

**Council****Thursday, 12 February 2015, County Hall, Worcester****Minutes****Present:**

Mrs P E Davey (Chairman), Mr A A J Adams, Mr R C Adams, Ms P Agar, Mr A T Amos, Mrs S Askin, Mr J Baker, Mr R W Banks, Mr M L Bayliss, Mr A N Blagg, Mrs S L Blagg, Mr C J Bloore, Mr PJ Bridle, Mr M H Broomfield, Mr J P Champion, Mr S J M Clee, Mr S C Cross, Mr P Denham, Mr N Desmond, Ms L R Duffy, Mrs E A Eyre, Mr A Fry, Mr S E Geraghty, Mr W P Gretton, Mrs J L M A Griffiths, Mr P Grove, Mr A I Hardman, Mr M J Hart, Ms P A Hill, Mrs A T Hingley, Mrs L C Hodgson, Mr C G Holt, Mr I Hopwood, Mr M E Jenkins, Ms R E Jenkins, Mr R C Lunn, Mr L C R Mallett, Mr P M McDonald, Mr A P Miller, Mrs F M Oborski, Mr J W Parish, Mr S R Peters, Dr K A Pollock, Mr D W Prodger, Prof J W Raine, Mrs M A Rayner, Mr A C Roberts, Mr J H Smith, Mr R J Sutton, Mr J W R Thomas, Mrs E B Tucker, Mr P A Tuthill, Mr R M Udall, Mr G J Vickery and Mr G C Yarranton.

**Available Papers**

The Members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated)
- B. Eleven questions submitted to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (previously circulated); and
- C. The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 15 January 2015 (previously circulated).

**1642 Apologies and Declaration of Interests (Agenda item 1)**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr C B Taylor and Mr T A L Wells.

Four declarations of Other Disclosable Interests were made:

Mr A T Amos – Items 7, 8 and 9 – Member of the Advisory Council of ASH.

Mr P Grove – Item 7 – Member of Malvern Hills District Council.

Mr L C R Mallett – Items 7 and 8 Employee of the British Heart Foundation.

		Prof. J W Raine – Item 7, Notice of Motion 1 – Member of Malvern Hills District Council.
<b>1643</b>	<b>Public Participation (Agenda item 2)</b>	One member of the public participated at the meeting. Ms Ruth Forecast spoke to Agenda item 7, Notice of Motion 1 – Humanitarian Relief and gave members of the Council information and comments on the plight of Syrian refugees.
<b>1644</b>	<b>Minutes (Agenda item 3)</b>	<b>RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.</b>
<b>1645</b>	<b>Chairman's Announcements (Agenda item 4)</b>	The Chairman referred members to the printed announcements circulated at the meeting.
<b>1646</b>	<b>Reports of Cabinet - Matters which require a decision by Council - Budget 2015 - 2016 (Agenda item 5)</b>	<p>The Council had before it a detailed report on the Budget for 2015 – 2016 which the Cabinet had considered on 5 February 2015 and which the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet were recommending formally for adoption by the Council.</p> <p>All Councillors had received a copy of the full report and Appendices considered by the Cabinet on 5 February 2015 and had been requested to bring those to the meeting to allow full consideration of all the issues. Members were reminded that the Appendices referred to were those presented to 5 February Cabinet, except updates to Appendices 4(a), 8 and 14 which were attached to the report to Council.</p> <p><b>2015/16 Local Government Finance Settlement</b></p> <p>The report set out that the final figures for the 2015/16 Local Government Finance Settlement were unknown at the time the 5 February 2015 Budget report to Cabinet was drafted. The Government had since confirmed the final Local Government Finance Settlement and this was reported at the Cabinet meeting. There was one change to the information contained in the provisional settlement that was included in 5 February 2015 Cabinet report. This related to an additional £0.502 million added to the Council's un-ring-fenced Revenue Support Grant and the Government had indicated this recognised that councils had asked for additional support, including to help them respond to welfare needs and to improve social care provision.</p> <p>The 5 February 2015 Cabinet Budget Report had already</p>

included a proposal to allocate up to £0.4 million to support the continuation of funding for one year (2015/16) to District Councils in respect of the valued Local Welfare Assistance schemes. This allocation would only be made on the basis that the funding was matched by each District Council and could be combined with any underspends in 2013/14 and 2014/15.

The report also contained a proposal that the new additional funding of £0.502 million was also allocated to support Local Welfare Assistance Schemes for one year only, 2015/16. District Councils would be able to use this funding across more than one financial year and would be able to consider this as a non-recurrent fund.

This was consistent with the approved recommendation from the October 2014 Cabinet Resources Report which was to delegate authority to the Chief Financial Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Finance, to agree arrangements with District Councils should the Government provide grant funding, and including transitional arrangements in relation to grant money unspent at 31 March 2015. This delegation continued.

The report set out that additional funding had therefore updated the cash limits that were reported in the 5 February 2015 Cabinet Budget Report as follows:

- An **increase** of £501,723 to the total funding received from Revenue Support Grant for 2015/16
- An **increase** of £502,000 in the cash limit for Commercial and Change / Finance budget in respect of Welfare Assistance Schemes for one year only, 2015/16
- A **decrease** of £277 in the amount to transfer to Earmarked Reserves

The report clarified that the changes described meant the Council's Budget Requirement rose by £501,723 to £327,559,266 as set out in the updated Appendices 4a and 14 attached to the report.

There were no changes to the cash-limited budgets to be allocated to other Directorates for 2015/16 and there was no change to the Council Tax Requirement (precept).

It was also set out that the draft Pay Policy Statement had been updated following the outcome of negotiations in

respect of Chief Officers pay, and the updated Statement was attached as Appendix 8.

### **Cabinet Report - 5 February 2015**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Finance which included details of:

- those decisions made by the Cabinet on 18 December 2014 on the draft budget 2015/16
- how the 2015/16 budget supported the County Council's refreshed Corporate Plan – FutureFit which looked forward to 2017. The budget would provide for a number of initiatives that supported the delivery of the four Corporate Plan focus areas: Open for Business; Children and Families; Health & Well-being, and The Environment, within the context of a significant reduction in funding from the Government
- the work needed to close the provisional financial gap. In the medium term the Council would continue to target the achievement of around £25m per year whilst focusing on what was important to local people and delivering the Corporate Plan – FutureFit's four areas of focus. The Council had managed its finances prudently in the past and plans had already been presented that potentially delivered £23.8m of savings and efficiencies in 2015/16
- the work undertaken in January 2015 to close in full the initial funding gap of £2.4m identified in the December 2014 Cabinet report. District Councils had confirmed increases in the tax base forecast for 2015/16 as well as the surplus from their Collection Fund in 2014/15. Provisional forecasts for income from Business Rates and Business Rate Buoyancy had been refined as well as a review of initiatives funded through the New Homes Bonus. For one year only it was proposed that £0.6m of the one-off Collection Fund surpluses be used to balance the Revenue Budget with the intention this was replaced by savings in 2016/17 that would be delivered year on year. It was recommended to allocate the remaining £1.5m surplus from the Collection Funds into the Change and Transformation Fund (£1m) and Self Financing Capital Investment Fund (£0.5m)
- the Council Tax referendum limit which had been set for Council Tax increases for 2015/16 of 2%. The budget therefore confirmed the intention contained

within the December 2014 Cabinet report to increase Council Tax by 1.94% to fund increased costs for Looked After Children

