

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

2ND DECEMBER 2020, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors R. J. Laight (Chairman, until Minute Item No. 44/20), A. J. B. Beaumont (Vice-Chairman), S. J. Baxter (until Minute Item No. 44/20), S. R. Colella, R. J. Deeming, G. N. Denaro, S. P. Douglas, A. B. L. English, M. Glass, S. G. Hession (until Minute Item No. 45/20), C.A. Hotham, S. A. Hughes, R. J. Hunter, R. E. Jenkins (until Minute Item No. 45/20), 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

35\20 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

36\20 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

37\20 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 21ST OCTOBER 2020**

Members considered the minutes of the meeting of Council held on Wednesday, 21st October 2020.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 21st October be approved as a true and correct record.

38\20 **TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND/OR HEAD OF PAID SERVICE**

The Chairman advised Council that he had no announcements to make on this occasion.

The Head of Paid Service also confirmed that he had no announcements to make at the meeting.

39\20 **TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER**

The Leader noted that it had been a difficult year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Bromsgrove District had been placed in Tier Two following the second national lockdown and she encouraged everyone to follow

the guidelines. The Leader welcomed the news that the Covid-19 vaccine produced by Pfizer and BioNTech had been approved for use by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) that day.

During consideration of this item, the political party group leaders joined the Leader of the Council in thanking Council staff, elected Members and key workers for their hard work during the Covid-19 pandemic. Reference was also made to the temperature that the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine needed for storage purposes and questions were raised about how the vaccine would be transported safely to vulnerable residents who might struggle to attend the vaccination centre at the Artrix. Officers undertook to obtain further information on this subject for Members' consideration.

Clarification was requested about the action that could be taken to enable Districts in Tiers 2 and 3 to be placed in Tier 1 in the future. The Leader explained that she attended meetings of the Worcestershire Local Engagement Board where the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic locally was discussed. There would be the potential to lobby for Worcestershire to be placed in Tier 1. However, risk factors and local Covid-19 case numbers would be taken into account when decisions were taken about the tier in which the county should be placed moving forward.

40\20

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.

41\20

URGENT DECISIONS

Members noted a number of urgent decisions that had been taken since the previous meeting of Council in respect of the following matters:

- Section 106 funding for 76, Sherwood Road
- Covid Impact - Subsidy to the Leisure Service Provider SLM (Everyone Active)
- Worcestershire Business Rates Pool 2021/22
- Green Homes Local Authority Delivery Grant Funding
- Licensing (Miscellaneous) Sub-Committees A and B

It was noted that a significant number of urgent decisions had been taken in 2020. Many of these urgent decisions had been made due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members welcomed the urgent decision in respect of the Green homes grant funding and requested further information on this subject for the consideration of local residents. Questions were also raised regarding the ways in which the availability of the grant funding had been

communicated to eligible householders. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the lead officer for the Green Homes grant funding would be asked to share this information with Members.

However, concerns were raised about the frequency with which urgent decisions were being taken and the potential impact on the transparency of the decision-making process. In particular, reference was made to the urgent decision in respect of the Worcestershire Business Rates Pool 2021/22, where a decision had been recorded as taking place on 22nd October 2020, the day after a full Council meeting. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that this decision would be checked. Members were advised that the Council aimed to minimise the number of urgent decisions that were taken and all of these decisions were published on the Council's website to ensure transparency.

Reference was also made to the potential for urgent decisions to be considered through the Council's Overview and Scrutiny process. It was noted that the urgent decisions were signed off by the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board and questions were raised about the extent to which these decisions could be subject to scrutiny. The Overview and Scrutiny Chairman responded by suggesting that if Members felt he was not fulfilling his role then this could be considered at a future Board meeting. Councillor L. Mallett requested that this part of the debate be recorded in the minutes. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the Board had the authority to determine the position of the Overview and Scrutiny Chairman.

During consideration of this item reference was also made to the length of time involved in considering and making an urgent decision, including the amount of notice provided to Members consulted over urgent decisions. It was also noted that group leaders had opportunities to meet outside formal Committee meetings when a range of issues could be discussed. The Monitoring Officer suggested that this matter could be addressed by the Leader outside the meeting.

42\20

AMENDMENT TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Members were advised that Councillor J. Till was standing down from the Licensing Committee and would be replaced by Councillor A. Kriss. Councillor Till was thanked for her work serving as a member of the Committee.

During consideration of this item Members questioned why an appointment to the Licensing Committee had been reported to Council. The Monitoring Officer explained that group leaders were responsible for determining their group's appointments. However, Committee appointments were always retrospectively reported to Council, both at the Annual Council meeting and during the year as they occurred.

43\20

APPOINTMENT OF SECTION 151 OFFICER

Members were advised that there was a requirement under the Local Government Act 1972 for the Council to have a Section 151 Officer. During a recent meeting of the Appointments Committee, Mr J. Howse had been nominated to the position of Section 151 Officer and Director of Resources. Subject to Council agreement, Mr Howse would be commencing employment with the authority in 2021.

RESOLVED that Mr James Howse be appointed as the officer responsible for the administration of the Council's finances under s151 of the Local Government Act 1972.

44\20

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET (TO FOLLOW)

**Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board Budget
Recommendations 2020/21**

Councillor A. Kent, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services, presented the recommendations arising from a meeting of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Board held on 1st October 2020.

The recommendations addressed the need for partner organisations to increase budget contributions in order to cover increased pension costs. The increase in pension costs had arisen following the outcomes of a national court case in relation to age related contributions. A refund had been requested to be paid to Wyre Forest District Council, which was withdrawing from the pest control service provided by WRS. The revised budget contribution from Bromsgrove District Council to WRS in 2020/21 would be £468,000, or 14.59 per cent of the WRS budget.

During consideration of this item, it was noted that there appeared to have been a challenging debate at the WRS Board meeting when the budget position for 2020/21 had been discussed. Members noted that Councillors A. Kent and H. Jones served on the WRS Board on behalf of Bromsgrove District Council. It was also noted that there would be further recommendations about the WRS budget coming forward in future months for Members' consideration.

Members commented that WRS had been working very hard during the Covid-19 pandemic, which had created a number of challenges for the service. Officers in the team were praised for their hard work at this difficult time.

RESOLVED that partner authorities approve the following for 2020/21:

- 1.1 the additional partner liabilities for 2020/21 in relation to increase in WRS pension forward funding rate and recommend the increase to individual partner councils:-

Bromsgrove District Council	£11k
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- 1.2 the additional partner liabilities for 2020/21 in relation to the additional increase in pay award of 0.75% from the original estimated 2% and recommend the increase to individual partner councils:-

Bromsgrove District Council	£3k
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- 1.3 the refund to Wyre Forest in relation to the change of Pest Control Services and recommend the refund to individual partner councils:-

Wyre Forest District Council	£7k
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- 1.5 the revised budget for 2020/21 and partner percentage allocations for 2020/21 onwards, due to the change in pest control service at Wyre Forest:-

	£'000	Revised %
Bromsgrove District Council	468	14.59

Domestic Abuse Policy

Councillor S. Webb, Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing and Health and Wellbeing, presented the Domestic Abuse Policy for Members' consideration. Members were advised that the policy set out the Council's approach to responding to cases of domestic abuse and supporting victims, which included participation in multi-agency partnership work to tackle domestic abuse. The Domestic Abuse Act would introduce a legal duty, from April 2021 onwards, for Councils to house victims of domestic abuse and their children. The legislation also introduced a statutory definition of domestic abuse, which acknowledged that this could be physical, emotional and / or coercive.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the draft Domestic Abuse Policy be adopted; and
- (2) the Head of Housing and Community Services be given delegated authority to update and amend the policy in line with any new legislation and guidance, as and when required.

