

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 8TH JANUARY 2014 AT 6.00 P.M.

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

Officers: Mr. D. Allen, Mr. K. Dicks, Mrs. S. Hanley, Ms. S. Morgan,
Mrs. S. Sellers and Mr I Westmore

71/13 **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence.

72/13 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

73/13 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 4th December 2013 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

74/13 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 16th December 2013 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

75/13 **AUDIT BOARD**

It was reported that the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Board held on 12th December 2013 would be submitted to the February meeting of the Cabinet.

76/13 **WORCESTERSHIRE SHARED SERVICES BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Shared Services Board held on 21st November 2013 were submitted.

In relation to minute 29/13 it was proposed that a meeting be arranged between the Leader, the relevant Portfolio Holder, the Chief Executive and the

Head of Regulatory Services to discuss the impact of Worcestershire County Council budget proposals on the future resilience of the shared service.

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

77/13 **HOME CHOICE PLUS ALLOCATIONS POLICY REVIEW**

The Cabinet considered a report which detailed proposed amendments to the allocation scheme for determining priorities and for defining the procedures to be followed in allocating social housing provision as set out in a draft Policy.

The Portfolio Holder drew Members' attention to the one significant amendment which was being proposed, that of seeking to address concerns about local connection and how best to prioritise the housing needs of Bromsgrove residents when allocating properties in the District. It was noted that the Strategic Housing Manager was to contact the relevant Portfolio Holders at partner authorities outlining the Council's position in this regard. Should the response not be positive the Council would consider how best to proceed with promotion of local connection, particularly in the light of forthcoming guidance from the Government which would encourage local authorities to incorporate a greater preference towards housing local people.

Members were clear that the numbers of residents and properties involved were small in absolute terms but, in order to fulfil growing expectations towards localism and self-determination, a redefinition of local connection was reasonable.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Home Choice Plus Allocations Policy is approved to be sent out for consultation; and
- (b) that Officers report back to Cabinet on the outcome of discussions with the Home Choice Plus Partnership regarding local connection.

78/13 **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2014/15 TO 2016/17 - PRESENTATION**

Members were provided with an update on the preparation of the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2014/15 – 2016/17.

It had previously been reported that the Council needed to meet a budget shortfall of £160K for the coming year but the figure had been revised downwards to £97K. This was partly in response to recent government decisions to reconsider the allocation of the New Homes Bonus to Local Enterprise Partnerships and an accompanying reduction in the Revenue Support Grant to the Council.

The Financial Services Manager noted that the Council was looking to make use of £250K from balances and that there were two bids coming forward for consideration, these being in respect of limited free car parking and support for local cultural events.

There was brief discussion of the likely effect of the Council not proceeding with the redevelopment of the Dolphin Centre. It was suggested that the overall impact of proceeding with the scheme would be primarily limited to one-off costs near the start of the process but Members were informed of the need to remain mindful of the ongoing squeeze on the public finances.

The proposals around the sale of trade waste lists were noted and it was suggested that Officers revisit the possibility of building up this business over time to provide an ongoing income stream.

The investment of £150K over six years to support cultural events was intended to achieve wider recognition for the District, was being carried out in conjunction with Bromsgrove School and was primarily aimed at increasing footfall in the town centre. Whilst the principle was broadly supported there was a desire to see a commitment to tangible financial involvement from the School. The promotion of town centre viability was also behind the bid for free car parking on small business Saturdays but members were less convinced at the efficacy of this approach. There was a strong feeling that the money might be more usefully deployed in supporting small business development across the District.

As a final point, the potential impacts of Worcestershire County Council budget cuts were highlighted. It was noted that Officers were unable to quantify the amount of additional customer demand that would present to the District Council although Heads of Service were currently attempting to identify likely effects. It was proposed that certain local County Council colleagues be briefed on the effects of County Council budget decisions on Bromsgrove by their District counterparts and Officers.

79/13 **COUNCIL TAX BASE 2014/2015**

The Committee considered a report that set out the details of the calculation of the District's tax base for Council Tax setting purposes.

RESOLVED:

- (a) the amount calculated by Bromsgrove District Council as the Council Tax Base for the whole area for 2014/15 is approved at 34,117.95; and
- (b) the amount calculated by Bromsgrove District Council as the Council tax Base for 2014/15 for the calculation of local precepts shall be the amounts shown in the appendix to these minutes.

80/13 **WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES - REMOVAL OF HEALTH AND WELLBEING FROM STATEMENT OF PARTNER REQUIREMENTS**

The Committee considered a report which sought agreement to modify the statement of partner service requirements for Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) by removing the requirements in relation to health and wellbeing and health promotion. It was noted that this move would save the authority £22K per annum and would avoid duplication of this particular function.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the statement of partner service requirements for Worcestershire Regulatory Services be modified by removing the requirements in relation to health and wellbeing / health promotion; and
- (b) that delegated authority be given to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services, following consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holders, to make the relevant amendments to the legal agreement with the other parties.

The meeting closed at 7.13 p.m.

Chairman