



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

TUESDAY 4TH JANUARY 2011, AT 6.30 P.M.

THE COUNCIL HOUSE, BURCOT LANE, BROMSGROVE

MEMBERS: Councillors S. R. Colella (Chairman), D. L. Pardoe (Vice-Chairman), A. N. Blagg, Mrs. M. Bunker, R. J. Deeming, Mrs. R. L. Dent, Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths, C. R. Scurrall, Mrs. C. J. Spencer, C. B. Taylor, C. J. Tidmarsh and L. J. Turner

AGENDA

1. To receive apologies for absence
2. Declarations of Interest and whipping arrangements
3. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 23rd November 2010 (Pages 1 - 4)
4. Cabinet Response to the Inquiry into the Alvechurch Multi-Use Games Area (Pages 5 - 8)
5. Questions to Witnesses 1st February 2011 (Pages 9 - 10)
6. To consider any other business, details of which have been notified to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chairman considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting

K. DICKS
Chief Executive

The Council House
Burcot Lane
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B60 1AA

17th December 2010

Agenda Item 3

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

TUESDAY, 23RD NOVEMBER 2010 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors S. R. Colella (Chairman), D. L. Pardoe (Vice-Chairman),
R. J. Deeming, C. R. Scurrall, Mrs. C. J. Spencer, C. B. Taylor,
C. J. Tidmarsh and L. J. Turner

Officers: Ms. A. De Warr, Mr. M. Carr and Ms. A. Scarce

31/10 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. N. Blagg,
Mrs. M. Bunker and Mrs. R. L. Dent

32/10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS

No declarations of interest were received.

33/10 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board held on
5th October 2010 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

34/10 CABINET RESPONSE TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE ALVECHURCH MULTI USE GAMES AREA (MUGA)

An apology for absence was received from Cllr M. Webb, Portfolio Holder for
Community, who was to present the Cabinet Response to the Inquiry on the
Alvechurch Multi-Use Games Area.

RESOLVED that the consideration of the Cabinet Response to the Inquiry on
the Alvechurch Multi-Use Games Area be deferred to the next meeting of the
Board.

35/10 WORCESTERSHIRE HUB JOINT SCRUTINY TASK GROUP - FINAL REPORT

The Board received a report from Worcestershire County Council Overview
and Scrutiny Performance Board on the Worcestershire Hub. The report
outlined the review of the Worcestershire Hub and made 22 recommendations
to Worcestershire County Council (WCC) Cabinet, including some which
related to the County's statutory partners, including Bromsgrove District
Council.

The Chairman asked the Head of Customer Services for a succinct definition of what the "Worcestershire Hub" was and its relationship to Bromsgrove District Council. She defined the Hub as "the partnership through which we provide joint access to council services". It was the "umbrella" under which the County Council and district councils within the Worcestershire area provided access to their services. Within this umbrella, Bromsgrove District Council managed its own Customer Services Centre, at the Dolphin Centre.

Malvern Hills, Worcester City and WCC had shared customer services accessed through the Hub. It was explained that the Worcestershire Hub call centre at Perry Wood dealt with customer enquires for those local authorities that had a shared services agreement; this did not include Bromsgrove District Council (BDC).

Overview and scrutiny committees throughout the County had been invited to participate in the WCC Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board Task Group investigation, by nominating a representative to be co-opted onto the Task Group. Participating local authorities were: WCC, BDC, Malvern Hills District Council, Redditch Borough Council, Worcester City Council, Wychavon District Council and Wyre Forest District Council.

Councillor Taylor was the BDC co-optee and gave a presentation on the investigation and commented on its effectiveness.

The terms of reference for the Task Group were:

- the development of the Worcestershire Hub, including the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service,
- how to make the Worcestershire Hub fit for purpose in the future,
- differences in provision across Worcestershire, what they are and why they exist,
- what are the gaps in provision and what are the opportunities?

The Task Group ran from 5th November 2009 and was due to report to WCC Cabinet on 25th November 2010. Evidence hearings had been held between January and July 2010, with 9 Task Group meetings and site visits.

