

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 1ST AUGUST 2007 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors R. Hollingworth (Leader), Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths (Deputy Leader), Dr. D. W. P. Booth JP, G. N. Denaro, Mrs. J. Dyer M.B.E., R. D. Smith, Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP and M. J. A. Webb.

Observers: Councillor J. T. Duddy, Councillor D. L. Pardoe, Councillor C. R. Scurrrell and Councillor G. G. Selway.

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Mr. P. Street, Mr. J. Godwin, Ms. J. Pitman, Ms. D. Poole, Mrs. D. Warren, Ms A-M. Darroch and Ms. D. Parker-Jones.

38/07 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor P. J. Whittaker.

39/07 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Mrs. J. Dyer M.B.E. declared a personal interest in agenda item 7 (Hamilton House Supported Housing Scheme) as a Trustee of the Bromsgrove Youth Homelessness Forum.

Councillor R. D. Smith declared a personal interest in agenda item 7 (Hamilton House Supported Housing Scheme) as an employee of a housing association.

Mr. J. Godwin, Acting Head of Culture and Community Services, declared a personal interest in agenda item 9 (Progress with Leisure Centre Developments), as a consultee of the proposed transfer of the Dolphin Centre to a leisure trust.

40/07 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 10th July 2007 and 18th July 2007 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as correct records.

41/07 **SCRUTINY STEERING BOARD**

The minutes of the Scrutiny Steering Board held on 3rd July 2007 were submitted.

In relation to the newly established Task Groups, the Leader requested that the scope of the Public Transport - Buses Task Group be extended to include the impact of the proposed re-development of Bromsgrove Railway Station,

particularly with regard to issues associated with the relocation option which would allow for increased parking capacity, a bus interchange facility and potential for a Park and Ride station in a strategic location, some aspects of which it was felt would also affect the Air Quality Task Group. Furthermore, Members felt it important that transport links to railway stations across the district be covered by the scrutiny exercise. Members also queried the level of public interest which had been shown following the press advertisements advising of the establishment of the Groups.

The Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny Steering Board agreed to take back to the Board for consideration the Cabinet's suggestions and to ascertain from officers and feedback to the Cabinet details of the public responses received to date to the establishment of the Task Groups.

Regarding the items to be considered by the Cabinet that evening, the Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny Steering Board highlighted an issue in relation to agenda item 8 - Future of Bromsgrove Museum - as detailed separately at Minute 45/07 below.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the minutes be noted;
- (b) that the Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny Steering Board report back to the Board and Cabinet on the issues raised in relation to the new Task Groups; and
- (c) that the comment of the Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny Steering Board in relation to the report appearing later in the agenda on the Future of Bromsgrove Museum be noted.

42/07 **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BOARD**

The minutes of the Performance Management Board held on 17th July 2007 were submitted.

In relation to part (a) of the recommendation at Minute 19/07 (Comprehensive Performance Assessment and Improvement Plan 2007-08), the Chairman of the Board advised that, following discussions with the Chief Executive (whom it was confirmed was due to give a presentation on the Spatial Project prior to the September meeting of the Board), the appropriate Portfolio Holder and relevant Head of Service would instead be addressing the Board on progress made toward implementation of the Spatial Project at its September meeting, in order to allow for the said presentation to first take place. In this regard, the Leader commented that it would be the role of the Portfolio Holder to address the Board on this, with assistance from the Head of Service where required, thus shifting the reporting emphasis.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the minutes be noted; and
- (b) that, subject to the update given by the Chairman of the Performance Management Board and the comments of the Leader in relation to recommendation (a) of Minute 19/07 (Comprehensive Performance Assessment and Improvement Plan 2007-08), as detailed in the

preamble above, the recommendations contained in the minutes be approved.

43/07 **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING PARTY**

The minutes of the Local Development Framework Working Party held on 19th July 2007 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

44/07 **HAMILTON HOUSE SUPPORTED HOUSING SCHEME, SIDEMOOR**

The Cabinet considered a petition relating to Hamilton House Supported Housing Scheme, Sidemoor, together with an accompanying report on future use of the premises. Councillor D. Pardoe, who had presented the petition at the meeting of the Council on 18th July 2007, was present and spoke on the matter.

Whilst supporting the recommendations detailed in the report on future use of the premises, it was agreed that officers should report back to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs. J. E. Dyer and the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing as to how it was envisaged that the condition for no more than two units at any time to be allocated as temporary accommodation, would work in practice.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the contents of petition be noted;
- (b) that the Council owned premises known as 15, 15a, 17 and 17a York Road no longer be leased to Bromford Housing Group for the purposes of providing a supported housing scheme for younger people and that reasonable notice be given to enable the closure of the scheme and appropriate re-location of residents currently housed at Hamilton House;
- (c) that, subject to the comments detailed in the preamble above in relation to temporary accommodation, approval be given to the principle of the accommodation being returned to four self contained one bedroomed flats for management by a partner Registered Social Landlord (RSL) and allocation to general needs or homeless clients subject to a condition that no more than two units at any time may be allocated as temporary accommodation;
- (d) that the Council's partner RSLs be invited to submit innovative proposals to purchase or lease the premises for management and allocation on the basis set out in paragraph 2.2 of the report, at a cost that would enable them to cross subsidise a scheme of bringing back into use empty flats over shops in the district for letting as dispersed temporary accommodation for younger homeless people; and
- (e) that, subject to a suitable scheme being proposed by an RSL, the Head of Planning and Environment and the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing, be granted delegated authority to sell or transfer the dwellings at a peppercorn rent or capital receipt that represents market, below market or zero value.

45/07 **FUTURE OF BROMSGROVE MUSEUM**

Consideration was given to an update report on progress toward implementation of the Cabinet's decision of February 2007 to close the Museum.

