



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

MONDAY 29TH FEBRUARY 2016
AT 6.00 P.M.

PARKSIDE SUITE - PARKSIDE

MEMBERS: Councillors L. C. R. Mallett (Chairman), K.J. May (Vice-Chairman), C. Allen-Jones, S. J. Baxter, C. J. Bloore, S. R. Colella, B. T. Cooper, R. J. Deeming, M. Glass, R. D. Smith and P.L. Thomas

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence and Named Substitutes
2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Arrangements

To invite Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Disclosable Interests they may have in items on the agenda, and to confirm the nature of those interests.
3. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 18th January 2016 (Pages 1 - 10)
4. Staff Survey - Update (Pages 11 - 32)
5. Planning Backlog Data (Pages 33 - 34)
6. Homelessness in Bromsgrove - Short Sharp Review (Pages 35 - 38)
7. Evening & Weekend Car Parking Task Group - Verbal Update
8. Action List (Pages 39 - 40)
9. Cabinet Work Programme (Pages 41 - 46)

10. Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme (Pages 47 - 50)
11. 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

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

18th February 2016



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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

18TH JANUARY 2016 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors L. C. R. Mallett (Chairman), K.J. May (Vice-Chairman), C. Allen-Jones, S. J. Baxter, C. J. Bloore, S. R. Colella, B. T. Cooper, M. Glass, R. D. Smith and P.L. Thomas

Observers: Councillors G. Denaro, M. Sherrey, S. Shannon and C. Taylor

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Mr. D. Allen, Ms. A. Scarce and Ms. J. Bayley

95/15 **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor R. J. Deeming.

96/15 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

Councillors S. J. Baxter and S. R. Colella declared pecuniary interests in respect of Minute No. 100/15, Medium Term Financial Plan. As these pecuniary interests specifically related to Capital Project Bids they had submitted to the Council in relation to Wythall Car Park (for Councillor Baxter) and Hagley Scouts and Hagley Chub respectively (for Councillor Colella) they remained in the room during consideration of the report and presentation on the subject of the Council's budget from Officers. However, they left the room during the Board's consideration of these Capital Project Bids and did not take part in these discussions or voting thereon.

97/15 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 14th December 2015 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 14th December 2015 be approved as a correct record.

98/15 **WORCESTERSHIRE ACUTE HOSPITAL TRUST - UPDATE**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor M. Sherrey, attended the meeting to clarify the Council's position in respect of the future of Worcestershire Acute Hospital's NHS Trust. She explained that the situation with regard to the Trust had been very fast moving since it had been placed in special measures and decisions needed to be taken quickly. Redditch Borough Council and Stratford District Council were both supportive of proposals to break up the Trust as a result of the difficulties that were being experienced. Councillor Sherrey had taken a decision in her capacity as a Strong Leader to support them.

The management arrangements in place at the Trust were also briefly discussed. No announcement had been made to date regarding a permanent appointment of a Chief Executive of the Trust, though Members praised the acting Chief Executive for his hard work. The influence of the Save the Alex campaign over developments in respect of the Trust was also briefly considered and it was noted that there continued to be links between the Leaders of the 3 Councils and representatives of the campaign, though they did not always attend the same meetings.

99/15

BURCOT LODGE EMERGENCY HOMELESS UNIT - FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS REPORT

The Strategic Housing Manager presented an update on the financial implications of introducing a replacement for Burcot Lodge Emergency Homeless Unit. During the presentation of this report he highlighted the following issues for Members' consideration:

- Burcot Lodge would need to be closed once the sale of the Council House site was completed.
- The level of homelessness in Bromsgrove district was relatively stable, though nationally levels could fluctuate depending on circumstances.
- More homeless applications were received than the number of people placed in temporary accommodation. This could be for a variety of reasons including housing solutions being identified in the meantime.
- Burcot Lodge was only one form of temporary housing provided to residents at risk of homelessness who lived in the district.
- The Council had liaised closely with Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) to identify various options which could replace Burcot Lodge.
- Officers were proposing two options for the replacement of Burcot Lodge from which Members could select.
- The Council and BDHT would continue to monitor demand for temporary accommodation and further action could take place in future if required.

