

## MEETING OF THE CABINET

Wednesday, 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2013 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, Crumpton, Foster, Partridge, Waltho  
and Wood

together with the following Opposition Group Members appointed to  
attend meetings of the Cabinet:-

Conservative Group - Councillors Evans, Harley, J Jones, K Turner and  
Wright

### OFFICERS:-

The Chief Executive, Director of Adult, Community and Housing  
Services, Director of Children's Services, Director of Corporate  
Resources, Director of the Urban Environment, Director of Public  
Health, Treasurer, Assistant Director of Corporate Resources (Human  
Resources and Organisational Development), the Democratic Services  
Manager and the Assistant Principal Officer (Democratic Services) –  
Richard Sanders, together with other officers

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34                    APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of  
Councillors James, Mrs Simms and S Turner.

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35                    CHANGE IN REPRESENTATION OF MINORITY GROUP MEMBERS

It was reported that Councillors Evans and J Jones were serving in  
place of Councillors Mrs Simms and James, respectively, for this  
meeting of the Cabinet only.

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36                    DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Member made a declaration of interest, in accordance with the  
Members' Code of Conduct.

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MINUTES

## RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2013, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY 2014/15

A joint report of the Chief Executive and Treasurer was submitted on the Revenue Budget Strategy for 2014/15 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015/16-2016/17 and on spending and funding options for consultation.

Arising from the presentation of the report submitted, a number of questions were asked and responded to. Particular reference was made to the issue of regeneration of town centres in the Borough and the proposal to increase parking charges.

## RESOLVED

- (1) That the Council be recommended that 2013/14 budgets be amended as set out in paragraphs 6 and 12 of the report now submitted.
- (2) That in respect of Looked After Children a report be brought back to Cabinet in February 2014 outlining the outcomes of the diagnostic exercise and presenting any proposals that arise from it, as set out in paragraph 12 of the report now submitted.
- (3) That the preliminary strategy outlined in the report be approved as a basis for consultation.
- (4) That the Chief Executive and Directors, in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader and relevant Cabinet Members, be authorised to examine the options set out in paragraph 36 of the report now submitted.
- (5) That the various issues and risks which will need to be taken into account in finalising budget proposals for 2014/15, and the Medium Term Financial Strategy, be noted.

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

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STAFFING ISSUES – BUDGET SAVINGS YEAR 2013/14

A report of the Director of Corporate Resources was submitted updating Cabinet with final figures relating to staff changes as a result of the budget savings process for year 3 (2013/14) and with learning that had taken place and outcomes from the learning put into place for the 2014/15 budget saving process together with proposals in relation to voluntary and compulsory redundancies.

## RESOLVED

That, subject to the necessary approval of the Council:-

- (1) That the contents of the report submitted to the meeting, be noted.
- (2) That the outline timetable for the next round of employee related budget savings be approved.
- (3) That a voluntary redundancy programme related to services where savings are identified, rather than a Council wide “expressions of interest” process, be approved.
- (4) That the Director of Corporate Resources, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Human Resources (HR), Law and Governance, be authorised to determine all applications for voluntary redundancy including those where there are pension implications, and that the Assistant Director HR and Organisational Development, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for HR, Legal and Property be authorised to determine all applications for compulsory redundancy including those where there are pension implications, up to a total maximum of £3.0m for direct redundancy costs and £1.5m for the capitalised cost of pension strain.

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

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LOCALISED COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2014/15

A report of the Director of Corporate Resources was submitted, updating Cabinet on the results of the consultation exercise approved by Cabinet on 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2013, together with information regarding Council Tax reduction scheme changes in neighbouring authorities and, following consideration of the consultation results, outcomes of member scrutiny and an equality impact assessment, on options for the Council's Council Tax reduction scheme with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2014.

## RESOLVED

That the Council be recommended:

- (1) That, further to consideration of the outcomes of the preceptor and public consultation on the Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme, member scrutiny, the equality impact assessment and last year's results of the Big Question budget survey in 2012, the CTR scheme be amended from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014; the preferred scheme to be submitted for full Council approval on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2013 be based on the eligibility and calculation rules of the current scheme with a 20% cut in the resulting level of the reduction; and a transitional arrangement of an 8.5% cut in the calculated reduction apply at least up to 31st March 2015 with full protection from any scheme changes being given to pensioners (as defined in legislation), disabled adults, disabled children, war pensioners and lone parents with a child under 5, the definition of the protected groups to be as defined in the 2013 public consultation.
- (2) That, subject to full Council approval before 31st January, 2015 the transitional arrangements of an 8.5% cut may be extended beyond 31st March 2015 without further public consultation.
- (3) That the proposal to document the preferred CTR scheme in such a manner that any personal allowances, premiums, disregards and non-dependant deductions are automatically linked to equivalent annually up-rated values published by the central government in either Housing Benefit legislation or the prescribed Council Tax Reduction scheme for pensioners, be approved; this allowing any approved scheme to be automatically carried forward to future years, without the need for annual public consultation and re-approval, until such time that further scheme changes are considered.

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

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### CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING

A joint report of the Chief Executive and the Treasurer was submitted on progress with the implementation of the Capital Programme and proposing certain amendments to the Programme.

In relation to paragraph 5 of the report, the importance of the heritage of the Halesowen District Office, following the departure of Children's Services from the building, was acknowledged, and possible alternatives were discussed regarding the future of the building.

#### RESOLVED

- (1) That the results of the Post Completion Review of capital projects, as set out in Appendix B to the report now submitted, be noted.
- (2) That the Council be recommended:-
  - (a) That current progress with the 2013/14 Capital Programme as set out in Appendix A to the report now submitted be noted and that budgets be amended to reflect the reported variances.
  - (b) That the urgent amendment to the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 5 of the report now submitted, be noted.

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

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### ANNUAL REVIEW OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY 2013

A report of the Director of Corporate Resources was submitted on the annual review of equality and diversity for 2013, a full copy of which was available in the Members' Room and electronically on the Council's Committee Management Information System.

#### RESOLVED

- (1) That the annual review of equality and diversity 2013 be approved.
  - (2) That the full copy of the annual review of equality and diversity for 2013 be circulated to all Members of the Council.
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ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION

A report of the Director of Corporate Resources was submitted on the annual review of the Constitution.

## RESOLVED

That the Council be recommended:

- (1) That the work undertaken and in progress to integrate public health functions within the Constitution, as referred to in paragraphs 8 and 9 of the report now submitted, be noted.
- (2) That the terms of reference of the Appointments Committee be amended, with consequential changes elsewhere in the Constitution, to provide for salary packages for new appointments and any severance packages for employees that exceed £100,000 to be recommended to full Council for approval as referred to in paragraphs 10 and 11 of the report now submitted.
- (3) That the review of the Members' Planning Code of Good Practice, as referred to in paragraph 12 of the report now submitted, be noted.
- (4) That the proposed addition to the terms of reference of the Ernest Stevens Trusts Management Committee be approved as set out in paragraphs 13 and 14 of the report now submitted.
- (5) That the Deputy Leader (Cabinet Member for Finance) be authorised to sign Decision Sheets in the absence of the Cabinet Member for Human Resources, Legal and Property, as referred to in paragraph 15 of the report now submitted.
- (6) That the approach to the recording of Council, Cabinet, Committee and other meetings, as set out in paragraphs 16 to 19 of the report now submitted, be approved and that Council Procedure Rule 24.6 be amended accordingly.

- (7) That the amended Terms of Reference for West Midlands Joint Committee, as described in paragraphs 20 to 26 and Appendix 1 to the report now submitted, be approved insofar as they relate to the executive functions of Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council and that the Director of Corporate Resources be authorised to take any necessary and consequential actions to give effect to this decision.
- (8) That the establishment of the Black Country Executive Joint Committee, as referred to in paragraphs 27 to 33 of the report now submitted, be approved and that the Constitution be amended accordingly.
- (9) That the constitution of the Black Country Executive Joint Committee, including the Terms of Reference set out in Appendix 2 to the report now submitted, be endorsed and the associated functions and powers be delegated to the Executive Joint Committee, subject to the requirement that any revenue or capital expenditure programmes or commitments are approved by the Cabinet and full Council in accordance with the existing Constitutional requirements of Dudley MBC.
- (10) That the Leader of the Council be appointed as the Cabinet's representative on the Black Country Executive Joint Committee together with a named Member to act as a substitute.
- (11) That the proposals for the City Deal and Growth Deal Advisory Board, as set out in paragraphs 31 and 32 of the report now submitted, including the provision for the appointment of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, be approved.
- (12) That the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the Chief Executive and appropriate Directors, be authorised to make any necessary and consequential changes to the terms of reference of the Black Country Executive Joint Committee that may be required from time to time to implement the proposals in the report now submitted.
- (13) That the appointment of Walsall MBC to act as Secretary to the Black Country Executive Joint Committee and Advisory Board be noted.
- (14) That the ongoing reviews of governance arrangements, as referred to in paragraph 34 of the report now submitted, be noted.

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

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ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

No issues were reported under this item.

The meeting ended at 6.40pm

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL