

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

13TH OCTOBER 2016 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors H. J. Jones (Chairman), M. Glass (Vice-Chairman), C. Allen-Jones, S. J. Baxter, C. J. Bloore, M. T. Buxton, S. R. Colella, B. T. Cooper, R. J. Deeming, G. N. Denaro, R. L. Dent, J. M. L. A. Griffiths, C.A. Hotham, R. J. Laight, L. C. R. Mallett, K.J. May, C. M. McDonald, P. M. McDonald, S. R. Peters, S. P. Shannon, M. A. Sherrey, R. D. Smith, C. J. Spencer, C. B. Taylor, M. Thompson, L. J. Turner, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Mrs. S Hanley, Ms J.Pickering, Mrs C. Felton, Mrs. S. Sellers, Mrs S. Jones.

55\16 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R. Jenkins, P. Lammas and P. Thomas.

56\16 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

57\16 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET - EFFICIENCY PLAN**

Councillor G. Denaro proposed, Councillor K. May seconded the recommendation from the Cabinet meeting held prior to the Council meeting relating to the Council's Efficiency Plan. This item had been deferred from the Council meeting on 21st September.

In introducing the recommendation, Councillor Denaro informed Councillors that the Department for Communities and Local Government had confirmed that it was seeking high level, strategic, efficiency plans from local authorities. There were a number of unknown elements such as the amount of New Homes Bonus in future and the outcome of reform of business rates, but he considered that submission of the Plan to central government gave some certainty to financial planning for the next 4 years.

Councillor Denaro thanked Councillors Colella, Hotham and Mallett and the Finance working group for their input since the last Council meeting. He outlined the changes to the Plan, including a revised format; short explanations for each of the proposed efficiencies and savings being set out for one year rather than cumulative.

Councillor L.C.R Mallett proposed, Councillor M. Thompson seconded an amendment that under the proposed efficiencies, the total amount set out for the organisational management review should be increased to £450k (savings to Bromsgrove) and that the commentary should be amended to indicate that external consultants would be used to carry out the review, not the Local Government Association.

During debate on the amendment some members suggested that it was desirable to outline the minimum savings which were achievable and then over-deliver against the target, instead of setting a target which may not be achievable. The LGA offered robust peer review at no extra cost to the subscription paid by the Council to the LGA and using external consultants was likely to involve additional expenditure.

On a requisition under Council procedure rule 18.3 the following details of the voting on the amendment were recorded:

For the amendment: Councillors C. Bloore, M. Buxton, L.C.M. Mallett, C. McDonald, P. McDonald, S. Shannon, M. Thompson (7)

Against the amendment: Councillors C. Allen-Jones, S. Baxter, S. Colella, B. Cooper, R. Deeming, G. Denaro, R. Dent, M. Glass, J. Griffiths, R. Laight, K. May, S. Peters, M. Sherrey, R. Smith, C. Spencer, C.B. Taylor, L. Turner, S. Webb and P Whittaker (19)

Abstention: Councillor C. Hotham (1)

The amendment was declared lost.

Councillor Mallett proposed a further amendment, seconded by Councillor M. Thompson, that there should be an addition to the narrative commentary that a full review should be carried out of the allocation of costs between Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils. In proposing the amendment Councillor Mallett suggested that each Council was receiving different service levels from the shared officer structure.

On a requisition under Council procedure rule 18.3 the following details of the voting on the amendment were recorded:

For the amendment: Councillors S. Baxter, C. Bloore, M. Buxton, S. Colella, C. Hotham, L.C.M Mallett, C. McDonald, P. McDonald, S. Peters, S. Shannon, M. Thompson and L. Turner (12).

Against the amendment: Councillors C. Allen-Jones, B. Cooper, R. Deeming, G. Denaro, R. Dent, M. Glass, J. Griffiths, R. Laight, K. May, M. Sherrey, R. Smith, C. Spencer, C. B Taylor, S. Webb, and P. Whittaker (15).

The amendment was declared lost.

A further amendment was proposed by Councillor C. Hotham, seconded by Councillor S. Colella, that officers should reconcile the efficiency plan to the medium term financial plan as agreed in February 2016 as there was a discrepancy of £8k over the 3 year period.

During discussion of the amendment Ms J Pickering, S151 Officer, clarified that the figure of £135k in 2017/18 for the Organisational management review would be the net figure required to be saved.

Following discussion, the amendment to the effect that the anomaly raised would be corrected for the final version of the Plan to be submitted to Central Government, was generally agreed

Councillor C. Hotham then proposed a further amendment, seconded by Councillor S. Colella, that a pressure of £100k in relation to unrealised savings should be included in the Efficiency Plan against the Parkside building. In proposing this, he suggested that the level of savings being achieved at £150k per year did not match those predicted in February 2014 of £250k per year.

During debate on this amendment, it was noted that the proposed savings for the current financial year were being achieved. However, the information was not available to confirm whether the level of savings for 2016-17 was £250k in a full year.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared lost.

The Council then considered the substantive motion and the debate included:

- Whether details were available of the alternative models of service delivery proposed. It was noted that these had yet to be explored;
- The costs to Bromsgrove of staff travel between Parkside and the Town Hall in Redditch – Councillor Denaro undertook to check the figure for this;
- The potential to secure government funding for the next 4 years which meant that the Council needed to approve the Plan.

On being put to the vote the substantive motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED:

That the Efficiency Plan 2016/17 – 2019/20 as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report be approved for submission to Central Government to enable a 4 year financial settlement to be secured, subject to the anomaly identified between the plan and the Medium Term financial plan being corrected.

The meeting closed at 7.09 p.m.

Chairman