

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

13TH FEBRUARY 2019, AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors G. N. Denaro (Leader), K.J. May (Deputy Leader),
B. T. Cooper and M. A. Sherrey

Observers:

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Mr. G. Revans, Ms. C. Flanagan,
Mr. M. Dunphy, Mr M. Austin and Ms. A. Scarce

62/18 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C. B. Taylor and
P. Whittaker.

63/18 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

64/18 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 16th January 2019 were
submitted.

Councillor K. May asked for Minute no. 52/18 to be amended to say that
she had asked for a strategic traffic assessment to be carried out in the
north of the county.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of Cabinet meeting held on 16th January
2019 be approved, subject to the pre-amble above.

65/18 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
BOARD HELD ON 14TH JANUARY 2019**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 14th
January 2019 were considered.

It was noted that there was a recommendation in respect of the
Homeless Grant and Flexible Support Grant 2019-20 Report, which had
been pre-scrutinised by the Board. It was suggested that the Council
should carry out a physical count of rough sleepers.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the Council carry out a physical count of rough sleepers; and
- b) That the Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 14th January 2019 be noted.

66/18

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The Executive Director, Finance and Resources introduced the report and explained that the format was similar to those received in recent months. The recommendations were detailed at page 125 and she confirmed that the preceptor information was awaited and will be made available as soon as the information is received and updated into the resolutions.

In presenting the report she highlighted the following areas:

- The Medium Term Financial Plan provided the framework within which the Council could provide financial funding to support its strategic purposes.
- A number of assumptions had been made in order to bring forward a four year plan. These were detailed within the chart on page 127 of the agenda pack, with supporting explanatory notes and covered a number of areas, including additional pay and inflation, unavoidable costs, revenue bids, additional borrowing costs, identified and unidentified savings.
- The Executive Director, Finance and Resources provided detail around the Negative Support Grant in respect of the removal of the £740k.
- Detail was also provided in respect of the NNDR Income and confirmation that the Worcestershire Business Rate Pilot scheme had been accepted by Central Government and the implications of this to the Council.
- The current projections included an increase of 2.9% on Council Tax.
- Concerns in respect of the New Homes Bonus (NHB) scheme in the future. The amount confirmed that 2019/20 was less than had been anticipated.
- Members were reminded of the Community Bid scheme which had been set up and linked to the payment of new NHB monies and it was confirmed that whilst the current scheme would result in this payment ceasing an assumption had been made that this scheme would continue at £74k per year for the four year period of the current plan.

The Executive Director, Finance and Resources referred Members to the additional papers, which had been tabled at the meeting. This included an amendment to recommendation 2.1.5 and revised table 3.5 (as originally detailed on page 127 of the agenda pack) and revised tables 3.17.1 (as detailed on pages 130 and 131 of the agenda pack). It was explained that these had been revised following discussions at the

Corporate Management Team meeting and concerns raised at the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Finance and Budget Working Group meeting held on 11th February. The Executive Director, Finance and Resources confirmed that she had also discussed the matter with the External Auditors. The concerns had been around the reduction of balances to below the level agreed by Members. Following the discussions it had been agreed that £150k would be released from reserves which would offset the £150k in respect of the costs for the work being carried out by Mott McDonald. This reserve was in respect of economic regeneration funds and as there was already £20m potential borrowing available which could be used for this purpose, it was felt that it was prudent to release the £150k from reserves. In addition a further £300k was to be released from reserves over the period 2020/21 –2021/22

Councillor B. Cooper, Portfolio Holder for Finance took the opportunity to thank the Executive Director, Finance and Resources and her team for their hard work in producing the four year plan. However, he reminded Cabinet that it needed to be aware of the Council's position going forward and the importance of taking action to address the problems looming in future years. He also raised concerns and the importance of resolving the issues in respect of County Highways, which were impacting on the Council's financial position in a number of ways, lack of income from planning applications, New Homes Bonus monies, Council Tax income and the cost of the work being carried out by Mott McDonald.

