

## **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE CABINET**

Wednesday, 6th December 2006 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors R. Hollingworth (Executive Leader), Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths (Deputy Executive Leader), Mrs. J. Dyer M.B.E., Mrs. M. A. Sherrey J.P., Mrs. C. J. Spencer, Mrs. M. M. T. Taylor and P. J. Whittaker.

Observers: Councillors Miss D. H. Campbell and Mrs. S. J. Baxter  
Mr. J. Edwards (Lead Official)

#### 103/06 **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor B. L. Fuller C.B.E., Q.F.S.M.

#### 104/06 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 1st November 2006 were submitted.

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

#### 105/06 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

##### **(a) Task Groups**

Further to Minute 88/06, the Portfolio Holder for Street Scene and Waste Management expressed concern that of the existing Task Groups, three involved significant input from Officers from Street Scene and Waste Management which could result in an adverse impact on staff resources.

##### **(b) Removal of Spoil Heaps at St Chad's Park, Rubery**

Further to Minute 101/06 it was reported that the spoil heaps at St Chad's Park had been removed and that the area would be re seeded.

#### 106/06 **BDHT SCRUTINY REPORT**

The Cabinet considered recommendations made by the Scrutiny Steering Board regarding the relationship between the Council and the Bromsgrove District Housing Trust based on the report of the Task Group set up to scrutinise this matter. The Cabinet acknowledged the work undertaken by the Task Group in producing a clear and straightforward report on the issue. It was recognised that since the production of the report in July 2006 some issues had moved on, partly as a result of the work of the Task Group.

**RESOLVED:**

(a) that no action be taken to establish an Advisory Group of the Executive Cabinet to explore ways in which the relationship could be further improved at the present time, in view of the work being undertaken by Officers and the improvement achieved in the working relationship between the Council and BDHT;

(b) that the possibility of providing a Rent Collection Service at the Customer Service Centre for BDHT tenants be investigated and form part of discussions in relation to working in partnership with BDHT on a number of Housing issues;

(c) that it be noted that BDHT have now made alternative arrangements in relation to payroll services but that the possibility of joint provision in the future of payroll services by an external provider be acknowledged;

(d) that it be noted that the Officers are currently considering a new approach to the provision of CCTV and Telecare Services including working closely with other Local Authorities, but that further consideration be given as to how monitoring of the services can be properly achieved;

(e) that Members be informed that queries regarding responsibility for maintenance of certain pieces of land in the District can be resolved by reference to plans held by Legal and Democratic Services and that a copy of the documentation will be placed in the Members' area;

(f) that it be noted that discussions are already taking place with BDHT with regard to jointly investing in resources required for Grounds Maintenance and that this be pursued;

(g) that it be noted that the Cabinet Advisory Group on Affordable Housing is now actively addressing the provision of land for affordable housing and closer involvement with BDHT is being achieved through the Local Strategic Partnership. In addition it is intended that a report be submitted to Executive Cabinet early in 2007 relating to possible Preferred Partnership Status for BDHT.

(Councillor Mrs. C. J. Spencer declared a personal interest in this item as one of the Council's representatives on the BDHT Board).

107/06

**AUDIT BOARD**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Audit Board held on 21st November 2006 were submitted.

Councillor Mrs. S. Baxter, Chairman of the Board, addressed the Cabinet and commented that it may be appropriate for the frequency and timing of meetings to be driven by events rather than by a fixed timetable of meetings.

**RESOLVED:**

(a) that the Minutes of the Meeting be noted;

(b) that the possibility of scheduling meetings of the Board as they are required be considered.

108/06

**SCRUTINY STEERING BOARD**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny Steering Board held on 31st October 2006 were submitted.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Steering Board referred to the decision of the Board made at its meeting on 5th December 2006 to invite members of the Post Watch Midlands Group to attend the next meeting of the Board for a discussion and information gathering exercise relating to the issue of closure of Rural Post Offices.

The Chairman of the Board also reported an issue raised at the Board's meeting on 5th December 2006 regarding the methodology used in obtaining of performance information in relation to the Local Performance Indicator on missed bins.

**RESOLVED:**

(a) that the Minutes of the Meeting be noted;

(b) that the Leader of the Council, the Chairman of the Scrutiny Steering Board and appropriate Officers meet with representatives of the Post Watch Midlands Group to determine whether there are any proposals to close Post Offices within the Bromsgrove District Council area;

(c) that the question of collection of data on missed bins be considered under the agenda item on the Improvement Plan.

