

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 7TH MARCH, 2007

PRESENT: Councillors R. Hollingworth (Executive Leader), Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths (Deputy Executive Leader), Mrs. J. Dyer M.B.E., Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP, Mrs. C. J. Spencer, Mrs. M. M. T. Taylor and P. J. Whittaker.

Observers: Councillors Mrs. S. J. Baxter, Mrs. J. D. Luck, P. M. McDonald and N. Psirides JP.

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Mr. H. Bennett, Mrs. C. Felton and Ms. K. Firth.

169/06 **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor B. L. Fuller C.B.E., Q.F.S.M.

170/06 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 21st February 2007 were submitted.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Meeting be approved and confirmed as a correct record, subject to the correction of the declaration of interest set out in Minute No. 159/06 (Discretionary Rate Relief Policy) to state Wythall Village Hall Committee.

171/06 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

There were no matters arising.

172/06 **AUDIT BOARD**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Audit Board held on 19th February 2007 were submitted.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting be noted and the recommendations be approved.

173/06 **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BOARD**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Performance Management Board held on 16th February 2007 were submitted.

With reference to Minute No. 68/08 (Integrated Financial/Performance Management Report – Quarter 3 2006/07), the Chairman of the Performance Management Board drew particular attention to the following issues:

➤ Shortfall of income from Dolphin Centre Health & Fitness Activities

Board Members had expressed concerns over an apparent lack of operational controls within the Dolphin Centre.

➤ Refuse Collection Overspend

Board Members had expressed concern over extra costs associated with the Faun refuse vehicles and had agreed that the Cabinet be requested to carry out a thorough investigation into the total costs associated with Faun vehicles.

➤ HSBC Bank

Following a recent presentation to Members by Postwatch Midlands which had highlighted that HSBC did not allow its customers banking facilities via Post Offices, Board Members had agreed to request the Cabinet to examine the Council's position in this regard, insofar as our social responsibility was concerned to the local community and various stakeholders. The Board had also agreed to request the Cabinet to ask the appropriate officers to review the Council's Procurement Policy and to consider developing a corporate Social Responsibility Policy for the Council.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Minutes of the Meeting be noted and the recommendations be approved;
- (b) that the relevant Portfolio Holders look into the three items referred to above and report back to the next meeting of the Cabinet.

174/06 **SCRUTINY STEERING BOARD**

The Minutes of the Meetings of the Scrutiny Steering Board held on 6th and 15th February 2007 were submitted.

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Meeting be noted.

175/06 **FLYTIPPING SCRUTINY REPORT**

The Cabinet considered recommendations made by the Scrutiny Steering Board based on the report of the Task Group set up to scrutinise issues relating to flytipping. The Leader acknowledged the work undertaken by the Task Group and asked the Chairman of the Scrutiny Steering Board to thank the Task Group for its efforts in undertaking a good exercise. During the discussion he also asked the Portfolio Holder for Street Scene and Waste Management to liaise with the County Council to ensure that its publicity for the Household Waste Site permit scheme trial had covered all areas in the Bromsgrove District.

RESOLVED: that the recommendations contained within the Flytipping Task Group be approved, subject to officers reporting back to Members on their viability and affordability.

176/06 **ANNUAL EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2005/06**

The Cabinet gave consideration to the Annual External Audit Report for 2005/06. During the discussion it was acknowledged that a number of the recommendations had already been or were in the process of being implemented.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Annual External Audit Report for 2005/06 be accepted;
- (b) that the management response to the recommendations set out in the Annual External Audit Report for 2005/06 be endorsed.

177/06 **IMPROVEMENT PLAN EXCEPTION REPORT (DECEMBER 2006)**

Consideration was given to the Improvement Plan Exception Report as at December 2006. During the discussion the Leader commented that the format of the report was now clear and user-friendly and should remain unchanged. The Portfolio Holder for Human Resources and Legal and Democratic Services advised that the training needs analysis of Members would be put back until after the Local Elections so that the needs of new Members could be taken into account.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the revisions to the Improvement Plan Exception Report, together with the corrective action being undertaken be approved;
- (b) that it be noted that 89.5% of the Improvement Plan is on target, 7% is one month behind and 3.5% is over one month behind.

178/06 **INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT - 3RD QUARTER 2006/07**

The Cabinet considered an integrated performance and financial monitoring report for the third quarter of 2006/07. At the request of the Leader, the Portfolio Holder for Street Scene and Waste Management reported on the overspend situation with regard to Street Scene and Waste Management services and it was noted that the target income for these services had been reduced as part of the recently approved Medium Term Financial Plan.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that it be noted that 52% of indicators are improving or stable as at 31 December 2006 (68% if those indicators that cannot be reported on are excluded) which represents a small increase on last month's figures and is the same as at quarter 2;
- (b) that it be noted that 47% of indicators are achieving their targets at December 2006 (61% if those indicators that cannot be reported on are excluded), an improvement of 2 percentage points over November and a considerable improvement over the figure of 39% at quarter 2;

- (c) that it be noted that 70% of indicators are projected to outturn on or above target at the year-end (75% if those indicators that cannot be reported on are excluded), compared to 59% in November. This particular analysis was only introduced in October 2006, so comparison to quarter 2 is not possible;
- (d) that it be noted that the projected outturn position in relation to other authorities (by comparing projected outturn to the quartile positions) is a significant improvement over last year, and that there is a 22% reduction in the number of indicators in the bottom two quartiles;
- (e) that the potential areas for concern set out in section 4.7 of the report and the corrective action being taken be noted;
- (f) that the revenue financial underspend from April – December 2006 to budget of £331,000 be noted;
- (g) that the predicted revenue financial overspend of £65,000 be noted and that Heads of Service be requested to reduce the overspends where appropriate;
- (h) that the use of General Fund Revenue Balances and earmarked reserves be noted;
- (i) that the capital underspend of £1.098m against the Profiled Capital Budget to December 2006 be noted, together with the progress made on capital schemes.

179/06 REVISED RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Consideration was given to a revised Risk Management Strategy. It was acknowledged that there was a need for risk management to be embedded within the organisation.

RESOLVED: that the revised Risk Management Strategy as set out in the appendix to the report be approved.

180/06 REVISED CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING CODE

Consideration was given to a revised Confidential Reporting Code which would apply to all staff working for the Council. The Code aimed to encourage staff to feel confident in raising any serious concerns and to provide a sound mechanism for reporting and responding to such concerns.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the revised Confidential Reporting Code as set out in the appendix to the report be approved;
- (b) that the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be given delegated authority to amend the Code following the necessary consultation with the Trade Unions and any other relevant bodies.

181/06 REVIEW OF PUBLIC SPEAKING AT PLANNING COMMITTEE

Having considered a report on the success of the trial public speaking facility at meetings of the Planning Committee, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that Meetings of the Planning Committee continue to commence at 2.00 p.m.;
- (b) that the approach taken by other local authorities in notifying interested parties of the opportunity to speak at the Committee meetings be investigated and incorporated into the Council's relevant processes as a benchmark of standard (or best) practice; and
- (c) that the public speaking facility be continued and reviewed again in twelve months time.

The meeting closed at 7.22 pm

Chairman