- revenue budget monitoring. The outturn forecast to 31 December 2014 indicated that the budget would break even by the end of the financial year representing a reduction from a forecast of a £0.5m deficit reported within the December 2014 Cabinet report. There still however remained a significant adverse variance with regard to Children's Social Care Placements. The BOLD transformational savings programme continued to make good progress and the 2014/15 target of £30.5m was forecast to be achieved in the main. General balances were likely to remain at £13m at the end of the 2014/15 financial year
- the virement of £0.6m from the Financing Transactions budget for 2014/15 to earmarked reserves to fund an additional one year's extension to the Councillor's Divisional Fund scheme for 2016/17 was recommended. This did not require alteration of the net cash limits approved by Full Council
- details of the budget 2015/16 consultation. The Council had engaged with a wide range of individuals and organisations through a number of channels. The draft budget proposals and feedback from the consultation events were considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board and its response was before the Cabinet
- the budget requirement of £330.7m against funding from the Government and Council Tax of £320.9m leaving an initial funding gap of £9.8m. BOLD schemes to the value of £7.4m had been developed that left an initial financial planning gap of £2.4m at the time of the December 2014 Cabinet report
- developments since the December 2014 Cabinet report. These included details of the Leader's response to the Government's Local Government Finance Settlement. The Government had, since the 5 February 2015 Cabinet report was drafted, confirmed the final figures for the 2015/16 Settlement. (Details of the resulting adjustments made to the budget were set out in paragraphs 3 – 11 of the report). The provisional settlement published on 18 December 2014 indicated a £0.2m reduction in Council funding compared with that forecast in the December 2014 Cabinet report. This shortfall had

been offset by increased levels of Council Tax Buoyancy. Since the last Cabinet report forecasts in the Business Rate Retention Scheme (District Councils were yet to confirm their Business Rate income), Revenue Support Grant, Specific Revenue Grants, Council Tax Base and Collection Fund performance and Expenditure budgets had been refined based on new information. The above changes in Council Tax, Business Rates Income and Expenditure budgets had enabled the provisional funding gap of £2.4m to be fully recovered. General Balances could be retained at their planned level of £13m for 2015/16 and future years

The report set out a summary of changes since December 2014 Cabinet, namely

£m	December	February	Change
Council Tax	209.2	212.1	2.9
Collection Fund Surplus	0.0	2.1	2.1
Revenue Support Grant	53.6	53.9	0.3
Business Rates Retention	58.1	59.0	0.9
Better Care Fund	33.5	33.5	0.0
Total Funding Available	354.4	360.6	6.2
Total Net Expenditure	380.6	382.9	2.3
Future Fit Programme	-23.8	-23.8	0.0
Earmarked Reserves Contribution	0.0	1.5	1.5
Funding Shortfall	2.4	0.0	-2.4

- the spending requirements which were proposed to become cash limits for each Directorate in 2015/16
- the Pay Policy Statement for approval which specified the Council's policies relating to pay of its workforce. The Statement had to be published on the Council's public website by 31 March each year
- details of the allocations of the Council's New Homes Bonus and match funding identified to support the bid for £6m allocation from the

Government's Highways Challenge Fund. If successful, the latter would create £12m investment to improve Worcestershire's roads infrastructure

- the Council's Capital Programme 2014/15 to 2017/18. It was recommended that the A440 Worcester Southern Link Dualling Phase 3 scheme was added to the Capital Programme subject to certain conditions being met. The Council's Capital Budget for 2014/15 totalled £153.7m. Capital expenditure as at 31 December 2014 was £85.4m (56% of budget). In terms of the Local Transport Plan Settlement, the Council expected to receive funding of around £100m over the future years to 2020/21. This included notional allocations of £12m per year from 2018/19 totalling £36m. With regard to the Capital Programme for schools, to date, the Council had only been notified of the confirmed amount for the basic need grant for 2015/16 and 2016/17 which would be £8.3m and £8.7m respectively. Allocations for capital maintenance and devolved formula capital were awaited. Work had also been undertaken on the financial provision within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for additional prudential borrowing of £5m per year. There had been two significant allocations from unallocated capital funding: a contribution of £0.150m towards refurbishment and development of Hartlebury Castle and £0.305m to Wythall Library Services. As a result of the updates, forecast capital investment over the period 2014/15 to 2017/18 was £491m
- the latest assessment of the Council's MTFP prospects. The total savings requirement over the period 2015/16 to 2018/19 was £100.1m of which £58.9m FutureFit savings had been identified. There was a risk that the current projections in relation to Government funding into the future could reduce further following the General Election. There were a number of risks and sensitivities that may have a significant impact on the MTFP such as Looked after Children's Placements, demographic growth, the medium term implications of the Care Act, inflation, funding from the Government, business rates, pensions and the New Homes Bonus
- the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2015/16 and the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities Statement for 2015/16

- the County Council's Public Sector Equality Duty in relation to setting the budget. An overarching strategic equality relevance assessment had been undertaken in respect of budget proposals for key transformational change programmes. As many programmes were at an early stage of development it was not yet possible to carry out more detailed equality impact analysis. Where necessary equality analysis would be undertaken and funding reported to Cabinet where key decisions were required
- a personal assurance statement from the Chief Financial Officer as Section 151 officer on the robustness of the budget calculations.

The Leader of the Council gave an introduction to the Budget and moved the recommendation as set out in paragraph 1 of the report; this was seconded by Mr S E Geraghty.

An amendment was then moved by Mr P M McDonald and seconded by Mr R C Lunn:

<b>To be invested in services:-</b>	<b>2015/16</b>
	<b>£000</b>
<i>Living Wage</i>	900
<i>Street Lighting</i>	100
<i>Mobile Libraries</i>	50
<i>Positive Activities</i>	200
<i>Footway Repairs</i>	700
<i>Domestic Abuse and Violence</i>	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,000</b>
<b>Funded By:</b>	
<b><i>It is proposed to withdraw one-off monies from the following Earmarked Reserves / budget areas</i></b>	<b>2015/16</b>
	<b>£000</b>
<i>Financial Services Reserves</i>	300
<i>Resources Reserves</i>	230
<i>Futurefit</i>	1,450
<i>Lord Lieutenant</i>	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,000</b>

*"For 2016/17, it is proposed that the £2 million investment in services above is funded entirely by a withdrawal from the £13 million held in general balances.*

*For 2017/18 new recurrent savings will need to be identified, after taking account of any updates to the medium term financial position".*



The mover and seconder of the amendment spoke in favour of its adoption. The key points of the debate in favour of the amendment included:

- that this was a budget hostile to the people of Worcestershire and the amendment sought to assist hard-working families with carefully thought out adjustments to restore some budget heads affected by the ongoing austerity measures imposed nationally
- the amendment was an attempt to retain some accountability for the services residents would receive and would protect key areas of provision
- that the amendment was an attempt to protect the most vulnerable within the county and preserve the services they depended on to retain a reasonable quality of life
- that the amendment was an attempt to restore hope to those hardest hit by the national economic conditions and help the most vulnerable in society.

Members also spoke against the amendment:

- the Council had listened to consultees and a Council Tax increase was proposed as a result. This had been carefully targeted at specific areas. The amendment was an ill thought-out mixture of minor adjustments which had no bearing on the comments made by the mover and seconder
- the amendment sought to fund on-going commitments with one-off monies and as such was flawed
- the intention of the budget as a whole was to protect the residents of Worcestershire. The amendment was peripheral tinkering and was intended to provoke headlines rather than address important issues.

During consideration of this item it was moved and seconded under PSO 19.11(e) that Council proceed to next business. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that this closure motion could only be put if the Chairman considered that the matter had been sufficiently discussed. The Chairman indicated that as this was the major item considered by the Council in the course of the year she was minded to allow the conclusion of the discussion and debate by calling the remainder of the list of councillors who had already

indicated their wish to speak.

**At the conclusion of the debate and on a named vote this amendment was lost.**

Those voting for the amendment were: Ms P Agar, Mr J Baker, Mr C J Bloore, Mr P Denham, Mr A Fry, Ms P A Hill, Mr M E Jenkins, Ms R E Jenkins, Mr R C Lunn, Mr L C R Mallett, Mr P M McDonald, Mr R M Udall and Mr G J Vickery (13)

Those voting against were: Mrs P E Davey, Mr A A J Adams, Mr R C Adams, Mr A T Amos, Mrs S Askin, Mr R W Banks, Mr M L Bayliss, Mr A N Blagg, Mrs S L Blagg, Mr P J Bridle, Mr M H Broomfield, Mr J-P Champion, Mr S J M Clee, Mr S C Cross, Mr N Desmond, Mrs L R Duffy, Mrs E A Eyre, Mr S E Geraghty, Mr W P Gretton, Mrs J M L A Griffiths, Mr P Grove, Mr A I Hardman, Mr M J Hart, Mrs A T Hingley, Mrs L C Hodgson, Mr C G Holt, Mr I Hopwood, Mr A P Miller, Mrs F M Oborski, Mr J Parish, Mr S R Peters, Dr K A Pollock, Mr D W Prodger, Mrs M A Rayner, Mr A C Roberts, Mr J H Smith, Mr R J Sutton, Mr J W R Thomas, Mrs E B Tucker, Mr P A Tuthill and Mr G C Yarranton (41)

Professor J W Raine abstained (1)

An amendment was then moved by Mrs E B Tucker and seconded by Mrs F M Oborski.

*"This amendment strengthens the budget for Trading Standards which underpins a level playing field for our businesses and funds it from the Economic Development staff budget and requiring Business Central to work towards self- funding under the wing of the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP). We also propose much needed strengthening of the budget for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. Finally we take a further step towards the Living Wage by removing the bottom spinal column point 8".*

<b><i>Increases in expenditure</i></b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/176</b>
	<b><i>(Part Year)</i></b>	<b><i>(Full Year)</i></b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<i>Increase hourly rate for the lowest paid staff to spinal column point 9 (£7.30 per hour) in support of moving</i>	21	41

<i>towards supporting the Living Wage</i>		
<i>Strengthening the base budget for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services</i>	100	300
<i>Strengthening the base budget for the County Council's contribution towards the Worcestershire Regulatory Services</i>	-	300
<b>Total</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>641</b>
<b>Spending Reductions</b>		
<i>Reduce the Economic Development budget staff budget and require Business Central to work towards self-funding under the wing of the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP).</i>	95	300
<i>Stop funding lunch for members attending the 6 Full Council meetings each year.</i>	2	2
<i>Reduction in the budget equivalent to the Special Responsibility Allowance for 2 Cabinet Members in 2014/15 from 9 to 7 from 1 July 2015</i>	24	33
<i>Reduce the level of base budget for the Communications Team</i>	-	6
<i>Maximise the level of Public Health monies that can be used to support the increase in base budget for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services</i>	-	300
	<b>121</b>	<b>641</b>

The mover and seconder of the amendment spoke in favour of its adoption. The key points of the debate in favour of the amendment included:

- that the action proposed would address some of the major issues facing the Council. Strengthening Trading Standards should be a major part of this
- that the Council should scale down its own in-house economic development resource and rely more on the work of other partners
- the Council should go further in its ambitions to pay the living wage and the amendment proposed was another step toward this
- spending on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) was an essential element of a caring Council, an area where prevention was better than cure
- the Council needed to bolster key areas of expenditure to meet the needs of the most vulnerable residents of the county. The amendment was a step in the right direction.

Members also spoke against the amendment:

- the attack on the Economic Development function of the Council was short-sighted and would cause damage far in excess of any savings made
- that the aim of the amendment was tokenistic and should have been addressed earlier rather than attempting to capture headlines at this late stage
- the method of funding the proposals was ill thought out
- the amendment was opportunistic rather than realistic and worked against what the Council was trying to achieve overall.

**On a named vote this amendment was lost.**

Those voting for the amendment were: Mrs S Askin, Mr M E Jenkins, Ms R E Jenkins, Mrs F M Oborski, Mr S R Peters, Prof J W Raine, Mrs M A Rayner, Mr R J Sutton and Mrs E B Tucker (9)

Those voting against were: Mrs P E Davey, Mr A A J Adams, Mr R C Adams, Ms P Agar, Mr A T Amos, Mr J Baker, Mr R W Banks, Mr M L Bayliss, Mr A N Blagg, Mrs S L Blagg, Mr C J Bloore, Mr P J Bridle, Mr M H

Broomfield, Mr J-P Campion, Mr S J M Clee, Mr S C Cross, Mr P Denham, Mr N Desmond, Mrs L R Duffy, Mrs E A Eyre, Mr A Fry, Mr S E Geraghty, Mr W P Gretton, Mrs J M L A Griffiths, Mr P Grove, Mr A I Hardman, Mr M J Hart, Ms P A Hill, Mrs A T Hingley, Mrs L C Hodgson, Mr C G Holt, Mr I Hopwood, Mr R C Lunn, Mr L C R Mallett, Mr P M McDonald, Mr A P Miller, Dr K A Pollock, Mr D W Prodger, Mr A C Roberts, Mr J H Smith, Mr J W R Thomas, Mr P A Tuthill, Mr R M Udall, Mr G J Vickery and Mr G C Yarranton (45).

Mr J Parish abstained (1).

In debating the Budget, as originally moved and seconded, the following principal points were made:

- the Budget followed a steady and well thought-out plan and was the result of a long and challenging process which had involved wide consultation within the county. The Budget process had been through the Scrutiny process and had given all members the chance to comment at the earliest stage
- the Budget contained a modest rise in Council Tax which would deal with the most pressing issues facing the Council. This rise was within the limits imposed by the Government and was considered to be a prudent measure to protect the county
- the Budget was a planned, proportionate and rational response by the Council to meet the constraints imposed by a tight financial envelope, it was also sustainable and provided longer term stability
- as always the Council was delivering value for money whilst maintaining and sustaining services and outcomes for the people of Worcestershire.

**On a named vote RESOLVED that**

- (a) the conclusions concerning revenue budget monitoring up 31 December 2014 be endorsed;**
- (b) cash limits for 2014/15 are updated to reflect use of an additional grant of £0.520 million to support earlier discharges from Acute Hospitals to social care services;**
- (c) the budget requirement for 2015/16 be approved at £327,559,266;**

**(d) the Council Tax band D equivalent for 2015/16 be set at £1,079.77 and the Council Tax Requirement (precept) be set at £212,083,547;**

**(e) consistent with the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement that revenue cash limits be set for each Directorate:**

<b>(i)</b>	<b>Adult Services and Health</b>	<b>132.901</b>
<b>(ii)</b>	<b>Children's Services</b>	<b>77.388</b>
<b>(iii)</b>	<b>Business, Environment and Community Services</b>	<b>72.971</b>
<b>(iv)</b>	<b>Commercial and Change/Finance</b>	<b>42.819</b>
		<b><u>326.079</u></b>

**recognising that £1.481 million will be transferred to earmarked reserves;**

**(f) the A440 Worcester Southern Link Dualling Phase 3 scheme is added to the capital programme and that cash limits are updated accordingly subject to agreement with developers on the amount of contributions that will be provided to support the financing of the scheme as well as the indemnity or surety to confirm the certainty of this income that results in the scheme not requiring any net prudential borrowing from the Council other than for the purpose of financing cash flow requirements, and on condition that there is no increased cost to the Council beyond that identified in the Cabinet report;**

**(g) the County Council continues to engage with residents and businesses in shaping the Corporate Plan and spending profile in line with their priorities;**

**(h) Members' Allowances are frozen for the seventh year in a row for 2015/16;**

**(i) the Council's pay policy statement as set out in Appendix 8 to the report be approved;**

**(j) the conclusions concerning capital budget monitoring up to 31 December 2014 be endorsed;**

**(k) the Capital Programme as set out in Appendix 9 to the report be approved;**

**(l) the Medium Term Financial Plan as set out in**

**Appendix 10 to the report be approved;**

**(m) the Treasury Management Strategy set out in Appendix 11 to the report be adopted; and**

**(n) the Statement of Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Statement as set out in Appendix 12 to the report be approved.**

Those voting in favour were: Mrs P E Davey, Mr A A J Adams, Mr R C Adams, Mr A T Amos, Mr R W Banks, Mr M L Bayliss, Mr A N Blagg, Mrs S L Blagg, Mr P J Bridle, Mr M H Broomfield, Mr J-P Campion, Mr S J M Clee, Mr N Desmond, Mrs L R Duffy, Mrs E A Eyre, Mr S E Geraghty, Mr W P Gretton, Mrs J M L A Griffiths, Mr P Grove, Mr A I Hardman, Mr M J Hart, Mrs A T Hingley, Mrs L C Hodgson, Mr C G Holt, Mr I Hopwood, Mr A P Miller, Mr S R Peters, Dr K A Pollock, Mr D W Prodger, Mr A C Roberts, Mr J H Smith, Mr R J Sutton, Mr J W R Thomas, Mr P A Tuthill and Mr G C Yarranton (35)

Those voting against were: Mrs P Agar, Mrs S Askin, Mr J Baker, Mr C J Bloore, Mr P Denham, Mr A Fry, Ms P A Hill, Mr M E Jenkins, Ms R E Jenkins, Mr R C Lunn, Mr L C R Mallett, Mr P M McDonald, Mrs F M Oborski, Mr J Parish, Prof J W Raine, Mrs M A Rayner, Mrs E B Tucker, Mr R M Udall and Mr G J Vickery (19)

Mr S C Cross abstained (1).

**1647 Reports of Cabinet - Summary of decisions taken (Agenda item 5(b))**

The Leader of the Council reported the following topics and answered questions in relation to them:

- Implementation of the Care Act 2014
- Superfast Extension Programme - Appointing a Preferred Supplier for a County-wide Broadband Infrastructure Partner
- Increasing the Number of School Places available in Malvern
- Scrutiny Report: Digital Inclusion

**1648 Constitutional Report - Worcestershire County Council Pension Fund Governance (Agenda item 6)**

The Council had before it a report which set out that the Council was the Administering Authority for the Worcestershire County Council Pension Fund which was the Local Government Pension Scheme for its own employees and those of over 140 other Scheme Employers in the administrative area of Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The Scheme had 20,000 contributing members, 14,100 pensioners and beneficiaries and a further 14,200 deferred pensioners.

In May 2013, the Council had agreed to establish a Shadow Pension Board in anticipation of Regulations requiring this under the Public Service Pensions Act 2013.

The long-awaited Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment) (Governance) Regulations were laid before Parliament on 28 January 2015. They were not yet law but it was stated that they would come into force after the meeting of Council but by 1 April 2015 (subject to the Parliamentary process).

These Regulations required an Administering Authority to establish a local Pension Board by 1 April 2015. That Board would be responsible for:

- assisting the Council to comply with legal obligations relating to the Scheme and any requirements imposed by the Pensions Regulator
- assisting the Council to ensure the effective and efficient governance and administration of the scheme.

This was an oversight role and the new local Pension Board would **not** be responsible for decision-making in relation to the management of the Scheme or the discharge of the Council's functions.

