

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet

Wednesday, 1st October, 2014 at 6.00pm
in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley

Present:

Councillor D. Sparks - Leader of the Council (in the Chair)
Councillor P. Lowe - Deputy Leader (Vice Chair)
Councillors K. Ahmed, H. Bills, J. Foster, R. Harris, G. Partridge and
S. Turner

Opposition Group Members nominated to attend meetings of the Cabinet:-

Councillors N. Barlow, A. Goddard, P. Harley, N. Neale, D. Vickers and
M. Wood (Conservative Group);
Councillors P. Brothwood and S. Etheridge (UKIP Group)

Officers:-

J. Polychronakis (Chief Executive), P. Sharratt (Interim Director of Children's Services), T. Reilly (Assistant Director of Corporate Resources – Human Resources and Organisational Development), C. Williams (Director – West Midlands Employers) and S. Griffiths (Democratic Services Manager).

25. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillors D. Branwood, T. Crumpton, R. James, P. Miller and G. Simms.

26. Changes in representation of Opposition Group Members

Councillors N. Barlow, A. Goddard and N. Neale were serving in place of Councillors R. James, G. Simms and P. Miller for this meeting of the Cabinet only.

27. Declarations of Interest

Councillor M Wood declared a non-pecuniary interest, in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct, in relation to Minute No. 29 below as a Governor (and Chair of the Finance Committee) at Halesbury School and Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees at the People's Field Trust (Halesbury and Sutton Schools).

The Chief Executive recorded a pecuniary interest on behalf of all Directors and Assistant Directors in respect of Minute No. 30 below.

28. **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 17th September, 2014, be approved as a correct record and signed.

29. **Demographic Growth Funding – The Creation of a New Special Educational Needs Post 16 facility**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Interim Director of Children's Services, seeking approval to create a new Post 16 facility for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities through the refurbishment of an existing building on the former Pensnett School site. The report also sought approval to develop a master plan for the former Pensnett School site and to commence a series of consultation events.

During the discussion on this item, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration undertook to provide a written response concerning the projection the Council had made for an increase in demand for Special Educational Needs.

Resolved:

- (1) That the proposal to provide a new Post 16 facility for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities through the refurbishment of an existing building on the former Pensnett School site, be approved.
 - (2) That the proposal to develop a master plan for the entire former Pensnett School site, including demolition of the main school building that fronts Tiled House Lane, be approved.
 - (3) That the proposed series of consultation events be commenced.
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30. **Review of Senior Management and Operational Structure**

The Cabinet received a report of the Chief Executive on the outcome of consultation on the proposed senior management and organisational restructure.

Following the introduction of this item, a question was raised concerning the project methodology used in developing the proposals. The Director – West Midlands Employers reported on the process used, including formal and informal consultation, appropriate external benchmarking and other statutory considerations.

All officers then left the meeting with the exception of the Chief Executive and the Democratic Services Manager.

The Leader responded to points raised by the main opposition group, as summarised in Appendix 3 to the report. He referred to the involvement of all opposition groups in the restructuring process and all consultation responses had been considered. The Leader emphasised the need to implement proposals that were fit for purpose to meet the significant challenges faced by the Council and the clear objectives identified in the report, including the adoption of the leanest management structure of any Metropolitan District Council.

Opposition spokespersons raised concerns regarding the proposed salaries for the new posts of Strategic Director and Chief Officer. The proposed salary levels were based on the outcome of a full job evaluation exercise, taking account of external factors and market forces. The Strategic Directors and Chief Officers were new posts to replace the existing Director and Assistant Director structure. Overall there would be a reduction in the top three tiers of management from 22 to 11 posts. The recruitment process would be considered by the Appointments Committee and Members of the Committee reserved the right to advertise any posts externally if there were no suitable internal applicants.

The Deputy Leader undertook to arrange for a written response to be provided in response to detailed questions concerning the savings of £1m as referred to in the report. The Chief Executive made specific reference to paragraph 22 of the report concerning the financial implications and would provide a written response prior to the meeting of the Council on 13th October, 2014.

Resolved:

That the Council be recommended to:

- (1) Note the outcome of the formal consultations summarised in Appendix 2, and the comments of the Conservative Group and Overview and Scrutiny Management Board as set out in Appendices 3 and 5 of the report now submitted.
- (2) Approve the new senior management structure as set out in Appendix 1 of the report now submitted.
- (3) Approve the spot salaries for the new Strategic Director and Chief Officer posts as set out in paragraphs 10 and 11 of the report now submitted.
- (4) Approve the policy and procedure for market forces supplements as set out in Appendix 4 of the report now submitted.

- (5) Amend the terms of reference of the Appointments Committee and the Appeals Committee as set out in paragraphs 15 and 18 of the report now submitted.
- (6) Authorise the Chief Executive to apply the approved policy on voluntary redundancies in accordance with paragraph 17 of the report now submitted.
- (7) Note the next phase of consultation on the 4th tier structure as referred to in paragraph 20 of the report now submitted.

(This was a Key Decision with the Cabinet and the Council named as Decision Takers)

The meeting ended at 6.55pm

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL