

MEETING OF THE CABINET

Thursday, 23rd November, 2006 at 6.00 p.m.
in the Council Chamber at the Council House, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor Caunt (Leader of the Council) (Chairman);
Councillors Adams, Evans, Fraser-Macnamara, Knowles, Mrs. Martin,
Miller, Mrs Millward, and Mrs Walker.

Opposition Group Members nominated to attend meetings of the
Cabinet: Councillors Ali, Crumpton, G.H. Davies, and Ms. Foster
(Labour Group); and Councillor Tyler (Liberal Democrat Group).

OFFICERS:-

The Director of Law and Property, the Director of Adult, Community
and Housing Services, the Director of Finance, the Director of the
Urban Environment, the Assistant Director of Children's Services
(Resources), The Marketing and Communications Officer (Ms
Jennings), Chief Executive's Directorate and Mr Sanders (Directorate
of Law and Property).

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APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of
Councillors Ms Partridge, Mrs Ridley, Mrs Shakespeare and Sparks

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Member declared an interest, in accordance with the Members'
Code of Conduct, in relation to any matter to be considered at this
meeting.

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DUDLEY TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION – REDEVELOPMENT OF DUDLEY CIVIC QUADRANT

A joint report of the Director of Law and Property and Director of
Finance was submitted seeking further consideration of the proposal
reported to the meeting of the Cabinet held on 13th September, 2006
for the comprehensive redevelopment of the Dudley Civic Quadrant
site as a key part of the regeneration of Dudley Town Centre.

The report now submitted contained further details in respect of the model proposed by BV Strategies Limited (BVS); the proposed programme; the success criteria negotiated in relation to the furtherance of the project to date; the outputs that would be delivered should the project move to the “Examine” stage; and issues relating to fees and the intellectual property rights involved.

Concerns were expressed by members of the Labour Group regarding the time made available for consultation on the detailed project, in the light of the undertaking that the project would not proceed without the agreement of all political groups.

In response, the Director of Law and Property confirmed the date on which the substantive documentation had been received from BVS and referred to the offer made by the Leader immediately following the receipt of the documentation for all group leaders to receive a personal briefing. Members of the Labour Group indicated that the leader of that Group had been unable to accept the offer, as he was on leave and away from Dudley.

A discussion ensued in which the Director of Law and Property clarified the measures that would be necessary should the Alternative Dispute Resolution be activated in the event of the Success Criteria being disputed between the parties. The Director also clarified the position regarding fees for which the Council would be liable should the project not proceed beyond the “Examine” stage.

In discussing the nature of the project, the Leader confirmed that, through the Dudley Community Partnership, stakeholders had already been briefed and would be invited to indicate whether they wished to be incorporated within the proposed civic complex. Regarding heritage aspects, the façade of all the old buildings comprising the Council House/former Court Buildings/Concert Hall/Central Library would be protected. In relation to the existing buildings, the point was made by some members that some of the old properties and Westox House were not fit for purpose currently.

In relation to the proposal to negotiate with one company, rather than to invite tenders, the advantages in following the course of action proposed in terms of value for money and affordability were explained by the Director of Law and Property. The manner in which it was currently proposed the project would be financed was explained by the Director of Finance.

RESOLVED

That the Council be recommended:

- (1) That the Success Criteria set out in Appendix 1 of the report now submitted be approved and that it be confirmed that this project is and will remain a priority for the Council for capital investment;
- (2) That the liability for fees for Phase 1 referred to in paragraph 25 of the report now submitted be noted;
- (3) That the Director of Law and Property, in consultation with the Director of Finance, be authorised to negotiate, agree and enter into an Agreement with BV Strategies Limited and Public Sector Plc for the Examine phase including any requirement for the payment of fees;
- (4) That the Director of Law and Property, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to appoint the Council's representatives on the Joint Corporate Steering Board referred to in paragraph 24 of the report now submitted;
- (5) That it be noted that there will be a further report at the conclusion of Phase 1, as referred to in paragraph 26 of the report now submitted;
- (6) That the Director of Law and Property and the Director of Finance be requested to keep the three Group Leaders informed of the progress of this project.

The meeting ended at 7.05 pm.

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL