

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

16TH MAY 2018, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors C. J. Spencer (Chairman), M. J. A. Webb (Vice-Chairman), C. Allen-Jones, C. J. Bloore, M. T. Buxton, S. R. Colella, B. T. Cooper, R. J. Deeming, G. N. Denaro, R. L. Dent, M. Glass, C.A. Hotham, R. E. Jenkins, H. J. Jones, R. J. Laight, L. C. R. Mallett, K.J. May, C. M. McDonald, P. M. McDonald, S. R. Peters, S. P. Shannon, M. A. Sherrey, C. B. Taylor, M. Thompson, L. J. Turner, K. J. Van Der Plank, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

1\18 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE ENSUING YEAR**

It was proposed by Councillor M. A. Sherrey and seconded by Councillor K. J. May that Councillor C. J. Spencer be elected Chairman for the ensuing year.

It was

RESOLVED that Councillor C. J. Spencer be elected Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year.

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

2\18 **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE ENSUING YEAR**

It was proposed by Councillor R. J. Laight and seconded by Councillor B. T. Cooper that Councillor M. J. A. Webb be elected Vice Chairman for the ensuing year.

It was

RESOLVED that Councillor M. J. A. Webb be elected Vice Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year.

Councillor Webb signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and thanked Members of the Council for electing her to the Office of Vice Chairman.

3\18 **VOTE OF THANKS TO RETIRING OFFICE HOLDERS**

The Chairman thanked the retiring Chairman, Councillor Jones, for the work she had carried out over the past year and for the funds raised for her chosen charity.

Councillor Jones confirmed that over £4,000 had been raised for NewStarts and thanked everyone for their support during her years as Chairman.

4\18 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S. J. Baxter, J. M. L. A. Griffiths and P. L. Thomas.

5\18 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

6\18 **TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND/OR HEAD OF PAID SERVICE**

The Chairman announced that her charity for the year would be Bosom Friends, a breast cancer support group which was started in 1996 through the Alexandra Hospital and further details were available for anyone that was interested. The Chairman also confirmed that her Chaplin for the year would be the Reverend Ray Khan.

7\18 **TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER (INCLUDING MEMBERSHIP OF THE CABINET)**

The Leader announced that there was a slight change to the responsibilities within the Cabinet, but the Membership remained the same:

- Councillor g. N. Denaro – Leader of the Council without Portfolio (retaining overarching Governance/Policy and Performance);
- Councillor K. J. May – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, the Town Centre and Strategic Partnerships;
- Councillor B. T. Cooper – Portfolio Holder for Finance, Enabling, Human Resources and Organisational Development;
- Councillor M. A. Sherrey – Portfolio Holder for Health and Well Being and Environmental Services;
- Councillor C. B. Taylor – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Strategic Housing;

- Councillor P. J. Whittaker – Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Cultural Services, Community Services and Regulatory Services.

The Leader also took the opportunity to thank Councillor L. Mallett for the work he had carried out, particularly in respect of the Overview and Scrutiny Board and the Finance and Budget Working Group, both of which had worked extremely well and helped to improve the working of the Council. He went on to say that he looked forward to working with Councillor M. Thompson.

Councillor Thompson raised a number of points in respect of the role of the Annual Meeting of Council and the inclusion of ordinary business on the agenda. The Leader responded that this was something which had been discussed at length at the Constitution Review Working Group and with his own Group, which had chosen for it to remain as a traditional Annual Meeting for the time being. He said he was happy to discuss this further with Councillor Thompson at a later date.

Councillor P. McDonald requested that the Leader provide costings of the meeting and the Leader agreed to provide this information outside of the meeting.

8\18

APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES 2018-19

The Leader reminded Members that this was a report which was considered each year and referred them to Appendix 1 of the report in particular, which showed that the allocation of places was unchanged from the previous year, with 4 places being available for the opposition groups to agree.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor G. N. Denaro and seconded by Councillor K. J. May.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that 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;
- (b) that Members be appointed to the Committees and as substitute members in accordance with nominations to be made by Group Leaders; and
- (c) that the terms of reference for the Boards and Committees as set out at appendix 2 be confirmed.

9\18

SCHEME OF DELEGATIONS

The leader drew Members attention to Paragraph 3.7 which highlighted that a full review of the Delegations was currently being undertaken and that at the most recent meeting of the Constitution Review Working Group it had been agreed that a further report would be brought before the Council's September meeting for consideration. The report before Members therefore merely included changes to legislation and officer titles. It was also noted that on page 37 there appears to be a number of question marks in respect of delegations and it was confirmed that these should be removed. The Leader asked Members to advise officers if there were any particular areas which required further clarification.

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

Councillor P. McDonald commented that this was the only opportunity Members had to give input into the delegations and drew Members attention to page 74, Planning Application delegations and in particular 1(a) applications for dwelling houses where the number of houses to be provided is 10 or more. Councillor McDonald was of the view that this should be reduced to just one property and that all applications should be brought before the Planning Committee and requested an amendment to the this effect. The amendment was seconded by Councillor M. Thompson.

Councillor McDonald highlighted the following areas in support of his amendment:

- To stop Councillors trying to influence others, particularly in respect of applications outside of their own Ward.
- Take away the need for the call-in process in respect of applications.
- To protect Officers, as decision in respect of planning applications, particularly in the current climate could be contentious. He believed that it was unfair to put Officers in the position where they could be open to influence from developers.
- He did not believe that by this change it would have a significant impact on the work of the Planning Committee.

