



**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE CABINET**

**WEDNESDAY, 2ND APRIL 2008, AT 6.00 P.M.**

**COMMITTEE ROOM, THE COUNCIL HOUSE, BURCOT LANE, BROMSGROVE**

**SUPPLEMENTAL / ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION**

The attached papers were specified as "to follow" on the Agenda previously distributed relating to the above mentioned meeting.

5. To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Board held on 17th March 2008 (Pages 1 - 6)
6. To receive the minutes of the Performance Management Board held on 18th March 2008 (Pages 7 - 10)

K. DICKS  
Chief Executive

The Council House  
Burcot Lane  
BROMSGROVE  
Worcestershire  
B60 1AA

27th March 2008

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## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### MEETING OF THE AUDIT BOARD

MONDAY, 17TH MARCH 2008 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors C. J. K. Wilson (Chairman), Mrs. H. J. Jones, C. R. Scurrall (during Minute No's. 33/07 to 41/07), Mrs. C. J. Spencer and E. C. Tibby

Also in attendance: Councillor G. N. Denaro (Portfolio Holder for Finance) and Councillors Mrs. J. D. Luck and D. L. Pardoe (for item 4 - Civic Bonfire and Fireworks Event)

Officers: Mr. T. Beirne, Ms. J. Pickering and Ms. D. Parker-Jones

#### 33/07 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S. R. Colella (Vice-Chairman) and D. McGrath.

#### 34/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

#### 35/07 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Audit Board held on 10th December 2007 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

#### 36/07 CIVIC BONFIRE AND FIREWORKS EVENT

Consideration was given to a report, originally raised as a scrutiny proposal by Councillor Pardoe, relating to the civic bonfire and fireworks event which had taken place on Sunday 4th November 2007 at Sanders Park, Bromsgrove. Two issues had been raised in connection with this, namely: that no tickets had been issued on entry, meaning it was not possible to fully audit receipts; and the lack of a record of the exact numbers of people in attendance at the event. Councillors Mrs. Luck and Pardoe were present for this item and spoke on the issues in question.

It was noted that the 2007 event was the first to have been organised as a chargeable event to the public and that there were lessons to be learnt from this. Members supported the proposals contained in the report for the introduction of a paid ticket system for each member of the public attending the event. This would enable receipts to be fully audited and reconciled and

would also produce an exact record of how many children, adults and families had attended. It was felt that colour coded tickets for different categories of attendee, together with advance ticket sales in the weeks leading up to the event would assist in the future.

Officers agreed to investigate and report back to Members after the meeting on certain operational matters raised during the course of the discussion. It was also agreed that public statements would be issued acknowledging difficulties encountered with the event and outlining changes to be put in place for 2008.

**RESOLVED** that, subject to the comments in the preamble above, the contents of the report and the proposed enhancements for the 2008 event be noted.

37/07 **ANNUAL EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2006/07**

The Chairman welcomed Mr. A. Cardoza, Senior Manager with KPMG LLP (UK), the Council's former appointed Auditor. Mr. Cardoza presented the report which summarised the 2006/07 external audit work carried out by KPMG for their areas of audit responsibility under the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice.

It was noted that an unqualified opinion had been issued in relation to the Authority's accounts. Regarding use of resources, improvements had been noted in a number of areas, with the Authority also having made proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness on 9 of the 12 criteria determined by the Audit Commission (compared to only 4 criteria in the previous year). Whilst the Authority had continued to strengthen its arrangements for managing and improving its value for money, and with there being a much stronger understanding of its costs and performance, further improvement was still required in this area. Significant progress had also been made with the second review of data quality.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) that the Annual External Audit Report for 2006/2007 be noted and accepted;
- (ii) that the management response to the Annual External Audit Report for 2006/2007 recommendations be endorsed; and
- (iii) that the thanks of the Board be expressed to both officers and KPMG LLP (UK) for the valuable and beneficial working relationship which had taken place during the last few years.

38/07 **RISK MANAGEMENT TRACKER**

Members considered a report which presented a summary of progress to date against all of the improvement actions detailed on individual Service risk registers for the period 1st April to 31st December 2007.

The year end prediction in the report in relation to the number of actions/improvements which would be behind target was noted. Officers advised that risk management was still in its infancy and that there was a need for better reporting of updates on actions and improvements and to quantify, in future, the level of those risks which were behind target (e.g. whether they were high or low risks).

