

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 2ND JULY 2014 AT 6.00 P.M.

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

Observers: Councillors S. R. Colella, L. C. R. Mallett and C. J. Spencer

Officers: Ms J. Pickering, Mrs C. Felton, Ms A. De Warr, Mr J. Godwin,
Mr D. Thomas and Ms R. Cole

11/14 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R.L. Dent and C. B. Taylor.

12/14 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

13/14 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 4th July 2014 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 4th June 2014 be approved as a correct record.

14/14 **DOLPHIN CENTRE REPLACEMENT**

Cabinet considered a very detailed report on the proposed replacement of the Dolphin Centre.

The Portfolio Holder, Councillor M. J. A. Webb referred to the need for a decision to be made on the future of the existing Centre which had been built in the 1960's with adaptations and extensions being undertaken since that time. The original life expectancy of the building had been around 40 years. In addition recent surveys of the building had indicated that it would need to be replaced within the next three or four years.

The report highlighted the importance of the Dolphin Centre in the provision of sports and physical activity opportunities to the residents of the local area, in that it is the only venue to offer both wet and dry facilities on a "pay and play"

basis with no limits on time of usage. In addition surveys undertaken had shown very high public support for the retention of a Leisure Centre in the Town Centre.

Members were reminded that in 2011 an external company had undertaken a full review of future leisure provision in Bromsgrove. The study had included the important contribution of a Leisure Centre to the overall Town Centre regeneration scheme.

Members noted that the Cabinet report made reference to the number of options which had been part of the initial considerations of officers and detailed the process which had been undertaken in order to reach the preferred option 2a which was now being formally brought forward to Cabinet and Council. In particular the mix of facilities proposed to be provided had been considered in great detail. While cost had inevitably played a part the option being put forward was not the cheapest option. The facilities proposed compared very favourably with those existing at present.

Councillor Webb reported that it was intended to provide the new Leisure Centre with as little disruption as possible to visitors and users of the existing Centre which would remain open until the new Centre was available.

As part of the detailed discussions on the report the Cabinet gave consideration to the comments and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Board as contained in the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 16th June 2014. The Board had considered the report of the Leisure Provision Task Group following the Group's pre scrutiny of the Dolphin Centre business case. It was noted that the Group were looking at Leisure provision within the District as a whole but ahead of that had considered the Dolphin Centre business case prior to consideration by Cabinet.

The recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Board were considered in turn:

Recommendation 1

Financial concerns around the increased membership that will be needed to ensure good annual revenue should be addressed through an Audit Board investigation of the figures

Cabinet were aware of the importance of increasing the membership of the new centre, but it was felt that the membership figures included in the report were reasonably conservative. Officers had advised after investigation that they were achievable given that the facilities would be of a high quality.

It was therefore felt not to be necessary to refer the figures to the Audit Board but Cabinet recognised that the Board could call for further investigation if it felt this was required.

Recommendation 2

The Overview and Scrutiny Board should be involved in scrutinising more detailed plans to ensure that they address the needs of customers with disabilities.

Cabinet recognised that a great deal of work had been undertaken to date to ensure that the new facilities would be fully accessible to customers with disabilities. Cabinet were aware however that members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board had an interest in this area and were welcome to call for the opportunity to scrutinise more detailed plans.

Recommendation 3

Cabinet note the Board's disappointment that the Sports hall has not been included within the plan for the new Dolphin Centre.

Cabinet took note of the Board's comment but drew attention to the Sports England report on the provision of Sports Halls in Bromsgrove which had demonstrated a more than sufficient supply of Sports Hall facilities. It was intended that public access to existing or new Sports Hall facilities would be increased through hire or dual use agreements. It was part of the role of the Council to promote the use of alternative facilities and to make the best use of public funds.

Recommendation 4

Cabinet note the Board's concern that insufficient facilities have been planned for the Centre, especially for young people (i.e. No climbing wall as has been installed in other leisure centres).

Cabinet took note of the Board's concern but did not agree that insufficient facilities had been planned. The mix of facilities had been carefully considered with a view to providing the best opportunities for all age groups. The installation of a climbing wall had been looked at but after investigating the experience of other providers was not felt to be the best use of public money.

The Leader and the Portfolio Holder thanked the Leisure Provision Task Group and the Overview and Scrutiny Board for their consideration of the business case and contribution to the process so far.

Thanks were also expressed to officers for their very detailed work on the proposals over a period of time.

Following further discussion it was

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that Option 2a, as set out below, be confirmed as the preferred option for the replacement of the Dolphin Centre at a total project cost of £11.5m:

Facility Mix

- Main Pool – 25m by 13m (6 lanes) with 100 spectator seats
 - Learner Pool – 12m by 8m with moveable floor
 - Fitness Suite – 80 stations with functional training spaces supporting up to 1800 members
 - Dance Studio – 2 spaces for up to 60 people
 - Spinning Studio – for up to 25 people
 - Spa facilities and treatment rooms – Sauna, Steam room and Jacuzzi
 - Ancillary facilities includes car park of 200 spaces
- (b) that within the total cost, this Council purchases the Blackmore House site on School Drive from Worcestershire County Council at a value of £1.425m;
- (c) that borrowing of £9.536m be approved to fund the majority of the costs associated with the project;
- (d) that at the completion of the project, the enabling land which will no longer be required on School Drive (currently Car Parking) be considered to be surplus to requirements and be offered to the market to reduce borrowing costs;
- (e) that £100k of balances be used to ensure the total funding of £11.5m for the project is available;
- (f) that officers investigate and implement an option to develop a Dual Use arrangement at North Bromsgrove High School provided that it does not impact on the capital costs incurred by the Council and therefore does not impact on the Medium Term Financial Plan;
- (g) that authority be delegated to the Head of Leisure and Cultural Service and the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Resources following consultation with the Portfolio Holders, to agree the final terms for the disposal of land associated with this project;
- (h) that authority be delegated to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services to enter into the necessary legal documents for the purposes of implementing recommendations (a) to (g) above;
- (i) that officers be requested to provide updates on the project at key milestones as agreed with the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Cultural Services to include verbal updates at all Cabinet meetings and an update report once final tender submissions are received to confirm the final project position and proposed timescales.

