

MEETING OF THE CABINET

Wednesday, 12th March, 2014 at 6.00 p.m.
in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor Sparks (Leader of the Council) (Chair)
Councillor Lowe (Deputy Leader)
Councillors K Ahmed, Branwood, Foster, Partridge, S Turner and Waltho.

Conservative Group Members appointed to attend meetings of the Cabinet: Councillors Evans, Harley, James, Kettle, Miller and Mrs Simms.

OFFICERS:-

Chief Executive, Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services, Director of Corporate Resources, Director of the Urban Environment, Interim Director of Children's Services, Director of Public Health, Treasurer, Planning Policy Manager, Head of Economic Development and the Democratic Services Manager.

OBSERVER:-

Councillor Perks.

70 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors Crumpton, Vickers, Wood and Wright.

71 CHANGES IN REPRESENTATION OF OPPOSITION GROUP MEMBERS

It was reported that Councillors Evans and Miller were serving in place of Councillors Vickers and Wright for this meeting only.

72 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Evans and Sparks declared non-pecuniary interests, in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct, in relation to Dudley Town Centre Regeneration and associated matters as Directors of Dudley Zoo.

73

MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 12th February, 2014, be approved as a correct record and signed.

74

CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING

The Cabinet considered a report on progress with the implementation of the Capital Programme and proposing certain amendments.

The Director of the Urban Environment undertook to provide information to Councillor Evans concerning plastic and cardboard recycling.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the results of the Post Completion Reviews of relevant capital projects, as set out in Appendix C to the report, be noted.
- (2) That the Interim Director of Children's Services be authorised to submit an application for funding to Salix for the Schools Energy Efficiency project, as set out in paragraph 6 of the report.
- (3) That the Council be recommended:-
 - (a) That current progress with the 2013/14 Capital Programme as set out in Appendix A to the report be noted and that budgets be amended to reflect the reported variance.
 - (b) That in respect of the Mortgage Rescue Scheme, expenditure of £500,000 plus the value of any associated Housing and Communities Agency Grant be added to the public sector housing capital programme over five years, and that the Director of Corporate Resources be authorised to acquire properties suitable for Mortgage Rescue on behalf of the Council, as set out in paragraph 5 of the report.
 - (c) That, subject to the application for funding being successful, the Schools Energy Efficiency project be approved and included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 6 of the report.

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

75

CORPORATE QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

The Cabinet considered a report on the corporate quarterly performance management report for the period 1st October to 31st December, 2013.

Councillor Miller raised a concern about advice given to a resident about the Mortgage Rescue Scheme. The Deputy Leader noted the comments and suggested that any individual cases should be raised with the relevant Directorate.

Councillor Harley referred to the tourism strategy and action plan and asked for an update on the development of the strategy. He also expressed concerns about the lack of progress on improving the website to promote tourism. The Deputy Leader indicated that he would investigate progress on the website development. A report on the tourism strategy would be submitted to a future meeting.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the corporate quarterly performance management report be approved.
- (2) That the consideration of the report by the Corporate Performance Management, Efficiency and Effectiveness Scrutiny Committee be noted.

76

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE DUDLEY AREA ACTION PLAN
'ISSUES AND OPTIONS' STAGE DOCUMENT

The Cabinet considered a report on the Dudley Area Action Plan (AAP) Issues and Options document to be used as a basis for public consultation.

RESOLVED

That the Dudley Area Action Plan Issues and Options document be approved as the basis for public consultation, commencing on 14th March, 2014, for a period of six weeks.

77

DUDLEY TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION

The Cabinet considered a report on regeneration activity in and around Dudley Town Centre together with associated financial issues.

Councillor Harley referred to the three approved planning applications for major foodstores in the Town Centre and raised concerns about the timescale for development and potential delays over land ownership issues. The Cabinet Member for Regeneration indicated that a decision on the preferred scheme was expected by the end of the summer 2014. Professional advice and guidance was being obtained to minimise any potential delays in regeneration schemes.

A query was raised concerning the projected revenue implications of the proposed Tower Street multi-storey car park. The Cabinet Member for Regeneration reported that the Council would only proceed with the scheme once it was satisfied that the financial implications were sustainable. The Cabinet Member also emphasised the links between the retail/shopping opportunities, the improvements to car parking provision, public realm works and the wider regeneration activity in and around the Town Centre.

The Leader responded to issues raised concerning the transport infrastructure taking account of the ambition to attract a significant amount of additional visitors to the Town Centre.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Council be recommended to approve and include the proposed Tower Street car park in the Capital Programme.
- (2) That the regeneration activity underway in and around Dudley Town Centre be noted.
- (3) That authority be given to incur capital expenditure of up to £9 million on regeneration activity in Dudley Town Centre and Castle Hill in advance of capital receipts from the project.
- (4) That reports be submitted to the Cabinet at least annually to review the implications on the Dudley Town Centre Area Development Framework programme of any variances in the value and timing of project costs and capital receipts.

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

APPROVAL FOR CONSULTATION OF THE COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY DRAFT CHARGING SCHEDULE AND DRAFT REGULATION 123 LIST

The Cabinet considered a report on the development of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and seeking approval for the Draft Charging Schedule (DCS) and Draft Regulation 123 List to be published for a six-week period of public consultation.

RESOLVED

That approval be given to the publication of the Draft Charging Schedule, for a six-week period of public consultation, commencing on 14th March, 2014.

79

RAIL DEVOLUTION

The Cabinet considered a report seeking support to ongoing negotiations by Centro for a devolved rail contract for the West Midlands to be known as 'West Midlands Rail'.

RESOLVED

That approval be given to the signing of a letter of 'in principle' support for the proposal for rail devolution in the West Midlands and the outline governance arrangements.

80

BLACK COUNTRY JOINT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – COLLABORATION AGREEMENT

The Cabinet considered a report seeking approval for the Council to enter into a Collaboration Agreement in relation to the Black Country Executive Joint Committee.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Council enter into a Collaboration Agreement with Walsall, Wolverhampton and Sandwell Councils and the Black Country Consortium.
 - (2) That the Directors of Corporate Resources and the Urban Environment be authorised to negotiate the terms of the Collaboration Agreement and to renegotiate them as and when required.
 - (3) That the Cabinet Member for Regeneration represent the Council on the Black Country Executive Joint Committee's Advisory Board.
 - (4) That the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, in consultation with the Directors of Corporate Resources and the Urban Environment, be authorised to agree the procedures for the development of projects to be considered for approval by the Black Country Executive Joint Committee.
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81

ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

No issues were reported under this item.

The meeting ended at 6.40pm

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL