

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE CABINET**

**WEDNESDAY, 6TH APRIL 2011 AT 6.00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Councillors R. Hollingworth (Chairman), G. N. Denaro (Vice-Chairman), Dr. D. W. P. Booth JP, Mrs. J. Dyer M.B.E., Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP, R. D. Smith, M. J. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Ms. S. Hanley, Mr. H. Bennett, Ms. J. Pickering, Mrs. C. Felton, Mr. J. Godwin, Mr. A. Coel and Ms. R. Cole.

149/10 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

150/10 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Mrs J. Dyer MBE declared a personal interest during the discussion on Agenda Item 10 (Government Homelessness Grant and Support for Preventative Services) as a Trustee of Bromsgrove Youth Homelessness Forum.

151/10 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd and 23rd February 2011 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be approved as a correct record in each case.

152/10 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

The minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 1st February 2011 and 1st March 2011 were submitted.

**Minutes of the meeting held on 1st February 2011**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 1st February 2011 be noted, including the recommendations contained at 9/10 relating to the Draft Medium Term Financial Plan which had been taken into account as part of Cabinet discussions thereon.

**Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March 2011**

Following particular discussion on the contents of minute 16/10 relating to the Annual Civic Bonfire Event, it was

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that recommendation (a) relating to the further investigation of sponsorship of the event be approved;
- (b) that no action be taken with regard to recommendation (b) relating to a postal code sampling survey as this was felt to be impracticable and of limited value;
- (c) that it be noted that recommendation (c) relating to continued review of the event in the context of budget restraints was being already undertaken; and
- (d) that the remainder of the minutes be noted.

153/10 **WORCESTERSHIRE SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee held on 28th February 2011 were submitted.

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

154/10 **SHARED SERVICES BOARD (NON CONFIDENTIAL)**

The minutes of the meeting of the Shared Services Board held on 22nd March 2011 relating to non confidential and non exempt items were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be noted

**RECOMMENDED** that the revised programme timeline for the delivery of Shared Services and Transformation between the two Councils be approved.

155/10 **VERBAL UPDATES FROM THE LEADER AND/OR OTHER CABINET MEMBERS ON ANY RECENT MEETINGS ATTENDED IN AN EX-OFFICIO CAPACITY**

Councillor G. N. Denaro reported that he had attended a meeting of the Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

Councillor Mrs. J. Dyer MBE reported that she had attended a LEP Transport Group.

Councillor Mrs M. A. Sherrey reported she had attended a BECAN celebration event at the Ryland Centre which had been supported by District Council officers and which had been extremely successful.

156/10 **BROMSGROVE MUSEUM**

The Cabinet considered a report on the latest position regarding negotiations on the disposal of the Bromsgrove Museum building.

The Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services reported on a request received from the Norton Collection Museum Trust (formerly the Friends of the Norton Collection Charitable Trust) to be granted a twelve month option to

purchase the Bromsgrove Museum building which would enable third parties to commit funds to the project on a more secure basis.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the latest position regarding negotiations with the Norton Collection Museum Trust be noted;
- (b) that the Norton Collection Museum Trust be granted an option to purchase the Museum building for the sum of £285,000 on terms to be agreed; and
- (c) that authority be delegated to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council to determine the terms of the option to purchase on the basis that it would be for a definite period of twelve months from the date that the option is granted.

157/10 **BROMSGROVE WAR MEMORIAL - CHANGE OF NAME**

Members considered a report on a request for the transfer of a licence previously granted by the Council to the THANKSS Charity (To Honour and Acknowledge those Killed and Still Serving) to the Bromsgrove Armed Forces Memorial Fund. Members were reminded that the Licence was in respect of the erection of a war memorial on land at Amphlett Hall, Crown Close, Bromsgrove.

Members queried whether in view of the change of name of the Charity, it was still the intention to honour those currently serving in the armed forces as well as those who had lost their lives. The Section 151 Officer undertook to check this with the organisation.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the request to transfer the licence previously granted to the organisation known as THANKSS to the Bromsgrove War Memorial Fund to enable the erection of a memorial on land at Amphlett Hall, Bromsgrove be approved;
- (b) that the above approval be subject to the Bromsgrove War Memorial Fund becoming a registered Charity and the production of a viable business case in respect of the project; and
- (c) that authority be delegated to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Services, to approve the detail of the business case and design of the memorial.

158/10 **GOVERNMENT HOMELESSNESS GRANT AND SUPPORT FOR PREVENTATIVE SERVICES**

The Cabinet considered a report on progress made on current schemes to prevent and address homelessness within the District funded by grant from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) during 2010/2011.

The report also sought approval from Cabinet for the allocation of DCLG grant funding to specific schemes during 2011/2012 which had been recommended by the Bromsgrove Homelessness Strategy Steering Group.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the update on the homelessness prevention and support schemes funded by the DCLG homelessness Grant during 2010/2011 be noted;
- (b) that the use of the DCLG Homelessness Grant for 2011/2012 be approved in respect of the schemes for 2011/2012 recommended by the Bromsgrove Homelessness Strategy Steering Group;
- (c) that the funding from the DCLG Homelessness Grant of a new temporary Private Sector Housing Options part time post be approved for one year at a cost of £10,100, together with the establishment of a fund of £5,000 to offer discretionary Housing Benefit payments to those who have accessed the private rented sector through the Housing Options service and others adversely affected by the Housing Benefit changes; and
- (d) that authority be delegated to the Head of Community Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing, to allocate any under spend or make further adjustments necessary to ensure full utilisation of grant allocation for 2011/2012 in support of existing or new schemes and to approve expenditure of the Non Tenure Specific Economic Recovery Fund.

159/10 **COUNTYWIDE HOUSING STRATEGY FOR WORCESTERSHIRE 2011 - 2014**

The Cabinet considered a report on a draft Countywide Housing Strategy and accompanying action plan together with a local Housing Strategy Action Plan for Bromsgrove.

It was reported that the Countywide Housing Strategy had been developed jointly by the six District Councils in Worcestershire following approval for this approach from Chief Executives and Leaders in 2009. Previously each of the Strategic Housing Authorities had developed individual strategies and this had improved ways of working together and had lead to an increase in the number of countywide initiatives.

Whilst Worcestershire Districts had been working in effective partnership for a number of years on housing matters, it was envisaged that the adoption of this Countywide Strategy would enable a more integrated approach to the development and delivery of housing services.

Members welcomed improved partnership working through the Countywide Strategy together with the individual Strategic Housing Action Plan which was specific to the Bromsgrove District.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the report be noted;
- (b) that the Draft Countywide Housing Strategy and action plan attached as appendix 1 to the report be approved and that authority be

- delegated to the Head of Community Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing to agree any minor changes arising from the consultation process; and
- (c) that the Housing Strategy Action Plan for Bromsgrove attached as appendix 2 to the report be approved.

160/10 **WORCESTERSHIRE LOCAL INVESTMENT PLAN AND AFFORDABLE HOMES PROGRAMME**

The Cabinet considered a report relating to:

- (i) a proposed Local Investment Plan (LIP) for Worcestershire;
- (ii) a range of proposed Government reforms to the way that social housing is delivered, in particular the Homes and Communities Agency's (HCA) new "Affordable Housing Programme Framework"; and
- (iii) the proposed response of the Council's Principal Preferred Partners (BDHT and West Mercia Housing) to the Government's new framework for the delivery of affordable housing. In particular the report gave an overview of the bid currently being formulated by BDHT and West Mercia for submission to the HCA by 3rd May 2011 in order to seek grant subsidy over the next four years. It was clear that the HCA would require confirmation that the bid had the support of the Strategic Housing Authority.

In relation to (iii) the Strategic Housing Manager gave an update on the recent discussions which had taken place with BDHT and the amended detail of their developing bid to HCA which now proposed 229 dwellings over a four year period. It was reported that due to the timescale and outcomes required by the HCA the proposal for the ring fencing of 50% of capital receipts from rural disposals was no longer workable and therefore section 6.8 of the report should be disregarded.

Members discussed the proposed bid in detail and raised issues of concern particularly regarding the loss of housing stock in rural areas. It was felt however that following the discussions which had taken place with BDHT and in view of the continuing need for cooperation and close working on future bids to HCA it should be possible to address any potential issues at an early stage. Members were also mindful of the commitment which BDHT were making to the bid.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the Worcestershire Local Investment Plan attached as appendix 1 to the report be approved;
- (b) that the range of proposed reforms in respect of the delivery of affordable housing and the summary of key elements of the HCA's new Affordable Delivery Framework as set out in section 5 of the report be noted;
- (c) that the content and principles of the BDHT bid to HCA as outlined in section 6 of the report and as amended at the meeting be approved, subject to it being made clear to BDHT that there is a requirement for improved communication with the Council's Chief Executive in respect of approval for proposed disposals, in order to ensure that no

unreasonable concentration or pattern of disposals occurs in any particular rural area or other part of the District.

