

Cabinet minutes

Wednesday 19 November 2008 at 6.00 p.m.

in Conference Room 2 at the Council House Walsall

Present

Councillor O'Hare	Leader of the Council
Councillor Andrew	Deputy Leader and Regeneration
Councillor Zahid Ali	Children's services
Councillor Walker	Environment
Councillor Griffiths	Finance and personnel
Councillor Harrison	Leisure and culture
Councillor Arif	Procurement, transformation and performance management
Councillor McCracken	Social care, health and housing
Councillor Harris	Transport

2079 Apology

An apology for non-attendance was submitted on behalf of Councillor Perry.

2080 Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meetings held on 22 October and 29 October (adjourned) 2008 copies having been sent to each member of the Cabinet be approved and signed as correct records.

2081 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2082 The Regional Spatial Strategy

Councillor Andrew presented the report:

(see annexed)

Resolved

- (1) That the proposed response made by officers, summarised in this report and set out in detail in the annexes 1, 2 and 3, be approved.
- (2) That Cabinet the recommendation of the Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel on 6 November 2008, as set out in Annex 1 of this report, be noted and endorsed.
- (3) That work with other authorities and the Regional Assembly continue in order to address the specific issues raised by the RSS Phase 2 Revision and the further work commissioned by the Government.
- (4) That the Executive Director, Regeneration in consultation with the portfolio holder for Regeneration be authorised to (a) give consent for any further technical work funded regionally or from within existing resources and (b) approve formal representations on behalf of the Council as considered necessary

2083 Brownhills environmental strategy

Councillor Andrew presented the report:

(see annexed)

Resolved

That the Brownhills Environmental Strategy be approved as the basis for long term public realm and environmental regeneration of the area linked to Walsall Housing Group's Housing Masterplan and the Brownhills Transport Package.

2084 Route 529 – Wolverhampton bus showcase and A454 red route

Councillor Harris presented the report:

(see annexed)

Resolved

- (1) That Cabinet note the outcomes of the public consultation exercise undertaken in June 2008, demonstrating 87% public support for the scheme and support from operators.
- (2) That Cabinet approve the proposals as shown in the plans attached at Appendices A, B, C and D to be taken forward to detailed design and implementation.
- (3) That Cabinet delegate responsibility for resolving any minor scheme amendments to the Executive Director Regeneration and Performance. Specifically this will include:

- Finalising the location of any loading bays and parking arrangements along the A454 Wolverhampton Road
 - Finalising agreement with adjoining land owners for any environmental mitigation and improvement measures required along the route.
- (4) That Cabinet approve the undertaking of a tendering exercise for the appointment of a contractor in accordance with the Council's Financial and Contract Rules, to undertake the construction of the Bus Showcase and Red Route proposals.
- (5) That Cabinet delegate authority for the acceptance of tenders and award of contract to the Executive Director Regeneration and Performance, following an assessment of received tenders for Value for Money and quality, subject to the scheme remaining within identified budget limits.

2085 **Building a new Birchills together**

Councillor Andrew presented the report and he informed Cabinet of a change to recommendation (d) which should refer to the name of the development framework as "Birchills Forward":

(see annexed)

Resolved

- (1) That Cabinet endorses the recommendations of the Building a New Birchills Together report, set out in appendix 1 and summarised below which recommends that:
- (a) the Council and its partners make a commitment to Birchills forming part of the refreshed Strategic Regeneration Framework.
 - (b) the Council and its partners commit to the investigation of potential vehicles for securing public investment in Birchills.
 - (c) a formal Birchills Task and Finish Group is convened consisting of Walsall Council (Regeneration, Neighbourhood Management and Housing), WRC, English Partnerships/HCA, Advantage West Midlands and Birchills Project Reference Group to drive forward the development of a Project Plan for bringing forward proposals. The project plan will include a working protocol, (roles and responsibilities of partners including who leads) delivery options and an exit strategy. The Birchills Task and Finish Group will formally report to the Birchills Project Reference Group.
 - (d) an overall Development Framework to be known as "Birchills Forward" is scoped and commissioned through the PRG. Plan will include options for developing:

- a programme of comprehensive housing renewal including:
 - which housing stock to retain / improve
 - where demolition of stock is necessary (for comprehensive redevelopment and/or due to property conditions)
 - opportunities for new housing developments;
 - improvements to community facilities and public spaces;
 - the development of new businesses, including social enterprises; and
 - a range of community-led projects to address the causes of economic underperformance of the area and to address worklessness and the digital divide.
- (e) the Project Reference Group, in partnership with key community groups in the area, procure a robust evidence base in conjunction with the local community. This may include:
- a residents survey specific to the Birchills study area (including a socio-economic profile); and
 - a comprehensive stock condition assessment to include details about:
 - compliance with Housing Health and Safety Rating (HHSR); and
 - energy efficiency
- (f) the development Plan should include proposals on how best to strengthen and support key community organisations in performing a stronger neighbourhood management role.
- (e) urgently indicates to all land owners and developers with an interest in sites in and adjacent to Birchills that it is supporting the preparation of a Development Framework for the defined area.
- (2) That the Cabinet supports the addition of Birchills to the Strategic Regeneration Framework Programme, and that a development framework is commissioned, through the Birchills Project Reference Group (PRG), that will provide the opportunity to embrace wider neighbourhood level service delivery.

