

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

24TH JULY 2019, 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, S. P. Douglas, A. B. L. English, M. Glass, S. G. Hession, S. A. Hughes, R. J. Hunter, H. J. Jones, A. D. Kent, J. E. King, A. D. Kriss, K.J. May, M. Middleton, P. M. McDonald, M. A. Sherrey, C. J. Spencer, P.L. Thomas, M. Thompson, K. J. Van Der Plank, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited representatives from Age UK to give a short presentation on the local Age UK partnership with North Worcestershire.

26\19 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies from absence were received from Councillors C. A. Hotham, R. E. Jenkins, L. C. R. Mallett, H. D. N. Rone-Clarke and J. Till.

27\19 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

28\19 **TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND/OR HEAD OF PAID SERVICE**

There were no announcements from the Chairman or Head of Paid Service.

29\19 **TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER**

The Leader advised that on Saturday 6th July, as Members may have been aware, there had been a fire involving the Uninterruptable Power Supply (UPS) to the Server Room at Bromsgrove District Council. She was pleased to report that no one had been injured and the authority had not lost any data.

The Leader took the opportunity to thank the Officers who handled the situation in a most professional manner and restored business as usual by 4pm on 8th July 2019.

The Leader further advised Council that, Councillor M. Thompson had recently spoken with the Chief Executive and her regarding the issue of drugs/ substance mis-use in our District. It had been agreed that a Substance Mis-use Multi-Agency Forum be set up. This was with a view to getting a greater understanding of the issues in Bromsgrove, their impact and the support/ services that were currently available. Once outcomes had been agreed she would look at convene the forum and hold the first meeting. Members would then receive a calendar invite to this first meeting.

Councillor M. Thompson thanked the Leader and Officers for helping to bring forward the Council meeting and allowing the Climate Change motion to be discussed as soon as possible, acknowledging that this was an important matter which warranted being given the appropriate time for debate. He asked that the Chamber consider extending the time allocated to Motions on Notice to allow all those put forward to be debated.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Thompson for his comments and reminded Members that he expected there to be sensible cross party debate of all matters.

The Leader advised Members that whilst the time extension was a matter for Council she was happy for this decision to be made by the Chairman. The Chairman confirmed that he had spoken to the Monitoring Officer and would discuss this further under that item.

Councillor S. Colella asked the Leader whether the fire, to which she had referred, had been appropriately investigated by the relevant authority and also whether this had been the case regarding the fire which had taken place at the Burcot Lane site in 2018.

The Leader advised that she was unable to comment on the Burcot Lane incident, but could confirm that the fire at Parkside had been due to an upgrade carried out by UPS with the fire occurring some 20 minutes later. The circumstances had been thoroughly investigated and the matter dealt with appropriately.

30\19

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

The Chairman confirmed that a member of the public had asked a question as detailed below:

Ms J. Tipper

Ms Tipper asked Councillor M. Sherrey, the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services the following question:

Could you tell me what proportion of our recyclable waste is actually recycled, and where and how this is carried out, and what is the end

product of these processes? Also, are there plans for a food waste collection?

Councillor Sherrey responded that all of the dry recycling that the Council collect from residents' green bins was transported to a site just outside Worcester called EnviroSort. This facility had been contracted by Worcestershire County Council (WCC) to mechanically sort the recyclables in order for them to be sold on into the recycling industry, to be either reprocessed into new materials, or used as a sustainable material in industry. All of the glass and tin cans were sold on to re-processors who then use it in the UK.

Most of the paper was bought by paper mills in the UK, with a proportion being sold to Europe, and a small amount was sent to Asia where it was also used to make new paper products.

There were a number of different plastics used in packaging, and once sorted at Envirecover, some of them may be further sorted at other facilities to ensure a high quality material, and then sold on to businesses in the UK, Europe and Asia.

There was an element of contamination in recycling bins, where people placed the wrong items in their bin, and this sometimes prevented some material from being processed in full, but this material was separated out and sent to an "energy from waste" facility called Envirecover in Hartlebury near Kidderminster, which burnt the residual waste from grey bins to generate electricity. After incineration, any recoverable metals are separated out and fed back into the recycling stream, and the ash produced is used in the aggregate industry as an inert material. The proportions vary, but approximately 10% of the dry recycling we collect was contaminated, and was processed this way.

The Garden Waste Service was only able to take garden waste, but this was sent to an open window composting facility near Pershore where it was turned into a soil improver that was available to buy for both commercial and domestic use.

As with the recycling collection, any contamination was separated out where possible, and this was then disposed of either to landfill at the nearby Hill & Moor site, or sent across to Envirecover at Hartlebury.

Worcestershire Authorities currently have no specific plans regarding food waste, but it is currently being discussed at a National level, as part of Central Government's Waste & Resources Strategy, and may well be implemented through legislation along with additional funding to allow us to set up the appropriate treatment facilities, as the existing composting facilities were not allowed to take food waste due to Environmental Health legislation. There was an ongoing consultation throughout 2019 and the Council hoped to know later in the year what this might look like and possible timescales which were being considered.

The Chairman thanked Ms Tipper for her question and suggested that should she have any further questions she could contact Councillor Sherrey direct.

31\19

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET

The Chairman advised Members that in respect of the background papers to these recommendations, pages 29 to 33 were attached in error and were not for consideration at this evening's meeting, this was an error on the part of Democratic Services and Members were asked to disregard these pages.

Councillor M. Thompson requested that in respect of the recommendations for the Finance Monitoring Outturn 2018/19 that recommendation (h) be taken separately.

Active Kitchen Report

Councillor S. Webb, Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing and Health and Wellbeing proposed the recommendations in respect of the Active Kitchen report. These were seconded by Councillor K. May.

In proposing the recommendations Councillor Webb commented that she was happy to put forward these recommendations and hoped that Members would be supportive of the project.

Councillor P. McDonald expressed his disappointment at the incorrect spelling of Rubery within the recommendation and the Leader apologised for this error.

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

- The fact that such projects were needed.
- An understanding of those areas where the project will be piloted and why they have been chosen and whether it would be rolled out more widely.
- Appreciation that the need had been recognised in the Drakes Cross area.
- Support for the project.
- Whether reviewing the project in July 2020 would be too late for the summer holidays and the date brought forward. Councillor Webb explained that by using that date it would allow for sufficient data to be gathered to ensure that a proper evaluation of the scheme was carried out.
- Clarification as to the format of that evaluation.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that Officers continue to pilot the Active Kitchen service in Sidemoor, Charford, Catshill, Rubery and Drakes Cross in 11

weeks of the school holidays and that approval be given for an estimated £34,000 to be drawn down from balances 2019/20 to fund the service's operational delivery, marketing, research and development be approved; and

- (b) that Officers return to Cabinet in July 2020 to review the pilot and recommend the next steps for the project.

BDC Low Emissions Strategy

Councillor M. Sherrey, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services proposed the recommendations in respect of the Low Emissions Strategy. These were seconded by Councillor A. Kent.

In proposing the recommendations Councillor Sherrey advised Members that work on this had commenced some time ago and that it was now important it got started in order that the benefits to the District could begin.

Members discussed the following in more detail:

- An important step towards becoming carbon neutral and the need for the Council to set an example for its residents. Councillor Sherrey confirmed that the strategy looked at the wider use of vehicles and that the Council was considering this when replacing the smaller vehicles at the depot.
- The importance of infrastructure to be in place and for there to be suitable charging points for other vehicles available and to promote the greater benefit to the community.
- The need to be conscious of the costs – Worcestershire County Council were considering the matter of electric buses and this was the start of a journey into the future, with a balanced approach needed. It was important that whatever steps the Council took it did them well and they were well thought through.
- The responsibility of Councillors on committees such as Planning to ensure that charging points were included in applications where possible.
- The speed at which technology was changing and bringing with it new opportunities.

In summing up Councillor Sherrey thanked Members for their comments and advised that all the suggestions would be considered.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the ULEV strategy and associated Action Plan attached at Appendix 1 be adopted;
- (b) that the Head of Environmental Services and Head of Community Services have delegated power to act following consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to administer the (OLEV) Ultra-Low

Emission Taxi Infrastructure Scheme funding including site selection be approved;

- (c) that an increase to the Capital Programme 2019/20 of £300k for the (OLEV) Ultra-Low Emission Taxi Infrastructure Scheme Funding be approved;
- (d) that the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) Ultra-Low Emission Taxi Infrastructure Scheme funding be used in procuring the installation of a dedicated electric taxi charging network which supports Bromsgrove Taxi drivers and operators in:
 - Transitioning to electric vehicles
 - Their ability to travel into Birmingham's Clean Air Zone; and
- (e) that the Head of Environmental Services and Head of Community Services have delegated power to act following consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to apply for, accept, and administer (including in partnership with other local authorities) future funding in line with this strategy be approved.

Finance Monitoring Outturn 2018/19

As indicated at the beginning of this item, it was agreed that recommendation (a) – (g) would be taken en bloc with recommendation being considered separately.

Councillor G. Denaro, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling proposed the recommendations in respect of the Finance Monitoring Outturn 2018/19 report. These were seconded by Councillor K. May.

In proposing the recommendations Councillor Denaro highlighted a number of pertinent areas within the report:

- An overall Budget Surplus on Revenue of £186K against a revised Budget of £11.1m amounted to a 1.6% surplus which was well within guidelines. He believed this was evidence of better budget control which the Auditors had been asking the Council to address. Where Commercial Income was concerned, there was no proposed ceiling as all new income fed straight through to protecting services to residents.
- There had been some difficulties in Environmental Services last summer and evidence of that was shown in their overspend position and Council had addressed the problem by approving Business Cases which were now in place and being recruited. Bouts of sudden sickness would never be eradicated, but there was now increased flexibility to deal with such operational occurrences.
- Commercial Income within Environmental Services had risen considerably, and the result was an overspend of 10.1% which

was a better outcome than anticipated. The guidelines would be reviewed as the new finance system came on stream, which would enable more detailed and earlier monitoring of performance.

- Savings continued to be made and exceeded the target by £237k. Further savings would be identified as officers continued to make efficiencies and increased income streams where appropriate.
- Overall the Council's revenue position was encouraging but it still faced challenging financial times ahead with uncertainties remaining in relation to the negative grant and New Homes Bonus funding. However, with £5.7m in earmarked reserves plus £4.9m in balances we can approach the difficult years ahead with concern rather than dread.
- Looking at the Council's Capital position it was obvious that it must do better at pushing projects through. The delay in the Dolphin project was due to the review of the sports hall position. Comparing budgeted spend to actuals the Council had a gap of approximately £5m in its planned borrowing which in turn delivered an unexpected saving in the associated revenue costs. This was an area officers would be focusing on in the coming year to ensure the programme was managed more effectively.
- With the increased Disabled Facilities Grants coming through Councillor Denaro wanted to increase the Council's ability to process them more quickly, as he believed that a quick response kept residents in their own homes and reduced demand on health providers.
- The Council must be clearer on the Capital spend on its projects including the Burcot Lane redevelopment and potential investment opportunities to maximise invest to save opportunities in the future.

Councillor Denaro congratulated Council's officers for the financial performance of the Council in what were increasingly difficult and uncertain financial times. The Council had, in effect, generated a surplus and he expressed the view that, in this day and age, it was a minor triumph to deliver a surplus in local government with no reduction in services and with no use of money from balances.

Councillor Denaro concluded by thanking the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources and the Council's Finance Team for all their excellent work.

Following presentation of the report Councillor Thompson commented that he had briefly spoken to the Portfolio Holder in respect of the Capital Programme but raised concerns in respect of the CCTV item which it had been requested to carry forward. Councillor Thompson's concern was that the increase in anti-social behaviour and the need for an

improved CCTV system this had not been moved forward. He also questioned whether the Portfolio Holder was prepared to be accountable for the delays which had occurred in this and a number of other projects, for example the Burcot Lane site.

Councillor Denaro responded that there were various reasons for the delays which have occurred, it had been Council's decision to reconsider the options for the Dolphin Centre which had caused the delay with that project and in respect of Burcot Lane there had been delays with Homes England, but it was hoped that this would be signed off by the end of July and the Council would continue to press on with Capital Programme.

Members also questioned the inclusion of Section 106 monies within the Capital Programme, as this was not "the Council's" money, but money allocated to be spent within the community. It was agreed it would be useful to see this as a separate item with some sort of audit trail to show where the monies came from and when they had been spent. The Leader assured Members that this was in fact monitored and detailed records kept, but was not currently reported on. This would be considered for future reference.

Councillor P. McDonald proposed an amendment to recommendation (h) as he raised concerns that the recommendation was approving an outside organisation to carry out work on behalf of the Council. It was the Council's responsibility and therefore it should administer how these funds were spent. He appreciated that voluntary organisations, such as Keep Bromsgrove Beautiful provided support in the community but the administering of the funds needed to remain within the Council's control. The amendment was for the words "to administer the grant and any future monies which have similar requirements to this grant" to replace the reference to BARN.

Councillor Denaro and the Leader explained how this funding was allocated and that it was for specific projects which would be co-ordinated by BARN, who were given clear guidance from the Council and therefore they saw no issue with BARN administering the funds.

Members commented that this was a good example of partnership working with the voluntary sector and BARN carried out good work in the District. Councillor Thompson confirmed that he did not have a problem with BARN carrying out the work, but it was not necessary for them to administer the funds which had been given to this Council.

It was confirmed that there was a detailed schedule of work which was to be carried out by BARN, which covered such areas as litter picking in the village centres.

On being put to the vote the amendment was lost.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the transfer to balances of £186k is actioned as a result of revenue outturn savings 2018/19 be approved;
- (b) that the movement of £60k in existing reserves as included in Appendix 1 be approved;
- (c) that the addition of new reserves of £2,777k included in Appendix 1 be approved;
- (d) that the carry forward to the 2019/20 capital programme of £4,984k as detailed in Appendix 3 be approved;
- (e) that an increase in the 2019/20 Capital Programme of £163k for Disabled Facilities Grants. This is due to the budget allocations having now been announced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). This will increase the available budget to £913k be approved;
- (f) that an increase to the capital programme 2019/20 of £44k s106 monies for re-landscaping the recreation ground, Bromsgrove be approved;
- (g) that an increase to the Capital programme 2019/20 of £41k for a Bromsgrove combined Footpath and Cycle Way Network funded from a grant from Worcestershire County Council. (£390k already approved at quarter 3) be approved; and
- (h) that an increase to the Revenue budget 2019/20 of £7k due to grant being received from Communities and Local Government towards High Street clean up and future community environmental enhancements and approval for BARN to administer the grant and any future monies received which have similar requirements to this grant, as per paragraph 3.4 be approved.

Statement of Accounts Delegation

Councillor G. Denaro, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling proposed the recommendation in respect of the Statement of Accounts Delegation. This was seconded by Councillor K. May.

In proposing the recommendation Councillor Denaro explained that this was a practical way of dealing with this, and confirmed what had been happening for some time. The Audit, Standards and Governance Committee had been dealing with ensuring that all the mechanisms were in place to enable the accounts to be produced. It was therefore sensible for them to complete this last piece of work, which was something which many other authorities had also delegated to this Committee.

RESOLVED that the consideration and approval of the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts be delegated to the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee.

32\19 **TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE CABINET HELD ON 10TH JULY 2019**

The Minutes from the Cabinet meeting held on 10th July were submitted for information and noted by Members.

33\19 **CODE OF CONDUCT REVIEW REPORT**

The Leader confirmed that this item had been withdrawn as the document was currently still out for consultation.

34\19 **QUESTIONS ON NOTICE (TO BE CIRCULATED AT THE MEETING)**

Question submitted by Councillor R. Hunter

How many bus shelters are the responsibility of Bromsgrove District Council, what budget is made available annually for their maintenance and is this sufficient to keep them in good order?

Councillor M. Sherrey, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services responded that there were 44 bus shelters within the District which Environmental Services were responsible for, with an overall budget of £2k per annum.

Question submitted by Councillor J. King

How is Bromsgrove spending its allocation of the Government's Brexit Preparedness funding and is the District prepared for the potentially devastating consequences of Brexit?

The Leader responded that the Council had received an allocation of £17,484 in March 2019; which had been transferred in to a reserve account as corporately, this Authority had not identified any pressing demands. It was confirmed that should any come forward then the monies would be utilised accordingly.

Question submitted by Councillor S. Hughes

Is the provision of two recycling bins at opposite ends of Bromsgrove high street sufficient and what plans are in place to improve recycling facilities in the town centre?

Councillor M. Sherrey, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services responded that there were in fact 4 recycling bins at each end of the High Street all of which were well used.

MOTIONS ON NOTICE

Playing our part in stopping climate change

Before commencement of proceedings, Councillors P. McDonald, A. Kent and S. Baxter indicated that they wished to put forward an amendment to the Motion.

The Chairman reminded Members that it was important that this matter was debated properly and that Members concentrated on the facts and evidence based discussions.

Members considered the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Hughes:

“Climate change is already causing serious damage to our community in Bromsgrove and communities around the world. The Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change’s 2018 Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C calls for urgent action within 12 years to protect people from the consequences of irreversible climate change. All governments: national, regional, and local have a duty to act.

Council declares a climate emergency that requires urgent action. Bromsgrove Council Cabinet will therefore commit to doing the following:

- Work with our partner authorities to review and update the Worcestershire County Climate Change Strategy, which is about to expire, ensuring ambitious targets for improvement.
- Establish a working group to engage with the community, develop an action plan and report regularly on actions taken.
- Explore areas where our services can be delivered in a way that reduces the Council’s carbon emissions and look at ways in which the Council’s energy supplies can be from 100% renewable sources.
- Set an aspiration for Bromsgrove to become carbon neutral.”

The Motion was proposed by Councillor Hughes and seconded by Councillor R. Hunter.

In proposing the Motion Councillor Hughes explained that it was an area which impacted on everyone and something which people came across every day, whether it be through air pollution from excess traffic or the impact of single use plastics, which had been well documented. Councillor Hughes highlighted to Members that, should no action be taken, then the damage caused by global warming would become irreversible in 12 years’ time. The work that was already being done was recognised but it was imperative that it be acknowledged that much more needed to be done at a faster pace. Direct action needed to be taken to ensure that everyone played their part in making those necessary changes. The importance of educating the young was also highlighted. A working group would be able to co-ordinate and evaluate

the best way forward and engage with local partners and other groups to ensure that Bromsgrove played its part in this global issue. There were already over 90 other local authorities who had signed up to such an agreement and it was felt that Bromsgrove must also take action as a matter of urgency.

Councillor A. Kent proposed some small amendments to the motion, which were seconded by Councillor K. May and accepted by Councillor Hughes.

The amended Motion is detailed below:

Council declares a climate emergency. Bromsgrove Council will look to do the following:

- *Work with our partner authorities to review and update the Worcestershire County Climate Change Strategy, which is about to expire, ensuring ambitious targets for improvement.*
- *Establish a cross party working group to develop an action plan, report regularly on actions taken and engage with local communities.*
- *Explore areas where our services can be delivered in a way that reduces the Council's carbon emissions and look at ways in which the Council's energy supplies can be from 100% renewable sources.*
- *Set an aspiration for Bromsgrove to become carbon neutral and charge officers with working up relevant business cases and the financial impact of this on this Council and its Residents.*

Councillor P. McDonald proposed an amendment "set an aspiration for Bromsgrove to become carbon neutral by 2025", this had been put forward at other local authorities and showed that the Council was committed in taking this matter forward and showed that the Council had a goal to work towards. The amendment was seconded by Councillor M. Thompson.

The Leader responded that the Council needed to set realistic targets, by setting a date the Council was committing to something with financial implications that it did not have the full details of and therefore as she had a responsibility to the tax payers she would need to see a full business case before she could make that commitment. The Council was not in a position to make such a commitment in the current economic climate as there may be budget implications, which could impact on services the Council provided.

Members discussed the merits of the motion and Councillor McDonald's amendment at length and in particular referred to the following areas:

- The need for a detailed business plan before any decision could be made as the cost would be significant in some areas.
- The Council was committed to making changes where possible and would consider all options available to it.
- The District had a better opportunity than the County Council, in some respects because it was smaller; to make changes and influence is residents.
- The urgent need to address the air pollution and traffic congestion in the district and its impact on residents.
- There were a number of areas where the changes needed were relatively small but had a wider impact.
- Whether there was a need for a specific post to be created in order for the right skills to be available to formulate a policy to move the Council forward. It was important that the Council got this right with the policy being delivered and managed properly.
- It was important that action was taken whether the date was aspirational or not.
- If an aspirational date was included then it would give the Council a goal to aim towards, otherwise it would be open ended and would dilute the importance of the matter.
- It was important to establish the message the Council wanted to give out to its residents and to show that their concerns were being listened to and actioned.
- The need to take account of residents' views.
- The need to set a timeline, some targets and re-prioritise budgets in order to achieve those targets.
- The areas which a cross party working group could look at , including carbon neutral buses and transport links to villages, new buildings for life, tree planting, food waste and recycling for example.

Councillor Hunter commented that the key word was aspirational which was what the motion was based on, there was a need for any actions or plan put in place to be credible and for the Council to think careful about target setting and what it was able to achieve.

In summing up his amendment Councillor McDonald stated that by setting a date it would be something to work towards and ensure that the Council set an example. It should be made easy for residents to be able to go to any charging point and encourage them to have electric vehicles.

On being put to the vote Councillor McDonald's amendment was lost.

Councillor S. Baxter proposed an amendment "set an aspiration for Bromsgrove to become carbon neutral by 2030", as she believed that 2030 was a more realistic date, she also confirmed that she was happy with the amendments proposed by Councillor Kent. She felt that it was key for the Council to set some realistic goals to work towards. Councillor Baxter provided some examples of the direct impact of

climate change, for example the recent floods in Wythall which showed that it had a really effect on residents. It was therefore important that the Council set itself some challenging milestones, when it put forward the suggested business cases and it was also important that the local communities were involved and engaged in the process, with a positive message being given from the Council. Councillor Baxter's amendment was seconded by Councillor S. Colella.

On being put to the vote Councillor Baxter's amendment was lost.

Councillor Thompson suggested that it needed to be made clear that it was the Council's aim to become carbon neutral by 2025 which would show its commitment to residents by leading by example. It had a small fleet of vehicles and the potential to include solar panels on buildings and therefore he believed that this was achievable. He therefore suggested a further amendment to this effect – "set an aspiration for Bromsgrove District Council to become carbon neutral by 2025." This amendment was seconded by Councillor McDonald.

In supporting the amendment Councillor McDonald stated that urgent action needed to be taken and there was the potential for the Council to begin to address the issues, in particular air quality and the immediate impact on residents. There were already a number of Air Quality Management Areas in the District and there was a need for air quality to be measured, whilst it may be within the legal limits this did not deter from the fact that the quality was poor and impacted on the health of the young and old in particular.

Members discussed a number of areas and suggested alternative wordings to the motion and clarified whether they were referring to the Council or to the district. The Council was only able to make the changes to its own vehicles and buildings and was not able to impose anything on its residents in this respect.

On being put to the vote Councillor Thompson's amendment was lost.

Following the detailed discussions, Councillor Hughes' briefly summed up her motion, and confirmed her acceptance of the amendments put forward by Councillor Kent.

On being put to the vote the amended motion was carried.

Before moving on to the remaining motions the Chairman advised Members that the one hour allocated to this item had been exceeded. He was however, minded to suggest that the meeting be extended by twenty minutes to allow the remaining motions to be considered.

Trees

Members considered the following Notice of motion submitted by Councillor M. Thompson:

“Council notes the importance on logging trees felled – and re-planting – in the combat against producing a carbon-neutral world. Council resolves to make a log of every tree it cuts down and, to compensate, to plant six new trees to replace them.”

The Motion was proposed by Councillor Thompson and seconded by Councillor P. McDonald.

In proposing the Motion Councillor Thompson said he would keep his presentation of the motion brief, but suffice to say that as the Council did not fell a significant number of trees then the impact of the proposal was nominal. He appreciated that where trees were felled it was for a legitimate reason, for example if a tree was unsafe. He was suggesting that the Council plant 6 trees in place of very tree which was felled.

In speaking in support of the motion Councillor McDonald also highlighted the positive impact that trees had on the environment and the reversal of greenhouse gases. It was important to highlight the value of trees and the replacement of those felled for future generations. A clear example of where such a policy worked was in Scotland and Councillor McDonald provided statistical information which showed that replacements trees planted there were helping to regenerate the forest cover.

Councillor Thompson was asked how the figure of six trees had been chosen and he confirmed that this was a figure provided by the Forestry Commission.

Councillor Kent advised that it was difficult to support such a motion without having the relevant business case to support any costs to the Council. After speaking to the relevant officers he believed that the only trees which had been felled recently in the District were in the Bromsgrove Cemetery and this had been for safety reasons. He was therefore happy to put the matter to the Climate Change Working Group, which would be set up following the motion of Climate Change, for further consideration.

