

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

**WEDNESDAY, 20TH AUGUST 2014 AT 6.00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Councillors R. J. Laight (Vice-Chairman), C. J. Bloore, D. W. P. Booth, J. M. Boswell, J. R. Boulter, M. A. Bullivant, M. T. Buxton, R. A. Clarke, S. R. Colella, B. T. Cooper, R. L. Dent, S. J. Dudley, P. A. Harrison, H. J. Jones, B. Lewis, L. C. R. Mallett, E. J. Murray, J. A. Ruck, C. R. Scurrrell, E. M. Shannon, R. J. Shannon, S. P. Shannon, M. A. Sherrey, C. J. Spencer, C. B. Taylor, C. J. Tidmarsh, L. J. Turner and C. J. K. Wilson.

29\14 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Baxter, Brogan, Deeming, Grant-Pearce, Griffiths, Hollingworth, Lammas, C McDonald, D McDonald, Webb and Whittaker.

30\14 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

31\14 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 16TH JULY 2014**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2014 be approved as a correct record.

32\14 **COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME REVIEW**

The Council considered the minutes and recommendations from the Cabinet meeting held earlier in the afternoon. The Council had asked Cabinet to reconsider the Council Tax Support Scheme at its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> July.

The Cabinet had considered a report setting out proposals to reduce the financial impact to the District and other precepting bodies in relation to Government changes to the Council tax support scheme. All Councillors had been sent a copy of this report.

Councillor Sherrey proposed, Councillor Taylor seconded the recommendations from the Cabinet.

During debate on the proposal the main issues discussed included:

- the proposal to issue the consultation to residents beyond those currently in receipt of support. It was suggested that it should be restricted to those currently receiving Council tax support, since they would be most directly affected by any changes. It was noted that the rules encouraged authorities to enable those who had an interest in the operation of the scheme to comment and the opportunity was being taken to do this at an early stage;
- it was suggested that the scheme potentially had an adverse affect on the Council in terms of increasing the level of Council tax arrears and this should be taken into account;
- the option to reduce Council Tax discount on empty homes should not apply to properties which were subject to probate. It was confirmed that officers had discretion when dealing with probate cases to avoid causing distress to those involved.

Councillor Bloore proposed an amendment, that the consultation should include all 1700 people directly affected by the proposed options for change. This was seconded by Councillor Mallett.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared lost.

The substantive motion was then voted on and declared carried.

### **RESOLVED**

- (a) that the options set out in Appendix 1 to the report be put to public consultation in order to inform potential changes to the Council's Council Tax Support Scheme for 2015/16 and /or later years;
- (b) that the Head of Customer Access and Financial Support be authorised to consult on the options, set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes;
- (c) that the Head of Customer Access and Financial Support report back to Cabinet on the outcome of that consultation and any proposals for changes to the scheme, for further consideration and resolution by Cabinet, to consult on a draft scheme;
- (d) that further to the outcome of Cabinet's decision on the draft regulations, the Head of Customer Access and Financial Support be authorised to carry out the statutory consultation required on the draft scheme;
- (e) that the final Scheme be presented to Cabinet to make recommendations to Council in January 2015, to allow for the necessary regulations to be published by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2015.

The meeting closed at 6.53 p.m.

Chairman