



**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

**MONDAY 15TH JULY 2013**  
**AT 6.00 P.M.**

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

**MEMBERS:** Councillors C. J. Bloore, Dr. B. T. Cooper, Mrs. R. L. Dent, S. J. Dudley, Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths, R. J. Laight, P. Lammas, L. C. R. Mallett, J. A. Ruck, S. P. Shannon, Mrs. C. J. Spencer, L. J. Turner and P. J. Whittaker

**AGENDA**

1. Election of Chairman
2. Election of Vice Chairman
3. To receive Apologies for Absence and notification of Substitutes
4. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Arrangements
5. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 22nd April 2013 (Pages 1 - 22)
6. Making Experiences Count Quarter 4 Report (Pages 23 - 42)
7. Quarter 4 Sickness Absence Performance and Health Report - Verbal Update
8. The Living Wage Report - Additional Information (Pages 43 - 46)
9. Overview & Scrutiny Board Annual Report 2012/13 (Pages 47 - 72)

10. Appointment of members to the Joint Worcestershire Regulatory Services Task Group (Pages 73 - 74)  
Members are asked to nominate 2 Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board to serve as lead and substitute representatives (one to be either the Chairman or Vice Chairman) respectively on behalf of the Council on this review. (Terms of reference attached for information.)
11. Overview and Scrutiny Topic Proposal - Outreach Provision at the Artrix Arts Centre (Pages 75 - 78)
12. Youth Provisional Task Group Draft Final Report (Pages 79 - 120)
13. Air Quality Task Group - Verbal Update
14. Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Board - Verbal Update
15. Cabinet Work Programme 1st August to 30th November 2013 (Pages 121 - 126)
16. Action List (Pages 127 - 130)
17. Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme (Pages 131 - 134)
18. 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, by reason of special circumstances, 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

5th July 2013



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# Agenda Item 5

## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

MONDAY, 22ND APRIL 2013 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors P. Lammas (Chairman), J. S. Brogan, S. P. Shannon,  
Mrs. C. J. Spencer and L. J. Turner

Observers: Councillor C. B. Taylor

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Mr. S. Jordan, Mr. M. Kay, Mr. S. Wilkes,  
Ms. D. Poole, Mrs. H. Mole, Mr. C. Santoriello-Smith, Ms. J. Bayley and  
Ms. A. Scarce

#### 115/12 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C. J. Bloore, R. A. Clarke, Dr. B. T. Cooper, Mrs R. L. Dent, K. A. Grant-Pearce, Mrs J. M. L. A. Griffiths, R. J. Laight and P. M. McDonald.

#### 116/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS

Councillors J. S. Brogan and Mrs C. J. Spencer declared disclosable pecuniary interests, as members of the Artrix Board of Trustees, in respect of item 8 on the agenda; the proposal to review outreach provision at the Artrix Centre. Councillor P. Lammas also declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in this item in his capacity as a member of the Arts Development Holding Trust for the Artrix Centre.

The Board noted that as a result of these interests only 2 Members would be present during consideration of this item, which would have made the meeting inquorate. Consequently, Members agreed that the topic proposal concerning outreach provision at the Artrix Centre should be considered at the following meeting of the Board.

#### 117/12 MINUTES

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 26th March 2013 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

#### 118/12 THE WORK OF WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES

The Board received a presentation from the Head of Regulatory Services on the subject of Worcestershire Regulatory Services (Appendix A). The

Chairman explained that the presentation had been requested in order to provide Members with background information about the shared service in advance of the launch of a joint scrutiny review of this subject.

The following points were highlighted by Officers for Members' consideration:

- A shared Regulatory Service had been one of eleven options originally considered under the Worcestershire Enhanced Two Tier Programme (WETT). This shared service had been progressed because it had been considered viable and capable of achieving efficiency savings.
- Worcestershire Regulatory Services was the only regulatory service shared between different local authorities in the country. There was the potential that further Councils could be incorporated into the shared service in the long-term.
- Worcestershire Regulatory Services was responsible for managing a number of functions including food safety. In recent months service representatives had investigated the implications of the horse meat scandal for food provided to schools in Worcestershire, though only a single area of concern had been identified in the north of the county.
- When the shared service had first been launched joint working had been challenging because officers were familiar with different organisational cultures and operating methods. By using a central base in Worcester staff had been able to develop a single culture.
- Elected Members' engagement with the Worcestershire Regulatory Services team varied across the county, though senior Officers regularly briefed the Leader and Chief Executive of each local authority.
- Worcestershire Regulatory Services was based in Wyatt House in Worcester. However, surgeries were provided in each of the districts and could be accessed by customers where required.
- Bromsgrove District Council was the host authority for Worcestershire Regulatory Service. The Council received a fee from other local authorities in the partnership for hosting the service.

During the meeting Members also discussed the following points in detail:

- Members commented on the high frequency of nuisance complaints that had been received from the Aston Fields area of the district. A number of reasons were discussed as the potential causes for these complaints, including the location of industrial estates within the area, though Members were advised that complaints could be influenced by a variety of factors.
- A significant proportion of complaints about nuisance related to reports of noise. 80% of complaints about noise concerned domestic circumstances.
- Dog Wardens employed by the service worked throughout the county. The Dog Wardens were primarily employed to respond to complaints about barking dogs, though staff could provide advice about appropriate sources of support available to manage the behaviour of dogs.

- Stray dogs located by the Dog Wardens were often placed temporarily in local kennels until either the owner could be located or a new home could be found for the animal.
- Members commented that licensing arrangements at each local authority appeared to vary significantly. This was largely due to the fact that each local authority retained local decision making powers in relation to licensing matters and could determine the level of fees and charges for various licenses.
- Internet crimes, involving malpractice with regard to trading standards, increasingly featured in the work of the service. Officers utilised covert techniques to monitor the work of criminals and could take action to prosecute offenders.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that a copy of the presentation be circulated for the consideration of every member of the Board; and
- (b) that the report be noted.

119/12 **PRESENTATION ON THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS**

The Board received a presentation from the Head of Business Transformation and the Transformation Manager on the subject of Systems Thinking (Appendix B).

During consideration of this item the following issues were discussed in detail:

- Service transformation was not a traditional top-down approach to changing services. Instead, the process focused on meeting the needs of the customer.
- Specialist support could be provided by the Business Transformation team to enable service transformation to proceed effectively.
- Service transformation also made use of the expertise of officers involved in delivering services. Staff were involved in capturing demand and trialling proposed changes to services.
- Recent examples of service transformation included changes to bulky waste collection that had been trialled in the district. As part of this trial rather than undertaking separate journeys collections were made by teams operating within the vicinity and customers were being provided with choice over the timing of appointments, which had already had a positive impact on customer satisfaction feedback.
- There had been instances where staff had held differing opinions about the benefits of proposed changes. The primary method for addressing these disagreements was to trial proposed changes, which enabled Officers to learn whether a different process would work effectively.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that regular updates and seminars, focusing on the transformation of particular services, be provided to Members; and
- (b) that the report be noted.

120/12 **QUARTERLY SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT ACTION  
TAKEN (1ST JANUARY TO 31ST MARCH 2013)**

The Board considered the Quarterly Summary of Environmental Enforcement Action Taken for the period 1st January 2013 – 31st March 2013.

During consideration of this item the following issues were discussed in detail:

- Fly tipping continued to be the most time consuming crime type investigated by the Council. However, the Council's approach to investigating fly tipping represented best practice and had received praise from the Hereford and Worcester Environment Group.
- There had been one successful prosecution for fly tipping in the period and six other cases were in the process of being prepared for court.
- There continued to be a steady stream of work tackling fly posting in the district. Frequently fly posting occurred because companies were not aware of the rules on the matter. In this context the role of the Council was to educate companies about acceptable practices.
- Dog fouling was a persistent problem. In particular, there continued to be problems with dog fouling in popular locations such as parks as well as in particular residential areas.
- Targeted patrols were taking place in the district to discourage dog fouling. Fixed penalty notices could rarely be issued for dog fouling as dog owners were more likely to comply when they observed enforcement officers in the area.
- Dog walkers had been handed bags that could be used to dispose of dog faeces. Unfortunately, sometimes these bags were not then placed in bins but rather were left on pathways or hanging from trees which created a litter problem as well as having health and safety implications.
- Increasingly littering offences involved individuals dropping items out of their cars, particularly at traffic islands in Bromsgrove.
- Residents were entitled to report littering offences. However, in the event that offenders did not pay fines these residents needed to be prepared to attend court to testify and unfortunately frequently residents were not prepared to do so.
- There had been no cases involving the transport of waste during the period. However, spot checks were due to take place which could lead to an increase in reports on the subject.
- There had been three fixed penalty notices issued during the quarter. One of these penalty notices had not been paid and would be the subject of future court action.
- The Council did not have an enforcement policy for responding to offences committed by juveniles, though a fixed penalty notice could be issued to anybody aged 12 or more.

Members were advised that this would be the final time that the Board would receive a quarterly environmental enforcement report in this format. The report was due to be amended in order to focus on outcomes. There would be more information about the enforcement and investigation stages and a

breakdown of information by crime type and broken down into Ward areas within the district.

**RESOLVED** that the report on the Quarterly Summary of Environmental Enforcement Action Taken for the period 1st January 2013 – 31st March 2013 be noted.

121/12 **REPORT ON THE LIVING WAGE IN RELATION TO PROCUREMENT**

The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources presented a report on the subject of payment of the living wage to staff employed by Council contractors.

The following key points were discussed during consideration of this item:

- Local authorities, like other organisations, had a statutory duty to pay at least the minimum wage to staff, though all staff employed by Bromsgrove District Council received at least the living wage as a minimum.
- There was no legal obligation for any organisation to pay the living wage to staff.
- The Council could request as part of the tendering process that companies pay staff the living wage for completing contracted work.
- There was also the potential for the Council to offer a dual tendering deal process, whereby one price could be quoted involving payment of the living wage and another price quoted where the living wage would not necessarily be paid.
- However, in both cases payments of the living wage would be difficult to monitor. Staff would need to give permission for their personal details to be shared with the Council; it was possible that not all staff would be willing to take this action.
- There was also a risk that a minority of companies would place pressure on staff to confirm that they were paid the living wage even if this was not the case.

The Board concurred that from a moral and ethical perspective it was supportive of paying of the living wage to staff employed by Council contractors and it suggested that this point should be formally endorsed by the whole Council. In respect of becoming accredited under the Living Wage Campaign, the Board was advised that the definition of contractors within *The Living Wage Guide for Employers* contained a number of subtle distinctions and nuances that could have further implications for the subject. Members therefore agreed that further information/clarification on this particular area should be obtained before the Board proposed any recommendations on the subject.

**RESOLVED** that the Board be provided with further information, including from a legal perspective, in respect of different contractual arrangements and the implications for payment of the living wage to contractors' staff.

122/12 **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY TOPIC PROPOSAL - OUTREACH PROVISION AT THE ARTRIX CENTRE**

In accordance with the decision noted under minute 116/12 Members agreed that this item should be deferred for consideration at the following meeting of the Board to be held on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

123/12 **ACTION LIST**

The Board was advised that it had not been possible to obtain any updates on actions requested at the previous meeting. Officers would be requesting further information over the following week and explained that all feedback would be circulated for the consideration of members of the Board.

124/12 **YOUTH PROVISION TASK GROUP**

Members were informed that there had been a single meeting of the Task Group since the previous meeting of the Board. This meeting had been attended by Jackie Hooper, Operations Manager at the Basement Project, and John Blackhall, Chairman of the Bromsgrove Rugby and Football Club.

A further meeting of the Task Group was due to take place on Thursday 25th April 2013 when Members would interview the Council's Head of Leisure and Cultural Services, together with Debbie Roberts from EPIC and Paul Finnemore the Commissioning Manager for young people from Worcestershire County Council's Children's Services Department. Members were also due to consider statistics provided by Worcestershire County Council in relation to young people who were not in education, employment or training (NEETs).

The Task Group remained on track to complete their review by the 15th July 2013.

125/12 **AIR QUALITY TASK GROUP**

The Chairman of the Task Group advised Members that there had been two meetings of the Task Group since the last meeting of the Board.

The first of these meetings had taken place on 4th April 2013 and had been attended by two Worcestershire County Council Officers: David Balme, Transport Planning Officer and Steve Harrison, Transport Strategy and Policy Team Leader. This had been an instructive meeting due to the Officers' expertise.

The second meeting of the Task Group had taken place on 18th April. During this meeting Members had interviewed the Council's Head of Planning and Regeneration and the Portfolio Holder for Planning, the Core Strategy, Regulatory and Strategic Housing Services, Councillor C. B. Taylor. The extent to which air quality issues were taken into account during consideration of planning applications had been discussed in some detail.

The Task Group was keen to consider further information about the health implications of air quality issues, though information requested from Worcestershire PCT prior to the previous meeting of the Board had still not been provided. Members were also interested in the Air Quality Action Plan consultation, which had been launched on 15th April 2013, and were aiming to discuss this matter further with representatives of Worcestershire Regulatory Services.

The Task Group had struggled to organise meetings during the busy election period and had also encountered some difficulties securing information from relevant expert witnesses. To provide the Task Group with the time needed to complete the review effectively the Board agreed that the deadline for the exercise should be extended.

**RESOLVED** that the deadline for presentation of the Air Quality Task Group's final report to the Overview and Scrutiny Board should be extended to 16th September 2013.

126/12 **CABINET WORK PROGRAMME 1ST MAY TO 31ST AUGUST 2013 (FOR INFORMATION)**

The Board considered the latest edition of the Cabinet Work Programme. Due to the fact that this would be the final meeting of the Board in the 2012/13 municipal year Members agreed that it would not be appropriate to identify additional items for the Board's Work Programme.

The meeting closed at 8.13 p.m.

Chairman

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# **Worcestershire Shared Regulatory Service**

Steve Jordan

## **What is WRS?**

**A shared service representing all  
Councils, including the County, within  
Worcestershire, covering Trading  
Standards, Environmental Health and  
Licensing functions**

## Functions

- Air Quality
- Burial/Cremation of Persons Deceased at Public Expense
- Contaminated Land
- Consumer and Business Advice
- Dog Warden Service
- Drainage
- Environmental Permitting
- Exhumations
- Fair Trading (Pricing, Descriptions, Counterfeiting)
- Farmed Animal Health and Welfare/Disease Control
- Weights and Measures

- Filthy and Verminous Investigations
- Food Safety
- Food Standards including Animal Feed
- Gambling Act 2005 – Administration and Enforcement
- Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing
- Health and Safety at Work
- Health and Wellbeing/Health Promotion
- Infectious Diseases
- Land Drainage
- Licensing Act 2003 – Administration and Enforcement
- Licensing of Petroleum, Poisons and Explosives
- Licensing and Registration – Many different businesses

## Background

- Strong and Prosperous Communities white paper
- Worcestershire Enhanced Two Tier Programme (WETT)
- Key principles:
  - Delivery of service improvements and improved performance for all stakeholders,
  - Reduced pressure on the budget both overall and for each participating local authority,
  - Increased resilience to meet the demands placed on the service.
- Regulatory Reform (Hampton, LBRO, etc)
- Future public sector funding climate

## Vision

**'A fully integrated Regulatory Services function, more effectively focussed on businesses and consumers, with all partners operating within one Management Structure'**

## Business Model

- Single management structure
- Integrated teams delivering County and District services seamlessly
- Focused on key customer groups – businesses and consumers/ residents
- Service standardisation with local distinctiveness
- Dispersed workforce, locally based,
- Risk based and intelligence led
- Transformational service delivery through 'Systems Thinking'

## Benefits

| Business Case                           | Now   |
|---|---|
| Improve delivery to customers           | Noise – improved end to end times biggest demand over 50% of nuisance complaints 2,250/pa |
| Greater resilience                      | Larger pool of staff  |
| Cost reduction through efficiencies     | 23% reduction in costs  |
| Economies of scale                      | Air quality and contaminated land   |
| Consistent approach in service delivery | Yes, where appropriate single policies  |
| Reduce burdens on local businesses      | Yes, reduces unnecessary inspections  |

| Worcestershire<br>Regulatory Services   |  |
|---|--|
| Supporting our customers  |  |
| Business Case   | Now  |
| Standardise performance, quality, policy and processes                        | Standard performance across service for all partners, single processes in most cases and policy harmonisation where appropriate. |
| Business transformation improving self-service and reducing avoidable contact | New IT system, move to self help and Duty Officer  |

| Worcestershire<br>Regulatory Services   |  |
|---|--|
| Supporting our customers  |  |
| <h2>Governance Arrangements</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Service reports to Joint Committee (Local Government Act 1972 s.101)</li> <li>• Delegation of policy and executive functions from partners to Joint Committee and Head of Shared Service</li> <li>• Service specifications detail partner delegations and operational arrangements</li> <li>• Special arrangements for Licensing Act 2003 functions (retain local Licensing Committees)</li> <li>• Partners retain determination of fees and charges</li> </ul> |  |

## Financial Implications

| Business Case  | Now   |
|--|---|
| £1.26m (17.25% like-for-like revenue saving (09/10))                         | 13/14 Revenue Budget now £5.626m (23% saving) |
| £438k saving 2011/12, £1.26m saving 2012/13                                  | Exceeded in both years                        |
| Capital investment £1.2m (net of grant) for ICT and transformation           | £282 savings already returned                 |
| Return on investment in 4 <sup>th</sup> year                                 | Achieved before end of year 2                 |
| Costs/savings sharing in proportion to partner current gross revenue budgets | No costs – all savings                        |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Potential for further £355k savings in partner internal recharges/overheads (equivalent to 20%) | Up to individual partners. Not aware of level of savings partners have made as a result of us coming together |
| Risks if financial assumptions have been/are not realised                                       | Financial risks mitigated   |

## Bromsgrove is Host Authority

Bromsgrove provides key support:

- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Finance
- Legal
- Payroll

## Progress to Date

- 23% SAVING + extra £900k over 10 years in accommodation costs
- £1m returned to partners in underspends since 2010
- Multi functioning Teams
- 115 FTE, down from 154
- Transformation project delivering improvements
- Number of councils coming to us re advice
- Performance remains positive

## Lessons Learnt

- Bringing everyone in under the same roof has been beneficial but challenging
- IT could have been implemented earlier – too much reliance on Systems Thinking
- Systems Thinking approach was right but had to be adapted
- Service no longer has a voice in individual councils
  - Out of sight - out of mind
  - Portfolio Holder regular meetings
  - Communications with wider Members
- Partners attitude to WRS particularly early on regarding budgets
- How critical the roll of WRS is to the local economy and Health and Wellbeing Agenda. WRS is a critical service

## Performance

- Main stats – satisfaction rates, complaints and compliments,
- Financial performance
- Outcome measures
- Handling 25,000 service requests pa
  - Slight drop in nuisance complaints - poor summer
  - Some increases in demand ie planning up 20-30%
  - Licensing demand gone up



## Next Steps

- IT Implementation
- Financial pressures
- Business Growth – other partners, generating income
- Governance review
- Service transformation continues

**Thank You**

**Questions?**





## **What is Systems Thinking?**

Systems thinking is not about IT systems. It is an approach that supports the review of services as a whole (not functions)

Systems thinking is a very different approach to improving services, it challenges the assumptions we make about service design.

Using a method of 'study', systems thinking reveals how traditional assumptions are responsible for undermining service quality, driving up costs and causing low morale.

Systems thinking aims to create better service, at reduced cost with increased capacity and higher staff morale.

Systems thinking is the basis for all future service reviews and improvements to our services



## Systems Thinking – The Approach

Systems thinking is not a typical, top down approach to planning how a system or process should work.

It takes an outside-in approach (or customers view) to improving service; that is to change the work, you first need to understand 'how the work works' - change is based on knowledge.

It is very different to typical approaches for improving services. The systems thinking approach often reveals unexpected results.



## Systems Thinking – changing the way we think

**Thinking.....** Management thinking and assumptions about the work ..



**System** ... drives the design of our processes and procedures ...

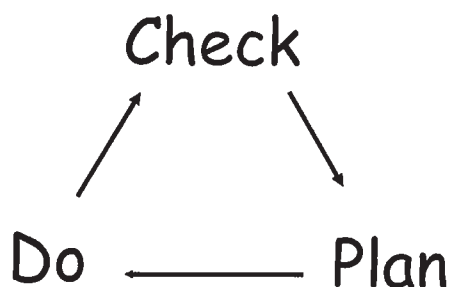


**Performance....** which in turn affects performance



## What is the Approach?

It is not possible to adequately convey here how systems thinking works. The only way to really understand its potential is to use it. It is useful to appreciate the basic concept and key phases for conducting a systems thinking review of a service. They are as follows:



## Check – the ‘what’ & ‘why’

Is concerned with understanding the current service and its performance. It is crucial that any decisions about what to change are based on evidence and learning gained during 'Check'. Check involves 6 stages:

**Purpose** - Identifying purpose of the system from the customers perspective

**Demand** - Studying demand e.g. 'I need to claim benefit' or 'I need a home'. This helps us identify what matters to customers.

**Capability** - Measuring our ability to respond to what matters to customers

**Flow** - Identifying how the work is carried out and using information about what matters to customers to identify value work and waste (e.g. duplication, handoffs).

**System Conditions** - The factors responsible for the waste in the system. System conditions may be policy, procedure, IT system, training etc

**Thinking** - It is important to relate system conditions to the management thinking responsible for their introduction. This is key to unlearning old assumptions and to start looking at things differently.

## Plan and Do

### Plan – identify how we can change

This stage takes the learning from Check to identify a new set of operating principles and 'clean flow' designed to deliver what matters to customers. Measures are agreed based on what matters and experiments devised to prove the new way of working.

### Do – implement the changes

This stage involves confirming that experiments done in the Plan phase do in fact support the work and processes underpinning the new service. In practice this means taking a small number of customers out of the current system, testing the new ways of working, solving any problems and adapting the new service along the way. As the new service evolves through experimentation so does understanding of capacity, roles and structures required to support the new way of working.



## Next Steps - Options

So Members can learn more about systems thinking.

Some suggestions:

- **Practical Orientation Sessions** – day and half. Do some 'check'
- **Interventions – visit.** Look at how 'Plan' & 'Do' is implemented.
- **Portfolio Holders** – discuss with Head of Service about visiting interventions.
- **“Seminars”** – updates from Interventions / presentations from teams (2 or 3 a year?)
- Possibly utilise **Shared Services Board** to share learning with Councillors?



## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> July 2013

### MAKING EXPERIENCES COUNT - QUARTERLY COMPLAINTS REPORT

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder  | Cllr Mark Bullivant                        |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | √  |
| Relevant Head of Service   | Amanda de Warr – Head of Customer Services |
| Wards Affected             | All Wards                                  |
| Non-Key Decision           |  |

#### 1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

This report provides the Board with customer feedback data for the fourth quarter of 2012/13

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

**The Board is asked to:**

- 2.1 Note the contents of the report.**
- 2.2 Consider whether it is still necessary to continue to receive the report at Overview and Scrutiny Board, and if not,**
- 2.3 Agree that the report be made available to members through the Orb and Members Room.**

#### 3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The Planning Policy Task Group recommended that Overview and Scrutiny Board receive a quarterly report giving details of customer feedback. This is the report for the 4th quarter of 2012/13 and details complaints and compliments, including Local Government Ombudsman complaints and information on how well we have handled these within the timescales we aim for.

There are no targets in respect of numbers of complaints and compliments as enforcing targets can lead to complaints not being recorded and compliments being solicited in order to meet targets which have little meaning. Instead we focus on learning from the feedback we receive.

- 3.2 The report also provides some information on the Customer Service Centre's work as well as an update on progress against the 'Every

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> July 2013

Customer, Every Time – Everybody Matters' Customer Experience Strategy.

- 3.3 The Planning Policy Task Group recommended that this report be received and considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Board due to concerns about the recording of customer complaints.
- 3.4 The Overview and Scrutiny Board has now received the report for over 12 months and the data indicates that there are no major problems being identified in respect of how complaints are dealt with.
- 3.5 Lessons have been learnt in respect of the issues investigated by the Planning Policy Task Group and the planning service is undergoing significant changes to make it more customer focused.
- 3.6 All of the data contained within this report can be made available to members through the copies of the appendix being available on the Orb and in the Members Room.
- 3.7 Members are therefore asked to consider whether it remains necessary to receive the report at Overview and Scrutiny Board.

### **Financial Implications**

- 3.8 There are no direct financial implications.

### **Legal Implications**

- 3.9 There are no specific legal issues arising from this report. Any legal issues arising from complaints are dealt with on a case by case basis.

### **Service/Operational Implications**

- 3.10 The Every Customer, Every Time, Customer Experience Strategy was launched in March 2011 and sets out our vision for excellent customer service provision and improving the customer experience when having contact with the Council.
- 3.11 The strategy was supported by a three year Action Plan. This action plan has now been completed, ahead of schedule, and many of the actions have now become on-going normal business.
- 3.12 Quarterly reporting is intended to ensure Members of the Council and customers are updated in respect of customer feedback, especially complaints made in respect of service provision.



## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> July 2013

- 3.13 Good customer service has improved value for money by reducing failure demand. Improvements to the way we handle complaints has resulted in less officer time spent chasing responses and re-investigating.
- 3.14 Customer service and excellent customer care is embedded in every transformation work strand. The Customer Services Management Team continues to work closely with services in transformation to support their work and to ensure a consistent approach to customer care quality.
- 3.15 The Customer Service Team provide a range of support from guidance to training, assistance with difficult situations to help with writing complaint responses. Customer Feedback also continues to be closely monitored by Customer Service officers and concerns escalated to the Head of Customer Service to address with the relevant Head of Service.
- 3.16 Although led by the Head of Customer Services, the customer experience strategy applies to all services and all customers and progress against the action plan involved officers from many services working together to the benefit of customers.

### **Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.17 It is important to monitor aspects of customer service to ensure that we are improving and developing. Customers need to know that we respond properly to complaints and act on the issues raised to reduce the possibility of them happening again.
- 3.18 Customer feedback is a valuable tool for understanding what is going well, and what not so well, within the organisation. These form vital information for all transformation reviews, and complaints, along with other forms of customer feedback, are used by service managers and Heads of Service as a measure of what is happening in their system.
- 3.19 Some managers are now responding to complaints in person and more quickly, thus resulting in a more responsive service and one which better understands the real issues. This in turn is leading to better outcomes for customers. All services will be rolled into this new model for handling complaints.
- 3.20 Customer Service is an integral part of our transformation towards a systems thinking organisation and as such we are now using systems thinking principles to develop customer care and customer service provision

# **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> July 2013

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## **4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 It is important to use the Council's complaints or compliments to measure how well the system is meeting its purpose and to act on those complaints to fix the system where it is failing.

## **5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 - **Making Experiences Count - Quarterly Customer Feedback Report Quarter 4 2012/13**

## **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The details to support the information provided within this report are held by Head of Customer Services

## **AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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**EVERY CUSTOMER, EVERY TIME -  
“Everybody Matters”**

**Making Experiences Count  
Quarterly Customer Service Report**

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**1<sup>st</sup> January 2013 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012**



**Bromsgrove**  
District Council

[www.bromsgrove.gov.uk](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk)

## 1. Introduction

This report provides some of the key customer service information for the organisation, including:-

- analysis of the complaints and compliments received during this quarter and any other relevant feedback.
- Customer Service Centre management information, including transactional statistics for information, and
- An update on the improving the customer experience action plan.

## 2. Customer Feedback Analysis

**24** complaints were received during this quarter because we did not meet the customer expectations, or failed to meet our own standards, or the customer was unhappy with an outcome.

**12** Complaints (50%) were answered in 15 working days or less.

**12** Complaints took longer than 15 working days to respond to. This shows an increase in the percentage dealt with within our agreed timescales, but is still lower than we would hope for.

We also received **37 compliments**.

These figures compare with last quarter and last year's totals as follows:-

| Quarter 4 11/12 |             | Total 11/12 |             | Quarter 3 12/13 |             | Quarter 4 12/13 |             |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Complaints      | Compliments | Complaints  | Compliments | Complaints      | Compliments | Complaints      | Compliments |
| 28              | 28          | 146         | 109         | 47              | 29          | 24              | 37          |

This quarter we have seen a significant decrease in the number of complaints received particularly for the Refuse and Recycling service. At the beginning of this year a dedicated call centre was set up at Bromsgrove Depot staffed by experienced team members to deal with queries for Environmental Services. Armed with local and current knowledge of their service area, this team has been able to deal with requests for missed collections as they come in. This has resulted in a much lower number of complaints being recorded for this service.

We can see that many of the complaints we receive have several factors in common and this quarter they were:

- Not doing what we promised
- Poor communication
- Staff not having any empathy or understanding of customer's needs
- Not responding to customers calls or emails
- Unacceptable delays in taking action

These are issues that we are addressing by:

- Developing new guidance for staff about how they can best use the functionality of their telephones to make sure calls are answered in their absence.

- Trialing a new complaint process where the customer is contacted as soon as the complaint is received to discuss our understanding and what we can do to put it right as soon as possible.
- Providing refresher training for staff using our customer feedback system.

The total figures for last year compared with 2011/12 are as follows:

|         | Total compliments | Total complaints | Dealt with in target time |
|---------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| 2011/12 | 109               | 146              | 111(76%)                  |
| 2012/13 | 124               | 151              | 95 (63%)                  |

Over the year there has been an increase in the number of complaints that haven't been responded to within our 15 day standard. Customers were kept informed of delays unless they were of just a couple of days. The data does not show that complaints are being ignored, nor is there any evidence that complaints are not being properly processed.

We are also aware that because of organisational changes there is a need to provide training on our customer feedback system to new staff or staff that have changed roles. This is currently taking place.

### Complaints and compliments by department

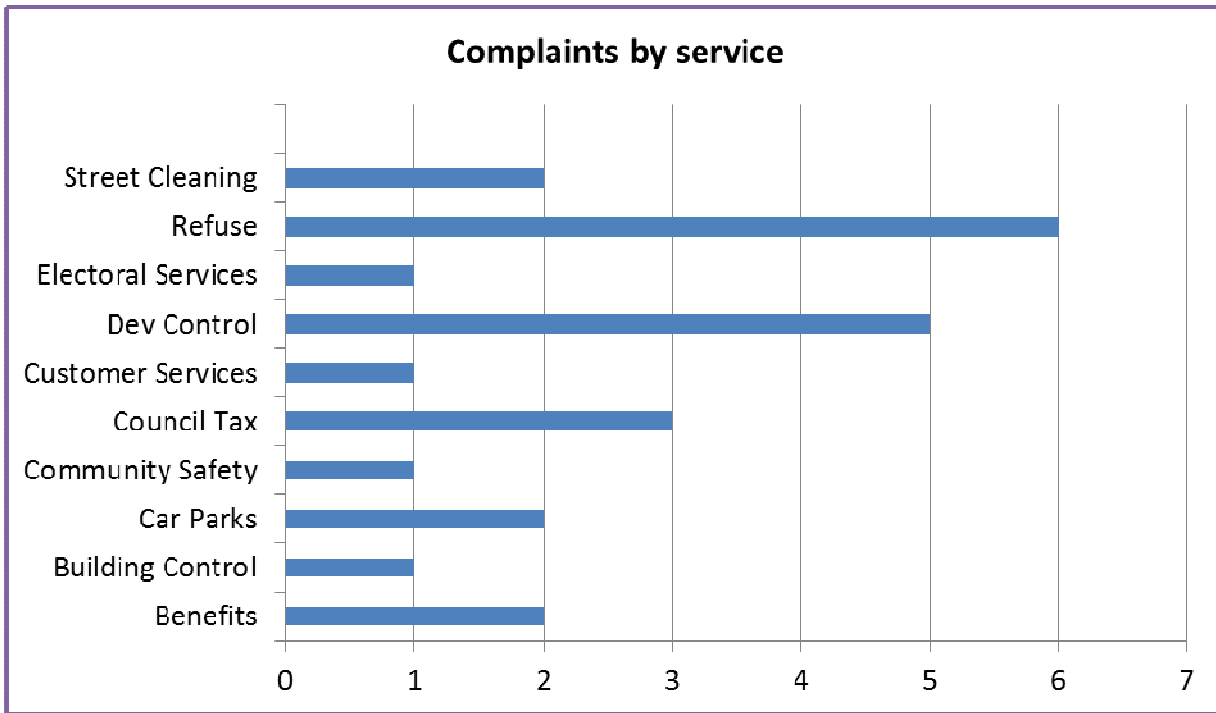
The following table shows the total of the complaints and compliments received by department.

Those departments with the highest demand inevitably have higher number of complaints but compared with the total demand the numbers are low.

| Department                    | Compliments | Complaints | Responded to within 15 working days | Still open |
|-------------------------------|-------------|------------|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Community Services            | 12          | 1          | 1                                   | 0          |
| Customer Services             | 3           | 1          | 1                                   | 0          |
| Environmental Services        | 12          | 10         | 8                                   | 0          |
| Legal and Democratic Services | 0           | 1          | 0                                   | 0          |
| Leisure and Culture           | 1           | 0          | 0                                   | 0          |
| Planning and Regeneration     | 8           | 6          | 1                                   | 0          |
| Resources                     | 1           | 5          | 1                                   | 1          |
|                               | <b>37</b>   | <b>24</b>  | <b>12</b>                           | <b>1</b>   |

### Number of complaints by service (detailed)

The following table provides a more detailed breakdown of complaints by service.



### Time taken to respond to complaints

We aim to respond to customer complaints within 15 working days and 50% of complaints received during this quarter were dealt with within that timeframe.

Where it has taken us longer to respond than expected, (12 cases) customers were informed that there would be a delay, except where the delay was only 1 day (3 cases), or where the customer could not be contacted (1 case).

The reasons for delay are detailed below, along with details of the complaint and the outcome.

| Complaint details   | Outcome of investigation              | Action taken   | Days taken to respond and reason for delay |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Community Services</b>   |                                       |  |  |
| Customer unhappy that we did not respond to his email informing us of a an illegal sale of a vehicle on a highway | Team did not respond in time to email | Apology given and investigation into alleged illegal sale undertaken | 4  |

| <b>Customer Services</b>   |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
| Customer unhappy that they had to wait over 35 minutes to be seen at the Customer Service Centre.  | Customer did not give name or contact details, and it has not been possible to identify who they were waiting to see (queues for some enquiries are longer than others by their nature). | Queue management will be improved and checked, to ensure reasonably accurate information about possible wait times are provided. | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>Environmental Services</b>  |  |  |   |
| Customer unhappy that the car park machine wouldn't accept the coins he was putting in.  |  | Apology given and machine inspected and serviced.  | <b>13</b>   |
| Customer unhappy that she has no response to her car parking appeal yet has had a letter from a debt collection agency regarding the fine.       | Error in process identified.   | Apology given, debt collection cancelled and appeal process underway.  | <b>10</b>   |
| Customer unhappy that her bins are still being left in a dangerous position despite her complaint four months ago                                | This round has had some problems which have been resolved.   | Apology given and collection will be monitored.  | <b>14</b>   |
| Customer unhappy that his recycling wasn't collected and this is the fourth time in 12 months.   | No obvious problems with this collection.  | Apology given and collection will be monitored   | <b>1</b>  |
| Customer unhappy that the message on telephone number for the bulky waste service kept prompting him for an extension number and kept repeating. | Our error as out dated web pages could still be found by a Google search   | Apology given and pages deleted  | <b>1</b>  |
| Customer unhappy with the Xmas Refuse collections and that the black bags she left outside were attacked by animals.                             | Information was published in the local press and our website   | Explanation given.   | <b>11</b>   |
| Customer unhappy with the questions he was asked about his disability for an assisted collection   | No evidence found that staff were rude   | Customer visited and explanation given about why we need to ask such questions   | <b>17</b><br>Delay in being able to speak to customer |

|   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| Customer unhappy that a member of the street cleaning staff has been seen visiting shops when he should be working.                         | No evidence found but this will be monitored   | Customer informed.   | <b>16</b><br>Complex investigation  |
| Customer unhappy that alarms went off in disabled toilet.   | Alarm system checked and will be monitored   | Apology given and customer given advice on what to do if it happens again. | <b>3</b>  |
| Customer unhappy that although she was recently granted an assisted collection it hasn't happened.  | Crews reminded.  | Apology given and collection will be monitored.                            | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>Legal and Democratic Services</b>  |  |  |   |
| Customer is unhappy about the wrong details being on the register for her and her husband and suspects that they have fraudulently entered. | No evidence found and all possible checks made to signatures. Customer had been provided with the necessary guidance relating to anonymous registration but has not completed the process. | Explanation given of how the process works.                                | <b>32</b><br>Complex and lengthy investigation.<br><br>HOCS carried out independent investigation in this case. |
| <b>Planning and Regeneration</b>  |  |  |   |
| Customer claims that the roof tiles on her house are not the right type and were signed off by Building Control with the previous owner     | Customer given incorrect information by builder.   | Explanation given to customer  | <b>24</b><br>Complex investigation involving external contractors   |
| Customer unhappy that a planning application was accepted but a similar one was refused.  | Application followed all correct procedures  | Explanation given  | <b>1</b>  |
| Customer unhappy about a planning application for new houses and the procedure at the planning meeting                                      | Members did consider all objections in the officer's report.<br><br>The developer's consultation process is out of Council's control.  | Explanation given  | <b>21</b><br>Complex investigation  |
| Customer unhappy about an approved planning application   | The loss of privacy was considered and has been addressed.   | Explanation given  | <b>13</b>   |



|  |   |   |           |
|--|---|---|-----------|
| Customer is unhappy about the decision to allow both their neighbour's application as they consider the proposal breaches the 45 degree code, invades their privacy and has resulted in a loss of light. | The 45 degree code was applied correctly and consultation is not required for a non-material amendment.   | Explanation given   | <b>16</b> |
| Customer unhappy that her neighbours planning proposal will affect her light and is being built into her garage wall   | Application followed all correct procedures   | Explanation given and advised that concern about the garage wall is a civil matter. | <b>16</b> |
| <b>Resources</b>   |   |   |           |
| Customer unhappy with the way that his benefits claim was assessed.  | Officer made mistake with calculation. This has since been rectified.   | Apology given and officer advised.  | <b>16</b> |
| Customer unhappy that when he rang to inform us that he was moving out he was asked for details of who was moving in.  | This is a general power we have to request information from him as the owner of the property which could be used to identify who is the liable person for any period specified in the notice. | Explanation given   | <b>21</b> |
| Customer unhappy that the Council Tax leaflet does not explain how the Council spends the funds generated.   | There is a significant amount of information in the leaflet but it did not meet this customer's expectations.   | More detailed information sent as requested.  | <b>17</b> |
| Customer unhappy that his Council Tax has been increased.  |   | Customer called and explanation given   | <b>1</b>  |

### Time taken to respond to complaints by service.

This chart shows the breakdown of all complaints by response time.



We can see that there are several complaints that have taken longer to respond to than our standard of 15 days. This is in part due to the complexity of some cases but we are also aware that because of staff changes and restructures, some teams may need some refresher training on our customer feedback process.

### “You said – we listened” – what did we change as a result of complaints?

Some of the changes made as a result of complaints include:-

- Checks are being made on our web pages to make we have deleted out of date information for refuse collections
- Alarm system in disabled toilet will be monitored to ensure efficiency.

### Number of complaints escalated to Head of Customer Services

There was one complaint escalated to the Head of Customer Services, for further investigation or action.

A customer was unhappy that his application for a storage site for caravans was rejected. He also complained that his complaint was not handled properly and we hadn't followed the proper process.

After investigation, the Head of Customer Services found no evidence of failure to follow proper planning process. However we had failed to provide a written response when requested. An apology was given to the customer for this.

### Happy Customers!

From the **37** compliments received we can see that customers appreciate the range of services the Council provides, especially when we deal with their requests in a timely and professional manner. Here are some of the compliments we have received for information.

| Team              | Compliment Detail  |
|-------------------|--|
| Lifeline          | Customer wished to thank Lifeline for all the help they have given him.  |
| Lifeline          | Customer thanked us for all our help and said that the service is marvellous.  |
| Lifeline          | Customer wanted to thank Lifeline for all our help during a recent incident.   |
| Customer Services | Customer says she recently visited the CSC twice over two separate days in Bromsgrove's' Dolphin Centre and had occasion to talk to "Andy" on the front desk. On both occasions he went above and beyond the level of service expected and was an absolute credit to the organisation, and himself. Customer stated that they do not leave compliments lightly but would like to advise of his excellent customer care friendly approach. Requested that thanks be passed on and that we ensure that his supervisor is aware of just how good a job he is doing. |
| Refuse            | Customer would like to pass her thanks onto the crew who came and collected her bins, on time like they normally would.  |
| Refuse            | Customer reported some fly tipping and wanted to compliment the men in acting so quickly as it was removed the next day.   |
| Street Cleaning   | Customer says she would like to comment on the Road Sweeping which took place on her road. The person driving the Road Sweeper carried out an excellent job in clearing leaves and debris from the road and pavements. We have lived in this road for 7 years and the road cleaning has never achieved the standard of the past 2 days. Please pass on our congratulations for a job well done.  |
| Planning          | Thank you to you and your colleagues for all the work you have put into achieving this rightful and, regarding environmental preservation, important decision  |
| Planning          | Customer sent in comment card to say that Ruth Lambert is extremely helpful and gave her some good advice.   |

### 3. Local Government Ombudsman Complaints

During this quarter there were three complaints referred from the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO), for investigation. One is still under investigation and therefore not reported in detail. Those investigated are detailed below – cases 3 and 4.

There were a total of six complaints referred from the Ombudsman during 2012/13. Two are still under investigation and no outcome can be reported. Details of all those investigated are as follows:

|   | Team                 | Complaint   | Decision  |
|---|----------------------|---|---|
| 1 | Legal Services       | Customer claimed that the Council wrongly handled a parish councillor's appeal about a standards committee decision.  | The LGO decided not to investigate as there was no evidence to substantiate the complaint.  |
| 2 | Parking              | The customer complained that ticket machine was only accepting certain coins and when he called into the Dolphin Centre just before his ticket was about to run out the receptionist was taking a phone call and he was kept waiting, resulting in him being late back to his car and receiving an ECN  | The LGO rejected his complaint without a formal investigation and found that there had been no maladministration and no injustice to the customer.  |
| 3 | Refuse and Recycling | The customer complained that the Council regularly fails to ensure wheelie bins are returned to a safe place after being emptied. He was concerned that by allowing bins to cause an obstruction, the Council is not complying with its stated policy. His wing mirror was damaged as he passed an overhanging wheelie bin at the side of the road. He would like the Council to reimburse the repair costs.                                | The LGO decided that this case was outside their jurisdiction and that the customer could pursue a civil case   |
| 4 | Dog Warden-WRS       | The complaint related to the awarding of contracts for dog warden services and was made by an ex-employee who had hoped to be awarded one of the contracts but was not successful. She also complained that after the new service was set up the Council had not notified interested parties who used the service sufficiently well and she had been disturbed by numerous callers who still thought that she was acting as the dog warden. | LGO felt that customer should have been notified in writing of process for contract re-tender rather than only being notified verbally. It was also recognised that hand over arrangements could have been better dealt with. The LGO recommended local settlement to resolve the complaint. The Council/ WRS agreed compensation payment of £250 to reflect the time and trouble taken by the customer to make the complaint. The customer also asked for a letter of apology and one was sent by WRS. |

## 4. Customer Service Centre Information

This section provides some statistical information in respect of the service provided at the Customer Service Centre (CSC).

The operational purpose of the Customer Services team is 'Help me get the support I need with my issue or problem'

### Customer numbers

The following table shows the numbers of customer transactions recorded by the Customer Service Team:

|  | Totals for 2011/12 | 4th quarter 2011/12 | 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter 2012/13 | 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter 2012/13 | 3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter 2012/13 | 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter 2012/13 | Totals for 2012/13 |
|--|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Face to face (enquiries)               | 14,121             | 3,774               | 3,478                           | 3,546                           | 2,549                           | 3,289                           | 12,862             |
| Telephone (enquiries)                  | 110,036            | 23,416              | 20,176                          | 21,422                          | 17,850                          | 25,839                          | 85,287             |
| Email (enquiries handled by CS team)   | 3,496              | 257                 | 322                             | 904                             | 923                             | 765                             | 2,914              |
| Payments (through cash office)         | 26,100             | 5,372               | 6,073                           | 5393                            | 6,207                           | 5,328                           | 23,001             |
| Payments (online)                      | 8,814              | 2,792               | 1,458                           | 1,315                           | 2,851                           | 3,733                           | 9,357              |
| Payments (automated telephone service) | 6,280              | 1,810               | 1,037                           | 1,008                           | 1,897                           | 2,653                           | 6,595              |
| Payments (assisted telephone service)  | 10,144             | 3,355               | 2,455                           | 2,237                           | 2,558                           | 3,194                           | 10,444             |
| <b>Total customer contacts</b>         | <b>178,991</b>     | <b>46,735</b>       | <b>34,999</b>                   | <b>35,825</b>                   | <b>34,835</b>                   | <b>44,801</b>                   | <b>150,460</b>     |

The trend for increasing use of on line and automated payment options continues although there are still a significant number of customers who continue to call the CSC to make a payment. Once the cash receipting system has been upgrade we will carry out a publicity campaign to encourage use of the automated 24/7 service.

Overall we have seen a reduction in business for the Customer Services team during 2012/13 as expected due to changes in service delivery. Resources have reduced in parallel with some customer service advisors transferring in to other roles within the organisations and making

excellent use of their customer care skills to support the shift of customer demand to expert teams.

Telephone answering performance cannot be assessed accurately for this period due to the change in call handling system, however we do know that we saw an increase in abandoned calls in January 2013 due to weather related surge in demand. Additionally system failure in March will have impacted on performance.

Overall, answering times have improved compared to 2011/12. On average wait times are 10% better than in 2011/12 and 10% more calls are being answered in less than 30 seconds. The percentage of abandoned calls has also reduced by over 3%. However, with the majority of calls now being handled by expert teams we are unable to provide performance data for those teams at present but work is ongoing to address this issue.

The new call handling system is working well and early indications suggest another improvement in call answering times as a result of the change. We are also able to use our resources more flexibly which will help to maintain service levels despite reducing resources.

A significant peak in Benefits and Council Tax customers at the end of March and early April has put strain on the resources available to deal with the demand. The Customer Service Manager, whilst not responsible for these services, works closely with the relevant managers to try to ensure the best possible service for customers. However, there have been lengthy wait times, and a need to call a number of times, for some customers. The Head of Finance is currently assessing the customer demand experienced during this period in order to identify ways in which we can reduce the need for so many customers to make contact at this time of year

## 5. 'Every Customer, Every Time – Everybody Matters' – Action Plan

The Every Customer, Every Time – Everybody Matters' Customer Experience Strategy set out a clear vision in respect of customer service.

### Our vision is to:-

- **make it easy to access services, joining up with other organisations where possible;**
- **provide a high quality customer experience for all customers who make contact with us, regardless of when or how they make contact;**
- **ensure customers get the information and advice they need in a way that suits their needs and is easy to understand.**

This was supported by an action plan, focusing on 4 key themes intended to focus on delivering the best quality services that meet the needs of individuals for the lowest possible costs. These 4 themes are:

- **Customer experience** - going back to basics to ensure that the customer's experience of contacting us is always positive – even when we can't give the answer the customer wants.
- **Transform** – reviewing, and changing, service delivery based on what customers actually want and need and building the processes around the customer rather than to meet organisational needs.

- **Understanding the customer (including internal customers or partners)** – through feedback, complaints, compliments, surveys, forums, and using customer insight tools such as Mosaic and the information held on our own systems.
- **Our Staff** – ensuring all our staff are truly customer focused, and share the values and behaviours necessary to ensure we exceed our standards and our customer's expectations.

By implementing the Strategy we were also mindful of Bromsgrove District Council's priorities, specifically to provide **Value for Money**.

In the last two years there has been considerable progress with much of the action plan having been completed. Many of the actions have now become normal business and our approach to service transformation has customer service at its core thus ensuring a customer focused approach to all service development.

Some of the successes include:-

- Customer Focused 'behaviours' and expectations are embedded in our recruitment and performance development processes, ensuring that all staff are clear about how we will interact with customers and colleagues . Managers have received training to help them work with members of their team using coaching methods to help improve customer care provisions
- We have held regular training events in a variety of formats ranging from in-house short awareness sessions such as the Customer Services pantomime, and 'handling complaints' training tailored to meet individual team needs, to formal training sessions on:
  - Customer focused written communications;
  - Customer Care Excellence;
  - Dealing with Difficult Customers; and
  - Coaching for Excellence,

Customer service focused training forms part of the annual training plan.

- A range of guidance has been provided to staff and is available on the customer service pages of the staff intranet. These include:
  - Staff customer care handbook;
  - Complaints - handling and recording;
  - Key behaviours
  - Telephone techniques
  - Dealing with Difficult Customers.
- Considerable work has been done on improving the content and accessibility of the Council's website, including a feedback mechanism to enable users to highlight problems or poor content. This work is ongoing with each service managing their own content but working with the Web Development experts to ensure consistency and a high standard.
- An in house Mystery Shopping regime has been developed and is used annually. This is the subject of further development as it is important to ensure this fits with the changing face of service delivery as a result of transformation. This is supported by the 'call back'

system, where Customer Service staff make contact with customers a few weeks after their contact with the Council to find out whether they were happy with the service and if their issue was resolved.

- The customer feedback system was reviewed and simplified. This is now being reviewed again using systems thinking principles, specifically that the managers should speak directly to the customer about their concerns and agree a suitable resolution, wherever possible. This is showing that complaints can be handled more quickly and also more effectively to the customers satisfaction. Although it is recognised that sometimes we are unable to satisfy the customer, evidence so far suggests that the personal interaction is helpful in breaking down misconceptions and poor communication.
- The work of the Customer Service team has changed dramatically over the last two years and so is under constant review, but changes made to the front of house service, cashiering service and structure, and the telephone software have resulted in a more responsive service, as well as reducing the resources required.
- To support the established and well recognised staff awards scheme, we have introduced an ongoing Customer Heroes Award which enable staff and customer to nominate a member of staff at any time of year in recognition of being a customer hero. This has highlighted excellent customer care across the authority.

There are 3 actions currently in development. These are:

- Providing guidance/opportunities for people to get involved at the Council;
- Staff surveys; and a
- Rolling communications/consultation plan.

6 actions out of a total of 57 have not been completed. These have all been reviewed and no further action taken as the systems thinking approach has superseded the need. The actions not completed are:

1. Action - CMT Walking the Wards.
  - System Thinking requires system leaders to understand their systems in much greater depth, including the impact on the locality. Work in Housing, Planning and Environmental Services has resulted in CMT and other managers working in specific areas and 'out in the work'.
2. Action - Use of Customer Insight tools to inform decision making.
  - Although we carried out a pilot we found that the customer insight data did not take account of true customer demand. Again, as systems thinking places the customer's needs at the heart of service delivery we found that there was little or no advantage in using such tools.
3. Action – Working with partners across Worcestershire to implement a joint self-service strategy.
  - We are developing self-service mechanism in line with systems thinking principles, based on needs identified within each service and where it adds value to our customers.



4. Action - Achieve Customer Service Excellence Accreditation.
  - An internal review of the organisation against the CSE criteria showed that we met the majority. The decision was taken to not pursue the costly accreditation and focus our resources instead on system thinking transformation which looks at customer service in the context of the whole system.
5. Action – Ensure customer service features in action plans of all services, as part of our business planning process.
  - The formal business planning process has been discontinued as a result of our move towards the systems thinking approach. This sees customer service as an integral part of all service transformation reviews.
6. Action – Implement GovMetric to capture real time customer feedback on their experience.
  - This has been deferred due to changing priorities. We will continue to monitor customer feedback through complaints, comments and compliments received as well as real time discussions with customers as they do business with us.

The Head of Customer Services will continue to identify areas for improvement and any actions necessary to support the vision to ensure that **every customer** has an excellent experience when dealing with the Council, **every time**.

Amanda de Warr  
Head of Customer Services  
May 2013

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## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

15<sup>th</sup> July 2013

### LIVING WAGE - CONTRACTORS

|                            |                                  |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder  | Roger Hollingworth               |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | Yes                              |
| Relevant Head of Service   | Jayne Pickering ( Exec Director) |
| Wards Affected             | <b>All</b>                       |
| Ward Councillor Consulted  | None specific                    |

#### 1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 Following a request for further information at the meeting of 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2013, this report enables Members to consider the challenges and impact of ensuring the living wage is paid by contractors of the Council.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **Members are requested to consider information provided and to decide on the opportunity to encourage all contractors to pay the living wage to their employees.**

#### 3. KEY ISSUES

##### Financial Implications

- 3.1 It is estimated that there would be an additional cost to a number of contracts where contractors pay their staff a lower amount than the Living Wage. This is difficult to currently quantify as the tender documents require contractors to include a total cost as opposed to rates paid to individual staff members. Should members be minded to request contractors to pay the Living Wage, contractors will be asked to show the cost associated with this separately in the contract documents.
- 3.2 There would also be costs associated with the monitoring of the contractors by the procurement team to ensure that, as far as is practicable, the contractors are complying by paying the Living Wage. It is estimated that the resource required would cost £13k pa.

##### Legal Implications

- 3.3 There are a number of significant legal implications to the Council should contracts be awarded on an unfair basis or without compliance and due regards for the EU Procurement regulations. The procurement team would have to assess each contract to ensure the Living Wage criteria is met and to address all implications of EU regulations.

**Service / Operational Implications**

- 3.4 Following a report in April 2013, members asked for further information and clarification in relation to ensuring contractors pay their staff the Living Wage. Officers have further researched the issue and have made the following points for members consideration;
- The Council could stipulate that all temporary staff be paid the Living Wage as we control the rates via Matrix and they could provide us with evidence of compliance with same on a monthly basis
  - In respect of the Councils Contractors and suppliers employees we could get a form of agreement drawn up and signed by the Contractors/Suppliers wherein they commit to paying the Living Wage to their employees engaged on Council contracts.
  - The payment of Living Wage will only apply to employees directly employed on Council Contracts therefore there is the potential for a two tier pay system at Contractors/Suppliers with its attendant problems. It would be difficult to enforce Contractor/Supplier compliance with such an agreement on payment of the Living Wage without some form of audit mechanism or pay monitoring, which could be difficult with employees not wishing to reveal information about their pay to the Council.
  - If a Contractor/Supplier refuses to sign any such agreement on payment of the Living Wage we cannot either legally terminate existing contractual arrangements or refuse to allow them to bid for contracts or business in general as this would be seen (notably under EU law for contracts over the relevant threshold) as discriminatory/unfair
  - It would be sensible to apply the Living Wage to new contracts only as this would remove some of the potential difficulties identified when trying to enforce the Living Wage retrospectively on existing contracts.
  - When negotiating new contracts we would have to assess case-by-case whether it's in the Council's best interest to require the Living Wage on a contractual basis. One key factor is the law as again notably we must be careful not to breach EU procurement rules, and this must be carefully considered in each case.

- Once we are satisfied that our contractors pay the Living Wage we need to continue to monitor compliance, especially to make sure that wages are raised in line with the Annual Uplift each year.
- The Procurement Policy would have to be revised to ensure Living Wage is paid on new contracts
- The officers would review the current contracts to establish which (if any) fit the Living Wage criteria

**Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

3.5 In encouraging contractors to pay the Living Wage this would provide a fairness to all staff for the Council.

**4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

4.1 The procurement team would have to manage and monitor the compliance of payment and this would be done with regular dialogue with contractors and their staff.

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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Bromsgrove District Council **Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services**



# Overview and Scrutiny **Annual Report**

**2012-2013**



**Bromsgrove**  
District Council  
[www.bromsgrove.gov.uk](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk)



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## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2012-13**

### **CONTENTS**

|   | <b><u>Page Number</u></b> |
|---|---------------------------|
| <b>Foreword from the Chairman</b>                     | 1                         |
| <b>Introduction</b>                                   | 2                         |
| <b>Membership</b>                                     | 3                         |
| <b>The Role of the Overview and Scrutiny Board</b>    | 6                         |
| <b>The Overview and Scrutiny Process</b>              | 7                         |
| <b>Board Investigations 2012-13</b>                   | 10                        |
| <b>Task Group Investigations 2012-13</b>              | 15                        |
| ▪ Planning Policy Task Group                          |                           |
| ▪ Youth Provision Task Group                          |                           |
| ▪ Air Quality Task Group                              |                           |
| <b>Joint Overview and Scrutiny Investigations</b>     | 18                        |
| <b>Future Work of the Overview and Scrutiny Board</b> | 19                        |
| <b>Further Information</b>                            | 20                        |

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## **FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

Welcome to Bromsgrove District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Board's annual report for 2012/13.

The past year has been both busy and productive with numerous activities and services associated with the council being examined. Board Members are ever mindful of their responsibility and commitment to residents whom they serve in scrutinising, impartially, those services which can impact enormously on their lives.

High among the topics looked at has been the Government's new welfare reforms and their effect on residents when devolved down to local level and how the district council planned to implement them causing the least hardship to those in receipt of help.

Homelessness in Bromsgrove and across the county and the strategy to alleviate its effects, and the grant aid available was examined.

Affordable housing at the new Longbridge development, crime and disorder in the district and CCTV also featured in the Board's deliberations as did a new policy on fly posting.

Car parking and a Blue Badge consultation exercise was also discussed.

The board also received regular updates on the work of the county council's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

During the year a number of task groups were also launched. Air Quality and Youth provision in the district are the latest to come under the spotlight and reports on the subsequent findings are expected later this year.

Finally, on a personal note, as new Chairman, I wish to thank Board Members for their help and support as well as Committee Services Officers for their continued hard work and endeavours.

**Councillor Peter Lammas  
Chairman**

## **INTRODUCTION**

We are pleased to present the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report which outlines our work during 2012-13 and provides general information on the overview and scrutiny processes at Bromsgrove District Council.

Overview and Scrutiny is a key part of the democratic decision making process in local councils, where elected councillors outside of the Cabinet can contribute to shaping council policy, community well being and accountability. This is done by reviewing council services and policies, community issues and key decisions and making recommendations for improvement.

The four key principles of Overview and Scrutiny are:

- Provides a 'critical friend' challenge to executive policy makers and decision-makers.
- Enables the voice and concerns of the public to be heard.
- Is carried out by 'independent minded members' who lead and own the scrutiny role.
- Drives improvement in public services

The Members of the Board consider these principles when selecting topics to investigate whether it is holding the executive to account, reviewing policies, policy development or scrutiny of external bodies.

**MEMBERSHIP** (The Board is made up of 13 Members)



**Cllr. Steve Colella**  
(Chairman 18<sup>th</sup> June 2012 to 25<sup>th</sup> March 2013)



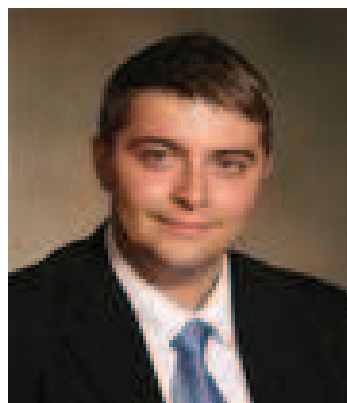
**Cllr. Peter Lammas**  
(Chairman 26<sup>th</sup> March 2013 onwards)



**Cllr. Roy Clarke** (Vice Chairman  
26<sup>th</sup> March 2013 onwards)



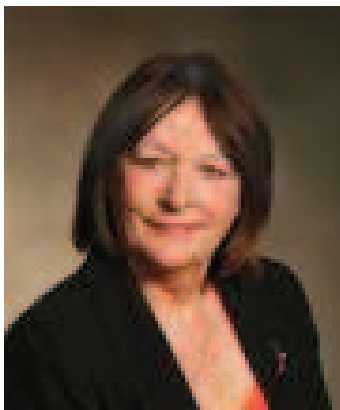
**Cllr. Chris Bloore**



**Cllr. James Brogan**



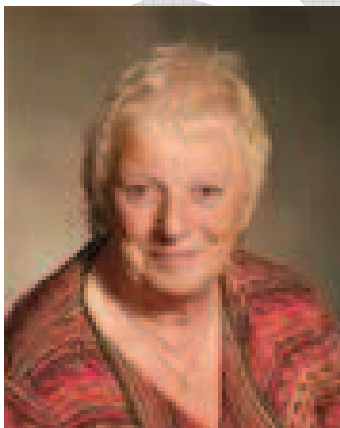
Cllr. Dr. Brian Cooper



Cllr. Mrs. Rita Dent



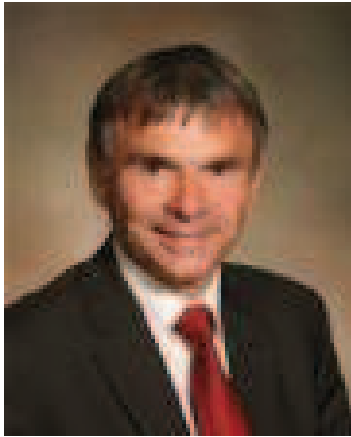
Cllr. Keith Grant-Pearce



Cllr. Mrs. June Griffiths



Cllr. Rod Laight



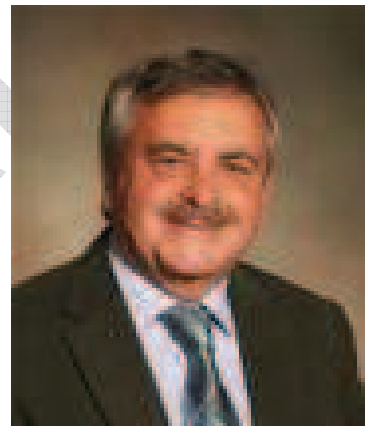
Cllr. Peter McDonald



Cllr. Sean Shannon



Cllr. Mrs. Caroline Spencer



Cllr. Les Turner

## **THE ROLE OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

Overview and Scrutiny is a key part of the Council's political structure and it plays a vital role in improving the services that people of the District use, whether a resident, employed here or just visiting. It does not just look at the way the Council does things, it can look at anything which affects the lives of people within the District and it allows citizens to have a greater say in Council matters.

Overview and Scrutiny allows Councillors to review and scrutinise decisions, look at existing practices and make recommendations to help ensure the residents of Bromsgrove District receive excellent services. The aim is to ensure overview and scrutiny adds value to the Council's decision-making process and makes a positive contribution towards policy development.

The terms of reference of the Overview and Scrutiny Board also include the following:

- Overall responsibility for monitoring performance improvement.
- Identifying unsatisfactory progress or performance and making recommendations on remedial action to the Cabinet.
- Overall responsibility for monitoring the Council Plan and the Sustainable Community Strategy and making recommendations to the Cabinet.

The detailed terms of reference and procedure rules for the Overview and Scrutiny Board can be found at Part 3 (Part C) and Part 8 of the Council Constitution. The Council Constitution can be accessed by using the following link.

<http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/cms/council-and-democracy/councillors-and-committees/decision-making/council-constitution.aspx>

### **Number of Meetings**

The Overview and Scrutiny Board met on a monthly basis during 2012-13 and there were a total of 9 meetings throughout the year. The meeting arranged for 16th January 2013 was cancelled due to adverse weather conditions.



## **THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCESS**

### **Topic Proposals**

Any Councillor, member of the public or officer can submit an overview and scrutiny proposal. The Board will then make a decision whether or not the suggested topic will be included on the work programme. In making that decision, the Board considers points such as:

- Reasons given and supporting evidence as to why the subject needs to be considered
- Links to Council priorities
- Possible key outcomes that the proposer anticipates could be achieved.

Other relevant points that are taken into account are whether it is of key interest to the public, if it is a poorly performing service, contributes to the Council Plan, an area of concern identified by internal or external audit, a review that could render significant savings or value for money or identified as a key issue in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

### **Approach to Investigations**

Overview and Scrutiny investigations can take a variety of different approaches. The Board can decide to undertake a “short, sharp inquiry” through meetings of the Board or by setting up a Task Group, which meets outside of the formal committee process and which may involve other non-Executive Members of the Council.

Task Groups can be more flexible in their timing and approach to an investigation and can take a longer or shorter time, depending on the issue. Task Groups are often able to consider an issue in more detail and take the investigation outside of the formal committee process to look at what is happening on the ground, by undertake research and interviewing key stakeholders in a more informal setting.

### **Receiving Evidence**

Overview and Scrutiny investigations receive evidence from which their conclusions and recommendations may be drawn. Evidence may be received during a formal Board meeting, in writing to Members of the Board or during a Task Group investigation. Evidence may include written reports from Council officers, written testimonials from interested parties, background papers, oral evidence from witnesses and site visits to look at particular places and events on the ground.

## **Overview and Scrutiny Inquiries and Recommendations**

At the end of an investigation, conclusions are drawn up and recommendations made to the Cabinet and any other relevant local decision makers. The conclusions and recommendations, together with the relevant evidence, may be presented in a report or sometimes just recorded in the minutes of the Board meeting. Reports and recommendations are agreed by the Board before referral to Cabinet for consideration.

Recommendations may also be made to the full Council (policy and budgetary decisions) or to external agencies where the council does not have the power to act.

### **Executive Response**

Overview and Scrutiny reports and recommendations are referred to Cabinet to make executive decisions in respect of each Overview and Scrutiny recommendation and to provide an Executive Response to the Board. The Cabinet is asked to agree, reject or amend each recommendation and to provide an indicative implementation date by which time the agreed recommendations are to be carried out.

The relevant Portfolio Holder is expected to attend the Board Meeting to present the Cabinet Response and answer any questions. If a recommendation is made to any other agency they may also be asked to provide an executive decision and response.

### **Tracking the Outcomes of Recommendations**

Ultimately Overview and Scrutiny is about making a difference. The Overview and Scrutiny Board tracks all recommendations made to and agreed by Cabinet through Quarterly Recommendation Tracker reports. In depth investigations and Task Groups are usually reviewed 12 months after their report has been considered by the Cabinet. The purpose of this is to check if the agreed recommendations have been implemented and to see what outcomes have been achieved.

### **Short, Sharp Inquiries**

A “short sharp inquiry” is carried out through a mix of both formal Overview and Scrutiny Board meetings and informal meetings involving all Members of the Board and chaired by the Overview and Scrutiny Board Chairman. This type of inquiry can be used for the investigation of a topic already on the Board’s work programme or a topic on the Forward Plan which the Board felt warranted a more in depth investigation being carried out. However, it can also be used to consider matters of local concern, that have not been scheduled on either the work programme or Forward Plan but which Members feel would merit inclusion and further investigation.

## **Task Groups**

If it is felt that a more in depth and detailed inquiry is required, the Overview and Scrutiny Board can appoint Task Groups which are separate from the Board and can include Members who are not Members of the Board (Members of the Cabinet cannot join a task group) to consider issues outside of the formal committee process or to allow an in depth overview and scrutiny investigation. It is best practice for the Chairman of a Task Group to be a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Board. Task Groups carry out investigations and report back to the Board with their findings and recommendations. Task Groups can use a variety of methods to gather evidence and can invite relevant officers, representatives from external organisations and members of the public who have an interest and would like to put their views forward to act as witnesses.

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## **BOARD INVESTIGATIONS 2012-13**

*In addition to the regular standing items on the Board's agenda (detailed under the section Future Work of the Overview and Scrutiny Board), it also requested and received reports and commented on the following areas:*

➤ **Scrutiny of Crime and Disorder Partnerships – Introduction to the Work of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership**

Following the merge of Redditch Borough Council, Wyre Forest District Council and Bromsgrove District Council's Community Safety Partnership to form the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership the Board were provided with background information and a progress report at the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2012, which included the purpose of the partnership, its structure, financial arrangements, local delivery and representation. The Board requested further updates on progress made in formally establishing the new Partnership.

➤ **New Fly Posting Policy and Procedures**

At the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2012 the Board received a presentation on the draft Fly Posting Policy from the Senior Community Safety Project Officer and the Environmental Services Manager. The aim was to give the Board an insight into some of the content of the new policy and to allow its comments to be fed into the final report which was to be presented to Cabinet in September 2012. Following detailed discussion and clarification of a number of points, the Board recommended to Cabinet that the policy be amended to ensure the inclusion of a "revocation" clause within the hire contracts for businesses which hired the Council's facilities and advertised such events without permissions.

➤ **Pre-scrutiny Longbridge Statement of Principles regarding Affordable Housing Provision**

The Board received a presentation from the Head of Community Services in respect of the Longbridge Statement of Principles regarding affordable housing provision, which included the proportion of new residential development to be affordable housing, the preferred type, size and tenure of affordable housing to be sought together with the targeted standard of construction and the distribution within the development. It was stressed to Members that this would not apply to any other development within the District. The statement of principles had been drawn up in order to provide both Planning and Strategic Housing Officers with a set of agreed guidelines to assist them in negotiating affordable housing provision at Longbridge.

- **Car Parking – Decline in Usage and Blue Badge Holder Consultation**

At the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2012 Members expressed concerns about the declining use of car parks in the town centre and asked for further information on the implications of that decline. A full and detailed response to Members' concerns was received at the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> September and the Board discussed how the Council could be more pro-active in addressing the decrease in usage, including the possible reduction in the car parking charges. Car Parking was in the process of become part of a shared service arrangement with Wychavon District Council and once this had stabilised a full parking review would be undertaken followed by a marketing campaign. This would be carried out following any changes which may arise following the results of the survey/consultation for Blue Badge Holders - the Board received a presentation in respect of the findings of a working group which had been set up to investigate the needs of Blue Badge Holders in order to better understand the needs and views of local disabled residents. Members were also informed that the introduction of civil parking enforcement (in April 2013) would also be a consideration when undertaking a full review of car parking.
- **CCTV Shared Service – the role of the CCTV Team**

Following the completion of a topic proposal, earlier in the year by the then Chairman, the Board received a presentation at its meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2012 and discussed the topic further at a subsequent meeting. Members had initially been concerned about the effectiveness of CCTV both as a deterrent to criminals and as evidence to prosecuting criminals. The Board discussed the CCTV Scheme's objectives and code of practice (which was due to be reviewed) and the benefits of this being a shared service. Members were informed that following new legislation, the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and the appointment of a Surveillance Camera Commissioner the review of the code of practice being delayed, but would also involve a review of the camera scheme to ensure that these were in the correct position and did not infringe on people's right to privacy. The Board requested that it received a report on the revised code of practice in due course in order for its comments to be fed into the final document.
- **The Work of Worcestershire Regulatory Services**

A proposal to carry out a countywide Joint scrutiny exercise into the work of Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) was received and accepted by the Overview and Scrutiny Board at its meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2013. As Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) is the host authority for this service, under the joint protocol set up and agreed by all authorities, it would fall to BDC to host the joint scrutiny exercise. With this in mind the Board agreed that it would be helpful to receive a presentation from the Head of WRS on the work carried out and background information as to how the shared service came about. A detailed presentation was received by the Board at its meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2013 in preparation for the commencement of the joint scrutiny exercise in July 2013.

➤ **The Transformation Process**

At the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2013 the Board received a presentation from the Head of Business Transformation and the Transformation Manager on the subject of Systems Thinking. This covered recent examples of service transformation and how it made use of the expertise of offices involved in delivering services and the involvement of staff at all levels in the process, including how proposed changes were trialled to ensure different process would work effectively and the positive impact on customer satisfaction feedback received to date. Members requested that they receive updates and seminars which focused on the transformation of particular services in the future.

*During the course of 2012/13 the Overview and Scrutiny Board has shown a particular interest in the effects of both the current economic climate and the forthcoming welfare reforms on the residents of the District and the work that is being carried out by the Council to mitigate the problems that these issues could cause. This has led Members to consider the following areas in detail:*

➤ **Countywide Homelessness Strategy 2012-17**

At the Board meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2012 Members received a presentation in respect of the Worcestershire Joint Homeless Strategy. This highlighted both national and local issues which could have an effect on homelessness, including the Comprehensive Spending Review, the impact of the Localism Act, the increase in rough sleeping across the County and links to childhood life experiences such as domestic abuse and relationship breakdown. Members' attention was also drawn to the strategic goals of the strategy and the work which would be carried out in order for those goals to be met.

➤ **Government Welfare Reforms**

At the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2012 the Board received a presentation on the impact of Welfare and Housing Benefit Reforms on residents in Bromsgrove. This updated Members on the impact to the Council on the benefit changes that had been made since the Board considered an earlier report (at the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2012). The presentation detailed the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and how this had been reduced, the number of households in Bromsgrove affected by the benefit cap and how social housing tenants in under-occupied properties would no longer receive LHA. Members were concerned that this would have on the Housing Options Service and lead to an increase in homelessness, but were provided with details of work that was already being carried out in order to raise awareness of the welfare reforms and encouraging residents who may be affected by the changes to discuss with the Council the options available.



➤ **Homelessness Grants**

The Overview and Scrutiny Board had originally received a report on the Homelessness Grants 2012/13 in February 2012 and at that meeting had requested that an update be provided in 12 months' time. At its meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2013 Members were informed that the Council had a significant number of schemes in place in order to mitigate homelessness in the District and that a significant part of this work continued to be preventative and included support from the voluntary sector. Members' main concerns were around the ring fencing of funds for grants and how the welfare reforms which would come into effect from April 2013, would impact on residents.

➤ **Hardship Fund Payments and Criteria**

At the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2012 Members requested information on the "Hardship Fund" and in particular how payments would be made and the criteria which had to be met to receive a payment. At the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2013 Members were advised that the Essential Living Fund had replaced community care grants and crisis loans and that the fund had been allocated by the Government to the County Council in two-tier authority areas such as Worcestershire. This was due to come into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 and delivery of the process within the District has been delegated to the Council, allowing local knowledge and accessibility to underpin the management of the fund. As part of this process Officers would be taking into account applicants' eligibility to apply for other local grants and benefits when determining whether to provide support to an individual using the Essential Living Fund.

*During the early part of 2012/13 the Worcestershire NHS Joint Service Review was at the forefront of discussions and the updates received from its representative on HOSC played an important part in keeping Members update on developments:*

➤ **Worcestershire County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)**

During the 2012/13 Municipal Year the Board has, again, received regular updates from the Council's representative (who must be a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Board) on the above Committee. The agenda and previous meeting's minutes of HOSC continue to be a standing item on the agenda and the representative feeds back to Members at each meeting any areas of interest and responds to questions. This allows the views of the Board to be feedback into the HOSC where appropriate. Early on in 2012/13 the information provided by the Board's representative on the HOSC led Members to request a meeting with representatives of the Joint Service Review. A presentation and detailed question and answer session took place at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2012 and are detailed below:

- **Joint Service Review – the future configuration of Acute Services in Worcestershire**

The Board received a presentation in respect of the Worcestershire NHS Joint Service Review, Worcestershire hospitals – fit for tomorrow, from representatives of Worcestershire Acute Health Trust (WAHT). The presentation was an overview of the case for change of the Joint Services Review and provided information on the models of care which were being development together with details of the project's planned timetable and any associated governance issues in relation to it.

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## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUPS 2012-13**

### **Planning Policy Task Group**

*Although the majority of the work carried out by the Planning Policy Task Group took place in 2011/12 the recommendations continued to be considered by Cabinet into 2012/13.*

#### **Background**

An Overview and Scrutiny Topic Proposal Form into the planning process was submitted to the Board meeting held on 13th June 2011 with the request that it be included within the Work Programme of the Board for the coming year. After discussion it was agreed that it would be necessary to break the process down into specific areas of planning and to concentrate on the areas of most concern to both Members and residents in the first instance. It was further agreed that initially, a Board Investigation would be carried out in to Planning Enforcement. An initial, informal meeting of the Board took place in July 2011 to discuss this area.

At a subsequent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 27th September 2011 and following a request from full Council, it was agreed that a Task Group would be established to scrutinise matters relating to planning policy issues. As there was significant interest from Members on this particular topic it was agreed that a special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board would be held on 12th October 2011 in order to appoint a Chairman of the Task Group and to agree membership.

Following discussions at the Board meeting held on 21st November 2011 it was further agreed that the work of the Board Investigation in to Planning Enforcement would be amalgamated within the scope of the Planning Policy Task Group.

#### **Key Findings and Recommendations**

The Task Group began its investigations with a presentation from the Head of Planning and Regeneration which gave Members an understanding of the planning process and the setting and enforcement of planning conditions. Members used a particular application, the Former Landfill Site, Alvechurch Highway, Lydiate Ash (more commonly known as Marlbrook Tip) as a case study and the evidence gathered from this proved invaluable in every area of the investigation. The investigation was broken down into 4 areas and this lead to 12 recommendations being put forward covering planning applications and the committee process, the

planning enforcement process, the Internal Audit Ad Hoc Investigation into Marlbrook Tip and the Customer Feedback Complaints process.

The Task Group acknowledged that the Council had made mistakes over the years in respect of the Marlbrook Tip site and this was reflected in several of the recommendations that were made. The Task Group was also concerned at the inconsistency of the recording of service requests and complaints within the Enforcement area and was pleased to be informed that steps had already been taken to rectify this area. It was envisaged that together with the recommendations this would ensure that similar errors would not occur again in the future. The Task Group supported the recommendations within the Internal Audit Ad Hoc Investigation report and recommended that these be picked up within the Overview and Scrutiny Board's quarterly recommendation tracker to ensure they were carried through.

The Task Group's final report, which included **12 recommendations**, was presented to Cabinet on 4th April 2012 and Cabinet provided an interim response which was received at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 23rd April 2012. Cabinet had agreed 8 of the recommendations but had asked that the Overview and Scrutiny Board looked again at elements of the remaining 4 recommendations and provided Cabinet with a response before giving them further consideration at its meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2012. Cabinet's final response was received at the Board meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2012, with all recommendations being accepted.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board is due to review the progress on implementation of the recommendations at its September 2013 meeting.

## **Air Quality Task Group**

### **Background**

Following a presentation on the work of the Local Strategic Partnership at the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2012, the Board agreed at its November meeting to set up a Task Group which would revisit the Air Quality Scrutiny Report prepared in December 2007, to investigate whether the recommendations had been implemented successfully and the effect of poor air quality on residents, together with progress made in improving air quality and any future plans within the District to address this issue. The Task Group anticipate that the possible key outcomes would be to promote the understanding of air quality issues within the District, highlight any progress made by the Council and others in addressing air quality issues and make further recommendations which would assist in raising awareness and improving air quality issues.

### **Key Findings and Recommendations**

The Task Group have held seven meetings to date, it became apparent at an early stage that the work was both complex and detailed and that it was unlikely that the Task Group would be able to complete its work within the timescale initially set. It was therefore agreed at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2013 that the Task Group's final report and recommendations would be presented to the Board at the meeting to be held on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

## **Youth Provision Task Group**

### **Background**

Again, following a presentation on the work of the Local Strategic Partnership at the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2012, the Board agreed at its November meeting to set up a Task Group which would investigate the youth provision within the District. The key objectives of the Task Group were to consider current arrangements for providing services for young people, to analyse opportunities to participate in youth activities, to scrutinise accessibility of current services provided by the Council and identify any gaps within the services provided. Young People are a significant proportion of the local population and an effective review of this subject could potentially enable members to address the needs of young people living in the District and in the long term have a positive impact on their future prospects.

### **Key Findings and Recommendations**

The Task Group have carried out numerous site visits and interviews with expert witnesses, including receiving a presentation from pupils at a local high school. The final report and recommendations will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Board at its meeting to be held on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2013.

## **JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INVESTIGATIONS**

No joint scrutiny exercises have been carried out in 2012/13.

However, an approach has recently been made by Wychavon District Council to all Councils in the County in respect of a joint scrutiny exercise to look at Worcestershire Regulatory Services. As Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) is the host authority for this service, under the joint protocol set up and agreed by all authorities, it would fall to BDC to host the joint scrutiny exercise. The terms of reference have been agreed by the participating authorities and it is anticipated that the joint scrutiny exercise will commence in July 2013.

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## **FUTURE WORK OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

Topics already included on the Board's work programme for 2013-14 are as follows:

- Continued Scrutiny of Crime and Disorder

The following are standard items which are considered at regular intervals by the Overview and Scrutiny Board and will again be scheduled into the work programme for 2013-14:

- Cabinet Leader's Work Programme
- Quarterly Finance Monitoring Report
- Write Off of Debts Report
- Making Experiences Count Quarterly Report (*this was following a recommendation from the Planning Policy Task Group*)
- Sickness and Absence Health Monitoring Report
- Quarterly Summary of Environmental Enforcement Action Taken (*this is a new quarterly report which the Board now receives following scrutiny of the Joint Environmental Enforcement Strategy in February 2012*)
- Worcestershire County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (*the Council's representative on this Committee must be a Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Board and provides the Board with regular updates on the work being carried out.*)

The following standard items are prepared by the supporting officer and considered by the Board regularly:

- Work Programme
- Action List
- Recommendation Tracker
- Task Groups (*the Board reviews Task Groups 12 months after the recommendations have been considered by the Cabinet*)

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

### Overview and Scrutiny Board Meetings

Overview and Scrutiny Board meetings are open to the public. To find out more visit our website at [www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/scrutiny) or telephone 01527 881288 and ask to speak to the Democratic Services Officer.

### Public Involvement

If you would like to have your say on issues being considered by Overview and Scrutiny or to suggest a topic for consideration you can email [scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk) or complete the form on the Council's website [www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/scrutiny)

### Giving Evidence

Members of the public or organisations with a special interest or knowledge about a particular topic being considered by Overview and Scrutiny can put forward evidence to a committee or appear as a witness to give evidence for an investigation. If you think you or your organisation might be able to participate in an issue currently under review, please contact us.

If you have a personal issue with a council service you may find it more useful to contact your local ward councillor who can help you decide the best way to take it forward.

### Contact Overview and Scrutiny

If you would like to find out more about any aspect of the Overview and Scrutiny Board then you can email [scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk) or telephone 01527 881288 and ask to speak to the Committee Services Officer.

Further information can also be found on the Council's website. Please go to [www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/scrutiny)

**Overview and Scrutiny  
Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services  
Bromsgrove District Council  
The Council House  
Burcot Lane  
Bromsgrove B60 1AA**

DRAFT





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**EQUALITY**  
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FOR LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT  
ACHIEVING

### **Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services**

Bromsgrove District Council, The Council House, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B60 1AA.

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## Joint Scrutiny of Worcestershire Regulatory Services

### Terms of Reference

#### Objectives

1. To review the final business case for the Shared Service (as agreed by the participating Councils) against current operation, including:
  - resilience in the model to cope with fluctuations in workload;
  - efficiencies achieved;
  - cash savings and how these have been used;
  - its level of fitness for purpose;
  - the impact of the model on service levels/quality.
2. To compare the previous service levels of each participating Council compared with current levels and those outlined in the final business case.
3. To establish the performance of the service to participating Councils prior to and since the establishment of the shared service.
4. To review levels of customer satisfaction prior to and following establishment of the shared service and how feedback informs practice.
5. To consider the governance arrangements between the shared service and the participating Councils to include how changes to the service requested by one or more Councils can be achieved.

#### Membership

6. The Team will be made up of one representative from each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees from Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Redditch Borough, Wyre Forest, Worcester City and Wychavon District Councils.
7. Each authority will also appoint a named substitute, who will be sent details for each meeting and may attend meetings as an observer to keep up to date with the exercise.
8. That at least one of the appointed Member to the Team or their named substitute must comprise either the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## Roles

9. Members of the Panel are expected to:
  - undertake appropriate reading and research, which may involve consultation, visits and evidence gathering between meetings;
  - having agreed a programme of meetings of the Team, to attend as many of them as possible;
  - to ask for support, training and development if/when they feel it is necessary;
  - to contribute fully to the drafting of any reports.
10. Each member is responsible for reporting back to parent Overview & Scrutiny Committees as appropriate.
11. Officer support will be provided by Bromsgrove District Council as the host authority, for meeting arrangements and scrutiny support, as well as liaison with officers from each authority to provide evidence and practical help (provision of meeting rooms etc)

## Arrangements for Meetings

12. The Team will make its own arrangements for meetings.
13. The meetings may be held in public or in private. In considering how it will meet, the Team will balance the desire for transparency and openness with making visitors feel welcome and comfortable, to encourage frank and open discussion.
14. It will not normally be the case that full notes will be made of each meeting. In most cases a short “action list” will be sufficient for the Team’s use.

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

15<sup>th</sup> July 2013

### SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION PROPOSAL

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder                          | Councillor Mike Webb  |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted                         | No  |
| Relevant Head of Service for Overview and Scrutiny | Claire Felton – Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services |
| Wards Affected                                     | All wards   |
| Ward Councillor Consulted                          | No – not at this stage  |
| Non-Key Decision                                   |   |

### 1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 An Overview and Scrutiny Topic Proposal Form relating to the Outreach Provision at the Artrix Arts Centre has been completed by Councillor P. McDonald and is submitted for consideration by the Board.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Board considers the completed proposal form (at Appendix 1) and agrees to one of the following:
- (a) that further information be requested from a relevant source before deciding whether or not further investigation is required;
  - (b) that the topic is included on the work programme for further investigation at a future date;
  - (c) that the topic is included on the work programme and a Task Group is established to undertake a more in-depth investigation, appoint a Chairman for the Task Group and set a time scale for completion of the investigation; or
  - (d) take no further action.

### 3. KEY ISSUES

#### Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications directly relating to this report, however, if the proposal is accepted, any implications would be considered as part of the subsequent investigation undertaken.

#### Legal Implications

- 3.2 There are no legal implications directly relating to this report, however, if the proposal is accepted, any implications would be considered as part of the subsequent investigation undertaken.

**Service/Operation Implications**

- 3.3 An Overview and Scrutiny Topic Proposal Form relating to the work of the Outreach Provision at the Artrix Arts Centre has been completed by Councillor P. McDonald.
- 3.4 If the Board decides that it does wish to investigate this topic further, it then needs to decide whether it is appropriate for the Board itself to undertake the investigation or whether a more in-depth investigation is required and a task group established.
- 3.5 Another option is for the Board to request further information on the topic from a relevant source to assist Members in deciding whether an investigation is required.
- 3.6 Alternatively, the Board could decide that it is not a topic it wishes to investigate, in which case no further action would be required.

**Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.7 N/A

**4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 N/A

**5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Overview and Scrutiny Proposal Form

**6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

**7. KEY**

None

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

Name: Amanda Scarce – Democratic Services Officer  
E Mail: [a.scarce@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:a.scarce@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01527 881443

# Overview and Scrutiny

## Topic Proposal Form

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> March 2013

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Name of Proposer:</b> Peter McDonald<br><b>Telephone number:</b> _____<br><b>E Mail:</b> _____ |  | <b>Contact Address:</b><br>10 Waseley Road, Rubery, Nr<br>Birmingham, B45 9TP |
| <b>Title of Proposed Topic:</b>   | ARTRIX   |   |
| <b>Specific subject areas to be investigated:</b>   | ARTIX Outreach Provision   |   |
| <b>Reasons why this subject should be considered:</b>   | To establish whether Outreach Provision as agreed with BDC and other agencies have been met.   |   |
| <b>Evidence to support the need for this particular investigation:</b>                            | Outreach Provision over the last two years and finance cost  |   |
| <b>Council priorities it links to:</b>  | Financial, equality and wellbeing  |   |
| <b>Possible key outcomes: (i.e. what do you anticipate could be achieved?)</b>                    | To ensure that Outreach Provision is successful and marketed in such away it reaches those in the community that may be excluded and plays its part in tackling anti-social behaviour. |   |

Please indicate if any of the following apply to the proposed subject area:

| CRITERIA  | NO | YES | Why?  |
|---|----|-----|---|
| Is it a priority issue for the Council or the Local Strategic Partnership?  |    |     | To ensure it plays its part in social exclusion and anti-social behaviour measures. |
| Is it an important issue for local residents?   |    | *   | Regarding value for money   |
| Is it a topic where Overview and Scrutiny could feasibly and constructively make recommendations?                     |    | *   |   |
| Is it a topic where external review would be helpful?   |    |     | Not sure  |
| Is it a topic where a review could be made in time to make recommendations for the executive decision making process? |    | *   |   |
| Is it a poorly performing service?  |    |     | Maybe part of the outcomes  |
| Is it a review that could render significant savings or value for money?  |    | *   | .   |
| Is the topic strategic in scope?  |    | *   | Maybe   |



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Please return completed forms to: Committee Section,  
 Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services, Bromsgrove District Council  
 Email: [scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk)

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## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

15<sup>th</sup> July 2013

### YOUTH PROVISION TASK GROUP

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder                          | Councillors Mrs. M Sherrey / M Webb                               |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted                         | Yes   |
| Relevant Head of Service for Overview and Scrutiny | Claire Felton – Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services |
| Wards Affected                                     | All   |
| Ward Councillor Consulted                          | All Ward Councillors were invited to join the Task Group          |
| Non-Key Decision                                   |   |

#### 1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 To consider the findings and recommendations from the Scrutiny investigation undertaken by the Youth Provision Task Group.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

##### 2.1 **Members are requested to:**

- (a) **consider and approve the report and the recommendations attached at Appendix 1; and**
- (b) **submit the report and recommendations to the Cabinet for approval.**

#### 3. KEY ISSUES

##### Financial Implications

- 3.1 These are detailed within the attached report.

##### Legal Implications

- 3.2 These are detailed within the attached report.

##### Service/Operation Implications

- 3.3 Overview and scrutiny is a key part of the Council's democratic decision making process and enables non-executive Members of the Council to put forward recommendations for policy development, policy review and service improvement.

**Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

3.4 N/A

**4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

4.1 N/A

**5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Youth Provision Task Group Report

**6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

See attached report for details.

**7. KEY**

None

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

Name: Amanda Scarce – Democratic Services Officer  
E Mail: [a.scarce@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:a.scarce@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01527 881443





# **Youth Provision Task Group Overview & Scrutiny Board**

**June 2013**

Supporting officer: Amanda Scarce



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# CONTENTS

|   | <b>Page Number</b> |
|---|--------------------|
| Foreword by the Chairman  | 1                  |
| Summary of Recommendations  | 2                  |
| Introduction/Background Information   | 7                  |
| <b>Chapter 1 – The Positive Activities Scheme</b>   | <b>8</b>           |
| <b>Chapter 2 – What is available to Young People within the District?</b>                       | <b>15</b>          |
| <b>Chapter 3 – How the Council can promote the activities already available in the District</b> | <b>21</b>          |
| <b>Chapter 4 - Conclusion</b>   | <b>23</b>          |
| <b>Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference/Scoping Checklist</b>  | <b>25</b>          |
| <b>Appendix 2 – Declarations of Interest</b>  | <b>29</b>          |
| <b>Appendix 3 – Acknowledgements</b>  | <b>30</b>          |
| <b>Appendix 4 – Witnesses</b>   | <b>31</b>          |
| <b>Appendix 5 – Activities for Young People by Ward Area (provided by Councillors)</b>          | <b>33</b>          |

## **MEMBERSHIP OF THE TASK GROUP**

Councillor Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths (Chairman)  
Councillor Mrs. S. Baxter  
Councillor C. J. Bloore (withdrawn)  
Councillor J. S. Brogan  
Councillor R. J. Laight  
Councillor P. Lamma  
Councillor Mrs. C. J. Spencer

## **SUPPORTING OFFICER**

Amanda Scarce – Democratic Services Officer  
a.scarce@bromsgroveandreditch.gov.uk

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## **FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

I must begin by say what a great pleasure it has been carrying out this investigation as the Task Group has been fortunate enough to visit some exceptional youth facilities and had an opportunity to hear the views and thoughts of young people from different parts of the District.

My thanks go to the Task Group Members who have attended a large number of meetings in a relatively short period of time and I hope they will all agree that it has been a great opportunity to go out and see for ourselves what is happening all over the District for young people.

I hope the information provided within this report and the recommendations go some way to summarise the scope of what is already available and how the Council can further engage with the young people in both promoting and shaping activities in the future.

Finally, special thanks go to Democratic Services Officers, Amanda Scarce for her support and organisational skills in keeping the Task Group on track and Jess Bayley and Pauline Ross for their support with research and note taking.

**Councillor Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths  
Chairman of the Youth Provision Task Group**

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

### CHAPTER 1 – The Positive Activities Scheme

| <b>Recommendation 1</b>   | <b>Portfolio Holder</b>  | <b>Completion Date</b> |
|---|--------------------------|------------------------|
| That Worcestershire County Council ensures that regular meetings between the commissioner and local providers of Positive Activities (within the Bromsgrove District) take place to ensure there is no overlap of services and to enable best practices to be shared. | Councillor M. J. A. Webb | As soon as possible.   |
| <p><b>Financial Implications</b><br/>There are no financial implications arising from this recommendation.</p> <p><b>Resource Implications</b><br/>There are no additional resource implications for Bromsgrove District Council.</p>                                 |                          |                        |

| <b>Recommendation 2</b>  | <b>Portfolio Holder</b>  | <b>Completion Date</b> |
|--|--------------------------|------------------------|
| That Bromsgrove District Council write to Worcestershire County Council highlighting its concerns in respect of the limited life span and uncertainty over the provision of a building for the youth services provided by EPIC in the Rubery Ward. | Councillor M. J. A. Webb | As soon as possible.   |
| <p><b>Financial Implications</b><br/>There are no financial implications arising from this recommendation.</p> <p><b>Resource Implications</b><br/>There are no additional resource implications for Bromsgrove District Council.</p>              |                          |                        |

| Recommendation 3  | Portfolio Holder                | Completion Date             |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <p>That Worcestershire County Council ensure that the activities provided from £15k provided by Sandwell Leisure Trust are commissioned through the Positive Activities process to ensure that no further delays occur.</p>           | <p>Councillor M. J. A. Webb</p> | <p>As soon as possible.</p> |
| <p><b>Financial Implications</b><br/>There are no financial implications arising from this recommendation.</p> <p><b>Resource Implications</b><br/>There are no additional resource implications for Bromsgrove District Council.</p> |                                 |                             |

## CHAPTER 2 – What is available to Young People within the District?

| Recommendation 4  | Portfolio Holder                  | Completion Date                                      |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| <p>That Bromsgrove District Councillors familiarise themselves with all facilities for young people within their Ward and build relationships with local providers where appropriate.</p>             | <p>Councillor R. Hollingworth</p> | <p>Ongoing and to be reviewed in 12 months time.</p> |
| <p><b>Financial Implications</b><br/>There are no financial implications arising from this recommendation.</p> <p><b>Resource Implications</b><br/>There are no additional resource implications.</p> |                                   |  |

| Recommendation 5   | Portfolio Holder                  | Completion Date                                 |
|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| <p>That through the Local Strategic Partnership's Balanced Communities Group a process is found whereby all providers of youth activities throughout Bromsgrove District are given an opportunity to support each other and share ideas and best practice.</p> | <p>Councillor R. Hollingworth</p> | <p>Within 6 months of the date of approval.</p> |
| <p><b>Financial Implications</b><br/>There are no financial implications arising from this recommendation.<br/><b>Resource Implications</b><br/>Any support would be met from existing resources.</p>  |                                   |   |

| Recommendation 6   | Portfolio Holder                  | Completion Date                                    |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| <p>That the Chairman of the Task Group (supported by Democratic Services Officers) give a presentation, of the Task Group's findings, to CALC in order to encourage Parish Councils to support local youth groups.</p> | <p>Councillor R. Hollingworth</p> | <p>Within 3 months of the date of this report.</p> |
| <p><b>Financial Implications</b><br/>There are no financial implications arising from this recommendation.<br/><b>Resource Implications</b><br/>Any support would be met from existing resources.</p>                  |                                   |  |



**CHAPTER 3 – How the Council can promote the activities already available in the District**

| <b>Recommendation 7</b>  | <b>Portfolio Holder</b>    | <b>Completion Date</b>                   |
|--|----------------------------|--|
| That Bromsgrove District Council launches a Twitter campaign to promote activities for young people across the District.   | Councillor M. A. Bullivant | Within 6 months of the date of approval. |
| <p><b>Financial Implications</b><br/>There are no financial implications arising from this recommendation.</p> <p><b>Resource Implications</b><br/>Any support would be met from existing resources.</p> |                            |  |
| <b>Recommendation 8</b>  | <b>Portfolio Holder</b>    | <b>Completion Date</b>                   |
| That Bromsgrove District Council uses active young people to help with and schedule the Twitter campaign including creating the #tag.  | Councillor M. A. Bullivant | Within 6 months of the date of approval. |
| <p><b>Financial Implications</b><br/>There are no financial implications arising from this recommendation.</p> <p><b>Resource Implications</b><br/>Any support would be met from existing resources.</p> |                            |  |
| <b>Recommendation 9</b>  | <b>Portfolio Holder</b>    | <b>Completion Date</b>                   |
| That via Twitter, Bromsgrove District Council carries out a consultation on youth activities in the District including which activities young people would like to see more/less of.                     | Councillor M. A. Bullivant | Within 6 months of the date of approval. |
| <p><b>Financial Implications</b><br/>There are no financial implications arising from this recommendation.</p> <p><b>Resource Implications</b><br/>Any support would be met from existing resources.</p> |                            |  |

## **CHAPTER 4 - CONCLUSION**

| <b>Recommendation 10</b>  | <b>Portfolio Holder</b>    | <b>Completion Date</b>   |
|---|----------------------------|--|
| That the Overview and Scrutiny Board includes within its Work Programme an investigation into the provision of services available to disaffected young people and those not in education, employment or training within the District. | Councillor M. A. Bullivant | To be included within the work programme immediately following approval of the recommendation. |
| <b>Financial Implications</b><br>There are no financial implications arising from this recommendation.<br><b>Resource Implications</b><br>There are no additional resource implications.  |                            |  |

### **AREAS OF CONCERN WHICH THE TASK GROUP MEMBERS WISHED TO HIGHLIGHT**

Following its investigations, although not able to make recommendations in respect of these areas, the Task Group wished to highlight the areas of concern as set out below.

- Whilst there was an abundance of activities available around Bromsgrove itself and throughout the District, Members were concerned that there was little available within the Bromsgrove Town Centre area.
- Members were concerned that any increase in the hire charges for use of the facilities at the Ryland Centre (following the expiry of the subsidy provided by WCC) could have a detrimental effect on those groups which were currently based there.

### **AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE/EXCEPTIONAL VALUE WHICH THE TASK GROUP MEMBERS WISHED TO HIGHLIGHT**

Following site visits and interviews Members wished to highlight the following groups which showed areas of good practice and Members believed were of exceptional value to the communities they served.

- The Basement Project
- Bromsgrove Rugby Club
- Woodrush Youth Centre
- The Lounge
- EPIC
- Stoke Parish Youth Club

## **INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Overview and Scrutiny Board received a presentation on the work of the Local Strategic Partnership at its meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2012. Following this presentation the Board agreed at its following meeting, in November 2012 to set up a Task Group which would investigate the youth provision within the District. The key objectives of the Task Group were to consider current arrangements to providing services for young people, to analyse opportunities to participate in youth activities, to scrutinise accessibility of current services provided by the Council and to identify any gaps within the services provided. Members believe that as Young People are a significant proportion of the local population an effective review of the subject would potentially enable them to address the needs of young people living in the District and in the long term have a positive impact on their future prospects.

(Full details of the terms of reference are available at Appendix 1 of this report.)

The Task Group has held a total of 18 meetings, which included 6 site visits and interviews with numerous internal and external witnesses. The Task Group has also considered written evidence from a number of sources and considered information provided by both Ward Councillors and Parish Councils. The initial meeting of the Task Group took place on 5<sup>th</sup> December when Members considered the Terms of Reference and discussed in detail how it would carry out its investigation, from the early stages Members were keen to visit facilities for young people within the District in order to find out what was available to them. The penultimate meeting of the Task Group took place on 29<sup>th</sup> May when Members formulated the recommendations which are now outlined within this report and the final meeting took place on 17<sup>th</sup> June to discuss the draft report before submitting it to the Overview and Scrutiny Board at its July meeting.

## **CHAPTER 1 – Positive Activities Scheme**

At an early stage of its investigations the Task Group asked to meet with both the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services at the Council and the Commissioning Manager, Young People at Worcestershire County Council (WCC), as they were keen to hear what progress had been made in the commissioning of activities under the new scheme. Therefore following those initial discussions Members tasked officers with arrange visits to a number of youth facilities within the District. The aim of the visits was to see what each facility provided overall for young people. The Task Group Members visited 3 youth facilities within the District that were supported by the Positive Activities Scheme. During the initial meeting with the Commissioning Manager, Young People WCC Members raised concerns over the recent “take over” of the Ryland Centre in Bromsgrove, which had previously been a base for youth activities and agreed that although this did not fall within the Positive Activities Scheme it would be important to investigate what the Ryland Centre was now providing for young people. Officers were therefore also asked to arrange a to visit the Ryland Centre in order to meet with Sandwell Leisure Trust, who had taken over the running of it.

Originally five providers of Positive Activities had been identified, including the Council; however Members were informed that one provider had withdrawn and it was anticipated that the provision of Positive Activities work at Rubery would now be picked up by EPIC who were also the provider at the Trunk in Charford (together with various other sites in Bromsgrove). At a later meeting with the Commissioning Manager, Young People WCC Members were concerned to hear that although EPIC had taken over the contract at Rubery with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013, the issue of premises continued to be a problem; this was due to WCC’s initial decision to dispose of the current youth centre building in Rubery. WCC had however agreed to extend the life of the building until September 2013 with a view to alternative accommodation being sourced and Members were informed that various options were being considered with one in particular being favoured, subject to WCC’s agreement. The Task Group agreed that it was unlikely that a satisfactory conclusion would be reached in such a short period of time and that the uncertainty could be unsettling for the young people involved.

### **Bromsgrove District Council**

During the course of discussions the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services and the Sports Development & Physical Activity Manager provided the Task Group with a comprehensive list of all the activities available to young people within the District. This ranged from a simple list of parks and open spaces to a comprehensive list of sports clubs and activities. There was a number of school based activities where the Council works with the school to develop a coaching programme and activities throughout the school holidays. These activities were promoted through the Council’s website and local papers. Members were also provided with information on club and coach development, the Council has developed a good strong community sports club culture throughout the District

which included 8-9 football teams, including boys, girls and young people with disabilities. The Members were informed that some of the disabilities groups used the Ryland Centre as their base and as this had recently been “taken over” by Sandwell Leisure Trust were concerned about the knock on effect of any potential increased charges as due to the nature of the groups they tended to be made up of smaller numbers of young people. Members shared this concern not only for the disabilities groups but other smaller groups who would find it difficult to absorb any increase in charges or be able to find alternative accommodation at a reasonable rate.

The Council has a taster community sports programme which then feeds directly into the club structure. The Council’s aim was to facilitate and support these activities in order to reach a stage where a club could be handed over to volunteers to carry on the work. Members were given an example of this in the Gymnastics Club, where the Council funded a coach for 12 months, until the club became established and able to fund the coach itself. These were all activities which were very much reliant upon volunteers and where possible the Council put in appropriate support mechanisms to ensure the good work continued (this support often being provided by Sports England).

The Head of Leisure and Cultural Services informed Members that in respect of Arts and Cultural events, whilst it was acknowledged that it did not have the money to support it that sports had, the events that were organized were well attended and supported. These included working with the Artrix Centre and Arts Alive, Youth Theatre events and Street Theatre. The Artrix Centre provided a good link for those young people who wished to explore the Arts further.

*John Godwin, Head of Leisure and Cultural Services, attended several meetings and supported Members throughout the Task Group process.*



#### EPIC/The Trunk, Bromsgrove

Following on from initial discussions with the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services and the Commissioning Manager, Young People WCC it was suggested that Members visit the Trunk in Bromsgrove to see the work that it was carrying



out with young people. The Task Group Members visited the Trunk and spoke to the Managing Director of EPIC and the Youth Co-ordinator. Members were provided with detailed information about the work that was carried out at both the Trunk in Charford and other venues at Sidemoor and Catshill. The Task Group discussed the issues that had arisen in respect of premises for activities in Catshill, which had originally been based at the local middle school. The Youth Co-ordinator had set up a steering group involving other professionals in the area, including representatives from the Scouts and Parish Council. This has led to ongoing partnership working which the Youth Co-ordinator aimed to develop further. The Task Group were informed that following the loss of its building provision in Sidemoor and difficulties in finding alternative accommodation EPIC had sourced funding for a purpose built unit. The Health Authority had provided funding for a purpose built modular unit, the Health Hub at Perryfields and the Task Group members were informed that currently it was used for health related issues and for the provision of services for 13-19 year olds.

EPIC also worked with local schools, often with small groups of young people who were presenting challenging behaviours and the Managing Director informed Members that the links with local schools were important in order to support the young people wherever possible. Activities were inclusive and where necessary arrangements would be made to put staff in place to provide a young person with one to one support. This was particularly important for the needs of young people with autism for example until they became accustomed to the environment within the Centre. There was a mix of staff at EPIC including some volunteers, but it was recognised that there was a risk from using volunteers and that it was difficult for people to make a regular commitment. This had an impact on the young people who often needed a constant presence and familiar face. A Youth Committee has been established at the Trunk and it was hoped that this could be replicated at the other centres. This had given the young people some responsibility for the activities which took place and allowed them to see “the bigger picture” as to how the centre was run.

In respect of the Positive Activities Scheme, the Managing Director confirmed to Members that it would be useful for all the providers from Bromsgrove District to meet regularly in order to exchange ideas and ensure that work was not being duplicated. This would be particularly useful for those groups that did not have such experienced staff as EPIC. The Managing Director also confirmed that she had met with Sandwell Leisure Trust and discussed the use of the Ryland Centre for some activities, but it was agreed that the facilities being offered were not conducive to the type of work that was needed.

The Managing Director confirmed that EPIC, following the withdrawal of the original provider, had been commissioned to provide youth services at Rubery and it was anticipated that her team would provide 2 evening sessions a week. She also informed Members that there was an ongoing issue with premises and that if this was not resolved there was concern that these sessions would not be able to go ahead. The Managing Director was invited to a further meeting of the Task Group, in late April 2013 and asked to provide an update on the situation at

Rubery. She informed Members that a mapping exercise had been carried out within the local area in an attempt to find suitable alternative accommodation, as she had been informed that although the life of the current building had been extended by WCC, this was only until September 2013. However, she had been able to employ 3 of the workers who had previously worked at the Rubery centre for WCC which had given the young people concerned some stability. Members raised concerns that WCC had not resolved this matter and that the search for premises was time consuming and that the Managing Director's time would be better spent concentrating on the activities provided for the young people.

#### Woodrush Youth and Community Centre

Task Group Members visited the Woodrush Youth and Community Centre and were given the opportunity to hold discussions with the Youth Management Team and Youth Committee. The Director of Youth and Community Provision and other members of staff were able to provide background information on the Centre, including details of the partnership with the school and Members found that, as was often the case; the support of volunteers was paramount to its success. However, through the Positive Activities scheme one of the projects the Centre was able to do was employ a youth worker one evening per week to provide drug counselling and to liaise with partner agencies on other health related issues such as smoking, alcohol and sexual health.

The Youth Management Team and Youth Committee members provided the Task Group with details of centre opening times and activities together with details of particular events which had taken place throughout the year. This included a Work Skills Programme which was linked with the local high school and included mock interviews, voluntary work and money management. The Director of Youth and Community Provision informed Members that she sat on the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership and that it was important for more engagement with schools in order to ascertain what work skills employers wanted and to provide help in preparing young people for work. Other activities included a residential trip which concentrated on self esteem followed by the production of a DVD which had been distributed to all schools in Worcestershire.

The Youth Management Team played a key role in "balancing" the books and was given an opportunity to contribute ideas as to how funds were used. They were also encouraged to become involved in any issues, with the young people, that were witnessed or experienced within the Centre (where a zero tolerance policy was in place). The Youth Management Team explained that often young people who either had difficulty in fitting in or initially created problems found it easier to relate to the Members of the Management Team or Committee and often approached them for advice.

The Youth Management Team were keen for the Centre to be part of the local community and had offered the Centre's help and support for a local fun run. It had good links with the local churches and the local Community Safety Officers (CSOs) visited the Centre on a Monday evening and helped out with a football activity of a Tuesday, which had helped the younger age group (11-13 years)

interact with the CSO's whilst attending the Centre. The Centre was used during the day by the School and also a mother and toddler group once a week. The local church also used it for a youth group on Sundays.

The Task Group Members were particularly impressed with the relationship between the staff and the young people and how they were involved in every aspect of the Centre, together with how they took those responsibilities seriously.

#### The Lounge, Alvechurch

The Lounge was a relatively new youth facility and had been set up by local residents who were concerned about the tensions between the different generations within the community and anti social behaviour (ASB) by some young people and the perception of it by older residents. The Council and the Parish Council had been very supportive and WCC had provided pastoral care and support from youth workers in the early stages of forming the Lounge. The actual concept of the Lounge had come from the young people themselves, who had asked for a café type environment which was separate from school. The café was used during the day by local people of all age ranges and youth specific activities were held 2 evenings a week. It was also open as a drop in for the young people after school and during the school holidays. Members were informed that the café had become the hub of the community and as a consequence the older generation were much more accepting as they saw what was going on and this has had a positive impact on the village itself. The café has a Youth Management Committee, made up of 10 young people from all age ranges, which work on running the youth side of the café and work on projects to help within the community. The café had a good working relationship with the local Community Safety Officer who called in regularly and discussed ASB with those that were involved in it.

The Task Group was provided with details of the work that was carried out with the young people (including those that were vulnerable and more hard to reach) and was impressed with how innovative the staff were with the limited resources that were available to them and as was often the case, the majority of the staff were volunteers. The help and support provided by those volunteers was invaluable to the day to day running of the café in particular. The Task Group discussed with the staff whether they would find it helpful to hold regular meetings with other Positive Activities providers, not only to ensure there was not an overlap of work, but also to share best practice and it was confirmed that although they had made contact with both EPIC and Woodrush, regular meetings would be useful as these centres had much more experience and available resources so the opportunity to meet regularly would be useful.

#### The Ryland Centre, Bromsgrove

Although the Ryland Centre did not form part of the positive activities scheme, the Task Group had been informed that Sandwell Leisure Trust, who took over the running of the Centre in early 2013, had pledged funding of £15k per year for three years to go towards activities for young people, either to be based at the Ryland Centre or within the town centre area. Members were keen to visit the



Ryland Centre following its refurbishment and speak to with representatives of Sandwell Leisure Trust to ensure that, wherever possible consideration continued to be given to activities for young people and to find out more about the funding which it had pledged.

During the visit to the Ryland Centre and discussions with the Chief Executive and Operations Manager from Sandwell Leisure Trust, it was apparent to Members that although the sports groups/clubs which had previously used the centre continued to do so and that the football pitches continued to be only used by youth teams during the weekend period, the focus of the Centre had now changed significantly and was aimed at a different type of clientele. Sandwell Leisure Trust confirmed that it had a 30 year lease with Worcestershire County Council and must continue the work covered by the Sports England grants and had also guaranteed that hire rates for current clubs/groups would not increase within the first year and that it would discuss any increases where necessary with the relevant groups. The Task Group was informed that young people would be encouraged to use the building whenever possible, but development of the gym membership was imperative to the success of the Centre.

Members agreed that whilst the initial work that had been carried out at the Centre appeared positive, it would be useful to visit again in six to twelve months time to see if this remained the case. In respect of the £15k funding, the Trust informed Members that it would be at the discretion of WCC as to how this would be distributed, however if appropriate there was a room available within the Centre which could be used for a youth group of some description. After further questioning it became apparent to Members that this would not necessarily be a suitable option and that careful consideration would need to be given as to how this money could best be used.

At the Task Group's penultimate meeting the Commissioning Manager, Young People WCC informed Members that a meeting had taken place in April 2013 to discuss the method for commissioning the £15k from Sandwell Leisure Trust. This would be along the same lines as the Positive Activities funding and it was hoped that it would be available in time to provide activities over the summer period. The specification for this was currently being written in consultation with Councillors. The Task Group were concerned that although the funding had been available from early 2013 it had still not been drawn down and the process not finalised.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

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| <b>Recommendation 1</b> |
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| That Worcestershire County Council ensures that regular meetings between the commissioner and local providers of Positive Activities (within the Bromsgrove District) take place to ensure there is no overlap of services and to enable best practices to be shared. |
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**Recommendation 2**

That the Council write to Worcestershire County Council highlighting its concerns in respect of the limited life span and uncertainty over the provision of a building for the youth services provided by EPIC in the Rubery Ward.

**Recommendation 3**

That Worcestershire County Council ensure that the activities provided from £15k provided by Sandwell Leisure Trust are commissioned through the Positive Activities process to ensure that no further delays occur.

*Members interviewing  
Representatives from  
Sandwell Leisure Trust  
At the Ryland Centre,  
Bromsgrove*



## **CHAPTER 2 – What is available to young people within the District?**

At the initial meeting of the Task Group it was agreed that although Members wished to look at the activities provided through the Positive Activities Scheme they also wanted to investigate what other activities were available for young people throughout the district, as Members believed from initial investigations that there was likely to be much more available than expected.

Officers were tasked with researching activities for young people by Ward area and received detailed information from the Leisure and Cultural Services team on what was provided by the Council. This was both written evidence and through interviews with both the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services and the Sports Development & Physical Activities Manager. Members initial views of this information was that although there was a comprehensive choice of activities, many of them were sports orientated. The Head of Leisure and Cultural Services informed Members that arts and culture events were organized through the Artrix Centre, Youth Theatre and Arts Alive. It was agreed that although Arts and Culture did not have the same funding level to support it as Sports had, the events that were organized were well attended.

Members arranged to visit the Artrix Centre and interviewed the Artistic Director who provided both a tour of the Centre and comprehensive information about the activities that they provided for young people throughout the year. Activities were also arranged during the school holiday period and the Artrix worked with the Council to ensure that these did not “overlap” with those provided by the Council. These activities were a mix of both free and charged activities and drop in sessions for families. The Centre also provided youth theatre/drama sessions throughout the week, some of which were aimed at young people with particular needs (at which parents or carers were able to also attend). During the site visit Members saw how the Centre has adapted some of the rooms to make them multi functional to accommodate as many groups as possible.

The Centre has a mobile cinema, which it had taken out to schools within the District and had also used it for open air film nights at the Avoncroft Museum. Members were informed that generally the 16-24 years age range tended not to use the Centre (particularly the cinema facilities) and although attempts had been made to engage with this age range it was felt this would never be successful as they preferred to access more commercial cinemas in particular.

Members were informed that the Centre also had a designated Education & Outreach Co-ordinator. The outreach work was largely aimed at those hard to reach young people through specific projects which could take up to a year to complete. Workshops were also carried out within the parks which were used to engage with young people and art graffiti was a particularly successful area. Member arranged to interview the Education Outreach Co-ordinator at a later meeting and she provided Members with a comprehensive list of the work carried out and how it was funded. West Mercia Police had assisted with particular

projects which were usually around diverting young people away from ASB, raising drug and alcohol awareness and educating them in life choices through the Outreach in Action Projects. Members were particularly interested in the work with the hard to reach young people, as they were concerned that this was a group of young people which could be vulnerable and unlikely to engage, for various reasons, in many of the other activities which were available from other providers.

Following on from the meeting with the Education & Outreach Co-ordinator the Task Group agreed that it was important for it to investigate what was available for those vulnerable young people that the Co-ordinator had spoken of, which led to the Operations Manager at the Basement Project being invited to a meeting together with a member of the Council's Community Safety Team.

During the interview with the Council's Community Safety Project Officer Members were informed that rather than engage in general youth provision, the team seek to identify and target those young people who are most at risk of offending and those who are at risk of harm from participating in inappropriate and/or anti-social behaviour. The work tended to come under the categories of enforcement, education or diversionary activity and took place periodically throughout the year and historically increased its focus on youth activity during the school holidays. The areas covered vary from the Schools Respect Programme, which is a 12 week programme of community safety workshops to target groups of young people in local schools who have been identified by teachers as having challenging behavioural issues, to Community Safety Diversionary Activities. These activities have included projects such as DJ skills sessions, the Community Safety Angling Project and leisure and sports activities and were offered to young people who had shown some improvement in their behaviour and/or had signed up to Acceptable Behaviour Contracts. The Team always aimed to encourage young people to get involved in more general Community Promotions such as environmental action days.

The Basement Project was a charitable organisation which had been set up some 15 years ago and was aimed at homeless and potentially homeless young people from age 16 – 25 years. The Project helped young people find accommodation and provided support at various levels dependent upon each young person's needs. The Operations Manager attended as a witness and provided the Task Group with information on the work it carried out. Members were keen to find out how the Project was staffed and funded. The Operations Manager informed them that there was a total of 5 paid staff and the remainder were volunteers. The Project had a Board of Trustees and donations and fund raising events played a large part in funding the Project and funding of £25k was provided from the Council's homeless fund (which the Project had to apply for annually). The Project had worked with over 200 young people over the previous year, who had come to the Centre from all over the District (and in some cases outside of the District).



A variety of work was carried out, from working within schools on a programme of “story telling” which was based around homelessness and how people were affected by it to workshops which covered cooking, shopping and raising the young people’s self esteem. The young people were encouraged to join in with stands/stalls which the Project had at events throughout the District, such as the Street Theatre. The aim was to identify each young person’s individual needs and tailor the work around them. Members were impressed with the commitment and work that the Basement Project undertook with limited funding and resources.

As part of the investigation the Task Group agreed that it would be helpful to find out from other Members if they were aware of activities for young people within their own Ward, whether provided by the Council or other agencies. An email was sent to all Ward Members asking them to provide (a) a list of youth services that they were aware of that were available to young people within their Ward (this could include Brownies, Scouts or activities organized by the local Church for example) and (b) if they had ever been contacted by any young people in respect of youth provision within their Ward. Officers also undertook this exercise, by carrying out research on the internet, in order for a comparison to be made. (Information received from Councillors is attached at Appendix 5.)

A limited response to this request was received and has led to one of the recommendations listed below being put forward. However, from the information that was received Members were informed that Stoke Parish Council had funded a youth club, once a week, for young people in the area for the last four years. The Task Group were interested to see how this had been set up and arranged to visit when the Youth Club was taking place. During the subsequent visit the Task Group interviewed Mr. George Verney, who provided background information on his involvement with and running of the Youth Club.

*Members interviewed George Verney at Stoke Parish Youth Club and spoke to the young people in attendance.*



The youth club completely relied upon volunteers and had become self-sufficient in many ways. The Treasurer for example held a Food Hygiene Certificate which enabled her to provide food preparation/cooking lessons for the young people. The majority of volunteers were first aid trained, with two youth club members also being trained. Several of the volunteers had originally been members themselves and had asked to stay on and help once they had reached the club's age limit. The Club was very much community orientated and Mr. Verney gave examples of how the young people had helped some older members of the community by sweeping snow and collecting shopping during the winter months. Members were impressed with the dedication of the volunteers and the enthusiasm and enjoyment that the young people showed during the visit.

Following on from the visit to Stoke Parish Youth Club all parish councils were contacted and asked to provide details of any activities for young people that the parish contributed towards or organized, whether it was a one off event or on a regular basis. Although several responses were received and parish councils provided funding for activities, the Task Group were not aware of any other parish council provided a similar facility to Stoke.

Receipt of the information from parish councils and the visit to Stoke Parish Youth Club has led to the formulation of recommendation 6 detailed below. The Task Group believe the youth club is an excellent example of a community working together, with minimum financial support and was something which could be replicated in other Wards within the District. It highlighted to Members that providing activities for young people was not necessarily always about large funding streams and providing paid professional staff.

Also highlighted in the information provided by Councillors was the abundance of Scouts/Girl Guide groups that were available throughout the District. In order to find out more about the Scouting movement, Mr. Roy Clarke, District Commissioner for the Scouts was invited to attend as a witness. The Task Group were informed that there was 9 groups throughout the district of Bromsgrove and membership started from aged 6 years (Beavers) up to aged 25 years for Network members. Members were provided with detailed written evidence in respect of the work of the Scouts Association and the training available. The Scouts Association received no funding and therefore relied upon volunteers and fund raising events. Hagley was the largest unit in the District and as such tended to be "self sufficient" whereas many of the other units tended to work more closely together and shared events and outings. The challenge was to keep the young people interested enough to move up to each different stage and to finally become leaders themselves at aged 18. The majority of the units were open all year round, with only a 2 week break during the summer and met once a week. Girls are allowed to join the Scouts if they so wish, although it was confirmed that there was some strong Girl Guide groups within the District. The District Commissioner confirmed that the Scouts were made up from a good cross section of local communities and that although they are encouraged to participate in all outdoor activities it was recognised that this did not appeal to everyone and therefore there was always opportunities to take part in less

physical activities. It was confirmed to Members that there was a hardship fund available for those unable to afford the annual fees and a family discount could also be applied. The Scouts units try wherever possible to contribute to the local communities and held a Community Week regularly to raise awareness of the Scout movement.

The Task Group had been provided with detailed information from the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services about the sporting activities which the Council supported, but following the information provided by some Councillors Members agreed it would be helpful to receive information from a more “independent” sports provider within the District. Mr. John Blackhall, Chairman of Bromsgrove Rugby Football Club was therefore invited to attend as a witness. Mr. Blackhall informed Members that there were currently 20 teams ranging from under 5s to under 17s at the Club, together with girls, adults and veterans teams. The Club was accredited with 150 volunteers, coaches and first aiders and was completely self-funded (although the Council had previously provided funding for 2 floodlight pitches). There was an annual subscription fee, however if there was a problem with payment the Club would look at each case sympathetically and help where possible with kit and tour visits for example. The Club worked hard to help the young people develop personal skills as well as skills on the field and had a Welfare Officer who was available to everyone. Mr. Blackhall discussed with Members the future plans of the Club and how it hoped to make improvements to the facilities, funds were continuously being raised by various events and monies secured in a separate development fund account. The ground was regularly used by local schools and for school competitions and county matches and tournaments. The Club had a good standard of coaching and the younger players were now being coached by ex players. Members acknowledged that it was important that the Club maintained this interest and appreciated the hard work and dedication of the volunteers at the Club.

Members had also requested that a press release be produced to invite members of the public, of any age, to put forward their views, experiences and ideas. Officers were approached by the Sixth Form Achievement Co-ordinator at Hagley High School on behalf of a number of pupils who were carrying out a survey into what activities young people wanted in Hagley. There had previously been a youth project (part funded by Hagley Parish Council), but following the lose of a paid youth worker and difficulties in finding a replacement; this was no longer the case. Members were keen to hear the views of young people throughout the district and duly invited them to attend and give a presentation on the findings of their survey. The presentation highlighted that the most popular facility requested was that of a skate park and that pupils were concerned that there was not enough facilities for teenagers living in Hagley in comparison to towns such as Kidderminster and Bromsgrove. The pupils informed Members that although there were activities available which were organised by the local church, this type of activity was not always suitable for everyone.

Hagley was keen to ensure that an independent youth project was reintroduced and asked for help from the Task Group in securing a paid youth worker as they believed that youth activities enabled young people to met with other teenagers

and develop social skills. Although sympathetic to their needs, but as highlighted at Stoke Parish Youth Club, Members did not believe that it was always essential to have a paid youth worker to make a youth club successful.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

**Recommendation 4**

That Bromsgrove District Councillors familiarise themselves with all facilities for young people within their Ward and build relationships with local providers where appropriate.

**Recommendation 5**

That through the Local Strategic Partnership's Balanced Communities Group a process is found whereby all providers of youth activities throughout Bromsgrove District are given an opportunity to support each other and share ideas and best practice.

**Recommendation 6**

That the Chairman of the Task Group (supported by Democratic Services Officers) give a presentation, of the Task Group's findings, to CALC in order to encourage Parish Councils to support local youth groups.

*Pupils from Haybridge High School gave a Presentation to Members on activities for young people in Hagley.*





### **CHAPTER 3 – How the Council can promote the activities already available in the District**

As the work of the Task Group drew to a close it was apparent that there was an abundance of activities available to young people throughout the district. However, it was recognised that there were gaps in particular areas, which could, in some cases, be addressed by support and assistance from the community (as shown at Stoke Parish Youth Club). The Task Group concluded that the activities that were already available needed to be promoted in such a way that the young people would become more aware of what was on offer and also be given an opportunity to take part in the promotion and where possible improvement of the activities.

With these thoughts in mind, the Task Group interviewed the Communications Manager in order to find the most effective (and cost effective) way in which to promote those activities provided by the Council and where possible other organisations. Various options were discussed with the Communications Manager, including the use of a young peoples' supplement to the Together Bromsgrove magazine which was circulated to all households within the District. However, it was agreed that it was unlikely that form of "advertising" was one which young people would access. The Communications Manager explained to Members how Twitter could be used and how this could actually evolve by allowing the young people to lead on producing a #tag thread. It was also explained to Members that as this began to be used, it could also be used not only to promote activities for young people but also as a tool to ascertain which activities were successful and what activities they would like to see more of, leading to an informal online consultation process.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

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| <b>Recommendation 7</b> |
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| That Bromsgrove District Council launches a Twitter campaign to promote activities for young people across Bromsgrove District. |
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| <b>Recommendation 8</b> |
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| That Bromsgrove District Council uses active young people to help with and schedule the Twitter campaign including creating the #tag. |
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### **Recommendation 9**

That via Twitter, Bromsgrove District Council carries out a consultation on youth activities in the District including which activities young people would like to see more/less of.

*Members met with the Youth Management Team and the Youth Committee at Woodrush Youth and Community Centre.*



## **CHAPTER 4 - CONCLUSION**

The overall conclusion of the Task Group was that there was a large amount of activities available for young people in the District and that they needed to be promoted and encouraged to participate in them. Whilst acknowledging that there was a wide range of activities, Members were concerned that although these were available to everyone, there was a small minority of young people who could potentially have difficulty in accessing them for various reasons.

A particular group that caused Members concern were those hard to reach young people who the Education and Outreach Co-ordinator at the Artrix Centre worked with, together with those that the Community Safety Project Officer worked with in schools and those that accessed the facilities at the Basement Project. The Task Group was also provided with statistics (split into Ward areas) in respect of young people not in education, employment or training and again, although not a large number, Members were concerned that it was this group who perhaps needed both support and access to activities the most.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

### **Recommendation 10**

That the Overview and Scrutiny Board includes within its Work Programme an investigation into the provision of services available to disaffected young people and those not in education, employment or training within the District.

The scope of the work of the Task Group has been immense and it was felt some areas which it had covered warranted attention being drawn to them as Members, although noting that recommendations on these areas would not be appropriate, were concerned about the long term effect that these issues could have on young people. Similarly, during the course of its investigations the Task Group visited and spoke to many people whose work within the community and with young people was truly inspirational. The success of these clubs/projects was due to the dedication of the staff and volunteers who worked so hard to support the young people.

The Task Group Members wish to draw attention to the following areas of concern together with areas of good practice/exceptional value to the District.

### **AREAS OF CONCERN WHICH THE TASK GROUP MEMBERS WISHED TO HIGHLIGHT**

Following its investigations, although not able to make recommendations in respect of these areas, the Task Group wished to highlight the areas of concern as set out below.

- Whilst there was an abundance of activities available around Bromsgrove itself and throughout the District, Members were concerned that there was little available within the Bromsgrove Town Centre area.
- Members were concerned that any increase in the hire charges for use of the facilities at the Ryland Centre (following the expiry of the subsidy provided by WCC) could have a detrimental effect on those groups which were currently based there.

**AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE/EXCEPTIONAL VALUE WHICH THE TASK GROUP MEMBERS WISHED TO HIGHLIGHT**

Following site visits and interviews Members wished to highlight the following groups which showed areas of good practice and Members believed were of exceptional value to the communities they served.

- The Basement Project
- Bromsgrove Rugby Club
- Woodrush Youth Centre
- The Lounge
- EPIC
- Stoke Parish Youth Club



## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY EXERCISE SCOPING CHECKLIST

This form is to assist Members to scope the overview and scrutiny exercise in a focused way and to identify the key issues it wishes to investigate.

- Topic: **Youth Provision Task Group**

For the purpose of this review young people will be classed as aged between 13 and 19 years (in respect of young people with learning disabilities this would increase to 24 years).

### **Specific Subject Areas to be investigated:**

There would be a number of key objectives to this review:

- 1) To consider current arrangements for providing services to young people in the district.
- 2) To analyse opportunities for young people to participate in youth activities and how these opportunities might be extended. This could involve:
  - Interviewing representatives of the Artrix.
  - Interviewing representatives from local sports facilities
  - Interviewing representatives from The Trunk and other facilities within the District
- 3) To scrutinise the accessibility of current Bromsgrove District Council Services to young people and to identify any actions that could be taken to improve accessibility.
- 4) To assess the barriers to participating in youth activities facing young people living in the district and how these barriers could be overcome.
- 5) To assess actions that could be taken by the Council and others to improve marketing of local youth related events. This should involve:
  - Reviewing current actions taken to market local events.
  - Interviewing local young people to identify their preferred forms of communication.
- 6) To investigate actions taken by other district Councils to ensure that appropriate youth services are delivered to young people living within their boundaries. This could involve:
  - Assessing scrutiny reports on the subject of youth services produced by other local authorities.
  - Interviewing representatives of other local authorities.
- 7) To investigate the potential for Bromsgrove District Council services and other service providers to address any current gaps in youth service provision.

(i.e. please state what Members hope to achieve through this investigation):

### **Possible Outcomes**

In the 2011 census 5,500 children aged 10-14 years old and 5,800 children aged 15-19 yrs old, were recorded as living in Bromsgrove district, out of a total population of 93,600. Young people are therefore a significant proportion of the local population. An effective review of this subject could potentially enable Members to address the needs of young people living in the district and in the long-term have a positive impact on their future prospects.

The review would also help Members to identify any gaps in youth service provision as well as an opportunity to promote the activities already available and any actions that could be taken to address the gaps.

- Should the relevant Portfolio Holder(s) be invited to give evidence? **YES**
- Which officers should be invited to give evidence?  
(Please state name of officer and/or job title)

- Head of Leisure and Cultural Services
- Arts Development and Events Manager
- Senior Community Safety Officer

- Should any external witnesses be invited to give evidence? **YES**  
If so, who and from which organisations?

- Representatives of Worcestershire County Council involved in co-ordinating the Positive Activities for Young People framework.
- Representatives of other local authorities that have reviewed youth services (the Task Group will be provided with copies of scrutiny reports from a variety of local authorities and will have the authority to determine which representatives they ask to interview).
- Representatives of West Mercia Police
- Voluntary Sector Service Providers

- What key documents/data/reports will be required?

Education Select Committee Report 2011

- Is it anticipated that any site visits will be required? **YES**  
If so, where should members visit?



- Youth activities within the district
- Other local authorities (locations to be determined by the Task Group as part of their investigations).

- Should a period of public consultation form part of the exercise? **YES**  
If so, on what should the public be consulted?

Throughout the review it will be important to engage with local young people as they will be affected by any changes that the group might propose to the delivery of youth services in the district.

(Please Note: A separate press release requesting general comments/suggestions from the public will be issued in the normal way at the beginning of the investigation.)

- Have other authorities carried out similar overview and scrutiny exercises?  
**YES**  
If so, which authorities?

A large Number of local authorities have reviewed the subject of youth services. The following Councils have been listed because they completed the review recently and / or because the review was completed by a neighbouring authority.

- Gloucestershire County Council
- Rotherham Borough Council
- St Helen's Metropolitan Borough Council
- Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
- Westminster City Council

- Will the investigation cross the District boundary? **NO\***  
If so, should any other authorities be invited to participate? **N/A**  
If yes, please state which authorities:

- Would it be appropriate to co-opt anyone on to the Task Group/Board whilst the Overview and Scrutiny exercise is being carried out? **NO\***  
If so, who and from which organisations?

- What do you anticipate the timetable will be for the Overview and Scrutiny exercise?

It is anticipated that this review could be completed in a maximum of six months. It is anticipated that a draft report will be presented to the Board meeting to be held on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2013.

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**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following interests were declared at various meetings held throughout the Task Group's investigation:

| <b>Councillor</b>                     | <b>Interest Declared</b>  |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths (Chairman) | Member of the Bromsgrove Arts Centre Trust (Atrix Operating Trust)<br><br>As a Worcestershire County Councillor contribution from Discretionary Grant given to the Lounge, Alvechurch |
| Mrs. S. Baxter                        | As a Member of Wythall Parish Council a contribution was made to Woodrush Youth and Community Centre  |
| J. S. Brogan                          | Member of the Bromsgrove Arts Centre Trust (Atrix Operating Trust)  |
| R. J. Laight                          | Member of the Bromsgrove Arts Development Trust (Atrix Holding Trust)   |
| P. Lammas                             | Member of the Bromsgrove Arts Development Trust (Atrix Holding Trust)   |
| Mrs. C. J Spencer                     | Member of the Bromsgrove Arts Centre Trust (Atrix Operating Trust)  |

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Task Group wishes to thank the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services for his support throughout the Task Group's investigations and the Democratic Services Officers, Amanda Scarce, Jess Bayley and Pauline Ross.

Thanks also go to all those Ward Councillors and Parish Councils who took the time to respond to requests for information.

The Task Group would also like to thank the following for allow the Members access to their facilities and sparing the time to discuss, at great length on many occasions, the work that was carried out at those facilities.

### Artrix Arts Centre, Bromsgrove

Andy Woods, Artistic Director

### Ryland Centre, Bromsgrove

Paul Slater, Chief Executive and Ash Rai, Deputy Chief Executive/Operations Manager, Sandwell Leisure Trust

### The Trunk, Charford

Debbie Roberts and Kate Higginson

### The Lounge, Alvechurch

David Shoesmith and Emily Yates

### Woodrush Youth & Community Centre, Wythall

Kay Parker and Faye Parker

*With special thanks to members of the Youth Management Team and the Youth Committee*

### Stoke Parish Youth Club, Stoke Heath

George Verney

## **WITNESSES**

The Task Group considered evidence from the following sources before making its recommendations:

### **Internal Witness:**

- John Godwin - Head of Leisure and Cultural Services
- Laura Kerrigan - Sports Development & Physical Activities Manager
- Anne Marie Darroch - Communications Manager
- Sarah Kelsey - Community Safety Project Officer

### **External Witnesses:**

- Paul Finnemore – Commissioning Manager, Young People (Worcestershire County Council)
- Debbie Roberts – EPIC
- Roy Clarke – District Commissioner, Scouts, Bromsgrove
- TC Peppercorn – Outreach Co-ordinator, Artrix Arts Centre
- Jackie Hooper – Operations Manager, Basement Project
- John Blackhall – Chairman, Bromsgrove Rugby Club
  
- The Task Group also received a presentation on “*Youth Facilities for Teenagers in Hagley*” from three pupils at Haybridge High School (accompanied by Linda Bridges, Sixth Form Achievement Co-ordinator)

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**Youth Provision Task Group - Youth Provision in each Ward – details provided by Members**

| <b>WARD</b>                                 | <b>Youth Clubs</b>                       | <b>Cricket Clubs</b>       | <b>Football Clubs</b>  | <b>Rugby Clubs</b>  | <b>Other Sports Activities</b>   | <b>Scouts/Guides /Brownies</b>  | <b>Church Groups</b>                                   | <b>School Clubs/Other</b>  |
|---|--|----------------------------|--|---|--|---|--|--|
| <b>Alvechurch</b>                           | The Lounge<br>Coffee bar &<br>Youth Club | Alvechurch<br>Cricket Club | Alvechurch Lions<br>Football Club  | Kings Norton<br>Rugby Club (incl<br>Aussie Rules &<br>American Football)<br>Five Ways Rugby<br>Club | Alvechurch<br>Fisheries  |   |  |  |
| <b>Beacon</b>                               | <i>No response received</i>              |                            |  |   |  |   |  |  |
| <b>Catshill</b>                             |  |                            | Youth football<br>team   |   | Judo, Karate,<br>Dance School,<br>play parks   | Scouts, Cubs,<br>Brownies, Guides,<br>Rainbows  | Sunday School  |  |
| <b>Charford</b>                             | The Trunk –<br>youth club                |                            | South<br>Bromsgrove High<br>School – football<br>coaching<br>St Andrews<br>Church Hall –<br>football coaching<br>from<br>Kidderminster<br>Harriers | Bees Rugby Team<br>Woodrush Rugby<br>Club   | Aston Fields –<br>Well fit, Martial<br>arts tuition.<br>South<br>Bromsgrove High<br>School – Martial<br>Arts<br>St Andrews<br>Church Hall –<br>Martial Arts, Well<br>Fit | Charford Scouts Hut<br>– Scouts, Marimba<br>Scouts (Muslim)<br>St Andrews Church<br>Hall - Rainbows |  | South<br>Bromsgrove<br>High School –<br>Samba Band                                     |
| <b>Drakes Cross &amp; Walkers<br/>Heath</b> | Youth club                               | Cricket teams              | Football teams   | Bees Rugby Team<br>Woodrush Rugby<br>Club   | TKD, Judo,<br>Jujitsu, Redhill<br>Archers, dance<br>troupes, Road<br>Cycling Club,<br>Tennis, Hockey   | Rainbows<br>Brownies  | Jam, Christian<br>Life youth<br>group, Boys<br>Brigade | Film club, animal<br>club, gym club,<br>drama, chess,<br>eco, gardening,<br>trampoline |
| <b>Furlongs</b>                             | <i>No response received</i>              |                            |  |   |  |   |  |  |
| <b>Hagley</b>                               | School Youth<br>Club                     |                            |  |   |  | Brownies, Scouts,<br>Adventure Scouts   | Free Church<br>offers some<br>activities               |  |
| <b>Hillside</b>                             | <i>No response received</i>              |                            |  |   |  |   |  |  |
| <b>Hollywood &amp; Majors<br/>Green</b>     | Woodrush Youth<br>Club                   |                            | Football teams   |   | Tennis Club,<br>Gym Club   | Beavers, Cubs,<br>Scouts, Explorers,<br>Rainbows, Brownies,<br>Guides, Rangers                      | JAM Club<br>(Jesus & Me)                               |  |
| <b>Linthurst</b>                            | Not aware of any youth activities        |                            |  |   |  |   |  |  |
| <b>Maribrook</b>                            |  |                            | Football teams   |   |  |   |  |  |

| WARD                 | Youth Clubs  | Cricket Clubs           | Football Clubs   | Rugby Clubs                    | Other Sports Activities  | Scouts/Brownies /Brownies                          | Church Groups  | School Clubs/Other                         |
|----------------------|--|-------------------------|--|--------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Norton</b>        |  |                         | Football pitches   |                                |  |  |  | Various parks & open spaces                |
| <b>Sidemoor</b>      |  |                         | Bromsgrove Sporting FC – adult team, under 18s, several junior teams |                                | King George Rec – several junior teams play here.                          |  | New Song Church – YP group putting on plays, drama and socialising.                          |  |
| <b>Slideslow</b>     |  | Bromsgrove Cricket Club |  | Bromsgrove Rugby Football Club | Bromsgrove Tennis Club, Bromsgrove Hockey Club, Karate                     | 7th Bromsgrove Scout Group, Rainbows, Brownies x 2 | Five Alive Church Group  |  |
| <b>Stoke Heath</b>   | <i>No response received</i>  |                         |  |                                |  |  |  |  |
| <b>St Johns</b>      | St John's Church Youth Club  |                         |  |                                | Mini Tennis at the Ryland Centre, Various activities at the Dolphin Centre | 1 <sup>st</sup> Bromsgrove Scouts & Beavers        | St John's Sunday School, All Saints Sunday School, Methodist Centre Boys Brigade, Night Club | IT facilities available at the Library     |
| <b>Stoke Prior</b>   | Stoke Parish Council run youth activities at Avoncroft   |                         |  |                                | Active sports area at Harris Bush wit new pavilion.                        |  |  | Play areas in Ryefields Road and Shaw Lane |
| <b>Tardebigge</b>    | <i>No response received</i>  |                         |  |                                |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Uffdown</b>       |  |                         |  |                                | Holiday sports Clubs provided by Youth Sports                              | Rainbows, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Ranger Scouts     | Sunday School  | Play areas                                 |
| <b>Waseley</b>       | <i>No response received</i>  |                         |  |                                |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Whitford</b>      | 2 x youth clubs  |                         |  |                                |  | Scouts, Guides, Brownies                           |  |  |
| <b>Woodvale</b>      | <i>No response received</i>  |                         |  |                                |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Wythall South</b> | <i>No response received. However, see below – many of the activities in both Drakes Cross &amp; Walkers Heath &amp; Hollywood &amp; Majors Green overlap into Wythall South.</i> |                         |  |                                |  |  |  |  |

Additional info re Wythall activities:

- The church youth club meets on Sunday evenings which usually involves a meal followed by a debate, alternating weekly with a social activity. Six times a year they plan to have a 'Challenge Sunday' where they challenge other Youth Clubs within Bromsgrove to a variety of activities. They have a youth band and other activities include drama, dance, videos, and games. There is also youth football on Friday evenings at Woodrush School on AstroTurf which is also enjoyed by youths from outside the church.
- JAM Club (Jesus and Me) meets at the Coppice school after school on Wednesdays for infant and junior children. Volunteers and returning youths from Woodrush help to run these sessions which include bible readings and plenty of games, stories, art and craft making etc.

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# CABINET LEADER'S WORK PROGRAMME

**1 AUGUST 2013 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2013**

**(published as at 3 July 2013)**

This Work Programme gives details of items on which key decisions are likely to be taken in the coming four months by the Council's Cabinet

(NB: There may be occasions when the Cabinet may make recommendations to Council for a final decision. E.g. to approve a new policy or variation to the approved budget.)

Whilst the majority of the Cabinet's business at the meetings listed in the Work Programme will be open to the public and media organisations attend, there will inevitably be some business to be considered that contains confidential, commercially sensitive or personal information. This is called exempt information. Members of the public and media may be asked to leave the meeting when such information is discussed.

If an item is likely to contain exempt information we show this on the Work Programme. You can make representations to us if you consider an item or any of the documents listed should be open to the public.

The Work Programme gives details of items on which key decisions are likely to be taken by the Council's Cabinet, or full Council, in the coming four months.

**Key Decisions** are those executive decisions which are likely to:

- (i) result in the Council incurring expenditure, foregoing income or the making of savings in excess of £50,000 or which are otherwise significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- (ii) be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the district;

**Key Decisions** will include:

1. A decision which would result in any expenditure or saving by way of a reduction in expenditure of £50,000 provided the expenditure or saving is specifically approved in the Medium Term Financial Plan.
2. A virement of any amount exceeding £50,000 provided it is within any virement limits approved by the Council;
3. Any proposal to dispose of any Council asset with a value of £50,000 or more or which is otherwise considered significant by the Corporate Property Officer;
4. Any proposal to cease to provide a Council service (other than a temporary cessation of service of not more than 6 months).
5. Any proposal which would discriminate for or against any minority group.

The Work Programme is available for inspection free of charge at The Council House, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove, B60 1AA from 9am to 5pm Mondays to Fridays; or on the Council's web-site ([www.bromsgrove.gov.uk](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk))

If you wish to make representations on the proposed decision you are encouraged to get in touch with the relevant report author as soon as possible before the proposed date of the decision. Contact details are provided. Alternatively, you may write to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services, The Council House, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove, B60 1AA or e-mail: [democratic@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:democratic@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)

The Cabinet's meetings are normally held every four weeks at 6pm on Wednesday evenings at The Council House. They are open to the public, except when confidential information is being discussed. If you wish to attend for a particular matter, it is advisable to check with the Democratic Services Team on (01527 881409) to make sure it is going ahead as planned. If you have any queries Democratic Services Officers will be happy to advise you.

The full Council meets in accordance with the Councils Calendar of Meetings. Meetings commence at 6pm.

**CABINET MEMBERSHIP**

Councillor R. Hollingworth  
Councillor Mrs. M. A. Sherrey  
Councillor M. J. A. Webb  
Councillor Dr. D. W. P. Booth  
  
Councillor C. B. Taylor  
Councillor M. A. Bullivant

Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Partnerships and Economic Development  
Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Health and Well-being  
Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Cultural Services, Environmental Services and Emergency Planning  
Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing, Business Transformation (including ICT) with special responsibility for the Town Centre Regeneration and Special Projects  
Portfolio Holder for Planning, Core Strategy and Regulatory Services  
Portfolio Holder for Policy, Performance, Communications, Customer Services, Legal, Equalities, Democratic Services and Human Resources

| Decision<br>Including Whether it is a Key<br>Decision                        | Decision Taker<br>including Details of<br>Exempt Information (if<br>any) | Date of Decision  | Documents submitted to<br>Decision Maker /<br>Background Papers List          | Contact for Comments  |
|--|--|-------------------|---|---|
| County Air Quality Action Plan   | Cabinet  | 4 September 2013  | Report of the Head of<br>Regulatory Services                                  | Mark Cox, Senior Practitioner,<br>Pollution 01527 881392  |
| Bromsgrove Customer Service<br>Centre – Opening Hours                        | Cabinet  | 4 September 2013  | Report of the Head of<br>Customer Services                                    | Amanda De Warr, Head of<br>Customer Services<br>01527 881421                                      |
| Youth Provisions Task Group<br>Report  | Cabinet  | 4 September 2013  | Report of the Overview and<br>Scrutiny Board                                  | Sheena Jones , Democratic<br>Services Manager<br>01527 548240                                     |
| Housing Growth Consultation<br>Report  | Cabinet (May be<br>recommendation to<br>Council)                         | 4 September 2013  | Report of the Head of Planning<br>and Regeneration                            | Mike Dunphy, Strategic<br>Planning Manager<br>01527 881325  |
| Homelessness Grant Policy  | Cabinet  | 4 September 2013  | Report of the Executive<br>Director and Deputy Chief<br>Executive             | Derek Allen/Amanda Glennie<br>Strategic Housing<br>01527 881269                                   |
| Capital Programme –<br>Bromsgrove Town Centre ,<br>Public Realm Improvements | Cabinet (May be a<br>recommendation to<br>Council)                       | 4 September 2013  | Report of the Executive<br>Director (Finance and<br>Resources) – S151 Officer | Jayne Pickering, Executive<br>Director (Finance and<br>Resources) – S 151 Officer<br>01527 881400 |
| Statement of Accounts<br>2012/13   | Cabinet (recommendation<br>to Council)                                   | 25 September 2013 | Report of the Executive<br>Director (Finance and<br>Resources) – S151 Officer | Jayne Pickering, Executive<br>Director (Finance and<br>Resources) – S151 Officer<br>01527 881400  |

| Decision<br>Including Whether it is a Key<br>Decision                           | Decision Taker<br>including Details of<br>Exempt Information (if<br>any) | Date of Decision | Documents submitted to<br>Decision Maker /<br>Background Papers List | Contact for Comments  |
|---|--|------------------|--|---|
| Playing Pitch Strategy  | Cabinet  | 2 October 2013   | Report of the Head of Leisure<br>and Culture                         | Karl Stokes, Parks and Green<br>Spaces Services Manager<br>01527 64252 ext 3377 |
| Air Quality Task Group Report   | Cabinet  | 2 October 2013   | Report of the Overview and<br>Scrutiny Board                         | Sheena Jones, Democratic<br>Services Manager<br>01527 548240                    |
| Homelessness Grant on<br>schemes funded 2012/13 and<br>proposed funding 2014/15 | Cabinet  | 4 December 2013  | Report of the Executive<br>Director and Deputy Chief<br>Executive    | Derek Allen/Amanda Glennie<br>Strategic Housing<br>01527 881269                 |

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**- 1 - ACTION SHEET: BROMSGROVE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD 22nd APRIL 2013**

| ITEM   | GENERAL COMMENTS   | ACTION  | OFFICER DEALING  | DATE REQUIRED BY                                 | RESPONSE PROVIDED AND DATE PROVIDED                           |
|--|--|---|--|--|---|
| <i>There were no actions arising from the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2013</i> |  |   |  |  |   |
| <b>O/S Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2013</b>                                    |  |   |  |  |   |
| <b>Item 6 – Hardship Fund Payments &amp; Criteria</b>                                    | The Board received a presentation from the Benefits Services Manager.  | The following action was agreed:<br>(a) Clarification on the age range for care leavers eligible for this grant.<br>(b) A briefing on the Essential Living Fund to be made available to all Members.  | The Executive Director, Finance and Resources Democratic Services Officer in conjunction with the Executive Director, Finance and Resources. | As soon as possible.<br><br>As soon as possible. |   |
| <b>Item 7 – Quarter 3 Finance Monitoring Report</b>                                      | The Board considered the Finance Monitoring Report which details the Council's financial position for the period October – December 2012 | The following actions were agreed:<br>(a) That the Board receive an explanation as to the cause of delay in the work on the Cemetery Toilets.<br>(b) An update on how the £200,000 carried forward by Community Services for 2013/14 for affordable housing programme with BDHT, would be | The Head of Environmental Services.<br><br>The Head of Community Services.   | As soon as possible.<br><br>As soon as possible. | Emailed to Members 13/5/13<br><br>Emailed to Members 03/05/13 |

**- 2 - ACTION SHEET: BROMSGROVE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD 22nd APRIL 2013**

|  |   |   |  |  |                      |  |
|--|---|---|--|--|----------------------|--|
|  |   |   | utilised.<br>(c) A briefing note to be provided to Members in respect of the shortfall in income for Planning and Regeneration Services, due to lower than anticipated revenue for planning applications and land charges. | The Head of Planning and Regeneration                | As soon as possible. |  |
| <b>O/S meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2013</b>             |   |   |  |  |                      |  |
| <b>Item 4 – CCTV Code of Practice</b><br>Page 128                    | The Board considered the CCTV Code of Practice.                                   | The following action was agreed:<br>That the Board receive a report on the revised Code of Practice for consideration and comment.  | CCTV and Lifeline Manager  | As soon as available.                                |                      |  |
| <b>Item 6 – Homelessness Grants 2012/13 Update</b>                   | The Board considered the briefing paper in respect of Homelessness Grants 2012/13 | (c) Estimated costs and earmarked reserves in respect of the spare room subsidy for 2013/14 and 2014/15   | The Executive Director, Finance and Resources  | As soon as possible.                                 |                      |  |
| <b>Item 8 – Quarter 3 Sickness Absence Performance Health Report</b> | The Board considered the Quarter 3 Sickness Absence Performance Health Report     | The following actions were agreed:<br>(a) the report to include the number of days for each department equated against the number of staff within that department.<br>(b) The report to include the number of absences in | The Head of Finance and Resources  | Quarter 4 Sickness Absence Performance Health Report |                      |  |



- 3 - ACTION SHEET: BROMSGROVE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD 22nd APRIL 2013

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  | respect of such things as<br>T.A. Service and Jury<br>Service. |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|

| <b>O/S from meeting held on 17th December 2012</b> |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Quarter 2 Finance Monitoring Report</b>         | The Board considered the Finance Monitoring Report which details the Council's financial position for the period July – September 2012, | The following actions were agreed:<br>a) The inclusion of any cost for bed and breakfast accommodation as a separate item in future reports.  | Director of Finance and Corporate Resources.  | To be included in the Quarter 3 Report.                             |
| <b>Quarter 2 Write Off of Debts Report</b>         | The Board considered the Quarter 2 Write Off of Debts Report for the period July – September 2012.                                      | The following actions were agreed:<br>a) In respect of write off of Sundry Debtors, Members requested that a breakdown to include the number of debtors and transactions be included in future reports.<br>b) In respect of the aged debt profile, Members requested comparative data for previous years. | Director of Finance and Corporate Resources.<br><br>Director of Finance and Corporate Resources | To be included in the Quarter 3 Report.<br><br>As soon as possible. |

## OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD

### WORK PROGRAMME

2013-14

All meetings commence at 6.00 p.m. in the Committee Room unless otherwise stated.

This Work Programme consists of two sections: Items for future meetings (including updates) and Task Group Reviews.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

(a) To consider and agree the work programme and update it accordingly.

#### ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

| <b>Date of Meeting</b>                | <b>Subject</b>   | <b>Other Information</b>                                   |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>17<sup>th</sup> June 2013</b>      | Making Experiences Count Quarter 4 Report              |  |
|                                       | WRS Joint Scrutiny Exercise – Nomination of Members    |  |
|                                       | Overview & Scrutiny Board Draft Annual Report 2012/13  | For comment and information                                |
|                                       | The Living Wage Report – Additional Information        | Requested following meeting on 22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2013 |
|                                       | Air Quality Task Group – Verbal Update                 |  |
|                                       | Youth Provision Task Group – Verbal Update             |  |
|                                       | Cabinet Work Programme                                 |  |
|                                       | Action List  |  |
|                                       | Work Programme   |  |
| <b>15<sup>th</sup> July 2013</b>      | Quarter 4 Sickness Absence Performance & Health Report |  |
|                                       | Youth Provision Task Group Draft Report                |  |
|                                       | Air Quality Task Group – Verbal Update                 |  |
|                                       | Cabinet Work Programme                                 |  |
|                                       | WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Board – Verbal Update   |  |
|                                       | Action List  |  |
|                                       | Work Programme   |  |
| <b>16<sup>th</sup> September 2013</b> | Quarter 1 Finance Monitoring Report                    |  |
|                                       | Quarter 1 Write Off Of Debts Report                    |  |

| <b>Date of Meeting</b>               | <b>Subject</b>   | <b>Other Information</b> |
|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
|                                      | Cabinet Response to the Youth Provision Task Group Report              |                          |
|                                      | Planning Policy Task Group – 12 month Review                           |                          |
|                                      | Air Quality Task Group Draft Report                                    |                          |
|                                      | Cabinet Work Programme   |                          |
|                                      | WRS Joint Scrutiny Exercise – Verbal Update                            |                          |
|                                      | WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Board – Verbal Update                   |                          |
|                                      | Action List  |                          |
|                                      | Work Programme   |                          |
| <b>14<sup>th</sup> October 2013</b>  | Quarter 1 Sickness Absence Performance and Health Report               |                          |
|                                      | Cabinet Response to the Air Quality Task Group Report                  |                          |
|                                      | Cabinet Work Programme   |                          |
|                                      | WRS Joint Scrutiny Exercise – Verbal Update                            |                          |
|                                      | WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Board – Verbal Update                   |                          |
|                                      | Action List  |                          |
|                                      | Work Programme   |                          |
| <b>18<sup>th</sup> November 2013</b> | Update report on the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership |                          |
|                                      | Six Month Summary of Environmental Enforcement Action Report           |                          |
|                                      | WRS Joint Scrutiny Exercise – Verbal Update                            |                          |
|                                      | Cabinet Work Programme   |                          |
|                                      | WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Board – Verbal Update                   |                          |
|                                      | Action List  |                          |
|                                      | Work Programme   |                          |
| <b>16<sup>th</sup> December 2013</b> | Quarter 2 Finance Monitoring Report                                    |                          |
|                                      | Quarter 2 Write Off of Debts Report                                    |                          |
|                                      | Quarter 2 Sickness Absence Performance & Health Report                 |                          |
|                                      | WRS Joint Scrutiny – Verbal Update                                     |                          |
|                                      | Cabinet Work Programme   |                          |
|                                      | WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Board – Verbal Update                   |                          |
|                                      | Action List  |                          |

| <b>Date of Meeting</b>               | <b>Subject</b>   | <b>Other Information</b> |
|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
|                                      | Work Programme   |                          |
| <b>20<sup>th</sup> January 2014</b>  | Quarter 3 Summary of Environmental Enforcement Action Report |                          |
|                                      | Cabinet Work Programme                                       |                          |
|                                      | WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Board – Verbal Update         |                          |
|                                      | Action List  |                          |
|                                      | Work Programme   |                          |
| <b>24<sup>th</sup> February 2014</b> | Quarter 3 Sickness Absence Performance & Health Report       |                          |
|                                      | Cabinet Work Programme                                       |                          |
|                                      | WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Board – Verbal Update         |                          |
|                                      | Action List  |                          |
|                                      | Work Programme   |                          |
| <b>24<sup>th</sup> March 2014</b>    | WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Board – Verbal Update         |                          |
|                                      | Cabinet Work Programme                                       |                          |
|                                      | Action List  |                          |
|                                      | Work Programme   |                          |
| <b>14<sup>th</sup> April 2014</b>    | Quarter 4 Summary of Environmental Enforcement Action Report |                          |
|                                      | Cabinet Work Programme                                       |                          |
|                                      | WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Board – Verbal Update         |                          |
|                                      | Action List  |                          |
|                                      | Work Programme   |                          |

**Scrutiny of Crime & Disorder Partnership Meeting Dates**

18<sup>th</sup> November 2013

**Provisional Informal Budget Briefings 5.30 p.m. (Private)**

2<sup>nd</sup> December 2013

7<sup>th</sup> January 2014

**Reports not allocated**

Annual Review of Call In

Countywide Sustainable Community Strategy – this is a ten year strategy and not due to be reviewed until 2014

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY TASK GROUP/INQUIRY REVIEWS 2013-14**

| <b>Task Group</b>          | <b>Date of Review</b> |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Planning Policy Task Group | September 2013        |
| Youth Provision Task Group | September 2014        |
| Air Quality Task Group     | October 2014          |