

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

TUESDAY, 5TH APRIL 2011 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors S. R. Colella (Chairman), D. L. Pardoe (Vice-Chairman), R. J. Deeming, Mrs. R. L. Dent, J. A. Ruck, C. R. Scurrall, Mrs. C. J. Spencer (Present from Minute No. 25/10 to Minute No. 30/10), C. B. Taylor, C. J. Tidmarsh and L. J. Turner

Invitees: Councillor G. N. Denaro and Councillor M. J. A. Webb

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Mrs. C. Felton, Mr. G. Revans, Ms. R. Dunne, Mrs. A. Wardell-Hill, Ms. S. Horrobin and Ms. A. Scarce

25/10 **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths.

26/10 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

There were no declarations of interest or whipping arrangements.

27/10 **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL DEMOCRACY - PRESENTATION (INCLUDING 12 MONTH REVIEW)**

The Board received a presentation from the Senior Corporate Policy and Performance Officer which highlighted the work that had been carried out in both Local Democracy Week and Democracy Year 2010/11, and which had formed a part of the recommendations put forward by the Community Involvement in Local Democracy Task Group in May 2010.

The Senior Corporate Policy and Performance Officer informed Members that Local Democracy Week had been timed to lead into the local election and had brought together colleagues from different departments within the Council and external partners, with a particular focus on young people through schools and youth centres. The activities had been designed to cover different areas of the District, had produced a programme that could be repeated in the future, developed relationships with community and provided ongoing engagement with democracy. The following areas were covered in detail within the presentation:

- A market stall in Bromsgrove Town Centre manned by the Elections Team.

- Work at Rubery Youth Centre including meeting with the Youth Management Team and the design of a Decision Makers Questionnaire.
- Visit to Haybridge High School to deliver a lesson on women in democracy, which was linked to International Woman's Day. A group of students attended the Council's celebration of this event which was held in the Spadesbourne Suite.
- Several local schools took part in Community Clean-ups.
- Sessions with young people took place at Woodrush High School and Youth Centre which explored what democracy meant to the young people.
- Information was provided to students and staff on voting and elections, with a "mock" polling station. at NEW College at the Bromsgrove and Redditch campuses.
- Work with the Youth Management Team at the Trunk which discussed the qualities of a good representative and issues relevant to young people.

The Senior Corporate Policy and Performance Officer also informed Members that as a result of the success of the activities, the following items were planned for the future:

- Web pages for young people would be developed.
- The X-press Democracy Magazine would be updated.
- Engagement with Young People was being reviewed in partnership with the Children and Young People Theme Group and 2 mini conferences were proposed.
- The possibility of inviting representatives of the Worcestershire Youth Cabinet in to meet Councillors.

The Board asked what, if any, the future plans were for this type of work to be carried out in future years. The Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services informed Members that an evaluation of the activities would be carried out and those which had been most successful and had the most benefit to the Council, would be built upon for future years, and it was anticipated that similar exercises, wherever possible, would be carried out in 2011/12 and 2012/13. Material had been provided to some schools to enable them to include some of the areas covered within their own Citizenship lessons and information would also be made available on the website in due course.

The Chairman thanked the Senior Corporate Policy and Performance Officer for providing a very informative presentation.

28/10 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 1st March 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. 15/10 and the Head of Environmental Services confirmed that the financial information would be provided, via email, for Members as soon as it was available.

29/10 **ENFORCEMENT AND FIXED PENALTY NOTICES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES - BRIEFING PAPER**

The Chairman welcomed the Head Of Environmental Services, the Environmental Services Manager and the Waste & Street Scene Policy, Publicity and Performance Manager to the meeting and advised that an opportunity to pre-scrutinise the Enforcement and Fixed Penalty Notices for Environmental Services had been requested by Members at the meeting held on 1st March 2011.

The Portfolio Holder for Community Services introduced the briefing paper which outlined the use of enforcement action to tackle environmental problems such as fly-tipping and dog fouling and the opportunities for continued improvement to street cleaning performance and improved environmental enforcement within the Council. The Portfolio Holder gave details of what was classed as 'environmental crime' and the 5 stage approach for dealing with the offences, which were detailed in the proposed Joint Environmental Enforcement Strategy. Members had also been provided with details of the level of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for the various environmental crimes.

The Head of Environmental Services informed Members that, although Redditch Borough Council's (RBC) area and needs were slightly different to those of Bromsgrove District Council's, the enforcement and FPNs for Environmental Services had been successful at RBC, for example there had been a reduction in fly-tipping from 1,270 cases in 2007 to 870 cases in 2010.

A full report would be presented to Cabinet at the meeting to be held on 6th June 2011 and the Portfolio Holder informed Members that, if the report was agreed at this meeting, introduction of the FPNs would be implemented as quickly as possible. However, this would be dependant upon the recruitment of staff. It was anticipated that there would be 3 Environmental Enforcement Officers across the Shared Service and the benefits of this would include the provision of cover for sickness and holidays.

The Board discussed how the 5 stage approach would work and the difficulty in gathering evidence for the court proceedings stage. Members also discussed under what circumstances an FPN could be issued and the necessity to use all stages of the process. The use of covert investigations was also discussed and Members were informed that there was a significant amount of legislation which governed this type of investigation. The Head of Environmental Services informed Members that it was envisaged that preventative work through education of residents would play a large part in reduction of offences in the District.

RESOLVED that the briefing paper be noted and that the Board include a review of the Enforcement and Fixed Penalty Notices within Environmental Services policy, following implementation, on the Work Programme.

30/10 **COUNCIL PLAN 2011-2014 REPORT**

The Board considered a report on the Council Plan 2011-2014. The Senior Corporate Policy and Performance Officer informed Members that the Council Plan had been restructured this year in order to take account of both the financial and political changes that have taken place.

The Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Resources informed Members that there was less actions and objectives in the Council Plan than in previous years. This was due to the Council bringing forward the Shared Service and Transformation programme from a 3 year time schedule to 18 months. Heads of Service had therefore been asked to include only achievable actions and objectives, as it was imperative that the Shared Service and Transformation programme be completed within the timeline set.

The Board discussed the following in more detail:

- Implementation of the Countywide Housing Strategy Action Plan
- The review of protocols and procedures relating to the homelessness service.
- Installation of Solar panels
- Who the Council Plan was aimed at.
- Duplication of information within the Plan and the format of the Plan in future years.
- Key Performance Indicators for older people.

RESOLVED that the Council Plan for 2011-2014 be noted.

31/10 **ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENT TO THE PLACE SURVEY**

The Senior Corporate Policy and Performance Officer informed the Board that the Place Survey and the majority of performance indicators included within it had been abolished. In the past this had been dealt with through Worcestershire Viewpoint, in partnership with all districts and the County Council. The funding for this would remain in place until May 2012 and the Council would continue to make use of this facility for benchmarking purposes.

At a more local level, the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services and the Head of Customer Service would also be involved in providing more district relevant questions, including customer satisfaction, for a predominantly online questionnaire which would run each quarter. This would be promoted by the business card system, which was a process used successfully on previous occasions. The business card would direct people to the County Council Business Portal which the Council had access to and although led by the County Council the documentation would be Council branded. This portal had already been used for the Core Strategy and Town Centre consultations. The Senior Corporate Policy and Performance Officer informed Members that the

facility was able to collate the data into a suitable format for use in what ever way the Council required, whilst also allowing a printable version of the questions to be used when necessary.

The Chairman thanked the Senior Corporate Policy and Performance Officer for the update.

32/10 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OLDER PEOPLE'S TASK GROUP 12 MONTH REVIEW HELD ON 9TH MARCH 2011**

The Chairman introduced this item and explained that the Minutes of the Older People Task Group Review had been provided as an update to the progress that had been made in implementing the recommendations following the Task Group Report which had been received by Cabinet on 3rd March 2010. After discussion it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that progress on the recommendations as set out in the Minutes be noted;
- (b) that the Overview and Scrutiny Board include a review of the Worcestershire County Council's draft Older People's Strategy in the Work Programme;
- (c) that the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships continues to scope the possibility of a handbook for GPs on the health related services that the Council provides and to source possible funding for this;
- (d) that the Portfolio Holder for Older People, the Young and Vulnerable, the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships and the Age Well Co-ordinator promote the activities offered for the over 50s via the Parish Council Forum;
- (e) that the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships revisit and review the Older Person's Services Directory and mapping exercise during 2012/2013 and considers involving the Parish Council Forum when undertaking this exercise;
- (f) that the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships contact the Older People's Forum regarding its help with a mystery shopping exercise specifically on older people's services;
- (g) that the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships engages with the Portfolio Holder and the Older People's Forum to look at the possibility of championing a 'Village Agents' project for 2011;
- (h) that the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships and the Benefits Services Manager look at including benefits information in the leaflets produced and distributed by Lifeline Officers; and
- (i) that the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships and Climate Change Manager look at ways of engaging with specific partner agencies, for information and promoting energy saving ideas for older people and to use any future Older People's events to promote these ideas.

33/10 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD QUARTERLY RECOMMENDATION TRACKER**

The Board considered the Quarterly Recommendation Tracker Report and Officers provided a verbal update on progress in respect of the recommendations from the Alvechurch Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) Inquiry. Members requested that the recommendations from the MUGA Inquiry remain on the Quarterly Recommendation Tracker Report until the 12 month review had taken place.

Officers advised that following the presentation on Local Democracy and the updated information provided in the Minutes of the Older People Task Group, the Tracker Report would be amended accordingly.

After further discussion it was

RESOLVED that the Quarterly Recommendation Tracker be noted and the completed items be removed from the Tracker.

34/10 **FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS 1ST APRIL TO 31ST JULY 2011**

The Board considered the Forward Plan of Key Decisions and agreed, after discussion that as there was not a meeting of the Board until 13th June 2011 it was not appropriate to put forward any item from the Forward Plan for scrutiny at this time.

35/10 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board considered the Work Programme and was informed by Officers that the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services was not available to attend the meeting on 13th June 2011 in respect of the Silverdale Play Area Petition item. Members requested that a detailed report still be provided at that meeting and if necessary, the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services attend a subsequent meeting to answer any further questions which may arise.

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

The meeting closed at 7.12 p.m.

Chairman