

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

22ND JANUARY 2020, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors R. J. Laight (Chairman), S. J. Baxter, S. R. Colella, R. J. Deeming, G. N. Denaro, S. P. Douglas, A. B. L. English, M. Glass, C.A. Hotham, S. A. Hughes, R. J. Hunter, H. J. Jones, A. D. Kent, J. E. King, A. D. Kriss, L. C. R. Mallett, K.J. May, M. Middleton, P. M. McDonald, H. D. N. Rone-Clarke, M. A. Sherrey, C. J. Spencer, P.L. Thomas, M. Thompson, J. Till, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Mr David Burrell, Chief Executive of the Primrose Hospice who gave a short presentation on the work of the Hospice. The Leader thanked him for attending and for the work that his dedicated team carried out.

65\19 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Beaumont, S. Hession, R. Jenkins and K. Van der Plank. It was noted that Councillor L. Mallett would arrive late.

66\19 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

67\19 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 20th November 2019 were submitted. The following points were noted:

- Councillor H. Jones had asked for her comments on page 20 of the minutes, in respect of Councillor R. Hunter's notice of motion to be withdrawn.
- Councillor Hotham asked whether, as detailed in minute no. 61/19 on page 8 of the minutes, the copies of notes from the private meetings had been made available to at least Group Leaders, without the need for a Freedom of Information request. The Monitoring Officer clarified, that these had been provided to Councillor L. Mallett at his request and that should any other

Member wish to see them they would be made available, but no other requests had been received to date.

- On page 18 of the minutes it was clarified that Councillor P. Thomas had responded to Councillor S. Douglas' notice of motion and not the Leader, as had been stated.

RESOLVED that, subject to the preamble above, the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 20th November 2019 be approved.

68\19

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

The Chairman highlighted a number of events which had taken place since the last Council meeting, including a number of Christmas events. He thanked all those who had been able to attend and those officers who had organised them and helped make them such a success.

The Chairman also advised Members that on Monday 20th January he had held a very successful meeting with all Group Leaders, the aim of which had been to ensure efficient and productive debate at this evening's meeting. He would elaborate on this later in the meeting, under the Motions on Notice item.

The Chairman also reminded Members that the Holocaust Memorial Service would take place in the Parkside Suite on Monday 27th January 2020 at 11.00 am.

There were no announcements from the Head of Paid Service.

69\19

TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER

The Leader made the following announcements:

- Following the Council's challenge to the Valuation Office around the Business Rates payable on Burcot Lane site; the Valuation Office had reduced the Rateable Value and the Council had received a refund of £222,423.
- The bus shelter survey had been completed. It had transpired that the Council was responsible for fifty bus shelters, eighteen of which had been identified as requiring remedial work/replacement. A Capital bid has been included in the Budget Report to carry out this work over three years (£18k per year) and Officers were in the process of confirming that all eighteen were still serviced by a bus service.
- The Council was in the process of developing the Greenspace strategy, within this document the tree management, planting of wild flowers to encourage bio diversity would be included, and the climate control agenda would be explored in detail and delivered by an action plan.
- The Substance Misuse Multi-Agency Forum met for the first time on 15th January 2020. It had been well received with twenty six

partners around the table. It had been shocking to hear the impact that substance misuse had on a community. She thanked Councillor M. Thompson for working with her on this initiative.

Councillor Thompson thanked the Leader for her support with the Substance Misuse Forum and highlighted that this was a good example of dealing with a matter outside of the Notice of Motion process and working together to address an issue which impacted on many across the District.

Councillor R. Hunter thanked the Leader for responding in respect of bus shelters, which would be of benefit to many residents.

Councillor P. McDonald asked whether the Leader agreed that over the last ten years the increase in substance misuse was a result of the impact of it no longer being a priority to the Police due to the Government cutbacks which had been enforced on the services they provided. The Leader responded that substance misuse was a sad state of our society which was not restricted to this District and that she hoped the Council could support the Police and other partners in addressing this and make a really difference to those affected by it.

70\19

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

There were no comments, questions or petitions from members of the public on this occasion.

71\19

CONSTITUTION UPDATE REPORT

Councillor G. Denaro, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling introduced the report and in so doing highlighted to Members that the full rules relating to Council Procedures had been included within the report, however the alterations being proposed only related to items listed under paragraph 3.3 and 3.4.

However, the Deputy Leader advised that the Constitution Review Working Group had agreed at its meeting in November that the Head of Planning would be authorised to speak at Full Council meetings, as she had done successfully in November. This should have been included in the recommendations. Members were asked to accept his apologies for this oversight and agree this adjustment verbally. It was confirmed that amendments had been agreed by Group Leaders.

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

Councillor S. Baxter welcomed the changes in the report and made particular reference to the inclusion of ordinary business at the Annual Meeting of Council and the adding of an additional Council meeting in the new municipal year, however, Councillor Baxter warned that these

changes would not work unless the Council worked together. She made reference to the meeting that had been held on Monday 20th January with all the Group Leaders and the Chairman which she believed had shown really progress and she hoped that this would continue.

Councillor R. Hunter echoed the comments of Councillor Baxter, whilst recognising that in some circumstances there was a place for motions to be debated by all Members.