Following the presentation the Board discussed a number of issues in further detail:

- The time taken to review options for the replacement of Burcot Lodge since the subject was initially raised for the Board's consideration in August 2015.
- The Council's responsibility to ensure that Bromsgrove district residents at risk of homelessness were provided with temporary accommodation.
- The length of time that the average resident or family spent living in temporary accommodation in Bromsgrove district before a long-term housing solution could be identified.
- The need for BDHT to convert a void property and the impact that this might have on housing provision within the district.
- The work BDHT had already undertaken to identify properties suitable for conversion and the need for some existing tenants to be transferred to alternative accommodation before any conversion works could be undertaken.

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- The length of time that would be required to convert a void property for use as temporary accommodation and the need to ensure there was appropriate timing for these works. The Board was advised that BDHT were estimating the conversion works would take 3 months to complete.
- The options in terms of the sale of the former Council House site, including the choice of whether to demolish the site prior to sale and the impact this might have on the sale value.
- The potential for Burcot Lodge to be retained as temporary accommodation despite the sale of the Council House site. Officers confirmed that this option had been considered but for a variety of financial and legal reasons was not considered viable.
- The availability of temporary housing from alternative social housing providers alongside that supplied by BDHT. Officers confirmed that there was an emergency plan for housing and that the Council worked with a variety of housing providers.
- The original proposal for the Board to launch a scrutiny review of the replacement for Burcot Lodge and the potential for a Task Group to be dedicated to addressing the subject of homelessness in more detail.

During the course of these discussions a number of questions relating to the potential future impact of new housing legislation and welfare reforms on homelessness levels in the district and demand for temporary accommodation. Due to the number of questions and data required to provide answers the Board agreed that this list of questions should be sent to the Strategic Housing Manager for consideration. Given the level of detail and the potential that additional questions might arise upon consideration of the answers Members concurred that further debate of this subject would be useful. The Board considered whether to receive an update on this subject, or whether a Short, Sharp Review would provide Members with an opportunity to focus on the subject in detail.

Members agreed that any further scrutiny of the subject should not delay Cabinet making a decision about the options to replace Burcot Lodge. However, there was general consensus that the review should be completed in relatively short timescales to ensure that the Council could respond to changing legislative requirements and demand from customers. For this reason the Board agreed membership of the scrutiny group during the meeting in order to reduce the potential for any delays to occur in the review process.

RECOMMENDED that Proposal 1 to replace Burcot Lodge, as detailed within the Cabinet report, be approved, though the Council should remain open to reconsidering Proposal 2 at a later date if demand for temporary accommodation from residents at risk of homelessness increases.

RESOLVED that

- (a) A Short, Sharp Review of homelessness in Bromsgrove District, taking into account the impact of recent Housing legislation and welfare changes, should be launched;

- (b) Councillor C. J. Bloore be appointed as Chairman of the Short, Sharp Review;
- (c) Councillors S. J. Baxter, B. T. Cooper, S. Shannon and R. D. Smith also be appointed to the Short, Sharp Review; and
- (d) Councillor Bloore meet with the Democratic Services Officers to identify suitable terms of reference for the review.

100/15 **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN**

The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources provided an update on the Medium Term Financial Plan and delivered a presentation on the subject of the Financial Settlement 2016/17 to 2019/20. During this presentation the following matters were raised for the Board's consideration:

