

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

6TH JULY 2022, AT 6.00 P.M.

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

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Mrs. S. Hanley, Mr P. Carpenter,
Mrs. R. Bamford, Ms. C. Flanagan, Mr. M. Dunphy, Mrs. H. Mole
and Mrs. J. Bayley-Hill

9/22 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor S. Webb.

10/22 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors K. May and M. Sherrey declared other disclosable interests in Minute Item No. 14/22 – the Nomination of Romsley Methodist Church as an Asset of Community Value – in their capacity as ward Councillors for Belbroughton and Romsley. They both remained at the meeting for the discussions in respect of this item and voted thereon.

11/22 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON 1ST JUNE 2022**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 1st June 2022 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on Wednesday 1st June 2022 be approved as a true and correct record.

12/22 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 30TH MAY 2022**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 30th May 2022 were submitted.

Officers confirmed that there were no outstanding recommendations detailed in these minutes requiring Members' consideration.

The Leader advised that the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board had tendered his apologies for the Cabinet meeting in advance of the meeting.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on Monday 30th May 2022 be noted.

BROMSGROVE AND REDDITCH DUTY TO CO-OPERATE

The Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager presented a report on the subject of the Bromsgrove and Redditch Duty to Co-operate.

Cabinet was informed that both Councils had submitted their latest Local Plans in 2017. A significant part of the work on the Local Plans had been the Duty to Co-operate with Redditch Borough Council, including on cross-boundary housing allocations. At that time, Redditch Borough had been allocated 3,000 houses that would have been built in Bromsgrove District. However, since then, the anticipated housing needs in the Borough had decreased. In order to anticipate housing needs in the District and Borough moving forward both Councils had commissioned Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessments (HEDNAs), which had concluded that, whilst demand for housing in the Borough was not likely to increase at the level previously anticipated, the level of demand in Bromsgrove District was likely to remain the same as had been predicted in 2017.

Redditch Borough Council had already reviewed their duty to co-operate and had concluded that the 3,000 houses allocated from Bromsgrove District should be returned to Bromsgrove District Council for allocation. The housing numbers required in the District would need to be enshrined in the Local Plan and a policy position would clarify future requirements. The Council would need to determine where to allocate the 3,000 houses for development, which could include provision of some of the houses to meet the development needs in the Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Areas (GBBCHMA).

Officers were suggesting that, moving forward, Bromsgrove District Council needed to continue to work closely with Redditch Borough Council as part of the Duty to Co-operate. The two Councils could work together in responding to approaches from the GBBCHMA regarding housing development needs. In addition, close co-operation between the two Councils would help to ensure that the authorities' Local Plans were closely aligned, although Members were advised that there were no plans to produce a joint Local Plan.

Following the presentation of the report, Members discussed the requirements from the GBBCHMA and the timescales in which clarification was likely to be provided about these needs. Officers clarified that the Black Country authorities were progressing with work on their Local Plan, which was likely to be published shortly. Every planning authority was supposed to issue a new Local Plan every five years but the Black Country areas had taken longer than this when working on their latest Local Plan. Birmingham City Council had submitted their previous Local Plan at a similar time to Bromsgrove District Council, although were at a different stage to Bromsgrove in development of the authority's new Local Plan.

RECOMMENDED that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council be agreed.

14/22

NOMINATION OF ROMSLEY METHODIST CHURCH - ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE

The Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services presented a report setting out proposals for the nomination of Romsley Methodist Church as an asset of community value.

Cabinet was informed that Officers had delegated authority to determine whether a property should be listed as an asset of community value. Members were advised that this was a procedural matter and, if agreed, would result in the protection of the property for a period of up to six months should the owners decide to place it up for sale on the market. The report was seeking the Cabinet's support for Romsley Methodist Church to be listed as an asset of community value, which was an approach supported by Officers. Members were asked to note that the nomination met all of the requirements in relevant legislation.

Members subsequently discussed the report and in doing so noted that Romsley Methodist Church was frequently utilised by the local community for events and activities. The property was therefore highly valued by the local community.

RESOLVED that the listing of Romsley Methodist Church, 88 Bromsgrove Road, Romsley, West Midlands B62 0LF as an asset of community value be supported.

(Prior to consideration of this item, Councillors K. May and M. Sherrey declared other disclosable interests in their capacity as ward Councillors for Belbroughton and Romsley. They both remained at the meeting for the discussions in respect of this item and voted thereon.)

15/22

FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

The Interim Section 151 Officer presented a Financial Monitoring Report for Members' consideration.

Cabinet was informed that the report detailed the Council's approach to monitoring financial performance in the 2022/23 municipal year. Monitoring would be undertaken using data obtained from the Council's financial management system.

The Council's revenue budget for the 2022/23 municipal year was £12.1 million. There was a capital budget of £2.4 million. In addition to this, there was Levelling Up funding that had been allocated to the budget for use on specific projects. There were financial challenges facing the Council moving forward and over the following three years the authority needed to bridge a gap of £1.4 million in order to achieve a balanced

budget. Base budgets were in the process of being reviewed and the Corporate Management Team (CMT) was also considering the financial position. A range of indicators had been added to the report to enable performance in respect of the budget to be monitored and more would be added once technical issues with the Council's finance system had been resolved.

Members subsequently discussed the content of the report and in doing so questioned why the figures provided in a table concerning payment of Council Tax did not appear to add up across consecutive columns. Officers explained that the figures highlighted residents who were eligible for support but not all households had taken up this support, which impacted on the bottom line for the figures provided. In future editions of the report Members agreed that an additional line should be added to the table clarifying the number of eligible people who had not received support.

Reference was also made to the number of customers who were not paying their Council Tax via direct debit and concerns were raised about the implications for the customer. Officers clarified that attempts had been made over many years to promote payment of bills using direct debit. However, approximately one third of customers did not pay via direct debit and the reasons for this varied, although included some customers who would struggle to make direct debit payments due to cash flow difficulties.

RESOLVED

- 1) To note that future monitoring returns will be in the "on system" format;
- 2) That the approach being taken by Officers to balance the 2022/23 budget and future years' budget deficit positions be approved; and
- 3) That the addition to the monitoring report of the additional financial health indicators be approved.

16/22

CABINET APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance presented a report detailing Cabinet appointments to outside bodies.

Members were informed that appointments by the Council to outside bodies had been confirmed at the Annual Council meeting held on 18th May 2022. There were also appointments made by Cabinet to outside bodies which needed to be approved at a meeting of the Cabinet.

Consideration was given to the list of Cabinet appointments to outside bodies and Members noted that some of these appointments were made in conjunction with other Councils in Worcestershire. Reference was also made to the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership's (WLEP) European Structural and Investment Funds Strategy Committee (ESIF)

and Members commented that no appointments were required to this body moving forward, following Brexit.

RESOLVED that Cabinet nominates Members to outside bodies as detailed in Appendix 1 to the minutes.

The meeting closed at 6.25 p.m.

Chairman