

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 3RD MARCH 2010, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors R. Hollingworth (Chairman), G. N. Denaro (Vice-Chairman), J. T. Duddy, Mrs. J. Dyer M.B.E., Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP and M. J. A. Webb

Observers: Councillors Mrs. M. Bunker, D. L. Pardoe and C. B. Taylor.

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Ms. J. Pickering, Mr. H. Bennett, Mrs. C. Felton, Mr. J. Godwin, Mr. A. Coel and Ms. R. Cole.

156/09 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dr. D. W. P. Booth JP, R. D. Smith and P.J. Whittaker.

157/09 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP declared a personal and prejudicial interest during the discussion on Agenda item 6 (Performance Management Board Minute 77/09 (Annual Artrix Performance Report)) as a member of the Bromsgrove Arts Centre Operating Trust and left the meeting during the consideration of the item.

158/09 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 3rd February 2010 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

159/09 **OVERVIEW BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview Board held on 2nd February 2010 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

160/09 **SCRUTINY BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Board held on 25th February 2010 were submitted.

There was discussion on Minute No 66/09 relating to the Climate Change Presentation and the recommendation that the Council sign up to the 10:10 campaign which aimed to reduce CO2 emissions by 10% in one year. It was accepted that in signing up to the campaign the Council was able to commit to a reduction of a 2% reduction and that this would signal the Council's aspiration to reduce emissions further through the Climate Change Strategy which was being developed at present.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the recommendation contained at Minute No 66/09 relating to Climate Change be approved, on the basis that when the Council's Climate Change Strategy is approved, a press release be issued to include details of the Council's participation in the 10:10 Campaign;
- (b) that the remainder of the minutes be noted.

161/09 **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BOARD**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Performance Management Board held on 15th February 2010 were submitted.

It was noted that in relation to Minute No 77/09 (Annual Artrix Performance Report), the Board had raised concerns regarding the potential for disturbances of performances taking place at the Artrix from vehicles travelling from the proposed Blue Light Campus. The concern was noted and the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships confirmed he had already raised the issue with the Executive Director (Planning, Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing) for consideration at the Town Centre Steering Group.

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

162/09 **SHARED SERVICES BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Shared Services Board held on 1st March 2010 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

163/09 **VERBAL UPDATES FROM THE LEADER AND/OR OTHER CABINET MEMBERS ON ANY RECENT MEETINGS ATTENDED IN AN EX-OFFICIO CAPACITY**

There were no updates on this occasion.

164/09 **OLDER PEOPLE TASK GROUP REPORT**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Overview Board Task Group on issues relating to Older People. The Leader welcomed Councillor Mrs. M. Bunker, Chairman of the Task Group to the meeting. Councillor Mrs. Bunker briefly introduced the report and presented the recommendations from the Task Group and these were then considered in detail by the Cabinet.

It was recognised that the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Council Plan included older people as a priority for the Council, particularly in view of the national and local trends and the need to prepare for an ageing population by “age-proofing” services.

It was noted that a key recommendation was the production of an A to Z Directory of Services available for older people in the Bromsgrove District and that a budget had been allocated for this in the Medium Term Financial Plan. Members were informed that the County Council may now be considering the production of a similar publication but felt it was important that information specifically relating to Bromsgrove was readily available.

