

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

TUESDAY, 5TH OCTOBER 2010 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors S. R. Colella (Chairman), D. L. Pardoe (Vice-Chairman), A. N. Blagg, 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

Observers: Councillor Mrs. J. Dyer M.B.E. and Councillor M. J. A. Webb

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Ms. R. Bamford, Mrs. A. Heighway, Mr. C. Santoriello-Smith, Mr. M. Carr and Ms. A. Scarce

20/10 **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs. M. Bunker.

21/10 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

Councillor Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths declared a personal interest in the MUGA Inquiry, as she had previously appeared as a witness.

22/10 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 31st August 2010 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

23/10 **REPORT ON THE INQUIRY INTO THE ALVECHURCH MULTI-USE GAMES AREA (MUGA)**

The Chairman summed up the background to the MUGA Inquiry report. The Board had, on 15th June 2010, resolved to undertake an Inquiry into the Alvechurch MUGA and members of the Inquiry had heard evidence from a wide range of witnesses, reviewed local anti-social behaviour (ASB) statistics for Alvechurch, conducted site visits and received a large amount of written testimony from local residents. At the end of this process a report had been drafted for approval by the Board, containing 11 recommendations to the Cabinet and other local decision makers and provided a synopsis of the evidence considered during the Inquiry.

The Chairman explained that questions could be put, if necessary, by Members of the Board to key stakeholders in attendance and drew attention to the comments of technical accuracy, cost and feasibility that had been received from key stakeholders on the draft report. He also drew attention to

the comments received from Alvechurch Communities Together (ACT) and various minor amendments.

Member of the Boards commented that the Inquiry process had been very informative and thorough and that the report and recommendations were a fair reflection of the investigations and the conclusions reached.

RESOLVED that the Board:

- (a) approve the report and the recommendations contained within it, subject to the amendments agreed; and
- (b) submit the amended report to the Cabinet for consideration of the recommendations.

24/10 **PRESENTATION - PLANNING POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

The Head of Planning and Regeneration provided a briefing on the planning policy development process. She explained that local planning policy was framed through a Local Development Framework (LDF), which included various planning documents, including the Core Strategy. The LDF was a statutory requirement and the key tool for decision making in the planning arena.

The Core Strategy was one of several LDF documents, which together made up local planning policy. All future planning decisions should be made in accordance with the Core Strategy, so it was very important that the strategy reflected local planning preferences. The Core Strategy should be “grass roots” up; reflecting what local residents wanted and yet consistent with national planning policy.

The Core Strategy Vision stated;

“By 2026 Bromsgrove District and its communities will have become sustainable, prosperous, safe, healthy and vibrant. People from all sections of society will have been provided with access to homes, jobs and services. The attractiveness of the District in terms of its landscape, built form and settlements will have been preserved and enhanced”.

It was suggested that more work could be done to give the Core Strategy Vision a particular Bromsgrove District emphasis. The challenge was to give full consideration and include planning policy guidance that reflected what was important to Bromsgrove District. The Head of Planning and Regeneration highlighted some of the key objectives of the draft Core Strategy.

One objective was summarised as “we want the town centre of Bromsgrove to be thriving and vibrant, and to meet the facilities of its residents and we want to focus development, whether that be employment or housing, in and around Bromsgrove town, so that the town centre would be the first location of new development”. It was therefore envisaged that approximately 60% of new development would happen there.

Residential settlements within the District had been categorised into “large” and “small”. “Large” settlements generally had an “Area of Development Restraint” (ADR) attached to them; which indicated (paradoxically) that these areas had previously been identified in the local plan as areas where land designated as restrained development could be used for development at some point in the future. The policy was that these ADRs should, going forward, be considered for development, although further consideration might be given to the precise form of development in these areas. For example, whether Hagley should be developed with all housing or a mix of housing and employment developments.

One objective was summarised as “the protection and enhancement of the unique character, quality and appearance of the historic and natural environment throughout the District”. There were a large amount of listed buildings and conservation areas throughout the District and it was important to consider how to protect these.

The Head of Planning and Regeneration said that it was her understanding that the Council wanted to identify housing for 4000 new property developments and she clarified that this was a local choice and not something that had been imposed by the Regional Spatial Strategy.

Attention was drawn to the key sections of the Core Strategy, which included:
1. development strategy, 2. housing development, 3. business development, 4. town centre development, 5. environmental and health issues

It was noted that section 5 (environmental and health issues) included a policy on food takeaway establishments which would enable in due course the production of a Supplementary Planning Document to address this issue.

It was envisaged that the draft Core Strategy would be considered at Cabinet on 1st December 2010. A special full Council meeting would be held shortly after Cabinet. The consultation period would be from 15th December 2010 until the end of February 2011.

A range of informal meetings, open to all councillors, had been set up through the LDF Working Party, to allow input from all councillors in the development of the new Core Strategy. A range of activities for public consultation had also been arranged and councillors were welcome to become involved in these.

Councillor Tidmarsh extended an invitation from Stoke Prior Parish Council to the Head of Planning and Regeneration to attend a meeting of the parish council to explain the consultation process for the Core Strategy and to get feedback as part of the consultation process. The Head of Planning and Regeneration said that she would be happy to attend, preferably at an early stage in the consultation period. It was also suggested that a joint meeting of parish councils, for example through the Parish Council Forum, could be arranged to engage with all parish councils simultaneously.

It was asked if there was scope to reconsider some of the designated ADRs within the draft Core Strategy and what the existential period for a ADR was

once it had been designated. The Head of Planning and Regeneration explained that there was always an anticipated end date for an ADR, although some of those designated may already have expired or changes in planning policy and legislation could outmode the Core Strategy at any time. She clarified that it was possible to reconsider ADRs within the local plan, but that to accommodate the identified 4000 new housing developments it may be necessary to reconsider the designation of green belt land to compensate for the removal of any ADRs. This would entail a more detailed review of the local plan which may delay the development of local planning policy.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Planning and Regeneration for her presentation.

25/10 **THE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP PLAN**

The Senior Community Safety Project Officer provided an overview of the 2010/11 Bromsgrove Community Safety Partnership Plan (CSPP). The CSPP was a strategic document which provided the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) with a steer on how to approach tackling local problems of crime and disorder.

He explained that the CSPP identified:

- the key local, regional and national drivers for the strategy,
- the membership of the CSP,
- the priorities for tackling crime and disorder and
- the parameters within which the partnership works.

He also explained that the Annual Strategic Assessment informed the development of the CSPP and made sure that it was intelligence led. The Community Safety Partnership Steering Group then agreed the priorities and a plan of action was developed against each priority. Key priorities of the plan included; youth related anti-social behaviour, acquisitive crime, violent crime and environmental crime.

Members discussed which areas of crime and disorder reduction they would like to consider further and identified: an overview of violent crime in the District, domestic violence, crime and planning. The Chairman of the Bromsgrove Community Safety Partnership informed Members that she would provide the Board with a presentation on domestic violence crime and crime reduction.

RESOLVED that the Board:

- (a) note the priorities outlined within the 2010/11 refresh of the Community Safety Partnership Plan; and
- (b) consider the following areas crime and disorder reduction within the its Work Programme:
 - town centre management, overview of violent crime in the District, domestic violence, crime and planning.

26/10 **SCRUTINY OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER PROTOCOL**

The Scrutiny Officer introduced a report which presented the draft Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Protocol. He explained that section 19-21 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 had introduced a requirement for Councils to put in place procedures for the scrutiny of crime and disorder partnerships and a designated crime and disorder scrutiny committee. In Bromsgrove, the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board (JOSB) had been designated as the crime and disorder scrutiny committee in the Council Constitution.

The Home Office guidance for the scrutiny of crime and disorder suggested that local authorities should “consider developing a short, flexible and meaningful protocol which lays the mutual expectations of scrutiny members and partners of the community safety members and partnerships”.

The draft Protocol set out guidance to the Board and to the Bromsgrove Community Safety Partnership (CSP) on how the scrutiny of crime and disorder partnerships would operate, including the processes for setting the work programme, requesting information from partners, calling witnesses from partner agencies, making reports and recommendations to partners, the Executive Response from partners to the Board and monitoring implementation of agreed recommendations.

The Chairman of the Bromsgrove CSP welcomed the Protocol and confirmed that it would be brought for consideration by the CSP at its next available meeting.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the requirements and role for the scrutiny of crime and disorder be noted,
- (b) that the Scrutiny of Crime and Disorder Protocol be agreed, and
- (c) that the protocol be submitted to the Community Safety Partnership for formal agreement.

27/10 **THE APPOINTMENT OF A CRIME AND DISORDER ADVISOR TO THE BOARD**

The Scrutiny Officer introduced the report and explained that the Home Office guidance for the scrutiny of crime and disorder suggested that crime and disorder scrutiny committees either appoint a co-optee or an advisor on crime and disorder and that for district authorities the preferred option was the appointment of an advisor. It further suggested that crime and disorder scrutiny committees involved metropolitan police authorities (MPAs) in the process. In Bromsgrove the suggested approach was to appoint an advisor, as this would allow flexibility to only call the advisor when crime and disorder matters were being discussed, as the Board has a much broader remit.

A candidate had been identified through the West Mercia MPA; Councillor Brandon Clayton. Councillor Clayton had experience of crime and disorder issues and crime and disorder reduction partnerships, as he was both a member of the West Mercia MPA and a member of the Community Safety

Partnership in Redditch. At the same time, not being directly involved in the Community Safety Partnership in Bromsgrove avoided the potential conflicts of interest that might arise in scrutiny of the Bromsgrove CSP.

RESOLVED that Councillor Brandon Clayton be appointed as an Advisor on Crime and Disorder to the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board.

28/10 **WORCESTERSHIRE HUB JOINT SCRUTINY TASK GROUP - VERBAL UPDATE**

The Chairman noted that in the minutes of the previous meeting it had been recorded that the Board had requested the Scrutiny Officer to write to the Chairman of the Worcestershire Hub Joint Scrutiny Task Group at the County Council to invite him to attend a meeting of the Board. The Scrutiny Officer confirmed that a written invitation had been made but that no formal response had yet been received.

Members of the Board received a progress report from Councillor C. B. Taylor on the Worcestershire Hub Joint Scrutiny Task Group at Worcestershire County Council. Councillor Taylor was one of the representatives appointed by the Board to the Worcestershire Hub Joint Scrutiny Task Group.

Councillor Taylor informed the Board that he had spoken about some of his previous concerns about the administration of the Worcestershire Hub Joint Scrutiny Task Group with the scrutiny officers at Worcestershire County Council.

He informed the Board that the Task Group was reaching a conclusion and would report imminently.

29/10 **WORK PROGRAMME AND MEETING SCHEDULE 2010/11**

The Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme was noted.

30/10 **QUESTIONS FOR WITNESSES AT MEETING TO BE HELD ON 23RD NOVEMBER 2010**

The Chairman invited Members of the Board to identify specific questions or information that they would like included in investigations at the next meeting of the Board. Members asked to receive information on enforcement of planning and the SPD on takeaway establishments that could be included within the Core Strategy development and the details of housing needs assessment in estimating need for housing development under the Core Strategy.

The meeting closed at 7.35 p.m.

Chairman