

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

**23RD JANUARY 2019, AT 6.00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Councillors C. J. Spencer (Chairman), C. Allen-Jones, S. J. Baxter, 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, P.L. Thomas, M. Thompson, K. J. Van Der Plank, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

67\18 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

At the start of the meeting the Chairman invited Amy Stokes a Mission Enabler from the Listening Service to give a short presentation on this project.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. M. L. A. Griffiths, L. J. Turner and M. J. A. Webb.

68\18 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

69\18 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2018 were submitted.

During consideration of the minutes the following areas were raised as a matter of accuracy:

- Councillor M. Thompson noted that whilst it had been recorded that he had not been happy with the recording of his motion under Minute No. 52/18 the Minutes from the meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> September had been resolved as an accurate record, which he did not think was correct. It was confirmed that it would be recorded that the resolution of the Minutes for the meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> September 2018 should have recorded that the minutes were approved subject to the pre-amble above, to take account of Councillor Thompson's comments.

- Councillor C. Hotham asked for it to be recorded that whilst he had quoted a figures of £32 million in respect of his Notice of motion, Minute No. 64/18, this figure had since increased.
- Councillor M. Thompson made reference to his Notice of Motion under Minute No. 64/18 and commented that if the appropriate data had been available there may not have been the need for the Overview and Scrutiny Board to have set up a Short Sharp Review on the matter, which he was chairing.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2018 be approved subject to the pre-amble above.

70\18

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

The Chairman provided details of two events:

- Holocaust Memorial in the Parkside Suite on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2019 at 11 a.m. She was happy to report that again there would be a number of local schools attending this event.
- A Thai Evening fund raising event was planned for 22<sup>nd</sup> February to be held at the Maekong Thai Restaurant in Bromsgrove, to which invitations had been sent out to all Members.

The Head of Paid Service reported that Councillor M. Thompson had raised an issue with the Head of Legal, Democratic and Electoral Services in respect of an error in the Postal Vote Identifier Refresher Letters. He explained that it was a legal requirement that every five years postal voters were written to and asked to provide a new specimen signature for their postal vote identifier. It was a further requirement that requests were sent out during January for the period of 31<sup>st</sup> January the preceding year to 30<sup>th</sup> January in the current year (31<sup>st</sup> January 2018 to 30<sup>th</sup> January 2019).

Mail was sent out through downstream access where a third party printed and sent out the letters. Unfortunately, when creating the letters the operator omitted to add the request of a reply paid envelope to the electronic order and this was not spotted before sending to the printers. This had led to approximately 1,400 letters being sent out on 17<sup>th</sup> January without a return envelope and at a cost of around £550 to the Council.

It was explained that Officers had been made aware by callers on 21<sup>st</sup> January and since it was a legal requirement to send a reply paid envelope it was decided to re-run the batch. This was one on 21<sup>st</sup> January. Electors that had called the office regarding the missing enveloped had been given an apology and asked to wait for the replacement letter to arrive.

Action had been taken to ensure that moving forward any large mailing would be double checked by another officer before an order being sent.

A brief discussion followed in which the following points were raised:

- Whether the Leader had been aware of this and it was confirmed that he was not.
- Whether the Council was responsible for the costs or the third party – it was confirmed that the Council was responsible for the cost of rectifying the error.
- The low morale amongst staff which would only lead to further mistakes being made. The Leader advised that he was not aware of low morale. Councillor Thompson advised that he had evidence to support his claim.
- It was suggested that a meeting take place between the Group Leaders and the Chief Executive to discuss the morale and a number of other areas. The Leader agreed to this.

**RESOLVED** that a meeting be arranged between the Group Leaders and the Chief Executive.

71\18

**TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER**

The Leader advised that he had three announcements:

1. The Leader had received a reply to his letter to the Heath Minister, which had arisen from the Overview and Scrutiny Board's investigation into Hospital Car Parking Charges. He had received the letter on 31<sup>st</sup> December, although it was dated 14<sup>th</sup> December. The letter outlined the reasonings behind the charges and relevant acts but did not address the affordability question. He had therefore drafted a response:

*"Thank you for your letter dated 14<sup>th</sup> December in response to the issues I raised regarding the cost of hospital car parking at Worcestershire Acute Hospital NHS Trust.*

*Whilst I note the explanation you have provided, the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group on hospital Car Parking Fees carried out its investigation one of the main findings was around affordability in light of the high level of fees charged. I can only re-iterate on behalf of the Council that the problems with affordability of hospital car parking charges represent a genuine source of concern for our local residents. I understand that this is a concern that affects many other areas of the country and it is disappointing that the current guidance has not been updated since 2015.*

*Accordingly, I would ask again that this issue be considered, and that an urgent review is undertaken of the current guidance with a view to either eliminating, or significantly reducing the level of charges for hospital car parking."*

The Leader advised that he intended to dispatch the letter by the end of the week and would be sending a copy to the Council's MP.

2. In respect of the Highways Review the Leader was pleased to report that progress was being made in dealing with County Highways. At a meeting before the Christmas break he had met with the Leader of Worcestershire County Council (WCC) and the Chief Executive together with other relevant officers. The outcome had been their agreement to carry out a Strategic Traffic Assessment in the North of the County with immediate effect. He highlighted that signs of recording were already being seen and that this was a positive start. Councillor K. May had reported that the Worcestershire LEP were also supportive of this.

The Leader considered this to be a positive first step and there was a follow up meeting planned for 25<sup>th</sup> January, after which he would ask Officers to do a briefing note for circulation to Cabinet, Group Leaders and the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

3. The Leader advised that there would be no Portfolio Holder update at this Council meeting. He explained that he had made the decision and notified the Group Leaders, so that as part of the rescheduled report Members could be provided with a position statement regarding the future management arrangements in delivering leisure and cultural services in Bromsgrove. This was following the current Head of Leisure and Cultural Services taking up a new role as Managing Director of Rubicon Leisure. The Leader took the opportunity, on behalf of all Members, to wish the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services well in his new role.

Councillor L. Mallett thanked the Leader for the update in respect of the Highways Review and asked that the Leader included within his discussions the request that WCC repaid the Council for the cost of the additional work carried out by Mott McDonald in respect of the ongoing issues. He reminded Members that the Overview and Scrutiny Board had also met with officers from WCC and had struggle to get responses to a number of questions and hoped that the Leader was more successful. It was important that the Council was involved in Strategic Traffic Assessment to ensure that any conclusions from it met the needs of the District. As the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Councillor Mallett said he would be happy to attend any future meeting if the Leader thought it would be helpful. He also raised the question as to whether the "Western Relief Road" would form part of those discussions and the Leader advised that he was not aware of this at the moment.

A number of further comments were made by Members following the Leader's announcement, these included:

- Whether an update in respect of the Highways Review should have been provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Board as they had been asked to investigate this matter by Council.

- The lack of a Portfolio Holder report and whether this was a breach of the Constitution, as it was the responsibility of the Portfolio Holder and the changes referred to should not impact on the relevant Member being able to provide an update.
- The Special Responsibility Allowances paid to Portfolio Holders and the work carried out in respect of this position.
- The Alvechurch Neighbourhood Plan – Councillor K. Van der Plank took the opportunity to congratulate all those involved and the residents who had attended the recent referendum. Councillor C. Hotham also took the opportunity to thank the Strategic Planning Manager and his Team for the support they had provided to the Parish Council in preparing the Plan.

72\18

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

The Chairman confirmed that three members of the public had asked to speak at this evening's meeting.

**From Martin Benbow**

Mr Benbow commented on the Motion on Notice – The Motor Neurone Disease Charter to be considered later in the meeting. He explained that he was a campaign volunteer for the Motor Neurone Disease Association and was accompanied by Dr Anita Sharma-James, Chairman of Worcestershire Branch of MND Association and also a local Bromsgrove resident.

He thanked Councillor R. Jenkins for proposing the motion and also Councillors M. Sherrey and G. Denaro for being supportive when he had contacted them previously.

Mr Benbow went on to explain that he was a local resident living in Hagley and his personal interest in the motion was because his father died from Motor Neurone Disease. MND was a cruel disease, one that was rapidly progressing and always fatal. It attacked the nerve endings and made it impossible for the brain to send signals to the muscles. Sufferers ended up living in a shell of a body, unable to move, communicate or look after themselves and eventually unable to breathe. Life expectancy after diagnosis could be very short and one third of people died within 12 months. There was no cure.

He was currently aware of 3 cases of MND in Bromsgrove. The short life expectancy was one of the reasons that it was so important that all stakeholders had a clear understanding of MND and the role they could play to deliver speedy care and attention. When you only had one year to live, one week was a long time to wait for an assessment or a piece of equipment.

The MND Charter calls for 5 simple rights:

- Early diagnosis and information.

- Access to quality care and treatment.
- To be treated as individuals with dignity and respect.
- The right to maximise their quality of life.
- The right for carers to be valued, respected, listened to and well supported.

He believed that as a District Council Bromsgrove had an area of responsibility in relation to housing and Disabled Facilities Grants. Because the disease progresses so rapidly, it was essential that people living with MND get any adaptations to their homes made as quickly and easily as possible. He would also like to raise awareness of the disease within the Council and its staff, in order that support for sufferers and carers could be provided in a timely manner. Adoption of the Charter would send a message that the Council was supportive of the rights set out within it. Across the UK, 81 Councils had already adopted the Charter including Wyre Forest District Council and Worcestershire County Council.

The MND Association and its Worcestershire branch provided some local services and support which could complement the role of the Council. He would welcome the opportunity to work together with the Council in the future and asked the Council to support Councillor Jenkins' Motion.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Benbow for his attendance.

#### **From Kyle Daisley**

Members were advised that Mr Daisley was unfortunately unavailable and therefore his question would not be considered.

