

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

23RD OCTOBER 2019, AT 6.00 P.M.

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

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Ms. J. Pickering, Mrs. C. Felton, Mr. M. Dunphy, Mr D Riley and Ms. A. Scarce

34/19 **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor M. Sherrey.

35/19 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

36/19 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 4th September 2019 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 4th September 2019 be approved as a correct record.

37/19 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 2ND SEPTEMBER 2019**

It was noted that the recommendations within these minutes had been tabled at the previous meeting and therefore the minutes were merely for noting.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 2nd September 2019 be noted.

38/19 **ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE - HIGH HOUSE WOOD**

Councillor A. Kent, as Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services presented the report and reminded Members of the process that gave communities a right to identify a building or other land that they believed would be of value to their community.

He believed from the information that he had been provided with that it was appropriate for the Council to support this application.

Members were in agreement and after a short discussion it was

RESOLVED that Cabinet support the listing of High House Wood as an Asset of Community Value.

39/19

WYRE FOREST LOCAL PLAN - BDC RESPONSE TO PRE SUBMISSION PLAN

The Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager introduced the report and reminded Members that they would be aware of the situation from the previous response and the concerns raised around the lack of a transport assessment, which had still not been received.

He went on to explain that the objections were therefore similar to those in the original response, as little had changed in respect of the concerns that had been raised at that time in respect of the transport implications of the proposed development sites. The response covered a number of technicalities, but had stopped short of making reference to the duty to co-operate. However, if the issues did not get resolved then further down the line there was the potential for this to be considered.

The Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager advised that a meeting had been arranged in three weeks' time with officers at Wyre Forest District Council and it was hoped more evidence would be made available at that meeting. The Strategic Planning Conservation Manager confirmed that he would continue to update Members with any progress made in this respect.

Following presentation of the report Members were happy with the measured response prepared by Officers. However, concerns were raised that no responses had been received to date. The Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager explained there was no reason for Wyre Forest District Council not to respond and he was hopeful progress would be made, particularly as there would be an examination in public. Councillor Kent reiterated that every effort had been made to engage with Wyre Forest.

RESOLVED that Cabinet endorse the officer response to the Wyre Forest Local Plan Review Pre Submission Plan (as attached at Appendix A to the report).

RECOMMENDED that

- a) Council approve the officer response to the Wyre Forest Local Plan Review Pre Submission Plan as its formal response, and that it is confirmed with Wyre Forest district Council as such; and

- b) Delegated Authority is given to the Head of Planning and Regeneration to ensure that BDC is represented at the Examination in Public element of the Wyre Forest Local Plan review.

40/19

LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2018/19

It was noted that the date at the top of the report should read 2020/21 and not 2018/19 as stated. It was also noted that within the recommendation the date should read 2020/21.

The Financial Support Manager provided background information in respect of the report and explained that the proposal was for it to continue unchanged for 2020/21. This was due to a number of reasons including stability within the team after the introduction of Universal Credit. However, a full review in 2021/22 would take place which would also allow the opportunity to learn from other authorities and the introduction of Universal Credit.

The Leader acknowledged that it had been a difficult time for the Team and asked for it to be recorded that all their hard work was noted and appreciated.

The Financial Support Manager went on to explain the purpose of the Council Tax Support Scheme and the provision for those on a low income. It covered up to 85% of Council Tax dependent on income and household make up.

It was explained that the current scheme was too reactive to change and was no longer viable, with each change implemented by Universal Credit resulting in a reassessment due to the current scheme's structure. This made it difficult for recipients to be able to calculate their regular income each month. The move to a more efficient scheme would address this by simplifying the administration scheme for both the Council and applicants.

RECOMMENDED that no changes be made to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2020/21 other than the uprating of allowances, disregards and other financial limits.

41/19

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN - FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

The Executive Director, Finance and Resources introduced the report which had been prepared in order for Members to be able to consider the overall financial strategic framework and objectives for the Council from 2020/21 to 2023/24.

In light of the financial pressures it faced, the framework set out the strategy aims in order for the Council to become financially sustainable whilst delivering its priorities to the Community. The key objectives were detailed within the report and were referenced within the Council Plan, which had recently been agreed at full Council. A timeline of reports to

be received over the next six months was also included and reference was made to the work carried out by the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Finance and Budget Working Group in reviewing a number of those reports and making relevant recommendations to Cabinet.

It was noted that the current Medium Term Financial Plan, for the Council presented an increasing gap over the next three years. The report detailed how measures were in place to address these challenges with the aim to maximise savings in 2019/20 to enable balances to be increased. Those measures included a non-essential spending freeze, a recruitment freeze and a full review of capital spending to enable a reduction in borrowing costs, together with all commercial activities being marketed to maximise income potential.

Following a brief discussion it was

RESOLVED that the overarching financial objectives and framework to be used in developing the detailed financial plan, to enable the Council to realise savings and additional income whilst delivering the strategic priorities of the Council be noted.

The meeting closed at 6.24 p.m.

Chairman