

## **COUNCIL**

**23rd February 2021**

**Present:**       **The Mayor, Councillor Jo Hodges in the Chair**

**Councillors Agar, Allcott, Altaf, A. Amos, B. Amos, Barnes, Bayliss, Berry, Biggs, Bisset, Cawthorne, Collins, Cronin, Denham, Ditta, Geraghty, Gregson, Griffiths, Hassan, Mrs L. Hodgson, S. Hodgson, Johnson, Lamb, Laurenson, Mackay, Mitchell, Riaz, Roberts, Squires, Stafford, Stalker, Stanley, Stephen and Udall**

Prior to the Council meeting, which was held remotely, all Members of the Council and other persons present observed a minute's silence to commemorate former Mayoress Peggy Neil, the wife of former Councillor Bernard Neil, who had twice been Mayor of Worcester.

The Mayor's Chaplain, the Reverend Sarah Northall, offered prayers before commencement of the formal business of the Council.

### **61    Apologies for Absence**

None.

### **62    Declarations of Interest**

The following declarations of interest were made:

Councillor Agar – Proposed Budget 2021/22 And Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 - 2025/26 (Minute 70) – As a Member of Worcestershire Pension Board and Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority.

Councillors Berry and Hodges – Proposed Budget 2021/22 And Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 - 2025/26 (Minute 70) – Self or partner is a beneficiary of the Pension Fund.

Councillor Cronin - Retain £20 Uplift to Universal Credit Payments (Minute 67) – As a beneficiary. Councillor Cronin left the meeting for consideration of the item.

With reference to the Notice of Motion relating to HMO Advertising Boards (Minute 67), the Monitoring Officer advised that, after consultation with Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee, a dispensation had been granted to all Members who are HMO Landlords to speak and vote on this item. Furthermore, with regard to the Independent Remuneration Panel Recommendations for Members' Allowances 2021/22 (Minute 68), after consultation with Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee, a dispensation had been granted to all Members to speak and vote on this item.

**63 Minutes**

**RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.**

**64 Mayor's Communications****LGBTQ+ History Month**

The Mayor explained that February was LGBTQ+ History Month and she would be showing her support by recording a short film, giving some personal thoughts, a summary of the month's activities and a look to the future. The Rainbow Flag had been raised in Cathedral Square to mark the month.

**Chinese New Year**

The Mayor highlighted the Chinese New Year, which fell on 12 February. Although Covid had affected the way in which the city marks the occasion this year, she had shared a Zoom call with BBC Hereford and Worcester, in which she had explained how significant this festival has become in Worcester value and how much the contribution of the Chinese people to our multicultural society in Worcester is valued.

**Worcester Massachusetts**

The Mayor had recently attended a Zoom meeting set up by Worcester Twinning Association, which was attended by friends from Worcester's twin towns of Worcester Massachusetts, Le Vesinet and Kleve. Zoom had helped twinning members to stay in touch and was the way forward for the future of the Association. She was due to have a further Zoom meeting with the Mayor of Worcester Massachusetts regarding the tricentenary of their incorporation as a town and the opportunities for sharing in those celebrations.

**Vaccination**

The Mayor explained that she and her Consort had recently been given their first Covid-19 vaccination and she thanked staff and volunteers at St. John's Medical Centre, where she had received my jab, as well as everyone involved in delivering the vaccination programme. The Mayor urged everyone who receives their invitation for the vaccine to go ahead and get it done as soon as possible.

**Captain Sir Tom Moore**

The Mayor paid tribute to the former British Army officer Captain Sir Tom Moore, popularly known as Captain Tom, who had sadly passed away recently after raising a huge sum of money for charity during the 2020 coronavirus pandemic in the run-up to his 100th birthday, and had been an inspiration to many people.

**65 Public Participation**

None.

**66 Questions**

The Council considered the following questions submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9.

<b>Question No. 1</b>	
<b>Question From:</b>	<b>Councillor Alan Amos</b>
<b>Question To:</b>	<b>Councillor Marc Bayliss, Leader of the Council</b>
<b>Question:</b>	Given the environmental and aesthetic importance of trees, and given the divided responsibility for trees between land ownership and management of them between the City and County Councils, will the Leader of the Council discuss with relevant partner organisations, in particular the County Council, the possibility of planting more trees of an appropriate species on the green areas in Bedwardine Ward, for example on Pitmaston Park, The Green, and around Alexander Road whilst ensuring that none is planted anywhere near residential properties or other structures where they could cause problems later; and will he also ensure that the Council's management of our tree assets proactively prunes those where, due to their excessive height and overgrowth, pose potential danger through damage to nearby residential properties and cause loss of light?
<b>Answer:</b>	Yes, I very much support your ambition for more trees. I also wanted to say thank you and support the County Council's commitment to plant 150,000 trees over the next few years. I hope that we as a Council will consider a target of our own, but obviously I would like to see trees planted throughout the city, not just in the Bedwardine Ward, beautiful as it may be. I think we should be encouraging tree growth and doing our bit everywhere across the city.
<b>Supplementary Question:</b>	Clearly there are schemes now in place to plant thousands of trees, which is good news, but would he also ensure that future programmes perhaps refine the programmes a bit more, such that particular streets or areas will benefit, so that it's not just a question of planting thousands of trees in one area but rather spreading them out a bit more?
<b>Answer:</b>	I'll simply limit myself to just saying "yes."