#### **From Peter Rendell**

#### **Question to the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Cultural Services**

“As it looks unlikely that the council will ever reach an agreement with BAM for the use of the school sports hall, isn't it time to consider refurbishing our sports hall for badminton, football, military circuit training and other community activities?”

“Isn't it worth replacing the lights and switching the heating back on, so that disability groups like Keep on Moving can continue to use it?”

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Cultural Services responded to Mr. Rendell's question and in so doing advised that this was a matter which was well documented. The Council had agreed in 2014 that a sports hall would not be included as part of the plans for the new leisure centre. This decision was made following the Sports England report and the cost effectiveness of providing such a facility. Following a number of requests, the matter was reconsidered in 2018, with a number of options being placed before Members. After much debate within the Council Chamber it was agreed, that whilst it was disappointing, it was

not financially viable to take the matter further and the decision was made to demolish the Sports Hall, as had been originally planned. The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Cultural Services explained that repairs to the Sports Hall would be in excess of £15k and any works would be without guarantee or warranty and therefore was not an option. It was hoped that an agreement could be reached with BAM in respect of use of the Sports Hall at the School going forward.

Members made a number of comments on this matter:

- The length of time it was taking to reach an agreement with BAM.
- The impact on user groups and in particular the Keep on Moving group which currently used the Sports Hall.
- Whether it would be appropriate for the Overview and Scrutiny Board to look at this matter in more detail.
- That the situation would not have arisen if a Sports Hall had been included in the original design.

The Chairman thanked Mr Rendell for his question.

73118

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET**

Cabinet Recommendations 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018

#### **Bromsgrove District Council's Response to the Wyre Forest District Council's Pre-Submission Local Plan**

The recommendations from Cabinet in respect of the Council's response to the Wyre Forest District Council's Pre-submission Local Plan were proposed by Councillor K. Taylor and seconded by Councillor G. Denaro.

In proposing the recommendations Councillor Taylor explained to Members that this had already been submitted to Wyre Forest due to the time constraints and that if it had been done any later it would have been out of time. He drew Members' attention to item 6.1 of the response which made it clear that the Council was the Wyre Forest Local Plan was unsound, and that the Council did not consider that the plan was justified, effective or consistent with National Policy. Details supporting this were highlighted within the report, in particular the objection focused on Policy 12 – Strategic Infrastructure and Policy 13 – Transport and Accessibility, together with the evidence base which purported to support them.

Councillor Taylor thanked all those involved in preparing the response and in particular the Ward Councillors from Hagley who had attended the Cabinet meeting to put forward their views and concerns.

Following presentation of the report Members discussed a number of areas within it and Councillor S. Colella thanked both the Portfolio Holder and the Strategic Planning Manager for the detailed response

stated that he fully supported it. It was questioned whether the inclusion of this item within the agenda impacted on a Notice of Motion to be considered later in the meeting and Councillor Taylor advised Members that it did not.

The papers had been marked as confidential and Members questioned whether this should have been considered in private session. Councillor Taylor explained that originally the document had been confidential but it was not a public document and as such he was happy for it to be discussed in public.

**RESOLVED:**

- a) that the Officer response to the Wyre Forest Local Plan Review Pre Submission Plan, be approved by Council as its formal response, and that this be confirmed with Wyre Forest District Council; and
- b) that delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning and Regeneration to ensure that the Council is represented at the Examination in Public element of the Wyre Forest Local Plan Review.

**Finance Monitoring Quarter 2 Report**

The recommendation from Cabinet in respect of the Finance Monitoring Quarter 2 Report was proposed by Councillor B. Cooper and seconded by Councillor G. Denaro.

In presenting the report Councillor Cooper advised that it outlined the Council's financial position at the end of quarter 2 in September 2018. It was early in the financial year to draw any conclusions; however, it appeared that the Council seemed to be on target to achieve a modest under-spend for the full year. The table on page 58 of the agenda suggested that the Council would make a surplus of over £500k but this was misleading because the figures in the table now included the Section 31 Grant given by Central Government for offsetting the costs of small business rate relief. The Council was not certain that this would be given this year so it was not in the original budget. The apparent surplus would go into balances.

The Quarter 2 Report was produced for the Cabinet and was tabled as information for Councillors. However, there was one accounting issue on page 57, that needed Council's approval; this would not have any impact on the Council's overall budget position.

The Council had received funding for a Government promoted district heat network feasibility study. A district heating network is a cluster of buildings supplied with heat from a central plant via a network of pipes. Councillor Cooper agreed to send a briefing note on the study to any Councillor who was interested. There was an increase in the 2018/19 revenue budget of £59k for the Bromsgrove District Heating Feasibility Study. This would be funded by a grant of £40k from the Government Heat Network Development Unit, a grant of £5k from North

Worcestershire Economic Development & Regeneration and a grant of £14k from Worcestershire LEP.

Following presentation of the report Members discussed a number of areas including:

- Whether the Heat Network Grant related to private or social housing and who would benefit from it. Councillor Cooper explained that this was the very early stages of the project and that he would provide Members with a briefing paper outside of the meeting explaining more details.
- What areas would be covered by the Heat Network Feasibility Study and whether there was a cost to the Council? Councillor K. May provided a brief summary of information she had found on the Heat Network website.
- Whether sites had already been identified where the Heat Network would be located.
- Councillor Cooper re-iterated that Members were merely being asked to transfer funds to the revenue account.
- The shortfall in planning application income and whether this could also be included in the costs that the Council would attempt to recoup from Worcestershire County Council.

**RESOLVED** that an increase in the 2018-19 Revenue Budget of £59k for the Bromsgrove Heating Feasibility Study be approved and to be funded by a Government Heat Network Development Unit Grant (£40k), NWEDR (£5k) and Worcestershire LEP (£14k).

Cabinet Recommendations 16<sup>th</sup> January 2019

### **Medium Term Financial Plan 2019/20 – 2022/23**

The recommendations from the Cabinet in respect of the Medium Term Financial Plan 2019/20 – 2022/23 were proposed by Councillor B. Cooper and seconded by Councillor G. Denaro.

In proposing the recommendations Councillor Cooper explained that the report on the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was submitted to Cabinet. This was not the final version and was not for discussion at this evening's meeting. The final version of the MTFP was being prepared and would be discussed by the Finance and Budget Working Group and Cabinet before it was submitted to Council in February for approval. However, there were items in the attached report which related to staff pay which Cabinet has recommending to Council. In the appendix on page 81 of the agenda pack, there was a briefing paper on the National Pay Award and the proposed changes to the local pay model. It was anticipated that no Council employee would have a pay cut as a result of the proposed revision to the pay model. The changes would cost the Council £165,000 over the next four years and these costs had been included in the MTFP that is being finalised. This scheme would be

going to formal consultation with the trades' unions, provided Council approved it.

Following presentation of the report Members discussed a number of areas in more detail:

- The impact of the proposed pay model and whether any staff who were affected by it would be given a transitional period of adjustment.
- It was confirmed that the Trade Unions involved in the consultation would be the Bromsgrove branches of Unison, GMB and Unite.
- The aim was to bring both Redditch Borough Council's and this Council's pay models in line with each other, with Redditch carrying out its own negotiations.
- Staff morale and industrial relations and whether this was something which the Overview and Scrutiny Board could consider investigating. Councillor S. Colella commented that he had chaired a Joint review with Redditch Members, in respect of the staff survey and he had been appointed as the "Staff Champion". Although he highlighted that he had not been invited to any discussions on this in recent months.
- It was suggested by Councillor P. McDonald that a small panel of Members be brought together to meet to two or three times a year to discuss industrial relations and other related issues to ensure that, if necessary, any appropriate actions are being taken to address any issues. The Leader agreed that he would meet with the Group Leaders and the Chief Executive to discuss this matter further.
- Whether the assumptions made within the report should be amended to take account of the impact of the reduction on the New Homes Bonus (NHB) received on the NHB Community Grants Scheme which has been based on a percentage of "new" NHB money received. Members were keen to ensure that this worthwhile scheme continued.

**RESOLVED:**

- a) that the pay model as detailed at Appendix 5i of the report (attached to these minutes), be adopted and implemented with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019; and
- b) that a formal consultation be commenced with the Trade Unions, with a view to reaching a Collective Agreement to implement the pay model in line with the revised National Pay Spines.

**Fees and Charges 2019/20**

The recommendations from the Cabinet in respect of the Fees and Charges 2019/20 were proposed by Councillor B. Cooper and seconded by Councillor G. Denaro.

In proposing the recommendations Councillor Cooper explained that in past years, fees that could be increased were increased across the board by a standard inflationary increase. Understandably, this had criticized by Councillors, especially last year. Heads of Service had taken this on board so this year the approach had been somewhat different, as outlined in paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 of the report. It remained more important than ever that additional income was generated from Fees and Charges and this year, each fee was assessed to identify how it met the Council's strategic purposes. Any increases suggested had been based on a robust estimate of firstly, the impact of cost increases and secondly, the demand for the service. Where a general inflation increase had been proposed, RPI of 3% was used; this was the level of RPI in October 2018.

Fees and charges had been considered in the light of the following criteria:

- Was the service to be subsidised by the Council?
- Was the service to break even?
- Was the service to make a surplus, to offset other overhead costs?

The appendix to the report showed all the fees and charges for each service area, with comments on each section. It was noted that part of the appendix was on confidential papers, as it contained fees and charges for some Environmental Services that were commercially sensitive. The schedule of fees and charges had been discussed at the Finance and Budget Working Group where some suggestions were made, which were subsequently approved by Cabinet and are listed on page 2 of the supplementary agenda tabled at this evening's meeting. They would be incorporated into the schedule of fees and charges.

