

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

24TH FEBRUARY 2021, AT 4.30 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors K.J. May (Leader), A. D. Kent (Deputy Leader),
G. N. Denaro, M. A. Sherrey, P.L. Thomas and S. A. Webb

Observers: Councillor A. B. L. English

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Mrs. S. Hanley, Mrs. R. Bamford,
Mr C. Forrester, Ms. C. Flanagan, Mr D Riley, Ms K. Goldey and
Ms. J. Bayley

70/20 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

71/20 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

72/20 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE CABINET HELD ON 17TH FEBRUARY 2021 (TO FOLLOW)**

The Chairman advised that the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on Wednesday, 17th February 2021 would be considered at the following meeting of Cabinet in March.

73/20 **ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE - THE VILLAGE INN, BEOLEY**

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services presented a report which nominated The Village Inn, at Holt Hill, Beoley as an Asset of Community Value. Cabinet was informed that there had been a lot of preparatory work undertaken in respect of the nomination and this proposal was supported.

During consideration of this item Councillor A. English, as the ward Councillor for Beoley, spoke in support of the nomination of The Village Inn as an Asset of Community Value. Members were informed that by providing The Village Inn with the status of Asset of Community Value, the Parish Council would be able to make a bid for the building.

RESOLVED that Cabinet support the listing of The Village Inn, Holt Hill, Beoley, B98 9AT as an Asset of Community Value

74/20

COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION (TO FOLLOW)

The Head of Financial and Customer Services presented the Council Tax Resolutions 2021/22. Cabinet was advised that there had been a delay to the publication of this report as the Council had been waiting for information from all of the precepting authorities about their settlements. Assumptions had been incorporated into the Council Tax Resolutions in respect of the Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority, as the authority had not yet held a meeting to determine their requirements. Therefore, a request had been made in the report for authority to be delegated to the Head of Financial and Customer Services to amend the resolutions should the Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority agree a settlement that differed from the assumptions in the report.

During consideration of this item, Members discussed the proposed increase in Council Tax for Bromsgrove District Council. Officers confirmed that District Councils could increase Council Tax by a maximum of either 1.99 per cent or by £5. Officers were proposing that Council Tax should increase by £5 in Bromsgrove, as this would result in a slightly higher rate of return to the authority.

RESOLVED to NOTE that at a meeting of Cabinet held on 13th January 2021 Members approved the calculated Council Tax Base 2021/22 as:

- (a) for the whole Council area as 37,186.55 [Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")]; and
- (b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates the amounts as shown in Column 4 of the attached Schedule 1.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) The calculation for the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2021/22 (excluding Parish precepts) as **£8,664,624.08**.
- 2) The following amounts be calculated for the year 2021/22 in accordance with sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
 - (a) £43,940,922 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the Act (taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils) (*i.e., Gross expenditure*);
 - (b) £34,224,101 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act. (*i.e., Gross income*);

- (c) £9,716,821 being the amount by which the aggregate of 1.2.2(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 1.2.2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act);
 - (d) £261.30 being the amount at 1.2.2 (c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1.1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts);
 - (e) £1,052,198 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34 (1) of the Act (as per the attached **Schedule 3**);
 - (f) £233.00 being the amount at 1.2.2 (d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 1.2.2 (e) above by Item T (1.1 (a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34 (2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates;
 - (g) The amounts shown in Column 3 of **Schedule 1**. These are the basic amounts of the council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of the Council's area shown in Column 1 of the schedule respectively to which special items relate, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act. (District and Parish combined at Band D);
 - (h) The amounts shown in Column 5 of **Schedule 1** being the amount given by multiplying the amounts at 2.2.2(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands;
- 3) It be noted that for the year 2021/22, Worcestershire County Council, Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia and Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwelling in the Council's area as indicated below:

	Valuation Bands							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Worcestershire County Council	895.89	1,045.20	1,194.52	1,343.83	1,642.46	1,941.09	2,239.72	2,687.66
Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia	160.13	186.81	213.50	240.19	293.57	346.94	400.32	480.38
Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority	58.45	68.20	77.94	87.68	107.16	126.65	146.13	175.36

- 4) That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 1.2.2(h) and 1.2.3 above, that Bromsgrove District Council in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 hereby sets the amounts shown in Schedule 2 as the amounts of Council Tax for 2021/22. for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings;
- 5) The Executive Director Finance & Resources be authorised to make payments under Section 90(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 from the Collection Fund by ten equal instalments between April 2021 to March 2022 as detailed below:

	Precept £	Deficit on Collection Fund £	Total to pay £
Worcestershire County Council	49,972,401.00	-183,950.00	49,788,451.00
Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia	8,931,837.44	-31,596.78	8,900,240.66
Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority	3,260,346.04	-12,065.05	3,248,280.99

- 6) The Executive Director Finance & Resources be authorised to make transfers under Section 97 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 from the Collection Fund to the General Fund the sum of £9,681,240 being the Council's own demand on the Collection Fund (£8,664,623.06) and Parish Precepts (£1,052,197) and the distribution of the Deficit on the Collection Fund (£35,580);
- 7) The Executive Director Finance & Resources be authorised to make payments from the General Fund to Parish Councils the sums listed on **Schedule 3** by two equal instalment on 1 April 2021 and 1 October 2021 in respect of the precept levied on the Council;
- 8) The above resolutions to be signed by the Chief Executive for use in legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court for the recovery of unpaid Council Taxes;

- 9) Notices of the making of the said Council Taxes signed by the Chief Executive are given by advertisement in the local press under Section 38(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992; and
- 10) That authority be delegated to the Head of Finance and Customer Services (Interim S151) following consultation with the finance portfolio holder to amend the resolution should the Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority Service not approve the estimated figure that is being used in this report. This is due to the Hereford and Worcester Authority Service having their approval meeting after this resolution report has been brought to Council.

75/20

TO CONSIDER ANY URGENT BUSINESS, DETAILS OF WHICH HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED TO THE HEAD OF LEGAL, DEMOCRATIC AND PROPERTY SERVICES PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE MEETING AND WHICH THE CHAIRMAN, BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, CONSIDERS TO BE OF SO URGENT A NATURE THAT IT CANNOT WAIT UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING

Council Tax Support Scheme 2021/22

Cabinet considered the Council Tax Support Scheme 2021/22 as urgent business, having deferred the item at a meeting held on Wednesday, 17th February 2021.

The Financial Support Manager presented the Council Tax Support Scheme 2021/22 report and in so doing highlighted the following points for Members' consideration:

- The Council Tax Support Scheme was reviewed on an annual basis.
- The amended scheme had been considered by Cabinet in draft form earlier in the municipal year and had subsequently been subject to public consultation.
- The majority of people who had responded in the consultation process had been broadly supportive of the proposed changes.
- The new Council Tax Support Scheme would be an income banded scheme.
- Where residents were in particular need, there would be the option for them to receive 100 per cent relief in relation to Council Tax. This compared favourably with the existing scheme, whereby everybody, regardless of income, had to make a Council Tax contribution.
- The support available to residents was tapered and took into account residents' income.
- The Overview and Scrutiny Board had pre-scrutinised the scheme at a meeting held on Monday, 15th February 2021, where a number of issues had been raised.
- In response to the points raised at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting, Officers had undertaken remodelling work.

- Through that remodelling work, Officers had identified that 82 per cent of people who received support through the scheme would receive an increase in support, 3 per cent would remain unaffected and 15 per cent would experience a reduction in support.
- Additional assistance would be available for the 15 per cent of people who would experience a reduction in support, through the Hardship Scheme.
- The proposed changes would result in an increase in costs to the Council of £136,000. However, this was less than the costs to the authority in 2014/15 when Council Tax Support Schemes were first localised.
- People in receipt of Universal Credit would be eligible for support under the scheme. The Council would be notified by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) about new Universal Credit applicants, which would make the scheme simpler for the customer.
- The new scheme would require less administration by the Council and would be less bureaucratic for residents.
- The new scheme would also make it easier for residents to plan their expenses and manage their household budgets.
- Housing benefit payments would no longer be taken into account under the new scheme.

Following the presentation of the report, Members discussed the number of people who would be impacted by the changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme. Officers confirmed that only 375 applicants out of a total 2,709 would be negatively impacted and they would be eligible to apply for support under the Hardship Scheme. Further information had been provided in a breakdown of the different client groups, based on averages, to help demonstrate the potential consequences for different households.

Reference was made to the Hardship Scheme and Members questioned how this was accessed and advertised to the public. Officers advised that the Hardship Scheme was promoted on the Council's website. Staff working in the Council Tax department would also promote the scheme to eligible residents where it was identified that people were struggling to make payments.

RECOMMENDED the introduction of a new income banded / grid scheme for working age applicants with effect from 1st April 2021 to implement a modern, future proofed scheme and reduce the administrative burden placed on the Council by the introduction of Universal Credit.

The meeting closed at 4.50 p.m.

Chairman