<b>Question No. 2</b>	
<b>Question From:</b>	<b>Councillor Chris Mitchell</b>
<b>Question To:</b>	<b>Councillor James Stanley, Chair of Communities Committee</b>
<b>Question:</b>	Councillor Stanley, one of the most vulnerable groups of people during this pandemic was those people living on the street, the homeless. I think the work that the Council have done to protect this particularly vulnerable group has been commendable and the residents of Worcester should know the good work that the Council have been doing. Could you please inform me of the number of homeless people we have housed and where they have been housed during Covid-19?
<b>Answer:</b>	<p>Members I'm sure will know that the decision to activate what became known as "Everyone In" was taken at the end of March 2020, when Council Leaders were asked by government to secure accommodation that was Covid safe for those either rough sleeping, or considered in imminent danger of so doing. The speed and efficiency with which incredibly vulnerable people were found accommodation undeniably protected them from the possibility of serious illness or indeed death, it is on record. He's quite right in saying that the work of Council officers and partner agencies has been commendable.</p> <p>Specifically, 154 people have been placed in temporary accommodation, predominately at Fownes Hotel and Ombersley Road and also in other guest house accommodation. Of those, 58 have been moved into settled accommodation, either in social housing stock including Housing First, the private rented sector and Park Street. 34 remain in temporary accommodation. 31 were evicted despite an open and lenient approach, and 10 are currently on the street and services continue to engage with these individuals to provide for them where we can.</p>
<b>Supplementary Question:</b>	It is clear that taking 154 people off the streets potentially saved lives and definitely reduced anxiety I'm sure for those people. That's a significant task. Can you tell me where the funding for that came from?
<b>Answer:</b>	Yes, specifically the funding for "Everyone In" will be found via the general Covid Financial Support Fund. However, I would like to draw Council's attention to the £286,936.90 which has been directly received from the MHCLG ,which will be used to fund for example the Next Step accommodation programme, the Cold Weather Fund, Covid Rough Sleeper payments – all of which are absolutely invaluable as we go forward in moving from this to the next stage. We've received an incredible amount of support here now. This money which we've received from the relevant ministry will go an enormous distance towards providing the resources necessary to protect vulnerable people as we go forward.

<b>Question No. 3</b>	
<b>Question From:</b>	<b>Councillor Andy Roberts</b>
<b>Question To:</b>	<b>Councillor Marc Bayliss, Leader of the Council</b>
<b>Question:</b>	<p>We are told that sticking to the Local Development Plan is a material planning consideration of great weight; and it should be so. Its adoption can mean sacrificing open amenity, but at least when it is agreed we know where we stand. Unfortunately for our health, environment and biodiversity this is not the case.</p> <p>Recently the Planning Committee agreed to disregard the South Worcestershire Development Plan and go even further than its possible revision. In line with the SWDP, residents had accepted the loss of a treasured green space on the old golf course in my ward, which was set aside for nine dwellings.</p> <p>It was anticipated (without proper process) a revision to the Development Plan might allow 15 dwellings. The Committee then went further permitting not the nine dwellings, or even 15, but 16 dwellings.</p> <p>If the Development Plan can be ignored and its revision disregarded, even before engagement with the public or councils, what is the point of the development plan?</p>
<b>Answer:</b>	<p>Whilst I won't comment on the specific planning application, which would be inappropriate, what I will say to my colleague is that I believe great weight should be put on the SWDP as agreed, particularly by the Planning Officers and the Planning Committee. The document is a contract in my view between the planning authority and the people of Worcester and I think we should not deviate from it without very good reason.</p>
<b>Supplementary Question:</b>	<p>I'm grateful for the Leader of the Council's determination, he's surely right, but there is a concern if I can expand on it a little further and ask a question. The Council is largely at one about environmental issues. However, the planners don't seem to be up to speed with this. They're referring in planning concepts to an over-supply of green spaces in some areas, and that's used as a tool to allow development, the inference being that such land that is open to the public is of little or no merit. I think this is based on a misunderstanding of the 2019 Open Spaces Assessment, which predates decisions being made by this Council as far as biodiversity, as far as carbon neutrality and as far as the environment is concerned. So, I ask the Leader of the Council, what does he think of the concept of there being too much green space?</p>