109/06

**PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BOARD**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Performance Management Board held on 24th November 2006 were submitted.

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

110/06

**MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN**

Consideration was given to a report on the current position on the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2007/08 to 2009/10 in relation to both Capital and Revenue budgets. It was reported that a presentation would be made to all Members on 20th December 2006. It was

**RESOLVED:**

(a) that the current financial position for 2007/08 to 2009/10 be noted;

(b) that Heads of Service be requested to provide information relating to alternative ways of delivering services to demonstrate how levels of financial efficiencies could be achieved during 2007/08 to 2009/10 to ensure a robust and balanced budget;

(c) that Members give consideration to any additional budget pressures and the prioritisation of pressures and savings as identified in appendices C and D to the report.

111/06 **COUNCIL TAX BASE CALCULATION 2007/08**

Having considered the figures relating to 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 2007/08 assume a collection rate of 99.00% and be calculated at 35,939.18 for the area as a whole and for individual Parishes as set out in appendix 1 of the report.

112/06 **IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND EXCEPTION REPORT SEPTEMBER 2006**

Consideration was given to the updated Exception Report and Improvement Plan. There was also a discussion on the issue relating to the collection of performance data on missed bins raised by the Scrutiny Steering Board referred to in Minute 108/06.

**RESOLVED:**

(a) that the corrective actions being undertaken to address the contents of the Improvement Plan be noted;

(b) that it be noted that 94% of the Improvement Plan is on target or only one month behind;

(c) that no action be taken to amend the method of collecting data in relation to the reporting of the Local Performance Indicator on missed bins but that the focus be on the improvement of the service itself.

113/06 **BUSINESS PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

The Cabinet considered a report on an amended process for Business Planning and Performance Management together with an Annual timetable for the process. Following discussion it was

**RESOLVED:**

(a) that the process set out in appendix 1 to the report "Business Planning in a Nutshell" be approved;

(b) that the Annual timetable set out in appendix 2 to the report be approved and adopted;

(c) that the process and timetable be adhered to for at least a one year period.

114/06

**PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – QUARTER 2 2006**

The Cabinet considered a report on the Council's performance at 30th September 2006. Following discussion it was

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the corrective action being taken be noted;
- (b) that it be noted that 52% of indicators are improving or stable;
- (c) that it be noted that targets are being achieved in 39% of indicators;
- (d) that the revised targets for performance indicators as set out in section 4.7 of the report be approved.

115/06

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER**  
**STRONG AND PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES**

The Cabinet considered a report on the Central Government White Paper on the future of Local Government. It was felt that all members should have the opportunity to fully understand the contents and the implications of the White Paper. In addition there was a need for further consideration to be given to the possibility of unitary status and/or enhanced two tier working. Following discussion it was

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the proposals within the Local Government White Paper be noted ;
- (b) that arrangements be made for a presentation to members on the White Paper and that in the meantime members be urged to familiarise themselves with the contents of the White Paper;
- (c) that the issue of unitary status and/or enhanced two tier working be considered at the special meeting of Executive Cabinet already scheduled for 16th January 2007.

116/06

**UPDATE ON REVIEW OF PEST CONTROL SERVICE**

Following consideration at a previous meeting of a report on the review of the Pest Control Service when it was decided to externalise the Service, consideration was given to a report which sought to define the term "vulnerable", as residents who came within this definition would receive free provision of services relating to Pest Control. Following discussion it was

**RESOLVED:**

(a) that "vulnerable" be defined as those households where the main householder is in receipt of either Income Support, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit;

(b) that this definition be used in future in determining any concessions in relation to Council services;

(c) that any concessions be considered on a service by service basis until a comprehensive concessions policy is developed.

117/06

**UPGRADING OF CCTV FACILITIES AT ST CHADS PARK RUBERY**

Consideration was given to a report on the upgrading of the CCTV facility at St Chads Park Rubery, including the expansion of the telephone line facility to allow for future growth in CCTV coverage. Following discussion it was

**RESOLVED:**

(a) that the scheme to upgrade the CCTV facility at St Chads Park, Rubery at a cost of £29,000 be approved;

(b) that that the Scheme be included in the revised capital budget for 2006/07;

(c) that the sum of £29,000 be vired from the projected underspend on the capital budget for the provision of CCTV facilities at Wythall/Drakes Cross;

(d) that the telephone line costs of £1,000 per annum be approved.

118/06

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (EARLY TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT) (DISCRETIONARY COMPENSATION) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2006**

The Cabinet gave consideration to a report on new Regulations relating to early termination of employment and discretionary compensation. There was discussion on a proposed new policy in response to the Regulations. It was

**RESOLVED:**

(a) that the Council's existing practice of paying redundancy payments based on actual weeks pay be continued;

(b) that it be agreed that the Council does not exercise its discretion to award additional pensionable service under the augmentation provisions;

(c) that the Council's existing custom and practice arrangements in

relation to the 2000 Regulations continue to apply for those whose employment commenced before October 2006 and whose termination date is on or after 1st October 2006 and before 1st April 2007, but that at the end of the current financial year the discretionary payments payable be in accordance with the new policy.

**RECOMMENDED:** that discretionary powers be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Head of Financial Services and the relevant Portfolio Holder to make a single lump sum payment (including any redundancy payment where necessary) of up to no more than 52 weeks actual pay to any employee in accordance with the criteria set out in the report.

119/06

**RENT IN ADVANCE AND DEPOSIT BOND SCHEME**

Consideration was given to a report on the detailed operation of a Rent in Advance and Deposit Bond Scheme which had been approved in principle by Executive Cabinet on 1st November 2006. In view of the Council's commitment to seek to tackle and reduce homelessness in the District, it was

**RESOLVED:**

(a) that the detailed information relating to the operation of a Rent in Advance Deposit Bond Scheme for implementation in accordance with the previous decision of Cabinet on 1st November 2006 be approved;

(b) that the Scheme be categorised as high priority within the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2007/08.

120/06

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION "SPEND TO SAVE" SCHEME**

Consideration was given to a report on the detailed operation of a Homelessness Prevention "Spend to Save" Scheme which had been approved in principle by Executive Cabinet on 1st November 2006. In view of the Council's commitment to seek to tackle and reduce homelessness in the District, it was

**RESOLVED:**

(a) that the detailed information relating to the operation of a Homelessness Prevention "Spend to Save" Scheme for implementation in accordance with the previous decision of Cabinet on 1st November 2006 be approved;

(b) that the Scheme be categorised as high priority within the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2007/08.

121/06

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING – HOUSMAN CLOSE, CHARFORD**

Consideration was given to a report on a proposal from Bromsgrove District Housing Trust to develop four units of affordable housing for

older people on land in the ownership of the Council and currently designated as open space play facility at Housman Close, Charford, Bromsgrove. The proposal included the provision to site play equipment on other sites in Charford owned by BDHT. In view of the opportunity to promote the provision of affordable housing, to assist with the Charford Regeneration Project and to provide enhanced play facilities in the area, it was

**RESOLVED:**

(a) that the land at Housman Close, Charford identified in the report be conveyed to BDHT for the development of affordable housing at a figure below market value, to be negotiated by Officers in consultation and agreement with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing;

(b) that the conveyance of the land at Housman Close to BDHT be undertaken on the basis that, subject to successful local consultation being undertaken, the Council be permitted to site play equipment on either or both of the Humphrey Avenue and Austin Road sites identified in the report.

122/06

**MALVERN OUTDOOR EDUCATIONAL CENTRE**

(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)

It was reported that a letter had been received from Malvern Hills District Council seeking this Council's support for a motion passed by that Council expressing concern over the proposal of Worcestershire County Council to withdraw grant funding to the Malvern Outdoor Educational Centre from September 2008. Malvern Hills District Council were requesting other Districts within Worcestershire to write to the County Council requesting reconsideration of the funding proposal.

Following discussion and in view of the usage of the Centre by children throughout Worcestershire it was

**RESOLVED:** that a letter be sent to Worcestershire County Council requesting reconsideration of its proposal to discontinue its financial support for Malvern Outdoor Educational Centre from September 2008.

123/06

**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 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, the relevant paragraph(s) of that part being as set out below:-



Minute No.  
124/06

Paragraphs  
7, 8 and 9

124/06

**CUSTOMER FEEDBACK SYSTEM**

Following consideration of the report, it was

**RESOLVED:**

(a) that the purchase of the Managing Customer Feedback Solution from Tagish Limited be approved subject to consideration as part of the budget process;

(b) that the Scheme be categorised as high priority in the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2007/08.

The Meeting closed at 8.20 p.m.

Chairman