

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 3RD OCTOBER 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 S. R. Colella and P. M. McDonald.

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Mr. J. Staniland, Ms. D. Poole, Mr. G. Revans, Ms. S. Morgan, Mrs. S. Sellers, Mr. D. Allen, Ms. T. Beech, Mr. M. Bough and Ms. R. Cole.

53/12 **APOLOGIES**

No apologies for absence were received.

54/12 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

55/12 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 5th September 2012 and 26th September 2012 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record in each case.

56/12 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 10th September 2012 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

57/12 **AUDIT BOARD**

It was noted that the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Board held on 20th September 2012 would be considered at the next meeting of the Cabinet.

58/12 **PROPOSED REVISED ARRANGEMENTS FOR PERFORMANCE REPORTING**

The Head of Business Transformation gave a short presentation on the future of Performance Reporting.

The presentation included a brief overview of work undertaken on Transformation which was part of the Shared Services process. Members were reminded that performance measures, which emerged from the Transformation process within service areas, rather than imposed performance targets would be used in future to improve performance.

It was intended that operational measures would be considered on a monthly basis by the Corporate Management Team, with strategic measures being reported quarterly to Members via the Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Board. The role of Members was crucial if systems were to be well managed, with Portfolio Holders in particular being required to work with officers to utilise measures to understand and improve systems.

It was noted that for a transitional period the Performance Reports would be a combination of new measures and some retained performance indicators. New measures would emerge (with some being deleted if they were no longer appropriate) and would be illustrated by a variety of charts and graphs. Whilst the reports would still be in paper form initially, eventually a dashboard of key measures would be available centrally with access for all. A key issue would be that Performance information would be available in "real time" so that issues could be addressed by Members and officers as they occurred rather than on a retrospective basis.

The Cabinet expressed support for the proposals and felt it was important that all Members had the opportunity to understand the new arrangements. It was noted that a similar presentation would be given to the Overview and Scrutiny Board and that training and support would be provided for Members. As stated above whilst there would be paper based reports for a period, eventually the information would be provided in "real time" and Members would need to access this electronically. It was intended to provide additional internet facilities in the Members' Room to assist any Members who were not easily able to access the information.

The Leader then thanked the Head of Business Transformation for her presentation.

59/12 **TENANCY STRATEGY 2012-2014**

The Cabinet considered a report on a proposed Tenancy Strategy for Bromsgrove which the Local Authority had a duty to publish by 15th January 2013 under the Localism Act 2011.

It was reported that the Strategy had been developed in close consultation with Registered Providers of Social Housing, stakeholders and Members. The Strategy contained details of the matters to which Registered Providers must have regard when formulating their own Tenancy Policies in relation to issues such as the types and lengths of tenancies they would grant and how disposals of stock should be managed.

Members raised a number of issues, including the need to ensure boats were included in the exclusion list in paragraph 5.40 of the document, in relation to

the determination of a Local Connection. It was felt that the document would provide enough flexibility for both this Authority and the Registered Providers in relation to tenancy issues and making the best use of limited stock.

The Cabinet thanked the Strategic Housing and Enabling Officer, Ms. A. Glennie for the work she had undertaken on the Strategy.

RESOLVED that the Bromsgrove District Council Tenancy Strategy as set out in Appendix A to the report be approved.

60/12 **DISABLED PARKING REVIEW (INCLUDING BLUE BADGE HOLDERS)**

The Cabinet considered a report on a Review which had been undertaken in relation to the use of Council car parks by Blue Badge holders. This had been as part of an investigation into the possibility of granting free parking to disabled users.

The Portfolio Holder Councillor M. J. A. Webb explained in detail the background to the report and the work which had been undertaken by the cross party working group, which had consisted of Members and officers, to obtain accurate data on the level of use of the car parks by Blue Badge holders.

By using a variety of data including on site surveys it had been determined that for budget purposes it was reasonable to assume the annual revenue generated by disabled parking bays to be approximately £50,000 per annum.

It was reported that in order to take into account the views of disabled users of the service when considering the options available, meetings had taken place with community members and groups representing disabled people. In addition, in July 2012 a detailed survey had been sent to over 1200 Blue Badge holders. It was noted that at the time of the survey it had not been possible to access the Worcestershire County Council Blue Badge holder data base due to data protection issues, although it was hoped these issues had now been resolved. The survey had also been publicised through the local press and the Council's website.

The response to the survey had been very good with 474 responses being received. The survey had been designed to obtain views on all aspects of Blue Badge parking including location of spaces, ease of use of the service and cost issues.

Councillor Webb then outlined the results of the survey which he felt in some instances had been unexpected and contrary to generally held beliefs. In particular he highlighted that only 19 respondents had ever used the "BURT" bus, whilst 26% of respondents were not aware of the additional free hour offered to Blue Badge Holders. In addition the vast majority of respondents stated that they felt the car park spaces and the location of the pay machines were suitable and that the pay machines were easy to use. Whilst 46% stated that the cost of parking in Bromsgrove meant they shopped elsewhere, the majority of these gave Redditch as an alternative where a charge was also

made for parking by Blue Badge holders. From the answers given to other questions it appeared that the quality/numbers of shops available was also a key factor.