<b>Answer:</b>	I don't agree with the term over-supply, I think we should replace it with "above the minimum" because that better reflects the situation we find ourselves in. I think there is a minimum for green space in an area, and if we've got more than that I think that's good news generally, and I think we should seek to retain that and keep that. The concept of over-supply lends to the view that the land is surplus to requirements, and as the case my colleague is mentioning demonstrates, that is often not the case.
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<b>Question No. 4</b>	
<b>Question From:</b>	<b>Councillor Alan Amos</b>
<b>Question To:</b>	<b>Councillor Marc Bayliss, Leader of the Council</b>
<b>Question:</b>	Given the disproportionately high number of alleyways and above average level of dog ownership, and at a time when we all want to encourage more walking, will the Leader of the Council ask for a review into the number, geographical spread, and frequency of emptying of dog bins in Bedwardine Ward, and take any action that may be necessary to ensure each fully meets the needs of local residents?
<b>Answer:</b>	<p>I'm tempted to say when they're not planting trees in the Bedwardine Ward, I will ask the officers to do this. But the real answer is I understand a review of bins, including bins for dog faeces, is being undertaken currently and I have been reassured that all local Members will be thoroughly engaged in that process. So, what I can say to Councillor Amos is that he, myself and Councillor Bill Amos will be involved in the Bedwardine decisions, and I am happy to reassure him of that.</p> <p>Personally, I hope it doesn't reduce the number of locations of bins, even if dog bins and litter bins are amalgamated in any review. But I can assure him we will be actively involved in the process.</p>
<b>Supplementary Question:</b>	Would the Leader of the Council agree with me that it is essential that we do push for more bins, a greater frequency of emptying them, especially on The Green in Lower Wick, where there have been problems recently, and a much better geographical spread to encourage more people to use them?
<b>Answer:</b>	<p>I think we should have the right number of bins to meet the needs of each and every community across the city, and so I will be looking for evidence from officers from their work on the amount of waste that is currently obtained, and how best we can capture that.</p> <p>What I can say to my colleague is that he will have my full support in making sure we have the right number of bins to meet the needs in Bedwardine.</p>

<b>Question No. 5</b>	
<b>Question From:</b>	<b>Councillor Neil Laurenson</b>
<b>Question To:</b>	<b>Councillor Marc Bayliss, Leader of the Council</b>
<b>Question:</b>	The Local Government Association estimates that up to £2.6 billion will be needed to plug funding gaps arising from the pandemic. The government's inadequate test-and-trace programme cost £22 billion. As Leader of this Council, will you condemn this use of public money and join the Local Government Association in calling for more funding for this Council?
<b>Answer:</b>	<p>It must be an election in the air because we get the same sort of question from this Member every year, but it does allow me to update Council on the funding that local government generally and this Council specifically has had in the current year. I apologise for the long list I'm going to read out because the government has been so generous to local government in this past year. Here's a chronological list of support that the government has provided to local authorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11 March 2020: A £500m 'hardship fund' for residents struggling to pay their council tax bills.</li> <li>• 19 March 2020: £1.6bn additional funding made available to local authorities.</li> <li>• 25 March 2020: £1.8bn grants were provided to businesses.</li> <li>• 1 April 2020: £12bn funding for business rates grants was transferred to local authorities including nearly £15m for this authority.</li> <li>• 16 April 2020: Councils were allowed to defer £2.6bn in business rates payments to central government.</li> <li>• 18 April 2020: A second £1.6 billion of additional funding for local authorities was made available, in which we gained almost a million pounds.</li> <li>• 2 May 2020: a further discretionary fund of £617m was made available for grants to businesses that do not qualify for the Small Business Grant scheme.</li> <li>• 15 May 2020: £600m was made available to local authorities to support social care provision.</li> <li>• 24 May 2020: £50m was provided to local government via the Reopening High Streets Safely Fund.</li> <li>• 24 June 2020. A further £105 million was made available to tackle homelessness.</li> <li>• 11 June 2020: A 'local welfare assistance fund' of £63 million was made available to councils.</li> <li>• 2 July 2020: A further £500m of un-ringfenced funding for councils was provided.</li> <li>• 24 August 2020: guidance issued on a fund to compensate local authorities for 75% of all lost income from sales, fees and charges.</li> <li>• In the budget in October a further £919m of un-</li> </ul>

	<p>ringfenced funding for councils was provided; £1.55 billion in un-ringfenced funding for local authorities, this was distributed according to the 'Covid Relative Needs Formula'; £670 million was distributed to local authorities to support local council tax support schemes.</p> <p>I'm nearly at the bottom of the list.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 November 2020: The Local Restrictions Support Grant, Additional Restrictions Grant and Containment Outbreak Management Fund was formalised. This is allocated on a rough formula of £20 per head and £8 per head respectively.</li> <li>• 2 December 2020: further allocations of Local Restrictions Support Grant have been provided.</li> <li>• 18 December 2020: £408m further allocations of Local Restrictions Support Grant.</li> </ul> <p>I hope this reassures the Member that the government has given millions and billions to local government over the past year over and on top of what it planned to do in last year's budget.</p>
<b>Supplementary Question:</b>	<p>I take it that he won't condemn the £22 billion spent on the inadequate test and trace programme. In the words of the palliative care doctor and writer Rachael Clark the government's PPE procurement scandal has cost us billions of pounds, not to mention human lives. A High Court judge ruled last week that the Health Secretary broke the law by failing to publish multi million pound Covid-19 government contracts within the required 30 day period. What is your view on the fact that a government minister can stay in post despite breaking the law?</p>
<b>Answer:</b>	<p>I thought we'd end up talking about wider issues, so I've actually researched the vaccination statistics today. As of today, 26.7% of the entire population of the UK has been vaccinated. Britain has the third highest vaccination rate in the world. It is beaten by only two countries, Israel and the United Arab Emirates, both of which are countries with less than 10m people. The vaccination programme has been a massive success and is the way out of this crisis for us all, we all recognise as you did Madam Mayor in your introduction today, the vaccination programme is the way for us all to return to a normal situation and civilisation in this country and on that measure the government has been a fantastic success.</p>

<b>Question No. 6</b>	
<b>Question From:</b>	<b>Councillor Steve Mackay</b>
<b>Question To:</b>	<b>Councillor Joy Squires, Chair of Environment Committee</b>

<p><b>Question:</b></p>	<p>I understand that in December 2020 a council officer granted permission to a group of residents to cut back trees on the edge of Aldersey Park in St Peter's. I'm advised that the reason for doing so was that the Council had received complaints of the amount of light entering the homes of those residents being reduced because of the foliage.</p> <p>My ward is one which accommodates numerous trees and residents undoubtedly benefit from both their appearance and environmental value. However, they do on occasions limit the light entering homes. Over the years, whenever I have approached council officers requesting cuts, to assist residents in overcoming this problem I have always met with resistance and refusal, being told it is against Council Policy. Can the chair of the Environment Committee advise me if that policy has changed, or is changing, and if not, why it was transgressed on this occasion?</p>
<p><b>Answer:</b></p>	<p>In December 2020, The City Council received a tree complaint from a resident of Connaught Close in St Peters regarding the height of the trees and how these were impacting on TV signal reception and light to the properties. An officer visited the site and met with the complainant, other residents of the Close joined in and confirmed that the trees were causing issues for all the residents living underneath them. The residents wanted the trees removing. Given that the issue was affecting all the residents the Officer agreed to a compromise and special dispensation was made.</p> <p>The compromise agreed with the residents was that the trees would be retained but reduced in height to the height of the nearby hedge on the understanding that a reputable Tree Surgeon would be commissioned by the residents to undertake the work and that this would be at residents expense with no cost to the Council.</p> <p>Each tree complaint is unique and normally requires individual assessment. Such issues can often be resolved or reduced by the complainant exercising their right under British Common Law and cutting the tree back to their boundary themselves.</p> <p>Under rare circumstance where trees can affect quality of life The Council would undergo, or sanction tree works. For example, if a tree is disturbing the TV signal of a housebound resident or if trees were causing a nuisance to the residents of an entire street.</p>

<b>Supplementary Question:</b>	All I can suggest is can we please ensure that, where planned work is to take place, Ward Members be notified in advance when, where and why it's taking place in order that questions from residents can be answered? It's a little bit embarrassing not knowing what's going on in the Ward.
<b>Answer:</b>	I agree that it's absolutely essential that Ward Members are kept in the loop when it comes to these sorts of works going on in their Ward. It's an issue I have raised particularly with Environmental Operations in the past as a result of one or two things being carried out in my own Ward and not knowing about that. So, I'm with you on that and will ensure it becomes the policy for Environmental Operations.