(During consideration of this item an issue was raised about the Chairman's location whilst participating in the meeting and questions were raised about the suitability of this location. Reference was made to the Covid-19 rules, in respect of areas such as Bromsgrove District that had been placed under Tier Two restrictions. An adjournment subsequently took place from 18.54 to 19.22. At the end of this adjournment the Monitoring Officer advised that the matter of the

location of the Chairman at the start of the meeting would be investigated further. Members were advised that there were some exemptions which applied to individuals participating in business meetings from the same location and this would be explored further.

The Chairman left the meeting during the adjournment and did not return. The Vice Chairman chaired the remainder of the meeting from 19.22 until the end of the meeting.)

Financial Monitoring Report Quarter 2 2020/21

Councillor G. Denaro, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling Services, presented the Financial Monitoring Report for quarter 2 of the 2020/21 financial year and in so doing highlighted a typographical error in the report. Members were advised that this did not change the total figures that had been recorded.

Council was informed that quarter 2 in the financial year was the first point at which the full impact of the Covid-19 pandemic could start to be identified in the budget. The Council had received funding from the Government to help cover the financial costs arising from the pandemic and this had been provided in four tranches. In total, £865,000 of this funding remained to be spent and Members could determine how this should be used.

There was projected to be a variance in the budget by the end of the financial year. To address this, the Leader, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling Services were due to meet with senior Officers over the following weeks to discuss expenditure.

For the strategic purpose 'communities which are safe, well-maintained and green' there was projected to be a variance in the budget of £165,000. In part, this had occurred because Bereavement Services had not secured the income that had been anticipated at the start of the year. There had also been overspends on the trees and waste management services and a business case was in the process of being developed for the latter service.

There had been some savings achieved in Enabling Services. In particular, savings had been secured from vacant posts in Customer, Democratic and IT services. There had been an underspend in respect of the strategic purpose 'living independent, active and healthy lives' primarily because it had not been possible to hold events during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the strategic purpose 'run and grow a successful business' was overspent by £779,000 and it was unlikely these costs would be covered by the remaining Covid-19 grant funding.

Expenditure in the Capital Programme was not as advanced as had been anticipated. Therefore, reprofiling work would be required. However, some activity had commenced with regard to the Burcot Lane

site and it was likely that this would result in expenditure early in the new year.

RESOLVED that the reprofiling of the Burcot Lane project in the capital programme 2020/21 due to officers completing a review of the Capital budget for 2020/21 – 2023/24 as detailed in appendix 3 be approved.

Capital Strategy 2020/21 Incorporating the Treasury Management Strategy

Councillor G. Denaro, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling Services, presented the Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy for 2020/21. Council was informed that these strategies would usually be considered earlier in the municipal year but had been postponed due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Council was informed that in respect of short-term investments, the authority had previously worked with the Bank of England but this resulted in a low rate of return. Officers had worked hard to encourage Money Markets, which provided a greater rate of return, to consider working with the Council on short-term investments.

The Investment Strategy had been altered. In previous years the Council had only permitted investments to be made where there would be a good rate of return. The strategy had now been updated to enable the authority to make purchases that might break even or could result in a loss, in cases where the investment would benefit the local community.

During consideration of this item Members questioned whether the Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy had been considered at the latest meeting of the Finance and Budget Working Group. Further information was requested about the use of capital receipts as well as the structure costs of the ERP system, or new finance system, and service delivery for this system. The Head of Financial and Customer Services explained that the capital receipts were used to help cover costs that would usually be covered using revenue budgets. In relation to the ERP system, some of the costs related to staff redundancies.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Capital Strategy as an appropriate overarching strategy for the Council be approved;
- (2) the Treasury Management Strategy for 2020/21 and the associated MRP policy be approved;
- (3) the policy for Flexible use of Capital Receipts be approved; and
- (4) the Investment Strategy be approved.

Fees and Charges 2021/22

Councillor G. Denaro, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling Services, presented the proposed fees and charges for the 2021/22 financial year. In presenting the report, Councillor Denaro thanked both the Finance and Budget Working Group and Officers working in the finance department for their hard work in reviewing the figures. In some cases, fees had been set in order to achieve full cost recovery. In other cases, fees had not been increased due to concerns about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the customers in receipt of those services. An additional fee had been proposed for the Birdbox.