Cabinet had also felt that there could be more information about what some hire charges included. It was proposed that this information would be included in next year's schedule of fees and charges. All members of the Council had had the opportunity to question Heads of Service at a special meeting, held before the most recent Cabinet.

Following presentation of the report Councillor S. Baxter took the opportunity to thank the Portfolio Holder and the Finance and Budget Working Group for their work and in bringing forward such a comprehensive report. It was agreed that the approach taken this year was one of the most effective that Members could remember and the cross party work of the Finance and Budget Working Group was recognized as being pivotal in the progress that had been made. It was hoped that these improvement would continue.

Councillor Cooper took the opportunity to thank the Executive Director, Finance and Resources and the Senior Democratic Services Officer for their support and input into the Finance and Budget Working Group.

**RESOLVED:**

- a) that Council approve all fees and charges that are included within Appendix 1 of the report;
- b) that Council approve the recommendations from the Finance and Budget Working Group; and
- c) that additional information on hire Products be included within future fees and charges reports.

**Capital Strategy 2019/20 incorporating Treasury Management Strategy and half year Treasury update**

It was noted that the Group Leaders had been advised of the deferral of this item. Councillor Cooper apologised for this and explained that on further consideration and as this was a new requirement, he believed it would be helpful if the Finance and Budget Working Group be given the opportunity to consider it before it was brought before Council. It would therefore be re-considered at the Cabinet meeting in March and be brought back to Council at its March meeting.

74\18

**TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE CABINET HELD ON 5TH DECEMBER 2018 AND 16TH JANUARY 2019**

The minutes of the Cabinet held on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018 and 16<sup>th</sup> January 2019 were submitted for information.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018 and 16<sup>th</sup> January 2019 be noted.

75\18

**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL**

The Leader introduced the report and in so doing highlighted to Members that the SRA recommendations made were identical to those made in the previous year, which he had rejected. The Leader confirmed that he had asked to meet with the Panel to discuss his concerns, but this had been delayed as a new panel had been formed as current terms had expired. He had sat on the recruitment panel in the autumn and believed that a good cross section of people had been selected.

He had subsequently met with two members of the Panel (one old/one new) as mentioned in the report and had had a good frank discussion with them. He had undertaken to provide them with supporting data, which related to the roles of Deputy Leader, Planning Chair and Licensing Chair.

The recommended increase of 18% for Cabinet/Scrutiny Chair could not be supported without detailed evidence to present to Council. This formed part of his discussions as did his rejection of their proposed reductions which was also discussed. He hoped to see progress from

the discussions in next year's report when hopefully the Council would endorse without change.

The Leader went on to explain that in the chart on page 33 within the agenda pack the cost ratios were reasonably in line with other authorities in the County. The figures on page 39, column 2 showed current multipliers out of sync and this was due to the SRAs being frozen in the previous year.

The Leader proposed the recommendations and these were seconded by Councillor B. Cooper.

Following presentation of the report Members discussed a number of areas in more detail, this included:

- Concern around the make-up of the actual Panel itself and that it was made up of people within local government who did not represent the residents of Bromsgrove. It was believed that the Panel was not representative of the people of Bromsgrove.
- The recruitment process for the Panel members – the Leader explained that the positions were advertised in the normal way and that following the recent recruitment process a number of new members had been appointed. He was hopeful that they would be more effective and “think outside the box”.
- Members discussed the need to recruit more young people into the role of councillor and that this may necessitate changes to payments received for the role.
- The information that the IRP received in order to make the recommendations within the report and how the allowances were calculated against the amount of time spent carrying out the relevant duties.
- Whether it was possible to view the data that had been used before making a decision and review the Scheme of Allowances before the elections took place in May 2019.
- It was acknowledged that the nature of the role and the allowance paid influenced the type of people that came forward. It was often retired people using it as an additional income.
- The role of the councillor was to focus on doing what was best for the communities that they represented.
- The Leader explained that unfortunately in respect of the Panel members there was a certain type of person that applied therefore it was limited in its membership. Whilst he appreciated what was said within the Chamber it would be difficult to look at an alternative before the May 2019 elections.
- It was highlighted that the payment for the role of a councillor was an allowance and not a salary.
- It was clarified that the IRP covered five districts, this Council, Malvern Hills, Redditch Borough, Worcester City and Wychavon.

In light of the discussions the Monitoring Officers suggested that it may be appropriate for the Group Leaders to consider the matter in more detail outside of the meeting and suggested that it be included on the agenda for either the Member Development Steering Group or the Constitution Review Working Group. Members thought this was a reasonable proposal and following a further brief discussion it was

**RESOLVED:**

- a) that the Basic Allowance for 2019-20 is £4,437, representing a 2% increase;
- b) that the Special Responsibility Allowances remain at the current multiplier rates used by the Council;
- c) that travel allowances for 2019-20 continue to be paid in accordance with the HMRC mileage allowance;
- d) that subsistence allowances for 2019-20 remain unchanged;
- e) that the dependent Career's Allowance remains unchanged; and
- f) that for Parish Councils in the Bromsgrove District, if travel and subsistence is paid, the Panel recommends that it is paid in accordance with the rates paid by Bromsgrove District Council and in accordance with the relevant regulations.

