

# **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE CABINET**

Wednesday, 24th August 2005 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs. M. M. T. Taylor (Deputy Executive Leader) (in the Chair), Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths and P. J. Whittaker.

Observers: Councillors W. R. Newnes, N. Psirides J.P. and G. G. Selway.

### 61/05 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B. L. Fuller C.B.E., Q.F.S.M., R. Hollingworth and D. C. Norton.

### 62/05 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 17th August 2005 were submitted.

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

### 63/05 **ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

#### (1) Taxi Ranks

Members considered recommendations made by the Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee in relation to Taxi Ranks. The Chairman of the Taxi Ranks Task Group, Councillor W. R. Newnes, spoke in support of the proposals. It was

**RESOLVED:** that the recommendations contained in the second report of the Taxi Ranks task Group be approved and the funding of approximately £1,200 be met from the provision for contingencies in the 2005/06 budget.

#### (2) Car Parking in Aston Fields for Commuters

Members considered a recommendation made by the Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee that a bid for funding be submitted at the appropriate time for consideration in the draft Capital Programme 2006/07, in respect of the provision of additional parking at Aston Fields Social Club for commuters using Bromsgrove Railway Station. It was

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the recommendation be approved; and
- (b) that negotiations towards an appropriate legal agreement be continued, on the basis that they are provisional until funding has been approved, and subject to the proviso that the car park entrance will remain in Russell Croft.

#### (3) Building Inspections – Recruitment Issues

Members considered a recommendation from the Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee that problems surrounding recruitment of Inspectors in the Building Control Section of the Council be investigated as a matter of urgency. It was

**RESOLVED:** that the problems surrounding recruitment of Inspectors in the Building Control Section be investigated in the next phase of the restructuring process.

64/05

**MOTIONS REFERRED FROM COUNCIL UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10 – IMPROVEMENTS AT BROMSGROVE RAILWAY STATION**

Councillor G. G. Selway spoke in support of the motion relating to improvements at Bromsgrove Railway Station. Following discussion it was

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the proposals of Worcestershire County Council for improvements at Bromsgrove Railway Station be welcomed;
- (b) that the necessity for close working between all public bodies participating in the proposed improvements be recognised and endorsed; and
- (c) that letters of support be sent to the Government Office of the West Midlands, the Department of Transport and Network Rail to encourage their financial support for the proposed improvements.

65/05

**MONITORING OF THE REVENUE BUDGET 2005/06**

The Cabinet considered a report which monitored the position of the Revenue Budget for 2005/06 for the period 1st April to 30th June 2005. The report drew attention to the variances for each service department and provided explanatory comments.

The report also referred to the benefit of extending the Council's current bank contract to 31st March 2007 to allow a full appraisal of the Council's banking requirements to be undertaken.

The Corporate Director (Resources) reported that there had been a delay in purchasing refuse freighters for which there had been a provision of £339,000 within the Capital Budget 2004/05. It would be appropriate to recommend to Council that the sum be transferred to the 2005/06 Capital Budget. It was

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the underspend of £78,000 for the period April 2005 to June 2005 be noted;
- (b) that the variances to net expenditure for the revenue services as set out in the report be noted; and
- (c) that the extension of the bank contract with HSBC until 31st March 2007 be approved;

**RECOMMENDED:** that Capital Budget slippage of £339,000 from 2004/05 to 2005/06 relating to the purchase of refuse freighters be approved.

66/05

**HACKNEY CARRIAGE FARES**

The Cabinet considered a report on whether the Council's table of Hackney Carriage Fares should be regarded as a table of fixed fares, or a table of maximum fares. The Council's Licensing Committee had referred the issue to Cabinet for re-examination following discussions between that Committee and representatives of the local taxi trade. Following consideration of the history of the issue and the length of time since the last formal consultation had taken place, it was

**RESOLVED:** that the matter be deferred and a formal consultation with all Hackney Carriage owners be undertaken.

67/05            **USE OF EXTERNAL FUNDING FOR THE WASH BAY FACILITY AT THE DEPOT**

The Cabinet considered a report on the possibility of funding a shortfall of £18,000 in the Council's Capital Programme in respect of the construction of a vehicle wash bay facility at the Depot, by utilising part of a Waste Performance and Efficiency Grant from DEFRA. Following discussion it was

**RESOLVED:** that the allocation of £18,000 from the DEFRA Waste Performance and Efficiency Grant, towards the cost of providing a vehicle wash bay facility at the Depot be approved.