**RESOLVED** that the progress to date against all Service risk register actions for 2007/08 be noted.

39/07 **PROCEDURES RE CODE OF CONDUCT**

Consideration was given to a report on the procedure in place at the Authority for officers to comply with the Code of Conduct. As the Code was slightly out of date a few minor amendments were made to this and it was noted that the Code would also need to be reviewed by the Head of Human Resources for any further appropriate updates.

**RESOLVED** that, subject to the review of the Code by the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development and the minor amendments raised by the Audit Board, the Code of Conduct for Council Employees be noted.

40/07 **FUTURE TRAINING PLAN**

Further to training which had previously been provided to the members of the Audit Board by the former Audit Services Manager, the Head of Financial Services asked Members whether there was any additional training which they felt was necessary in order to assist them in fulfilling their role on the Board.

The following suggestions were made in this regard:

- (a) a talk from an appropriate member of staff of internal audit at another authority to see how they approached audit board matters;
- (b) a session on value for money once benchmarking figures were in place;
- (c) a session on the role of the Finance team, to include relevant financial procedures/processes etc; and
- (d) training on how to be an effective member of an audit board - possibly bringing in the chairman of an audit board of another authority to hear their experiences.

**RESOLVED** that the proposals for future training for the members of the Audit Board be noted and progressed by officers.

41/07 **BUDGETARY CONTROL AUDIT PROCESS**

Members considered a report on the procedure in place to audit the budgetary control systems within the Council, which included the formulation of the Annual Budget as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan. The Head of Financial Services detailed the procedure and provided an example of the

forthcoming transfer of the payroll function from the Authority to Redditch Borough Council.

**RESOLVED** that the audit brief and procedures in place for audit of this area be noted.

42/07 **2008/09 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN**

Consideration was given to the Council's Internal Audit Plan for 2008/2009.

The Head of Financial Services advised that discussions were being undertaken in relation to interim support to the Internal Audit team following the departure of the Audit Services Manager. This might involve future arrangements to include working with Redditch Borough Council in the provision of Audit Management.

**RESOLVED** that the Internal Audit Plan for 2008/2009, as detailed in the report, be noted and approved.

43/07 **RECOMMENDATION TRACKER**

Members considered a report which provided a summary of previously selected audit report "priority one" recommendations.

The Head of Financial Services advised that any "priority one" recommendations which were still ongoing and outside of their target dates would, in future, be referred to the Corporate Management Team for Heads of Service to consider in view of the recommendations being fundamental to improving the controls within the system and the forthcoming Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the "priority one" recommendations detailed in Appendix A to the report be noted; and
- (b) that these be brought back to the Audit Board following referral to the Corporate Management Team.

44/07 **INTERNAL AUDIT PERFORMANCE AND WORKLOAD**

Consideration was given to a report which provided a summary of the current performance and workload of the Internal Audit Section.

Regarding delivery of the Audit Plan, the Head of Financial Services advised that although only 46% of reviews had been completed during 2007/08, work had commenced on 75% of the Audit Plan, with a number of reviews simply awaiting final responses from managers and Heads of Services on agreement in relation to recommendations arising from the reviews.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the current status and work completed on the 2007/08 Audit Plan be noted and approved;

- (b) that the work completed by the Internal Audit Section between December 2007 and February 2008 be noted;
- (c) that the summary of investigations completed by the Internal Audit Section be noted;
- (d) that the current Internal Audit Performance Indicator statistics be noted;  
and
- (e) that it be noted that there were no new or updated Internal Audit documents to report.

The meeting closed at 7.41 p.m.

Chairman

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# Agenda Item 6

## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BOARD

TUESDAY, 18TH MARCH 2008, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors J. T. Duddy (Chairman), C. B. Taylor (Vice-Chairman),  
Mrs. M. Bunker, S. R. Colella, Mrs. A. E. Doyle and Mrs. C. M. McDonald

Observers: Councillor R. D. Smith (Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Mr. H. Bennett, Ms. J. Pitman, Ms. J. McNicol and Mr. A. Jessop

#### 86/07 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A. N. Blagg, and the Chief Executive.

#### 87/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

#### 88/07 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Performance Management Board held on 19th February 2008 were submitted.

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

#### 89/07 AUDIT COMMISSION DIRECTION OF TRAVEL REPORT

The Assistant Chief Executive reported that, since the compilation and despatch of the agenda for this meeting, he had received a request from the Leader of the Council for the Board to defer consideration of this report until its next meeting, in order to encompass the views of the Cabinet in this regard. The Chairman advised that he had been consulted on this issue and had agreed that it would be prudent to defer. Whereupon it was

**RESOLVED** that this matter be deferred for consideration at the next meeting of the Board, and that, in the interests of economy, Members be requested to retain their copy of the report and bring it to that meeting.

(NOTE: The Leader of the Council will also be invited to the next meeting of the Board for this item).

90/07 **EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT**

The Chairman referred to the fact that this report had been considered by the Audit Board at its meeting the previous day, and that the only issue of relevance to this Board was on Data Quality, on which the Council had recorded an improved score of 2, and that, accordingly, as this was otherwise a purely financial report, was not particularly relevant to the work of this Board.

**RESOLVED** that the position be noted.

91/07 **EMPLOYEE STRESS SURVEY RESULTS**

Consideration was given to a report which conveyed the results of the work related stress audit which had been carried out as part of the risk assessment process and strategic framework to identify areas of potential risk, and, if proven, to take any appropriate action.

**RESOLVED** that the content of the survey recommendations and action plans be noted.

92/07 **COUNCIL PLAN 2008-2011**

Consideration was given to a report containing the draft Council Plan for 2008-2011, including a high level action plan for the Council's priorities for 2008-2011.

**RESOLVED**

- (a) that, having paid particular attention to the new Balanced Scorecard for the Council and the Strategic Action Plan 2008/2011, the draft Council Plan for 2008-2011, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be noted; and
- (b) that an invitation be extended to the Audit Commission inviting them to address members on the impending changes to the reporting of National Indicators and Comprehensive Area Assessment..

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (a) that it be suggested to Cabinet that Disabled Facilities Grants should be included as one of the Corporate Indicators; and
- (b) that further examination should be given to all of the various indicators to determine other "key" issues.

93/07 **MONTHLY PERFORMANCE REPORT - PERIOD 10 (JANUARY 2008)**

The Board gave consideration to a report on the Council's performance as at January 2008 (Period 10).

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that it be noted 74% of indicators were improving or stable at the period end, compared to 55% in period 9;
- (b) that it be noted that 85% of indicators were achieving their targets at the period end, compared to 73% in period 9;

- (c) that the successes in Section 3.5 of the report (examples of considerable or continued improvement over the period) be celebrated;
- (d) that the potential areas for concern set out in Section 3.6 of the report, together with the corrective action being taken, be noted; and
- (e) that, on the question of sickness absence (as referred to in Section 3.6 of the report), the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development be requested to look further into a recently reported Government proposal which would allow General Practitioners to issue patients with "well notes" rather than sick notes, (i.e., setting out what they were capable of undertaking rather what they were not), and that a report be brought back to the Board in this regard in due course.

94/07 **IMPROVEMENT PLAN EXCEPTION REPORT - PERIOD 10 (JANUARY 2008)**

Consideration was given to the Improvement Plan Exception report for January 2008, together with the corrective action being taken as set out in the appendix to the report.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the revisions to the Improvement Plan Exception report, together with the corrective action being taken, be noted; and
- (b) that it be noted that for the 140 actions highlighted for January within the Plan, 84.3% were on target (green); 11.4% was one month behind (amber), and 1.4% was over one month behind (red). 2.9% of actions had been rescheduled (or suspended), with approval.

95/07 **WORK PROGRAMME**

Consideration was given to the report on the Board's updated work programme for 2008/09.

**RESOLVED**

- (a) that the Assistant Chief Executive be requested to contact Worcestershire County Council with a view to someone from that authority possibly attending the May meeting of the Board to discuss Youth Service provision within the district/county;
- (b) that it be noted that the Spatial Strategy Review was to become a regular item on the agenda for the foreseeable future; and
- (c) that consideration of the Housing Strategy Action Plan Update be considered alongside the Housing Inspection (which is expected to take place on 5th June 2008, but maybe earlier).

The meeting closed at 7.55 p.m.

Chairman

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