes to roles in the Cabinet and it now comprised the following members:

Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships and Enabling – Councillor Karen May

Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Regeneration – Councillor Sue Baxter

Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Community Safety – Councillor Peter Whittaker

Cabinet Member for Finance – Councillor Steve Colella

Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing and Strategic Housing – Councillor Shirley Webb

Cabinet Member for Leisure and Climate Change – Councillor Bernard McEldowney

Cabinet Member for Planning, Licensing and WRS – Councillor Kit Taylor.

The Leader thanked all members of the Cabinet for the work they had carried out in their roles over the past year.

8\24

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

The Chairman reported that no questions or petitions had been received from members of the public.

9\24

URGENT DECISIONS

Members were informed that there had been one urgent decision taken since the previous meeting of the Council on the subject of Revised Parking Charges.

10\24

APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES 2024/25

Councillor K. May, the Leader of the Council, introduced the report setting out the recommended political balance of the Council and explained that it was a technical report which was considered at each Annual Council meeting. Councillor May proposed, Councillor S. Baxter seconded and it was

RESOLVED that:-

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

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

11\24

OUTSIDE BODIES

A report on appointments to various Outside Bodies was submitted for Councillors' consideration.

Councillor K. May proposed, Councillor S. Baxter seconded the appointments listed in the appendix to the report.

Councillor R. J. Hunter expressed thanks to Councillors May and Baxter for their support in reviewing appointments to outside bodies as part of the review of governance arrangements.

RESOLVED that

The Council nominates to the outside bodies as listed at the appendix to the minutes for the 2024-25 Municipal Year.

12\24

CONSTITUTION REVIEW

The Council reviewed its Constitution at each Annual meeting. Members considered a report which set out outcomes of the latest meeting of the Constitution Review Working Group (CRWG), held on 12th March 2024, at which various changes to the Council's constitution were discussed. These proposed recommendations were considered at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 22nd April 2024.

In presenting the report, Councillor K. May highlighted a change to the CRWG's proposals which had been suggested by the Overview and Scrutiny Board. The Board had endorsed the recommendations made by the CRWG, subject to an amendment to the proposed changes to the Scrutiny Procedure Rules to enable an issue to be discussed more than once in a 6-month period, subject to certain parameters. The proposed change had been included in the appendix to the report before the Council.

During consideration of the report a member thanked the Democratic Services Team for their work on the Member Officer Protocol and welcomed the clarification in that of the expectation for officers to respond promptly to Members' queries. Reference was also made to the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee's request for the publication of a Whistleblowing Strategy, and this was due to be presented shortly. The Committee was also looking at appointing an Independent Member.

Councillor May proposed, Councillor S. Baxter seconded and it was

RESOLVED that

- 1) The current version of the Officer Scheme of Delegations is agreed as set out at Appendix A;
- 2) The Joint Arrangements, at Part 7 of the constitution, be updated, as detailed in Appendix B;
- 3) The Planning Procedure Rules, at Part 14 of the constitution, be updated, as detailed in Appendix C and the Planning Call in process be removed from the Officer Scheme of Delegations at Part 6 of the constitution;
- 4) The Scrutiny Procedure Rules, at Part 12 of the constitution, be updated as detailed in Appendix D;
- 5) The Audit, Standards and Governance Committee Procedure Rules, at Part 13 of the constitution, be updated as detailed in Appendix E;
- 6) The amendments to the Member Officer Relations Protocol, at Part 22 of the constitution, whereby the Member Enquiries Guidance should be added as an appendix to that part of the constitution, be approved; and
- 7) The Committee terms of reference for the Licensing (Miscellaneous) Sub-Committees A and B for the number of Councillors be amended as detailed in Appendix G.

13\24

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE (TO FOLLOW)

The Chairman advised that four questions on notice had been received for this meeting.

Question submitted by Councillor R. Hunter

“When will members have the opportunity to input into the play audit with respect to their individual wards?”

Councillor S. Colella, the Cabinet Member for Finance, replied that

“This item is on the forward plan for Cabinet on the 11th September 2024. In advance of this it is anticipated that there will be a Cabinet Advisory Group on this matter. The date of the Cabinet Advisory Group is yet to be arranged, but we envisage that it will be in late June or early July”.