Councillor Webb drew Members' attention to the options outlined in the report and reminded Cabinet that separately from this exercise, a full review of all aspects of the operation of the car park service was underway. In addition the regeneration of the Town Centre would also impact greatly on car parking and would be likely to attract more people to use the car parks. It was felt that there was a need to fully publicise and promote the facility for Blue Badge Holders to have an additional hour's parking free of charge. This would be particularly effective if it was to be publicised as part of the information distributed when new or replacement Blue Badges were being issued.

Following discussion it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that there be no change to the current arrangements in respect of car parking for Blue Badge holders, but that the facility of the additional hour of free parking be actively promoted and fully publicised; and
- (b) that following the active promotion referred to above, a further survey be undertaken to assess the needs of Blue Badge holders and that the timing of this be agreed between the Head of Environmental Services and the Portfolio Holder, in the light of the regeneration of the Town Centre and the on going review of the car park service as a whole.

61/12 **VERBAL UPDATES FROM THE LEADER AND/OR OTHER CABINET MEMBERS ON ANY RECENT MEETINGS ATTENDED IN AN EX-OFFICIO CAPACITY**

Councillor Mrs. M. A. Sherrey reported that she had recently attended the Bromsgrove Sports Awards and the High Five Awards together with the Older People's Day event.

Councillor M. A. Bullivant reported that he had also recently attended the Older People's Day event together with the Bromsgrove "No Barriers" Award event.

62/12 **BELBROUGHTON CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Cabinet considered a report on the proposed revision to the boundaries of the Belbroughton Conservation Area and associated Management Plan.

Members felt that this was a useful document which should assist with protection of the area within the planning process. It was noted that there had been a public consultation in respect of the document.

RESOLVED that the Belbroughton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, including boundary amendments, be approved and the

contents thereof be endorsed as a material consideration for planning purposes.

63/12 **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE 2012**

The Cabinet considered a report on The Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Guidance which had been produced by Landscape Officers at Worcestershire County Council to aid interpretation of the Landscape Character Assessment. It was noted that the document was to be considered by all District Councils within Worcestershire.

RESOLVED that the Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Guidance, attached as Appendix A to the report, be approved as a material consideration for planning purposes to aid the interpretation of Landscape Character when planning issues are considered.

64/12 **TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE INITIATIVE**

(The Leader agreed to the consideration of this item of business as a matter of urgency as a decision was required prior to the next meeting of the Cabinet).

Members were reminded that in April 2010 the Council had provisionally been awarded £1.2m from the Heritage Lottery Fund to operate a Town Heritage Initiative in Bromsgrove Town Centre Conservation Area. Following this, in April 2012 a second round bid had been submitted containing additional detail on the Conservation area and how the funding would be utilised to add lasting improvements and historic value to the area and it was reported that this bid had now been approved by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

It was reported that in order for the grant arrangements to be finalised, the Heritage Lottery Fund required a formal resolution from the Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the successful outcome of the Townscape Heritage Initiative application together with the award of a grant of up to £1.2m in respect of the funding of improvements in the Bromsgrove Town Centre Conservation Area be noted with pleasure; and
- (b) that the terms of the grant comprising the Standard Terms of Grant (attached as Appendix 1 to the report), the additional conditions set out in the formal Heritage lottery Fund offer letter (attached as Appendix 2 to the report) and the Heritage Lottery Fund document "Managing your Grant"(attached as Appendix 3 to the report) be accepted.

65/12 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

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 disclosure of "Exempt Information" as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the

Act the relevant paragraph of that part being as set out below and that it is in the public interest to do so.

<u>Minute No</u>	<u>Paragraph</u>
66/12	3

66/12 **DISPOSAL OF COUNCIL ASSETS AT HANOVER STREET CAR PARK AND GEORGE HOUSE**

The Cabinet considered a report giving an update on the marketing exercise previously agreed in relation to the disposal of Council owned assets at Hanover Street Car Park and George House, Bromsgrove.

Members discussed the detail of the report and had particular regard to the strategic importance of the development of the site in the regeneration of the Town Centre.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the contents of the report be noted;
- (b) that the long-term lease of the freehold land at Hanover Street Car Park and George House to the developer for the sum set out in the report be approved, subject to the confirmation by the District Valuer that the consideration is equivalent to or exceeds the commercial value of the land;
- (c) that the arrangements for the management of the car park spaces at the site including the Council managing the car park on the basis that the income from the parking spaces will be retained by the Authority, be approved; and
- (d) that delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director (Planning and Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) to agree the final terms for the disposal of the land with the developer and to enter into the necessary legal documents required for the purposes of implementing (b) and (c) above.

The meeting closed at 8.00 p.m.

Chairman