The report set out that the Scheme decision-making and management role was currently undertaken by the Chief Financial Officer, supported by the Shadow Pension Board. Although it was not *required* as part of the imminent change in governance arrangements, it was recommending that formal decision-making be carried out by a Pensions Committee. This would be a formal committee of the Council, subject to the usual rules of political balance and access to information. The detailed arrangements were set out in the Appendices to the report.

Other Regulations provided the statutory framework from which the Administering Authority was required to prepare a Fund Governance Policy Statement. The proposed Statement was set out in the Appendices for approval. The report made clear that given the final legislation was not yet in force, the recommendations included retaining some flexibility in settling the final arrangements.

In formulating the documents for the creation and operation of the Local Pension Board the Chief Financial Officer had followed the guidance issued by the Shadow



Scheme Advisory Board.

The appendices attached to the report set out the proposed terms of reference and governance arrangements by which the Administering Authority would carry out the functions. Appendix 1 was a Governance Policy Statement. Particular reference was made in Appendix 2 to the Local Pension Board and its proposed Terms of Reference.

The Leader of the Council referred to the recommendation as printed in the agenda papers and moved an alteration. This was seconded by Mr S E Geraghty.

**RESOLVED that:**

- (a) a Pensions Committee be established to discharge the responsibilities of the Council as Administering Authority of the Pension Scheme from the Annual Meeting 2015;**
- (b) a Chairman and Vice-Chairman of that Committee be appointed at the Annual Meeting;**
- (c) with effect from 1 April 2015 a Pension Board be established to assist the Council in ensuring the effective governance and administration of the Pension Scheme;**
- (d) the Pension Fund Governance Policy Statement as set out at Appendix 1 to the report be adopted;**
- (e) the arrangements including the terms of reference set out in Appendices 1 and 2 to the report for the purposes of pension fund governance be adopted with effect from 1 April 2015 (subject to the delegated authority of the Chief Financial Officer continuing as now until the Pension Committee is established); and**
- (f) the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to finalise and implement those arrangements as necessary to reflect the legislation when finally brought into effect, including appointing members to the bodies within the Policy Statement in accordance with the wishes of the relevant political Group Leaders where politically balanced.**

**1649 Notice of Motion  
- Notice of  
Motion 1 -  
Humanitarian  
Relief  
(Agenda item 7)**

The Council had before it a Notice of Motion standing in the names of Prof J W Raine, Mrs E B Tucker, Mrs S Askin, Mrs F M Oborski and Mr M E Jenkins as set out in the agenda papers.

The Motion was moved by Prof J W Raine and seconded by Mrs F M Oborski who both spoke in favour of it.

The Council was asked if it would wish to deal with the Motion on the day. It was suggested that the matter stand referred to the Cabinet to consider in June or July before returning to Council.

**RESOLVED that the Motion stand referred to Cabinet for advice.**

**1650 Notices of  
Motion - Notice  
of Motion 2 -  
Quality of Social  
Care for People  
who are Elderly  
(Agenda item 7)**

The Council had before it a Notice of Motion standing in the names of Mrs E B Tucker, Prof J W Raine, Mrs S Askin, Mr M E Jenkins and Mrs F M Oborski as set out in the agenda papers.

The Motion was moved by Mrs E B Tucker and seconded by Mrs S Askin who both spoke in favour of it.

The Council then agreed to consider and deal with the Motion on the day.

The Motion was debated during which the following principal points were made:

- carers deserved recognition for the job they did part of which was monetary recognition
- nothing precipitate was being proposed by the Motion and hence the request for a scrutiny
- proper training and pay should be enshrined in all contracts the Council commissioned
- that only by detailed scrutiny could the Council be assured that the commissioning process was not exploiting carers and their clients.

Members also spoke against the Motion.

- the Council had a good record in this area and there was no indication that the Council should carry out the proposed scrutiny

**1651 Notices of Motion - Notice of Motion 3 - Safer Roads (Agenda item 7)**

- there were national reports covering the concerns and giving a great deal of background that movers of the Motion could refer to
- the Council should not dictate what work programme OSPB adopted in an arbitrary and piecemeal manner.

**On being put to the meeting the Motion was lost.**

The Council had before it a Notice of Motion standing in the names of Mr P M McDonald, Mr L C R Mallett, Ms P A Hill, Mr R C Lunn, Ms P Agar, Mr C J Bloore and Mr G J Vickery as set out in the agenda papers.

The Motion was moved by Mr P M McDonald and seconded by Mr L C R Mallett who both spoke in favour of it.

The Council then agreed to consider and deal with the Motion on the day.

A debate ensued during which the following principal points were made:

- it made sense to ensure all routes to schools were added to the Primary Gritting routes both from the point of view of the pupils' continued education but also of their parents' contribution to the county and wider economy
- the Council would be failing in its duty of care if it did not make every effort to ensure the safety of school children
- schools in un-parished areas were at a disadvantage as the green grit bin system was not based on an equitable regime
- the current policy was adequate and could be extended at the request of individual schools
- there was a false impression that this problem was widespread - it was limited and the Council reviewed gritting routes regularly, especially in the light of representations about individual problem areas.

**On a named vote the Motion was lost.**

Those voting in favour were: Ms P Agar, Mrs S Askin, Mr

**1652 Notices of Motion - Notice of Motion 4 - Spending on Care (Agenda item 7)**

J Baker, Mr C J Bloore, Mr P J Bridle, Mr S C Cross, Mr P Denham, Mr A Fry, Ms P A Hill, Mr M E Jenkins, Ms R E Jenkins, Mr R C Lunn, Mr L C R Mallett, Mr P M McDonald, Mrs F M Oborski, Mr J Parish, Prof J W Raine, Mrs M A Rayner, Mr J W R Thomas, Mrs E B Tucker, Mr R M Udall and Mr G J Vickery (22).

Those voting against were: Mrs P E Davey, Mr A A J Adams, Mr R C Adams, Mr A T Amos, Mr R W Banks, Mr M L Bayliss, Mr A N Blagg, Mrs S L Blagg, Mr M H Broomfield, Mr J P Champion, Mr S J M Clee, Mr N Desmond, Mrs L R Duffy, Mrs E A Eyre, Mr S E Geraghty, Mr W P Gretton, Mrs J M L A Griffiths, Mr P Grove, Mr A I Hardman, Mr M J Hart, Mrs A T Hingley, Mrs L C Hodgson, Mr C G Holt, Mr I Hopwood, Mr A P Miller, Dr K A Pollock, Mr D W Prodger, Mr A C Roberts, Mr J H Smith, Mr P A Tuthill and Mr C G Yarranton (31).

Mr S R Peters and Mr R J Sutton abstained (2).

The Council had before it a Notice of Motion standing in the names of Mr G J Vickery, Mr C J Bloore, Mr R C Lunn, Ms P A Hill and Mr P M McDonald as set out in the agenda papers.