Councillor Hunter asked a supplementary question that ahead or shortly after the Cabinet Advisory Group whether there would be an opportunity for all members to have some input.

Councillor Colella answered that he agreed; it was important that all members understood the process, where their particular play areas fell in the ranking process and how the assessment was arrived at. Substantial capital expenditure had been set aside for this initiative, so it was important to understand needs across the district.

Question submitted by Councillor D. Nicholl

“When will the Council publish the next consultation on the local plan review?”

Councillor K. Taylor, the Cabinet Member for Planning, Licensing and Regulatory Services replied:

“The Bromsgrove District Plan Consultation is set to be considered by Members at the Cabinet in June and the Council in July, if approval is given consultation will begin shortly after the July Council meeting for an extended period to take into account the summer holiday period.”

Councillor Nicholl asked a supplementary question, whether the consultation would include potential site allocation, given concerns residents had about the green belt.

Councillor Taylor replied that potential site allocation would be included in the consultation.

Question submitted by Councillor J. Robinson

“When will the Ward Fund allocation for the 2024/25 financial year be available for members to access?”

Councillor S. Colella, the Cabinet Member for Finance responded that “The Ward Fund allocation application process for Members will be ready following the Council AGM meeting. This will include draft forms to be completed, and the checks and balances that the Council will need to undertake before monies are allocated to ensure we comply with all “subsidy” requirements (which has replaced the State Aid requirements we had when we were part of the EU). Members will be mailed the information, including key contacts and the estimated timescales from application to the delivery of the funds.”

Question submitted by Councillor S. Robinson

“It was recently reported that two thirds of councils expect not to hit the Government’s deadline of April 2026 for introducing food waste collections. This is because of a shortfall between the funding committed

by Government and what is actually needed to undertake the work. What does this mean for Bromsgrove?”

Councillor P. Whittaker, the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Community Safety replied:

“Defra have allocated a capital grant payment to Bromsgrove District Council of £902,511 for the purchase of food waste caddies and food waste vehicles. We have challenged this allocation as it is less than we have calculated is needed and await a response from Defra.

Details of two further funding streams to support the introduction of food waste collection are still awaited. Transitional resource funding is likely to cover the one-off costs such as communication materials, project management and delivery of the two food waste caddies to each house (internal to the property as well as the kerbside collection caddies). Ongoing revenue funding will then be paid to support the ongoing delivery of the service.

A review of the infrastructure required i.e. the waste disposal capacity for the service across the district and the county is also needed ahead of the service start. This will look at how we can deal with the collected food waste in the most efficient way, e.g. reducing transport through use of waste transfer rather than direct delivery to third party Anaerobic Digestion facilities.

A report updating Members is due to go to Overview and Scrutiny in July 2024. It is anticipated that the likely commencement of the service will be in late 2026.

14\24

MOTIONS ON NOTICE (TO FOLLOW)

The Chairman advised that one motion on notice had been submitted for this meeting.

White Ribbon Campaign

The Council considered the following Motion on Notice submitted by Councillor R. J Hunter:

“Council fully supports the White Ribbon campaign and thanks our Community Safety officers for their tireless proactive work to end domestic abuse in our communities.

Council will continue to support the development of new ways to help victims and survivors of domestic abuse, including through the ‘cut it out’ initiative.

Council calls upon officers to explore the potential for formal recognition of our efforts to eradicate domestic abuse through official White Ribbon accreditation.”

Councillor R. J. Hunter proposed the Motion. In doing so he referred to one in four women in England and Wales experiencing domestic abuse in their lifetime. The Police responded to a domestic abuse call every 30 seconds. The work undertaken by the Community Safety Team in collaboration with volunteers was vital in empowering women to get the help that they needed. A presentation at a recent Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting had highlighted the Council's work in this area and he gave examples of the initiatives supported by the Community Safety team. He acknowledged that survivors of domestic abuse included male victims, but 93% of perpetrators were men.

Councillor Hunter considered that the Motion as proposed would demonstrate the Council's strong support and show practical action as part of this. The White Ribbon Campaign and accreditation would help give recognition to the team and volunteers and in a practical sense would assess whether the Council was doing all it could to make sure all its employees were safe. He thanked officers and leading members for their support in bringing the Motion to Council.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor B. Kumar, who referred to awareness of the Campaign locally and across the world. The incidence of domestic abuse related crimes had increased by 7.7% between 2021 and 2023. Whilst the majority of cases were against women, women had also inflicted physical, emotional and psychological domestic abuse against men. Overall, he suggested there was an issue of underreporting of domestic abuse, especially during the Covid pandemic. In Bromsgrove, there were 30 cases in 2020-21 where the Council had been asked for assistance because an individual was being made homeless or was in fear of this. In 2022-23 there had been 27 approaches for temporary accommodation, and this had increased to 43 in 2023-24.

White Ribbon Day would begin on 16th November and whilst it was welcome, Councillor Kumar suggested year-round initiatives should be carried out, including workshops, seminars and school-based education and establishing and promoting support services. In his view the Council's website could include links to relevant sources of support and information. It would be important to monitor effectiveness of such programmes.

During consideration of the Motion the following points were made:

- the White Ribbon accreditation process supported embedding a culture in an organisation and many Councils had become accredited; the Council should support this.
- since the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 the Council had been obliged to provide a co-ordinator for domestic abuse; this post was in Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (bdht) and in practice this role worked very well. The officer worked with various community groups to raise awareness and included school visits.

- the statistics provided during the debate had illustrated that progress still needed to be made. Achieving white ribbon accreditation was crucial to ensuring Council employees felt safe and secure in their working environment.
- the view was expressed that the issue was wider than domestic violence and should be about all violence against all women. Educating younger men about appropriate behaviour was an important part of the initiative.
- the Motion was timely as the European Football Championships would begin in June and there was a risk of increased domestic abuse around the time of the competition.
- domestic abuse was endemic, and conversations should include all generations in the community.
- the community safety team worked with many groups on prevention of domestic abuse, but more could be done, and the Campaign provided a good framework for this.

Having been put to the vote the proposal was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Council fully supports the White Ribbon campaign and thanks our Community Safety officers for their tireless proactive work to end domestic abuse in our communities;
- 2) Council will continue to support the development of new ways to help victims and survivors of domestic abuse, including through the 'cut it out' initiative; and
- 3) Council calls upon officers to explore the potential for formal recognition of our efforts to eradicate domestic abuse through official White Ribbon accreditation.

15\24

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

There was no urgent business on this occasion.

The meeting closed at 6.54 p.m.

Chairman

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Council Appointments to Outside Bodies

15th May 2024

Organisation	No. of Appts & Length of Office	Appointed 2023/2024	Nominations 2024/2025
Amphlett Hall Management Committee	2 (previous years 4) 1 year	H. Rone-Clarke S. Webb	J. Robinson S. Webb
Citizens' Advice Bromsgrove and Redditch	2 1 year	S. Ammar S. Webb	E. Gray S. Webb
Hereford & Worcestershire Integrated Care Partnership Assembly	1 and a substitute (new group first appointment made by Council on 17th October 2022)	S. Webb Substitute: S. Baxter	S. Webb Substitute: S. Baxter
Midlands Joint Council for Environmental Protection	2 1 year	H. Rone-Clarke	H. Rone-Clarke S. Evans
West Mercia Police and Crime Panel <i>Rep and sub must be from the same political group on the Council (usually the majority group)</i>	1 rep and 1 substitute	H. Jones Substitute: S. Colella B. Kumar (Council 24 th Jan 2024)	H. Jones Substitute: B. Kumar
Worcestershire County Council Corporate Parenting Board	1 1 year	E. Gray	E. Gray
Worcestershire County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	1 1 year	B. Kumar (Overview & Scrutiny Board 11 th Sept 2023)	Delegate to the next meeting of the O&S Board to determine
Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board (previously Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee)	2 1 year To include relevant Portfolio holder and one other member of the controlling group and one substitute	K. Taylor H. Jones Substitute: M. Marshall	K. Taylor H. Jones Substitute: M. Marshall

