

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

**21ST OCTOBER 2020, 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, 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, K. J. Van Der Plank, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

**WELCOME**

The Chairman welcomed Members to the virtual full Council meeting and reminded them of the protocol to be following during it. This included the muting of microphones, the use of the instant messaging facility and the use of roll calls for the approval of items. Members were reminded that the detail of these would not be included within the minutes and if Members wished for a named vote to be taken, then this should be requested in the usual manner.

Members were also reminded that the meeting was being live streamed to the Council's You Tube channel to allow the public to view it.

24\2020

**APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor R Jenkins.

25\2020

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor R Hunter declared a non-pecuniary interest under item Nos 8 and 11 of the agenda as he worked for a not for profit social housing provider.

Councillor S Hughes declared a non-pecuniary interest under item 11 (Councillor H Rone-Clarke's Motion on Notice) as her husband worked in the Bromsgrove High Street.

26\2020

**MINUTES**

Members considered the Minutes of the full Council meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the full Council meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2020 be approved.

27\2020

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

The Chairman advised Council of the sad passing of Ali Tomlinson, the wife of Councillor P Tomlinson, Worcestershire County Councillor and Wychavon District Councillor and former Chairman of Worcestershire County Council. The Chairman and Leader had passed on their condolences to Councillor Tomlinson and his family.

There were no announcements from the Head of Paid Service.

28\2020

**TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER**

The Leader hoped that Members and their families were keeping well at this time and advised that the number of Covid-19 cases in the District had risen to 159 cases per 100k, this compared to the Worcestershire average of 95 cases per 100k. She reinforced the importance of following the Government's guidelines and importance of needing to impact on the number of residents contracting the virus.

29\2020

**INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL REPORT**

Councillor G Denaro, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources introduced the report and reminded Members that this had been due to be debated earlier in the year but had been held back until clarification was received on the National Pay Award. This had subsequently been agreed at 2.75% but was not finalised until after lockdown. Following the Leader's conversations with some of the Group Leaders the proposed adjustments would be to the Basic Allowance only. He advised that there were still differences with the Panel over some areas and the intention was have a conversation with them prior to the issue of this year's report.

Councillor Denaro highlighted the statistics on page 30 of the agenda pack which showed that this Council lay in the middle range cost against General Revenue Expenditure and costs per head were at the lower end whilst against average councillors this Council was at the top. It was noted that Wyre Forest did not use the panel but held its own negotiations. Full details as to how the IRP calculated the new Basic Allowance were shown on page 31 of the report.

It was confirmed that acceptance to the increase in Basic Allowance only with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2020 was being recommended.

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

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

- Clarification in respect of recommendation 2, as these appeared to refer to the proposals put forward by the IRP and therefore the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) would not remain the same as had been inferred by the Portfolio Holder. The Portfolio Holder responded that the IRP had made a number of recommendations in respect of SRAs but the proposal was for these not to be put in place, but for the SRAs and the multipliers to remain as they were.
- The Portfolio Holder clarified that all SRAs were to remain at the present rates. This was an amendment to the recommendations which had been included within the IRP report. Although it was highlighted that it was not clear from what the Portfolio Holder had advised Council, where this could be located within the agenda pack.
- It was suggested that the Members should not be accepting any increase in allowances this year and that this would be a more positive headline for the residents, many of whom may be facing financial difficulties at the moment.
- It was suggested that the increase be accepted by Councillors and that they would then be in a position to choose what they did with it as for example they may wish to consider making a donation to some worthy cause.

The Chairman apologised and explained that whilst he was using his new IT equipment, he was struggling to read the instant messaging board and was therefore reliant on officers to support him to ensure that he was able to take the speakers in the correct order.

The Monitoring Officer clarified that they had a requirement to take account of the IRP report and recommendations when making their decision, what Members were voting on was, as the Portfolio Holder had indicated, the 2% increase as opposed to any other recommendations the IRP may have made, notwithstanding the fact that Council had taken into account their views. There were therefore two recommendations for Members to consider.

Councillor Denaro confirmed that the recommendation was to accept the 2% increase to the basic allowance and the Scheme of Allowances was to continue in its current format.

Having regard to the report issued by the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel it was

**RESOLVED that**

- a) **Members basic allowance be increased by 2% from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2020;**

- b) The current Scheme of Allowances would continue unchanged for 2020/21; and
- c) the content of the Panel's report be noted.

30\2020

**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.

31\2020

**RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET**

It was noted that the recommendations from the Cabinet meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> October were included within the supplementary agenda pack, which Members had received electronically. The background papers to the recommendations were included in the main agenda pack on pages 53 to 85.

**Planning for the Future White Paper and Changes to the Planning System – BDC responses**

Councillor A Kent, Deputy Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services, confirmed that he would be recommending that the Council submitted appendix A (as detailed in the agenda pack) to MHCLG as the Council's response to the 'Planning for the Future' White Paper and that appendix B be confirmed as its response to the Changes to the Planning System Consultation. He took the opportunity to thank all Members that had attended the two Strategic Planning Steering Group (SPSG) meetings where the papers had been discussed in detail.

Whilst Councillor Kent acknowledged that most people had participated in the SPSG meetings, he took Council through some of the key areas within the documents. These were:

- The Council's response under section 1.3 (page 57 of agenda packs) where the Council was resisting removing villages from the Greenbelt and made this point very clearly.
- Section 1.4 (page 58 of agenda packs) Protected Areas - if an area was not protected it could be developed – the Council requested further clarity in respect of this. The desire for self-build and modular homes to be included in all development areas was also being requested.
- Section 2.1 (page 59 of the agenda pack) There was great concern around limiting the development management policies.
- Section 2.4 this was focused on the automation of planning applications and whilst Councillor Kent was focused on automation, he did not believe that replacing officers and Members with such a system – so the Council still required a

human touch but would still like to see applications being processed more efficiently in the future.

- Section 3.2 (page 60 of the agenda pack) The removal of the duty to co-operate was welcome as it was felt that this had not worked successful for this Council and had also delayed the process.
- Section 3.3 the removal of the sustainability appraisal was also welcomed for the reasons specified.
- Section 3.4 was in respect of reserved sites. Councillor Kent acknowledged that this Council had not delivered the level of housing that it should have and specifically this was often due to not having sites available on time to meet the needs. The use of reserved sites would be useful in this respect.
- Section 4.1 (page 61 of the agenda pack) was in respect of the Greenbelt, whilst the Council remained supportive of the method to determine housing need it was also very cautious as the biggest unknown was to how land constraints would be factored in. Until the precise weighting was known it would be difficult to plan for the future and concerns were raised around how the Council would reach the affordability level.
- Section 4.2 raised concerns around the lack of guidance on planning for other development needs, particular reference being made to economic growth.
- Section 4.3 (page 62 of the agenda pack) the revised housing numbers, whilst the number was noted given the revised projections since the announcement of this target, it should be revisited to properly reflect these figures and linked up to the most recent evidence. It was noted that Covid-19 and the impact of it should also be taken into account.
- Section 8.6 (page 66 of the agenda pack) the right to be heard. The Council did not support the removal of the public involvement even further.
- Section 9.1 (page 67 of the agenda pack) the Council was strongly in favour of Neighbourhood Plans and had a good relationship both past and present in this respect and these should be strengthened and not removed moving forwards.
- Section 14.4 (page 71 of the agenda pack) it was believed that this would not foster innovation and therefore the Council had commented accordingly. Section 14.5 referred to modern methods of construction which this Council had always been supportive of had made relevant comments to this end in its response.
- Section 18.1 (page 74 of the agenda pack) The Council believed that strong commitments in the Future Homes Standard were required if targets were to be met and the move towards slowing the impacts of climate change. It was important that homes of the future were built to be as sustainable as possible and as efficient as possible.
- It was noted that one of the main areas of concern was around the introduction of the new Community Infrastructure Levy, which had been responded to in detail.

Councillor Kent reiterated that the response had been discussed in detail at the SPSG meetings and he felt that it was a balanced response.

In respect of the second item, the response to the Changes to the Planning System, he did not propose to go into this in detail as it was a relatively short document, but was happy to respond to any specific questions in respect of it, if necessary. He did however highlight the standard methodology for assessing housing numbers, which he accepted was controversial. From the Council's point of view it wanted to ensure that it was providing the residents of Bromsgrove with the houses that they actually needed. It was felt that houses needed to be built and if a five year review was in place and the Council could get the affordability issue in place and review the housing numbers at that stage.

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

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

- Members welcomed the Portfolio Holder's commitment to community engagement.
- The Portfolio Holder was asked to provide further detail in respect of the commitment to climate change and in particular whether the White Paper would have any impact on the Council's commitment to carbon neutrality. Councillor Kent responded that there was a strong commitment within the document to meet the climate change requirements that the Council was looking to do, for example tree lined streets and the sustainability within the proposals was clear and that whatever was built in the future was fit for the future. It was also confirmed that once feedback from the Consultation had been received there would be further detailed discussion at the SPSG meetings to ensure Member involvement in future responses.
- Councillor Kent also advised all Members that he would be happy to respond in writing should any Members wish to email him with more detailed questions on specific areas within the document.
- Members were supportive of the right to be heard for residents and the importance of the Section 106 monies being the responsibility of the Council in order for it to be spent where it was felt most appropriate.
- Clarification was sought in respect of section 5.1 on page 63 of the agenda pack and not the need for outline permission. It was suggested that in strategic planning terms this was often in many years hence and the area of importance in giving outline permission gave the Council the opportunity to speak to the local residents as areas changed, the Portfolio Holder was asked how he felt about this? Councillor Kent confirmed that this was a valid point and he confirmed that one of the sections in respect of this

had been questioned. The areas referred to was where a growth area had been designated for either housing or economic needs and therefore deemed to have the benefits of outline planning permission. As this was open to interpretation it was agreed that further clarification was needed on this in the way that it was explained. It was hoped that this would happen at a later stage of the consultation. It was also suggested that this could inflate the price of land in particular areas. The Portfolio Holder hoped that the standard methods of economics would ensure that this would not be the case. What the Council did not want to see in its drive for affordable homes was the prices being pushed up. It was hoped that the proposal for five year reviews within the document would be put in place and this it was hoped, would mitigate the concerns raised by a number of Members. As it was clear from recent events that it was not practicable to try and make a plan for ten or twenty years moving forwards.

- Some Members felt uneasy about a number of the responses, particularly in respect of the number of statements of clarity rather than statements as to what was needed in Bromsgrove as a Green Belt district. It was questioned whether some amendments could be sent at a later date should the need be necessary. The Portfolio Holder responded that it had been made clear in meetings he had had at various levels, that this was a consultation period which would go on for a certain length of time and he was happy to take forward any questions and suggestions made at future SPSG meetings to the relevant people and lobby on the Council's behalf.
- The Council was struggling with the Brown Field land and it was important to ensure that the people of Bromsgrove could live, work and stay in the district.
- The level of affordability was further discussed and the impact it had on residents and their families. The figure of 11 plus would be defended by the Council and it did not want to see it going to the extent of 40 or 50 as had been suggested.

Councillor Hotham asked for the documents to be considered in two parts, and whilst he broadly agreed with the first part, the Planning for the Future White Paper, although he did raise concerns in respect of the standardised route to determining housing numbers. He was however very unhappy with the algorithm used to determine housing numbers as totally inappropriate, as this Council already had the need to build a large number of houses and this would now almost double that figure. He did comment that if those houses were to be all affordable then he would have some sympathy but bearing in mind that the report suggested that the sites should 40 to 50 houses before affordable housing came into the equation it was difficult to understand how the consultation could benefit affordability of housing. If the housing numbers were nationally determined then this Council would not have any say in those numbers. He believed therefore that the Council should be far stronger in rebutting part 2 as there were particularly issues which were unique to Bromsgrove District. Councillor Hotham

went on to comment that he had looked through the questions and had compared them to the responses which had been completed on behalf of Redditch Borough Council and he had been disappointed to note that all but one questions had the same response for both councils. He believed that Redditch had a completely different set of problems to those of Bromsgrove and therefore suggested that, although Members had been reassured several times that the Strategic Planners were separate for both Councils, that this was not the case, it was clear from these responses that there was just one planning department which looked at Redditch and Bromsgrove as a whole. He asked that part of the report be re-visited and a response prepared which much better reflected the needs of Bromsgrove.

Councillor Kent responded that he was disappointed with this view as the main focus of the responses was in respect of affordable housing for the district. He advised that if the Council did not build houses then it would not be able to reduce the average earning level in order to achieve this. It was imperative that the figure was reduced in order for people to be able to afford to live and work in Bromsgrove. It was essential that the Council met the needs of its residents and it was not doing this at the moment.

The Leader advised Council that at every DCN call she had been involved in the Minister had reassured her that this was the first stage of the consultation and there would be further consultations as the matter progressed and there would be many further opportunities for Members to be consulted on this matter. She also reminded Members of the Peter Brett and Brendon Nevin reports and the results that they came up with in respect of Bromsgrove, she also reminded Members of the demographic of the district and those families who were leaving the area as they could not afford to live in it. She made reference to the number of hectares of employment land left on the current plan. The Council had a duty of care to ensure that it made sustainable communities and inspire people to want to live in Bromsgrove, which had good connectivity to the surrounding areas. The policy would allow the Council to do some building in sustainable positions going forward and the site analysis was therefore most important.

During the further debate which followed, Members discussed:

- Whilst it was an excellent submission with some strong points and the importance of championing working towards zero carbon emissions and the protection of the Greenbelt around the villages and the emphasis on affordability.
- There was an acute need for homes which were affordable to rent.
- The importance of affordable housing, but that the leading group needed to be clearer in exactly what the proposed formula meant, as it appeared that it was moving from a current annual requirement of 379 homes per year to a requirement of 694 homes per year and what was not clear was what proportion of

those homes had to be affordable. The concern was that a lot of homes would be built but not ones which were affordable.

- It was accepted that there was a wider objective in respect of getting over 300k houses built across the country, however the Council needed to question itself as to whether the figure represented a fair portion for Bromsgrove.
- It was suggested that building homes alone did not guarantee that affordable ones would be included within those developments. The figure of 40% needed to be retained to progress this and not the suggested Government figure, which was much lower.
- The importance of homes that were for rent and shared ownership was also highlighted.
- Councillor Kent was asked if he was able to provide details of the number of applications which had actually hit the target of 40% affordable homes. Councillor Kent advised that he would find out the information and clarify the figures outside of the meeting.
- It was questioned as to whether building houses actually reduced the affordability level, as the area was a very desirable area in which to live.

Councillor R Hunter asked that part 2 on page 79 of the agenda pack, the line which specifically stated that “the Council’s only preference is for clarity and certainty that an adopted methodology is substantially robust and can endure over time” be removed as it was not in the best interest of this Council.

Councillor Kent responded that he was disappointed that people did not appreciate the need to build houses in order to lower the affordability level to an acceptable level. He reiterated that the plan included a five year review and would be looked at, at that point. He therefore did not understand the logic of the arguments being put forward as he believed it was a question of economics and the need for enough houses to be built in order to reduce the affordability level. The Council was currently being penalised for not having sufficient affordable homes, through the affordability ratio.

It was suggested that the issue was the definition of affordability, whether it was the affordability of homes to buy, an example of the type of house which some Members believed was really needed in Bromsgrove was given as Roman Court, a BDHT project which was a mix of shared ownership and social rent. Homes which people on low incomes were able to have a realistic prospect of being able to afford. The Planning White Paper was putting forward first homes which were 70% of the market, a 30% discount on a market home. In many areas of Bromsgrove 70% of the market was not an entry level for a lot of residents.

Councillor Kent reminded Members that there had been ample opportunity for their comments to be noted and included in the responses both through the SPSG meetings and also when this report had been presented at Cabinet. The Council had one of the highest

criteria for affordability, the Council was driving forwards with the emphasis on affordable homes and the need for social housing and efforts to reduce the waiting list were imperative moving forwards.

Councillor Hotham emphasised that he was very much in favour of affordable housing, but what he believed the District did not need was executive homes and as had been said previously in the meeting if only 40% affordable housing was the aim then the required number of affordable homes would not be achieved. There was a double problem in that there were affordability issues both in the district and outside of the district. Those that worked outside the district earned considerably more than those within it and the affordability level was calculated on the wages within the district. A different approach was needed and in his view the Council should be building proper council houses as this was the way forward and addressed the affordability issue. He again reiterated his view that the second document needed to be disregarded and a clear response for Bromsgrove be put forward.

Councillor Kent advised that the Council was not in a position where it was making the decision nationally but the Council would lobby very strongly on the points it had put across and he hoped that Council would support the responses put forward.

Councillor J. Till asked for the matter to be moved to the vote.

In his summing up Councillor Kent shared his disappointment in that coming up to the meeting there had been a very open platform for Members to put forward their views and concerns on this matter through both the SPSG meetings and Cabinet and he hoped that those opportunities would be taken up for future discussions as the consultation progressed.

Councillor Hunter raised a point of order in that both he and a number of other Members had made their views known at the SPSG meetings, which appeared to have been disregarded in the final response brought before Council at this meeting.

Councillor McDonald asked for an amendment to allow for the recommendations to be taken separately. This was seconded by Councillor S. Baxter.

On being put to the vote the amendment was lost.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) Appendix A as attached to the report, be submitted to MHCLG as the Council's Response to the Planning for the Future White Paper; and**

- 2) **Appendix B as attached to the report, be confirmed as the Council's response to the Changes to the Planning System consultation.**

32\2020

**TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE CABINET HELD ON 9TH SEPTEMBER AND 14TH OCTOBER 2020**

The Chairman reminded Members that these were for noting and accuracy only and highlighted that the recommendations within the minutes from the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> September had been agreed at the Council meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> September (as detailed in the minutes of that meeting). The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> October were included in the supplementary agenda.

The minutes from the Cabinet meetings held on 9<sup>th</sup> September and 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020 were noted.

33\2020

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Question submitted by Councillor R Hunter**

"When will it be possible to make cashless payments at all of the car parks maintained by Bromsgrove District Council?"

The Leader advised that It was currently possible to pay for parking on all the Council's Pay and Display car parks via the online mobile cashless parking app 'MiPermit'. The two Pay on Foot car parks by the nature of their operation were not able to be included in this app.

Unfortunately, due to the age of the existing ticket machines the Council was unable to adapt them to offer a cashless card payment option. However, officers would be bringing a 5 year car park maintenance report to Cabinet on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020 for Members consideration. This plan included the staggered replacement of the ticket machines on all the car parks and it was proposed that those replacement ticket machines would have cashless functionality.

**Question submitted by Councillor P McDonald**

"Would the Leader please inform me of the cost of travelling expenses so far this year compared to this time last year?"

The Leader confirmed that using the mileage and essential car user allowance figures that had been paid via Payroll for the period 1 April to 30 September 2019 the figure was £60,0125.63 and for the same period in 2020 the figure was £39,568.24.

Councillor McDonald asked if he could put forward a supplementary questioned and the Leader responded that, as had been agreed at a meeting between all Group Leaders, there would be no supplementary questions due to the Notice of Motions being debated under the next item.

