

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 4TH JUNE 2014 AT 6.00 P.M.

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

Observers: Councillors L. C. R. Mallett and S. P. Shannon

Officers: Mr M. Bough, Mrs S. Hanley, Mrs J Pickering, Ms A. Scarce, Mrs S. Sellers, Ms A. de Warr, Mr I. Westmore

1/14 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

2/14 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

3/14 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON 2ND APRIL 2014, 7TH APRIL 2014 AND 14TH MAY 2014**

The minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 2nd April, 7th April and 14th May 2014 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

4/14 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 24TH MARCH 2014 AND 14TH APRIL 2014**

The minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 24th March and 14th April 2014 were submitted.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the minutes be noted.
- (b) that, in respect of Minute 99/13 (Quarter 3 Write-Off of Debts Report), it be agreed that the Council issue a press release to advise residents with Council Tax arrears about the payment options available and the support provided by the Council with this process.

5/14 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT BOARD HELD ON 20TH MARCH 2014**

The minutes of the meeting of the Audit Board held on 20th March 2014 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

6/14 **ARTRIX OUTREACH PROVISION TASK GROUP REPORT**

The Cabinet received the report of the Artrix Outreach Work Provision Task Group. The Chairman of the Task Group, Councillor S. P. Shannon, was present to provide clarification on any matters raised by Cabinet members.

The Committee considered the recommendations of the Task Group which were contained within 5 chapters:

- Funding from Bromsgrove District Council;
- Raising Awareness of Outreach Work with Councillors;
- Outreach Provision;
- Raising Awareness of Outreach Work with Residents; and
- General

The Cabinet then considered the recommendations of the Task Group in detail.

Recommendation 1

- (a) that the inclusion of a set of clear performance indicators in respect of Outreach work be included within the new Service Level Agreement; and
- (b) that a proportion of the funding provided by the Council be ring fenced for Outreach work.

Cabinet Response

The Cabinet sought confirmation that the Artrix Centre had been consulted on this and then approved the recommendation.

Recommendation 2

That the Bromsgrove District Council logo be more prominent in Artrix promotional literature.

Cabinet Response

This was approved.

Recommendation 3

- (a) that in order to complement the formal reporting of performance indicators to Officers that the Council receives a quarterly informal (narrative and image based) report from the Artrix detailing the events that have taken place together with the number of those attending; and
- (b) that those Member representatives on the Operating Trust report back regularly to full Council.

Cabinet Response

This was approved.

Recommendation 4

- (a) that the Artrix Centre liaise with Members in respect of specific activities within their ward; and
- (b) that the Artrix Centre explore ways in which it could raise awareness of its activities in all areas within the District. (For example through Parish Council, school and other notice boards throughout the District.).

Cabinet Response

This was approved.

Recommendation 5

- (a) that the Artrix Centre ensure that there is a defined profile for the target participants / audience that the Outreach Provision is provided for;
- (b) that the Artrix Centre ensure that participation in such activities is not prohibitive due to cost (for example, seek funding for bursaries where possible); and
- (c) that the Artrix Centre make activities available throughout the main school holidays, particularly during the Easter and summer breaks.

Cabinet Response

Councillor M. J. A. Webb proposed that, in addition, the Artrix Centre be invited to provide a presentation for the benefit of Council members outlining its plans at least once each year. Councillor S. P. Shannon indicated that Artrix Centre had undertaken to do so. In response to a query over Councillors acting as Trustee Board members and reporting back to the Council there was discussion as to the legal propriety of such a course of action. The Principal Solicitor undertook to investigate this matter and report back to the Committee following the meeting. This recommendation was approved, as amended.

Recommendation 6

That an insert, prepared by the Artrix, be included within Together Bromsgrove detailing Outreach activities at the Artrix.

Cabinet Response

This was approved.

Recommendation 7

That the main programme brochure which is produced by the Artrix be used to promote its Outreach work.

Cabinet Response

This was approved.

Recommendation 8

That the Artrix promote all the facilities available to those with a disability.

Cabinet Response

Councillor C. B. Taylor enquired whether any facilities within the Artrix were not available to those with a disability. Councillor S. P. Shannon responded that the issue was less one of accessibility and the recommendation was more concerned with the improved promotion of facilities and programme provided for those with a disability. This was approved.

