

# **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE CABINET**

Wednesday, 13th October 2004 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors D. C. Norton (Executive Leader), Mrs. M. M. T. Taylor (Deputy Executive Leader), B. L. Fuller C.B.E., Q.F.S.M., Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths, R. Hollingworth and P. J. Whittaker.

Observers: Councillors A. N. Blagg, Mrs. R. L. Dent and Mrs. K. M. Gall.

### 84/04 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meetings of the Executive Cabinet held on 8th September and 15th September 2004 were submitted.

**RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the Meetings be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

### 85/04 **TENDERS COMMITTEE**

The Minutes of the Tenders Committee held on 20th September 2004 were submitted.

**RESOLVED:** that the Minutes be noted.

### 86/04 **ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

#### (1) **SCRUTINY REPORT - TAXI RANKS**

Consideration was given to the recommendation of the Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee that the Cabinet approve the Scrutiny Task Group Report on Taxi Ranks and the recommendations contained within it. The financial implications of the recommendations were reported. Councillor Mrs. R. L. Dent, a Member of the Taxi Ranks Scrutiny Task Group, addressed the Cabinet in support of the recommendations. Cabinet Members were mindful of the limited financial resources available to the Council and it was therefore

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee be thanked for their report;
- (b) that the recommendations within the report be considered as part of the budget preparation process, and in relation to other priorities and demands.

#### (2) **SCRUTINY REPORT - DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS**

Consideration was given to the recommendations of the Housing and Planning Policy and Health and Leisure Scrutiny Committees that the Cabinet approve the Scrutiny Task Group Report on Disabled Facilities Grants and the recommendations contained within it. Members noted that there were minimal financial implications and it was

**RESOLVED:** that the Scrutiny Report on Disabled Facilities Grants and the recommendations within it be accepted.

87/04

**PARISH CHARTER FOR BROMSGROVE**

The Cabinet considered a draft Parish Charter for Bromsgrove which it was proposed to offer to Parish Councils as a framework for future relationships. Discussions were still ongoing with regard to the financial arrangements between the District Council and Parish Councils so this aspect of the Charter would be developed at a later date. Following discussion, it was

**RESOLVED:** that the draft Parish Charter for Bromsgrove be supported as an interim arrangement pending a final decision consequent upon a financial report, and that it be circulated to Parish Councils with an invitation to enter the relationship described in it.

88/04

**MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN**

Consideration was given to a report on the proposed timetable and process to be followed in order to establish the Council's revenue and capital budgets for 2005/06 and medium-term financial plan to 2007/08. It was noted that as the Council's priorities were not likely to be approved as part of the Corporate Plan until December 2004, it would be necessary for Members to give some detailed indication as to their priorities and their relative order of priority outside of the Corporate Plan process, in order to enable the preparation of the budget. It was

**RESOLVED:** that the approach outlined in the report for deciding the 2005/06 budgets and medium-term financial plan to 2007/08 be approved subject to the following amendments:

- (i) the addition of paragraph 4.12 to state that "In appropriate cases the capital will be subject to a repayment schedule at an interest rate agreed with the Corporate Director (Resources)";
- (ii) the timetable set out in Appendix A be amended to include the words "and portfolio holders" in the first line of the process for 20th September and in the first line of the process for 27th September to 5th November.

89/04

**MONITORING OF THE REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2004/05**

The Cabinet considered a report which monitored the position of the revised Capital Programme for 2004/05 as at the end of August 2004. The report set out the variance for each scheme together with explanatory comments from budget holders. Following discussion, it was

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the underspend of £1.057 million at August 2004 and the forecast underspend of £0.390 million at the end of the 2004/05 financial year be noted;
- (b) that the progress made on capital schemes to date as set out in the report be noted.

90/04

**VOLUNTARY ENGAGEMENT - MONITORING BOARD ARRANGEMENTS**

Consideration was given to a report which presented the Minister's response to the Lead Official's report on the Council as part of the Voluntary Engagement process and which also detailed the arrangements for the Government's Monitoring Board. Following discussion, it was

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the Minister's letter received on 7th September 2004 be noted and that the points raised therein be addressed as part of Bromsgrove's Recovery Plan;
- (b) that the Members of the Monitoring Board set out in paragraph 5.3 and the Terms of Reference set out in Appendix 2 of the report be noted and that approval be given to the Council's representatives set out in paragraph 5.5 of the Report;
- (c) that a Special Meeting of the Cabinet and a Special Meeting of the Council be

held on 27th October 2004 to receive and discuss the Recovery Plan for submission to the Minister by 29th October 2004.

91/04      **PERFORMANCE INFORMATION - FIRST QUARTER 2004/05**

Consideration was given to information in relation to the Council's performance during the first quarter of 2004/05 during which Members raised a number of questions to which Officers responded accordingly. It was

**RESOLVED:** that the report be noted.

92/04      **PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY AND GRANT ASSISTANCE POLICY**

The Cabinet considered a report which set out a revised Private Sector Housing Strategy to improve poor standard, unfit or empty dwellings and to enable people to remain in their own homes, together with a number of alternative options relating to the method of grant allocation and recovery when an improved dwelling was sold. Following discussion, it was

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy set out in Appendix I of the report be approved;
- (b) that the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy set out in Appendix II of the Report be approved on the basis of it incorporating the method of grant allocation and recovery set out under Option 4b as detailed in section 4 of the report.

