

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

4TH NOVEMBER 2015 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors C. B. Taylor (Deputy Leader), G. N. Denaro, R. L. Dent,
R. J. Laight (Minute Nos. 48/15 to 53/15) and P. J. Whittaker

Observers: Councillors C. A. Hotham and P.L. Thomas

Officers: Ms S. Hanley, Ms J. Pickering, Mr J. Godwin, Mr D. Piper, Mrs S.
Sellers and Ms R. Cole

48/15 **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor M. A. Sherrey.

49/15 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor G. N. Denaro declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in item 7 on the agenda (Bleak House Farm Section 106 Funding) as a Trustee Governor of Woodrush High School Academy. Councillor Denaro stated that he would be leaving the room for this item and contacting the Monitoring officer to update his Register of Interests form in the light of the proposal to pass funding to the School for the Health and Fitness facilities under the terms of the existing Section 106 agreement.

50/15 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 7th October 2015 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 7th October 2015 be approved as a correct record.

51/15 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 28th September 2015 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 28th September 2015 be noted.

52/15 **WORCESTERSHIRE SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee held on 8th October 2015 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee held on 8th October 2015 be noted.

53/15 **BLEAK HOUSE FARM SECTION 106 FUNDING ALLOCATION**

(Councillor G. N. Denaro left the room during the consideration of this item)

The Cabinet considered a report on the proposed use of Section 106 funding of £134k arising from the Bleak House Farm development, together with the resulting required amendment to the Council's Capital Programme 2015/16.

It was reported that the developer of the Bleak House Farm site had indicated in discussions that the first "trigger point" for release of S106 funding was likely to be reached before Christmas.

It was noted that the sum received was proposed to be utilised to fund the fitting out of new Health and Fitness facilities at Woodrush High School Academy.

Members noted the background to the current proposal and in particular that the fitness gym and studio was part of a larger development at the site of a Woodrush Community Hub. This included the Fitness Suite and Dance Studio Space, Youth and Community Centre, Public and School Library, Conference Facilities and ancillary facilities. The development was being funded through the Education Funding Agency, Woodrush High School and Worcestershire County Council Libraries and Learning.

It was reported that the new facility would offer community access to facilities including during the school day. Officers had previously identified a shortage of activities and facilities in the area and the new facility would provide a venue for hire to support activities such as mobility sessions and exercise classes which would have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of local residents.

Following discussion it was

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the Council's Capital Programme 2015/16 be increased by £134,000 to fund the fit out of the of new Health and Fitness facilities at Woodrush High School Academy to be funded by the Section 106 payments applicable to the Bleak House farm site.;
- (b) that the Section 106 funds be released to the school only when they are received from the developer;
- (c) that authority be delegated to the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services to enter into a suitable legal arrangement and contract management process to protect the Council's funding in this matter;

- (d) that the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Service be authorised to prepare and complete the necessary documentation in respect of the agreements referred to in (c) above.

54/15 **BROMSGROVE CENTRES MANAGEMENT**

The Cabinet considered a report containing a proposal for the North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration service to host a new Bromsgrove Centres management function on behalf of the Council. This would cover the Town Centre together with outlying centres and villages including Alvechurch, Barnt Green, Catshill, Hagley, Rubery and Wythall.

Members were aware that that one of the economic priorities which had recently been approved by Cabinet was to “create a more vibrant Bromsgrove Town Centre by enhancing the current retail and leisure offer” It had also been recognised that other centres and villages within the District had their individual needs and requirements which the Council may want to address.

It was reported that whilst a great deal had been achieved within the Town Centre in terms of the completion of particular schemes, it was recognised that there was still further work to be undertaken including regeneration and the on going “management” of the Town Centre and other outlying centres and villages.

At present Bromsgrove was the only North Worcestershire District without a Town Centre Management arrangement in place. The report therefore set out a proposal for the creation of a Town Centre Manager (TCM) role which was detailed in paragraph 3.17 of the report . It was envisaged that the TCM would work pro-actively with each of the centres. It was stressed that whilst a number of villages and centres had been referred to in the report, this was not an exhaustive list and other areas such as Cofton Hackett could be included in the future.

The Head of Economic Development and Regeneration - North Worcestershire also reported on the proposed timescale for the implementation of the new arrangements if agreed to by Members.

In accordance with Cabinet Procedure Rules and with the agreement of the Chairman, Councillor C. A. Hotham spoke on this issue.

Councillor Hotham expressed support for the proposal. He stated that whilst within Barnt Green many local traders, organisations and the Parish Council worked together to organise community events etc. this was obviously undertaken on a voluntary basis. It was felt it would be of great benefit in particular to the outlying centres and villages to have some assistance from a professional TCM.

