

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE CABINET

Wednesday, 15th December 2004 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors 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.

Observer: Councillor N. Psirides J.P.

122/04 **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor D. C. Norton.

123/04 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 10th November 2004 were submitted.

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

124/04 **ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

(1) **FLYPOSTING POLICY, WARNING LETTER AND ACTION FLOW CHART**

The Cabinet considered recommendations made by the Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee in relation to flyposting in the District. It was felt that whilst it was important to address the issue of flyposting, at some stage consideration should be given to how events organised by local or charitable organisations could be publicised. It was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the warning letter and the Flyposting Action Flow Chart attached to the report be approved; and
- (b) that where there is evidence of flyposting the policy of sending warning letters in advance of instituting prosecution proceedings and/or proceedings to secure Anti-Social Behaviour Orders be approved.

(2) **LAND ADJACENT TO BROMSGROVE RAILWAY STATION**

The Cabinet considered recommendations made by the Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee in relation to the possible use of land South of Bromsgrove Railway Station as a temporary car park. It was noted that at present the English Welsh Scottish Railways had not carried out the marketing exercise required by the Strategic Railway Authority and therefore the SRA would object to the release of the land. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that the English Welsh Scottish Railways and Network Rail be approached regarding the possibility of using the land lying immediately South of Bromsgrove Railway Station for car parking on a temporary basis.

(3) **FUTURE FUNDING FOR SCRUTINY**

The Cabinet considered a request from the Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee in relation to funding for the implementation of recommendations made by Task Groups and Scrutiny Committees. It was noted that at present there was a budget allocation in relation to scrutiny but that this was intended to cover costs for external, expert assistance to Scrutiny Committees in undertaking their deliberations, e.g., the attendance of expert witnesses at Scrutiny Committees. The work undertaken by Scrutiny Committees was acknowledged but it was felt that any proposed expenditure should relate clearly to the Council's priorities and should be considered as part of the normal budget process. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that an appropriate sum be included in the Revenue and Capital budgets to be under the control of the Corporate Director (Resources) to be utilised for emergency projects which arise including implementing recommendations made by Scrutiny Committees where they are consistent with the Council's priorities.

125/04 **TENDERS COMMITTEE**

The Minutes of the Tenders Committee held on 2nd November 2004 were submitted.

RESOLVED: that the Minutes be noted.

126/04 **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING PARTY**

The Minutes of the Local Government Framework Working Party held on 24th November 2004 were submitted.

RESOLVED: that the Minutes be noted.

127/04 **COMMITTEE TIMETABLE 2005/06**

Consideration was given to the draft Committee Timetable for 2005/06. It was

RECOMMENDED: that the Committee Timetable for 2005/06 be approved.

128/04 **HEREFORD AND WORCESTER COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY – SECOND YEAR ACTION PLAN OF INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Cabinet considered a consultation paper received from the Hereford and Worcester Combined Fire Authority on the draft second year Action Plan of its Integrated Risk Management Plan. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the comments set out in paragraph 3.7 of the Report form the basis of the Council's response to the Fire Authority; and
- (b) that in view of the proximity of the closing date for responses, the Cabinet's decision on the matter be not subject to the Council's call-in procedure.

129/04 **APPLICATION TO PURCHASE LAND AT REAR OF NOS. 2, 4 AND 6 GUILD ROAD, BROMSGROVE**

Consideration was given to the request to purchase an area of land at the rear of Nos. 2, 4 and 6 Guild Road, Bromsgrove. It was noted that Officers felt that the land may form part of a potential site for affordable housing in the future should adjoining land ever become available. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that the application to purchase land at the rear of Nos. 2, 4 and 6 Guild Road, Bromsgrove be refused but that no objection be raised to the Council entering into a licence agreement for use of the land as garden land.

130/04

COUNCIL TAX BASE CALCULATION 2005-06

Having considered the figures relating to the calculation of the Council's Tax Base, it was

RESOLVED: that in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992, the Council's Tax Base for 2005-06 assume a collection rate of 98.5% and be calculated at 34,982.18 for the area as a whole and for individual Parishes as set out in paragraph 3.1 of the Report.