Members reiterated Councillor Cooper's concern and the urgent need to restore confidence in the work of County Highways.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the Unavoidable costs as attached at Appendix1 be approved:
 - 2019/20 £366k
 - 2020/21 £240k
 - 2021/22 £243k
 - 2022/23 £245k

- (b) that the Revenue Bids as attached at Appendix 2 be approved:
 - 2019/20 £67k
 - 2019/20 £42k
 - 2020/21 £25k
 - 2021/22 £25k

- (c) that the Identified savings as attached at Appendix 3 be approved:
 - 2018/19 £332k
 - 2019/20 £335k
 - 2020/21 £355k
 - 2021/22 £459k

(d) that the Capital Programme bids as attached at Appendix 4 be approved:

2018/19 £687k
2019/20 £40k
2020/21 £40k
2021/22 £1,113k

(e) that the approval of the Pay Policy Statement as attached in Appendix 6 be approved;

(f) that the Council Tax Resolutions as attached at Appendix 7 to include the increase of the Council Tax per Band D @ 2.99% be approved; and

(g) that the release from reserves of £150k to fund Mott Macdonald in 2019/20 only be approved.

67/18

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES BUSINESS CASES

The Environmental Services Manager, supported by the Environmental Services Co-ordinator, presented the report and explained that this covered three areas, Domestic Waste Collection Services – options to support sustainable delivery for the future, Commercial Waste Collection Services – options to support future growth and income generation and the future delivery of Place working across Bromsgrove District.

In presenting the reports the Environmental Services Manager highlighted a number of areas covering each business case.

Domestic Waste Collection

- The significant service disruption in the delivery of this service in August/September 2018 due to a culmination of annual leave and above average sickness levels and the impact of housing growth going forward.
- To mitigate the risk of further service failure going forward.
- The use of agency staff and the financial impact of this.
- The current service was reviewed in order to strengthen the existing model.
- A full service review over the next two years.
- The potential impact of the Government's Waste Strategy which had recently been published. This included the potential to introduce a food waste collection service and free garden waste collection, which would have significant financial impact to the Council.

Commercial Waste Service

- Significant growth in the service in the last two years which has resulted in a change of focus and greater drive to grow the service.

- A small surplus had been made, but the service was not at full capacity.
- The opportunity to generate additional income for the Council.

Place Teams

- The most visible service within the District and the work that they carried out and the benefit from this service over the last two years.
- The demand for the service and support it has provided to other areas which had impacted on its ability to be pro-active.
- The need for investment in the team and the availability of funds to expand the service.

Councillor M. Sherrey, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services thanked the Team for all their hard work and was supportive of the business cases and the improvements that they would make.

The Head of Environmental Services highlighted that within recommendation for the Domestic Waste Collection, it should in fact state to fund five members of staff and not three.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance confirmed that the funds referred to had already been included within the Medium Term Financial Plan, which had been considered earlier in the meeting.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the recommendation from the Domestic Waste Collection Business Case, and allocate £156,646 revenue funding to Environmental Services to fund 5 members of staff, vehicle maintenance costs, and running costs to support the service be approved;
- (b) that the Capital Investment of £137,000 for 1 new Collection Vehicle, which will also incur annual borrowing costs of £21,823 from 2020/21 on the corporate financing revenue account be approved;
- (c) that the Commercial Waste Business Case, and allocate £184,558 additional revenue funding to Environmental Services to fund 6 additional members of staff, vehicle maintenance and running costs to support the service and the generation of additional income for the Council be approved;
- (d) that the Capital Investment of £340,000 for 2 new Collection Vehicles, which will also incur annual borrowing costs of £54,162 from 2020/21 on the corporate financing revenue account be approved; and
- (e) that the Future Delivery of Place Team Working Business Case, and allocate £166,697 additional revenue funding to Environmental

Services to fund 6 additional members of staff to support the service on a phased implementation over the next 3 years be approved:

	Staff Increase over 2018/19 levels	Additional Revenue Cost over 2018/19 Budget
2019/20	+2	£66,299
2020/21	+4	£119,161
2021/22	+6	£166,697

68/18

ALVECHURCH PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager introduced the report and reminded Members that this was the final version of the Alvechurch Neighbourhood Plan, which was similar to the documents that had been considered at previous meetings. This had now been examined independently and put forward for referendum. It had been positively received with a good turnout of local residents. This was the final stage of the process and under legislation it needed to be formally 'made' as detailed within the recommendations. The documents would then be used by officers when considering planning applications in the Alvechurch area and added further detail to the Bromsgrove Local Plan. It was a useful piece of information for case officers going forward.

Members thanked the Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager and his team for the support provided to the Parish Council in producing this document.

RECOMMENDED that the Alvechurch Parish Neighbourhood Plan be 'made' (formally adopted) immediately, in accordance with the relevant legislation.

69/18

LICKEY AND BLACKWELL AND COFTON HACKETT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager introduced the report and explained that this was the first stages of the production of this plan, which would run a similar course to that of the Alvechurch Neighbourhood Plan discussed at the previous item.

The Council had done a formal response, which was included within the agenda pack and were happy for this document to run its course as there were no major issues which had been identified from it. It will be examined by the Inspectorate following consultation and then go out to referendum before coming back to this Council for adoption.

Members questioned whether the Council had suggested bringing the two Parish Councils together and officers confirmed that this had been a joint decision and seemed to have worked well as they were both at a

similar stage. This was within the regulations and the Council would have been happy to have supported either option, however it was obviously easier to deal with the two together.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the District Council response to the joint Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan submission version;
- (b) that a six week statutory representation period from the 14th February to 28th March 2019 be approved;
- (c) that delegated authority to the Head of Planning and Regeneration to appoint an independent examiner to undertake examination of the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan following the representation period be approved; and
- (d) that delegated authority to the Head of Planning and Regeneration to proceed to a referendum on the joint Neighbourhood Development Plan, including accepting any recommendations from the independent examiner in assessing whether the plan meets the 'Basic Conditions' be approved.

70/18

COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME REVIEW

The Executive Director, Finance and Resources reminded Members that following consideration of the item previously it had been agreed that to go out to consultation for and 85% scheme and additional support for Care Leavers. This initial consultation had brought in a very low response rate and she had therefore asked for a further targeted consultation to take place. This had been implemented via text messages direct to the general public and claimants which had resulted in over 100 responses in two days. Following discussion at the Overview and Scrutiny Board Finance and Budget Working Group in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, it had been agreed that this consultation would close on Friday of this week, 15th February 2019. This would allow for the report to meet the statutory deadline for the Council meeting on 27th February 2019.

It was agreed that an additional Cabinet meeting would also be arranged prior to the Council meeting on 27th February 2019, at 4.30 pm to consider the final report.

71/18

PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the bi-monthly report which on this occasion covered the strategic purpose; Help me to find somewhere to live in my locality. The following areas were highlighted:

- The use of the local plan to drive development.

- Delivery of affordable housing – including Burcot Lane and a review of the temporary accommodation attached to this site.
- Support from Homes England and BDHT in respect of this temporary accommodation.
- Homelessness and rough sleeping – this had been debated on a number of occasions at various committees and a clear definition was included within the report, together with the support the Council was providing.

The remainder of the report covered a number of key corporate measures from the suite available on the Corporate Dashboard. This included data in respect of sickness absence and the Deputy Chief Executive explained that a review was currently being undertaken of the sickness absence policies and arrangements were being put in place to actively manage this and to ensure there was a consistent approach throughout the Council. It was noted that there was an increase in the long term sickness absence and this was detailed within each service area.

Members discussed whether the level of sickness absence had any impact of staff morale and they were advised that this was something which was very important to the Corporate Management Team who were working with officers to ensure that all staff were treated the same through the policy review, which was supported by staff representatives and the trades unions. It was important that there was consistency across the Council in dealing with the sickness absences.

Officers agreed to provide further information to Members outside of the meeting in respect of the costs to the Council of cash and card payments as it had been anticipated that the changeover to more transactions being paid by direct debit would reduce the banking costs, but this did not appear to be the case from the information provided within the report.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report and associated appendix be noted.

72/18

TO CONSIDER, AND IF CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE, TO PASS THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING DURING THE CONSIDERATION OF ITEM(S) OF BUSINESS CONTAINING EXEMPT INFORMATION:-

During consideration of this item Members agreed that Minute No 73/18 was not being discussed or debated, therefore it was agreed not to exclude the press and public, as no debate or information would be revealed relating to financial and business affairs).

73/18

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION IN RESPECT OF ITEM 5 - ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES BUSINESS CASES

The confidential information in respect of the Environmental Business Cases was noted.

The meeting closed at 6.10 p.m.

Chairman