

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 16TH FEBRUARY 2022, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors K.J. May (Leader), G. N. Denaro (Deputy Leader),
M. A. Sherrey, M. Thompson and S. A. Webb

Observers: Councillor C. Hotham (Chairman of the Overview and
Scrutiny Board)

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Mrs. C. Felton, Mr. J Howse, Ms J. Willis
and Mrs. P. Ross (via Microsoft Teams), Mrs. S. Hanley

51/21 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor P. L. Thomas.

52/21 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

53/21 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE CABINET HELD ON 19TH JANUARY 2022**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 19th January
2022 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on
Wednesday 19th January 2022 be approved as a true and correct
record.

54/21 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
BOARD HELD ON 17TH JANUARY 2022**

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Councillor C.
Hotham, briefly presented the minutes of the meeting of the Board held
on 17th January 2022, and in doing so the Cabinet was informed that
since the meeting of the Board things had moved on and that items had
been discussed and agreed. It was noted that there were no
recommendations from the Board in the minutes.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board
meeting held 17th January 2022 be noted.

55/21

SUSTAINABLE WARMTH FUNDING

The Head of Community and Housing Services presented a report on the subject of Sustainable Warmth Funding. Cabinet was informed that the Council was due to receive £429,000 for a sustainable heating grant, which was designed to help fund actions that could be taken to improve the energy efficiency of properties in the district with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating D – G.

The Head of Community and Housing Services drew Members' attention to the 2 components to this funding, as detailed on page 24 of the main agenda report:-

- Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) Phase 1 – these grants were intended for properties that were not connected to the mains gas system.
- Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Phase 3 – these grants were intended for properties that were connected to the mains gas system.

Cabinet was advised that there had been a typographical error (on page 25 of the main agenda report), the maximum average grant per property was £10,000 for LAD3 and £25,000 (not £15,000 as shown) for HUG.

There were a range of measures that could be funded, including cavity wall insulation, roof insulation and air source heat pumps.

The Council was working with Worcestershire County Council and Act On Energy in respect of the administration of the funds and promotion of the funding to eligible residents.

After the report had been presented Members discussed the following points in detail:

- The deadlines for expenditure of the grant funding and the extent to which the Council was likely to be able to ensure that all funding was spent by those deadlines. Officers clarified that the HUG Phase 1 and LAD Phase 3 funding needed to be spent by 31st March 2023 whilst the deadline for expenditure of the previous LAD Phase 2 had been extended to 31st July 2022. Members were advised that Officers were anticipating that these deadlines would be met.
- The potential for park home owners to apply for the HUG Phase 1 and LAD Phase 3 funding, following a change in regulations which meant that they could not apply for LAD Phase 2 funding. Members were informed that park homes were not eligible for HUG Phase 1 or LAD Phase 3 funding, but officers were monitoring any future funding opportunities that might become available for park home owners.

Cabinet was further advised that action would be taken to promote the funding to eligible members of the public, and that the Council was aiming to target low income households. A targeted approach to communications was considered preferable in order to ensure that the Council was not inundated with requests and that the funding was provided to those most in need. Support would be made available locally to help eligible households apply for the funding. Officers explained that Act On energy would be providing this type of support to eligible households and would also be able to help householders identify the most appropriate funding for them and if required would also support householders in obtaining an EPC rating.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Councillor C. Hotham, commented that the report was widely welcomed at the Board meeting and Members were pleased to note that officers were using external support to monitor and ensure that the funding was spent.

The Head of Community and Housing Services highlighted that, as detailed in the preamble above, that the report was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 15th February 2022. Board Members had raised a number of questions and officers had agreed to provide answers and further information to the Board. The following information was provided to Board Members in response to the questions raised: -

Current Energy Rating							
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Grand Total
46	4054	5988	9392	3959	816	196	24451

Total number of households	Unknown proportion
38,800	14,349

“There was little difference in the LADS 1, 2 and 3 programmes. The eligibility criteria was the same it was just the next tranche of funding but this latest Sustainable Warmth competition included the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) for off gas properties”.

