

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 4TH JANUARY 2012 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors R. Hollingworth (Leader), Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP (Deputy Leader), Dr. D. W. P. Booth JP, M. A. Bullivant, C. B. Taylor and M. J. A. Webb

Observers: Councillors C. Bloore, J. Brogan and L. Mallett.

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Ms. S. Hanley, Ms. J. Pickering, Mrs. S. Sellers, Mr. A. Coel and Ms. R. Cole.

90/11 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

91/11 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

92/11 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 7th December 2011 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be confirmed as a correct record.

93/11 **SHARED SERVICES BOARD**

The minutes of the Shared Services Board (part) held on 10th November 2011 relating to non confidential and non exempt items were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

94/11 **AUDIT BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Audit Board held on 15th December 2011 were submitted.

RECOMMENDED that as set out in minute 21/11 of the meeting of the Audit Board held on 15th December 2011, the maximum level of investment to be held within a single organisation (bank or building society), as detailed in the report, be set at £3 million, subject to market conditions.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that in relation to the recommendation referred to above, the Audit Board be requested to note that the maximum level of investment to be held within a single organisation should be maintained at £3 million;
- (b) that the remainder of the minutes be noted.

95/11 **VERBAL UPDATES FROM THE LEADER AND/OR OTHER CABINET MEMBERS ON ANY RECENT MEETINGS ATTENDED IN AN EX-OFFICIO CAPACITY**

The Leader reported that he had attended a meeting of a Sub Group of the Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership.

96/11 **HOME INSULATION FUNDING**

The Cabinet considered a report on an offer of funding of £40,000 from Worcestershire County Council specifically for the purpose of installing free cavity wall, draught proofing and loft installation measures for homeowners within the Bromsgrove District aged 60 years or over. It was a requirement that the funding be utilised by 31st December 2012 and be promoted under the Warmer Worcestershire branding.

Members queried whether the funding had been “top sliced” by the County Council and the Portfolio Holder undertook to investigate this. In addition there was discussion on whether preference could be given to utilising contractors from within the Bromsgrove District to undertake the work. It was reported that whilst Contracts would need to be awarded in accordance with the Council’s Procurement Procedures, it would be reasonable to request officers to review the procedures with a view to increasing the weight given to local suppliers where appropriate.

RECOMMENDED that the funding of £40,000 from Worcestershire County Council be incorporated into this Council’s “Energy Efficiency Grants Home Insulation Projects” budget and that the Capital Programme be amended accordingly.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Head of Community Services be authorised to formally accept and account for the expenditure of the Worcestershire County Council “Home Energy Efficiency Improvements” funding offer of £40,000 and associated funding conditions;
- (b) that applications be invited from homeowners within the District aged 60 or over for the installation of loft and/or cavity wall insulation and draught-proofing measures installed in their homes free of charge; and
- (c) that the Head of Community Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing, be authorised (i) to expend up to the sum approved by the Council, for the purposes indicated in the report; and (ii) to utilise such funding remaining at 1st April 2012 to extend the insulation to offer to any resident of the District irrespective of age or status, or for other Home Energy Efficiency initiatives subject to the agreement of Worcestershire County Council; and

- (d) that officers be requested to review the Council's Procurement Procedures with a view to increasing the weight given to local suppliers where appropriate.

97/11 **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2012/13 - 2014/15**

The Executive Director of Finance and Resources gave a presentation on the Authority's financial position for 2012/13 - 2014/15, together with Revenue and Capital bids forming part of the 2012/13 – 2014/15 Medium Term Financial Plan.

As part of the presentation reference was made to the recommendations arising from the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 3rd January 2012. The recommendations were in relation to the priorities to be attached to the various Revenue and Capital bids and were taken into account as part of the Cabinet consideration of the bids.

Reference was also made to the need to consider the potential impact on homelessness of the forthcoming Welfare Reform, in particular changes to the arrangements for Housing Benefit which would result in reductions in payments to claimants in particular circumstances.

Members' attention was drawn to the need to address any potential increase in homelessness at an early stage and it was noted that officers were taking steps to strengthen prevention measures as far as possible. This included close working between officers from the Strategic Housing and Housing Benefits Teams and in partnership with BDHT and private landlords.

Clearly even taking into account the strengthening of prevention measures, it was likely to be necessary to make some provision within the budget for an increase in the costs of temporary accommodation. It was suggested that an additional £35,000 could be allocated from balances, together with a total of £15,000 from unspent budgets from the current year, to establish a contingency budget of £50,000 to be used for preventative work and if necessary, temporary accommodation costs. Officers undertook to continue to review the position and to report further as appropriate.

Arising from the discussion on the Revenue and Capital Bids it was acknowledged that until the Council's Strategic Purposes had been fully defined it was inappropriate to make final decisions regarding the priority to be attached to some of the bids. It was important that the budget priorities were aligned with the Council's Strategic Purposes.

It was therefore

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the current position for 2012/13 - 2014/15 be noted and that officers be requested to review the savings that can be delivered to achieve a balanced budget;
- (b) that the Revenue bids in respect of an Energy Advisor and a Data Analyst for Procurement be reduced to a low priority;

- (c) that the Capital bid in respect of Planning – Town Centre be categorised as a high priority;
- (d) that the Capital bid in respect of replacement Christmas Lights be deleted and the work be undertaken as part of the regeneration of the Town Centre;
- (e) that the Capital bids as set out below be taken out of the budget process at present and that provided that the proposal meets the Council's Strategic Purposes as referred to in the preamble, officers be required to produce separate reports to include Business Cases as appropriate.
 - Toilets in Bromsgrove Cemetery
 - Improved Parking in Sanders Park
 - Improvement of Battlefield Brook Infrastructure
 - Allotment Extension

98/11 **ANTI-BRIBERY POLICY AND OFFICERS' CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Cabinet gave consideration to a report which proposed the updating of the Council's Anti Bribery policies and procedures following the coming into force of the Bribery Act 2010. The report included a new Anti-Bribery Policy and the introduction of a Code of Conduct for Officers.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the Anti-Bribery Policy attached at appendix 1 to the report be approved; and
- (b) that the Officers' Code of Conduct attached at appendix 2 to the report be approved and included in the Council's Constitution.

99/11 **SHARED SERVICES BOARD**

(Note: Although the Cabinet agenda had indicated that the public may be excluded during the consideration of this item, in the event it was considered in public).

The minutes of the meeting of the Shared Services Board (part) held on 10th November 2011 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted, including the recommendations contained at Minute 7 which had subsequently been approved by the Council on 16th November 2011.

The meeting closed at 7.40 p.m.

Chairman