- The financial settlement for the Council from the Government had been much more challenging than anticipated.
- The Council was one of 15 local authorities most severely impacted by reductions to the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and the only such Council North of the M25.
- The reduction in the RSG was partly due to changes in the way that the Government calculated how much grant funding to provide to Councils. A new approach, Settlement Core Funding, took into account likely Council Tax revenue both from existing stock and any new housing due to be developed.
- Bromsgrove had a relatively high number of E, F, G and H properties. This had impacted on the funding assessment for the district.
- The Planning department had a more conservative estimate than the Government for the number of homes that would be built. By year 4 Officers were anticipating that the Council would receive £500,000 less in Council Tax than levels predicted by the Government.
- The Government was also working on the basis that Council Tax levels would continue to increase at a rate of 2 per cent per annum.
- Under the new funding arrangements the Council would have to repay the Government from 2017/18.
- By 2019/20 Officers were anticipating that the Council would have experienced a 62 per cent reduction in funding.
- Funding changes were also anticipated for the New Homes Bonus (NHB) from 2017/18.
- The Government had launched a consultation about the future of NHB which was due to end in March. The responses to this consultation exercise would be reported to Council in due course.
- There were a number of questions arising from this consultation process that needed to be addressed in order to provide clarification about how NHB would operate in future years.
- The Government had confirmed that in future there would be a maximum of £1.4 billion available to all Councils from NHB, and this would need to be divided between Councils rather than unlimited funding being available as and when developments occurred.
- The 15 Councils that had been the worst affected had produced a Joint Settlement Response, though no feedback had yet been received.

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- Whilst the Government was promising that Councils could retain business rates growth in future years this would only occur once all of RSG funding had been removed.
- The Council had a number of unavoidable pressures, which included limited income from garden waste collection services because the fee was less than Officers had originally anticipated and fewer customers had opted into the service in 2015 than had been predicted.
- Free evening car parking would also be an unavoidable pressure if the decision was taken to continue with this arrangement at the end of the 12 month trial.

Following the presentation a number of key points were considered in further detail:

- The Government's proposal to consider making no NHB payments for homes built on appeal and the potential implications that this had in respect of predetermination at Planning Committee meetings.
- The option for the Council to address the budget deficit for 2016/17 using funding from balances. It was acknowledged that this funding was not finite and would not address funding challenges for every year.
- The advisability of retaining balances at least at the level of £745,000, though the Council had chosen to set the limit at a more comfortable £1.1 million.
- The probability that the Council would be able to set a balanced budget for 2016/17 and that there would be an unbalanced position over the 3 years. The Government's Efficiency Plans were discussed which may enable the Council to secure a 4 year settlement agreement but the details were not yet available from the Government.
- The value of reviewing the fees and charges that had been proposed for 2016/17 as a source of additional funding for the year.
- The limit in terms of the amount by which Councils could increase Council Tax without a referendum. Officers confirmed that any rise of Council Tax over 2 per cent for a district Council would trigger a referendum.
- The financial costs involved in managing a referendum in relation to Council Tax increases and the extent to which residents were likely to vote in favour of an increase.
- The legal implications of holding a referendum in respect of Council Tax at the same time as Local Government elections or the EU referendum were taking place.
- The amount of involvement of the local MP in discussions about the Council's settlement. It was confirmed that the matter had been discussed.
- The level of savings that had been identified by Heads of Service by the date of the meeting and the time available to identify further savings before the budget needed to be balanced.
- The need to avoid making rushed decisions which could be counterproductive in the long-term.

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- The extent to which the Council could achieve more efficiency savings following a period of a number of years where this had already been addressed through service transformation.
- The amount of detail required for inclusion in the efficiency plans.
- The funding settlements for other Councils in the county. Officers confirmed that most local authorities had been surprised by the settlement and were also in the process of attempting to identify savings.
- The potential for the Council to lease vehicles, rather than to invest capital in replacing the fleet. Officers explained that this option had been investigated but the financial costs had been found to be less advantageous than if the Council purchased vehicles.
- The length of time vehicles were used for and the use of spare parts wherever possible once the vehicles were no longer operational.
- The inclusion of Christmas parking in the list of unavoidable pressures. Members noted that this arrangement had been in place for some years and therefore questions were raised as to why this had been included within the list.
- The potential for greater revenue to be generated from Civil Parking Enforcement. Members noted that they regularly observed illegal parking which was inconsistent with reports of increased compliance.
- The possibility of holding an extra meeting of the Board to consider the Cabinet's budget proposals before a decision was made by Council. Members concurred that a further meeting was not needed, but any additional information, in respect of unavoidable pressures, potential savings and why those savings had been identified should be circulated electronically for Members' consideration.