The Chief Executive advised Members of the need for them to be aware that if Members decided to close the Museum on 1st October 2007, due to insufficient progress being made on the transfer, that the Council could potentially face a legal challenge. The Chief Executive further commented that the transfer to a Trust would have to be subject to the agreement of the Charity Commission.

The comments of the Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny Steering Board made earlier in the meeting that the Board did not wish to see any further slippage in the proposed timetable for completion of the transfer were also noted.

The Chairman of the Cabinet stated that negotiations with the transfer were now proceeding reasonably well and that it was hoped that the Museum would not have to close, thus avoiding any possibility of a legal challenge.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the delayed progress regarding the completion of the transfer of the Museum and its collection to a trust or arms length organisation, as outlined in the report, be noted;
- (b) that the period for the completion of the transfer be extended to 30th September 2007; and that should insufficient progress be made towards completion by this date, the Museum close on 1st October 2007 and not re-open until transfer of the collection to a trust is completed;
- (c) that with regard to the course of action referred to in paragraph 2.2 of the report, the Portfolio Holder for Culture and Community Services, the Corporate Director - Services and Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services be given delegated authority to determine whether sufficient progress has been achieved;
- (d) that in the event it is determined that sufficient progress has been achieved, the period for the completion of the transfer be extended to 31st December 2007; and
- (e) that the Portfolio Holder for Culture and Community Services, the Corporate Director – Services and the Section 151 Officer be given delegated authority to negotiate a price for the sale of the Museum building to the museum trust.

46/07 **PROGRESS WITH LEISURE CENTRE DEVELOPMENTS**

The Cabinet considered a report on progress on the future management of the Dolphin Centre and Haybridge Sports Centre.

In response to issues raised by Members on the financial implications of the report, the Chief Executive advised that full details in this regard would be included in the business case to be presented to the full Council.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that approval be given to the continued exploration of the actions that will expedite the process of entering into a lease with a leisure trust and the transfer of the staff of the Dolphin Centre and Haybridge Sports Centre to a leisure trust;
- (b) that the Council approve a transfer from balances of £44,000 to fund the projected costs associated with maintaining Haybridge Sports Centre until 31st March 2008;
- (c) that the Council agree to include a provision of £850,000 in the Capital Programme for 2007/08 for capital works at the Dolphin Centre to upgrade the fitness suite, to be met from existing capital receipts; and
- (d) that the Council agree to fund the provision of £25,000 from balances to support the process of transfer in using the skills and knowledge of resources from an adjoining district council.

47/07 **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY 2007-2010**

The Cabinet considered the draft Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2010.

Members supported the draft Strategy and its priorities and, in doing so, noted that it was a "living" document, with consultation on this due to end on 31st August 2007. As part of the consultation process with local residents a number of supportive responses had been received under the "Glad or Grumpy" postcard campaign, with constructive suggestions having been put forward where residents were of the view that improvements could be made. It was further noted that the Council would make a formal response to the draft strategy once the period of consultation had ended and all of the responses had been fully analysed.

RESOLVED that the draft Sustainable Community Strategy and its priorities be supported.

48/07 **BROMSGROVE RAILWAY STATION AND INTEGRATED PASSENGER TRANSPORT STRATEGY**

Consideration was given to a report on the re-development of Bromsgrove Railway Station and which also sought Member endorsement of the Council's response to the Integrated Passenger Transport Strategy and agreement to establish a Transport Theme Group for the District under the umbrella of the Local Strategic Partnership.

The Chief Executive updated Members on certain aspects of the funding elements linked to the re-development, together with statistical data in relation to possible numbers of commuters which a new Station might serve. It was Members' understanding that the further contribution which might be required at later stages of the re-development, which it was felt should specifically apply to stages 5 and 6 (Design and Development), would not be in the same proportion to the funding of the feasibility study. Members also commented on the membership and aims of Transport Theme Group.

RESOLVED that the Council's response to the Integrated Passenger Transport Strategy consultation (as detailed in paragraph 3.14 of the report) be endorsed; and

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that approval be given to a contribution of £25,000 (capital) towards stages 3 and 4 of the station re-development (as detailed in paragraphs 3.8 to 3.10 of the report);
- (b) that it be noted that a further contribution towards stages 5 and 6 may be required at later stages of the station re-development (as detailed in paragraph 3.11 of the report), but that this will be subject to ratification by the full Council; and
- (c) that approval be given to the establishment of a Transport Theme Group, the membership of which should also include Councillor Mrs. M. A. Sherry as Portfolio Holder for Street Scene and Recycling, and which is focussed, will not delay the decision-making process and will contribute its findings to the Council on a regular basis, for the District under the umbrella of the Local Strategic Partnership (as detailed in paragraph 3.15 of the report).

49/07 **PREFERRED PARTNERING IN THE DELIVERY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

The Cabinet considered a report on the outcome of the review undertaken by the Housing Partnership Review Panel on the formalisation of new preferred partnership arrangements between the Council and Registered Social Landlords.

In relation to paragraph 6.2 of the report with regard to the separate agreement whereby West Mercia/Bromsgrove District Housing Trust would be offered up to £350k development grant per annum (so long as it was available) and first chance to purchase land in the ownership of the Council identified for affordable housing (or otherwise if the Cabinet agreed to gift or sell at reduced value), Members were of the view that there should also be the option to lease such land.

RESOLVED that approval be given to the decisions made by the Preferred Partnership Review Panel on 8th June 2007 in the selection of the Council's Registered Social Landlord Preferred Partners (as detailed in paragraphs 6.1 and 6.2 of the report), subject to the amendment of paragraph 6.2 to include a lease option for land in the ownership of the Council identified for affordable housing.

The meeting closed at 7.52 pm

Chairman