Overall the Task Group report had concluded that:

- there was a need for clear evidence about the benefits to encourage the remaining district councils to join the Hub,
- service transformation was essential and that the Hub should be at the heart of service transformation, and
- a co-ordinated approach to customer service across the county to enable savings and minimise duplication should be encouraged.

The Chairman asked the Head of Customer Services the cost to BDC of being part of the Hub umbrella, considering that it managed its own customer services. She said that it did not cost the Council anything and that it paid for its own call centre. WCC contributed to the running costs and some of the

staffing costs of the Bromsgrove Customer Services Centre, as the centre dealt with customer enquiries relating to County services.

Councillor Taylor commented that the governance of the Worcestershire Hub was very complicated and that there was some confusion. He commented also that the scrutiny process had been very difficult, that there had been difficulties in obtaining key information and that some of the members of the Task Group were members of the Hub Shared Services governance board, which would seem to be a conflict of interest. It was felt that, as a joint scrutiny, the process should not be followed again in the future.

It was enquired as to whether the report and recommendations were implicitly seeking greater integration of district councils towards the shared services model under the Hub. Councillor Taylor was of the opinion that it was and Recommendation 3 of the report specifically asked each authority and the Worcestershire Hub Shared Service to review governance arrangements across the Worcestershire Hub Partnership with the aim of moving towards a single governance structure. There was a consensus against Bromsgrove District Council being part of the shared customer services within the Hub, particularly in view of the much higher performance of the Council's customer services compared with the Worcestershire Hub. It was also commented that it was desirable to keep things as local as possible, as customer services benefited from local knowledge.

The Scrutiny Officer clarified the proper process for the consideration of scrutiny reports and recommendations from external scrutiny committees, but stressed that it was not clear what process was expected by WCC in this case, as no process had been provided or was available. He said that a Joint Scrutiny Protocol was in the process of being drafted and agreed by WCC and that this was due to be considered at the informal meeting of the Worcestershire Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs Network. He clarified that it was most usual that when external scrutiny committees made recommendations to executive bodies other than their own executive, these would be referred from the scrutiny committee directly to the partner agency executives and not through the scrutiny committees of each organisation. In this case it would be possible for WCC to write to BDC's Cabinet and other district councils to ask them to consider the report and recommendations and provide an Executive Response.

The Chairman undertook to raise the concerns about the scrutiny process followed in respect of joint overview and scrutiny committees at the forthcoming Worcestershire Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs Network meeting.

RESOLVED that the report and recommendations of the Worcestershire County Council Worcestershire Hub Scrutiny Task Group be noted.

36/10 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board considered the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme. It was noted that the consideration of the Core Strategy as part

of the planning topic may be delayed from 4th January 2011. The consideration of the Council Budget may also be deferred from that meeting.

The Chairman reminded the Board there was an informal Budget briefing on 30th November 2010 at 6pm.

37/10 **QUESTIONS TO WITNESSES 4TH JANUARY 2011**

The Board considered questions to witnesses for the next meeting on 4th January 2011. It was requested that a question be put on planning enforcement; to provide a summary outline of the process for enforcement and the performance of enforcement, for the consideration of the planning topic. It was also requested that any capital bids and revenue expenditure for Bromsgrove Urban and Rural Transport (BURT) be considered within the consideration of the Budget.

The meeting closed at 7.10 p.m.

Chairman

Cabinet Response to the Report of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board on the Alvechurch Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)

Introduction

At its meeting on 3rd November 2010 the Cabinet considered the report of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board following the Board's Inquiry into reported Crime and Disorder issues around the MUGA at Swanslength, Alvechurch.

The Leader invited the Chairman of the Joint Board Councillor S. R. Colella to introduce the report. Councillor Colella briefly outlined the way in which the Board had undertaken the Inquiry, including interviews with a variety of stakeholders and the detailed information and reports which had been received.

As Portfolio Holder for Community Services I would like to thank the Board for the thorough and detailed investigation of the matter. I was particularly pleased that local children who used the facility had attended some of the meetings and had participated in the democratic process.

Response to recommendations

Please find below responses to the recommendations contained within the scrutiny report:

Recommendation One

That the Alvechurch MUGA be left in situ.

Cabinet Response

This was agreed.

Recommendation Two

That the Community Safety Officers for Alvechurch make periodic house calls to vulnerable residents living in close proximity to the MUGA.

Cabinet Response

That the Community Support Officers be requested to continue to make periodic house calls to vulnerable residents living in close proximity to the MUGA.

Recommendation Three

That the Alvechurch Community Together (ACT) Trust consider extending the opening hours of the Alvechurch Youth Club until the later time of 10pm in the evening for the older teenagers to actively discourage young people from socialising around the MUGA area late in the evening.

Cabinet Response

This was agreed but wording to be amended to relate to “the Lounge” Drop in Centre.

Recommendation Four

That the Alvechurch Youth Club carry out targeted outreach work on the MUGA itself to engage with the young people who use the site as a social meeting point in the evening after dusk.

Cabinet Response

Amend to “that ACT youth workers be requested to carry out targeted outreach work to positively engage young people and encourage them to join the youth club and that youth workers run organised activity sessions at the MUGA.”

Recommendation Five

That the Performance Management Board monitor the levels and types of reported Anti-Social Behaviour at Swanslength over the next 12 months to assess the levels of reported ASB compared to the previous 12 months. This should also be compared to general ASB trends across the district.

Cabinet Response

That the situation be monitored by the relevant Portfolio Holder rather than the Performance Management Board.

Recommendation Six

That Bromsgrove Community Safety Partnership monitor the levels of reported Anti-Social Behaviour around the MUGA to identify emerging issues of ASB and coordinate remedial action in partnership with the local police service and the Bromsgrove District Council Community Safety Team.

Cabinet Response

Amend to read “that Bromsgrove Community Safety Partnership continue to monitor...”

Recommendation Seven

That West Mercia Police allocate a higher level of uniformed presence of the Swanslength area between 9pm and 1am at night.

Cabinet Response

Amend to read “that West Mercia Police be requested to continue monitoring the vicinity of the MUGA after 9pm in the way they did in the summer.”

Recommendation Eight

That the street lighting located near to the MUGA facility be relocated further away from the MUGA site to discourage this area from being a social meeting point for people in the evening.

Cabinet Response

This was agreed.

Recommendation Nine

That the full length of the perimeter wall running alongside Swanslength be removed and the ground re-banked to remove the makeshift seating that the wall provides for people using the MUGA area as a social meeting point in the evenings.

Cabinet Response

This was agreed.

Recommendation Ten

That a programme of landscaping be completed to create an open space recreation ground to increase visibility of the site and reduce the number of ASB acts that are obscured by undergrowth.

Cabinet Response

This was agreed.

Recommendation Eleven

That the seating panels provided as part of the MUGA facility be removed and replaced with blank panels and that the swing frame and seat be removed altogether.

Cabinet Response

This was agreed.

In addition, the Cabinet also resolved that relevant officers work within the planning process to ensure that Statutory Consultees and partners engage effectively with the planning process and that they properly respond in their capacity as Statutory Consultees.

Councillor Mike Webb
Portfolio Holder for Community Services

Overview and Scrutiny

Methodology and Approach

The following key questions should be asked in each scrutiny review.

1. Business Aims and Objectives

- Q What are the business aims and objectives of the service?
- Q To what extent do these link with the Council's Vision and Objectives?

2. Performance

- Q What are the performance indicators for the service?
- Q How does the service perform against these performance indicators?
- Q How does performance compare to other councils including Redditch Borough Council, Statistical Neighbours, and Bromsgrove District Council over past 2 years?
- Q What are the reasons for poor/high performance?

3. Customer Feedback

Customer feedback – including Focus Groups, Customer Complaints etc.

4. Organisation

- Q What is the organisational structure for delivering this service?

5. Budget

- Q What is the budget for this service? Total. Capital. Revenue.
- Q What were the budget and out-turn figures for this service over the past 2 years?
- Q How does budget compare to other councils e.g. Redditch Borough Council, Statistical Neighbours and Bromsgrove District Council over past 2 years?

6. Future Plans

- Q What are the future plans for the development of this service (including any new statutory requirements etc)?

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