<b>Question No. 7</b>	
<b>Question From:</b>	<b>Councillor Steve Mackay</b>
<b>Question To:</b>	<b>Councillor Marc Bayliss, Leader of the Council</b>
<b>Question:</b>	Like other councils Worcester City has seen a considerable decrease in its own income generation during the Covid 19 outbreak. Fortunately, this has to a large extent been offset by grants being made by central government to cover much of this deficit. Could the leader of the council please advise just how much money has been given to this authority by the government in order that it could operate as near to normal as possible and what would have been the likely outcome if that sum given had been a lesser amount?
<b>Answer:</b>	<p>The Council has received £1.65 million for the first four tranches of un-ring-fenced additional funding. We have also had £270k for specific purposes, and £188k for New Burdens Funding, basically to cover the cost of handing out business grant funding. The income compensation which we've also received from the government amounts to £2.36 million. So, altogether this Council in round figures has received £4.5 million so far, all of which has been used to meet additional costs and lost income. Without this funding the outturn for this current year would have been in the region of a of £4.8 million overspend.</p> <p>Furthermore, an additional half a million has been provided for next year in un-ring-fenced funding and we have the Lower Tier Services grant of just over a quarter of a million.</p> <p>In addition the Government has allowed councils to spread the impact on the Collection Fund deficit of Council Tax and Business Rates losses over the next three years to reduce the impact on budgets and announced a Local Tax Income Guarantee of 75% of all irrecoverable losses from Council Tax and Business rates in this current year. Details of the scheme are being finalised, but payments are expected to be made early in the next financial year.</p>

<b>Supplementary Question:</b>	That's obviously a huge amount. Do you think it's sufficient to say government is honouring its commitment to support councils, particularly in these difficult times?
<b>Answer:</b>	I think it would be difficult for anybody, given that list of monies I read out in answer to Councillor Laurenson, and in response to Councillor Mackay, to say that the government has not stepped up to the mark on this occasion and honoured its commitment to fund local government throughout the Covid crisis. I hope that that continues into the future and that we continue to see further additional resources as the demand continues to exist.

## 67 **Notice of Motion**

The Council considered the following Notices of Motion, which had been submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 8:

### **HMO Advertising Boards**

The proliferation of HMO Advertising boards across the City, and in particular St Clement and St John's Ward creates an eyesore and detracts from the residential nature of parts of the City. The advancement in digital advertising platforms, supported by evidence from the University and students themselves who advise that they look for properties online using platforms such as Student Pad, would negate the need for this form of obtrusive advertising. However, I acknowledge that the banning of HMO advertising boards would, due to Planning Regulation 6 would have the unintended consequence of requiring any individual wishing to sell their house, having to apply for a Planning Application to have a "For Sale" sign outside their property which would place an undue burden upon them. That said there is a very real problem which as Councillors we should be looking to solve. To that end I would propose that Officers look to amend our policy on dealing with offending landlords such that where a Landlord fails to comply with initial enforcement action by the Local Planning Authority, they should expect that further breaches will result in a prosecution.

The proposer, Councillor Mitchell and the seconder, Councillor Geraghty, both spoke in support of the Motion.

In accordance with the rules set out in the Constitution, Councillor Udall proposed an amendment to the Motion, as follows:

Delete all words after "obtrusive advertising" and replace with: "Consequently, Council refers the issue to the Place and Economic Development Sub-Committee in order to consider the issue and to amend the policy as necessary."

The proposed amendment was seconded by Councillor Cawthorne.

Members then entered into a debate on the proposed amendment to the Motion, where support was expressed by the proposer and seconder of the original Motion.

On being put to the vote, the Motion as amended was agreed and it was

**RESOLVED: That the Council agree that the proliferation of HMO Advertising boards across the City, and in particular St Clement and St John's Wards, creates an eyesore and detracts from the residential nature of parts of the City. The advancement in digital advertising platforms, supported by evidence from the University and students themselves who advise that they look for properties online using platforms such as Student Pad, would negate the need for this form of obtrusive advertising. Consequently, Council refers the issue to the Place and Economic Development Sub-Committee in order to consider the issue and to amend the policy as necessary.**

### **Not Every Disability is Visible**

This Council notes that:

- The charity Crohn's and Colitis UK is encouraging venues providing accessible public toilets to install new signage. This is to help stop stigma and discrimination towards people with 'invisible illnesses' such as Crohn's Disease and ulcerative colitis.
- There have been instances nationally where such individuals using an accessible toilet have been accused by staff members of being ineligible to use them.
- These signs have two standing figures and a wheelchair user with the words Accessible Toilet and the logo 'Not every disability is visible'.
- The Government has decided recently that large accessible toilets for severely disabled people - known as Changing Places - will be made compulsory for large new buildings, such as shopping centres, supermarkets, sports and arts venues, in England from 2021.

Council resolves to:

- Ensure that accessible toilets on Council premises bear these signs;
- Ask city centre retailers and leisure outlets to do likewise with their accessible public toilets;
- Seek advice from the charity Crohn's and Colitis UK on the information and training we should provide to Council Staff members. This is so they understand these illnesses and to prevent potential embarrassment for those who suffer with them;
- Ensure that any Changing Places toilets in our buildings are properly signposted for visitors;
- Ensure that the requirement to provide new Changing Place toilets is included within the Council's future plans for new public buildings in the City.