RESOLVED that the Council Procedure Rules be amended as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report with the addition of the Head of Planning and Regeneration at 16.1 of the Council Procedure Rules.

72\19

OPEN SPACES REPORT

Councillor A. Kent as Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services presented the report and advised that this was a “hot topic” which had been raised on a number of occasions over the last few months. He highlighted a number of areas within the report; including that it was important to note that a developer was not obliged to consider passing the open space or play area provision to the Local Authority. If agreed, a letter would be sent to Central Government raising the Council’s concerns as detailed in the report.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Kent and seconded by Councillor P. Thomas.

Following presentation of the report the following areas were discussed in more detail:

- The report was a move in the right direction, however it was highlighted that a developer was able to move a play area/open space within a development after agreement had been reached. An example of this was provided at a site in Cofton Hackett.
- This was a national problem and that the management companies appointed often increased the charge for maintaining the area significantly.
- Members were thanked for taking the matter seriously and bringing forward the report.
- The inclusion of the matter within a review of supplementary planning guidance.

A suggested additional recommendation was put forward by Councillor C. Hotham and seconded by Councillor S. Baxter, in respect of when the Council was approached for searches and the inclusion of information about open spaces within the site and the use of a management company. The aim would be to make the information more accessible. Following discussion, Councillor Kent agreed to investigate this going forward and suggested that as things progress the matter could come back to Council if necessary. Following this discussion Councillor Hotham agreed to withdraw his amendment.

Councillor Kent reiterated the need for a change in legislation to address a number of areas and that he was happy for the matter to be discussed at the Strategic Planning Steering Group in more detail and if necessary a further report to be brought before Council as matters progressed.

RESOLVED:

- a) that Officers continue to consider applications on a case by case basis and agree where appropriate as a preferred option, off site provision thereby enhancing already existing facilities and what strategically is appropriate for adoption be approved;
- b) that where it is not possible to agree that there will be a presumption that the Council will adopt land where it meets the adoptable standard as agreed by the Council. That the Developer does all agreed works prior to handover, and that an acceptable commuted sum for the long term maintenance is agreed and paid to the Council be approved;
- c) that as part of a review of the relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance, Officers are tasked with the development of an open space adoptions and S106 policy. To incorporate standards and a cost calculator to enable a more standardised calculation to be achieved be approved; and
- d) that the situation nationally with regard to open space provision and the need to exercise the Council's role as community leader in writing to the Government to express its concern on behalf of its residents and to encourage a more regulated environment to be established in order that residents be safeguarded in situations where a developer chooses to retain these responsibilities be noted and approved.

73\19

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET - 4TH DECEMBER 2019 AND 15TH JANUARY 2020

Cabinet Recommendations 4th December 2019

Worcestershire Mineral Plan – Statement of Common Ground

Councillor A. Kent as Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services presented the report. It was explained that the matter had been brought before Council for transparency, as he and the Leader were County Councillors.

Councillor Kent highlighted a number of areas within the report, namely that the plan contained no new allocations, the Minerals Local Plan covered the whole of the county of Worcestershire and, once adopted, would be a Development Plan Document and form part of the Development Plan for Worcestershire. This meant that it sat alongside the district Local Plans and the Waste Core Strategy and should be used

to determine any minerals-related planning matters in the county. It provided for the steady and adequate supply of minerals in the county until 2035. The Minerals Local Plan would be used by Worcestershire County Council to make decisions about planning applications for mineral extraction, processing and restoration. It would also be used by District Councils to ensure other types of development did not sterilise mineral resources or negatively impact mineral infrastructure.

It was further explained that the Minerals Local Plan must enable a steady and adequate supply of minerals from the county to contribute towards supplying both local and national demand. The majority of mineral working in the county was sand and gravel for the aggregate industry. Brick clay was also worked in the north of the county for brick making, a small amount of silica sand was dug for industrial purposes and a small amount of brine was extracted for making food-grade salt. There are also building stone, crushed rock and coal deposits in the county, but these were not currently worked.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Kent and seconded by Councillor K. May.

RESOLVED that the statement of common ground with regards to the Worcestershire Minerals Local Plan and that delegated authority to the Leader of the Council to sign and send the agreement to Worcestershire County Council on behalf of the Council be approved.

Fees and Charges

Councillor G. Denaro, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling introduced the report and advised that the progress and clarification relating to Fees and Charges, which had commenced last year had continued this year, with the following criteria being used as shown in paragraph 3.2 of the report:

- Service to be subsidised by Council
- Service to break even
- Was the service achieving surplus to offset other/overhead costs.

As highlighted in Paragraph 3.1 of the report it was also noted that CPI would be used on inflation rates in the future.

Councillor Denaro commented that the Finance and Budget Working Group had once again played a full part in this year's analysis and Heads of Service had attended to give any explanations required. Cabinet had also adopted in full, the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Board which were included at page 67 within the agenda pack.

Councillor Denaro also took the opportunity thank the Executive Director for Finance and her officers for the time taken in producing this report and the Finance and Budget Working Group.

