

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

30TH MARCH 2022, AT 6.00 P.M.

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

Officers in attendance: Mrs. S. Hanley and Mrs P. Ross

Mr. K. Dicks, Mr J. Howse, Mrs. C. Felton, Ms. D. Poole, Mr. G. Revans, Mr. K. Hirons and Mrs J. Gresham (via Microsoft Teams)

Observers: Ms. E. Payne (via Microsoft Teams)

64/21 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

65/21 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

66/21 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON 23RD FEBRUARY 2022**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 23rd February 2022 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 23rd February 2022 be approved as a true and correct record.

67/21 **MINUTES FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD MEETING HELD ON 15TH FEBRUARY 2022**

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Councillor C. Hotham, presented the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 15th February 2022, and in doing so the Cabinet was informed that since the meeting of the Board things had moved forward and that items had been

discussed and agreed. It was noted that there were no recommendations from the Board in the minutes.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held 15th February 2022, be noted.

68/21

LAND DRAINAGE WATERCOURSE MAINTENANCE OPERATION

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Community Safety presented a report on Land Drainage Maintenance Operations. The report set out to present a proactive schedule of works for the future which would be undertaken by an external contractor. The first year of this maintenance schedule was viewed as a pilot scheme, where there was likely to be more emphasis on inspections, allowing also for prioritisation of any maintenance work which may be required, this could be refined over time. Members were advised that this report was welcomed in order to help mitigate future flooding events in the district.

During consideration of this item, Councillor C. Hotham, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, explained that the report had been pre-scrutinised at a recent meeting of the Board. Some concerns had been raised at this meeting regarding the use of an external contractor. However overall, it was felt by the Board this report provided a positive step forward in the maintenance of watercourses within the district.

Members questioned the issue of Himalayan Balsam, which was an invasive non-native plant and could be found in some of the watercourses, and whether removal would still take place this year, during the recommended period between March and June. Cabinet was informed that a tender process was currently being undertaken to procure an external contractor and it might be possible to begin the removal process of Himalayan Balsam if the contract was in place prior to the end of the Himalayan Balsam removal season in June.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) **an additional budget of £45k for Land Drainage – Watercourse Maintenance Operations be included in the general fund for the 2022/2023 financial year; and**
- 2) **a budget of £45k for Land Drainage – Watercourse Maintenance Operations be included in the Medium Term Financial Plan for future years.**

69/21

EQUALITY STRATEGY 2022-2026

The Head of Business Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Strategy presented the Equality Strategy 2022-2026. Members were advised that the Equality Strategy had been updated to support the organisation over the next 4 years and included information on equality monitoring, procurement and commissioning and employment policies.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance welcomed this report and thanked officers for their hard work in such a complex area.

RECOMMENDED that the Equality Strategy 2022-2026 as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be endorsed by Council.

70/21

EQUALITY ANNUAL REPORT 2021

The Head of Business Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Strategy presented the Equality Annual report 2021 for Cabinet's consideration. It was reported to Members that this was the first report of its kind to be considered. The report was carried out a result of the Equalities Task Group investigation which had been conducted during 2020-2021.

It was stated that the report set out to inform Members of the progress on the equality agenda covering the period January 2021 to December 2021. The report outlined the key achievements and progress in 2021, undertaken by the Council, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Cabinet was informed that Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) and partnership working had been successful during this time and that a number of community events had taken place within the district. The report also highlighted the initiatives that had taken place within Council operations to provide employee support, which had included; Mental Health Awareness training, Time to Talk and the establishment of a Health and Wellbeing Group.

During consideration of this item, Councillor C. Hotham, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, explained that the report had been pre-scrutinised at a recent meeting of the Board and the report had been well-received by all Board Members.

In proposing the recommendation, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance welcomed this report and stated that it was hugely

encouraging to see so much work had been and was being undertaken by officers in this area.

RECOMMENDED that the Equality Annual Report 2021 be endorsed.

The meeting closed at 6.20 p.m.

Chairman