The proposer, Councillor Allcott and the seconder, Councillor Squires, both spoke in support of the Motion.

In accordance with the rules set out in the Constitution, Councillor Griffiths proposed an amendment to the Motion, as follows:

Remove references to specific charities (Crohns and Colitis UK) in the third bullet point of the proposed resolution and amend to state: "Council will seek guidance from charities including Crohns and Colitis UK, Autism UK and any other relevant organisations on the information and training we should provide to Council Staff members. This is so they understand these conditions and complex disabilities and to prevent potential embarrassment for those who suffer with them."

The proposed amendment was seconded by Councillor Mackay.

Members then entered into a debate on the proposed amendment to the Motion, where support was expressed by the proposer and seconder of the original Motion.

On being put to the vote, the Motion as amended was agreed and it was

**RESOLVED: That the Council resolves to:**

- **Ensure that accessible toilets on Council premises bear these signs;**
- **Ask city centre retailers and leisure outlets to do likewise with their accessible public toilets;**
- **Seek guidance from charities including Crohns and Colitis UK, Autism UK and any other relevant organisations on the information and training we should provide to Council staff members. This is so they understand these conditions and complex disabilities and to prevent potential embarrassment for those who suffer with them;**
- **Ensure that any Changing Places toilets in our buildings are properly signposted for visitors;**
- **Ensure that the requirement to provide new Changing Place toilets is included within the Council's future plans for new public buildings in the City.**

**Retain £20 Uplift to Universal Credit Payments**

Council recognises that the uplift of £20 per week to Universal Credit payments, introduced as a temporary measure in March 2020, is helping well over 9000 families in Worcester to weather the financial strains of the Covid Pandemic.

Council believes that the impact of the pandemic will continue to be felt in Worcester for some time to come and that those families on the lowest incomes should continue to be protected.

Council therefore mandates the Managing Director to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Robin Walker MP, to ask that the £20 uplift to Universal Credit be maintained beyond March 2021.

The proposer, Councillor Denham and the seconder, Councillor Biggs, both spoke in support of the Motion.

In accordance with the rules set out in the Constitution, Councillor Bayliss proposed an amendment to the Motion, as follows (amended wording shown in capitals):

Council recognises that the uplift of £20 per week to Universal Credit payments, introduced BY THE CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT as a temporary measure in March 2020, is helping well over 9000 families in Worcester to weather the financial strains of the Covid Pandemic. AND THAT EVEN MORE WORCESTER RESIDENTS ARE BEING SUPPORTED THROUGH THE FURLOUGH SCHEME AND THE SELF EMPLOYMENT INCOME SCHMES ALSO INTRODUCED BY THE CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT.

Council believes that the impact of the pandemic will continue to be felt in Worcester for some time to come and that ALL FAMILIES, ESPECIALLY those families on the lowest incomes should continue to be protected.

Council therefore mandates the Managing Director to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Robin Walker MP, to ask that the £20 uplift to Universal Credit, THE FURLOUGH SCHEME AND THE SELF EMPLOYMENT INCOME SCHEMES be maintained beyond March 2021.

The proposed amendment was seconded by Councillor Stanley.

Members then entered into a debate on the proposed amendment to the Motion, where support was expressed by the proposer and seconder of the original Motion. Other Members expressed support for the amendment.

On being put to the vote, the Motion as amended was agreed and it was

**RESOLVED: That the Council:**

- 1. recognises that the uplift of £20 per week to Universal Credit payments, introduced by the Conservative Government as a temporary measure in March 2020, is helping well over 9,000 families in Worcester to weather the financial strains of the Covid Pandemic; and that even more Worcester residents are being supported through the furlough scheme and the self-employment income schemes also introduced by the Conservative Government;**
- 2. believes that the impact of the pandemic will continue to be felt in Worcester for some time to come and that all families, especially those families on the lowest incomes, should continue to be protected; and therefore**
- 3. mandates the Managing Director to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Robin Walker MP, to ask that the £20 uplift to Universal Credit, the furlough scheme and the self-employment income schemes be maintained beyond March 2021.**

**Our Commitment to Children and Young People**

In the aftermath of the Covid pandemic, and recognising the severe impact of the pandemic on children and young people, Council pledges to do all it can to make Worcester a better place for children and young people to grow up in.

Council agrees that:

1. All Council policies and decisions will be assessed for their impact on children and young people;
2. The strategic assessment of play and leisure opportunities for children and young people currently being prepared by officers, will consider the whole city and bring forward recommendations to address any gaps in provision;
3. A children and young people Champion will be appointed with a remit that includes an annual report to Council on how the City Council is meeting its commitment to children and young people.