Councillor Hotham expressed the hope that the TCM would be able to work with Parish Councils to enhance and extend local events and undertake further marketing and promotion etc.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Regeneration and Town Centre responded that as referred to in paragraph 3.23 (i) there would be an expectation that the TCM would work closely with local businesses and traders and with private and public stakeholders and that this would include Parish Councils.

Members queried the costs involved for the Council and the Executive Director - Finance and Resources referred to the budget pressures set out in the Financial Implications section of the report.

Following discussion it was

RECOMMENDED

- (a) that the funding of an unavoidable budget pressure in respect of a new Town Centre Management function be approved for inclusion in the Medium Term Financial Plan assumptions as follows:

2016/17 - £16,000

2017/18 - £41,000

2018/19 - £43,000

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the proposed model as set out in the report for Bromsgrove Centres Management be approved;
- (b) that the new function be hosted by the North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) service on behalf of Bromsgrove District Council;
- (c) that delegation in respect of the Centres Management function be added to the existing NWEDR Collaboration Agreement relating to the provision of Economic Development and Regeneration Services, to reflect the resolutions at (a) and (b) above;
- (d) that authority be delegated to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services to amend the Collaboration Agreement referred to at resolution (c) above; and
- (e) that the associated pension and redundancy costs of approximately £31,000 be released from reserves set aside for restructuring the organisation.

55/15

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2016/17 - 2018/19 - BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS

The Cabinet considered a report on budget assumptions to be used in preparing the detailed 2016/17 budget and the provisional budgets for 2017/18 and 2018/19.

The Executive Director – Finance and Resources commented that information on the Provisional Funding Settlement from Central Government would not be received until late November or early December.

The report requested Members to consider the assumptions in respect of the key elements of the Council's revenue budget as set out in section 3.7 of the report.

Members considered the assumptions contained in the report and in particular discussed the Fees and Charges issue. It was noted that the assumption was that discretionary Fees and Charges would be increased by 3%. If this was not to be the case, any reduction on 3% would have to be included as a budget pressure for 2016/17 – 2018/19.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance felt that In view of the assumption of an inflation rate of 0% together with the transfer to balances which had occurred at the end of the previous financial year, it would be appropriate for an assumption to be made that there would be no increase in fees and charges. The exceptions being those items covered by Statutory Charges or instances where Heads of Service could demonstrate particular circumstances whereby an increase was necessary.

It was reported that the usual report on Fees and Charges would be submitted to Cabinet in December.

Following discussion it was

RECOMMENDED that the revenue budget assumptions as set out in section 3.7 of the report be approved with the exception of the paragraph in relation to Fees and Charges with the amended assumption to be as follows:

“That it be assumed that the existing schedule of Fees and Charges for Council services will not be increased for 2016/17, with the exception of increases to any Statutory Charges, or any instances where the responsible Heads of Service demonstrates particular circumstances to justify an increase. In such cases the increase would need to be approved by Council. “

56/15

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2016/17 - 2018/19 - UPDATE

The Executive Director – Finance and Resources gave a brief presentation on the position in respect of the Medium Term Financial Plan 2016/17 – 2018/19.

The presentation included an overview of the current budget position including current balances and reserves and the likely position on borrowing in view of the Parkside and Leisure Centre Developments. Reference was made to the central government grant reduction projected over the next 5 years and to the changes in the Business Rates procedures.

The potential impact of changes to County Council funding arrangements and any Combined Authorities/Devolution Deal was also highlighted.

The Executive Director – Finance and Resources undertook to update Members as more details became available.

The current position was noted.

57/15 **NOMINATION OF AND ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE - THE HOP POLE INN, BROMSGROVE**

Members considered a report relating to an application from the Bromsgrove and Redditch Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale to list the Hop Pole, Birmingham Road, Bromsgrove as an Asset of Community Value under the Localism Act 2011.

Members considered the application in detail in the light of the test set out in Section 88 (1) of the Localism Act 2011. Consideration was given to the information provided within the application form and to the location of the Hop Pole in close proximity to the Town Centre.

Members were reminded that the final decision in respect of whether an asset is listed would be made by the Head of Planning and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration. The views of the cabinet would be taken into account in this process.

Following discussion it was

RESOLVED that the listing of the Hop Pole as an Asset of Community Value be not supported.

58/15 **CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES - CABINET 7TH OCTOBER 2015**

The confidential minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 7th October 2015 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the confidential minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 7th October 2015 be approved as a correct record.

(The public were not excluded for this item as there was no discussion on the minutes.)

The meeting closed at 7.00 p.m.

Chairman