

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE CABINET

Wednesday, 28th September 2005 at 6.00 p.m.

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

Observers: Councillors A. N. Blagg, Mrs. A. E. Doyle, Mrs. J. D. Luck, P. M. McDonald, N. Psirides, C. R. Scurrall and C. J. K. Wilson.

79/05 **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor R. Hollingworth.

80/05 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 9th September 2005 were submitted.

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

81/05 **MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP**

The Minutes of the Member Development Working Group held on 12th September 2005 were submitted. Reference was made to the need for consideration to be given to the financial implications of the proposed Member Development Programme covering the next six months. It was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the recommendations set out in Minute No. 21/05 regarding the Member Development Programme be approved in principle, subject to a report on the financial implications being submitted to the Cabinet;
- (b) that the remainder of the Minutes be noted.

82/05 **ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

Planning Services - Staff Salaries

Members considered recommendations made by the Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee regarding the problems surrounding recruitment and retention of Planning Officers and the need to increase the salaries of such staff, and for the staffing structure within Planning Services, particularly the Enforcement Section to be re-assessed. Councillor A. N. Blagg, Chairman of the Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee and Councillor Mrs. J. D. Luck spoke in support of the recommendations.

During consideration of the matter, the Deputy Leader acknowledged that the scrutiny recommendations were timely and paid tribute to Planning staff for the way they had re-organised themselves to deal with the staffing situation they had faced. The Interim Head of Planning and Environment indicated that salaries were under review as part of the restructuring proposals and that a review of business processes was being undertaken. It was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the problems surrounding recruitment and retention of Planning Officers and the need to increase salaries of such staff be investigated as a matter of urgency;

- (b) that once the current vacancies in the Planning Section have been filled and staff have been in the posts for 3-6 months, the staffing structure in the Planning section, particularly the Enforcement Section, be re-assessed.

83/05

**MOTIONS REFERRED FROM COUNCIL UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE
RULE 10**

Control of Rats

Councillors C. J. K. Wilson and P. M. McDonald spoke in support of the motion which called upon the Council to withdraw the call-out fee to respond to rat sightings so as to encourage people to report such sightings.

An officer report in connection with the motion was submitted. Following consideration of the matter, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the current Pest Control charging scheme be confirmed;
(b) that the Cabinet receive a quarterly report on the situation and take action as may be necessary, and that the scheme be reviewed as part of the budget process.

84/05

RECOVERY PLAN - NEW FORMAT

The Cabinet considered a revised format for the Recovery Plan which was intended to be more user-friendly for the Government Monitoring Board, Members and staff and to be a more effective more effective performance management tool. It was

RESOLVED: that approval be given to the adoption of the Recovery Plan in its new format comprising:

- an overview programme showing all activities;
- detailed programmes for each activity showing milestones for development;
- a '4-month horizon' document giving detailed communications on what is to be done.

85/05

REVISING THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

Consideration was given to the proposed timetable and process to be adopted in order to revise the three-year budget strategy for revenue and capital. The Corporate Director (Resources) emphasised that the budget would need to be driven by priorities and clarified that the final Service Business Plans for 2006/2007 would be subject to formal approval by Members. It was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the holding of a facilitated session between Cabinet Members and Senior Management to consider priorities and non-priorities be noted;
(b) that special Meetings of the Cabinet and full Council be held to agree priorities and non-priorities;
(c) that the initial draft Service Business Plans for 2006/2007 will not be considered formally by Members but be developed in conjunction with the appropriate Portfolio Holder;
(d) that further consideration be given to the consultation to be undertaken later in the budget process;
(e) that the Asset Management Plan and Capital Strategy be developed in accordance with the timetable and that these address the remainder of the current financial year and 2006/2007 onwards.

86/05 **AMPHLETT HALL - IMPROVEMENT WORKS**

The Cabinet considered a report on various improvement works which needed to be carried out in order to bring Amphlett Hall in line with the latest standards. Following discussion, it was

RECOMMENDED: that approval be given to the execution of works to Amphlett Hall as set out in the report, and that a budget of approximately £55,000 inclusive of related consultant fees be approved and funded from the Council's revenue reserves.

87/05 **PUBLIC SPEAKING AT PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Consideration was given to a report on the possible introduction of public speaking at meetings of the Planning Committee which set out a suggested scheme for adoption based on research into good practice. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that public speaking at meetings of the Planning Committee be approved in principle;
- (b) that the Chairman of the Planning Committee be asked to lead a 'task and finish' group to be set up comprising five Members to examine the practicalities of such a scheme and to report back recommendations to the Cabinet as soon as possible.

88/05 **A STRATEGY FOR THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES FROM THE STREET SCENE AND WASTE MANAGEMENT SECTION**

The Cabinet considered a report which presented a proposed strategy for the sustainable improvement of the services delivered by the Street Scene and Waste Management Section. The strategy would enable the Council to establish long term financial revenue and capital planning for these services and encompassed proposals for significant growth, particularly in street cleansing.

