

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 29TH APRIL 2009 AT 4.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors R. Hollingworth (Leader), Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths (Deputy Leader), G. N. Denaro, Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP and P. J. Whittaker

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Mr. T. Beirne, Mr. P. Street, Mr. M. Bell, Mrs. C. Felton, Mr. J. Godwin, Mr. D. Hammond, Ms. J. Pickering, Ms. D. Poole, Mr. A. Coel, Ms. K. Sharp-Fisher and Ms. R. Cole

196/08 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dr. D. W. P. Booth JP and Mrs. J. Dyer M. B. E.

197/08 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

198/08 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 1st April 2009 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

199/08 **SCRUTINY BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Board held on 24th March 2009 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

200/08 **OVERVIEW BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview Board held on 31st March 2009 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

201/08 **SHARED SERVICES BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Shared Services Board held on 30th March 2009 were submitted.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the minutes be noted;
- (b) that the recommendations contained at Minute No 3 (o) relating to Internal Audit and the additional cost involved in the preparation of a full business case be approved.

202/08 **POLICY ON EARMARKED RESERVES AND PROVISIONS**

Consideration was given to a report on the proposed adoption of a formal policy in respect of earmarked reserves and provisions. It was recognised as best practice by both the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Audit Commission that such a policy should be adopted.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the policy on earmarked reserves and provisions as attached at appendix A to the report be approved and adopted; and
- (b) that the policy be implemented as part of the final accounts process for 2008/2009.

203/08 **COUNTYWIDE HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY AND KICK START EQUITY RELEASE SCHEME FOR HOME IMPROVEMENTS**

The Cabinet considered a report on the recommissioning of Home Improvement Agency (HIA) Services and the Implementation of Kickstart Services. It was proposed that the HIA recommissioning process would be based upon the current level of funding from this Authority which would be contributed into a new single Countywide HIA.

The report also proposed that this Authority participate in the Kickstart Scheme which currently operating within the West Midlands, which was now being rolled out to include Authorities within Worcestershire.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Council participate in the joint recommissioning of a new Countywide HIA and that the Head of Planning and Environment Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing, be granted delegated authority to finalise the necessary contractual arrangements for the commencement of the new service;
- (b) that the Council support the new HIA through the use of revenue and capital base budget contributions which are committed to the current service arrangements with the North Worcestershire Care and Repair Agency.
- (c) that the Council's participation in the Worcestershire Kickstart Scheme, as set out in section 5 of the report, be approved and that the financial and support services available to clients under the Kickstart scheme be noted.

204/08 **PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY**

Consideration was given to a report on the development of a separate Housing Strategy which related solely to activities within the private sector. It

was reported that the Audit Commission had recommended this approach in their re-inspection of the Strategic Housing Service in February 2008. It was noted that it was intended to review the Strategy in twelve months' time and that the Private Sector Assistance Policy, which had previously been approved by Cabinet, had been amended slightly and now formed part of the Strategy.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Private Sector Housing Strategy as set out in Appendix A to the report be approved;
- (b) that the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy and Action Plan as set out in appendices 1 and 2 to the Strategy be approved.

205/08 **BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN**

Consideration was given to a report on the proposed introduction of a Business Continuity Plan. The plan was intended to minimise the impact of any emergency which may affect the Council's operations and to ensure the Council could quickly respond to and recover from such an emergency. It was noted that in the main this plan was intended to cover emergencies which were short term and modest in scale such as IT failure or short term severe weather problems.

It was reported that it was intended to produce further plans to cover specific emergencies such as pandemic flu. Individual departments would also produce specific service recovery plans.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Business Continuity Plan attached to the report be approved;
- (b) that separate plans be produced to cover specific emergencies such as pandemic flu; and
- (c) that individual service recovery plans be produced to cover specific service areas.

206/08 **GOVERNMENT CONNECT - CODE OF CONNECTION**

The Cabinet considered a report regarding the work undertaken to ensure compliance with the Government Connect Project and the associated Code of Connection.

It was reported that the Government Connect Project was designed to provide a secure network linking all local authorities in England and Wales to central government departments. The Code of Connection defined the minimum standards and processes with which a local authority must comply before being allowed to connect to the secure network and this Council had ensured the required controls were in place by the required date of 31st March 2009. It was reported however that some of the current procedures and processes in use within the organisation would require amendment to ensure continued compliance with the Code of Connection.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the required security measures to ensure compliance with the Code of Connection as set out in the report be noted; and
- (b) that the Head of E-Government and Customer Services be granted delegated authority to introduce new policies or to amend existing policies to ensure continued compliance with the Code of Connection.

207/08 **IMPROVEMENT PLAN EXCEPTION REPORT (FEBRUARY 2009)**

Consideration was given to the Improvement Plan Exception Report for February 2009, together with the corrective action being taken.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the revisions to the Improvement Plan Exception Report together with the corrective actions being taken be noted and approved; and
- (b) that it be noted that for the 130 actions highlighted within the plan for February, 86.2 percent of the plan was on target (green), 2.3 percent was one month behind (amber) and 1.5 percent was over one month behind (red). 10 percent of actions had been reprogrammed with approval.

208/08 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

RESOLVED 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 following minute on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, as amended, the relevant paragraph of that part being as set out below and that it is in the public interest to do so.

<u>Minute No</u>	<u>Paragraph</u>
209/08	4

209/08 **ELECTORAL SERVICES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY SHARED SERVICES**

(The Leader agreed to the consideration of this item as a matter of urgency as a decision was required thereon before the next meeting of the Cabinet)

Consideration was given to a report which set out the current position in relation to the shared services in Electoral Services and Community Safety.

RESOLVED that the progress made be noted

RECOMMENDED that the implementation timetable in relation to shared services in Electoral Services and Community Safety be approved.

210/08 **COUNCILLOR MRS. J. M. L. A. GRIFFITHS**

Councillor Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths stated that this was the last meeting of the Cabinet which she would be attending as she intended to step down as a Portfolio Holder. The Leader and other members of the Cabinet expressed

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their thanks to Councillor Mrs. Griffiths for her work and support over the past three years.

The meeting closed at 4.55 p.m.

Chairman