Following the proposed amendment, the Leader commented that this debate had also been had in the Constitution Review Working Group and believed that this figure was set by Central Government. Councillor Mallett advised that this was in fact the number of houses which triggered affordable housing provision and not those which needed to be considered by the Planning Committee, as this was a figure set by this Council.

Councillor C. B. Taylor, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Strategic Housing, commented that he also had sympathy in respect of the call-in process, however this was part of the democratic process and that he

had total confidence in the officers making a decision on developments of up to 10 houses.

During the following debate of the amendment a number of areas were discussed in more detail, including:

- “Back garden” developments, which often fell under the 10 houses ruling and which had the potential to be contentious.
- Members were provided with a list of all applications on a weekly basis and if they had any concerns or concerns were raised with them by residents then there was the opportunity to call-in a particular application.
- It was discussed that residents may not be aware of the call-in process and whether any actions could be taken to promote this.
- Members “lobbying” other Ward Members in respect of an application that was outside of their own area.
- The removal of the call-in process and all applications going to the Planning Committee in order to make the process more open and transparent.

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

For the amendment Councillors Bloore, Buxton, Colella, Hotham, Jenkins, Mallett, P. McDonald, C. McDonald, Shannon, Thompson, Turner and Van der Plank (12).

Against the amendment Councillors Allen-Jones, Cooper, Deeming, Denaro, Dent, Glass, Laight, May, Sherrey, Spencer, M. Webb, S. Webb, Whittaker and Jones (14).

Abstentions Councillor S. Peters (1).

The Chairman declared the amendment to be lost.

A brief discussion followed in respect of the inclusion of Ward Councillors within a number of areas to ensure that they were involved in the decision making process, as it was likely that they would have more local knowledge within their Ward and therefore input from them would be useful. Members were reminded that Ward Members had been involved successfully in, for example in the New Homes Bonus Community Grant Scheme and it was envisaged that the Ward Member role could be further enhanced in other areas. The Leader confirmed that this would be considered as part of the overall review carried out by the Constitution Review Working Group.

RESOLVED that the current version of the Officer Scheme of Delegations be agreed as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

10\18

APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Leader proposed that the Outside Bodies representatives from the 2017/18 be rolled over for the 2018/19 municipal year. He explained that officers were in negotiations with the relevant bodies and hoped to be able to negotiate, where possible that in future years these appointments be made for the full term of office of a Member.

Councillor Mallett provided an update in respect of the Worcestershire County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) representative, as it had previously been reported that this needed to be a Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Board. After this had been queried at WCC it had transpired that this was not the case and that any Member could be nominated, however it was important that this person reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Board on a regular basis. The Leader thanked Councillor Mallett for this update.

Members raised concerns in respect of a number of appointments, in particular that of the Worcestershire County Council Highways (Bromsgrove) Partnership Forum and why this had been deemed no longer necessary. Attendance at meetings of the various outside bodies and reports from the relevant Councillors was also discussed and Councillor Denaro explained that Democratic Services collated details of attendance and requested a brief update from each representative. A summary of these would be provided upon request.

Concerns were raised that whilst there was reference to a representative on the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), there appeared to be no reference to a representative on the Worcestershire LEP. The Leader confirmed that there were also a number of Outside Bodies nominations which would be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 30th May 2018. Councillor May confirmed that she was the representative on the Worcestershire LEP.

Reference was also made in respect of the Worcestershire County Council Corporate Parenting Board and the recent OFSTED report, which whilst giving excellent feedback in respect of Corporate Parenting had advised that there was a need to make improvements in respect of those with Special Educational Needs and disability. Councillor Sherrey, as the representative on this Board, confirmed that she was aware of this and that it was something which she would continue to raise at the appropriate meetings.

RESOLVED that the Outside Bodies nominations from 2017/18 be carried over for the 2018/19 municipal year.

The meeting closed at 6.45 p.m.

Chairman

Bromsgrove District Council

Composition of Committees 2018-19

Committee	Cons	Lab	Independent Alliance	Comments
Overview and Scrutiny Board	6 Allen-Jones Deeming Glass Laight Thomas S. Webb (subs – Jones, Dent, M Webb, Griffiths)	2 Take 3 Mallett Thompson Bloore	2 Colella Hotham	11 members on Board
Licensing Committee	6 Dent Glass Jones Sherrey Spencer S. Webb (subs – Cooper, Griffiths, Deeming)	2 Take 3 Buxton C. McDonald Shannon	2 Peters Turner (substitute Baxter)	11 members on Committee
Planning Committee	6 Allen-Jones Deeming Sherrey Spencer Thomas Whittaker #(subs – Taylor, Dent, S Webb, Cooper)	2 Buxton Shannon	2 Take 3 Baxter Hotham Peters (Substitute Turner)	11 members on Committee
Audit, Standards and Governance Committee	5 Allen-Jones Jones Laight Thomas M. Webb	2 Mallett Thompson	2 Colella Peters	9 members on Committee

Electoral Matters Committee	4 Deeming Dent Glass M. Webb	1 Mallett	1 Take 2 Turner Baxter	7 members on Committee
TOTAL Entitlement	27	11	11	49 places available