76\18

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Question submitted by Councillor M. Thompson**

“In late 2018 representatives of BDC met with BDHT to discuss the Burcot Lane site and the council's housing company. Please can the Leader tell us:

Who attended the meeting on behalf of BDC?

What were the objectives and outcomes of the meeting?

Particularly, given BDHT's experience, what BDHT thought of the council's venture into housing development?”

The Leader responded to Councillor Thompson's question and advised that senior officers from the Council and BDHT had met on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2018 – Council officers present were the Deputy Chief Executive, the Housing Strategy Manage and the Housing strategy and Enabling Team Leader and BDHT officers were the Chief Executive, Director of Housing and Communities and the Director of Asset Management and Development.

The Purpose of the meeting had been to provide an update to BDHT on the current position regarding proposals for the Burcot Lane development which had been endorsed by Council and specifically the position regarding ongoing dialogue with Homes England in respect of the Accelerated Growth bid funding, the proposed timelines for scheme development. It had also included confirmation that the Council had commissioned external support, an overview of the basis of affordable housing on site and BDHT's views were also sought around potential

future regeneration opportunities working with the Council on a partnership basis.

In addition there were a number of operational issues raised and actions agreed, and also an overview provided on the current partnership arrangements in place regarding community safety in Bromsgrove and North Worcestershire. The Leader confirmed that there was no view given by BDHT at this meeting regarding thoughts as to the Councils venture into housing development.

The Leader thanked Councillor Thompson for raising to Council's attention the ongoing positive collaborative partnership arrangements which existed with BDHT. Members were advised that officers met regularly with colleagues at BDHT and that it was vitally important that there was ongoing shared dialogue given the current ownership and interests at the Burctot site, not least of which BDHT's major stakeholder status as housing provider on site and the shared access arrangements and current hostel provision.

The Leader confirmed that as there were no formally recorded notes from the meeting in December, the contents of this response had been shared with all officers present at the meeting who had endorsed that this was a true and accurate reflection of the issues discussed.

**Question submitted by Councillor S. Colella**

"Does the Leader agree with me and other members of this Council whose wards are likely to see cuts in essential Public Library Services and Public bus services that we cannot stand by and watch WCC cut these services without this Council stepping in with both financial support in its Medium Term Financial Plan and without stepping in to look at what options exist for this district council to take responsibility for the statutory control of these services away from WCC who obviously see them as burdens on its role and responsibilities."

The Leader responded that the Council would do all it could to ensure retention of its libraries and the services they provided, as they were a vital community facility. The Council was looking at all avenues as to how it could work smarter with all partners and would continue to talk about libraries at every opportunity as its residents would expect.

**Question submitted by Councillor Kate Van der Plank**

"Please could the leader explain the current process and suggest what improvements can be made to improve communications and planning around scheduled maintenance?"

BDC planned to close the car park at the polling station for resurfacing on the day of the Alvechurch referendum. Furthermore, it seems that notices of works are not sent out to Parish councils so this was only picked up (and able to be stopped) at last minute and by chance."

The Leader thanked Councillor Van der Plank for her question which raised an interesting prospect if the Council had not managed to avert the problem. He confirmed that all events were fed into a central data base and officers were reviewing procedures to avoid a clash of events in the future.

77\18

## **MOTIONS ON NOTICE**

### **Motor Neurone Disease (MND) Charter**

Members considered the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor R. Jenkins:

"This motion is to endorse the Motor Neurone Disease (MND) Charter, which sets out the care and support that people who are living with MND and also their carers deserve and should expect and to call upon the Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Environmental Services to ensure the Council adopts the Charter.

By adopting the MND Charter, this Council would be agreeing to promote the Charter and to make it available to all councillors, council staff, partner organisations and health and social care professionals who deliver services for the council.

As Bromsgrove District Council we would raise awareness of MND and what good care for those living with this devastating disease looks like, as stated in the Charter, and we will do everything we can as the Council to positively influence the quality of life for local people with MND and their carers living in our community.

Adoption would also mean taking on successful steps including identification of key programme leads by the Council, publicity and developing links with the Motor Neurone Disease Association who would provide resources and advice."

The Motion was proposed by Councillor R. Jenkins and seconded by Councillor M. Sherrey.

In proposing the motion Councillor Jenkins thanked Mr Benbow for attending and for his support. She reiterated the areas covered by him and the five rights outlined in the charter, and also explained the complex needs and challenges faced by MND sufferers. It was important that all partner organisations worked together to ensure that those sufferers were supported as quickly and efficiently as possible. It was important that the Council and its staff raised awareness and the importance of the right care in order to help support sufferers in maximising their quality of life. As it was an disease that rapidly took hold it was important that their needs were prioritised, as a week in the life of a MDN sufferer was like a year. The Council must ensure that its services were able to respond to the needs to sufferers in providing such

things as housing, disabled facilities grants and any benefits that they were able to access.