15/14

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Following consideration of minute 10/14 of the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 16th June 2014 as part of the discussion of the previous item, the remainder of the minutes were submitted.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that in relation to minute 6/14 (Summary of Results of Staff Survey) recommendation 1 relating to a statement to be added to the top ten recommendations from the staff survey be approved;

- (b) that in relation to minute 6/14 (Summary of Results of Staff Survey) recommendation 2 relating to contact details for staff being made available to elected Members, this be referred to the Chief Executive for further consideration of the most appropriate way of meeting the requirements of Members in this regard; and
- (c) that the remainder of the minutes be noted.

16/14 **COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME**

Members considered the report on proposals to reduce the financial impact to the District and other precepting bodies in relation to the Government changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme.

The report reminded Members that it had previously been agreed to review the existing Council Tax Support Scheme for 2014/15 in order to meet the anticipated shortfall in funding resulting from the Government changes.

It was reported that before any changes in the scheme could be made there was a requirement for public consultation to be undertaken. It was therefore proposed that following initial consultation, a further report be submitted to Cabinet in September with a proposed scheme.

It was noted that the proposed options for consultation were set out in the Appendix to the report and included the following:

- Reduction in permitted capital/savings
- Cap on the maximum amount of support that can be claimed to:
 - 80%
 - 85%
 - 90%
- Removal of Second Adult Rebate;
- Cap support at a lower Council Tax Band
- Changes to non-dependent deductions

The proposals for consultation also included a reduction to the period of exemption for empty properties as follows;

- Limiting the amount of Council Tax discount on short term empty property to 50% for one month (excluding new developments)

Following discussion it was

RESOLVED that the Head of Customer Access and Financial Support be authorised to consult on the options for change to the Authority's Council Tax Support Scheme with effect from April 2015, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

17/14

REVIEW OF MARKET POLICY, TRADERS' TERMS AND CONDITIONS AND NEW MARKET STALLS

Cabinet considered a report relating to the Market in Bromsgrove High Street. The report related to the purchase of new market stalls which would replace the existing stalls and improve the appearance and operation of the market, together with the introduction of new terms and conditions in respect of the market.

It was noted that the new arrangements in the High Street, following completion of the reconstruction works, would allow for additional traders and also for speciality events such as Food Festivals and Craft Fairs. It was noted that the stalls would be purchased as they became required and the £60k was the maximum cost.

Members also noted that the proposed new stalls had a life expectancy of 10 years and it was anticipated that the additional income generated from the additional stalls could be used to generate a reserve for their future replacement.

The proposed terms and conditions as contained in Appendix 1 to the report were considered and it was reported that the Market traders had been consulted on these and were in agreement with them.

Members queried whether the whole of condition 5.3 was enforceable and the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services undertook to consider this.

RESOLVED that the introduction of the proposed new terms and conditions for market traders on Bromsgrove High Street as contained in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the 2014/15 Capital Programme be increased by £60k to fund the costs associated with the purchase of the replacement market stalls; and
- (b) that £56k be released from balances to fund the majority of the cost with the additional £4k to be met from current reserves.

18/14

TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE INITIATIVE GRANT - 22-24 HIGH STREET, BROMSGROVE

Cabinet considered a report on a proposed grant for the renovation of 22-24 High Street, Bromsgrove under the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI).

Members were reminded of the THI scheme which was jointly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Worcestershire County Council for the restoration of historic buildings on High Street and Worcester Road.

The proposed grant would enable the top floors of the grade 2 Listed Building to be brought back into use, with the owners of the building contributing

approximately half of the total eligible renovation costs. It was noted that the building was one of the seven priority “plus” buildings eligible for funding through the THI scheme.

Cabinet felt this was a good example of the importance of the THI scheme in bringing back into full use an important building in the Conservation Area. It would also encourage increased residential opportunities in the High Street.

RESOLVED that the Townscape Heritage Initiative Grant in respect of 22-24 High Street , Bromsgrove be approved on the terms set out in the report.

19/14

FINANCIAL OUTFURN AND RESERVES STATEMENT 2013/2014

Members considered a report containing financial information for Revenue and Capital for the year ended 31st March 2014. The report also contained details of the earmarked reserves for the year ending 2013/14 and sought approval for the creation of new reserves required to support the future plans of the Authority. In addition the report contained further details of the requirement for the Capital funding of teenage provision in Hagley to be met from Section 106 contributions.

It was noted that the revenue account resulted in a surplus of £647k and that this was due to a number of factors including officers reviewing all expenditure on non essential items. In addition there had been a saving on some vacant posts which had proved difficult to fill and additional income from Housing Benefit Subsidy. There was a continuing emphasis on a need for good budgetary control and it was intended that the £647k be returned to balances which could be used to deliver the priorities of the Council.

RESOLVED that the financial outturn position 2013/14 on Revenue and Capital as detailed in the report be noted, together with the transfer to balances of £647k.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the movement of £88k in existing reserves as included in Appendix A to the report which reflects the approval required for April 2013 to March 2014 be approved;
- (b) that the addition of new reserves of £495k as included in Appendix 1 to the report which reflects the approval required for April 2013 to March 2014 be approved; and
- (c) that the Capital bid of £80k for Hagley teenage provision to be funded from Section 106 contributions be approved.

The meeting closed at 7.10 p.m.

Chairman