

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

12TH JUNE 2019, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors K.J. May (Leader), G. N. Denaro (Deputy Leader), A. D. Kent, M. A. Sherrey, P.L. Thomas and S. A. Webb

Observers: Councillor M. Thompson

Officers: Mr. M. Dunphy, Ms. C. Flanagan, Mrs. S. Hanley, Ms. J. Pickering, Ms. A. Scarce and Mrs. R. Green

1/19 **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence.

2/19 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

3/19 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON 10TH APRIL 2019**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 10th April 2019 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 10th April 2019 be approved as a correct record.

4/19 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 8TH APRIL 2019**

The Leader thanked Councillor M. Thompson, for attending the meeting to present the Overview and Scrutiny Board minutes.

Councillor Thompson advised that the only recommendations within the minutes were those included in the Transport Planning Review Report which was a separate item on the Cabinet agenda.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 8th April be noted.

5/19 **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD - TRANSPORT PLANNING REVIEW FINAL REPORT**

Councillor M. Thompson, as Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, presented the report and drew Members attention to the timeline on page 35 of the agenda, which documented the circumstances which had brought the Board to carry out this investigation. The subsequent recommendations were detailed on pages 18 and 19 of the agenda. Councillor Thompson advised that he had not been heavily involved in the investigation and suggested that Councillors P. Thomas and S. Webb, who had been Members of the Board at the time of the investigation, may be better placed to comment further.

Councillors Thomas and Webb agreed that the report gave a good reflection of the investigation and discussions which took place.

The Leader thanked Councillor Thompson for his attendance and confirmed that the report would be given full consideration at the Council meeting to be held on 26th June.

6/19

HIGH QUALITY DESIGN - SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTATION

Councillor A. Kent, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services, introduced the report and in so doing commented that, in view of developments in respect of solar panelling and climate change elements, he would like to see a bigger emphasis on those areas within the document.

The Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager responded that this document concentrated more on the design element and that those areas may be better placed within an additional Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) at a future date, which could also include any legislative changes that may come forward. However, Members were asked to note that an SPD could only include supplementary information and not a new policy. Officers would therefore look at how reference to the areas discussed could be strengthened. In the meantime, this policy needed to be adopted.

Councillor Kent confirmed that he would arrange to meet with Officers to discuss these additional areas as soon as possible. He also commented that the responses to the consultation were appreciated and asked whether this was fed back to the respondents. The Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager advised that the responses were made public through the website.

RESOLVED that the Consultation Comments and Officer Responses' table made in response to consultation on the draft High Quality Design SPD, and the actions proposed by strategic planning officers to make subsequent revisions to the SPD, be noted.

RECOMMENDED that Full Council adopts the revised version of the High Quality Design SPD as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

7/19

STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND - APPROACH TO AGREEMENT WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Members were advised that this was a statutory document and the Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager explained that essentially this was a procedural requirement, formalising the Duty to Co-Operate and introduced a more formal process in respect of discussions which needed to be held between authorities. Members were assured that should there be anything significant in these discussions, requiring Member input, the matter would be brought to full Council and provided examples of the different circumstances that might arise.

The key items in the framework were highlighted with particular reference being made to; (b) the key strategic matters being addressed by the statement, for example meeting the housing need for the area, air quality etc., (e) if applicable the housing requirements in any adopted and (if known) emerging strategic policies relevant to housing within the area covered by the statement and (f) distribution of needs in the area as agreed through the plan-making process, or the process for agreeing the distribution of need (including unmet need) across the area. If none of these were involved and there were no likely issues to get through the process, then the delegation would be used. Such matters would then be reported back through an annual monitoring report.

RESOLVED that officer attendance is required at DtC/SoCG meetings where cross boundary issues and draft SoCG agreements are discussed and prepared, be noted.

RECOMMENDED:

- a) that Council delegate to the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Planning authority to sign off all relevant SoCG where cross boundary growth is not included; and
- b) that all SoCG which include agreements on cross boundary housing, employment or other development needs or any other development needs or any other key planning issue are reported to Council for consideration prior to signing.

8/19

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT - HELP ME BE FINANCIALLY INDEPENDENT

The Executive Director, Finance and Resources, introduced the report and highlighted a number of area for Members attention, this included:

- Supporting residents to reduce levels of individual debt and the work of the Financial Inclusion Team.
- Debt was the highest reason recorded as to why cases were referred to that team, and the cause of debt.

- Supporting communities during changes to welfare and benefits and issues around the Benefits service not dealing with benefit claims in a timely manner.
- Work carried out with the DWP to address the problems identified and the improvements that have been made.
- Implications of Universal Credit – it was anticipated that there would be less impact due to the older and more stable working population in the district.
- Those claiming ELF due to a delay in benefits had fallen significantly to align with the improvements made to speed up the processing time.
- Applications for ELF and reasons for application and the three key reasons for making a claim for ELF.
- The affordability ratio in respect of purchasing housing on the open market and the need to address this.
- Areas for future focus, including fuel poverty and affordable homes.

Councillor G. Denaro, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling confirmed that the Executive Director, Finance and Resources had covered all the relevant points and that there were some interesting statistics to be considered.

Members discussed the possibility of promoting and raising awareness to residents regarding the benefits which were available to them, in particular the pension credit. The Executive Director, Finance and Resources confirmed that a further meeting was due to take place with the DWP and that this was something which could be discussed with them. The Leader requested that this was also placed on the agenda for the next Leader's Group meeting.

RESOLVED that the content of the Performance Report 'Help me be financially independent' and associated appendix be noted.

9/19

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT - HELP ME RUN A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS

In the absence of the Chief Executive, the Deputy Chief Executive presented the report for Members' consideration and in so doing highlighted the following areas:

- The seven Bromsgrove District Centre covered by the Centres Strategy for 2017-2020.
- The themed outcomes of the Strategy and how the Council measured success and impact.
- The work of the Town Centres Manager and the relationships she has established with parish councils, business and local communities in developing local initiatives.

- The expression of interest for funding from Central Government which had recently been applied for, the outcome of which was expected in September.
- Two key strategic studies which were being undertaken in Bromsgrove Town Centre.
- Data provided following the Community Panel survey which had been carried out – it was confirmed that full details of this would be provided in due course.
- Encouraging local business and inward investment – the support provided by NWedR and funding provided to them.
- Improving connectivity within Bromsgrove (Digital and Transport) - key priorities including infrastructure and night time economy.

Members were advised that the report also included, as had been previously agreed, corporate sickness data on a bi-monthly basis. The Deputy Chief Executive advised Members that work had been done to support managers and officers in all services to ensure the process was consistent throughout.

Following presentation of the report Members the Leader confirmed that the Bromsgrove Centres Strategy would be reviewed and she was keen for it to be widened to include other areas such as Aston Fields. It was clear from the views of the survey undertaken with the Community Panel that the Council was working in the right direction and need to push forward with the Strategic Transport Assessment for the north of the County which would help address a number of issues.

Councillor Denaro commented that in respect of the sickness data it had been confirmed that the increase in long term absence had been due to 2 long term absences which had now been resolved and that the short term absences were predominantly in one area and this was being addressed.

Members questioned the make-up of the Community Panel and the Policy Manager explained that it was made up of around 200 people from a cross-section of the community, although it was hoped that this would be developed further and be more representative in future. The next survey would be in September 2019. It was suggested that Members could be involved in the promotion and distribution of the survey. It was confirmed that support from Members would be greatly appreciated.

Members also discussed the small businesses that had been set up and whilst this was encouraged, concerns were raised in respect of there being limited opportunities for such businesses to develop further. It was therefore important to ensure that this was addressed to ensure that those businesses did not move out of the District.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report and associated appendix in respect of the Corporate Performance Report 'Help me run a successful business' be noted.

10/19

OUTSIDE BODIES BY OFFICE (EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS)

Members considered a report in respect of appointments and nominations to a number of Outside Bodies, some of which were for executive functions and were made by the Cabinet.

RESOLVED that the appointments to outside bodies listed in appendix 1 be agreed.

The meeting closed at 6.40 p.m.

Chairman