

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 24TH SEPTEMBER 2014 AT 5.00 P.M.

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

Observers: Councillors C. J. Bloore, S. R. Colella, B. Lewis, L. C. R. Mallett and C. R. Scurrall

Invitees: Ms Z. Thomas (Grant Thornton)

Officers: Mr K. Dicks, Ms S. Hanley, Ms J. Pickering, Mrs S. Sellers, Ms S. Morgan and Ms R. Cole

31/14 **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor C. B. Taylor.

32/14 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

33/14 **AUDIT FINDINGS REPORT 2013/14**

The Cabinet considered the Audit Findings Report 2013/2014 together with the draft letter of representation. The Leader welcomed Ms Z. Thomas from Grant Thornton to the meeting.

Ms Thomas recognised that the accounts were well prepared and working papers were appropriate. There had been very few amendments and officers were thanked for their co-operation which had ensured a smooth process.

In relation to Value for Money the report reflected that the Council had proper arrangements in place for securing financial resilience and for challenging how it secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

It was noted that there were a number of recommendations proposed by Grant Thornton which had been accepted by officers. These were included in the Appendix to the Audit report and an Action Plan was being developed by officers to deliver the improvements required. The high priority recommendations related to:

- regular updates to be given on the ledger implementation;

- a review of the 2013/14 figure to have a better understanding of the recurring savings;
- accelerating the on-going work around reporting of measures to Members.

RECOMMENDED

- (a) that the Audit Findings report 2013/14 be noted; and
- (b) that the draft letter of representation , as included in the Audit Findings report be approved.

34/14 **STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2013/14**

Consideration was given to the report on the Statement of Accounts for 2013/2014.

Officers were thanked for their work in producing the accounts.

It was noted that there were three minor adjustments to the accounts which did not impact on the final figures.

RECOMMENDED that the Statement of Accounts 2013/14 be approved subject to the following minor adjustments:

- (a) the two adjustments on page 271 (of the Council agenda) within note 3; and
- (b) the amendment at page 211 (of the Council agenda) expanding the Earmarked Reserves, within note 3.

35/14 **ALLOCATION POLICY FOR GRANT FUNDING TO WARD MEMBERS**

The Cabinet considered a report proposing a policy to distribute funds to Ward Members to utilise within a Ward budget scheme.

Members were reminded of the background to the proposal which was approved at the Council meeting on 26th February 2014. The scheme enabled the allocation of the £45,000 received by the Council as part of the Government settlement for 2014/2015 in relation to the impact on Parish Councils from the Council Tax Support Scheme to be allocated across the District through Ward Members.

Members noted the comprehensive report including the additional legal and risk management implications. It was noted that any proposals for expenditure would be required to meet the criteria contained within the appendix to the report.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that Members note the decision of 26th February 2014 to allocate the sum of £45,000 equally to ward Councillors to spend within their wards and within the context of this more detailed report confirm this and their agreement to the introduction of the Bromsgrove District Ward Members' Fund Policy detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, as amended

- to remove any reference to consultation by the Executive Director of Finance and Resources with the Portfolio Holder for Finance; and
- (b) that delegation be given to the Executive Director of Finance and Resources to approve requests and make the formal payments in relation to the allocation of funds.

The meeting closed at 5.30 p.m.

Chairman