The Notice of Motion was moved by Mr G J Vickery and seconded by Mr C J Bloore who both spoke in favour of it.

On a Point of Order raised, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that the Notice of Motion was valid as either relating to the exercise of Council functions (adult social care) or affected the County (welfare of residents).

The Council then agreed to consider and deal with the Motion on the day.

The Motion was debated during which the following principal points were made:

- it was appropriate that a major cause of premature death should be taxed to support additional care as described in the Motion
- whilst the critics of the Motion claimed it was unworkable, similar moves had been made in the United States and the additional tax revenue used for early education on health care. An additional bonus was increasing the price of tobacco also reduced the number of people using it, reducing ill health and premature deaths

- the thrust of the Notice of Motion chimed with some of the sentiments expressed in Agenda item 8, the Council's ongoing campaign to promote good health
- this was a pre-election gimmick and did little to address either the damage done by smoking or the spending problems of the NHS
- the Motion did not make economic sense as the Government took more revenue by way of taxes on tobacco than it spent in dealing with its effects
- there was inconsistency in the message given out by some political parties and the suggestion was made that vested interests had a disproportionate influence over the tax-setting regime.

**On a named vote the Motion was lost.**

Those voting in favour were: Ms P Agar, Mrs S Askin, Mr J Baker, Mr C J Bloore, Mr P J Bridle, Mr S C Cross, Mr P Denham, Mr A Fry, Ms P A Hill, Mr M E Jenkins, Ms R E Jenkins, Mr R C Lunn, Mr L C R Mallett, Mr P M McDonald, Mrs F M Oborski, Mr J Parish, Prof J W Raine, Mrs M A Rayner, Mr R J Sutton, Mr J W R Thomas, Mrs E B Tucker, Mr R M Udall and Mr G J Vickery (23).

Those voting against were: Mrs P E Davey, Mr A A J Adams, Mr R C Adams, Mr R W Banks, Mr M L Bayliss, Mr A N Blagg, Mrs S L Blagg, Mr M H Broomfield, Mr J-P Campion, Mr S J M Clee, Mr N Desmond, Mrs L R Duffy, Mrs E A Eyre, Mr S E Geraghty, Mr W P Gretton, Mrs J M L A Griffiths, Mr P Grove, Mr A I Hardman, Mr M J Hart, Mrs A T Hingley, Mrs L C Hodgson, Mr C G Holt, Mr I Hopwood, Mr A P Miller, Dr K A Pollock, Mr D W Prodger, Mr A C Roberts, Mr J H Smith, Mr P A Tuthill and Mr G C Yarranton (30).

Mr A T Amos and Mr S R Peters (2) abstained.

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Health and Well-being presented his report which covered a number of overarching issues:

- Health and Well-being Board
- Health Improvement Group
- Health Protection Group
- Public Health
- Health and Social Care Integration

**1653 Reports of Cabinet Members with Responsibility - Report of Cabinet Member with**

**Responsibility for Health and Well-being (Agenda item 8)**

- Better Care Fund
- Timberdine
- Acute Hospitals Review.

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility answered questions about the report which included:

- the work of the Health and Well-being Board and its present composition
- tobacco control and the Council's agreement to sign up to the Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control. This was felt to be a sensible and prudent way to address smoking as a cause of ill health and increased mortality
- the various action plans for better health and how progress was being monitored
- health inequalities across the county and how these were being addressed.

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility also promised:

- to circulate copies (or links to) all action plans named in the report electronically to all members
- to write to the Acute Hospital Trust and make representations about the level of car parking charges on hospital sites within the county
- to address concerns about the removal of funding for a key support post relating to dementia care

**1654 Question Time (Agenda item 9)**

Eleven questions had been received by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and had been circulated before the meeting. One question (Question 2) was withdrawn at the meeting; the remaining ten questions were asked (or taken as read). All answers are enclosed with these Minutes.

The meeting adjourned from 1.15pm until 2.00 pm for lunch; the meeting ended at 3.18pm.

Chairman .....



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## **COUNCIL 12 FEBRUARY 2015 - AGENDA ITEM 9 – QUESTION TIME**

*Answers given at the meeting may have been a précis of the full answer which is set out below. In some cases additional information is also included. Where, due to time or other constraints, it was not possible for the question to be asked formally the written response is also included below.*

**QUESTION 1** - Mr R M Udall asked Mr S E Geraghty:

*"Will the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Economy, Skills and Infrastructure confirm the importance of food and agriculture to the Worcestershire economy and outline how these industries have been supported by the County Council?"*

### **Answer given**

Firstly, I would like to thank Richard for his question and the opportunity it gives me to update Council on the work that we are doing to support the rural economy.

There are over 1,650 agricultural/forestry business across Worcestershire which makes up 15% of our rural economy; this equated to around £180m GVA in 2012. Despite the fact that over the last ten years the value of GVA for the country's agricultural sector has slightly decreased by 0.7%, agriculture is as a key sector for Worcestershire, as identified in Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnerships Strategic Economic Plan and the Counties Local Development Plan (LEADER 2015-2020).

Key geographical areas for this activity include - The Vale of Evesham in Wychavon which is one of the most important areas for growing and agri-tech in the country. Pershore College, a Centre of Horticultural Excellence is located in Worcestershire, along with the Three Counties Showground, which provides vibrant, innovative events throughout the year. Agriculture is therefore a key feature of Worcestershire's economy and forms a part of our growth strategies for the future.

**Food and drink production** is identified in WLEP's SEP as a key growth area for Worcestershire, with significant opportunities in the areas of the Vale of Evesham for commercial horticulture, with increasing opportunities for growth, including food production and processing facilities; the Wyre Forest and surrounding area for development of smaller scale food production and Teme Valley and the South for commercial fruit production.

Recent consultation for the LEADER program highlighted growth areas in this sector; these included support to increase the added value of food and drink production and for the establishment of local food and drinks brand identities. Strengthening links across local food supply chains and encourage usage of local food and drink could also help to support the food and drink sector. The county has strong local food networks, including Growing Worcestershire, which would be an asset in the development of supply chains.

**Flooding** - Worcestershire is well known for the flooding issues it experienced, particularly in 2007 and more recently in 2014. Flooding has had a significant impact on local agricultural and horticultural businesses as demonstrated by the high volume

of applications received from the area for the Farm Flood Recovery Fund and the Council-run Flood Affected Business Grant.

