

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

**MONDAY, 23RD JANUARY 2012 AT 6.00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Councillors P. Lammas (Vice-Chairman), C. J. Bloore, J. S. Brogan, Mrs. R. L. Dent, K. A. Grant-Pearce, Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths, R. J. Laight, P. M. McDonald, S. P. Shannon and Mrs. C. J. Spencer

Invitees: Councillor Dr. D. W. P. Booth JP

Officers: Mrs. S. Hanley, Mrs. C. Felton, Mr. R. Savory and Ms. A. Scarce

79/11 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dr. B. T. Cooper, L. J. Turner and P. J. Whittaker.

80/11 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

There were no declarations of interest or whipping arrangements.

81/11 **MINUTES - 21ST NOVEMBER 2011**

The Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 21st November 2011 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

82/11 **MINUTES - 3RD JANUARY 2012**

The Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 3rd January 2012 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

83/11 **PRESENTATION - TOWN CENTRE CAPITAL BUDGET BID AND PROGRESS UPDATE**

The Chairman welcomed the Portfolio Holder for Business Transformation with special responsibility for the Town Centre Regeneration and Special Projects and the Town Centre Regeneration Programme Manager and reminded Members that this presentation had been requested following the Board meeting held on 3rd January 2012.

The Portfolio Holder informed Members that the Capital Bid for £50,000, together with funding contributions from Worcestershire County Council, was to facilitate continued project management support and any external specialist advice that was needed to progress the Town Centre regeneration.

The Portfolio Holder responded to questions from Members on the timescales for the development of the Town Centre and explained that a project of this size often involved a number of changes to it as situations developed and was confident that very good progress had been made, in view of the challenges that had emerged to date.

The Town Centre Regeneration Programme Manager gave background information on how Regeneration had become a Council priority, the Public Property Assets Review which had involved the Council, Worcestershire County Council, Fire and Police authorities, together with the Primary Care Trust. The Portfolio Holder also gave details of the membership and role of the Partnership Steering Group.

The Board discussed the following areas in more detail:

- The press release recently issued by Worcestershire County Council
- The Area Action Plan and key strategic aims
- The funding (including the 106 monies from Sainsburys and when this would become available) and how it was expected to be used.
- The risk assessment for the project, taking into consideration alternative arrangements that had been made should elements of the project not come to fruition.
- Lottery funding bid – the outcome of this was expected in September 2012.
- The number of jobs created and the net jobs gain, taking into consideration the site specific closure of retail outlets.
- Interest from developers and retail outlets in various sites throughout the Town Centre and additional private developments.
- The upgrade of the Bus Station and the inclusion of RTPI “real time” technology, which was an aspiration of Worcestershire County Council. It was confirmed that the Portfolio Holder and Town Centre Regeneration Programme Manager would continue to encourage and support this technology.
- The availability of plans on the Planning Portal.
- Provisions that had been put in place to ensure that utility companies would not need to disturb the new surfaces within the high street in the future.

The Portfolio Holder summarised the presentation and confirmed that the work on the Town Centre, which had been slow to start, was now gathering momentum, with more visible changes taking place.

The Chairman invited Councillor P. M. McDonald to introduce this item as he had put forward the Overview and Scrutiny Topic Proposal.

Councillor McDonald gave background information as to why he felt that the purchase of George House should be scrutinised by the Board and requested that a Task Group be set up to investigate the process and purchase of George House, together with information on how the purchase fitted in to the Town Centre Regeneration Programme.

The Board discussed the areas raised in Councillor McDonald's Overview and Scrutiny Topic Proposal in detail, and made particular reference to the procedures and guidelines of the Council and the reasoning behind the purchase of the property. After further discussion it was

**RSOLVED** that no further action be taken.

85/11 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD QUARTERLY RECOMMENDATION TRACKER**

The Board was reminded of the purpose of the Quarterly Recommendation Tracker Report and officers highlighted the following items:

- The response from the Head of Customer Service in respect of the outstanding recommendation from the Improving Residents' Satisfaction Task Group.
- The additional recommendations following the 12 month review of the Older Peoples' Task Group – a full update would be provided at the Board meeting to be held on 23rd April 2012.
- Review of the Recreation Road South Car Park Task Group – Recommendations 1 and 2 to remain on the Tracker Report.
- Reduction in Bus Services Task Group – Officers to seek clarification that Recommendation 2 had been completed before removal of the item from the Tracker Report.

The Board discussed in detail the issue of Fly Posting and welcomed the review of the current policy. After further discussion it was

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the Improving Residents' Satisfaction Task Group be removed from the Tracker Report;
- (b) that Recommendation 1 from the Reduction in Bus Services Task Group be removed from the Tracker Report; and
- (c) that a detailed report on the review of the Fly Posting Policy be provided at the Board meeting to be held on 27th February 2012.

86/11 **FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS 1S FEBRUARY TO 31ST MAY 2012**

The Forward Plan of Key Decisions was considered by the Board. Members were concerned that due to time constraints there was not an opportunity to

pre-scrutinise several of the items on the Forward Plan. Members discussed in detail the Homelessness Grant - Performance of 2011/12 Schemes and Proposed Funding of Schemes for 2012/13 and raised concerns as to this being sufficient for the needs of the District.

**RESOLVED** that a detailed report on Homelessness Grant - Performance of 2011/12 Schemes and Proposed Funding of Schemes for 2012/13 be received at the Board meeting to be held on 26th February 2012.

87/11 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board considered the Work Programme and was informed by officers that the most recent Worcestershire County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) meeting had been cancelled. It was suggested that in future the agenda front sheet and 'round up' from those meetings be included in the Board's agenda in order for Members to consider and discuss any items that they wished to receive further information on through its representative on HOSC.

The Board was advised that a written update in respect of the Planning Policy Task Group would be received at the Board meeting to be held on 27th February 2012 prior to the receipt of the draft final report, which it was anticipated would be completed and presented to the Board at the meeting to be held on 26th March 2012.

**RESOLVED** that subject to the above the Work Programme be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.34 p.m.

Chairman