It was clarified that the Council would not consider developing a separate collection service for nappies as this would be contrary to the Countywide Waste Strategy. Members were also informed that a further report would be brought forward with regard to proposals to deliver better customer care through improved Information Technology. It was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the proposals contained within the strategy be endorsed and that the strategy document be referred to the Health and Leisure Scrutiny Committee for consideration and comment;
- (b) that the strategy form the basis of a public consultation exercise to assist the Council in understanding community needs and in setting its priorities for environmental improvement;
- (c) that the additional resource implications of the strategy be considered as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

89/05 **EXTRA CARE HOUSING FOR OLDER PEOPLE**

The Cabinet considered a report on Extra Care Housing which included proposals for re-modelling the Gilbert Court Sheltered Housing Scheme to Extra Care Housing standard, together with a request for the Council to contribute towards the scheme. In return for this contribution, Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) had proposed a partnership strategy to improve the type and standard of accommodation available to house homeless people which would allow the Council to release capital assets. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that the contents of the report be noted and that approval in principle be given to the submission of a bid by BDHT for Government funding for the provision of Extra Care Housing in the District.

RECOMMENDED: that approval be given to the request by BDHT for capital funding of £1,000,000 towards the re-modelling of a sheltered housing scheme in the District to Extra Care standard on the basis of a commitment by BDHT to work in strategic partnership with the Council to provide alternative temporary accommodation and potentially release capital assets.

90/05

BROMSGROVE TECHNOLOGY PARK - DESIGN GUIDE

This item was withdrawn.

91/05

CAPITAL OUTTURN 2004/2005

Consideration was given to a report on the overall position of capital spending for 2004/2005, the financing of that expenditure, together with a number of requests for carry forward of budgets into 2005/2006. During the discussion attention was drawn to a number of capital schemes which it was felt highlighted the need to improve project management, forward planning and profiling of expenditure. It was also suggested that in some cases, better explanations of the reasons for variances and requests for carry forwards could have been included in the report. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the capital spending of £7.238m against the 2004/2005 Revised Capital Budget, and the capitalisation of expenditure amounting to £2.082m relating to costs incurred on the Large Scale Voluntary Transfer of the Council housing stock to Bromsgrove District Housing Trust be noted;
- (b) that the financing of capital expenditure totalling £10.699m for 2004/2005 be noted;
- (c) that the request to carry forward £35,000 from 2004/2005 to 2005/2006 for the Catshill Community Project be approved in principle, subject to clarification of the scheme and the submission of a schedule of all Section 106 schemes to a future meeting of the Cabinet;

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the request to carry forward £2,000 from 2004/2005 to 2005/2006 for scheme GC476 (Flex Time Machine) be not approved in view of the fact that this had already been carried forward from 2002/2003;
- (b) that a further report be submitted with regard to scheme GC052 (Green Lane Drainage Phase II), and that in the meantime, the request to carry forward £3,000 from 2004/2005 to 2005/2006 be not approved;
- (c) that in the light of a request from the Portfolio Holder for Finance for a schedule of all outstanding work in relation to scheme GC352 (Dolphin Centre - Upgrade), the Corporate Director (Resources) be authorised to determine the request for the carry forward of £171,000 from 2004/2005 to 2005/2006 for this scheme in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance;
- (d) that the Council approve the carry forward of budgets amounting to £1.386m to the Revised Capital Budget for 2005/2006;
- (e) that the Council approve the carry forward from 2004/2005 to 2005/2006 of revenue resources amounting to £16,500 for the purpose of financing the Shopmobility scheme.

92/05

MILL LANE CONTRACTOR COMPOUND AREA

Having considered a report on the retrospective designation of a number of spaces for the use of contractors working on the Mill Lane improvement project in Bromsgrove, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the parking spaces on the Recreation Road South pay and display car park indicated in Appendix A to the report be suspended for use by contractors during the period of works for the Mill Lane improvements;

- (b) that the loss of revenue from the suspension of these spaces be met from excess charges income.

93/05

MILL LANE DEDICATION OF LAND

This item was withdrawn.

94/05

RESIGNATION OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

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

Councillor B. L. Fuller referred to the resignation of Councillor D. C. Norton as Leader of the Council and sought clarification of the mechanisms that would be in place during the interim period until such time as a new Leader was appointed at a meeting of the full Council.

The Chief Executive, on behalf of officers of the Council, paid tribute to the full commitment and dedication shown by Councillor D. C. Norton as Leader of the Council in spearheading the turnaround of the Council and expressed best wishes for his future.

The Chairman also paid tribute and stated that Councillor D. C. Norton had brought the Council to a position where it could look forward to improving and finally reaching its goal which it aimed to achieve by March 2007. His efforts would never be forgotten and without his dedication and sense of purpose as Leader, the Council would not have reached the point it was now at. Members, Officers and Bromsgrove owed him a great debt and the Council could look forward positively to taking its place amongst the best authorities in the country.

It was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that it be noted that following the resignation of Councillor D. C. Norton from the office of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs. M. M. T. Taylor as the Deputy Leader will undertake all roles and functions which would otherwise be undertaken by the Leader, pending the election of a new Leader in due course;
- (b) that Members note with regret the resignation of Councillor D. C. Norton as Leader;
- (c) that the Chief Executive be requested to convey the sentiments as set out above to Councillor D. C. Norton;
- (d) that the Chief Executive write to all Members to formally inform them of the resolution set out in (a) above.

95/05

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>
96/05	7

96/05

SPADESBOURNE SUITE KITCHEN

Following consideration of the report, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that approval be given to the Council entering into a rental agreement for the use of the Spadesbourne Suite kitchen with CP Catering for an initial three year period;
- (b) that the Head of Culture and Community Services in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to agree appropriate terms including rental.

The Meeting closed at 8.10 p.m.

Chairman