Councillor Sherrey was happy to second the motion and explained that she had experience of this disease and was aware of the rapid way in which it took hold and affected people. She hoped the Council could help influence all partner organisations in being able to provide support to those suffering and to provide them with prompt access to the services they needed. It was important to remember that it was also those caring for the sufferers that needed support too.

Members were in full support of having the charter and believed it was an excellent idea, and hoped that a way would be found in order to promote it locally and to do its utmost best to ensure that the services provided and support needed were available.

Members thanked Councillor Jenkins for bringing this matter to the Council's attention.

On being put to the vote the Motion was carried.

### **Rough Sleepers**

Members considered the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor P. McDonald:

'In the light of Bromsgrove District now having experienced rough sleepers and the potential for an increase with the roll out of Universal Credit: we call upon the Leader of the Council to take whatever steps are required to ensure residents in Bromsgrove, should they know or come across a rough sleeper know who to contact to give the person immediate shelter.'

The Motion was proposed by Councillor P. McDonald and seconded by Councillor S. Shannon.

In proposing the motion Councillor McDonald commented that the Overview and Scrutiny Board had recently received a report which had contained data in respect of rough sleepers and he believed that this did not reflect residents view of the situation. He explained that residents did not know who to contact if they were concerned about a person rough sleeping that they came across and that it was the Council's responsibility. He explained that there were varying degrees of rough sleeping and the people affected were often suffering from mental illness and vulnerably, so needed the Council's support. It was important that the Council made every effort to get these people off the streets as quickly as possible. He believed that the roll out of Universal Credit would only make matters worse and from Government statistics he understood that 10 people every week were dying on the streets and as Members would be aware that this has happened in Malvern. Councillor McDonald went on to explain that the contact details on the Council's

website were for Street Link which was a charity in London. He had tried to contact them and it had taken him some 15 minutes to get a response, which was not satisfactory as it had taken some three days to help identify the person. He went on to provide Members with details of services within Bromsgrove District that had helped rough sleepers through providing shelter and meals over the Christmas period. However, he stated it should be made clear on the Council's website who to contact to get immediate help for rough sleepers.

In seconding the motion Councillor Shannon gave his support and explained that he had been asked by residents what they could do and where to go to look for support. He reiterated Councillor McDonald's view that the information provided on the Council's website was difficult to find and did not provide local support. The Council Hub was able to provide information, but this was only open during office hours from Monday to Friday. He advised that there were cases where people had been sleeping in tents in parks. It was suggested that the information could be displayed on the noticeboard within the High Street; however he understood that this had been removed, although he had contacted the Chief Executive to see if this could be reinstated.

Councillor C. B. Taylor, as Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing, responded to the motion and thanked Councillor McDonald for bringing the matter to Members attention. It was important the elected Members looked after those people with problems and gave them the support that was needed. The Council had an open door policy whereby if someone needed help then the Council would do whatever it could to provide that help, officers were always available to talk to anyone who came in to the Hub and asked for support. A number of steps had been taken to ensure the support was in place and the Council was working collaboratively with a number of partner organisations and the voluntary sector, including the Salvation Army in Redditch.

Information was available on the Council's website and had been provided to town centre traders; it would also be included in a leaflet which would go out to all residents with the Council Tax bills. Councillor Taylor believed the Council was doing all it could and taking all necessary steps to help and to ensure that those that needed help knew who to contact. He explained to Members the difference between rough sleepers and being homeless and reiterated that officers in Strategic Housing were committed to help with a number of areas in order to get those in need off the streets. He encouraged all Members to contact them immediately should they have concerns about anyone in their ward.

Members discussed a number of areas in more detail, including the following:

- There was no clear pathway on who to contact.
- How residents could help and where to go for that help.
- How to deal with cases outside of office hours.

- The importance of not forgetting those in the outlying areas and the need for support to be available to those in the rural more remote areas.
- The Council had not been as proactive as it could have been in dealing with this problem.
- The inclusion of information through the WRS newsletter which was sent out to taxi drivers on a regular basis.

In summing up Councillor McDonald said he believed that this was an opportunity for all Members to join together and reach out to those in need, particular as often the rough sleepers were ex Servicemen who had fallen on hard times.

On being put to the vote the Motion was carried

In view of the time limited period for the discussion of motions Councillor S. Colella asked the Chairman to clarify the amount of time left and whether she was prepared to extend this in view of the number of motions which remained to be discussed. The Chairman confirmed that there was 19 minutes remaining from the allotted time and that she would review the position when the time had elapsed.