### **Local Support:**

Worcestershire County Council has been directly and indirectly supporting Agriculture and Food Production, activities include:

- Supporting Agriculture and Horticulture Businesses via our Skills Support for the Workforce Program. This offers local businesses a chance to train their staff in a formal qualification free of charge.
- The Council has a farm management team who lease land to local farmers.
- The Council also runs Women2Web a free digital training scheme aimed at Women in Worcestershire. The project is linked to the roll out of Superfast Broadband in rural areas and has worked with a number of land owners and rural craft industries and farm diversifications.
- Destination Worcestershire which is linked to the Council promotes food based festivals including the popular Plum Festival and Asparagus Festival as well as supporting sustainable rural tourism.
- Flood affected farms who were not able to access DEFRA's Farm Recovery funding were able to be supported by the Council's Flood Recovery Fund for Flood Affected Business.
- Signposting to national provisions and grants via DEFRA and the Rural services Network.
- Agri-tech industries are eligible for all ERDF Programs which means they can access support and grants via our host of ERDF funded programs including Proof of Concept and Enterprising Worcestershire.
- The roll out of Superfast Broadband will be extended to cover 95% of the county following a successful bid to BDUK and monies allocated as part of the LEP's Local Growth Fund This is having a massive impact on rural businesses including agriculture.
- It is also important to note the work the Council does to maintain rural infrastructure to keep business moving through the county and we have continued to invest in the highway network and flood mitigation schemes.

As outlined above, the importance of Agriculture and Food has been highlighted in both the Local Enterprise Partnerships ESIF and SEP Strategies that have both been formally adopted by the Government. It has also been highlighted in our Rural Economic Development Strategy (LEADER) which will be run locally on behalf of DEFRA until 2020. Both strategies have funding attached to them so the offer the Council will have to support this growing sector over the coming years is set to increase.

I hope this further information helps reassure the member about the work the Council is supporting to help the rural economy.

### **Supplementary Question**

In response to a supplementary question in which the questioner invited the Cabinet Member to consider initiating an awards system/ceremony to celebrate Worcestershire Farming and Food and reward local efforts in this sector, Mr Geraghty said he would consider the proposal.

**QUESTION 2** – was withdrawn at the meeting by the questioner.

**QUESTION 3** – Mr P M McDonald asked Mr John Smith:

*"Would the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways please inform me how many road works/repairs have not started on the proposed date?"*

**Answer given**

The Council do not maintain figures for how many road works or repairs do not start on the proposed date. Street works legislation means that contractors don't have to start on the first day of their planned works, so we wouldn't be able to say whether the start date was delayed or not. Informal feedback does suggest that most schemes do start on time. What I can tell the Council is that during the first 6 months of 2014/2015, 88% of road works that required notification to the Street Authority were completed within the planned duration for the works.

Our records show that all programmed highway maintenance works bar two have commenced on the start dates specified on their individual road booking applications or on notified revised dates required under the Traffic Management Act.

The two works that have not started on their proposed dates are the Shrawley and Broadway Drainage schemes due to existing utility apparatus having to be redirected, new commencement dates will be requested once the utility work has been completed.

All highway reactive safety repairs (potholes) have been repaired within the specified response times laid down by the Highway Inspectors.

**Supplementary Question**

In response to a supplementary question Mr Smith outlined the respective responsibilities of the Council and contractors with regard to notification of road works and repairs.

**QUESTION 4** – Mr P M McDonald asked Mrs Sheila Blagg:

*"Will the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care please inform me how she is ensuring that contracted home carers are being paid between visits to clients and not having to pay their own petrol?"*

**Answer given**

It is always the case that our contracts comply with legislation. Contractually providers are required to pay at least the national minimum wage, and we have set our average minimum payment rate based on this including travel time. We followed the United Kingdom Home Care Association (UKHCA) formula for calculating this.

The rates that the Council pays to providers in rural areas are higher reflecting the greater cost of travel time and mileage. Tiered arrangements exist to accommodate this.

Commissioners check the operational records periodically and at least annually to see that sufficient time is allowed between calls, but do not check that travel time has been paid.

Contract monitoring is outcome based on quality of care and outcomes for service users. I receive monthly performance and budget reports from officers on all commissioned services, which includes complaints handling, inspections, random visits and at the other extreme serious case reviews.

As a commissioner of services we cannot interfere with provider employment practices other than stipulating that these must comply with legislation. Officers cannot micro manage the employment packages of each worker on a weekly basis but they do stipulate the contract requirements in renewal notices and act upon complaints from staff or family careers where care quality or health issues have been raised.

### **Supplementary Question**

In response to a supplementary question, in which the questioner made general comments about private sector care providers trying to avoid paying the minimum wage to care workers employed on Council-commissioned contracts. Mrs Blagg stated that if such practices existed she would not condone them. She asked the questioner to provide evidence of specific examples in Worcestershire, if he knew of any; any so notified would be investigated.

### **QUESTION 5** – Mr G J Vickery asked Mrs S L Blagg:

*"Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust has reported in the context of its £28 million forecast budget deficit, an £8 million cost of delayed discharges. Can the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care say how much of that is the fault of the County Council?"*

### **Answer given**

The County Council does not recognise the Acute Trust's figures. The County Council operates on the basis of figures provided by the Department of Health.

Officers will continue to work with the Acute Trust to understand why they differ from official published data.

Official Department of Health data show a total of 695 delayed discharges from acute hospital beds for Worcestershire residents during the April to December period that were the sole responsibility of adult social care. The cost to the local NHS of this would be around £230,000.

### **Supplementary Question**

In response to a supplementary question Mrs Blagg gave an explanation of how money might be reclaimed from the County Council for delayed discharges.

### **QUESTION 6** - Mr G J Vickery asked Mr J-P Campion:

*"82 Councils in England are paying, or committed to pay, their staff the living wage, including Worcester City Council, Bromsgrove District Council, Redditch Borough Council and Wyre Forest District Council. In addition all 32 councils in Scotland are now Living-Wage employers, paying their staff at least the living wage. Will the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Transformation and Change say whether the County Council intends to be a Living-Wage employer?"*

## **Answer given**

As this is a departure from the printed question I trust that the questioner will allow me a little leeway in my answer.

Of course we want to pay our staff a living wage, but this ambition has to be balanced against the resources we have available to us. This Administration has a very clear aim that we want to ensure that people can survive on the wages they are paid and that means in all senses reforming those on lower grades. However, because of the nature of our particular business – including social care and schools, it cannot be done as quickly as we would like. We will be doing it by reform and by progression. I don't necessarily buy into this arbitrary limit and whether it would be appropriate for Worcestershire – it might be higher, it might be lower and to compare some areas in the south of England with Worcestershire is absolutely ridiculous; expenses which make up an individual's outgoings are likely to be very different, rents, travel and so on. I would rather see a rate appropriate for our local area rather than an arbitrary figure which happens to fit very well on election posters.

