

## MEETING OF THE CABINET

Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2013 at 6.00 p.m.  
in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley

### PRESENT:-

Councillor Sparks (Leader of the Council) (Chair)  
Councillor Ali (Deputy Leader)  
Councillors K Ahmed, Foster, Islam, Lowe and Partridge

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

Conservative Group - Councillors Blood, Harley, James, K Turner and Mrs Walker

### OFFICERS:-

The Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Resources, Director of Children's Services, Director of the Urban Environment, Assistant Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services, Director of Public Health, Treasurer and the Democratic Services Manager, together with other officers

### ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:-

Mr S. Turner (representing the Council's External Auditors in relation to Minute No. 83 below)

### OBSERVER:-

Councillor J Martin

Prior to the commencement of the business, the Leader expressed condolences to Councillor Islam following his recent family bereavement.

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### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

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### CHANGES IN REPRESENTATION OF MINORITY GROUP MEMBERS

No changes were reported.

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81                    DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

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82                    MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2013, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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83                    ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2011/12

A joint report of the Chief Executive and the Treasurer was submitted on the Annual Audit Letter from the external auditors, the Audit Commission.

Members welcomed the positive comments of the auditors. The Cabinet Member for Human Resources, Law and Governance reported that work was ongoing to address the specific issues identified in the action plan.

RESOLVED

That the Annual Audit Letter, together with the views and comments of the Audit Commission, be noted.

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84                    BOROUGH HOUSING STRATEGY 2013-16

A report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services was submitted on the Borough's Housing Strategy 2013-16.

Reference was made to issues of under-occupancy and the potential impact of welfare reforms together with documents that were the subject of ongoing consultation. A query was raised regarding the accuracy of the rent levels as quoted in chapter 3 of the report. Members also referred to ongoing issues concerning the roll-out of extra care housing schemes and addressing appropriate care needs; Section 106 affordable housing obligations and the positive work previously undertaken by the Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education Scrutiny Committee. The Cabinet also acknowledged the need for a Member-led approach to future policy development.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Libraries and Adult Learning noted the points raised and undertook to respond concerning the accuracy of the rent levels referred to in the report.

RESOLVED

That the Borough's Housing Strategy be approved.

(This was a Key Decision with the Cabinet being named as Decision Taker).

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ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BLACK COUNTRY STRATEGIC TRANSPORT BOARD

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the establishment of a Black Country Strategic Transport Board.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the establishment of the Black Country Strategic Transport Board to act as the Black Country Local Transport Body be approved.
- (2) That the Cabinet Member for Transportation and Community Safety be appointed as the Council's representative on the Board.
- (3) That the Cabinet Member for Regeneration be nominated to act as substitute for the Cabinet Member for Transportation and Community Safety when needed.
- (4) That Wolverhampton City Council act as the Accountable Body for the Board, including undertaking the role as Secretary, Auditor and Co-ordinator for Freedom of Information requests, subject to further discussions in relation to the apportionment of all reasonable costs incurred in relation thereto.

(This was a Key Decision with the Cabinet being named as Decision Taker).

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CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING AND EXTERNAL FUNDING

A joint report of the Chief Executive and the Treasurer was submitted on progress with the implementation of the Capital Programme and which proposed certain amendments to the Programme and consideration of external funding issues.

The Director of Children's Services undertook to respond to a Member in writing to provide a breakdown of the specific projects referred to under paragraph 6 of the report.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Expression of Interest to the Big Lottery for Fulfilling Lives: A Better Start funding be noted, and that an update on progress be given in due course, as set out in paragraph 7 of the report now submitted.
- (2) That the results of the Post Completion Review of capital projects, as set out in Appendix B of the report now submitted, be noted.
- (3) That the Council be recommended:-
  - (a) That current progress with the 2012/13 Capital Programme, as set out in Appendix A to the report submitted, be noted and that budgets be amended to reflect the reported variances.
  - (b) That the Council's redistributed Kickstart funding of £252,000 be reinvested through current Housing Assistance Grants schemes, and that this expenditure be included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 5 of the report now submitted.
  - (c) That the Schools Grant allocation be noted, and the associated spend included in the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 6 of the report now submitted.
  - (d) That the urgent amendments to the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraphs 8 and 9 of the report now submitted, be noted.

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

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted seeking approval to undertake a statutory consultation process on the draft Planning for Health Supplementary Planning Document commencing on 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2013 for a period of eight weeks.

RESOLVED

That the draft Planning for Health Supplementary Planning Document be approved for consultation.

(This was a Key Decision with the Cabinet being named as Decision Taker)

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EXTERNALLY FUNDED PROJECTS: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted seeking approval to enter into Collaboration Agreements with Black Country local authorities to enable the delivery of four sub-regional economic development projects and to enter into future Black Country Collaboration Agreements to enable the delivery of economic development projects where Dudley MBC was a delivery partner.

In welcoming the report, Members requested further details of the businesses involved in relation to the expected outputs under project 1 in Appendix 1 to the report. Reference was also made to risks involved with the potential claw back of ERDF funding. It was considered important that all the relevant accountable bodies were monitored, along with any identified potential shortfalls, to ensure that all risks were minimised.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration noted the comments made and emphasised the Council's commitment to working with local people and communities, including the positive and ongoing engagement of local businesses.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and the Cabinet Member for Finance, in consultation with the Director of the Urban Environment and the Director of Corporate Resources (or their nominated representatives) be authorised to negotiate and agree all terms, conditions and financial commitments of the Black Country Collaboration Agreements for the following four projects:-
  - (a) Black Country Regional Growth Fund (Round 3) Programme Bid;
  - (b) Black Country Business Property Investment Programme (ERDF);
  - (c) Black Country Growth Opportunities: Local Delivery (ERDF); and

- (d) Black Country ERDF Technical Assistance.
  - (2) That the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and the Cabinet Member for Finance, in consultation with the Director of the Urban Environment and the Director of Corporate Resources (or their nominated representatives) be authorised to negotiate and agree all terms and conditions of future Black Country Collaboration Agreements for collaborative economic development projects across the Black Country as part of:
    - (a) The current European Regional Development Fund Programme (2007 to 2013)
    - (b) The next European Regional Development Fund Programme (2014 to 2020); and
    - (c) Future or exceptional rounds of Regional Growth Fund.
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GREEN DEAL/ENERGY COMPANY OBLIGATION (ECO) UPDATE  
AND HOME ENERGY CONSERVATION ACT (HECA)

A report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services was submitted on the Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation (ECO). The report referred to joint Black Country work that had been undertaken and further proposed work at a local level. The report also requested the approval of the Council's Home Energy Conservation Act return.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Libraries and Adult Learning noted the comments made by a Member concerning the need for further work to minimise energy costs for those on low incomes and associated energy affordability issues.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the various options for delivering Green Deal/ Energy Company Obligations in Dudley be developed further to finalise the Borough's approach to Green Deal/ Energy Company Obligations and that a further report be submitted to a future meeting for decision.

- (3) That the Council be recommended to authorise the Cabinet Member for Housing, Libraries and Adult Learning, the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services and the Director of Corporate Resources to bid for and enter into an Energy Company Obligations funding arrangement.
- (4) That the Dudley Home Energy Conservation Act report be approved and made publically available on the Council's internet site.

90                    FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

A report of the Director of Corporate Resources was submitted on the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the four-month period commencing 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2013.

RESOLVED

That the Forward Plan of Key Decisions be noted.

91                    ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

No issues were reported under this item.

92                    EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972, as indicated 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 paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A</u>
Staffing Issues – Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services	1

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STAFFING ISSUES – 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 an employee (JB), on the grounds of redundancy, in accordance with the Council's Redeployment and Retraining Policy.

RESOLVED

That the termination of the contract of employment of the employee referred to in the report now submitted be approved, on the grounds of redundancy, in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in the report.

The meeting ended at 6.42pm

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL