

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 13TH JUNE 2007 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: R. Hollingworth (Executive Leader), Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths (Deputy Executive Leader), A. N. Blagg, Dr. D. W. P. Booth JP, G. N. Denaro, Mrs. J. Dyer M.B.E., Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP, M. J. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker.

Observer: Councillor S. R. Peters.

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Mr. M. Bell, Mrs. C. Felton, Ms. J. Pickering, Ms. J. Pitman, Ms. D. Poole, Mr. A. Coel, Mr. J. Godwin, Ms. R. Cole and Ms. D. Parker-Jones.

1/07 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Executive Cabinet held on 24th April 2007 were submitted.

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Meeting be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

2/07 **SCRUTINY STEERING BOARD**

The Minutes of the Scrutiny Steering Board held on 3rd April 2007 were submitted. The Chairman of the Scrutiny Steering Board also referred to the three Task Groups which had been agreed at the Meeting of the Board on 12th June 2007 relating to aspects of the Refuse and Recycling Service, Air Quality and Transport (Buses).

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Minutes of the Meeting be noted and the recommendation in relation to High Hedges be approved; and
- (b) that the Task Groups be noted.

3/07 **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BOARD**

The Minutes of the Performance Management Board held on 22nd May 2007 were submitted.

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Meeting be noted.

4/07 **ANNUAL AUDIT AND INSPECTION LETTER**

The Chairman welcomed the Council's Relationship Manager Sandy McMillan from the Audit Commission to the Meeting. Mr. McMillan reported briefly on

the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter and explained that the letter was less detailed than usual due to the recent Comprehensive Performance Assessment. The two main issues arising from the report were the Council's use of resources in particular demonstrating value for money and the need for sustained progress in strategic housing. Mr. McMillan then answered questions from Members. The Chairman thanked Mr. McMillan for his attendance.

RESOLVED: that the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter be accepted.

5/07 **BENEFIT FRAUD PROSECUTION POLICY**

The Cabinet considered a report on a revised Benefit Fraud Prosecution Policy.

RESOLVED: that the revised Benefit Fraud Prosecution Policy as set out in Appendix A to the report be approved and adopted.

6/07 **TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2007-08 TO 2009-10**

Consideration was given to the report on the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy 2007/08 to 2009/10. The Head of Financial Services also gave a brief presentation on the Strategies which were required to comply with the Local Government Act 2003 and to ensure that the Council demonstrates accountability and effectiveness in the management of its funds. Following consideration it was

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the Strategy attached as Appendix A to the report be approved and adopted;
- (b) that the Authorised Limit for borrowing be set at £6,000,000 as required by CIPFA ;
- (c) that the maximum level of investment to be held within each organisation be set at £3,000,000.

7/07 **CHOICE BASED LETTINGS - BANDING MODEL AND ALLOCATIONS SCHEME**

Consideration was given to a report on the banding model and eligibility criteria to be used in the operation of the new Sub Regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme. The principle of implementing the Choice Based Lettings Scheme in place of the current allocations policy in respect of social housing had previously been approved. It was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the proposed Sub Regional Choice Based Lettings Banding Model and Eligibility Criteria as set out in Appendix A to the report be approved as the basis of the allocations policy for the operation of the new Sub Regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme;

- (b) that delegated Authority be granted to the Head of Planning and Environment Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing to agree the final alignment of bandings within the new scheme with the levels of housing need identified by the existing points scheme; and
- (c) that the remainder of the report be noted.

8/07 **EXPENDITURE OF HOMELESSNESS GRANT FUNDING**

The Cabinet considered a report regarding expenditure on schemes relating to the prevention of homelessness and repeat homelessness within the District. The report detailed the progress of schemes funded by grants during 2006/07, the level of grant allocated for 2007/08 and schemes put forward by the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group for grant funding in 2007/08.

It was reported that an additional £60,000 had recently been awarded for a countywide mediation service, such funding to be accessible by all six District Councils in Worcestershire. It was also reported that there had been a reduction in the number of people presenting as homeless and the number of people whom the Council had been required to house during the past year.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the progress of the homelessness preventative and support schemes funded through the homelessness grant from the Department of Communities and Local Government be noted;
- (b) that the level of homelessness grant funding for 2007/08 be noted;
- (c) that the submissions for the funding of schemes recommended by the Bromsgrove Homelessness Steering Group from the 2007/08 homelessness grant be approved;
- (d) that delegated authority be granted to the Head of Planning and Environment Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing to re-allocate any underspend or make further adjustments necessary to ensure full utilisation of the grant allocation for 2007/08 in support of existing or new schemes.

(NOTE: Councillor Mrs J. Dyer M.B.E. declared a personal interest in this item as a Trustee of the Bromsgrove Youth Homelessness Forum.)

9/07 **REFUSE AND RECYCLING - WINTER AND CHRISTMAS WORKING ARRANGEMENTS**

The Cabinet considered a report on alternative arrangements for publicising the details of refuse and recycling collections, including the green waste service, during the winter months. The proposals included the delivery of a calendar covering the period 1st December 2007 to 30th November 2008 to every household in the District by 1st November 2007. In addition publicity would be given by way of "Together Bromsgrove", advertisements in local newspapers, notifications would be sent to Parish Councils and full use would be made of the Customer Service Centre and the Council's web site.

It was also reported that consideration was being given to the amendment of the period of suspension of the green waste collection and that a further report would be submitted shortly on the options available.

As part of the discussion on this item the Chairman allowed a member of the public to ask a question on the green waste collection arrangements, to which the Head of Street Scene and Waste Management gave a response.

RESOLVED: that the proposals as detailed in the report for publicising the arrangements for refuse and recycling collections during the winter period be approved.

10/07 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

RESOLVED: that, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the Meeting during the consideration of the items of business the subject of the following minutes on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of "Exempt Information" as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, the relevant paragraphs of that part being as set out below:-

<u>Minute No.</u>	<u>Paragraph</u>
11/07	1
12/07	12
13/07	12

11/07 **RESTRUCTURE OF STREET SCENE AND WASTE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT**

Consideration was given to the report on a limited restructure of the Street Scene and Waste Management Department. The restructure involved the combination of two management posts into one post with greater responsibility.

RECOMMENDED: that the proposed changes to the structure be approved and that the cost of £95,478 be met from Council balances and refunded to balances over a period of approximately two years.

12/07 **FRAUD STRATEGY**

Following consideration of the report it was

RESOLVED: that the Fraud Strategy attached as Appendix A to the report be approved and adopted.

13/07 **VERIFICATION FRAMEWORK HOUSING BENEFIT/COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT ANTI FRAUD POLICY**

Following consideration of the report, it was

RESOLVED: that the Verification Framework for Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit Anti-Fraud Policy be approved and adopted.

The meeting closed at 6.58 pm

Chairman