RESOLVED that

- a) all fees and charges included in appendix 1 to the report be approved;
- b) an additional charge for the electric supply at the Birdbox be approved and
- c) all fees and charges included in appendix 1 are charged commencing 1st February 2021.

Bromsgrove District Council Car Parks – Capital Works Programme

Councillor K. May, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, the Town Centre and Strategic Partnerships, presented the Bromsgrove District Council Car Parks – Capital Works Programme report for Members' consideration. Members were advised that there were no risks to any of the car parks in the district arising from the proposals detailed in the report. There would be a full maintenance schedule and a fully costed business case had been prepared.

Some Members welcomed the report and the proposed investment in the town's car parks. It was suggested that this was an exciting time to invest in car parks and would help the local economy, following the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, during the pandemic, nationally there had been reports of businesses struggling financially, particularly in the retail sector. Action needed to be taken to make Bromsgrove a desirable place to visit and the proposals in respect of car parking would contribute to this. In addition, questions were raised about the extent to which Bromsgrove District council could afford to pay for the repairs and maintenance costs required to refurbish this car park.

However, some Members raised concerns about the potential for a third party to manage one of the Council's car parks in Bromsgrove town centre. In particular, concerns were raised that the Council might potentially lose income if a third party managed the car park on the Council's behalf. Concerns were also raised about the extent to which the Council could ensure that the charges for the car park levied by a third party would be equitable.

Members noted that further information in respect of the offer from a third party to manage one of the Council's car parks, which related to the first recommendation in the report, had been provided on pink papers and would need to be discussed in exempt session. In this context, Members agreed to determine recommendations 2 – 7 during consideration of this item and to determine the first recommendation in the report at the end of the meeting.

RESOLVED that

- (1) delegated powers be given to the Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services, Head of Finance and Customer Services and the Portfolio Holder, to explore, negotiate and agree the final lease details with the third party, be approved;
- (2) a decrease in the 2020/2021 Capital Programme of £34.5k to provide a total budget of £85.5k for replacement of parking machines be approved;
- (3) an increase of £432.0k, £307.0k or £267.0k in 2021/2022 to be funded from borrowing or balances following consideration as part of the medium term financial plan review be approved;
- (4) an increase of £136.0k to the 2022/2023 Capital Programme to be funded from borrowing or balances following consideration as part of the medium term financial plan review be approved;
- (5) an increase of £116.0k to the 2023/2024 Capital Programme to be funded from borrowing or balances following consideration as part of the medium term financial plan review be approved; and
- (6) an increase of £441.0k or £121.0k in 2024/2025 to be funded from borrowing or balances following consideration as part of the medium term financial plan review.

(During consideration of this item there was a brief adjournment, from 20.02 to 20.11).

45\20

TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON 25TH NOVEMBER 2020 (TO FOLLOW)

Members commented that reference had been made in the minutes to the Finance and Budget Working Group's debate about the fees and charges and that questions had been raised during this debate about fees for planning enforcement. Councillor C. Hotham clarified that the group had, in fact, been discussing fees for pre-application advice.

Reference was also made to the Bromsgrove Economic Recovery Framework, which had been discussed during the Cabinet meeting. Councillor S. Douglas asked for Members to be consulted at the 'imagine stage' of the town centres regeneration process.

The minutes from the Cabinet meeting held on 25th November 2020 were noted.

46\20

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Question Submitted by Councillor J King

“The leader assured this council recently that all Bromsgrove District Council workers are paid at least the real living wage currently £9.30per hour). Could she now assure this council that this includes those who are sub-contracted to work on behalf of Bromsgrove District Council delivering public services? Could she also confirm that it is a condition of any tender process for council services that sub-contractors must pay their staff the real living wage and if this is not current practice , could steps be taken to put this condition in place?”

The Leader responded by explaining that this issue had previously been discussed at a meeting of Council and had also been referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for a full investigation to be carried out. A motion had been put forward on this matter on 21st November 2012 and the Board received an initial report on 22nd April 2013 and a further report on 15th July 2013. The second report was the most relevant to the question that had been asked, as it highlighted the issues which could have an impact on the implementation and monitoring of the living wage. This was acknowledged by the Board when Members determined that no further action should be taken. The Leader offered to share copies of the minutes of the relevant meetings and reports that had previously been considered on this subject and advised that the position had not changed since then.

Question Submitted by Councillor R. Hunter

“Given that the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee has recently exposed the selection criteria for the £3.6bn Towns Fund for being ‘vague and based on sweeping assumptions’ to the extent that it is a ‘risk to the civil service’s reputation for impartiality’ will the Leader write to the Secretary of State to ask that any future funds of this type are distributed using a fairer and more transparent process?”

The Leader advised that the matter of fairness and transparency had been addressed in the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee’s Report published on 11th November 2020, following the inquiry ‘Selecting Towns for the Towns Fund’. The Council supported the report’s conclusions and recommendations, including the recommendation that *“to avoid accusations that government is selecting towns for political reasons, the Department [i.e. Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government] should be upfront and transparent about how it reaches funding decisions as the Towns Fund progresses, particularly the planned competitive round. The principle of openness and transparency should extend across the whole of government when it*

is selecting some local areas, but not others, to benefit from taxpayers' money". In this context, the Leader advised that it would not be appropriate at this stage to write a letter to the Secretary of State in respect of this matter.

Question Submitted by Councillor C. Hotham

"In the six months to August 2020 Wychavon District Council collected 957 tonnes of road sweeping, in the same period Bromsgrove District Council collected only 43 tonnes. Is the Portfolio Holder concerned that this failure could lead to localised flooding as road gullies become even more blocked with debris?"

Councillor M. Sherrey, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, provided an answer to the question in her capacity as the relevant lead Portfolio Holder.

Members were informed that unfortunately, there had been a number of mechanical issues with the Council's large sweepers during the year that had significantly disrupted operations up until September 2020. This was in addition to the Coronavirus issues, which resulted in the sweeper drivers providing support to the waste collection service due to staff shielding and isolating.

The Council had taken steps to replace, as well as repair, this equipment in order to restore the full service, and by December 2020 the sweepers were operating at normal levels again, with a new sweeper on order and expected before Christmas. The Council had been targeting resources to ensure that all known flooding hotspots had been managed as a priority since September 2020.

Staff had been monitoring the state of the district whilst sweepers had been off the road, to ensure that the Council was targeting resources efficiently. The team hoped to bring standards back to normal levels by the new year, with leaf fall being the greatest challenge at this time of year.

Members were asked to note that in the same period last year the Council swept 466 tons of material with sweepers. It was difficult to compare the amounts collected in districts due to the number and type of roads in each district. The Council normally operated 1.5 large sweepers across Bromsgrove, and 1 mid-size sweeper. Under the shared service with Redditch, the Council operated a total of 3 large sweepers and Redditch had been equally affected. The Place Teams also used mini sweepers which could manage small amounts on pavements but could not cover the work of the large sweepers. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, staffing had been a challenge across all services due to isolation requirements and shielding. The Council had prioritised waste collection services to ensure continuity for residents.

Question Submitted by Councillor P. McDonald

“Would the Leader write to Chancellor Rishi Sunak not to leave low-paid workers struggling on less than the minimum wage by increasing its 80 per cent contribution to workers’ wages to 100 per cent, so that those on minimum wage get their full pay if their bosses do not top up their wages, after he extended the furlough scheme to March next year.”

The Leader replied by explaining that whilst the Council acknowledged the impact a reduced salary had for workers on less than the minimum wage, when balanced with the national financial position and the funds the Government had already provided to support workers during the pandemic, it was felt that the current support contribution of 80% to workers was appropriate at this time.

Question Submitted by Councillor J. Till

“Following the recent coverage about cycling & walking in Bromsgrove. Could the Leader confirm the Council’s commitment to active travel?”

Councillor A. Kent, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services, responded to this question in his capacity as the relevant lead Portfolio Holder.

Members were advised that, along with colleagues at Worcestershire County Council, Bromsgrove District Council was committed to promoting and enhancing active travel as an alternative to cars. In recent years, the Council had worked with Worcestershire County Council on the national productivity and investment fund (NPIF) scheme. This fund would provide over £3 million to support 9 new or improved active travel routes across the district and these schemes were in the process of being implemented.

The A38 Bromsgrove Route Enhancement Programme (BREP) was in the process of working up the details of innovative green walking and cycling corridors to compliment the physical work being done in and around the carriageway of the A38. The section between Charford Road and the Oakalls would provide over a kilometre of new or improved walking and cycling routes of which approximately 50% would be a high-quality segregated section, 20% on new shared surfaces, and the remaining 30% on quiet and safe streets. In addition, as part of the Active Travel Fund, Bromsgrove District Council was supporting Worcestershire County Council on the provision of an active travel route between Bromsgrove and Redditch. As part of the work to be undertaken on the Local Plan, active travel would feature in the transport assessment work, ensuring that going forward the reliance on private car use could be addressed.

The planning applications for both Whitford Road and Perryfields provided new walking and cycling infrastructure both within and off site, including a new link through Sanders Park. In the case of Perryfields,

the proposal contained a new mobility hub, which in due course might offer e-bike rental schemes, enhanced bus availability and provision and other mobility measures to help reduce the reliance on private car use.

During consideration of the response to this question concerns were raised by Councillor R. Hunter about the reference to the Active Travel Fund. In addition, Councillor L. Mallett noted that Worcestershire had performed poorly on servicing active travel. Furthermore, he noted that of the two planning applications that had been referenced in the answer, one had been refused and one was a live planning application. The Monitoring Officer suggested that these concerns should be discussed further outside the meeting.

Reference was made by Councillor S. Robinson to the need for the public to have a right of reply where accusations were raised pertaining to the public and she expressed concerns that this had not been possible in relation to the question and answer about cycling and walking in Bromsgrove. Councillor A. Kent advised that no accusations had been made in relation to the public and he requested that this exchange be recorded in the minutes.

47\20

MOTIONS ON NOTICE

The Vice Chairman explained that in respect of Councillor R. Hunter's motion it has been agreed by the Leader and accepted by Councillor Hunter, that this matter would be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for consideration.

The Vice Chairman also advised that, in respect of Councillor McDonald's motion, following discussions, it had also been agreed that the subject of the Motion would be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for consideration.

IHRA Definition of Antisemitism

Members considered the following Motion on Notice, submitted by Councillor M. Thompson:

"This Council, in solidarity agrees to unequivocally adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism."

The Motion was proposed by Councillor M. Thompson and seconded by Councillor A. Kriss.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Thompson explained that whilst there had been suggestions that the Motion might be unconstitutional and amendments had been suggested, it was important to tackle prejudice. Reference was made to the findings in the Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) report 'Investigation into Antisemitism in the Labour Party', which was published in October 2020, the lessons that were being learned from this and the action that had

been taken since. Councillor Thompson highlighted his own political past and advised that he was opposed to all forms of racism, including antisemitism, and expressed concerns that racist and antisemitic comments had been made by national political figures from a number of political parties over the years.

In seconding the Motion Councillor Kriss explained that the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) had been established to tackle prejudice, undertake research and to raise awareness of antisemitism and the Holocaust. The IHRA had worked on the Holocaust Memorial Day commemorations, which had been introduced following concerns that reports of antisemitism were on the rise globally. Increasingly, people were expressing antisemitic comments and opinions in their criticisms of Israel and unfortunately some people believed in conspiracy theories about Jewish people. The IHRA definition of antisemitism had been adopted by the Government and Councillor Kriss urged Bromsgrove District Council to do the same.

During consideration of this item, Councillor S. Douglas suggested that clarification should be provided about the focus of the Motion and she therefore proposed that the IHRA's definition of antisemitism should be referenced in the Motion as follows: "*Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred towards Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed to Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.*" In discussing this proposal from Councillor Douglas, Members questioned whether this was an amendment. Instead, it was suggested that this provided clarification about the focus of the Motion, as originally worded.

