

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 5TH FEBRUARY 2014 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors R. Hollingworth (Leader), M. A. Sherrey (Deputy Leader), D. W. P. Booth, M. A. Bullivant, C. B. Taylor and M. J. A. Webb

Observers: Councillors M. T. Buxton, R. Dent and L.J. Turner

Invitees: Councillor S. P. Shannon

Officers: Ms J. Pickering, Mr G. Revans, Ms J. Willetts, Mrs S. Sellers and Ms R. Cole

81/13 **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence.

82/13 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

83/13 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 8th January 2014 were submitted.

The Leader referred to the changes he was introducing to the Cabinet Portfolios which he had spoken about at the last meeting and confirmed that the Portfolios were now as follows:

- Councillor R. Hollingworth - Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Support Services (Legal, Elections, Democratic Services and Human Resources).
- Councillor M. A. Sherrey - Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing, the elderly, young people and vulnerable people.
- Councillor C. B. Taylor - Portfolio Holder for Planning and Licensing

- Councillor D. W. P. Booth - Portfolio Holder for Business Transformation (including ICT) and Regeneration, including the town Centre and car parks.

- Councillor M. J. A. Webb - Portfolio Holder for Finance, Customer Services and Economic Development.

- Councillor M. A. Bullivant - Portfolio Holder for Environment (waste collection and grounds maintenance) and Leisure (parks and leisure centres)

RESOLVED that subject to the inclusion of the above, the minutes be approved as a correct record.

84/13 **AUDIT BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Audit Board held on 12th December 2013 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Audit Board be noted.

85/13 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 20th January 2014 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

86/13 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY FEEDBACK ON THE CABINET RESPONSE TO THE AIR QUALITY TASK GROUP REPORT**

The Cabinet considered a report on Overview and Scrutiny feedback on the Cabinet response to the Air Quality Task Group report.

The Leader invited Councillor S. P. Shannon as Chairman of the Air Quality Task Group to speak on the matter.

Councillor Shannon expressed disappointment at the initial response of the Cabinet to the recommendations of the Task Group. He felt that the Task Group had been hoping for a more robust response from the Cabinet, particularly in view of the importance of Air Quality and the particular issues within Bromsgrove District.

Councillor Shannon recognised that financial matters had significantly influenced the Cabinet's response, but requested that further consideration and support be given to WRS applying for funding from Defra, particularly as the document attached to the report seemed to indicate the Authority would be eligible for funding in future years.

The Portfolio Holder for Air Quality Councillor C. B. Taylor felt that the Cabinet had taken the report seriously when it was originally considered in October 2013 and had given the recommendations due consideration.

The Cabinet did feel however that it would be beneficial for the Portfolio Holder to discuss the issues further with the Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services and for the matter to be reconsidered by Cabinet at its April meeting.

The Leader thanked Councillor Shannon for his attendance at the meeting.

RESOLVED that further consideration of the report be deferred until the Cabinet's meeting on 2nd April 2014.

87/13 **FEES AND CHARGES 2014/15**

The Cabinet considered a report on proposed Fees and Charges in respect of a range of Council services for 2014/2015. It was noted that in general the overall increase was 3% although this did vary between services.

The Executive Director Finance and Corporate Resources stated that Heads of Service had reviewed the charges to ensure that they were relevant and reasonable in the context of the Bromsgrove District. The Medium Term Financial Plan had been prepared on the basis that additional income would be generated from fees and charges.

Members noted that in some instances the costs in Sanders Park had risen by 5% but that the facilities were to be improved. It was also noted that the intention was to keep Car Parking charges at the current level.

Reference was made to a small number of changes to be made to the schedule of fees and charges relating to Trade Waste Collections and Cesspool Emptying, Bulky Collections and the Interment of Cremated Remains.

Following discussion it was

RESOLVED that the fees and charges for 2014/2015 be as set out in the Appendix to the report be approved subject to the following:

- (a) that in respect of Trade Waste Collections and Cesspool Emptying officers be given the discretion to negotiate plus or minus 15% on contracts to allow them to compete in the market and to enable them to

- undertake difficult collections and empties in a more cost effective manner;
- (b) that in relation to Bulky Collections the opportunity for submitting a quotation be in respect of four items or more; and
- (c) that the fee for the interment of cremated remains be set at £170 rather than £180.

88/13 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2014/15 TO 2016/17

The Cabinet considered a report giving an update on the Medium term Financial Plan 2014/15 to 2016/17.

Reference was made to the considerable additional cost pressures facing the Authority over the next three years arising from a number of issues including:

- a reduction in Government Grant Settlement;
- changes to welfare reform and the impact on the Authority from residents' service need;
- cuts in County Council funding;
- impact of the current national economic situation

Members noted that it was intended to utilise funding received from the Government's New Homes Bonus scheme within the general fund to offset the pressures facing the Council. This approach was being adopted by many other Authorities within the Worcestershire and the West Midlands regions.

The Executive Director for Finance and Corporate Resources referred to the work being undertaken by officers looking at alternative ways to make savings whilst improving services to the community. A programme detailing further work on transformation would be submitted to Members shortly.

Members' attention was drawn to the "unavoidable" budget pressures which had been identified in Appendix 2 to the report and which included:

- reduction in funding from other agencies for the delivery of Council Services, including a reduction in County Council funding of £60,000 in respect of the Essential Living Fund;
- additional pension costs arising from the new assessment of £54,000;
- additional one year accommodation costs of £130,000 to be offset by future savings on the move to the former Parkside School building

At present a very few revenue bids were being put forward for consideration and these were detailed in Appendix 1 to the report. It was likely there would be an additional bid relating to work to be undertaken within the District by North Worcestershire Water Management.

It was noted that the Medium term Financial Plan would be considered at Cabinet on 26th February 2014 and that recommendations would be made to the Council which was to take place on the same date.

RESOLVED that the current position for 2014/2015 – 2016/2017 be noted and that officers be requested to review the savings that can be delivered in order to achieve a balanced budget.

The meeting closed at 7.15 p.m.

Chairman