68/05            **PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – 1ST QUARTER 2005/06**

Having considered the information relating to the Council's performance during the first quarter of 2005/06 which included national performance indicators and some local indicators, it was

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

69/05            **APPOINTMENT OF RETURNING OFFICER AND ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER**

Having considered the report reviewing the appointment of the Council's Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer, it was

**RECOMMENDED:** that the Council appoint Ms. Sue Nixon as Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer.

70/05            **CHANGE MANAGEMENT**

The Cabinet considered a report on a proposal to revise the Recovery Plan to provide a clearer presentation to staff and to ensure the Plan is more measurable for Members and the Government Monitoring Board. Consideration was also given to arrangements to manage and increase the pace of change during the recovery period. Following discussion it was

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the Recovery Plan format of an overview programme, supported by detailed key activity programmes and a four month narrative be approved and adopted;
- (b) that upon the arrival of the new Corporate Director (Services), Mr. C. J. Savage be invited to remain on site under his current employment arrangements for the purposes of continuity and to assist Mr. K. Dicks in the delivery of the Recovery Plan;
- (c) that the arrangement referred to in (b) above be reviewed on a monthly basis with both parties able to terminate the agreement; and
- (d) that the Chief Executive and the Corporate Director (Resources) be authorised to vary the areas of expenditure incurred on recovery provided that the expenditure is contained within the sum of £1,099,000 approved for recovery purposes on 22nd June 2005.

71/05            **WINDMILL AVENUE, RUBERY – PROPOSED PARKING IMPROVEMENTS**

Consideration was given to a report on a request previously received from the proprietor of Windmill Stores, Windmill Avenue, Rubery for improvements to on street parking at the front of the property. Following discussion it was

**RESOLVED:** that in order to facilitate the provision of car parking improvements a bid for funding be made at the appropriate time for consideration in the draft Capital Programme for 2006/07 and that the proprietor be requested to meet half of the costs involved.

72/05                    **CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY**

The Cabinet considered a proposed Customer Access Strategy which defines the Council's aims and objectives for customer contact and sets out proposals to amend the methods by which customers access and use Council services. Following discussion, it was

**RESOLVED:** that the contents of the Customer Access Strategy be approved and endorsed.

73/05                    **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:-

<u>Minute No.</u>	<u>Paragraph</u>
74/05	7

74/05                    **REQUEST FOR WRITE OFF – SUNDRY DEBTS**

Consideration was given to the report on write-offs of Sundry Debts. The Corporate Director (Resources) requested that consideration be given to amending the existing delegation which authorises the Head of Financial Services to write off irrecoverable debts up to the value of £500. It was

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the Sundry Debts set out in Appendix 1 to the report be written off as irrecoverable;
- (b) that the Standards Committee be recommended to approve the amendment of the delegation as follows:
  - (i) the Head of Financial Services be authorised to write off irrecoverable debts of up to £1,000;
  - (ii) the Head of Financial Services in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder be authorised to write off irrecoverable debts of between £1,000 and £2,500;
  - (iii) that consideration of write off of irrecoverable debts of over £2,500 be referred to the Executive Cabinet;
  - (iv) that the Head of Financial Services be authorised to approve the commencement of appropriate proceedings including the service of statutory demands against those debtors who fail to respond to other debt recovery measures.

75/05                    **MR. V. HARRISON**

The Chairman referred to the fact that this was the last Cabinet Meeting which Mr. V. Harrison, Head of Administrative Services, would attend as he was shortly to leave the Council's employ. On behalf of Members and colleagues the Chairman thanked Mr. Harrison for all his assistance and hard work over a number of years and wished him well for the future. Mr. Harrison thanked the Members for their good wishes.

The Meeting closed at 7.15 p.m.

Chairman