

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

1ST JUNE 2022, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors K.J. May (Leader), G. N. Denaro (Deputy Leader),
M. A. Sherrey, P.L. Thomas and S. A. Webb

Observers: Councillor C. A. Hotham

Officers: Mrs. S. Hanley, Mr J. Howse, Mrs. C. Felton,
Ms. D. Poole, Mr O. Paparega and Mrs. J. Bayley-Hill

1/22 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

2/22 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

3/22 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE CABINET HELD ON 3RD MAY 2022**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Tuesday 3rd May 2022 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Tuesday 3rd May 2022 be approved as a true and correct record.

4/22 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
BOARD HELD ON 25TH APRIL 2022**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on Monday 25th April 2022 were submitted.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Councillor C. Hotham, advised that during the meeting, the Board had received an update on the work of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership in Bromsgrove District. Members had appreciated the information that had been provided but had concluded that more action could be taken by the partnership in the district centres.

The Board had also received a presentation on the subject of CCTV in the District. Members had been informed that, whilst the cameras were digital, not all of the connections between the cameras used in the

District were digital, particularly in the district centres. There were significant financial costs attached to upgrading the system and this would therefore occur over time as and when appropriate.

Consideration had been given to the content of the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Annual Report for the 2021/22 municipal year. The final report was due to be presented for Members' consideration at the Council meeting in June 2022.

There had been a recommendation, on the subject of fireworks, which had been agreed by Members during the meeting of the Board held on 25th April 2022. This recommendation had been considered at the previous meeting of Cabinet where it had been approved.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on Monday 25th April 2022 be noted.

5/22

LEVELLING UP FUNDING PHASE 1

The Executive Director of Finance and Resources presented a report on the subject of the use of Levelling Up Funding in Phase 1 of the project. Members were advised that the report was designed to confer authority on officers to spend the funding available, which would be allocated to works at Windsor Street and at the former Market Hall site.

During consideration of this item, Members were advised that the Overview and Scrutiny Board had pre-scrutinised the report at a meeting held on Monday 30th May 2022. At this meeting, Members had recommended an amendment to the second recommendation in the report, that this should propose expenditure "up to £2.266 million". Members had expressed the view that this would be more appropriate to propose from a procurement perspective, than expenditure of a set figure, to provide the Council with flexibility. The recommendation that had been made by the Board had been published in a supplementary pack and Members were asked to note that this contained a typographical error, as it should have recorded a figure of £2.266 million rather than £2.66 million.

RESOLVED that

- 1) progress made to date on the Levelling Up schemes be noted;
- 2) authority be delegated to the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services and the Executive Director of Resources to proceed to spend the Levelling Up Fund allocation up to a total of £2.266m on the required demolition and remediation works at the Windsor Street site and to engage a design and build contractor on the Market Hall site; and

- 3) the timetable, where further approvals for the Market Hall project will be needed once options have been appraised and schemes designed via the invitation to tender, be noted.

6/22

COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME - UPDATE

The Executive Director of Finance and Resources presented an update to Cabinet concerning the Council Tax Support Scheme and the process for consulting on changes to the scheme.

In considering the scheme, Members were asked to note that, whilst the Council collected Council Tax on behalf of precepting authorities, Bromsgrove District Council only received approximately 12 per cent of the Council Tax from Band D equivalent properties. The rest was distributed amongst precepting authorities, with the majority of funding allocated to Worcestershire County Council.

Cabinet was informed that the Council was required to consult with both the public and precepting authorities about any proposed changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme. Members questioned the extent to which there would be further consultation in respect of the Council Tax Support Scheme during the year and how frequently this would need to take place. Officers explained that there would be consultation during the autumn and any further proposed changes would also need to be subject to consultation.

During consideration of this item, Members commented that the report was relatively lengthy. The suggestion was made that, in future, the appendix to the report could be published in a restricted number of paper copies of a supplementary pack for meetings, whilst remaining available for everybody to view electronically, in order to reduce the amount of paper required for printing purposes.

RESOLVED that

- 4) the present scheme be noted; and
- 5) the proposed consultation process for the 2023/24 scheme be noted.

7/22

COUNCIL PLAN (INCLUDING RESTORATION AND RECOVERY PLAN)

The Head of Business Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Strategy presented the Council Plan, including the Restoration and Recovery Plan, for Cabinet's consideration.

Members were reminded that the existing Council Plan had been approved prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. In recognition of the impact of the pandemic on local communities and public services, the content of the plan had subsequently been reviewed during a series of workshops, to assess whether the content remained appropriate. No changes to the

Council's strategic purposes or priorities had been proposed during these workshop sessions. However, it was proposed that the green thread which had previously been included in the Council Plan, relating to tackling climate change, should become a specific priority. This corresponded with feedback that had been received from the public who had completed the Community Survey panel, in which they had reported that recycling and waste collection as well as energy efficient homes were key priorities for local residents.

The Recovery and Restoration Plan had been drafted in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This document detailed actions that had been taken by the Council to address the impact of the pandemic locally.

The content of the updated Council Plan was briefly discussed, and Members welcomed the proposal for the green thread to become a Council priority. Members commented that this was appropriate in a context in which a climate emergency had been declared by the Council and given the need to work towards a carbon neutral future.

Reference was made to the Overview and Scrutiny Board's pre-scrutiny of the report at a meeting of the Board held on Monday 30th May 2022. Members noted that the Board had highlighted the significant number of acronyms that had been used in the plan and that it would be helpful for a key to be provided in future to assist Members and the public when reviewing the content. There was general agreement that this was a helpful suggestion.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Councillor C. Hotham, commented that the Board had also identified areas where Members had considered that improvements could be made to the content. In respect of the green thread, concerns had been raised that the District Heat Network had not been referenced specifically within the report or plan. These concerns were noted by Cabinet, although it was also highlighted that the Council Plan as a strategic document and particular projects and activities would be referenced in more specific plans.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the Council Plan Addendum 2022/23 be approved and included alongside the current BDC Council Plan 2019/23; and
- 2) the Recovery and Restoration Plan 2020/21 be agreed and closed.

DIGITAL STRATEGY

The Head of Business Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Strategy presented the Council's proposed Digital Strategy for Cabinet's consideration.

Members were advised that in recent years, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic, organisations had increasingly been using digital technology in service delivery. The Digital Strategy promoted a digital first approach to service delivery and there were four key themes to this approach:

- Digital access for the customer
- A digital workforce
- Digital leadership
- Digital infrastructure

The Council needed to be cautious when using digital technology. There were areas that needed to be managed carefully including: cyber security, data protection and use of the cloud to store data.

In considering the use of digital technology, Members were asked to note that there were people who were not comfortable using digital technology. When delivering services, the Council needed to continue to ensure that the needs of these people were met. Members commented that there were also barriers that prevented some residents from making use of digital technology, including poor broadband connectivity in rural areas.

RESOLVED that the Customer and Digital Strategy be agreed and adopted.

The meeting closed at 6.17 p.m.

Chairman