## **Supplementary Question**

In response to a supplementary question Mr Campion repeated that any adoption of the Living Wage could not be achieved at the present time but remained a future aspiration for this Council.

**QUESTION 7** – Mr R C Lunn asked Mrs E A Eyre:

*"Does the Cabinet Member for Children and Families agree with the comments of Councillor David Simmonds, Chair of the LGA's Children and Young People's Board, that 'Councils are best placed to ensure oversight of all schools is effective and any action needed can be taken quickly'."*

## **Answer given**

The Council has the responsibility to oversee standards in all tax-payer funded schools. This therefore includes Academies and free schools, as well as those maintained by the Council. The relationship between schools and the Council has been changing for several years, moving away from direct intervention by the Council, to a model where support and challenge is provided by a range of partners, for example other schools, the DfE and Ofsted. In Worcestershire we work closely with our schools and maintain the oversight of standards for all learners. We work proactively with Academies and free schools as well as with maintained schools, and where intervention is appropriate this will be either directly by the Council, or through other agencies such as the DfE.

As a Council we are proud of the improvements that schools have led in recent years. In 2014 we recorded our best ever Key Stage 2 results, and Key Stage 4 results are above both national and statistical neighbour levels. 89% of our schools are currently judged by Ofsted to be good or outstanding, the highest proportion in the West Midlands.

## **Supplementary Question**

In response to a supplementary question about support and challenge for local schools the Cabinet Member made reference to the changing relationship between the Council and schools and how this seemed to be providing better outcomes.

**QUESTION 8** – Mrs F M Oborski asked Mrs Liz Eyre:

*"Could the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families tell me:  
- what percentage of Key Stage 1 pupils across the county have taken up the Free School Meal Offer?  
- what assistance the Council is giving to encourage take up?"*

**Answer given**

**1) What percentage of Key Stage 1 pupils across the county have taken up the Free School Meal Offer?**

Provisional take-up of Universal Infant Free School Meals, taken from the January Census is 89% (this includes children eligible for Free School Meals due to low income). This compares to 91% for the Autumn Term. This relates to LA Maintained Schools only – the DfE has chosen not to share Academy data. (The January Census doesn't close for amendment until 20 March and the Census team expect some minor variation in the final figure following further data cleaning.)

**2) What assistance the Council is giving to encourage take up?**

The Council supported all schools involved with the introduction of Universal Infant Free School Meal initiative to bid for available capital money to support the delivery of meals. The first round of bids took place in April 2014, the Council allocated all of its £1.2m to schools. During the second round of bids the Council encouraged schools who met the DfE criteria to bid, thirty five schools bid for additional capital funding and one was successful.

From the start of this initiative the Council has provided information and advice to schools to ensure they are aware of the additional support available. The Council developed a generic application form for schools to use to ensure as many families as possible take up the UIFSM offer. The Council continues to inform schools of the support available from the Children's Food Trust, Food for Life Partnership and Change for Life partnerships.

**Supplementary Question**

In response to a supplementary question the Cabinet Member undertook to make a list available to all members with take-up figures for all county schools.

**QUESTION 9** – Mr P J Bridle asked Mr Marcus Hart:

*"This winter it is predicted that the death toll of vulnerable pensioners will be the highest since the decade 1999 -2009 when the influenza toll was 36,450. It is predicted that this figure will be exceeded by 3,000 to 4,000 this winter. According to the Office for National Statistics, there were 8,800 more deaths than the average of 25,000 in the short time between early December 2014 and 16 January this year. The reportedly useless 'flu vaccine issued this winter and the appalling fuel costs, boosted by the pointless environmental charges have condemned our precious elderly citizens to death by hypothermia or cold induced sickness in their own homes.*

*Have we any comparative statistics for Worcestershire?"*

## Answer given

- There were an estimated 400 excess winter deaths across Worcestershire in 2012/13 - this is the number of deaths during November to March compared to the summer months.
- The main reasons for excess winter deaths are cold weather, which increases the risk of heart attack and stroke, as well as respiratory infections, including influenza.
- Injury which includes falls, slips and trips, account for a very small number of excess winter deaths.
- The risks of increased deaths among our most vulnerable populations in winter are of great concern, and there are many initiatives across Worcestershire to reduce these risks. We work in partnership with the health economy and others to make sure that people at greatest risk are identified and that the right help is available.
- The number of excess winter deaths in Worcestershire shows a similar pattern to England as a whole and other similar areas.
- 2012/13 is the most recent year for which data is currently available – we expect to have figures for 2013/14 and 2014/15 later this year.
- There are a number of initiatives locally to prevent excess winter deaths, including the Warmer Worcestershire programme.
- Flu vaccination has unfortunately not been as effective as usual this year due to changes in one of the circulating strains of flu – however it should still offer protection against other strains and people at risk should take the opportunity to be vaccinated.

## **QUESTION 10** – Mr P J Bridle asked Mr Marcus Hart:

*"The practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is barbaric and appalls any right-minded citizen. I notice that not one case of this is reported in our county, let alone any charge or conviction of a perpetrator. The law is clear and holds anyone and everyone accountable who performs such an act or conceals such an act. Surely we must be seen to take this matter extremely seriously and not just pay it lip service. Are we giving a woman so violated every opportunity to report her ordeal and to protect her identity so that investigation can take place with her safety and confidentiality paramount?"*

*It is difficult to believe that this dreadful practice is not going on in our county. There isn't even the lowest of drum beats from the authorities or the afflicted.*

*Why? Are we being complacent or far too politically correct? Are we doing too little to empower these poor women to come forward? What reports are available from our GPs and hospital maternity wards?"*

## Answer given

When you say 'we' I will assume that you are referring to Worcestershire County Council. I can assure Cllr Bridle and all Members of this Chamber that health and social care services takes this issue very seriously. All women who are identified are referred to a consultant for review. Information is collected by the maternity services and data is returned to the Department of Health. Numbers are too small to be reported, to protect the identity of individuals. Health services have recently started rolling out training to staff and are developing guidelines and protocols to follow. We

will be liaising with health service providers to ensure that the training and protocols are aligned across the health and social care workforce.

**QUESTION 11** – Mr A T Amos asked Mr John Smith:

*"Will the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways ensure that, where relevant and appropriate, local members are in future consulted on proposals to install speed cameras in their electoral divisions?"*

**Answer given**

The requirement, placement, and enforcement of speed cameras is managed by the Safer Roads Partnership. The criteria they use to locate cameras are based upon personal injury accidents and 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds and is not open to consultation. When we are made aware of new speed cameras we will ensure local members are informed. So in short we have no control over the positioning of such cameras at all.

**Supplementary Question**

In response to a supplementary question the Cabinet Member undertook to investigate the operation of a particular concealed traffic speed camera in the Worcester area.