

MEETING OF THE CABINET

Wednesday, 19th March, 2008 at 6.00 p.m.
in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor Caunt (Leader of the Council) (Chairman);
Councillors Adams, Evans, Knowles, Miller, Mrs Millward, Mrs
Shakespeare and Mrs Walker

together with the following Minority Group members appointed to
attend meetings of the Cabinet:-

Councillors Ali, G H Davies, Mrs Ridney and Tomkinson (Labour
Group); and Councillor Lavender (Liberal Democrat Group)

OFFICERS:-

Chief Executive, Director of Finance, Director of Law and Property,
Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services, Director of
Children's Services, Director of the Urban Environment, Head of
Personnel and Support Services and Mr Sanders (Directorate of Law
and Property)

111 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of
Councillors Crumpton, Ms. Foster, Mrs Martin, Sparks and Tyler.

112 **CHANGES IN REPRESENTATION OF MINORITY GROUP
MEMBERS**

It was reported that Councillor Tomkinson was serving in place of
Councillor Ms Foster and Councillor Lavender was serving in place of
Councillor Tyler for this meeting of the Cabinet.

113 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No member declared a personal or prejudicial interest, in accordance
with the Members' Code of Conduct, in any matter to be considered at
this meeting.

114

MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 13th February, 2008 be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the substitution of the words "Waste Recycling Environmental Limited" for "Heritage Lottery Fund" in the sixth line of Minute 91 (Declarations of Interest - Councillor Ali)

115

CHOICE BASED LETTINGS AND A REVIEW OF THE HOUSING ALLOCATIONS SCHEME

A report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services was submitted, giving an evaluation of the Dudley at Home Choice Based Lettings pilot scheme and which also sought approval to roll out the scheme. The report also sought approval to the introduction of a Bandings Scheme as the basis for the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme.

The Select Committee on the Environment had considered both the introduction of Choice Based Lettings, in the light of the evaluation of the pilot scheme, and two alternative proposals for the future of the Council's housing allocations policy, these being to retain a simplified version of the existing Points Based Scheme and the introduction of the Bandings Scheme. The Select Committee had concluded by recommending the introduction of a Bandings Scheme.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the roll out of "Dudley at Home" to the rest of the Borough in summer 2008 be approved.
 - (2) That the banding model be taken forward with the intention of it replacing the points scheme.
 - (3) That the Select Committee on the Environment continue to monitor "Dudley at Home" and its full implementation and oversee the development of the banding model, ensuring that it meets the needs of Dudley residents.
 - (4) That a further report on "Dudley at Home" be submitted to the Cabinet in March 2009.
 - (5) That a report be submitted to the Cabinet in due course seeking approval to the implementation of a banding scheme as a basis for letting properties in Dudley.
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116 AFFORDABLE HOUSING UPDATE

A joint report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services and the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted giving a progress report on delivering affordable housing in the Borough and on the outcome of Registered Social Landlord funding bids to the Housing Corporation for the period 2008-11.

RESOLVED

That the updated information provided in the report submitted to the meeting, including the outcome of Registered Social Landlord funding bids to the Housing Corporation, be noted and that the strategic housing work to maximise the provision of affordable housing, as referred to in the report, be supported.

117 DUDLEY BOROUGH ECONOMIC STRATEGY 2008/09

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted seeking approval to the Council's Economic Strategy, which had been revised for 2008/09

RESOLVED

That the Council be recommended:-

- (1) That the revised Economic Strategy for the Borough for 2008/09, as attached to the report submitted to the meeting, be approved.
 - (2) That the revised Economic Strategy remain placed in the Members' Room for future reference.
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118 QUARTERLY CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted, under cover of which was circulated the Quarterly Corporate Performance Management Report for the third quarter for 2007/08, relating to performance for the period from 1st October to 31st December 2007.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Quarterly Corporate Performance Management Report for the third quarter of 2007/08, as circulated, be received and its content approved.

- (2) That the information contained within the Quarterly Corporate Performance Management Report be referred to Select Committees to consider specific issues within their respective Terms of Reference.
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119

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE - PRIMARY CAPITAL PROGRAMME

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted setting out progress made to date in preparation for the national Primary Capital Programme and seeking approval to arrangements for submitting the programme to the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

In the discussion, reference was made to the need to resolve and modernise provision in the wider Blowers Green area. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services undertook to meet local ward Councillors in an endeavour to agree the nature of investment necessary for primary school provision in that locality.

RESOLVED

That the "Investing in the Future - Primary Strategy for Change" document appended to the report submitted to the meeting be approved and that the Director of Children's Services be authorised to submit the document to the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

120

EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL AND SOCIAL FUNDS, 2007-13

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted, indicating the new 2007 European Structural and Social funding programmes and which sought consent to work up proposals to maximise the take-up of European funding to assist in delivering the Council's priorities.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the content of the report submitted to the meeting be noted.
 - (2) That the European Social Fund Co-Financing Organisation/Leaning and Skills Council/West Midlands Local Government Association Memorandum of Agreement be adopted.
 - (3) That proposals for maximising the take up of both European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund resources to assist the delivery of key priorities identified by the Council and its partners, be investigated.
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CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING

A joint report of the Chief Executive and Director of Finance was submitted on progress with the implementation of the Capital Programme and which also contained proposals for the amendment of the Capital Programme and matters associated therewith.

RESOLVED

- (1) That current progress with the 2007/08 Capital Programme, as set out in Appendix A of the report attached to the meeting, be noted.
- (2) That the Director of Children's Services be authorised to submit a funding bid to the Department for Children Schools and Families for the expansion of Hillcrest School and Community College, as set out in paragraph 15 of the report submitted to the meeting.
- (3) That the Council be recommended:
 - (a) That the Breakthrough funding allocation be noted and the associated expenditure be included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 5 of the report submitted to the meeting.
 - (b) That, subject to the anticipated Kick Start allocation being forthcoming, the associated expenditure be included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 6 of the report submitted to the meeting.
 - (c) That £76,000 of Section 106 funding be used to support Affordable Housing at Queens Road / Bath Road, Stourbridge, and that this expenditure be included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 7 of the report submitted to the meeting.
 - (d) That the further security measures at the Council House, Mary Stevens Park, Stourbridge, be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 8 of the report submitted to the meeting.

- (e) That the works to the track at the Dell Stadium be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 9 of the report submitted to the meeting.
- (f) That the stability assessment relating to Sedgley Hall Park watercourse erosion be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 10 of the report submitted to the meeting.
- (g) That the enhancements to the Liveability programme be approved, and that the award of funding for a Youth Shelter at Woodside Park be noted, and the project be included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 11 of the report submitted to the meeting
- (h) That the allocation of Road Safety Grant be noted and the Capital Programme amended accordingly, as set out in paragraph 12 of the report submitted to the meeting.
- (i) That the Extended Schools project at Milking Bank Primary School be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 13 of the report submitted to the meeting.
- (j) That the Computers for Schools grant allocation be noted, and the associated expenditure be included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 14 of the report submitted to the meeting.
- (k) That, subject to the funding bid to the Department of Children Schools and Families being successful, the project to expand Hillcrest School and Community College be included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 15 of the report submitted to the meeting.
- (l) That the Safer Stronger Communities allocation be noted, and the associated expenditure be included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 16 of the report submitted to the meeting.

- (m) That the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy for 2007/08 and 2008/09, as set out in paragraph 22 of the report submitted to the meeting, be approved.
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LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted seeking approval to the current draft Local Area Agreement Framework, which was currently subject to negotiation with the Government.

RESOLVED

That the Council be recommended that the revised priority outcomes in the draft Local Area Agreement appended to the report submitted to the meeting be approved as the basis for finalising negotiations with the Government and that the Leader of the Council be authorised to make the final submission of the Draft Agreement by 30th May, 2008.

123

PRIORY PARK AND RUIN - OUTLINE 10 YEAR MANAGEMENT PLAN

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted seeking approval, in principle, to an outline ten year management and maintenance plan for Priory Park and Ruin.

RESOLVED

That the outline 10 year management maintenance plan for Priory Park and Ruin, as described in the report submitted to the meeting, be approved.

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COMPLAINT TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN - CHILDREN'S SERVICES MATTER

A joint report of the Director of Law and Property and the Director of Children's Services was submitted on the findings of the Local Government Ombudsman on this complaint.

RESOLVED

That the content of the Ombudsman’s Report, attached as Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the meeting, and the actions taken by the Director of Children’s Services to remedy the complaint made, as set out in paragraphs 13 and 14 of the Ombudsman’s report be endorsed and that the views of the Director of Children’s Services, as set out in paragraph 7 of the joint report submitted to the meeting, be noted.

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EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in part 1 of schedule 12(A) to the Local Government Act, 1972, as specified below, and, in all the circumstances, the public interest in disclosing the information is outweighed by the public interest in maintaining the exemption from disclosure.

<u>Description of Item</u>	<u>Relevant Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A</u>
Investing In The Future – Information And Communication Technology In Schools	3
Staffing Issue – Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services	1
Staffing Issues – Directorate of Children’s Services	1
Staffing Issues – Chief Executives Directorate	1

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INVESTING IN THE FUTURE - INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) IN SCHOOLS

A report of the Director of Children’s Services was submitted seeking authority to exercise the Council’s option for a two year extension to the present agreement and to enter into formal negotiations with the current Private Finance Initiative ICT contractor for the Dudley Grid for Learning.

The report also identified and sought endorsement of a draft strategy for integrating educational ICT in Dudley into both Building Schools for the Future and Primary Capital Programmes initiatives from 2011 onwards and summarised the consultation processes involved and the outcomes.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Director of Children's Services be authorised to enter into negotiations for a two year extension to the present Dudley Grid for Learning Contract.
- (2) That the Director of Children's Services develop a strategy aimed at integrating the provision of support for all education information communication technology in Dudley into the procurement programme for Building Schools for the Future and the Primary Capital Programme.

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STAFFING ISSUE - DIRECTORATE OF ADULT, COMMUNITY AND HOUSING SERVICES

A report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services was submitted seeking approval to terminate the contract of employment of the member of staff identified in the report submitted to the meeting on the grounds of redundancy.

RESOLVED

That the termination of the contract of the officer referred to in the report submitted to the meeting, on the grounds of redundancy, and on the terms and conditions referred to in the report, be approved.

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STAFFING ISSUES - DIRECTORATE OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted seeking approval to terminate the contract of employment of a number of members of school staff, both local government and teaching, on the grounds of redundancy.

RESOLVED

That the termination of the contracts of employment of the staff referred to in the report submitted to the meeting, on the grounds of redundancy, and on the terms and conditions referred to in the report, be approved.

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STAFFING ISSUES – CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DIRECTORATE

This item was withdrawn.

The meeting ended at 6.50 p.m.

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL