

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

TUESDAY, 1ST MARCH 2011 AT 6.00 P.M.

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

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Mr. J. Godwin and Ms. A. Scarce

13/10 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs. R. L. Dent and Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths.

14/10 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

There were no declarations of interest or whipping arrangements.

15/10 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 1st February 2011 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

The Board was provided with updates on the matters arising from Minute No. 9/10 and Members asked to be provided with the following additional information.

- Car parking over spend relating to staff overtime - The Head of Environmental Services had advised officers that during 2011/12 a complete review of this service (including civil parking enforcement) would be carried out. Members would have an opportunity to be included within that review and Officers agreed to provide Members with details of the expected timetable for this. The Board continued to be concerned as to how the overspend had arisen and requested further clarity on this issue. Members also asked for further information on the value of penalty charges imposed after 6.00 p.m.
- The Board were advised that in respect of abandoned vehicles, the Council had a joint contract, which was subject to a full tender process, with Redditch Borough Council, Wyre Forest District Council and Worcester City Council. A £10 inspection charge per vehicle was made under the terms of the relevant

legislation and £30 for the removal of the vehicle, there was no storage charge. Members were advised that the Council had a duty to remove abandoned vehicles but were able to reclaim disposal costs from the County Council (the waste disposal authority) under an SLA. Members asked for the income and expenditure figures to be provided when available.

16/10 **REVIEW OF THE ANNUAL CIVIC BONFIRE EVENT**

The Chairman introduced this item and reminded Members that the topic had been re-visited on a number of previous occasions, and it was therefore important that some positive outcomes were put forward by Members.

Members received a presentation from the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services which provided a summary of the financial position relating to the Civic Bonfire Event. The Board discussed, with the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services, the following areas in more detail:

- Access points to the event being reduced.
- Weather conditions and the effect these had had on the event in the past.
- Lessons Learnt (including timing of the Bonfire and procurement)
- Car parking and the calculation of any increase in revenue
- Pre-sale of tickets and increased sponsorship from local dealerships/newspapers (for example banners attached to the stall for the weeks leading up to the event)
- Alternative arrangements (for example extending the Street Theatre programme as an alternative to holding the Bonfire.)

The Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Resources informed the Board that the funding was in place for this year's event, however, Members would be given the opportunity in June 2011 to re-assess and prioritise services and options for future civic events, for consideration in the context of budget constraints.

Members asked if there was any mechanism in place which would determine which parts of the district attendees came from, as it was felt that not all of the district benefitted from the event. The Head of Leisure and Cultural Services confirmed that it would be possible, particularly with the pre-sale tickets to undertake a post code sampling survey. After further discussion it was

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that sponsorship of the Civic Bonfire Event be further investigated with a target of 50%, through the avenues referred to in the above pre-amble;
- (b) that a postal code sampling survey be carried out at this year's event; and
- (c) that the holding of the Civic Bonfire Event in future years be reviewed in the context of budget constraints.

17/10 **COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION PROCEDURE**

The Board considered a report on the Councillor Call for Action Procedure. Members were informed that Councillor Call for Action was a legislative procedure which was introduced under Section 119 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and came into force on 1st April 2009.

Officers informed Members that the Community Involvement In Local Democracy Task Group had also recommended that a procedure for dealing with Councillor Call for Action be put in place. The procedure was discussed in detail and it was explained that a Councillor Call for Action was a place of last resort, after all other options to resolve an issue had been exhausted.

RESOLVED:

- a) that the requirements and role of Councillor Call for Action be noted; and
- b) that the Councillor Call for Action Guidelines attached at Appendix 1 of the report be agreed.

18/10 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INQUIRY/TASK GROUP PROCEDURE**

The Board considered a report on Overview and Scrutiny Inquiry and Task Group procedure guidelines. Officers explained to Members that the Task Group Procedure Notes had been removed from the Council's Constitution following the review of the Committee Structure, as in practice these had been found to be too prescriptive and rigid, and adherence to the process had caused delays in establishing task groups. The new guidelines were more informal and flexible and also took into account the recent, successful use of short, sharp inquiries. After further discussion it was

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Inquiry and Task Group Guidelines be noted and endorsed.

19/10 **ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS TO THE PLACE SURVEY - VERBAL UPDATE**

Officers informed the Board that the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships would attend the Board meeting to be held on 5th April 2011 and would provide an update in respect of this item at that meeting. After discussion, Members asked that the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships provide answers to the following questions:

- What, if any, would be the alternatives to the Place Survey?
- Do we need to do a survey and if so what areas would it cover?
- How much would a survey cost?

20/10 **FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS 1ST MARCH TO 30TH JUNE 2011**

The Board considered the Forward Plan of Key Decisions. Members requested sight of the report on Enforcement and Fixed Penalty Notices for Environmental Services for pre-scrutiny at the meeting to be held on 5th April 2011.

RESOLVED the Forward Plan of Key Decisions be noted, subject to the above request.

21/10 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board considered the Work Programme and discussed the Community Involvement in Local Democracy Task Group in detail. Officers explained that this was due for 12 month review by the Board in June 2011; however, as the Democracy Year campaign was coming to a close it was thought to be an appropriate point for Members to be made aware of the work that had been covered by the campaign. The Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services had therefore requested to attend the meeting on 5th April 2011 to up date Members on the work of the campaign and it was agreed that the 12 month review of the Task Group would also be included within that presentation.

After further discussion it was agreed that all Councillors should be invited to the presentation on Local Democracy and in view of the number of items on the agenda for the 5th April 2011 meeting, that the start time be brought forward to 5.30 p.m.

Members also discussed the following items on the Work Programme for the meeting to be held on 5th April 2011 in detail:

- The Council Plan
- Performance Management Strategy
- Older Peoples' Task Group 12 Month Review
- Hot Food Takeaways Investigation 12 Month Review

RESOLVED that the Work Programme be noted, subject to the above amendment.

22/10 **QUESTIONS TO WITNESSES**

The Chairman of the Board reminded Members that this was an example of questions that could be put to witnesses, this list was not exhaustive and if Members wished to ask further questions these should be provided to Officers as soon as possible.

23/10 **SILVERDALE PLAY AREA PETITION**

The Board considered a petition entitled "Potential Closure of Silverdale Play Area". After discussion Members asked that a report be prepared by the Head

of Leisure and Cultural Services for consideration at the meeting to be held on 13th June 2011. It was agreed that the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services together with the Portfolio Holder for Community Services be asked to attend that meeting to answer any questions from the Board.

RESOLVED that an in depth report be provided by the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services to the Board meeting to be held on 13th June 2011 for further consideration.

The meeting closed at 7.22 p.m.

Chairman