

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE CABINET**

**WEDNESDAY, 21ST FEBRUARY, 2007**

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 JP, Mrs. C. J. Spencer, Mrs. M. M. T. Taylor and P. J. Whittaker

Observers: Councillors N. Psirides JP and C. J. K. Wilson

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Mr. P. Street, Mr. H. Bennett, Mr. M. Bell, Mrs. C. Felton, Mr. D. Hammond, Ms. J. Pickering, Ms. J. Pitman, Mr. A. Coel, Mr. J. Godwin and Ms. R. Cole

1/07 **APOLOGIES**

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

2/07 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 3rd January 2007 were submitted.

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

3/07 **SCRUTINY STEERING BOARD**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny Steering Board held on 2nd January 2007 were submitted.

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

4/07 **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BOARD**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Performance Management Board held on 19th January 2007 were submitted.

**RESOLVED**: that the Minutes of the Meeting be noted and the recommendations be approved.

5/07 **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING PARTY**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Local Development Framework Working Party held on 6th February 2007 were submitted. Members expressed some

concern at the implications of the Regional Spatial Strategy for Bromsgrove in terms of housing allocation figures.

**RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the Meeting be noted and the recommendation in relation to the Longbridge Area Action Plan be approved.

6/07 **PETITION RELATING TO CHARGES FOR CAR PARKING PERMITS**

The Cabinet received a petition referred from Council, relating to charges for car parking permits issued to disabled persons and persons over the age of 60.

**RESOLVED:** that the contents of the petition be noted and that the budget implications be considered as part of the discussions on the Medium Term Financial Plan.

7/07 **IMPROVEMENT PLAN EXCEPTION REPORT - NOVEMBER 2006**

Consideration was given to the updated Exception Report and Improvement Plan. The relevant Portfolio Holders and Officers explained the actions being taken to address the issues which were shown at present as red or amber.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the revisions to the Improvement Plan Exceptions Report, together with the corrective action being undertaken be approved;
- (b) that it be noted that 66.5% of the Improvement Plan is on target, 12.5% is one month behind and 9.5% is over one month behind.

8/07 **PREFERRED PARTNERING IN THE DELIVERY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Consideration was given to the report on the need to review the Council's long term partnership arrangements with Registered Social Landlords to ensure the ongoing delivery of quality housing services and affordable housing to meet the Council's wider policy and strategic objectives. This requirement had been identified in the Council's Housing Strategy Action Plan. Following discussion it was

**RESOLVED:** that a Housing Partnership Review Panel be established and granted delegated authority to review and approve the formalisation of new preferred partnership arrangements as set out in Section 8 of the report.

9/07 **FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF BROMSGROVE MUSEUM**

Consideration was given to a report relating to the future management and control of Bromsgrove Museum. It was noted that that officers were looking at approaches which could be pursued to ensure the continued operation of the Museum. Following discussion it was

**RECOMMENDED:** that if Officers are unable to identify a suitable solution which would allow the transfer of Bromsgrove Museum to a Trust or other

arms length organisation within three months, then subject to the necessary consultation with staff, the museum be closed.

(Note: Councillor Mrs C. Spencer declared a personal interest in this item as the Council's representative on the Avoncroft Museum of Buildings Management Council)

10/07 **EMERGENCY PLAN**

Consideration of this item was deferred as further amendments to the report were required.

11/07 **RURAL SETTLEMENT LIST FOR RURAL RATE RELIEF**

Consideration was given to a report on the rural settlement list for the financial year from 1st April 2007 and revised guidelines for the award of discretionary rural rate relief.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the rural settlement list as contained in Appendix A to the report be approved and adopted for use from 1st April 2007;
- (b) that the revised guidelines for the award of discretionary rural rate relief as contained in Appendix B be approved.

12/07 **STRATEGY FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT AND HOUSING BENEFIT**

Consideration was given to a report on a strategy for the administration of Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit which would provide a framework to assist with the provision of a secure, effective and efficient administration of the Benefits service.

**RESOLVED:** that the strategy for the administration of Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit as contained in Appendix A be approved and adopted.

13/07 **DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF POLICY**

Having considered a report on a proposal to introduce a policy in relation to the procedure for approving discretionary rate relief applications and the period for which they are granted, it was

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (a) that the policy relating to discretionary rate relief as contained in Appendix A to the report be approved and adopted;
- (b) that the Council's scheme of delegation be amended to grant delegated authority to the Head of Financial Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance to approve the applications for discretionary rate relief within the approved Council policy and that the Executive Cabinet be granted delegated authority to review any appeals against the decisions made;

- (c) that discretionary rate relief be granted for a period of one year and be reviewed on an annual basis;
- (d) that a report containing details of the relief granted to the various organisations be submitted to Executive Cabinet on an annual basis.

(Note: Councillor Mrs. J. Dyer declared a personal interest in this matter as Vice Chairman of Wythall Parish Hall Committee.)

14/07 **BENEFITS TAKE UP STRATEGY**

Consideration was given to the report on the introduction of a benefit take up strategy which would help to ensure that residents were in receipt of advice on all aspects of benefit entitlement.

**RESOLVED:** that the benefits take up strategy as contained in Appendix A to the report be approved and adopted.

15/07 **RECOVERY POLICY**

Consideration was given to the report on the introduction of a recovery policy which would assist with the efficient administration of the Revenues and Benefits service.

**RESOLVED:** that the recovery policy as contained in Appendix A to the report be approved and adopted.

16/07 **CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2007/2008 TO 2009/2010**

Having considered a report on the Capital Programme for 2007/2008 to 2009/2010, it was

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (a) that the Capital Programme for 2007/1008 to 2009/2010 as detailed in paragraph 9.2 of the report comprising the continuation of existing schemes and the new "High" priority capital schemes contained in Appendix A to the report be approved;
- (b) that authority be delegated to the Head of Financial Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and the relevant Head of Service in relation to individual projects, to release capital funds subject to the receipt of a robust business case and an options appraisal demonstrating that the Council is achieving value for money;
- (c) that the capital budgets for the Dolphin Centre and leisure related schemes totalling £1,244,000 be removed from the Revised Capital Programme for 2006/2007 whilst consideration is being given to alternative ways of providing these services;
- (d) that the carry forward of the estimated under spent budgets totalling £2,233,000 from 2006/2007 to 2007/2008 as detailed in Appendix B to the report be approved;
- (e) that the removal of the Swanslength play area refurbishment capital scheme of £40,000 from the 2006/2007 Revised Capital Programme be approved.

17/07 **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2007/2008 TO 2009/2010**

Consideration was given to the Medium Term Financial Plan (revenue budgets) for 2007/2008 to 2009/2010. Following discussion it was

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (a) that the budget pressures identified as unavoidable and high in Appendix B of the report be included within the Medium Term Financial Plan as follows:

2007/2008	£1,799,000
2008/2009	£1,576,000
2009/2010	£1,615,000

- (b) that the recommended savings/additional income generation identified in Appendix C of the report be included within the Medium Term Financial Plan as follows:

2007/2008	£1,314,000
2008/2009	£1,571,000
2009/2010	£2,134,000

- (c) that officers undertake a review of alternative methods of service delivery to achieve savings as identified in Appendix C of the report ;
- (d) that the statutory resolutions (to be circulated following receipt of all parish precept notifications), setting a Council Tax for 2007/2008 of £172.46 for a Band D property be approved;
- (e) that the fees and charges set out in Appendix D be approved;
- (f) that the Head of Financial Service be authorised to approve any further increases in fees and charges in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and other Portfolio Holders as appropriate to the circumstances;
- (g) that in view of the receipt of the petition in relation to charges for car parking permits, officers be requested to investigate means by which the budget of £50,000 can be utilised to ensure the Council's car park facilities may be used to best advantage by disabled persons and all sections of the community;
- (h) that any financial recommendations from Scrutiny Task Groups be considered on the basis that projects which are self funding be considered in the financial year in which they are proposed and that any additional funding requests be approved for consideration as part of the following year's budget process.

**RESOLVED:** that thanks be expressed to all staff who have contributed to the budget process, in particular the Head of Financial Services and her staff.

18/07 **COUNCIL PLAN 2007 - 2010 PART 2**

The Cabinet considered a report in relation to the Council Plan for 2007-2010. Following discussion it was

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (a) that the balanced scorecard for the Council as contained in Appendix 2 to the report be approved;
- (b) that the Council's high level action plan 2007-2010 as contained in Appendix 3 to the report be approved;
- (c) that the corporate set of indicators and targets for the next three years as contained in Appendix 4 to the report be approved;
- (d) that authority to sign off the final version of the published Plan be delegated to the Leader of the Council in consultation with the Leader of the Opposition.

19/07 **COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT (CPA)**

The Cabinet considered a report on the Council's CPA self assessment document and on the latest position in relation to the CPA process. Following discussion it was

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the CPA self assessment document be noted;
- (b) that the contextual information, the summary paragraph at the beginning of each key line of enquiry and the conclusions within the assessment be noted and that these together with the findings in the self assessment be taken into account when future priorities are considered;
- (c) that the arrangements for the forthcoming inspection be noted.

20/07 **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 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 I of Schedule 12A to the Act, the relevant paragraph of that part, in each case, being as set out below:-

<u>Minute No.</u>	<u>Paragraph</u>
167/06	12
168/06	7

21/07 **WRITE-OFF POLICIES**

Following consideration of the report, it was

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (a) that the increases in the levels of individual debts which can be written off as set out in the report and in the policy be approved, subject to the amendment of the figure in relation to Council Tax, Benefit and Sundry Debt which can be authorised by Executive Cabinet to read "amounts over £5,000"

- (b) that, subject to the above amendment, the write off policy as contained in Appendix A to the report be approved and adopted.

22/07 **THE DOLPHIN CENTRE, HAYBRIDGE SPORTS CENTRE AND WOODRUSH SPORTS CENTRE**

Following consideration of the report, including comments from the Scrutiny Steering Board presented by the Vice-Chairman of the Board, it was

**RESOLVED**: that Officers be requested to take the necessary actions to work towards the transfer of the Dolphin Centre, Haybridge Sports Centre and Woodrush Sports Centre to Leisure Trusts or similar bodies but that it be made clear that in any event that the Centres would remain open although there would be a transfer of activities.

(Note: Councillor Mrs. J. Dyer M.B.E. declared a personal interest in this item as a Governor of Woodrush High School; Councillor Mrs. Sherrey also declared a personal interest in this item as a member of her family attended Haybridge High School.)

The meeting closed at 8.25 pm

Chairman