Members subsequently discussed the Motion in further detail. In discussing the Motion, Councillor M. Middleton highlighted the need for the Council to demonstrate that it took a firm stance against antisemitism and that this form of prejudice had no place in society. Members were asked to recall the genocide that had taken place during the Holocaust in World War Two and the many millions of people from the Jewish community, as well as other communities, who had been murdered during this time as an example of the impact that antisemitism could have if it went unchallenged. Personal stories were shared about family and friends who had died in the Holocaust and a plea was made for this to never happen again. Councillor H. Rone-Clarke commented that there was a need to deal with cases of antisemitism in a dynamic manner. He noted that in his political activism he was opposed to all forms of prejudice, including antisemitism. In addition, Councillor P. McDonald highlighted that the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups had already adopted the IHRA's definition of antisemitism at the national level. Members concluded by noting that the Overview and Scrutiny Board had launched an Equalities Task Group during the municipal year and it was important to demonstrate the Council's commitment to equalities.

On being put to the vote the Motion was carried.

Planning Enforcement

Councillor C. Hotham advised that he had contacted the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services about the subject of Planning Enforcement prior to the meeting and had agreed to attend a meeting with the Portfolio Holder and Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services to discuss the matter further. In this context, Councillor Hotham withdrew his Motion on Planning Enforcement.

Parking Enforcement Around Schools

Councillor H. Rone-Clarke commented that, in light of information that he had received from the Leader that an Officer had been employed to undertake parking enforcement work around schools, he would be withdrawing the Motion.

48\20

TO CONSIDER, AND IF CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE, TO PASS THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING DURING THE CONSIDERATION OF ITEM(S) OF BUSINESS CONTAINING EXEMPT INFORMATION:-

"**RESOLVED:** that under Section 100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act, as amended, the relevant paragraph of that part, in each case, being as set out below, and that it is in the public interest to do so:-

<u>Minute Item No.</u>	<u>Paragraph(s)</u>	
49/20	3	

49\20

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT CAR PARKS - CAPITAL PROGRAMME CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX

Members discussed the information that had been provided on pink papers in advance of the meeting about the Recreation Road South Car Park in exempt session.

It was noted that the Council was being offered extra funding by a third party to manage the car park at a time when the Council's parking revenue had declined. Members commented that the car park was not due to be refurbished for another 5 years and therefore a contract with a third party for 2 to 3 years would not impact on the condition of the car park. Concerns were raised that the Council would lose revenue if this deal was agreed. In addition, it was suggested that the car park was the jewel in the crown of Bromsgrove car parks and should therefore continue to be managed by the Council.

The Leader advised that moving forward, there were costs in respect of new car park infrastructure for the Recreation Road South Car Park. Parking Enforcement Officers would be diverted from the car park to working around schools, which would potentially have a beneficial impact on the safety of local school pupils. The Leader concluded by explaining that there would be no risk to the Council arising from the agreement with the third party.

During consideration of this item Members questioned whether there had been a breach in terms of the discussion of exempt information during the public session at the meeting, in particular through the naming of the third party organisation. The Monitoring Officer explained that she would investigate whether there had been a breach, though she noted that there were potential exemptions in respect of the commercial aspects of the agreement.

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

For the Recommendation: Councillors S. Colella, R. Deeming, G. Denaro, S. Douglas, A. English, M. Glass, C. Hotham, R. Hunter, H. Jones, A. Kent, J. King, A. Kriss, K. May, M. Middleton, S. Robinson, M. Thompson, P. Thomas, J. Till, M. Sherrey, C. Spencer, K. Van Der Plank, S. Webb and P. Whittaker. (23)

Against the Recommendation: Councillors L. Mallett, P. McDonald and H. Rone-Clarke. (3)

Abstentions: (0)

On being put to the vote the recommendation was carried.

RESOLVED that the preliminary offer made by a third party, to take over the running and maintenance of the Recreation Road South Car Park be accepted.

(During the consideration of this item, Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to move to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

The meeting closed at 9.53 p.m.

Chairman