At the end of this debate Councillors S. J. Baxter and S. R. Colella left the room whilst the Board considered the Capital Bids that had been received from elected Members.

In total 4 capital bids had been received from elected Members, though further bids could be submitted throughout the year. It was noted that a separate bid for funding for Hagley Scout Club had been received by the New Homes Bonus Community Grants Panel. The panel had recognised the value of the scouts group's work however the bid had been rejected on the basis that the bid was considered to be premature due to the lack of a clear project plan.

Members concurred that each of the bids were valid and once funded the projects could make a valuable contribution to local communities. For this reason, and in acknowledgement of the time taken to prepare and submit these bids, the Board agreed that they should be discussed further at a forthcoming Council meeting, as Members expressed concerns about any decisions being taken to fund these projects in the current difficult economic circumstances. Members also discussed whether it was appropriate for the bidding process to continue in light of the challenging financial position that the Council was likely to face for the foreseeable future.

RECOMMENDED that

- (a) Cabinet note the Board's position, in that Members do not feel able to recommend that any of the Capital Project Bids from elected Members be approved in the current challenging economic circumstances though would support further discussion of these bids and the Capital Project Bid Scheme at a future meeting of Council;
- (b) Cabinet note the Board's position that Members do not feel able to recommend any of the other Capital or Revenue Bids, as detailed in the appendices to the Medium Term Financial Plan, in the current challenging economic circumstances;
- (c) Cabinet reconsider the Council's Fees and Charges for 2016/17, and consider increasing fees and charges by 3 per cent wherever possible.

101/15 **EVENING & WEEKEND CAR PARKING TASK GROUP INTERIM REPORT**

Councillor K. J. May, Chairman of the Evening and Weekend Car Parking Task Group, presented an interim report for Members' consideration. She explained that the group had already identified 2 potential recommendations, though these remained in draft form. Further consultation would be taking place during forthcoming weeks and additional data would be considered before the group finalised their proposals. The Board was advised that the group remained on track to present their final report in March 2016.

In response to questions from the Board Members were advised that the former Portfolio Holder with responsibility for car parks had not been consulted. However, the group had consulted the current Portfolio Holders with responsibility for car parks and Council finances respectively together with relevant Officers, residents and representatives of local businesses.

102/15 **CABINET WORK PROGRAMME 1ST FEBRUARY TO 31ST MAY 2016**

Members considered the content of the Cabinet Work Programme for the period 1st February to 31st May 2016. During consideration of the plan the following matters were discussed:

a) **High Street Refurbishment: Phase 2 Consideration of Options**

The Chairman sought reassurance that the High Street Refurbishment: Phase 2 Consideration of Options report would not be presented for the consideration of Cabinet in February. The Overview and Scrutiny Board had previously asked to pre-scrutinise the report and this timing would prevent the Board from making any contribution. Officers advised that the report had been postponed though a new date for the item to be considered remained to be confirmed.

b) **New Homes Bonus Scheme**

Members were informed that this report would focus on the proposed amended scheme for 2016/17. The outcomes of the national

consultation process regarding the future of the scheme would be reported separately to Council later in the year.

103/15 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the content of the Board's Work Programme. During consideration of this item a number of points were raised:

a) 29th February meeting of the Board

Officers confirmed that the Board would receive the following reports during this meeting:

- The update on the staff survey.
- The latest report regarding the Planning Application Backlog Data.

b) 21st March meeting of the Board

The following items would be considered during this meeting:

- The annual update on the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership.
- The Evening and Weekend Car Parking Task Group's final report.

c) Increasing Physical Activities Task Group

The Chairman explained that, as requested at the previous meeting of the Board, Worcestershire County Council (WCC) had been contacted about arrangements for the presentation of the Task Group's final report. Councillor Richard Udall, Chairman of the Task Group, had been invited to attend a meeting of the Board to present the group's final report once the review was completed.