**Question submitted by Councillor S Colella**

“Can the Leader confirm that the previously agreed Council position whereby appointees to Outside Bodies submit regular updates on the meetings attended for collation by Democratic Services takes place and that these are available for Members to view.”

The Leader advised that, as had been agreed a number of years ago, at the end of each municipal year Democratic Services contact all Councillors who were representatives of the Council on an outside body. They were asked to complete a form which detailed the work of the body and its implications to the Council. A review of the appointments was also regularly carried out to ensure the appointments were still relevant. The forms were kept in paper format in the Democratic Services Office and if Councillor Colella or any other Member contact a member of the Team they would arrange a suitable time for these to be inspected.

34\2020

**MOTIONS ON NOTICE**

The Chairman explained that in respect of Councillor P McDonald's Motion on Notice and following discussions between all Group Leaders, this has been accepted by the Leader and she would write, as requested and keep Council updated of any response received.

In respect of Councillor H Rone-Clarke's Motion on Notice, again following discussions with all Group Leaders, it had been suggested and agreed, that the Leader would refer the matter to the new Town Centres Manager for consideration in due course.

In respect of Councillor R Hunter's Motion on Notice, it was explained that following discussions between Councillor Hunter and the Leader earlier in the day, Councillor Hunter had agreed with the Leader's suggestion that this matter be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Finance and Budget Working Group for further investigation and consideration.

The Chairman confirmed that there was therefore one Motion of Notice for debate this evening, that of Councillor S Colella.

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

*“Following the Government's White Paper on planning reform The Bromsgrove Alliance calls upon Council to suspend the Greenbelt review until after the White Paper has become planning Law and we know what our Housing allocation will be.*

*This will demonstrate that members of this council hold the district's Greenbelt in the highest esteem and demonstrates that the council will not sacrifice the Greenbelt from unnecessary and undue development until the exact details are known.”*

Councillor Colella welcomed the opportunity to have a motion debated at Council. He explained that the specific purpose of the motion was to call for Council to suspend the Green Belt review until the Government's White Paper review had been concluded. This also tied in with the availability of the Birmingham and Black Country housing figures. Councillor Colella believed the risks of not suspending the review were too great, as continuing with it would lead to over development and opening the door to any number of houses would undermine the plan making process, which related to the local area. It would leave the District with a confused outcome and be against the interests of the people of the District. It was believed that the conclusions of such a review would be premature and interest both the Government and neighbouring conurbations, together with landowners and developers. He believed that the review would show that many areas could be developed and so the sum of developable land would be enormous. Councillor Colella understood that a number of other councils had rejected the White Paper, speaking against it publicly. It was further highlighted that land had already been conceded to the Foxlydiate development for Redditch and offered no "kick back" to the Birmingham and Greater Solihull review through the Hearn report. Councillor Colella went on to highlight the process when assessing the Greenbelt and the impact of facing a higher housing target against a smaller housing target. Councillor Colella reminded Members that it was often quoted that Bromsgrove was 95% Green Belt and it was suggested that some could therefore be sacrificed with little impact of the District, but this was not the case and Council needed to know what it was looking at before it moved forward this review, it should be paused now. It must wait for clarity on housing needs before taking any further action.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Colella and seconded by Councillor S Douglas.

During the debate which followed Members discussed a number of areas including:

- The Greenbelt concerns everyone and that market housing will be built with a lost opportunity for affordable housing.
- It was vital to continue with the Greenbelt review as the Council needed something to fall back on and argue against the developers, who would be looking at the situation from a completely different angle to the Council.

Councillor S. Hughes asked to make a small amendment to the motion, to replace the Bromsgrove Alliance with Council, to reflect everyone. She also asked to amend it by adding the Council rejected the new housing need formula. Councillor Colella confirmed he was happy to the removal of the reference to the Bromsgrove Alliance. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that if the mover of the motion was happy with the suggested amendment, a vote was not necessary, and it would become the substantive motion. After discussion it was agreed that the

suggested wording be taken as an amendment and this was seconded by Councillor Hunter. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that Council was now debating the amendment.

Councillor Kent spoke to the amendment and commented that as this seemed to go back to what had previously been discussed in respect of the White Paper and he would not therefore be supporting it, as it changed the motion completely.

Councillor S. Baxter spoke on the amendment and advised that she would not be in support of it, as Council had already voted on this in a previous item, which had been lost.

Councillor Hunter spoke in favour of the amendment and said that as he was denied the opportunity to take the specific issue around the new housing need formula, when Councillor McDonald had asked for this to be taken separately. The reason why the amendment was needed was for this reason. There was also a wider issue, which was the understanding of affordable housing, which was something which needed to be understood before any decision was made and he urged Councillors to vote for the amendment.

At this point in the meeting, the Chairman had technical issues and the Vice Chairman took over for a short time.

In summing up the amendment Councillor Hughes urged Members to support it for the reasons which had already been stated. It was confirmed that the amendment was to add the sentence that the Council was rejecting the housing needs formula at the end of the motion.

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

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that Council were now debating Councillor Colella's substantive motion, with the slight amendment of replacing the Bromsgrove Alliance with Council.

Councillor Douglas spoke in support of the motion and raised some concerns around the new housing plans and reminded Members that 95% of the District was Greenbelt and prime farming land. She also raised concerns around developers not having to make contributions towards schools and medical facilities, that would be needed. Over development would destroy vast areas of green space and make public transport access even more difficult. It would also have an adverse impact on neighbourhood plans. She believed that the housing delivery system was broken and until local housing figures were known it was impossible to allocate land, therefore the Greenbelt review needed to be put on hold until the White Paper became planning law.

Councillor Kent responded to the motion that he understood it to be the suspension of the Greenbelt review until after the White Paper became planning law. He again reiterated that the matter had been through two

Strategic Planning Steering Group meetings and Cabinet where there had been ample opportunity for discussion and debate. He made the assumption that it was also referring to the Greenbelt review as part of the local plan making process and he reminded Members that this was one part of a wider set of analysis and evidence that sat behind any local plan. This process had started two years previously and highlighted that the Greenbelt was in fact 91% and not 95% has had been quoted earlier in the meeting. He provided data which showed that effectively 1,700 new homes had taken up 1% of the Greenbelt. Whilst he was in support of protecting the Greenbelt he advised Members that they also needed to understand the practicalities of it. Councillor Kent also reminded Members that the previous Local Plan had taken 10 years to complete, the measures set out in the White Paper would significantly speed up this process and should be welcomed by all. Much work on the current local plan could continue whilst the White Paper was being considered and without the housing needs formula. The time of the review had in fact been beneficial to this Council in its plan making journey as it had not and would not commit to any work which would in effect be wasted. The White Paper which had been debated earlier in the meeting outlined in full the implications on this Council. The Council was continuing to work towards bringing forward the best plan for the people of Bromsgrove. Councillor Kent also highlighted a number of previous occasions when there had been suggestions of delaying the plan making process, through motions and the impact these would have had.

In summing up Councillor Colella thanked Councillor Kent for highlighting the past history that his Group had put forward to the Council which showed the concerns it had in the plan and it would continue to highlight the pitfalls. It was important that the process was not rushed, and the final plan was fit for purpose. It was also noted that with the current plan there was difficulty in fulfilling it, as there were problems with the development land which had been put forward previously. In summary Councillor Colella advised that the motion was not about delaying the review but about planning and ensuring that it was done correctly and without uncertainty. Making the decision to pause the Greenbelt review would simply allow the Council time to understand what was before them and to be able to give it full consideration.

On being put to the vote the Motion was lost.

Council  
21st October 2020

Before the meeting closed Councillor H. Rone-Clarke raised a point of order in respect of his motion and asked the Leader whether it was being passed to the Town Centres Manager with the support of the Council and whether he and other Members would be involved in the process. The Chairman confirmed that the Leader would respond to the point raised outside of the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.28 p.m.

Chairman