

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE CABINET

Wednesday, 30th November 2005 at 4.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors R. Hollingworth (Executive Leader), Miss D. H. Campbell JP, Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths, Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP, Mrs C. J. Spencer, Mrs. M. M. T. Taylor and P. J. Whittaker

Observers: Councillors Mrs. J. Dyer M.B.E., Mrs. K. M. Gall, D. C. Norton, N. Psirides JP and C.R. Scurrall

114/05 **INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chairman introduced Mr. I. Marshall who had been nominated by the Council's Monitoring Officer to deputise for him in his absence for the consideration of the restructuring update report. During the course of the Meeting, the Chairman also welcomed Mr. H. Bennett, Assistant Chief Executive, Mr. P. Street, Corporate Director (Services) and new Portfolio Holders to their first Meeting of the Cabinet.

115/05 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 26th October 2005 were submitted.

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

116/05 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

In accordance with the procedure agreed by the Council for answering Public Questions, the Cabinet considered a question raised by Mr. A. Pugh in relation to the re-appointment of a retiring Independent Member of the Standards Committee.

The Portfolio Holder for Human Resources and Legal and Democratic Services responded to the question during which she advised that the Standards Committee had made its recommendation in a reasonable manner and had followed due process. It was

RESOLVED: that the response provided by the Portfolio Holder for Human Resources and Legal and Democratic Services be noted and conveyed to Mr. Pugh in writing.

117/05 **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BOARD**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Performance Management Board held on 10th November 2005 were submitted.

RESOLVED: that the Minutes be noted.

118/05 **TENDERS COMMITTEE**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Tenders Committee held on 18th November 2005 were submitted.

RESOLVED: that the Minutes be noted.

119/05 **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING GROUP**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Local Development Framework Working Group held on 25th October 2005 were submitted.

RESOLVED: that the Minutes be noted.

120/05 **BUSINESS CASE - PROCUREMENT**

The Cabinet considered the business case for a proposal to share Worcester City Council's Procurement Manager and to have use of a specialist buyer for an initial twelve month period. It was felt that this would significantly aid the delivery of the Council's Procurement Strategy which was a key element of the Council's recovery. Following discussion, it was

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the proposals as set out in the report be endorsed, subject to the correction of the typographical error in paragraph 8.2 to refer to Option 3 not Option 1;
- (b) that the Council approve the release of £11,933 of reserves in 2005/2006 and £23,867 in 2006/2007.

121/05 **AUDIT BOARD PROPOSALS AND TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Having considered a report on a proposed new Audit Board and its terms of reference, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that approval in principle be given to the establishment of an Audit Board and to the adoption of the terms of reference, as set out in the report;
- (b) that the Standards Committee be requested to recommend the Council to approve the amendment of the Articles of the Constitution to include the terms of reference of the Audit Board.

122/05 **2005/2008 REVISED STRATEGIC AUDIT PLAN YEAR 1**

Having considered the need to revise and update the first year of the 2005/2008 Strategic Audit Plan, it was

RESOLVED: that the revisions and updated first year of the 2005/2008 Strategic Audit Plan, as detailed in the report, be noted and approved.

123/05 **MONITORING OF THE REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET 2005/2006**

The Cabinet considered a report which monitored the position of the Revenue Budget for 2005/2006 as at 30th September 2005 and provided explanations for the variances for the respective Service Departments. The report also monitored the position with regard to the Revised Capital Programme for 2005/2006 and the resources made available under the capitalisation direction. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the net revenue underspend of £38,000 for the period April 2005 to September 2005 be noted;
- (b) that Heads of Service be reminded of the need to contain net revenue expenditure within budget and to achieve the savings set out in the Budget report;
- (c) that the capital underspend of £511,000 against the Revised Capital Programme as at September 2005 be noted;
- (d) that the underspend of £11,000 against the capitalisation direction as at September 2005 be noted;
- (e) that the progress made on capital schemes to date be noted.

124/05 **RECOVERY ACTION AND WRITE-OFF POLICIES**

Having considered a proposed new debt recovery policy and guidelines for the write-off of debts, it was

RESOLVED: that the policies relating to recovery and write-off of debts as set out in Appendices A and B to the report be approved and adopted.

125/05 **DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF REVIEW - NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES**

Having considered a report on a review of the Discretionary Rate Relief for National Non-Domestic Rates to be awarded for the next two years, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that Discretionary Relief be awarded for the period 1st April 2006 to 31st March 2008 for those organisations listed in Appendices I, II and III of the report;
- (b) that the Discretionary Relief awarded to those Working Men's Clubs/Social Clubs set out in Appendix III of the report be reviewed in 2007/2008 to take account of bar takings.

126/05 **DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF - BROMSGROVE ARTS CENTRE TRUST**

The Cabinet considered a report on a proposal to award 20% 'Top-Up' Discretionary Rate Relief for National Non-Domestic Rates to Bromsgrove Arts Centre Trust. Having noted that the organisation met the required criteria, it was

RESOLVED: that 'Top-Up' Discretionary Relief be awarded to the Bromsgrove Arts Centre Trust for the period 1st April 2005 to 31st March 2008, in line with existing policy.

(NOTE: Councillors Miss D. H. Campbell JP and Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths declared their respective personal interests in this item as members of the Arts Centre Operating Trust.)

127/05 **GRANT APPLICATION - AMPHLETT HALL**

Having considered a grant application from Amphlett Hall, it was

RESOLVED: that in view of funding having been made available in the approved Budget for 2005/2006, the application from Amphlett Hall for a grant of £8,300 be approved.

128/05 **CHRISTMAS PARKING ARRANGEMENTS**

(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 Cabinet.)

The Portfolio Holder for Street Scene and Waste Management referred to the tradition of providing free parking in the run up to Christmas and proposed that free parking be provided on the two weekends prior to Christmas. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that free parking be allowed in the Council's pay and display car parks on 10th, 11th, 17th and 18th December 2005;
- (b) that this concession be adopted as the policy for future years.

128/05

POLICE RESTRUCTURING

(The Chairman agreed to the consideration of this item as a matter of urgency.)

The Portfolio Holder for Culture and Community referred to consultations which had taken place regarding proposals for a major restructuring of police forces with particular regard to the proposals affecting West Mercia. The Council had been given a very short time in which to respond to the proposed options, which had caused some concern in view of the significance of the issue, together with a lack of information about potential financial implications. The Council was mindful that West Mercia Police was one of the best performing police forces in the country and wished to see it retained rather than being merged into a new Regional Strategic Force. The Chief Executive and Head of Culture and Community Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, had therefore agreed and submitted a response to express support for the option of a West Mercia Strategic Police Service. The Chairman expressed his thanks for their efforts in dealing with this matter in the short time that was available.

It was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the response submitted regarding the Police Restructuring be noted and endorsed;
- (b) that the Chief Executive be requested to circulate a copy of the response to all Members of the Council and the press.

130/05

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>
131/05	1

131/05

RESTRUCTURING UPDATE

The Cabinet considered restructuring proposals for below Head of Service level. The Chief Executive assured Members that there would be meaningful consultation. Once structures had been agreed, these would be circulated to Members for information. Following discussion, it was

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the organisational restructuring proposals be noted and approved;
- (b) that the Council approve the release of £232,000 from reserves for 2005/2006 and £58,000 for 2006/2007;
- (c) that the use of £142,326 per annum from the amount set aside for contingencies be approved;
- (d) that the Chief Executive and Corporate Director (Resources) be given delegated authority, in consultation and agreement with the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Human Resources, to consider early retirements/redundancies.

The Meeting closed at 5.10 p.m.

Chairman