It was explained that unfortunately the wording of the recommendations, which had been agreed by Cabinet had been incorrect and therefore a number of amendments were proposed including, recommendation (a) to enable the fees and charges to be implemented from 1st April 2020 **NOT** 1st February 2020. As these had not been advised to Members prior to the meeting, it was agreed that there would be a short adjournment to allow Members to consider the amendments.

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

It was noted that whilst the recommendations had been amended, this did not in any way impact on the actual Fees and Charges detailed in the report. It was further noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Finance and Budget Working Group had considered the report in some detail, with the relevant Heads of Service attending to respond to any queries that the Group had.

Following the adjournment Members raised a number of queries in respect of the Fees and Charges, including the following:

- The discretionary increase/decrease for Leisure Services – it was explained that this was a commercial decision and was one which had been applied in previous years.
- The location of the North Bromsgrove car park – it was clarified that this was the new Leisure Centre car park.
- The recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Board in respect of an increase for the Primary Sports Projects – it was confirmed that this referred specifically to those projects and not the wider fees and charges for Leisure Services.

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 as detailed at appendix 1 of the minute;
- c) that Council approve the 20% increase or decrease discretion on Leisure Services fees and charges throughout the financial year; and
- d) that all fees and charges included in Appendix 1 of the report be charged commencing 1st April 2020.

Cabinet Recommendation 15th January 2020

Cofton Hackett & Lickey and Blackwell Neighbourhood Plan

Councillor A. Kent, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory services explained that the Council had already considered the detailed contents of this plan in February 2019 when it was agreed it could go to examination and referendum, this was not therefore the opportunity to make further changes to the plan. The report confirmed that both of

these things have now happened successfully and it was now the Council's responsibility to confirm the plan as made, which was the same as when a local plan was adopted. It was noted that 86.35% of residents had backed the plan and Councillor Kent took the opportunity to thank all those involved in the process for an excellent piece of work.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor A. Kent and seconded by Councillor K. May

RESOLVED that the Lickey and Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan be 'made' (formally adopted) immediately in accordance with the relevant legislation.

BDC Response to South Worcestershire Development Plan

Councillor A. Kent, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services advised Members that the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) had been jointly prepared by the three South Worcestershire Councils (SWCs) – Malvern Hills; Worcester City and Wychavon, who had agreed to work together to roll the Plan forward. It was explained that, by this Council responding to the other councils plans the district was protected in the best way possible, by engaging positively in the planning process which was the purpose of the Planning Act and the NPPF requirements. It was appreciated that it might not always seem to be the case, but staying silent on such issues did not help this Council in progressing its own plan as similar discussions would have to take place, and by having positive and constructive relationships with other councils would be of benefit in the long term.

The Preferred Options Consultation set out where the SWCs consider new growth should be located, and the changes needed to the policies of the Adopted Plan to ensure they reflected the updated evidence base and national planning policy. The consultation document also considered what infrastructure was required to support new development.

Members' attention was drawn to paragraphs 4, 5, 10 and 12 of the response as detailed at page 227 of the report which clearly stated the Council's position and view on the document.

It was also noted that the Preferred Options Document had a housing target for South Worcestershire of 13,957 dwellings and for 295 hectares of employment land and identified a Spatial Development Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy to direct new growth until 2041. Section 17 also identified a number of new strategic site allocations to which the majority of new development would be directed. These included Worcester Parkway which would deliver 5,000 dwellings and 50 hectares of employment land; land at Throckmorton Airfield for 2,000 dwellings and 20 hectares of employment land and an expanded settlement at Rushwick to deliver 1,000 dwellings and 10 hectares of employment land.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Kent and seconded by Councillor K. May.

RESOLVED that the officer response to the South Worcestershire Development Plan preferred option consultation be approved by Council as its formal response and that it is confirmed with the South Worcestershire Councils as such.

South Staffs Local Plan Preferred Options

Councillor A. Kent, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services advised Members that they were being asked to endorse the officer response. This was not the full plan and as highlighted in the report there would be further opportunities for the Council to further understand and influence the content of the South Staffordshire Local Plan, which the Spatial Housing and Strategy and Infrastructure Delivery would be part of. South Staffordshire Council's current Local Plan Review consultation: This consultation set out a number of strategic approaches to new housing development, including potential broad locations and areas of search for development. It did not deal with matters such as employment, retail or other general policy approaches. South Staffordshire set out their commitment to plan to meet their own housing needs, together with a contribution of up to 4,000 dwellings towards the wider needs of the Greater Birmingham housing market area. By applying the Government's standard methodology for housing need, South Staffordshire's need for their proposed plan period of 2018-2037 was 4,845 dwellings, taken together with the contribution to the needs of the wider HMA, the Local Plan review was planning for 8,845 dwellings to 2037.

Councillor Kent highlighted the requirements of paragraph 137 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in relation to the demonstration of exceptional circumstances for any Green Belt releases, and the need for this Council and South Staffordshire Council to consider this under the duty to co-operate moving forward.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Kent and seconded by Councillor K. May.

Members thanked Councillor Kent for a detailed explanation of all the documents he had presented at the meeting and concerns were raised that in some circumstances these had already been presented as the view of the Council, before consideration at a Council meeting. It was explained that due to deadlines it was not always possible for such documents to be brought before Council in a timely manner, but should any changes be made to the documents during discussions then these would be relayed to the relevant authority and the Council's response amended.

RESOLVED that the officer response to the Spatial Housing Strategy and Infrastructure Delivery consultation be approved by Council as its

formal response and that it is confirmed with South Staffordshire as such.

Market Hall Site – Meanwhile Use

Councillor K. May as Portfolio Holder for Economic Development advised Members that the Council had commissioned a review of this site (along with the former Dolphin Centre site) and as the Council had limited sites within its direct ownership it was necessary to assess fully all of the potential opportunities available. Continuing with this as a temporary solution would enable the Council to evaluate the success of the bird box whilst the review of the sites was concluded.

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

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

- The history of the market hall site and the need for the Council to create something suitable and permanent on the site which would benefit residents. It was noted that within the Portfolio Holder's report, to be considered later on the agenda reference was made to the site being a long standing regeneration opportunity for Bromsgrove Town Centre.
- The Leader responded that the suggested options would be a short term fix to ensure that the site no longer remained empty and was being utilised, whilst a full evaluation of other options was being made.
- It was highlighted that the Overview and Scrutiny Board had been so impressed with the proposal that it had made a recommendations that the pop up site be made permanent.
- The cost of the evaluation of the site and whether the cost of the pop up option as a short term solution was value for money for residents. The Leader responded that investment had already been made on the site through Waitrose and that it was envisaged that the full development would take three years and therefore the pop up option would be a good starting point.
- How the site would be managed – Members were reminded that previously the Council had its own dedicated Economic Development Officer.
- Whether there was the need to spend any more money on the site should the pop up option be a success.
- Whether from a legal perspective it was possible to make the pop ups permanent. It was confirmed that legally the Council was not able to do so, as to make it permanent would mean that planning permission was required. Should this be successful and one of the options from the wider piece of work being carried out then this would be re-considered at a later date.
- As broadly speaking Members seemed to be in agreement that the pop up option was a good idea, whether it was possible to class this as a pilot facility with the option that should it be

successful the appropriate process would be gone through to make it permanent.

- The options and the one which Cabinet were proposing, was for a high quality creative space to be developed.
- Concerns continued to be raised in respect of its temporary nature and whether this would stop people from making a commitment, if there was the potential for it to be developed in another way at a later date.
- The Leader reiterated that at this stage Council were being asked to agree to a more detailed report being prepared to see what options were available in the long term. She was concerned that the site in its current state, had a negative impact on the Town Centre and she understood that retailers on the Worcester Road were supportive.

The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Board in pre-scrutinising the report and the detailed discussions which had taken place at its meeting in respect of this item. The importance of the impartiality of the Board as a critical friend and in providing a voice for the residents of the District was also discussed.

RESOLVED:

- that the approval of Option 1 as the preferred option be implemented and a release of £110k from balances to meet the required remaining funding for 2019/20; and
- that delegated authority to the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, the Town Centre and Strategic Partnerships to implement Option 1 be approved.

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Joint Board

Councillor A. Kent as Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services explained that Members were being asked to agree the budget for the services provided by Worcestershire Regulatory Services, as detailed in the supplementary agenda 2 papers. The full report had been provided in the main agenda pack. It was noted that efficiencies had been made where possible and that this was the first year, in a number of years, when a small increase had been requested. Full details of what that increased would specifically cover were provided by Councillor Kent.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Kent and seconded by Councillor G. Denaro.

RESOLVED that Council approve the following for 2020/21:

- a) the base revenue partner contributions for 2020/21-2022/23;

Bromsgrove District	£439k
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Council
22nd January 2020

Council	
Malvern Hills District Council	£386k
Redditch Borough Council	£529k
Worcester City Council	£499k
Wychavon District Council	£701k
Wyre Forest District Council	£463k

b) the partner percentage allocations for 2020/21 onwards;

	%
Bromsgrove District Council	14.55
Malvern Hills District Council	12.79
Redditch Borough Council	17.53
Worcester City Council	16.54
Wychavon District Council	23.24
Wyre Forest District Council	15.35

c) the additional partner liabilities for 2020/21 in relation to unavoidable salary pressure and increase in WRS pension forward funding rate;

Bromsgrove District Council	£13k
Malvern Hills District Council	£11k
Redditch Borough Council	£16k
Worcester City Council	£15k
Wychavon District Council	£21k
Wyre Forest District Council	£14k
Total	£90k

- d) the additional partner liabilities for 2020/21 in relation to three additional Technical Officers;

Council	Tech Officer Primary Authority – 3 Months £000	Tech Officer Animal Activity £000	Tech Officer Gull Control £000
Bromsgrove District Council	1	6	
Malvern Hills District Council	1	9	
Redditch Borough Council	1	1	
Worcester City Council	1	4	30
Wychavon District Council	2	9	
Wyre Forest District Council	1	4	
Total	7	33	30

- e) the 2020/21 gross expenditure budget of £3,547k as shown in Appendix 1 to the report; and
- f) the 2020/21 income budget of £530k as shown in Appendix 3 to the report.

Quarter 2 Finance Monitoring Report

Councillor G. Denaro, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling presented the Quarter 2 Finance Monitoring Report for Members consideration. He highlighted that the financial figures for Quarter 2 continued to show healthy progress. Whilst a proportion of the underspend projected of £360k was due to vacancies there had been a good pick up in Development Control, with large applications being received. The management review (if approved) would also contribute £85k. It was also noted that identified savings continued to be on track with £181k against a budgeted amount of £166k.

It was also confirmed that a grant of £50k for Development Control had been obtained, which was included within the recommendations before Members. It was also noted that the reprofiling of the Capital Programme at Appendix 4 had impacted on the interest budget and which had been amended accordingly.

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

RESOLVED:

- a) that an increase in the 2019-20 revenue budget of £50k for Development Management due to receipt of a planning enforcement grant from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government be approved; and
- b) the reprofiling of the capital programme due to officers completing a full review of the Capital Budget for 2019/20 – 2022/23 as detailed in appendix 4 of the report be approved.

Medium Term Financial Plan

Councillor G. Denaro, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling, advised Members that the Cabinet and other attending Members had discussed the merits of the proposed Bromsgrove Heat Network project. After much discussion it had been agreed that as there were still a number of pertinent questions which remained unanswered that the item would be deferred pending further information. The recommendation in the Cabinet papers therefore would not be put to Council.

Councillor M. Thompson confirmed that the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Finance and Budget Working Group had also discussed this matter in detail and thanked the Leader for allowing those present at Cabinet to take part in the debate on this matter.

Management Review

The Leader introduced the report in respect of the proposed Management Review, highlighting that Members were aware of the desire to review the Management situation which had been delayed due to several limiting factors. However, the Cabinet were now in a position to proceed and Members were able to see from the report that the outcome of the review had resulted in a reduction to the management structure of three positions, brought about by different processes.

The report showed clearly the redistribution of various functions which had meant an increased workload across Heads of Service positions and the creation of a Financial and Customer Services role. Savings from the restructure proposed would amount to £54,221 for Bromsgrove District Council as listed on P. 314 paragraph 3.7 of the main agenda pack. It was noted that these would add to the considerable savings made over the years and would give an annual saving of £1.06m per annum. It was confirmed that the proposals needed to go out to consultation once approval was given. The Leader advised that she did not propose to repeat what was in this report but endorsed fully the 'light approach' which had been adopted for the proposals.

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

It was confirmed that the figures referred to on pages 314 and 315 on the main agenda pack referred to the HRA account, which was specific to Redditch Borough Council.

RESOLVED that the proposed changes to the Single Management Structure attached at Appendix C and the formal consultation with the affected staff and Trades Unions be agreed.

74\19

TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE CABINET HELD ON 4TH DECEMBER 2019 AND 15TH JANUARY 2020

The minutes from the Cabinet meetings held on 4th December 2019 and 15th January 2020 were submitted for information and noted by Members.

75\19

TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER A REPORT FROM THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE TOWN CENTRE

Councillor K May, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and the Town Centre presented her annual report and highlighted that Economic Development was a key priority for the Council. There were 17,500 businesses in North Worcestershire accounting for 52.5% of the County's business.

In terms of North Worcestershire; Bromsgrove consistently outperformed Redditch and Wyre Forest across multiple indexes such as the Vibrant Economy Index and Corporate Index. This was also the case in respect of key statistics, such as business, survival, unemployment, income, GVA and levels of qualification. The Council worked with public and private sector partners through the Bromsgrove Economic Partnership Group to address the challenges and opportunities for delivering local Economic Growth. The Leader reminded Members of the Peter Brett Associates (PBA) report commissioned by North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) that confirmed that whilst the District had a good track record in supporting start-up enterprise; more effort was needed to help businesses to grown and remain in the District and access was needed for a developing skills base. The PBA report had identified the review of the Bromsgrove District Plan as an opportunity to consider future employment land provision. The supply of Employment Land was a major constraint for Business Growth in the District. In the District Council Plan adopted in January 2017, 28 hectares of land was designated as employment land; and currently, approximately 5 hectares remained to be built out.

It was noted that the Redditch Eastern Gateway site was a 30 hectare site; with 20 hectares within Stratford Upon-Avon District Council and 10 hectares within Bromsgrove District. It was further noted that the project was progressing well and confirmation as to the Developers taking the 10 hectares within the District Boundary was awaited.

Many Property Consultancies reported that companies were constantly looking for commercial opportunities within the Bromsgrove district; some wanted to start a business, some were looking for office space and some just wanted to grow and stay in the District realising what great connectivity was offered with the motorway network and four trains an hour from Birmingham to Bromsgrove. The Managing Director of GJS Dillon had highlighted to her that there was only around 2 and a half months supply of office space available in the District and he had a list of around 40 businesses wanting to get into or expand in the area. It was anticipated that the Birmingham Congestion Charge/Vehicle Ban would only focus more attention on the District and the potential it offered.

The Leader went on to explain that the North Worcestershire Economic Strategy covered a five year period 2019-2024 and set out some of the key economic indicators across North Worcestershire as well as the attributes that made the area attractive to businesses and visitors. North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration provided Business Support for both start-up and established businesses in line with the Economic Growth Strategy.

It was noted that the High Street faced many challenges in 2020 and she hoped that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would look to introduce further Business Rates relief for High Streets in his March Budget; so that entrepreneurs would come forward and help to stimulate the retail environment.

The Leader advised that the Council was currently reviewing its investment strategy to give it greater flexibility moving forwards with potential purchases. The reasoning behind this change was that the Council may wish to acquire assets where there was no material financial gain, or potentially even a loss, as the benefits to the wider area were deemed to be worth the reduced financial returns. Measures were being developed to ensure that these wider benefits were captured as part of the business case to ensure it was understood at the point of purchase the reasoning behind the purchase if not predominantly for financial gain.

Officers had also been tasked with commissioning work for the future of Bromsgrove Town Centre. This work would inform the Local Plan Review and incorporate a car parking strategy. The Local Centres Strategy and action plan comes to an end in 2020 and officers had been tasked with preparing a new strategy and action plan which would include Aston Fields.

The Leader went on to highlight the work of the Local Strategic Partnership for the District, under the chairmanship of Inspector David King. The vision for the Partnership was to 'Make Bromsgrove District the place to live, do business and to visit'. This Board brought a large number of partners around the table to discuss the issues that impact on residents and collectively looked at how they could be addressed.

The Leader also took the opportunity to personally pass on her sincere thanks to the following, who had supported her work within her Portfolio; Kevin Dicks, Sue Hanley, Ostap Paparega and his team, Cheryl Welsh, Robert Spittle, Della McCarthy, Inspector David King, Reverend Paul Lewis, Jonathan Smith, Julie Heyes, Amanda Scarce and Joanne Gresham. That was not an exhaustive list; and she thanked everyone who had supported her.

In concluding her presentation, the Leader advised that Bromsgrove faced challenges, but it also offered a wealth of opportunities; the Meanwhile Space, the £50million investment going into the A38 and the FTTP Broadband. Bromsgrove had also been chosen as one of 36 Towns and Cities by OpenReach to roll out FTTP (Fibre to the Premises); the newest, fastest and most reliable 'future proof' fibre broadband is being implemented and was 13 miles from Birmingham and 16 miles from Worcester and was a great place to live, work and play.

Following presentation of her report, Members raised a number of questions and made a number of observations, to which the Leader responded when appropriate, including:

- Whether the LSP minutes could be made available to all Councillors and what monies, if any, the Council contributed to its work. Councillor May confirmed that the Council had contributed £22k in respect of staffing for the Sunrise Project.
- Whether any discussions had taken place in respect of this Council being a member of two LEPs and whether a decision had been made in respect of which one the Council would go with, should it only be able to be a member of one. Councillor May confirmed that should a decision in respect of this need to be made; it would be one which was brought back to full Council.
- Electric charging points and the need for these to be available for card payments.
- The NWEDR growth statistics, which had been discussed in detail at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting, as there had been confusion over the number of jobs predicated. Councillor May reiterated that the figure was based on the available land and that there were far more houses being built in the other areas hence the employment figure was matched to the housing growth.

Councillor Hughes made reference to the planned investment in car parks and asked about time frames and assurances that all car parks would also include electric charging points. She also suggested that Pay on Foot was the preferred option for many people and encouraged them to stay in the town centre for longer, without having to worry about parking restrictions. There was also a need for the machines to take other forms of payment, not just cash. She also asked for consideration to be given to free parking for blue badge holders. The Leader advised that she was happy to discuss the points raised under the Notice of Motion which Councillor Hughes had submitted, however Councillor

Hughes advised that should the Leader chose to respond to these points now, she would be happy to withdraw her motion. The Leader therefore provided the following response:

The Council had spent over £30k on its Car Parks in this district in the last 12 months. Council were reminded that there had been a car parking review undertaken by 202 Consultancy which set out some clear recommendations. This work had been divided into two parts;

Part One - Ostap Paparega and his team at NWEDR were addressing the areas around the future needs of Car Parking for the District, including how many spaces would be required? Were they in the right place? Should there be a need to deck a car park? These points would be addressed in the Commissioned Work for the future of Bromsgrove Town Centre.

Part Two - was basically the in house infrastructure Improvement Plan. This was the lining, lighting, resurfacing, payment methods including replacement of the payment machines Introductions of Payment Apps and this was currently being addressed by the Head of Environmental Services and his team. A report was to be brought back to Cabinet before September of this year.

The Leader concluded that work was actively taking place around the Council's car parks and had been for several months. The Council was and would always be ambitious for Bromsgrove.

On receipt of this response, Councillor Hughes confirmed that she was happy for her Notice of Motion to be withdrawn. The Leader thanked Councillor Hughes for her decision and further confirmed that she was keen for the Council to keep its car parking charges low.

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QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Question Submitted by Councillor R. Hunter

"Please will you write, on behalf of this council, to the Leader of Worcestershire County Council and the Chief Executive of First Group to ask them to reverse the decision to cut services on Bromsgrove's 144 bus route?"

