

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 3RD SEPTEMBER 2014 AT 6.00 P.M.

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

Invitees: Ms C. Garner (BDHT)

Officers: Ms J. Pickering, Mrs S. Sellers, Mr D. Allen and Ms R. Cole

23/14 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor R. Hollingworth.

24/14 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

25/14 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 2nd July 2014 and 20th August 2014 were submitted.

RESOLVED that subject to it being noted that minute 16/14 was in fact a recommendation to the Council, the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 2nd July 2014 and 20th August 2014 be approved as a correct record.

26/14 **HOMES CHOICE PLUS ALLOCATIONS POLICY REVIEW**

The Cabinet considered a report on proposed changes to the Home Choice Plus Allocations Scheme for determining priorities and defining the procedures to be followed in allocating social housing provision. The proposed changes followed consultations and reviews undertaken as part of the Home Choice Plus Partnership.

Members were reminded of the background to this issue including previous Cabinet discussion. It was reported that consultations had been undertaken with the other Local Authorities in the Partnership in relation to local connection and how to best prioritise the housing needs of Bromsgrove residents when allocating properties in the District. It was recognised that the number of families coming into Bromsgrove without a local connection was small and was less than the number moving out into other parts of Worcestershire.

It was reported that the new Home Choice Plus Allocations Policy would reduce the number of people able to register from outside the Partnership area. It was felt in view of this that it would be appropriate to monitor the allocations for a twelve month period and to review the impact of the new Policy. Members requested however that at the end of this period, if there were concerns regarding the process, that officers would be in a position to come forward with proposals for change including financial implications.

Members felt it was very important that there was a clear understanding of the number of people who were homeless within the District and it was noted that this Policy would assist with ensuring the accuracy of the numbers involved and improving the understanding of the true position.

The report also recognised Members' previous request to consider afresh the value of continuing with a Choice Based lettings system for Bromsgrove. It was reported that some early work had commenced to understand the value of the Choice Based lettings model and Bromsgrove District Housing Trust had offered to work with this Council's officers to understand how well the existing model supports this Council's strategic purpose " help me to find somewhere to live in my locality". This analysis would be part of the review of the Allocations Policy at the end of the twelve month period.

The report also contained details of the preferred options for the expenditure of the remaining £26,000 available within the Department of Communities and Local Government Homelessness funding for 2014/15.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the Home Choice Plus Allocations Policy as contained in Appendix 1 to the report be approved;
- (b) that officers be requested to undertake a review of the Policy after a period of twelve months from the implementation date to establish whether it is the most effective way of meeting the Council's strategic purpose " help me to find somewhere to live in my locality"; and
- (c) that the Council works closely with Bromsgrove District Housing Trust during the next twelve months to establish whether from a "systems-thinking" perspective , Choice Based Lettings is the most effective way of meeting the strategic purpose.

RESOLVED that the remaining funds within the 2014/15 Department of Communities and Local Government Homelessness Funding be utilised in supporting Bromsgrove District Housing Trust in implementing the approved Policy and its impact (£21,000) and the Fry Housing Trust in respect of their housing scheme for ex-offenders in Bromsgrove (£5,000).

27/14 **AUDIT BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Audit Board held on 19th June 2014 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Audit Board held on 19th June 2014 be noted.

28/14 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 14th July 2014 were submitted.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 14th July 2014 be noted; and
- (b) that it be clarified whether the Overview and Scrutiny Board was able to make a recommendation to the Audit Board.

29/14 **WORCESTERSHIRE SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee held on 26th June 2014 were submitted.

There was discussion on the WRS Business Model Review (Minute 8/14) which had resulted in a number of modifications to the existing Model. These modifications would in turn require approval from participating authorities to enable changes to the Partnership Agreement to be incorporated. .

RECOMMENDED that the changes to the Worcestershire Shared Services Partnership Agreement as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

RESOLVED that the remainder of the minutes be noted.

30/14 **FINANCE MONITORING REPORT 2014/2015 QUARTER 1**

The Cabinet considered a report on the Council's financial position for the first quarter of 2014/15.

Members noted the current projected underspend of £124,000 for the financial year and requested officers to clarify how much of the underspend was due to staff vacancies.

Members also queried areas where income was less than anticipated such as parking enforcement. It was noted that this was being addressed with Wychavon District Council.

RECOMMENDED that the Capital Programme 2014/15 in respect of the Public Realm within the High Street be increased by £20,000, to be funded from Section 106 funds received in relation to land at Sherwood Road, Bromsgrove.

RESOLVED that the current financial position in terms of revenue and capital, as detailed in the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 6.50 p.m.

Chairman