“Air Source heat pumps cost around £6k - £8k to install so should be affordable within the scheme. Average max cost is £10,000 for LAD3 and £10,000 for EPC D up to £25,000 for EPC G for HUG”.

“We will work with Act on Energy who had been procured as the customer journey provider to assist in targeting applicants. A communication plan was being developed with the Midlands Energy Hub to have targeted communication but would also utilise traditional

methods such as social media and EPC data, Communications would also go out through partners such as County to those residents that received free school meals etc”.

The Leader took the opportunity to express sincere thanks to officers for a comprehensive report.

RECOMMENDED that

- a) the Capital and Revenue Budgets be increased to receive Bromsgrove District Council’s Sustainable Warmth scheme allocation of £429,000;
- b) and that delegated authority be granted to the Head of Community & Housing Services following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Climate Change to administer the funding received in line with the grant conditions.

56/21

THE COUNCIL'S 2022/23 BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2022/23 TO 2024/25 DRAFT

The Executive Director of Resources presented the draft Council’s 2022/2023 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2022/2023 to 2024/2025.

Cabinet was advised that this was an important budget report which also included the MTFP for a period of 3 years. The draft report had previously been presented to the Finance & Budget Working Group and was also presented at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting on 15th February 2022, whereby a good debate was had. It was noted that following on from the debate that no recommendations had been put forward by the Overview and Scrutiny Board. Good feedback was received from Members of the Board with regard to the new report format.

The Executive Director of Resources highlighted that the new report format added transparency and cut through complexity. It was a robust and balanced MTFP. Members’ attention was drawn to the following paragraphs in the report: -

- Paragraph 2.5 Financial Context
- Paragraph 2.9 Unprecedented Levels of Uncertainty
- Paragraph 4.8 Table 2, The Updated MTFP and Annual Revenue Budgets
- Paragraph 4.12 Table 3, The Updated (versus Previous) MTFP and General Fund
- Paragraph 4.15 Table 4, which showed that the General Fund balance was now forecast total £2.259 million at the end of 2023/2024 (compared to £1,735 million in the previous MTFP) and (without further action) reduce to £1,046 million at the end of 24/25 which was

	below the minimum set levels.
Paragraph 4.17/ 4/18	Table 4, Reconciliation of Previous and Updated MTFP – Adjustments made to the Annual Budget Forecasts 22/23 and 23/24.
Paragraph 4.22	Pressures
Paragraph 4.23	Resource Planning and Prioritisation (RPP).
Paragraph 4.24	Funding Impact (£0.956m in 22/23)
Paragraph 4.25	Council Tax Increase
Paragraph 4.26	Reallocation of Earmarked Reserves to General Fund

The Executive Director of Resources advised the Cabinet that the report was the draft report and that the final version of the Council's 2022/2023 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2022/2023 to 2024/2025, would be presented to Council on 23rd February 2022.

The Leader took the opportunity to express her sincere thanks to officers.

The Deputy Leader echoed this and was pleased to see that the end results had been warmly received by the Overview and Scrutiny Board; this was a credit to the Executive Director of resources and his team.

The Head of Legal, Property and Democratic Services reiterated that the report before the Cabinet was a draft report and that the final report would be presented to the Cabinet and Council on 23rd February 2022, therefore the report was for noting.

During consideration of this item, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Councillor C. Hotham, briefly stated that the report had been pre-scrutinised at the meeting of the Board on 15th February 2022. Board Members had been satisfied with the budget and had appreciated the new format of the report, it was very well received. Councillor Hotham expressed his thanks to the Executive Director of Resources and his team.

RESOLVED that as detailed in the preamble above, that the draft Council's 2022/2023 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2022/2023 to 2024/2025, be noted.

The meeting closed at 6.30 p.m.

Chairman