The Leader responded that she had spoken with the Cabinet Member for Highways at Worcestershire County Council regarding this matter and he had clarified the situation. The Bromsgrove 144 bus route was a purely commercial route. Worcestershire County Council had no influence over this route. First Group had altered the service between Bromsgrove and Birmingham to every hour as congestion issues in Birmingham had been sighted as the issue. Bus companies have a legal obligation to run to time within the permitted framework of being up to one minute early and up to five minutes late. The company had reduced this route in order to comply with this framework. The County Council

were not consulted on the change as they have no legal jurisdiction over the service as it is a purely commercially run service.

Question submitted by Councillor A. English

“I would like to ask what progress has been made in addressing the shortfall of pitches for Gypsy/Travellers in the district? There is an urgent need for the Council to provide pitches now. Waiting until the end of the Local Plan Review is not an option because it fails to address the urgent and legitimate Gypsy/Traveller need and thus further promotes unlawful and inappropriate development of the Green Belt.”

The Leader responded unfortunately the claims made were incorrect. Latest information from officers and from the ES14 return showed that currently Bromsgrove had a surplus of 6 Gypsy and Traveller pitches. Clearly there was, or will be a need to consider pitch provision going forward, however this had to be a matter for discussion primarily between the Council's Planning Officer and Worcestershire County Council as it was general practice that the districts identify and make available appropriate land and the County provide the funding. Any review would ultimately inform the Council's Local Plan but currently there was no urgent need.

Councillor May concluded that she would be happy to arrange for the officers to go through the figures with Councillor English.

Question submitted by Councillor J. King

“The Government has promised to encourage economic growth in the West Midlands and a substantial financial package is likely to be announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his next Budget. Bromsgrove is a member of both Worcestershire and Greater Birmingham LEPs and has a track record as the home of a high rate of start up companies. What will the portfolio holder do to ensure that Bromsgrove now receives the funding which it needs to grow its economy and provide the infrastructure which will make it an attractive place to live, work and visit?”

The Leader responded that, as outlined in her Portfolio Holder's Report, she sat on the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership Board and would continue to lobby for appropriate investment into the District in line with the Council's Economic Strategy, not only around infrastructure, but around the four key pillars of Economic Growth as had been outlined earlier.

- Talent
- Infrastructure
- Technology
- Creativity

In terms of the Worcestershire LEP she confirmed that she would do exactly the same via our representative Councillor Fran Orborski from the Northern Alliance.

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MOTIONS ON NOTICE (TO FOLLOW IF ANY)

The Chairman advised that, prior to the meeting, the Group Leaders had agreed to a number of motions being withdrawn and the order that the remaining would be considered had been amended. The Chairman thanked the Group Leaders for their co-operation in this matter and he hoped that this would continue for future meetings.

Rough Sleepers in the District

Councillor M. Thompson advised Council that he had withdrawn his motion as he had spoken to the relevant Portfolio Holder and was happy to work directly with her on this matter.

Strategic Planning

Councillor S. Baxter advised that following discussions she had also agreed to withdraw her motion and a meeting with all Group Leaders and the relevant officers would be arranged to discuss the concerns that she had raised.

Car Parks

As previously discussed, Councillor S. Hughes also confirmed that she was happy for her notice of motion to be withdrawn.

Climate Change

Members considered the following notice of motion from Councillor S. Douglas.

"In light of the threat of Climate Change, this Council should take practical steps to combat its consequences.

Therefore, we call upon the Cabinet to carry out a full analysis of land in the ownership of the Council which would be available for the planting of wild flowers and trees."

The motion was proposed by Councillor Douglas and seconded by Councillor H. Rone-Clarke.

Without debate and with the agreement of Councillor Douglas, it was agreed that this matter would be referred to the Cabinet for further consideration.

Defending our district against flooding

Members considered the following notice of motion from Councillor J. King.

"Council notes the considerable damage and disruption that recent floods have caused in our community and the likelihood of further problems as a result of climate change.

Council resolves to task the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with reviewing the resources made available for flooding prevention in our

community with a view to making more investment available if necessary from 2021/22.”

The motion was proposed by Councillor King and seconded by Councillor R. Hunter.

It was noted that this matter had tentatively raised at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 13th January when Members had been in agreement to it being a subject worthy of more detailed scrutiny. With this in mind and with the agreement of Councillor King, it was agreed that the matter be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for further consideration.

Show Pride in our LGBT Community

Members considered the following notice of motion from Councillor R. Hunter.

“Council notes that each year a Pride festival is organised in Worcester to recognise and celebrate our LGBT community.

Council believes that as a Worcestershire authority we should help to enhance the visibility of this important work.

Council resolves to fly the Rainbow Flag at the Parkside Building on Worcester Pride weekend which this year falls on 19-20 September and each year thereafter. Council further resolves to publicise our support for the event.”

The motion was proposed by Councillor Hunter and seconded by Councillor K. May. Councillor Hunter thanked Councillor May for her co-operation in this matter and was happy for the motion to be put to the vote without debate. Councillor H. Rone-Clarke highlighted that there would also be a Bromsgrove Pride event and requested that the Rainbow Flag also be flown for this event. Members were happy for this to happen.

On being put to the vote the Motion was carried.

Local Government Officers’ Pay

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

“Council notes

Local Government has endured central government funding cuts of nearly 50% since 2010.

Between 2010 and 2020, councils will have lost 60p out of every £1 they have received from central government. The 2019 LGA survey of council finances found that 1 in 3 councils fear they will run out of funding to

provide even their statutory, legal duties by 2022/23. This number rises to almost two thirds of councils by 2024/2025 or later.

The LGA estimates councils will face a funding gap of £8 billion by 2025. Faced with these cuts from central government, the local government workforce has endured years of pay restraint with the majority of pay points losing 22 per cent of their value since 2009/10.

At the same time as seeing their pay go down in real terms, workers experience ever increasing workloads and persistent job insecurity. Across the UK, an estimated 876,000 jobs have been lost in local government since June 2010 – a reduction of 30 per cent. Local government has arguably been hit by more severe job losses than any other part of the public sector.

There has been a disproportionate impact on women, with women making up more than three quarters of the local government workforce.

Our workers are public service super heroes. They keep our communities clean, look after those in need and keep our towns and cities running. Without the professionalism and dedication of our staff, the council services our residents rely on would not be deliverable.

*Government funding has been cut to the extent that a proper pay rise could result in a reduction in local government services. The government needs to take responsibility and fully fund increases in pay; it should not put the burden on local authorities whose funding *has* been cut to the bone.*

This Council:

- asks the Cabinet in the context of the budget setting process to support the pay claim submitted by GMB UNISON and Unite on behalf of council and school workers for a £10 per hour minimum wage and a 10 per cent uplift across all other pay points in 2020/21 and*
- calls on the Local Government Association to make urgent representations to central government to fund the NJC pay claim*
- [write](#) to the Chancellor and Secretary of State to call for a pay increase for local government workers to be funded with new money from central government.”*

The Motion was proposed by Councillor McDonald and seconded by Councillor S. Douglas.

In proposing the Motion Councillor McDonald advised that the motion was self explanatory and his concern was that with constant cut backs and staff being expected to carry out more duties that people were being

expected to get pay on a reduced pay in real time terms. He highlighted that over the last ten years 60 pence out of every £1 received from Central Government had been cut. Local Government employees were some of the lowest paid workers in the public sectors and Councils were being expected to be run on a shoestring and relied upon the hard work of its employees. It was therefore important to pay its staff a decent fair wage. He urged the Council to support his motion and to write to the Secretary of State to ask for this to be funded by new money in order to recognise the loyalty of its employees.

Councillor G. Denaro, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling responded that currently the Council paid its entire staff the Foundation Living Wage of £9.30 and currently none of its staff were paid less than £9.74. Members were reminded that the Council was part of the nationally (NJC) agreed pay scales which resulted from negotiations between the employer and the unions to ensure all of its employees had an award that was consistent with their colleagues across Local Government. In addition, the Council had not looked to make any detrimental changes to terms and conditions to enable savings to be delivered which a number of Councils had done.

To fund an increase of 10% to all employees earning over £10 would incur costs of around £900k. The Council currently had a 2% increase built into the budget which was in line with other Local Government bodies across the Country. Should this change through the NJC negotiations the Council would honour any percentage uplift agreed.

During the ensuing debate Members discussed how such matters had been addressed by other Councils and that previous pay increases received had been below inflation. Members also discussed the need to support its staff and to encourage new people to join the Council. Concerns were raised though as to who would be expected to pay for such an increase and the importance of support from Central Government in doing so. The importance of paying staff a fair wage was reiterated and whether such an increase would apply to all staff and how such an increase could be made viable.

Councillor Baxter asked for it to be made clear in the minutes that she was not opposed to a 10% increase for some staff, but that she could not agree to this being across the board.

In summing up, Councillor McDonald urged Members to support his Motion and the staff of this Council.

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

For the motion: Councillors Douglas, Hughes, Hunter, King, Mallett, McDonald, Rone-Clarke and Thompson (8)

Against the motion: Councillors Colella, Deeming, Denaro, Glass, Jones, Kent, Kriss, May, Middleton, Sherrey, Spencer, Thomas, Till, Webb and Whittaker (15)

Abstentions: Councillors Baxter, English, Hotham (3)

On being put to the vote the Motion was lost.

Parcels of Land

Members considered the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor H. Rone-Clarke:

Across the district, there are parcels of land which neither the County, District Councils or BDHT are willing to claim responsibility for. This means that, where there is casework relating to this land, often this can stagnate and residents can be left without answers.

This council calls upon the leader, alongside the relevant portfolio holders and officers, to meet with representatives from BDHT and the County Council to, once and for all, establish the ownership of all disputed land across the district, as well as an action plan to resolve disputes for future land which is highlighted.

Furthermore, we call upon the aforementioned to work with Councillors to identify where there are questions of land ownership within their own wards.

The Motion was proposed by Councillor Rone-Clarke and seconded by Councillor L. Mallett.

In proposing the Motion Councillor Rone-Clarke advised that he believed that this was a matter which all Members came across and sympathised where there was a piece of land that nobody took responsibility for. He hoped that this would bring all the appropriate service providers together to come to a proper decision. Councillor Rone-Clarke suggested that there were many ways in which these pieces of land could be put to much better for example community gardens.

On being put to the vote the Motion was carried.

The meeting closed at 8.54 p.m.

Chairman