

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE CABINET**

**WEDNESDAY, 7TH APRIL 2010, AT 6.00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Councillors G. N. Denaro (Vice-Chairman in the chair),  
Dr. D. W. P. Booth JP, J. T. Duddy, Mrs. J. Dyer M.B.E.,  
Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP, R. D. Smith, M. J. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Ms. J. Pickering, Mr. H. Bennett, Mrs. C. Felton,  
Mr. A. Coel and Ms. P. Ross

175/09 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor R. Hollingworth.

176/09 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

177/09 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 3rd March 2010 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

178/09 **OVERVIEW BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview Board held on 2nd March 2010 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be noted.

179/09 **JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 9th March 2010 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be noted.

180/09 **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Performance Management Board held on 15th March 2010 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be noted.

181/09 **AUDIT BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Audit Board held on 15th March 2010 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be noted.

182/09 **SCRUTINY BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Board held on 23rd March 2010 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be noted.

183/09 **VERBAL UPDATES FROM THE LEADER AND/OR OTHER CABINET MEMBERS ON ANY RECENT MEETINGS ATTENDED IN AN EX-OFFICIO CAPACITY**

Councillor G. N. Denaro reported on the 'Being Different Together' event he had attended together with the Chief Executive, the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Resources, the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships and the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services.

184/09 **FAIRTRADE TOWN**

The Cabinet considered a report on the arguments for and against Bromsgrove town seeking Fairtrade status. The Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board had received a public petition entitled "Fairtrade Bromsgrove", where it had been agreed that the Cabinet should receive a full report from the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships on the full cost implications of supporting Fairtrade Status for Bromsgrove town. Following further discussion on the resourcing impact on officers and the area defined as Bromsgrove town, it was

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (a) that the Council supports Fairtrade, and
- (b) that, by supporting Fairtrade, the Council works with the Fairtrade Bromsgrove Steering Group on working with local businesses on stocking and serving Fairtrade products, works with the Fairtrade Bromsgrove Steering Group on working with local employers on using Fairtrade products, works with the Fairtrade Bromsgrove Steering Group on a PR and marketing campaign to promote awareness and

understanding of Fairtrade and generally supports the Fairtrade Bromsgrove Steering Group.

185/09 **COUNTYWIDE HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY FOR WORCESTERSHIRE - PROGRESS ON DELIVERY**

The Cabinet considered a report that provided an update on the progress of recommissioning the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) Service and the development of the new Kick Start Equity Release Scheme Service. The Strategic Housing Manager responded to questions from Members.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the progress and arrangements being made for the recommissioning of a Worcestershire Home Improvement Agency and Kick Start Equity Release Scheme be noted; and
- (b) that the revised Housing Assistance Policy as set out at Appendix 1 of the report be approved, subject to the following amendments:

**Criteria for the Award of Discretionary Home Repair Assistance Grants**

First Bullet point for Eligible applicants to be altered to read: *“Owner Occupiers and tenants with full repairing lease responsibilities who have a duty or power to carry out the works.”*

Third Bullet point for Eligible Applicants to be altered to read: *“Disabled persons who are in receipt of Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance and who have household savings of less than £16,000.”*

186/09 **COUNCIL PLAN 2010/2013 PART 2**

The Cabinet considered a report on the draft Council Plan 2010/2013 Part 2 which included a high level action plan for the Council's new six priorities. Particular attention was drawn to the new balanced scorecard for the Council and the strategic action plan 2010/2013. The Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships was tasked to incorporate amendments to the Strategic Action Plan, Lead Members as highlighted during the discussion.

**RECOMMENDED** that, subject to the amendments as referred to in the preamble above, the Council Plan 2010/2013 Part 2 be approved.

187/09 **PRE-APPLICATION PLANNING ADVICE - INTRODUCTION OF CHARGES**

Consideration was given to a report setting out a proposal for the introduction of a range of charges for services associated with pre-planning advice given by the Planning Department. The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration responded to questions from Members and agreed to liaise with officers to clarify and, if necessary, ensure additional information in relation to Proposed development type 'other\*\*\*' was included prior to submission of the report to the Council.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (a) that the Council adopts the principle of introducing a charge for these services and the scale of charges proposed, subject to the additional information as referred to in the preamble above, and that these are implemented from 21st April 2010;
- (b) that officers continue to work with colleagues from other authorities to produce an appropriate information leaflet; and
- (c) that the charging arrangements and relevant fees be reviewed in 12 months' time.

188/09 **ARTRIX - RESTRUCTURING OF OPERATING TRUST**

The Cabinet agreed that this item be deferred until the Cabinet meeting to be held on 28th April 2010.

189/09 **IMPROVEMENT PLAN EXCEPTION REPORT (FEBRUARY 2010)**

Consideration was given to the Improvement Plan Exception Report for February 2010 together with the corrective action being taken.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the revisions to the Improvement Plan Exception Report together with the corrective action being taken be approved;
- (b) that it be noted that for the 77 actions highlighted for February within the plan 66.2 percent were on target (green), 5.2 percent were one month behind (amber) and 5.2 percent were over one month behind (red). In addition it was noted that 23.4 percent of actions had been reprogrammed or suspended with approval; and
- (c) that with reference to FP4: Managing Performance (including Value for Money), the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services be requested to arrange an alternative training date and advise Members of the proposed date and time.

190/09 **PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT (FEBRUARY 2010)**

The Cabinet considered a report on the Council's performance as at 28th February 2010 (period 11).

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that it be noted that 63 percent of Performance Indicators were stable or improving;
- (b) that it be noted that 60 percent of Performance Indicators that had a target were meeting their target as at the month end and 80 percent were projected to meet their target at the year end;
- (c) that the performance figures for February 2010 as set out in the report be noted;
- (d) that the particular areas of improvement as set out in section 3.5 of the report be noted; and
- (e) that the areas of concern as set out in section 3.6 of the report be noted.

191/09 **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 item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of "Exempt Information" as defined in part I 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>
192/09	3

192/09 **WRITE OFFS REPORT - HOUSING BENEFIT**

The Cabinet considered a report on a request to write off a debt in relation to Housing Benefit.

**RESOLVED** that the Housing Benefit Overpayment debt as set out in Appendix 1 of the report be written off as irrecoverable in accordance with the Council's Write Off Policy.

(NOTE: Under paragraph 17.7 of the Council's Procedure Rules, Councillor J. T. Duddy requested that it be recorded that he had abstained from voting on this matter).

The meeting closed at 7.03 p.m.

Chairman