The proposer, Councillor Squires and the seconder, Councillor Collins, both spoke in support of the Motion. Other Members also spoke in support of the Motion.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was agreed and it was

**RESOLVED: That the Council agrees that:**

- 1. all Council policies and decisions will be assessed for their impact on children and young people;**
- 2. the strategic assessment of play and leisure opportunities for children and young people currently being prepared by officers, will consider the whole city and bring forward recommendations to address any gaps in provision;**
- 3. a Children and Young People Champion will be appointed with a remit that includes an annual report to Council on how the City Council is meeting its commitment to children and young people.**

**68 Independent Remuneration Panel Recommendation for Members' Allowances 2021/22**

The Council considered the report and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Members' Allowances (IRP) for 2021/22.

In summary, the IRP recommended a 2.75% increase on the Basic Allowance recommended for 2020/21, which was £4,526. This gave a figure of £4,650.

The IRP's 2021/22 report stated that the Panel's work had been significantly influenced by the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent demands it has placed on individual Councils. In view of the above, and in consultation with all constituent authorities, the IRP decided for its report for 2021/22 it would focus solely on a recommendation in relation to the Basic Allowance and any consequential change to the value of existing Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs).

The IRP recommended that for 2021/22 Travel Allowances continue to be paid in accordance with the HMRC rate, and that Subsistence Allowances and the Dependent Carer's Allowance for 2021/22 remain unchanged

Following a meeting of 1 February, Group Leaders recommended a 2% increase on the current Basic Allowance paid and the consequential change to the value of SRAs. Group Leaders recommended no change to the multiplying factors of SRAs. This would result in a Basic Allowance of £4,474. This was in line with wage inflation but remained £176 p.a. below the IRP's recommended allowance.

It was proposed by Councillor Stephen and seconded by Councillors Bayliss and Gregson that the Council agree a 2% increase. Upon being put to the vote it was agreed and

**RESOLVED: That the Council agree a 2% increase on the current basic allowance and the consequential change to the value of Special Responsibility Allowances with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.**

**69 Report from the Relevant Committee on Matters which are Referred to Council for Decision**

**70 Referral Report from Policy and Resources Committee, 9th February 2020 - Proposed Budget 2021/22 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 – 2025/26**

The Council considered a referral report from the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee.

The Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting of 9 February had considered the proposed Budget for 2021/22 and the MTFP 2021-2026, and also a list of projects proposed by the Policy Committees.

The Council were recommended to approve the proposed the Budget and Council Tax 2021/22 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 – 2025/26. The proposed Medium Term Financial Plan included the Capital Programme and Capital Financing and the Earmarked Reserves Balance.

The Council were also recommended to approve the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2021/22, Pay Policy Statement 2021/22 and Fees and Charges 2021/22.

There were no new proposed allocations against the City Plan Fund for 2021/22. However, as reported previously to Council, planned spend on the existing schemes exceeded the City Plan Fund by £305k. Therefore, it was proposed that £305k is transferred from the General Risk reserve to meet this shortfall.

It was proposed by Councillor Stephen and seconded by Councillors Bayliss and Gregson and on being put to the vote it was agreed and

**RESOLVED: That the Council:**

**1. approves the proposed Budget and Council Tax for 2021/22 as set out in this report, in particular:**

- a. The Budget Requirement for Worcester City Council (excluding Parish Precepts) 2021/22 at £11,975,805;**

- b. The Council Tax Requirement for Worcester City Council (excluding Parish Precepts) 2021/22 at £6,292,038; and
  - c. The Band D Council Tax for Worcester City Council (excluding Parish Precepts) at £195.88;
2. approves the Council Tax Resolution 2021/22 set out at Appendix 9 to the report (figures for H&WFRA are advised but not published at the date of this meeting - final figures will be confirmed following the Fire Authority meeting on 24 February);
  3. approves the proposed Budget for 2021/22 as detailed in the following appendices:
    - i. the summary budget 2021/22 as set out at Appendix 1
    - ii. the detailed Budget 2021/22 as set out in the Budget Book at Appendix 2
    - iii. the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2021/22 as set out in Appendix 3
    - iv. the Pay Policy Statement 2021/22 as set out in Appendix 4
    - v. the detailed Fees and Charges 2020/21 as set out in Appendix 5 and in Appendix 5a (exempt item);
  4. approves the proposed Medium Term Financial Plan for the next five year period 2021/22 – 2025/26 as detailed in the following appendices:
    - i. the summary MTFP 2021/22 - 2025/26 as set out in Appendix 1
    - ii. the Capital Programme and Capital Financing as set out in Appendix 6
    - iii. the forecast Earmarked Reserves balance at 31 March 2021 as set out in Appendix 7; and
  5. endorses the list of projects proposed by the Policy Committees in Appendix 8.