2086 **Older people's reprovion – land exchange at Brownhills**

Councillor Andrew presented the report:

(see annexed)

Resolved

- (1) That approval be given to the acquisition from the Walsall Housing Group (whg) of 5,842 square metres or thereabouts of land in High Street, Brownhills, as shown edged red on plan EPMS 3001/3 in exchange for the Council's freehold interest in 2,674 square metres or thereabouts of land in Linden Drive, Brownhills, as shown edged red on plan EPMS 3017/2, and 3,904 square metres or thereabouts of land in Church Road, Brownhills, as shown edged red on plan EPMS 2037/2.
- (2) That Cabinet note that, once acquired, the site in High Street, Brownhills shall be let to Housing 21, the appointed Older People's Re-provision provider, at a peppercorn rental as part of the Re-provision of Residential and Day Care Services for Older People Programme.
- (3) That the Director of Regeneration and Performance, in consultation with the portfolio holder, be delegated authority to approve an exchange of an alternative area, or areas, of land of equal value to the whg land in High Street, Brownhills, in the event that further issues arise.

2087 Education capital programme

Councillor Zahid Ali presented the report:

(see annexed)

Resolved

- (1) That approval be given to the schemes and budgets set out in Appendix B of this report.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Children's Services to accept tenders for schemes detailed in Appendix A and B of this report where tenders are in excess of £500,000.

2088 Land at Lower Farm Primary School (Ashbourne Field)

Councillor Zahid Ali presented the report:

(see annexed)

Resolved

- (1) That approval be given to the incorporation of 3,155 sq metres, or thereabouts (edged in red and shaded yellow on the attached plan reference EPMS 2896/2), of Ashbourne Field, adjacent to Lower Farm Primary School, into the school site subject to planning permission being obtained.

- (2) That Cabinet approve the future use of the remainder of Ashbourne Field as recreational open space under the management of Greenspaces.

2089 **Bereavement and registration services – fees and charges**

Councillor Walker presented the report:

(see annexed)

Resolved

- (1) That approval be given to an increase in burial, cremation and discretionary registration fees with effect from 1 January 2009 as detailed in this report and Appendices.
- (2) That the enhancements to the burial service detailed within this report be approved
- (3) That authority be delegated the Head of Public Protection, in consultation with the portfolio holder, to amend the Council's rules and regulations in respect of cemeteries as required, to implement proposed service enhancements.

2090 **Corporate financial performance**

Councillor Griffiths presented the report:

(see annexed)

Resolved

That the following currently predicted year end forecasts be noted:

- a net revised revenue overspend of £2m (0.3% of the current gross budget) following corrective action.
- unspent resources of c £4.277m on the capital programme some of which is expected to be carried forward into 2009/10.
- to note that further corrective action is being sought to mitigate the remaining overspend.

2091 **Contract for the supply of gas 2009-2013**

Councillor Arif presented the report:

(see annexed)

Resolved

- (1) That approval be given to move to EU compliant flexible purchasing and employ energy suppliers for gas at the expiry of the existing contract.
- (2) That approval be given to continue with Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation and its framework contract as the energy specialist consultant, and delegate to the Executive Director, for Regeneration and Performance and Assistant Directors of Regeneration and Performance authority to commit to the framework.
- (3) That the Executive Director, Regeneration and Performance and Assistant Directors of Regeneration and Performance be delegated authority to accept tenders and appoint suppliers of gas subject to EU procurement procedures,

2092 Housing strategy 2008-11

Councillor McCracken presented the report

(see annexed)

Resolved to recommend to Council

That the Housing Strategy 2008-2011 be adopted.

2093 Highway asset management plan

Councillor Harris presented the report:

(see annexed)

Resolved

- (1) That Highway Asset Management Plan be approved..
- (2) That the Head of Engineering and Transportation be specifically authorised to update the plan and make amendments, as necessary, in the light of any changes in legislation, national codes of practice or corporate policy.

2094 **Private Session**

Exclusion of public

Resolved

That during consideration of the remaining item on the agenda, the Cabinet considers that the item for consideration is exempt information by virtue of the appropriate paragraph(s) of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972, and accordingly resolves to consider the item in private.

2095 **Darlaston Strategic Development Area**

Councillor Andrew presented the report:

(see annexed)

Resolved

- (1) That the scheme programme as set out in Section 3 and preferred scheme alignment as set out at Appendix A of the report be noted.
- (2) That the Executive Director – Regeneration be given the authority to negotiate land/property acquisition with those parties having interests in the land/property required for the scheme in advance of publishing any statutory order.
- (3) That the Executive Director – Regeneration be given the delegated power to commence the statutory order process in accordance with the scheme programme and preferred alignment (this will involve appointing external legal support; establishing owners, tenants and other parties with an interest in affected land/property; negotiating with these stakeholders; and, if necessary, drafting statutory orders);
- (4) That the Executive Director – Regeneration be given the authority to prepare and submit a planning application for the proposed highways improvements, new structures and associated works in accordance with the scheme programme and preferred alignment.
- (5) That it be noted that, before the statutory orders are published or the planning application submitted, detailed proposals will be presented to Cabinet for final approval.

[Exempt information under paragraph 2 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended)]

The meeting terminated at 6.35 p.m.

Leader:

Date: