

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

MONDAY, 11TH JULY 2011 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors P. J. Whittaker (Chairman), P. Lammas (Vice-Chairman),
C. J. Bloore, Dr. B. T. Cooper, Mrs. R. L. Dent, K. A. Grant-Pearce,
R. J. Laight, P. M. McDonald, S. P. Shannon and L. J. Turner

Observers: Councillor M. J. A. Webb

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Ms. B. Houghton, Mr. C. Santoriello-Smith and
Ms. A. Scarce

14/11 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Brogan, Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths and Mrs. C. J. Spencer.

15/11 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

There were no declarations of interest or whipping arrangements.

16/11 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 13th June 2011 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

17/11 **BROMSGROVE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP PLAN REPORT**

The Senior Community Safety Officer summarised the report and explained that its purpose was to provide Members with an overview of the 2011/12 Bromsgrove Community Safety Partnership Plan. This was a public document approved by the Community Safety Steering Group, which would be made available on the Council's website in due course. The report outlined the main local priorities within the plan and highlighted some of the key challenges in tackling those priorities.

Members were informed that the Police and Crime Act 2010, which had been implemented in April 2011, reviewed part of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and updated several of the requirements in the original Act, one of which was that a 3 year plan was no longer required, and that a rolling refreshed annual plan could be produced. The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) had chosen to produce an annual plan due to the forthcoming challenges it would

face, including the potential removal of the Police Authority and the introduction of a Police and Crime Commissioner. The CSP was also aware of a further 40% reduction in funding of the Community Safety Funding at County Council level, which was in addition to the 20% reduction already received this year.

The Senior Community Safety Officer provided details of the themes and priorities and the methodology of how these were chosen. Dwelling burglary was a priority and Members raised concerns about the low detection rate for burglary in particular areas of the District. The Board was advised that the Community Safety Partnership was unlikely to look at burglary detections as the detection of burglary was the responsibility of one agency, West Mercia Police, and there was very little that others partners could do. However, West Mercia Police had asked the partnership for assistance with home security and preventative work. This was being provided through a project which would offer home security assessments to elderly and vulnerable residents. In some cases the project would be able to provide financial support in order to implement security improvements for residents with the greatest need. The project would initially be piloted in Rubery for 3 months.

The Board also discussed the following areas:-

- The work of the Probation Service
- The Forensics Department at a national level
- Graffiti – the removal of, the reporting of and the use of anti-graffiti coatings. The Executive Director, Finance and Resources agreed to seek clarification with the Head of Environmental Services on issues, raised by Members, with the machine which was used to remove graffiti.
- Cycling in the High Street and problems caused by this, including signage and the By Laws relating to this. Members also discussed facilities for cyclist, including the provision of cycle racks and storage facilities.
- Safe night time economy in relation to and involvement in Town Centre Regeneration and the inclusion of other town centres/high streets of the District within the Town Centre Regeneration and the work of the Community Safety Partnership.
- The importance of PACT meetings for intelligence gathering by the Police and officer attendance at these meetings.
- Youth Services and the possible reduction in funding for these services and the impact this could have on both anti social behaviour and domestic abuse.
- Resources and services provided at a local level in respect of domestic abuse, including drop in sessions and multi agency meetings to support victims.
- Funding cuts and the effect on projects including exit strategies for projects in order for them to continue if they are successful.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the Bromsgrove Community Safety Partnership be consulted as part of the Core Strategy and in particular with regard to Hot Food Takeaways; and
- (b) that the inclusion of cycle racks/storage facilities be included within the Town Centre Regeneration Scheme.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Overview and Scrutiny Board acknowledge the priorities within the Community Safety Partnership Plan; and
- (b) that the outstanding topic proposal in respect of Drink Related Anti-Social Behaviour remain on the Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme for investigation.

18/11 **DETECTION OF CRIME - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TOPIC PROPOSAL REPORT**

Officers informed Members that the topic proposal on the Detection of Crime in Hagley had been put forward by Councillor S. R. Colella. The Board was informed that although under the Police and Justice Act 2006 scrutiny committees were given powers to scrutinise Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), it should be noted that the powers were to look at the work of the partnership as a whole, rather than a power to scrutinise individual partners or an area which was likely to concentrate on one partner. Councillor Colella's proposal referred specifically to the detection of burglaries and this was the sole responsibility of the Police. Therefore, the topic proposal form as it currently stood was not appropriate for consideration as a scrutiny exercise under the Overview and Scrutiny Board's responsibility for the scrutiny of CSPs.

The Board discussed the topical proposal in further detail and it was

RESOLVED that a letter be sent to the local Police Inspector requesting further information and his attendance at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board to be held on 19th September 2011 before deciding whether or not further investigation was required.

19/11 **RECREATION ROAD CAR PARK - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TOPIC PROPOSAL REPORT**

The Chairman invited Councillor S. P. Shannon to introduce this item as he had put forward the topic proposal form. Councillor Shannon provided background information on his proposal and explained that the issue in respect of the drainage/flooding had now been addressed. Members were informed that complaints had been received from individual taxi drivers and the Chairman of the Taxi Drivers Association in respect of the time limit set for pick up of passengers at the Recreation Road Car Park. Another issue which had been raised referred to the strict manner in which attendants issued parking fines for vehicles parked incorrectly and the appeal system which was in place. Councillor Shannon informed Members that he had written and

verbal evidence to substantiate the claims. Other Members commented that they had also received complaints from residents along similar lines.

As the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Cultural and Environmental Services was present at the meeting, the Chairman invited him to respond to the issues raised in the topic proposal form.

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Cultural and Environmental Services informed Members that the management of the Car Park Service was currently being considered as part of Shared Services and several options were being considered including out sourcing to another Council. It was confirmed that the flooding/drainage issued had been addressed by Worcestershire County Council. The Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Cultural and Environmental Services advised Members that as part of the Shared Services business plan an extension, from 10 to 15 minutes, of the taxi drivers' pick up/drop off time limit was being considered.

After further discussion it was

RECOMMENDED that the taxi drivers' pick up/drop off time limit be extended to 15 minutes with immediate effect.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that a review of the Recreation Road Car Park be included in the Work Programme and a Task Group established as soon as possible;
- (b) that Councillor S. P. Shannon be Chairman of the Task Group; and
- (c) that the Task Group complete its investigation and report back to the Board as quickly as possible.

20/11 **REDUCTION IN BUS SERVICES - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TOPIC PROPOSAL REPORT**

The Chairman invited Councillor C. J. Bloore to introduce this item as he had put forward the topic proposal form. Councillor Bloore provided background information and explained that this matter needed to be investigated urgently as it was likely that Worcestershire County Council would make a decision on the reduction in bus services as early as September 2011. After further discussion it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that A Reduction in Bus Subsidies in Bromsgrove is included in the Work Programme and a Task Group established as soon as possible;
- (b) that Councillor C. J. Bloore be Chairman of the Task Group; and
- (c) that the Task Group complete its investigation and report back to the Board meeting to be held on 19th September 2011.

21/11 **THE COUNCIL'S ETHICAL POLICY - VERBAL UPDATE**

The Executive Director, Finance and Resources advised Members that, although the Council did not have an over arching ethical policy, individual agreements for such things as sponsorship and procurement included strict

guidelines which should be adhered to. Members discussed the need for a policy, whether Redditch Borough Council had such a policy in place and requested a written report on the current position and the implementation of an over arching ethical policy.

RESOLVED a report on the possible introduction of an ethical policy for the Council be presented to the meeting of the Board to be held on 19th September 2011.

22/11 **PLANNING ENFORCEMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION - VERBAL UPDATE**

Members were advised that following the Board's decision to investigate Planning Enforcement an informal meeting needed to be arranged to discuss the Terms of Reference, timetable and work planning. Officers informed Members that under the Inquiry/Task Group Procedure Guidelines, agreed by the Board, it was not necessary for all Members to attend such a meeting and that it would not be a public meeting. Members agreed that suitable dates should be circulated by Officers as soon as possible.

23/11 **FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS 1ST JULY TO 31ST OCTOBER 2011**

The Forward Plan of Key Decisions was considered by the Board and it was noted that the majority of items on the Forward Plan referred to Shared Services.

24/11 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board considered the Work Programme for 2011-12. Officers advised Members that, as requested at the meeting held on 13th June 2011, the format of the Work Programme had been modified.

The Executive Director, Finance and Resources reminded Members that Budget presentations had been provisionally set for 5th December 2011 and 3rd January 2012. Members were asked to consider questions and the format they would like these meetings to take, Members agreed to provide the Executive Director, Finance and Resources with details at the meeting to be held on 19th September 2011.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme for 2011-12 be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.48 p.m.

Chairman