Following discussion it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that recommendations 1 (a and b) relating to UK Older People’s Day be approved;
- (b) that recommendations 2 (a and b) relating to free swimming at the Dolphin Centre be approved;
- (c) that recommendation 3 relating to gym facilities at the Dolphin Centre be approved;
- (d) that recommendations 4 (a and b) relating to Community Transport Services (BURT) be approved;
- (e) that recommendation 5 relating to THE TRUNK be approved;
- (f) that recommendation 6 relating to the Older People’s Strategy for Worcestershire be approved;
- (g) that recommendations 7 (a and b) relating to the mapping exercise be approved. It was noted that whilst the Older People Theme Group was no longer in existence, the work would be undertaken across the other Local Strategic Partnership Groups and in conjunction with the Champion for Older People;
- (h) that recommendations 8 (a and b) relating to an A – Z Directory of services for older people be approved;
- (i) that recommendations 9 (a and b) relating to Information Management be approved;
- (j) that recommendation 10 relating to Older People’s Champions be approved;
- (k) that recommendation 11 relating to the Older People’s Housing Strategy for Worcestershire be approved;
- (l) that in relation to recommendation 12 relating to Housing, the desire to ensure there is an appropriate housing mix in the District and that older people’s needs are catered for be endorsed, but that the limitations on the Council’s ability to achieve this be recognised and the Portfolio Holder, the Strategic Housing Manager and the Strategic Planning Manager be requested to ensure that all appropriate steps be taken to achieve the aim of the recommendation;
- (m) that recommendation 13 relating to the Lifeline Service be approved;
- (n) that recommendations 14 (a and b) relating to the Benefit Service be approved;

- (o) that recommendations 15 (a and b) relating to employment be approved;
- (p) that recommendation 16 relating to adult learning opportunities be approved;
- (q) that recommendation 17 relating to funding opportunities be approved;
- (r) that recommendation 18 relating to Worcestershire County Council Highways Department be approved and that this Council's representatives on the Highways Partnership Forum be requested to raise the issues with the Forum;
- (s) that recommendations 19 (a) to (e) relating to future vision be approved;
- (t) that recommendation 20 relating to the Older People's Strategy for Worcestershire – Phase 2 be approved.

Following consideration of the recommendations, the Leader thanked the Task Group for its hard work and for the production of an excellent report.

165/09 **BROMSGROVE ROVERS FC/VICTORIA GROUND UPDATE**

The Cabinet considered a report on the current situation regarding Bromsgrove Rovers Football Club Limited which was now in administration, and in particular the lease of the Victoria Ground, together with future lease implications for the site. Members raised issues relating to some of the practicalities involved and following discussion it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the position relating to the current lease of the Victoria Ground be noted;
- (b) that it be noted that officers are working on changing the conditions on which the Council holds the Victoria Ground; and
- (c) that officers be requested to seek expressions of interest for the lease of the Victoria Ground to ensure that the Council's community objectives and priorities are met and sustained.

166/09 **BROMSGROVE LOW COST HOUSING SCHEME**

Consideration was given to a report regarding the Council's Low Cost Housing Scheme. The report referred to the current low demand for the properties and suggested this could be addressed through the extension of the current eligibility criteria, together with revised methods of marketing the scheme and the available properties.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the eligibility criteria for the Low Cost Housing Scheme be extended to align with the local connection criteria for the Housing Register to include applicants who are employed in the Bromsgrove District and to those who have family already resident in the District;
- (b) that the Low Cost re-sale properties be marketed by way of the advertising opportunity available through the Home Choice Plus, Choice Based Lettings Scheme.

167/09 **SUPPORTING PEOPLE STRATEGY FOR WORCESTERSHIRE 2010/2013**

Consideration was given to the Supporting People Strategy 2010/2013 developed by the Worcestershire Supporting People Team. The Strategic Housing Manager reported that the period for submitting comments on the Strategy had been extended.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Supporting People Strategy for Worcestershire 2010/2013 be approved ;
- (b) that the Strategic Housing Manager in consultation with the Portfolio Holder be authorised to approve any further amendments arising from the extension of the period for comment on the Strategy.

168/09 **HOMELESSNESS GRANT FUNDING - OUTTURN FOR 2009/2010 AND PROPOSED USE FOR 2010/2011**

The Cabinet considered a report on Homelessness funding including the use of funding for 2009/2010 and an update on the proposed use of grant for homelessness preventative schemes for 2010/2011. Following discussion it was:

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the latest position on the homelessness prevention and support schemes funded through the Communities and Local Government Homelessness Grant (CLG) 2009/2010 be noted;
- (b) that the Council's performance in continuing to more than halve the use of temporary accommodation in advance of the Government's 2010 target date be noted;
- (c) that the schemes recommended by the Bromsgrove Homeless Strategy Steering Group as set out in section 7 of the report be approved and funded from the Council's CLG Homelessness Grant for 2010/2011 as detailed within that section; and
- (d) that the Strategic Housing Manager in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing be authorised to allocate any under spend or make further adjustments necessary to ensure full utilisation of the grant allocation for 2010/2011 in support of existing or new schemes and to approve expenditure of the Non Tenure Specific Economic Recovery Fund.

169/09 **TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2010/2011 TO 2012/2013**

Consideration was given to a report on a Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy 2010/2011 to 2012/2013. Following discussion it was

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy 2010/2011 to 2012/2013, together with the prudential indicators set out in appendix B be approved;

- (b) that the Authorised Limit for borrowing be set at £6,500,000;
- (c) that the maximum level of investment to be held within each organisation be set at £3,000,000 subject to market conditions;
- (d) that the unlimited level for investment in Debt Management Account Deposit Facility be approved; and
- (e) that the Treasury Management Policy statement set out in appendix F be approved.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that it be noted that the Audit Board will be undertaking additional scrutiny of the Strategy during 2010/2011 to ensure the Council's investments are being managed in a risk free environment; and
- (b) that it be noted that Member training for Treasury Management will be incorporated into the Modern Councillor Programme and prioritised in accordance with other training needs.

170/09 **HARDSHIP RELIEF POLICY**

The Cabinet considered a report on the introduction of a National Non Domestic Rates Hardship Policy. Following discussion it was

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the National Non Domestic Rates Hardship Policy be approved; and
- (b) that the Council's Section 151 Officer be authorised to determine any applications in accordance with the Policy.

171/09 **IMPROVEMENT PLAN EXCEPTION REPORT (JANUARY 2010)**

Consideration was given to the Improvement Plan Exception report for January 2010 together with the corrective action being taken. Members requested that the basis of the figure given relating to suspended and reprogrammed actions be clarified in future reports.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the revisions to the Improvement Plan Exception report together with the corrective action being taken be noted;
- (b) that it be noted that for the 83 actions highlighted for January within the plan 77.1 percent were on target (green), 3.6 percent were one month behind (amber) and 7.2 percent were over one month behind (red). In addition it was noted that 12.1 percent of actions had been reprogrammed or suspended with approval.

172/09 **PERFORMANCE REPORT (JANUARY 2010)**

The Cabinet considered a report on the Council's performance as at 31st January 2010 (period 10). It was noted that some of the indicators had inevitably been influenced by the recent bad weather conditions.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that it be noted that 37 percent of Performance Indicators were stable or improving;
- (b) that it be noted that 65 percent of Performance Indicators that had a target were meeting their target as at the month end and 85 percent were projected to meet their target at the year end;
- (c) that the performance figures for January 2010 as set out in the report be noted;
- (d) that the particular areas of improvement as set out in section 3.5 of the report be noted;
- (e) that the areas of concern as set out in section 3.6 of the report be noted.

173/09 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

RESOLVED that under Section 100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the item of business the subject of the following minute on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of "Exempt Information" as defined in part 1 of schedule 12A to the Act, as amended, the relevant paragraph of that part being as set out below and that it is in the public interest to do so.

Minute No.
174/09

Paragraph
3

174/09 **WRITE OFFS REPORT - COUNCIL TAX AND BUSINESS RATES**

The Cabinet considered a report on a request to write off a number of debts in relation to Council Tax and Business Rates.

RESOLVED that the Council Tax and Business Rates debts listed in the appendix to the report be written off as irrecoverable in accordance with the Council's Write Off Policy.

The meeting closed at 8.22 p.m.

Chairman