161/10 **BROMSGROVE PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY AND ASSISTANCE POLICY**

Members considered a report on an updated version of the Council's Private Sector Housing Strategy (2009 – 2014) which reflected additional and improved information available since the Strategy was approved in April 2009 together with the current level of funding available and an updated action plan.

Members also considered a revised version of the Council's Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy which contained proposed amendments to achieve a uniform policy in respect of the processing of Disabled Facility Grants and Home Repair Assistance across the Worcestershire Districts whose customers are served by the Worcestershire Care and Repair Service.

In addition Members noted that the Kick Start Equity Release Scheme would cease to operate as from 31st March 2011 following the withdrawal of both regional funding and Government funding to support private sector housing renewal.

Members felt that in relation to the repayment of Home Repair Assistance Loans, whilst the removal of the ten year time limit for repayment was to be welcomed, the amount repayable when the property was sold should continue to be index linked.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the updated Private Sector Housing Strategy and accompanying Action Plan as attached as appendices to the report be approved;
- (b) that the revised Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy be approved with the exception of the current proposal to amend the repayment terms in respect of Home Repair Assistance Loans so that the sum repaid is not index linked whilst removing the current ten year time limit and that accordingly, the Strategic Housing Manager be requested to propose to the next meeting of the Worcestershire Care and Repair Service that the index linking element be retained whilst removing the ten year repayment period;
- (c) that the position relating to the closure of the Kick Start Equity release Scheme be noted.

162/10 **COUNCIL PLAN 2011 - 2014**

The Cabinet considered the Council Plan for 2011-2014 including the action plan setting out how the Council's priorities are to be delivered.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Council Plan 2011-2014 attached as an appendix to the report be approved.

163/10 **ANNUAL REVIEW OF OPERATIONAL POLICY UNDER THE REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA)**

The Cabinet considered a report on the annual review of the Council's use of covert surveillance under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) together with the updated RIPA policy.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

164/10 **ADOPTION OF PLANNING ENFORCEMENT POLICY**

The Cabinet considered for information a report to the Planning Committee on the adoption of a Planning Enforcement Policy. It was noted that the recommendation of Planning Committee would be considered by Council

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

165/10 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**RESOLVED** that under Section 100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the items of business the subject of the following minutes on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of "Exempt Information" as defined in part 1 of schedule 12A to the Act, as amended, the relevant part being as set out below and that it is in the public interest to do so.

<u>Minute No.</u>	<u>Paragraphs</u>
166/10	3
167/10	1 and 4

166/10 **PROPOSAL FOR ALLOCATION OF ADDITIONAL CLG HOMELESSNESS GRANT FUNDING FOR 201/2011**

Following consideration of the proposal within the report it was

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the additional DCLG Homelessness Grant of £10,000 for 2010/2011 to assist those under 25 to access the private rented sector be noted; and
- (b) that subject to officers being satisfied that additional funding is required and subject to DCLG approval, Homelessness Grant be utilised to support the proposal set out in the report.

167/10 **SHARED SERVICES BOARD (CONFIDENTIAL)**

The minutes of the meeting of the Shared Services Board held on 22nd March 2011 relating to confidential items were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be noted

**RECOMMENDED** that the business case recommendations together with the delivery of a shared Leisure and Cultural Service by a single Leisure and Cultural Service management and development team hosted by Redditch Borough Council be approved.

168/10 **COUNCILLOR MRS J. DYER MBE AND COUNCILLOR R. D. SMITH**

The Leader referred to this being the last Cabinet meeting which Councillor Mrs. J. Dyer and Councillor R. D. Smith would be attending as they were not standing for re-election in May. The Leader thanked both Members for their hard work and wished them well for the future.

On behalf of himself and other Council officers the Chief Executive also thanked Councillor Mrs Dyer and Councillor Smith for the support and help they had given to officers during their time as Portfolio Holders.

The meeting closed at 7.55 p.m.

Chairman