Recommendation 9

That the Artrix consider contacting Worcestershire County Council with a view to improving the signage within the Railway Station and Town Centre areas.

Cabinet Response

This was approved.

7/14

NON DOMESTIC RATES - DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF POLICY

The Cabinet considered a report on proposals to amend the existing Discretionary Rate Relief Policy for Non-Domestic Rates.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Revenues and Benefits reported that the Council was facing a greater draw on its financial resources to meet the cost of discretionary rate relief on Non-Domestic Rates than had previously been the case and so was seeking to review its Policy in order to ensure a fair and transparent approach to the award and review of discretionary relief. Officers clarified that around 50% of the cost was now borne locally of which 4/5th was met by the Council. It was also stressed that the amendments to the Policy did not affect the provision of mandatory relief.

Members acknowledged that this Policy revision might result in adverse comment from without the Council, given the potential impact on organisations such as national charities, but it was considered that such a change was

necessary to avoid unfair competition for local businesses and that the revised Policy would still provide the discretion to protect the interests of charities directly benefitting the local community. Officers added that transitional relief would be available from central Government to ameliorate the impact on organisations who faced a reduction in their discretionary relief.

RESOLVED that the Non-Domestic Rates – Discretionary Rate Relief Policy and Guidance as attached to the report submitted be adopted.

8/14

BROMSGROVE LOW COST HOUSING SCHEME - CONSULTATION

The Cabinet considered a report which proposed undertaking a consultation on the Council's low cost housing scheme in view of the fact that the scheme was not operating to the benefit of the residents of the Borough and that any capital funding retrieved might be reinvested into a more fit for purpose affordable housing scheme.

Officers reported that there were 118 properties included within the scheme and it was proposed to contact the owners of these properties to establish the level of interest in them purchasing the Council's 30% share of the property. Members supported the proposal, given that it had the potential to unlock considerable funds which might be reinvested in affordable housing. It was noted that incentivisation was proposed within the report and Officers confirmed that this was the case, although no specific amount was under consideration at the present time.

RESOLVED

- (a) that authority be delegated to the Strategic Housing Manager, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Town Centre, Regulatory Services and Housing, to consult with current owners on purchasing the Council's 30% share in their property; and
- (b) officers report back to the Cabinet the outcome of the consultation and if required suitable schemes for the disposal of the Council's share and reinvestment of the capital receipt.

9/14

NOMINATION OF ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE - BROMSGROVE MUSEUM BUILDING

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure Services, Economic Development and Emergency Planning presented a report to the Cabinet detailing a request to list the Bromsgrove Museum building (216 Birmingham Road, Bromsgrove B61 0DD) as an Asset of Community Value.

Councillor M. J. A. Webb stated that, although he had doubted the merit of certain previous applications for this status, he was convinced that this present application did have merit. It was stressed to those present that the Museum building would be offered at full market value on the basis of an independent valuation, thereby protecting the financial interests of the Council and its residents. It was acknowledged that there would be a financial implication in

the Council having to maintain the building for a further period of up to six months.

RESOLVED that the listing of the Bromsgrove Museum building as an Asset of Community Value be supported.

10/14

NOMINATION OF ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE - FOOTBALL GROUND, BIRMINGHAM ROAD, BROMSGROVE

The Portfolio Holder for Planning Services introduced a report detailing a request to list the Bromsgrove Football Ground as an Asset of Community Value. The background to the site was briefly explained to the meeting, it being noted that the Football Ground had been constructed on land gifted to the Council by a local resident. The gift of the land had included a covenant specifying that the land might only be used as a football ground or as a public open space. Councillor C. B. Taylor added that, although he was content to support the request, the request itself served little purpose as the Council had absolutely no plans to sell the Football Ground site.

Other Members were happy to support the proposal should it not be an administrative burden on officers. Councillor R. Hollingworth reminded Members that twelve years previously the Council had explored selling the Football Ground for housing development and, on that basis, contended that the listing of the site as an Asset of Community Value was a prudent step.

RESOLVED that the listing of the Bromsgrove Football Ground as an Asset of Community Value be approved.

The meeting closed at 6.45pm

Chairman