131/04

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The Cabinet considered a report on the Medium Term Financial Plan and considered the information relating to the revenue and capital budget for 2005/06 and the following two years. It was clear that the Authority was facing a difficult financial situation and that the timetable for the budget process was very demanding. Officers were currently considering the options for savings. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the report be noted and the assumptions contained within the formulation of the budget be approved;
- (b) that only the statutory consultation be undertaken this year;
- (c) that the Pension Fund Contribution for the Council for 2005/06 be 15.7%;
- (d) that £14,000 be included in the revenue budget for 2005/06 to undertake more widespread consultation as part of the budget building process for future years;
- (e) that the Capital Programme be limited to £1,000,000 per annum funded from the Council's own resources;
- (f) that consideration be given in due course to the funding of housing grants above the £1,000,000 Capital Programme; and
- (g) that the capital investment criteria as set out in paragraph 9.3 of the report be approved.

132/04

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE

The Cabinet considered a report on progress made in relation to the opening of the Bromsgrove District Customer Service Centre. It was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the progress made towards the opening of the Centre be noted;
- (b) that £45,000 from the budget set aside for the project be released to fund the provision of furniture and fittings required at the Centre; and
- (c) that £43,000 from the budget set aside for the project be released to fund the purchase of additional IT equipment required at the Centre.

133/04

REVENUES AND BENEFITS – CHANGE TO ESTABLISHMENT

Consideration was given to proposed changes in the staffing structure of the Revenues and Benefits Section in order to achieve the improvements needed within the Section as a key part of the Council's Recovery Plan. Following consideration, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the existing vacant post of Principal Benefits Officer (Post T94) be re-graded to SCP 39-43;

- (b) that the existing post of Benefits Assessor (Post T115B) graded on SCP 14-25, be deleted from the establishment; and
- (c) that the Corporate Director (Resources) be authorised to deal with any re-grading issues for the Head of Revenues and Benefits in accordance with the Council's re-grading policy.

134/04

PERSONNEL SERVICES STRUCTURE

The Cabinet considered a report on changes to the structure of the Personnel Section in order to drive forward the challenging agenda faced by the Council as part of its recovery programme and as part of a move to be a modern Council. It was noted that it had not been possible to recruit a suitable person to the post of HR Manager as previously agreed. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the post of HR/Organisational Development Manager be deleted from the establishment;
- (b) that the creation of the post of Head of HR and Organisation Development at a salary of £42,069 to £44,841 be approved;
- (c) that the additional costs associated with the new post of Head of HR and Organisation Development which will be incurred in future years (£14,437) be taken into account the preparation of the budget strategy;
- (d) that the Chief Executive Officer and the Corporate Director (Resources) be authorised to make any amendments to the Job Description and Person Specification as required;
- (e) that the ongoing use of interim personnel support until the post of Head of HR and Development is appointed, be approved;
- (f) that the available balance of funding (from the additional £77,000 included within the budget for 2004/05) of £30,972 be used to procure additional temporary support within HR to address some of the urgent issues; and
- (g) that the Chief Executive Officer and the Corporate Director (Resources) be authorised to identify the most appropriate use for the balance of funds (£30,972).

135/04

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

Consideration was given to the revised version of the Local Development Scheme which is required to enable the production of Local Development Framework documents to proceed. The changes made to the draft document following consultation with the Government Office for the West Midlands were noted. Concern was expressed, however, regarding the financial cost to Authorities of production of a Local Development Framework resulting from the introduction of a new planning policy system under the Planning and Compensation Act 2004. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Local Development Scheme attached to the report be approved as the Council's three year programme of plan production to October 2007;
- (b) that the Scheme be submitted to the Government Office for their approval;
- (c) that the Director of Planning Services be authorised to make minor changes to the timing and submission of documents and examination periods on receipt of comments from the Planning Inspectorate;
- (d) that the Scheme be circulated to Parish Councils for information purposes and be published on the Council's website; and
- (e) that the Council expresses concern to the Local Government Association that the significant cost of implementing changes to the planning policy system has to be met by District Councils and that the changes will be of little benefit to local people.

136/04

LONGBRIDGE LINK ROAD STAGE 2 CONSULTATION

The Cabinet gave consideration to the report on the findings of the Consultants who had undertaken a feasibility study for a new link road providing improved accessibility between Longbridge and the A441 North of Hopwood and ultimately the M42. It was noted that the Policy and Strategy Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 14th December 2004 had expressed support for Option 2 but had suggested that the A38/M5 route should be investigated.

Some concern was expressed regarding the impact of any of the options particularly on the Hopwood area, it was also felt that the possibility of increasing the capacity of the A38 had not been considered. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that the Consultants be informed that whilst this Council recognises that Option 2 is the least environmentally damaging option of those put forward, there are major reservations regarding the proposal unless it can be shown that there would not be an adverse effect on traffic particularly on the A441. Other solutions should also be sought, and in particular the A38 option should be fully tested as a possible alternative route.

137/04

PLANNING SERVICES – DELEGATED POWERS

Consideration was given to the report on the extension of the trial period relating to Planning Services delegated powers. It was

RESOLVED: that the trial period be extended and a report on Planning Services delegated powers be submitted to Cabinet in February.

138/04

UPDATE REPORT ON THE COUNCIL'S DOMESTIC WASTE COLLECTION AND RECYCLING SERVICE – DECEMBER 2004

Consideration was given to the Report updating the position with regard to the modernisation of the Council's domestic waste collection and recycling service. The Report would form the "Position Statement" required in relation to the Audit Commission Inspection. It was noted that as part of the Council's Recovery Plan work was ongoing in a number of areas including budget development and financial processes which would facilitate the development of a comprehensive Business Plan for the next financial year. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the contents of the Report be noted; and
- (b) that subject to the deletion of paragraph 4.3 and the deletion of the last sentence in paragraph 7.7, the Report be endorsed and accepted as the "Position Statement" in relation to Service Performance at the Depot, for the purposes of the ongoing Audit Commission Inspection.

139/04

NATIONAL CYCLE NETWORK ROUTE 5 – STOURBRIDGE ROAD TO BROMSGROVE TOWN CENTRE

The Cabinet considered the report on a proposed alternative route for a section of the national cycle network running through Bromsgrove. It was noted that it had not been possible to complete the route as originally proposed. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the national cycle network alternative route proposal as set out on plan BROM/SCH/029/01 displayed at the Meeting be supported;
- (b) that this Council enter into a Public Path Creation Agreement with Worcestershire County Council to enable the conversion of Section F-H shown on the plan, from its current status of public right of way to bridleway; and

- (c) that Sustrans be requested to consider refunding to this Council part of the cost of providing the original route to which the Council contributed on the basis that proper research into the proposal does not appear to have been undertaken.

140/04 **WRVS RURAL RIDES**

RESOLVED: that this item be deferred to the next Cabinet Meeting to allow time for the Business Plan submitted to be fully considered.

141/04 **LOCAL CULTURAL STRATEGY**

Consideration was given to the Worcestershire Local Cultural Strategy, produced by Bromsgrove in partnership with five District Councils and the County Council in accordance with guidelines produced by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. It was

RESOLVED: that the Bromsgrove with Worcestershire Local Cultural Strategy be endorsed and that the Director of Leisure Services be requested to ensure it is taken into account within the Community Plan and the Leisure Services Service Plan.

142/04 **REPAIRS TO SPADESBOURNE SUITE ROOF**

The Cabinet considered a report on the repairs required to the roof of the Spadesbourne Suite. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that the roof of the Spadesbourne Suite be replaced at an estimated cost of £30,000 and that the capital funding be provided in the current financial year but that the sum available in the Capital Programme for 2005/06 be reduced accordingly.

The Meeting closed at 8.10 p.m.

Chairman