### **Active Kitchen Scheme**

Members considered the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor C. Bloore:

#### **Council notes**

- In 2018, active kitchen sessions were held in Sidemoor and Charford, in partnership with the YMCA, NewSong Community Church and the Oakland Foundation.
- These sessions during half term ensured that local children could take part in fun sporting activities and enjoy a healthy hot meal afterwards
- Funding for these sessions was provided from the divisional funds of two county councillors in Bromsgrove.
- The shameful growth in the number of local people forced to use foodbanks and the appalling rise of 'holiday hunger' meaning children often go without the meals they need.

#### **Council believes**

- In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, no child in Bromsgrove should go hungry.
- The botched roll out of welfare programs such as Universal Credit have put families in terrible economic predicaments that have placed many in hardship forced to choose between feeding their families, rent and other bills.
- That until the government officially records the number of people who have experienced hunger or have not eaten because they did not have enough money for food then we will be letting down the most vulnerable in our communities.

#### **Council resolves**

- To refer the matter to the Cabinet to consider the expansion of the Active Kitchen scheme and the associated funding in the budget setting process to enable the roll out of sessions during school holidays across Bromsgrove's areas of highest need.
- For the cabinet member responsible for health and well-being to present to council a robust plan of action and delivery to ensure the schemes success and sustainability.
- For the leader of the council to write to the Prime Minister to urge her to provide government support for the Food Insecurity Bill that aims to ensure the government records statistics on how many people have experienced hunger or have not eaten because they didn't have enough money for food.

The Motion was proposed by Councillor C. Bloore and seconded by Councillor L. Mallett.

In proposing the Motion Councillor Bloore explained to Members this was a scheme which he and Councillor Mallett had supported through their divisional funds from Worcestershire County Council (WCC). He explained how it helped both young people and their parents, who were often struggling to feed their children outside of school term time, often for a number of reasons. During term time the children were able to get a hot meal at school, but there was no service which provided this over the holiday period. Often the families were trying their best to provide for their children but due to zero hours contracts for work and changes to benefit payments, they were not able to do this without sometimes having to go without food themselves. Councillor Bloore spoke about how Bromsgrove was looked upon as an affluent town, but that there were a number of small pockets of deprivation which were forgotten in many quarters. It was accepted that there was similar issues across the county, this project took the stigma out of the situation for these people and gave them the opportunity to learn how to cook, provide support for the parents and provide the young people, currently between 20-30 children, an opportunity to have a meal and take part in some activities. This was a project that worked well and Councillor Bloore believed it should be expanded in order to support families in similar circumstances in other parts of the District. It was an opportunity to give these young people the best start possible and for everyone to work together. He referred to a recent communication exercise which had quoted both Councillors M. Sherrey and P. Whittaker who had said the project was addressing a series of issue and they had supported the programme which was making a difference.

Councillor Sherrey proposed an amendment to the motion and suggested that the matter be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Board in order to get more details as there were a number of services being provided by other organisations such as the Basement Project and it was important to ensure that all areas were covered and to ascertain and verify what was being done in order to see how best the Council could help.

Councillor Bloore explained that unfortunately he was not able to accept Councillor Sherrey's amendment as this was an existing programme which officers had been working on for a long time, and that short term funding had been provided. The aim was to ensure that this could be rolled out further and by taking the matter to the Overview and Scrutiny Board this would only delay matters further. It was important that the project became sustainable and that the Council built on the work that had already been done and reached those young people that needed the help, particularly in view of the February half term holiday coming up soon.

In seconding the motion Councillor Mallett was also concerned about the amendment as he understood that the project had already been evaluated by the team facilitating it and they were keen to see it continue. Whilst he appreciated the suggestion that it went to Overview and Scrutiny Board and the role that it played he did not think it appropriate on this occasion for the matter to be referred to it. The project had a good take up of young people and was providing them with a better start in life and the suggestion would only delay the matter further.

Following a brief discussion the amendment was withdrawn by Councillor Sherrey and a report would go to Cabinet on the matter as soon as possible.

Councillor C. B. Taylor commented that he had tried to find out about the project as he thought it came under his Portfolio but was unable to find any details and he therefore agreed with Councillor Sherrey that it would be useful for a report, including statistically information, to be brought to Cabinet in order that the matter could be given further consideration.

Members were keen for the project to continue and it was suggested that officers within Councillor Sherrey's Portfolio would be able to provide further information and it was agreed that such a project and its success was recorded. Both Councillors Bloore and Mallett explained that they had been in a position to meet some of the children that had attended the project and to see for themselves, the positive impact it had had on their lives. In many ways it was an invisible problem as often the parents did not want to come forward and admit that they needed help, by having the project in place this allowed them to get the help needed in a discreet manner.

On being put to the vote the Motion was carried.

The Chairman confirmed that the allotted time for consideration of motions had elapsed. Councillor Colella proposed an extension of the time to allow the remaining two motions to be discussed.

On being put to the vote the extension of time for motions was lost.

The Chairman confirmed that the remaining motions would be carried over to the Council meeting to be held on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

**Library Services**

Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor C. McDonald.

**Impact of LTP4**

Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Colella.

**Appendix 5i**

The meeting closed at 8.57 p.m.

Chairman