93/04      **ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE REVIEW OF DECISIONS UPON HOMELESSNESS OR NON-ACCEPTANCE ON THE COUNCIL'S HOUSING REGISTER**

The Cabinet considered a proposal to revise the membership of the Appeals Panel when it was dealing with certain housing related appeals in order to contribute towards a good working relationship with Bromsgrove District Housing Trust. It was

**RECOMMENDED:** that when the Appeals Panel is considering a matter connected with homelessness or non-acceptance of an applicant to the Council's Housing Register, a representative of Bromsgrove District Housing Trust be co-opted on to the Panel.

94/04      **CAR PARKING SERVICE - INTRODUCTION OF KEYPADS**

The Cabinet considered a proposal to introduce keypads for the entry of registration numbers on pay and display machines in the Council's car parks as a means of improving enforcement against non-payers as it would stop the practice of ticket swapping. It was predicted that the cost of the keypads would be offset by additional revenue generated within a few months of the scheme being introduced. Having noted the business case for the proposal, it was

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (a) that approval be given to the introduction of keypads for the entry of registration numbers on pay and display machines operated by the Council with immediate effect;
- (b) that the Council agree to release the necessary funds from usable capital receipts as a loan repayable by 30th April 2005 with 5% interest applied.

95/04      **REQUEST FROM WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR CCTV MONITORING**

The Cabinet considered a request from Wyre Forest District Council for Bromsgrove Council to provide a monitoring service for CCTV cameras in Kidderminster Town Centre.

The Head of Community Safety and Engineering clarified the business case for the proposal by drawing Members' attention to the following points:

The proposed additional 7 cameras for Wyre Forest could be accommodated at no extra cost either to the infrastructure or the day to day management.

A proposed charge of £1,500 per camera per annum (£10,500 per annum) would be made for this monitoring provision which was based on the current commercial rate for this activity.

The proposed Service Level Agreement was for an initial 3 years therefore providing a minimum of £31,500 (inflation would be added to years 2 and 3 payments).

The proposed Service Level Agreement would provide for the monitoring of up to 12 cameras. For each additional camera beyond 7, Wyre Forest would pay £1,500 per annum plus inflation for monitoring services.

The total income per annum assuming 12 cameras were utilised would be £18,000 per annum plus any relevant inflation factor.

The minimum revenue over 3 years would therefore be £31,500 plus any inflation factor.

The absolute maximum revenue over 3 years would be £54,000 plus any inflation factor.

The provision of 7 cameras or 12 cameras for Wyre Forest with the existing commitment of an additional 5 cameras for Bromsgrove Council would take the total operation of cameras in the control room to either 96 or 101 cameras.

That when the threshold band of 100 - 110 operational cameras is breached consideration for additional staffing, particularly at peak periods, would need to be addressed.

The provision of an extra person to cover these periods would cost at current rates approximately £18,000 per annum.

It was proposed that any costs associated with future expansions of the CCTV scheme would be met by the income generated from service agreements.

Following discussion and in light of the business case, it was

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the proposal from Wyre Forest District Council be approved on the basis of the terms as set out in the report;
- (b) that the Head of Community Safety and Engineering in conjunction with the Head of Legal Services conclude the formal Service Level Agreement.

96/04

**HOUSING CAPACITY STUDY**

Consideration was given to the outcome of consultation on the draft Bromsgrove Housing Capacity Study. Local Planning Authorities were required to produce an Urban Capacity Study in order to establish how much housing can be accommodated within their urban areas. Following discussion, it was

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the contents of the Housing Capacity Study as now reported be approved and adopted as the District's Urban Capacity Study;
- (b) that subject to the Cabinet receiving an annual briefing note, the Standards Committee be requested to approve the delegation of powers to enable Officers

to update the site details and housing figures on an annual basis using data from the Housing Land Availability Study.

97/04

**PROPOSED CLOSURE OF HAGLEY POST OFFICE**

(The Chairman agreed to the consideration of this item as a matter of urgency as a decision was required thereon before the next meeting of the Executive Cabinet).

The Head of Administrative Services reported that the Council had been consulted by Post Office Limited on a proposal to close the Post Office branch in Birmingham Road, Hagley. Any response needed to be submitted by 10th November 2004.

Members expressed their objections to the proposal as they felt it would deprive the local community of easily accessible Post Office services and possibly also the local shop. It was also felt the closure would particularly disadvantage vulnerable people such as the elderly. It was therefore

**RESOLVED:** that Council register its strong opposition to the proposed closure of Hagley Post Office.

98/04

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**RESOLVED:** that, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the Meeting during the consideration of the item of business the subject of the following Minute on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of "Exempt Information" as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act, the relevant paragraph of that part being as set out below:-

Minute No.  
99/04

Paragraph(s)  
12

99/04

**T.F. 60 LIMITED - FOOD SAFETY ACT 1990 AND THE FOOD SAFETY (GENERAL FOOD HYGIENE) REGULATIONS 1995**

(The Chairman agreed to the consideration of this item as a matter of urgency as a decision was required thereon before the next meeting of the Executive Cabinet).

The Head of Environmental Health Services referred to a decision taken at the last meeting of the Cabinet to instigate legal proceedings against T.F. 60 Limited for offences under the Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) Regulations 1995 and Food Safety Act 1990 (Minute No. 83/04 refers) and updated Members on the case. It was

**RESOLVED:** that legal proceedings be instigated against the company's sole director and also, if necessary, against the company or any individual for obstruction.

The Meeting closed at 8.10 p.m.

Chairman