

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

2ND NOVEMBER 2016 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors G. N. Denaro (Leader), K.J. May (Deputy Leader),
C. B. Taylor and R. D. Smith

Observers: Councillor L. C. R. Mallett

Officers: Mr K. Dicks, Ms J. Pickering, Ms. D. Poole, Ms. R. Bamford, Mrs
S. Sellers, Mr M. Hanwell, Mr D. Riley, Ms R. Dunne and Ms R. Cole

41/16 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

42/16 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

43/16 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 5th October 2016
and 13th October 2016 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 5th
October 2016 and 13th October 2016 be approved as a correct record in
each case.

44/16 **WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services
Board held on 6th October 2016 were submitted.

It was noted there was a recommendation at Minute 15/16 relating to a
review of the WRS Enforcement Policy.

RECOMMENDED that subject to the minor amendment detailed in
Minute 15/16, the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Enforcement
Policy be adopted.

RESOLVED that the remainder of the minutes of the meeting of the
Worcester Regulatory Services Board held on 6th October 2016 be
noted.

45/16

NOMINATION OF AN ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE - THE GREYHOUND PUBLIC HOUSE, WORCESTER ROAD, BROMSGROVE

The Cabinet considered a report on an Application to list the Greyhound Public House, Worcester Road, Bromsgrove as an Asset of Community Value.

Members were aware of the background to this application in that the premises concerned were no longer in use and had ceased trading as a public house in April 2016. Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 3.4 of the report which set out how the test for listing as an Asset of Community Value would apply in these circumstances.

It was noted that under sub section 2 of Section 88 of the Localism Act 2011 it was stated that such land can be listed if in the Local Authority's opinion :-

- (a) there is a time in the recent past when an actual use of the building or other land that was not an ancillary use furthered the social well being or interests of the local community; and
- (b) it is realistic to think there is a time in the next five years when there could be a non-ancillary use of the building or other land that would further (whether or not in the same way as before) the social well being or social interests of the local community

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor L. C. R. Mallett as Ward Member addressed the Cabinet in support of the application for listing and expanded on his written comments which had been included in section 3.14 of the report. It was noted that Councillor M. Thompson was also in support of the application for listing.

Councillor Mallett drew attention to the fact that following the closure of the premises in April, they had initially been marketed as a public house. It was only shortly before the application from CAMRA had been submitted that it had become clear that the premises may be permanently lost.

Councillor Mallett confirmed that the premises had been used extensively in the recent past by the community as there was no other convenient meeting place in the vicinity. There was no reason to think they could not be a valuable asset in the future both commercially and as a meeting place for community groups and residents.

Members of the Cabinet considered the application in detail and considered in particular the test as set out in section 3.14 of the report.

Following discussion it was

RESOLVED that the listing of the Greyhound Public House, Worcester Road as an Asset of Community Value be supported.

46/16

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2017/2018 - 2020/2021 BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS

The Cabinet considered a report on the budget assumptions to be used by officers in the preparation of the detailed 2017/18 budget and the provisional budgets for 2018/19 - 2020/21.

The Executive Director Finance and Resources drew Members' attention to paragraph 3.4 of the report which set out proposed budget assumptions in respect of key elements of the Council's Revenue budget.

- Pay Award – there was an assumption of 1% over the time period;
- Inflation – assumption of 0% across the majority of the Council's "non-pay" expenditure
- Utilities costs assumed to be increased by 6%;
- Discretionary Fees and Charges - the increase for 2017/18 – 2019/20 would be 3%. Any increase above 3% would need to be justified and evidenced by officers;

In addition it was noted that in respect of Superannuation Rates, discussions were on going in with Worcestershire County Council and the Actuary. The outcome would be built into future budget reports.

It was noted that Heads of Service were currently undertaking a robust review of the Capital Programme and that a four year Capital Programme was due to be considered by Members in January 2017.

Following discussion it was

RECOMMENDED that the revenue assumptions as detailed in paragraph 3.4 of the report be incorporated into the budget setting process.

47/16

COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2017/2018

Cabinet considered a report on the final Council Tax Support Scheme (CTSS) to be implemented for 2017/18.

Members were reminded that the Council had a duty to review its CTSS on an annual basis and must implement a scheme which protects people of pensionable age, incentivises work and has provisions to support vulnerable people in financial hardship as a result of the scheme.

Following the approval of the draft scheme for 2017/18 in July 2016 it was noted that consultation on this had been undertaken throughout

August and September. The consultation had included a letter to all current claimants, preceptors and other stakeholders advising them of the draft scheme and the changes to the existing scheme. It was reported that only two responses had been received and neither of these commented either in support of or against the proposals.

It was noted that the proposals would not impact significantly on current claims. The main purpose of the changes was to reduce the administrative burden on the Authority where possible, to bring the scheme into line with national changes to welfare support and to ensure that the assessment of income in relation to claims remained in line with other benefits such as Housing Benefit. This would mean that claims could be assessed in tandem and costs to the Authority would be minimised.

The Executive Director Finance and Resources confirmed that the Financial Inclusion Team would be working with Council Tax Team and that officers would be looking at all avenues of support to help people to be financially independent. The proposed continuation of the Hardship Fund would provide an opportunity to ensure that vulnerable people who had been financially disadvantaged by the changes to CTSS could be provided with transitional support.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the Council Tax Support Scheme be implemented as amended, namely :
 - (i) that the backdating of Council Tax support be reduced in line with the changes in Housing Benefit announced by Central Government;
 - (ii) that claims be processed based on information provided by the Department of Work and Pensions without the need for further information;
 - (iii) the removal of the Family Premium on claims made from 1st April 2017 to bring Bromsgrove District Council's Council Tax Support Scheme in line with the changes in Housing Benefit announced by Central Government;
- (b) that future "uprating" of some of the figures be approved to take account of other national changes in benefits and allowances;
- (c) that authority be delegated to the Head of Customer Access and Financial Support to carry out statutory consultation on future draft CTSS in accordance with the legislative guidelines, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder; and
- (d) that the continuation of the Hardship Scheme be approved.

48/16

THE COUNCIL PLAN

The Cabinet considered the proposed Council Plan which included actions to address the Council's strategic purposes developed through the transformation programme. The Plan had been slightly amended in line with suggestions to improve the "flow" of the Plan. An additional amendment had been proposed to wording on page 14 of the Plan relating to average wages for people working in Bromsgrove.

It was noted that the Council Plan and strategic purposes would help to set the direction for the Council and how it works with its partners. Service areas would be working towards these purposes and the priority actions, supported by operational purposes and measures to ensure that everything the Council does relates to demands and needs of customers.

RECOMMENDED that the Council Plan as amended be approved.

49/16

URGENT ITEM - ICT INFRASTRUCTURE RESOURCE

(The Chairman agreed to the consideration of this item as a matter of urgency to enable officers to explore options for the service without undue delay)

The Cabinet considered a further report on how on going difficulties in recruiting to the team dealing with ICT infrastructure could be addressed. This issue had been considered at Cabinet in September, but it had subsequently been agreed at the Council meeting on 21st September that the matter be referred back to Cabinet to ensure that all available options were explored.

The report drew attention to the difficulties in recruiting and retaining officers to the small ICT team dealing with ICT infrastructure. At present one of the posts within the team was filled and the resource to cover the other post was being purchased on an ad hoc basis which meant that maintaining continuity of service was difficult.

It was reported that following the withdrawal of the item from Council in September a further review had been undertaken and discussions with Members had taken place. These had lead to the current proposal that the service be put out to tender and that the results of this process be reported back to Cabinet to consider the outcome and implications of the tender exercise before any further commitment was entered into. .

It was noted that other public sector organisations would have the opportunity to bid for the contract as well as any private companies.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that authority be delegated to the Head of Transformation and organisational Development to undertake a tendering process

identify a potential supplier to undertake the ICT infrastructure functions; and

- (b) that a decision on any proposed contract be subject to a further report to Cabinet containing details of the proposals and their impact on the service and budget.

50/16

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 to the Act, the relevant parts being as set out below and that it is in the public interest to do so.

Minute No
51/16

Paragraph
4

51/16

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SHARED SERVICES BUSINESS CASE

The Cabinet considered a report on the Business Case for a shared Development Management service between Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council. The report and proposals had been considered by the Shared Services Board on 27th October 2016 and the meeting notes and recommendations of the Board had been circulated.

Officers outlined the details of the proposals and responded to queries from Members.

Following discussion it was

RECOMMENDED that the Business Case for the Development Management Shared Service be approved.

The meeting closed at 6.35 p.m.

Chairman