<b>For: Councillors</b>	<b>Against: Councillors</b>
<b>Councillors Agar, Allcott, A. Amos, B. Amos, Barnes, Bayliss, Berry, Biggs, Bisset, Cawthorne, Collins, Cronin, Denham, Ditta, Geraghty, Gregson, Griffiths, Hassan, Hodges, Mrs L. Hodgson, S. Hodgson, Johnson, Lamb, Laurenson, Mackay, Mitchell, Riaz, Roberts, Squires, Stafford, Stalker, Stanley, Stephen and Udall</b>	
<b>Total: 34</b>	<b>Total: 0</b>

**71 Referral Report from Audit And Governance Committee, 23rd November 2020 - Audit And Governance Committee Annual Report 2019/20**

The Council considered a report from the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee on the Committee's Annual Report for the 2019/20 municipal year. The Annual Report shows how the Audit and Governance Committee had successfully achieved its objectives over the last year and has thereby made a positive contribution to the Council's overall governance and control environment.

It was proposed by Councillor Alan Amos, seconded by Councillor Barnes and upon being put to the vote it was agreed and

**RESOLVED: That the Council receives the Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report 2019/20.**

**72 Referral Report from Place And Economic Development Sub-Committee 2nd February 2021 - South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) Preferred Options: Further Regulation 18 (III) Consultation**

The Council considered a referral report from the Chairman of the Place and Economic Development Sub-Committee on an SWDP additional further Regulation 18 (III) consultation to provide greater clarification and updates to elements of the Sustainability Appraisal evidence base work. The Sub-Committee had agreed to recommend approval of the Further Regulation 18 (III) consultation from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 for seven weeks in accordance with the consultation material in Appendix 1 to the report and the consultation statement in section five.

Appendix G of the SA Report (Appendix 1 of item 9c, pages 372 to 408) had been updated after formatting errors were identified.

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs L. Hodgson, seconded by Councillor Gregson and upon being put to the vote it was agreed and

**RESOLVED: That the Council agrees to:**

- 1. approve the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) – Further Regulation 18 (III) material set out at Appendix 1 for consultation from 1st March 2021 for seven weeks; and**
- 2. delegate authority to the Corporate Director – Place in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Place and Economic Development Committee to make minor amendments to the SWDP Regulation 18 (III) consultation material prior to publication.**

**73 Referral Report from Place and Economic Development Sub-Committee 2nd February 2021 - South Worcestershire Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations Development Plan Document DPD- Preferred Options: Regulation 18 Consultation**

The Council considered a referral report from the Chairman of the Place and Economic Development Sub-Committee on the Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options (2021).

The Sub-Committee had agreed to recommend approval of the Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations Development Plan Document (TTS SA DPD) – Preferred Options: Regulation 18 material (set out in Appendix 1) for consultation from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 for seven weeks.

The Chairman of the Sub-Committee explained that recommendation 1 had been amended due to the forthcoming Purdah period. It was now proposed that the consultation should commence as soon as possible after the May 2021 local elections.

It was noted that Figure 1 (Broad Locations for the Growth of Sites for Travellers and Travelling Showpeople) of the consultation document had been updated and amended since the Sub-Committee meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> February.

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs L. Hodgson, seconded by Councillor Gregson and upon being put to the vote it was agreed and

**RESOLVED: That the Council agrees to:**

- 1. approve the Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations Development Plan Document (TTS SA DPD) – Preferred Options: Regulation 18 material for consultation for seven weeks, the consultation to commence as soon as possible after the May 2021 local elections; and**
- 2. delegate authority to the Corporate Director – Place in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Place and Economic Development Committee to make minor amendments to the Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations DPD Regulation 18 consultation material prior to publication.**

**74 Report from the Leader of the Council on any matters which he is of the opinion require urgent consideration by The Council**

The Leader drew Council's attention to a Christmas card which he had received from a local resident, in which thanks had been expressed to the Council and all staff for continuing to deliver services during the Covid-19 pandemic.

**75 Items Involving the Disclosure of Exempt Information**

**RESOLVED: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of information as defined in Schedule 12A of the said Act.**

**76 Fees and Charges 2021/22 - Exempt Items**

The Council considered the fees and charges for Building Control for 2021/22. These were not for publication as they contained commercially sensitive information.

**RESOLVED: That the Council approve the Fees and Charges for Building Control 2021/22.**

**Duration of the meeting:** 7.00p.m.- 21:45p.m.

Chair at the meeting on  
30th March 2021