Members discussed a number of other areas in respect of this matter, including the loss of hedgerows and trees for housing developments and the impact on wildlife and it was suggested that this should be recognized within the motion. Although it was accepted that this may complicate matters and therefore should be restricted to Council owned trees.

On being put to the vote the motion was lost.

Residents' Funerals

The Chairman advised Members that Councillor A. Kriss had withdrawn this notice of motion.

Reducing food waste; financial and environmental benefits

Members considered the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor K. Van der Plank:

“This Council notes that:

- 1) The estimated annual cost of the food wasted in the UK is around £12bn - an average of £810 per family, per year.
- 2) Across Worcestershire, approximately a third of black bin waste is wasted food. WCC dispose of around 42,000 tonnes of food waste each year which equates to more than £4.5m in disposal costs.
- 3) Education and awareness campaigns such as the national ‘love food hate waste’ initiative can have a big impact on reducing food wastage at the same time as saving both individuals and council’s money.
- 4) More than 8 million people in the UK live in households that struggle to put food on the table, with more than half regularly going a whole day without eating. (Source: Food Foundation, using UN data).
- 5) Using food waste to feed the hungry is not a solution to food poverty, however, whilst both food waste and food poverty co-exist, we should ensure surplus food is used to help people in need.

This Council resolves:

To reduce food waste across the District by developing a practical action plan to include:

- communication and education activities to improve understanding and change behaviours in order to reduce food waste;
- work in partnership with other authorities and organisations on food waste initiatives and campaigns to increase awareness and participation;
- set an ambitious target for food waste reduction across our district and measure our performance against this; and
- support and encourage food redistribution initiatives and encourage local retailers and businesses to sign up to food redistribution schemes. “

The Motion was proposed by Councillor K. Van der Plank and seconded by Councillor A. English.

In proposing the Motion Councillor Van der Plank explained that there was both food waste and food poverty (which had been highlighted earlier in the meeting in respect of the Active Kitchen report) and the Council should do its best to ensure that surplus food in the district was put to good use. There were a variety of ways in which this could be done, including the support of local groups and charities and taking

practical action to educate its residents and work in partnership with those organisations. The essence of the motion was to reduce food waste across the district and help support some of its most vulnerable residents.

Councillor M. Sherrey, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services responded that Central Government were currently consulting on changes to how and what local authorities collected and processed for disposal and recycling as part of the Resource and Waste Strategy launched in December 2018. This was expected to result in significant changes to the services the Council provided and involved financial support in order to implement the changes once the national picture had been determined. Food waste was a key part of the consultation and the Council was already engaged with Central Government, alongside other Worcestershire authorities, as detailed in the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Municipal Waste Management Strategy. As such, the motion being put forward is already being considered as part of a national review of services to reduce the impact on the natural world. Councillor Sherrey made reference to the ministerial foreword to Central Government's Waste and Resources Strategy and advised Members that the Council was already actively engaged in this process and whilst fully agreeing with the principal of the motion put forward was keen to ensure that the Council's actions coincided with the national position in order to ensure the sustainability of any changes to the Council's services.

The Leader responded that whilst the motion made some good points she wished to reiterate that whilst the matter was still out to consultation it would not be prudent to take any action until a directive had been received from Central Government. Once the consultation was completed then the Council would react appropriately and carry out any necessary actions.

Members discussed the motion in further detail and it was suggested that the motion referred more to the use of food waste rather than its disposal as suggested by the information provided by the Portfolio Holder, and there was still the opportunity for the Council to set a target for this. The schemes referred to in the motion were a good example of this, with the potential cost to the Council being minimal at this stage.

In summing up Councillor Van der Plank commented that although there was a consultation being undertaken at the moment, with a likely outcome of the Council having to collect food waste, this did not prevent the Council from taking a number of practical steps towards reducing food waste within the District, which would help residents save money and broaden their expectations in the future.

On being put to the vote the motion was lost.

Council
24th July 2019

Green Plan

Councillor S. Douglas confirmed that as the matter referred to in her Motion had been discussed under the Climate Change item she would withdraw her motion.

The meeting closed at 8.53 p.m.

Chairman