

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY 21ST JUNE 2023, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors K.J. May (Leader), S. J. Baxter (Deputy Leader),
C.A. Hotham, C. B. Taylor, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

Observers: Councillor S. T. Nock

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Mrs. S. Hanley, Mr P. Carpenter,
Mrs. C. Felton and Mrs J. Gresham

1/23 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S. Colella.

2/23 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

3/23 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE CABINET HELD ON 15TH MARCH 2023**

The minutes from the Cabinet meeting that took place on 15th March
2023 were submitted for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 15th March
2023 be approved as a true and accurate record.

4/23 **RENEWAL OF THE ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLANNING (ERP)
CONTRACT**

The Interim Executive Director of Finance presented the report regarding
the renewal of the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Contract and in
doing so informed Members that the existing contract was due to expire
at the end of June 2023. Members were advised that the procurement
would take place through the G Cloud, a local government framework,
as it had been previously. However, it was clarified that, the new
contract would not include the use of the HR and Payroll modules. It was
queried whether, given the issues that had been experience during the
implementation of the ERP System, if the Council could procure a new

supplier. Officers reported that were the Council to procure an alternative supplier to TechOne, the issue with Cash Receipting would still need to be cleared prior to any transfer to an alternative supplier. This would also result in further financial investment being made. Therefore, it was considered that to reprocur TechOne was the most satisfactory way forward. It was likely that there would need to be a further review process and potential new implementation in two years' time.

Cabinet was informed that it was hoped that the issues experienced in the Cash Receipting module of the system would be resolved by the end of the calendar year and that an update was planned on the system in early July 2023. It was noted that several available updates had been skipped due to the previous issues experienced and now that the system was working well this update would bring the system back up to date. It was clarified that slipping some updates had been made to ensure stability within the system before any updates were made.

In respect of the contract with Wincave, which was required in relation to the cash receipting system, it was reported that the contract did not expire until December 2023, however the process for procurement of a new contract would need to be undertaken in September 2023.

Following the presentation of the report Members asked several questions including:

- Invoicing within the system – it was reported that there had been some issues experienced regarding invoicing previously, however these were now resolved and had resulted in the issuing of old invoices that needed to be paid. It was noted that this was a positive outcome of the system, in that the Council were able to chase any outstanding debts.
- Systems Accountants – The use of Systems Accountants would be usual during the implementation of Finance systems. However, the Council did not currently have these roles within the Finance team. However, staff members had now been identified who could be trained in this area for the future. It was hoped that this would ensure that when the AMS contract finished, the finance team would be able to provide this function in-house.
- The cost as a result of not procuring the HR and Payroll modules – It was reported that this was not yet known, and that the pricing would be set out in the framework contract. The £190K 2022/23 cost for system included a rebate for year 4 due to the issues encountered during the implementation.

- Review of system – it was noted that any system needed to be market tested on a periodic basis. However, it was confirmed that regular testing took place on the ERP system within the Council and that the TechOne system was intuitive for users.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Enabling, queried the wording of the following resolution contained within the report. As follows:

‘That the AMS contract continued until the Council had confidence that their in house resource was capable of delivering all or part of that function.’

It was clarified and agreed that *‘their’* included in the resolution above referred to the Council, and not AMS.

Subject to the preamble above regarding resolution 2, it was

RESOLVED that

1. the Council reprocured TechOne but at a reduced licence fee to reflect that HR and Payroll would not be used and delegated the finer negotiations to the Interim Director of Finance.
2. the AMS contract continued until the Council had confidence that their in house resource was capable of delivering all or part of that function.
3. the Wincave contract be renewed via a tender process in the autumn.

5/23

QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Interim Director of Finance presented the Quarter 4 Performance Monitoring report. The following was highlighted for Members’ consideration:

- The 2022/2023 Quarter 4 Outturn position would be considered at the next Cabinet meeting on 12th July 2023. This would allow the Finance team to reduce the volumes of items in Suspense and complete the Revenue and Capital Outturn suite of reports which were due for submission to Government on 31st July 2023.
- Improvements in several Operational Service Measures including a decrease in staff turnover, which was 1% lower than the national average. An increase in Council Tax collection rates and an increase in the speed in which Planning applications were processed.

- The remediation works at Windsor Street progress and process that had been undertaken to obtain quotes.

Following the presentation of the report Members queried the following areas:

- Measuring Health and Wellbeing – Some Members queried whether measures such as obesity were included in this report given that some of the responsibility for these issues did not lie with the Council. Officers noted that as the Council Plan was due to be refreshed shortly, this would provide Members an opportunity to look at the Council's priorities and include them in any future iteration of the Council Plan, if necessary.
- What measures were being taken by the Council to encourage residents to decrease their waste consumption given that the data regarding the amount of waste had been measured at 18% of residual waste, 35% was food was (45% of which was still in the packaging). It was confirmed by Officers that the Head of Service for Environmental Services was working on a briefing for all Members in this area, given the far reaching changes that were to be made in the new Environmental Act by Central Government. It was noted that the Head of Service for Environmental Services would work with Councillor P. Whittaker as the relevant Portfolio Holder to ensure Members are kept fully up to date with the potential changes in this area.

RESOLVED that

The Q4 Performance data for the Period January to March 2023 be noted.

6/23

QUARTERLY RISK UPDATE

The Interim Director of Finance presented the Quarterly Risk Update and informed Members that this was the fourth cycle of Corporate and Departmental Risk review since a baseline exercise was undertaken in April 2022.

As a result of these regular reviews, it was reported that there had been mitigation and reduction of risk across the Council and that measures to reduce risk had become business as usual. In addition to this, the Council had undertaken an update of the 4Risk system, the Council's repository for risk management and had established an Officer Risk

Group in order to ensure that a common approach to risk was embedded across the organisation.

Cabinet was informed that when the original baselining exercise took place there had been 105 Departmental Risks identified which reduced to 82 Departmental Risks following a review in June 2022. Currently there was a total of 55 Departmental Risks (2 Red, 21 Amber and 32 Green). The Red risks were in respect of the Revenue and Benefits Teams work, which currently included manual intervention when processing claims and therefore was considered to be an increased risk. The Bromsgrove Leisure contracts were also highlighted as a Red risk.

Members were keen to understand whether there needed to be a further risk included in respect of some partnership working, given the number of projects they were currently undertaking. It was felt that this would be an area that could be highlighted as a risk, particularly as one of the partners, North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) were managing a significant number of time-limited projects. Members were advised that the projects undertaken by NWEDR were risk assessed on a project by project basis.

The Interim Director of Finance informed Cabinet that at a recent conference hosted by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DHLUC) risks surrounding the number of Levelling Up projects across the country, the timescales for delivery, and the need for specialist contractors across many of these projects had been raised. It was hoped that there may be some flexibility of deadlines for some of the projects nationally in the future.

A further risk raised by Members was around the recruitment of the Chief Executive and Executive Director of Finance posts, that were to be advertised in the near future. Members agreed that this was a significant area of risk, and it was imperative that a succession plan was in place. Officers undertook to look at the risks as highlighted and progress accordingly.

RESOLVED that subject to the preamble above

The present list of Corporate and Departmental Risks and additional risks highlighted during the course of the meeting be considered and noted.

7/23

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 13TH AND 29TH MARCH 2023

Councillor C. Hotham presented the item in respect of the Overview and Scrutiny Board minutes from 13th and 29th March 2023 in his role as previous Chairman of the Board for the municipal year 2022/2023. He wished to thank all Members of the Board who carried out detailed and successful scrutiny during his time as Chairman.

In respect of the minutes of the meeting held on 13th March, Cabinet was informed that there had been a report considered regarding Damp and Mould, which had been well received and answered many of the Members questions. In addition to this, it was noted that the regular update regarding the Worcestershire County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) and a report on the Former Market Hall were considered.

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 29th March 2023 outlined the reports considered. Councillor C. Hotham stated that this had been a productive meeting which had included consideration of a report regarding the Provision of Street Signs, which had resulted in the Board making two recommendations. As a result, the budget for street signs, had been increased and included in the budget for 2023/24.

RESOLVED that

- 1)The recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Board at the meeting on 29th March 2023 be noted.
- 2)The minutes from the Overview and Scrutiny Board meetings that took place on 13th and 29th March be noted.

8/23

PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE REQUIREMENTS - RESPONSE TO THE AUDIT TASK GROUP

The Interim Director of Finance presented the report in respect of the Project Management Office. It was explained that this report was being considered as a result of a recommendation made by the Audit Task Group. The Task Group had conducted a detailed investigation into why the Section 24 Notice had been issued to Bromsgrove District Council in October 2022. The Bromsgrove Audit Task Group had considered hundreds of pages of written evidence and had held eight meetings over a period of 20 hours in February and early March 2023. The report and recommendations from the Task Group had been considered at a

meeting of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee held on 9th March 2023, and subsequently at a Cabinet meeting held on 15th March 2023, when all of the recommendations were agreed.

Cabinet was informed that high level corporate projects were reported quarterly to the Corporate Management Team (CMT) and were also included as part of the Quarterly Finance and Performance Report.

Furthermore, Members were advised that the Council already had a number of Officers trained to be project managers at Prince 2. It was noted that these skills needed to be realigned in order to ensure that trained staff were, where operationally possible, project managing Council projects.

Officers reported that, the CMT had recently reviewed the number of projects that were either underway or planned to start across the organisation. However, a further review was undertaken in February and March and a third of these projects were moved from the project list and were now considered Business as Usual. Once the final number of projects was established, they had been categorised as follows:

- Economic Development and Regeneration.
- Housing.
- ICT Related
- Organisational Change Related

The Interim Director of Finance reported that the Project Management Office Requirements, in response to the Audit Task Group report, recommended that two new roles be established: a Programme Manager and Programme Officer. The establishment of these roles had been a recommendation from the Audit Task Group. It was hoped that by recruiting to these roles that the project framework would be adhered to more successfully and that reporting on all projects would be on a monthly basis. The salaries for these two roles would be in total between £70k and £110k. It was noted that these costs would be included in any costs allocated to a project and therefore would be spread across all service areas.

Members welcomed this report in light of the findings of the Audit Task Group. However, some Members were keen to ensure that the roles and responsibilities of the Programme Manager and Programme Officer were made clear when established; and that staff who were recruited had the correct qualifications. It was confirmed by Officers that this would be the case and that both roles would mainly report to the CMT.

There was a query regarding how NWEDR projects were managed, and Officers clarified that this area was covered by the Governance Group which was chaired by the Chief Executive of Bromsgrove District Council.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Formal reporting of all projects be undertaken on a monthly basis by Officers and that this information to be included in the Quarterly Finance and Performance Reports for Members.
- 2) A compliance structure be put in place to ensure the delivery of projects and the management of the multiple interdependencies across projects. This included:
 - a. A council programme office be established to provide oversight and validation of the delivery of projects across the organisation.
 - b. The roles of a programme manager and a programme officer be established to provide support for the delivery of this oversight, especially for ICT and Organisational Change projects across the organisation.

9/23

TO CONSIDER ANY URGENT BUSINESS, DETAILS OF WHICH HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED TO THE HEAD OF LEGAL, DEMOCRATIC AND PROPERTY SERVICES PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE MEETING AND WHICH THE CHAIRMAN, BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, CONSIDERS TO BE OF SO URGENT A NATURE THAT IT CANNOT WAIT UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING

There was no urgent business on this occasion.

The meeting closed at 6.59 p.m.

Chairman