A response had recently been received from WCC with the invitation being declined on the basis that the Task Group was not considered by the County Council to be a formal Joint Scrutiny Committee and therefore it was not felt necessary for the Chairman to attend the District Councils' Scrutiny Committees.

Members expressed disappointment in this response. It was noted that Bromsgrove District Council did not have a formal representative on the group, though Councillor J. M. L. A Griffiths remained a member as a County Councillor, and the Board had been advised that it would not be worthwhile at this stage appointing a replacement. Furthermore, it was noted that for previous joint Task Groups, such as the joint scrutiny of Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS), the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the group had attended scrutiny Committee meetings at every participating Council to present the group's report. In this context the Board concurred that the Chairman of the Task Group and Councillor Griffiths should both attend a Board meeting to present the Task Group's findings.

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d) The Artrix

Members were advised that The Artrix had asked to present a report to the Board. This would cover many of the areas identified during the Artrix Outreach Provision Task Group. It was likely that the report would be received in either March or April 2016.

e) Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2015/16

The Chairman explained that the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Annual Report 2015/16 was due to be presented for Members' consideration in April 2016. He suggested that it would be useful to have a section in this report dedicated to reflecting on how the Board had performed during the year and actions that could be taken to improve the scrutiny process at the Council in future years. There was general consensus that this would be a sensible idea, though Members noted that a number of improvements had already been made during the year. This included good quality debates and the changes to seating arrangements that had encouraged a more participatory and apolitical environment than in previous years and which was much more conducive to effective scrutiny.

The meeting closed at 8.23 p.m.

Chairman

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STAFF SURVEY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The following information is provided as a reminder to Members of the background to this item. Copies of presentations referred to can be found within either the agenda packs or minutes on modern.gov or via the Council's website under the appropriate meeting.

1. The item was originally discussed at the Overview & Scrutiny Board meeting held on 14th October 2013 as part of the Work Programme item, when Members discussed that an online staff survey had been produced in August 2013.
2. At its meeting on 14th April 2014 Members received a presentation from the Executive Director, Finance and Resources which gave a summary of the results of the staff survey, the minute extract is detailed below:

The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources circulated a copy of a presentation that had been produced summarising the results of the staff survey. She explained that the survey had been completed by 40% of staff. Responses had included 800 comments from individual members of staff. Due to the scale of these responses it had taken time to analyse the feedback that had been received.

Some of the feedback that had been received had been positive. However, there had also been some responses that had caused concern. For example, only 45% of staff had indicated that they took part in regular team meetings and 50% had indicated that they did not receive feedback from their managers regarding their performance.

Members discussed the content of the presentation and highlighted the following points:

- *The difficulty for Members to scrutinise the effectiveness of the Steering Group's response to the staff survey results without first having an opportunity to consider the responses that had been received from staff.*
- *The fact that the Corporate Management Team (CMT) had also not analysed all of the responses received from staff because this feedback had been treated as confidential. Additional information would be presented for the consideration of CMT at the end of April, though this information would have the same level of detail as that which was contained within the presentation to the Board.*
- *The potential to share general feedback received from staff, trends within departments and in relation to sickness absence rates without breaching staff confidentiality.*
- *Concerns that one to ones and team meetings were not taking place as regularly as they should be.*
- *The frequency of the staff surveys.*

- *The potential for Members to consider a copy of the survey template to enable the Board to assess the feedback provided by staff in context.*
- *The length of time it had taken to assess the feedback received from staff and how this compared to other organisations where staff surveys were circulated.*
- *The fact that completion of the survey was not compulsory.*

RESOLVED that

- (a) a representative of the Steering Group be asked to attend the Board meeting to be held on either 16th June or 14th July 2014 to present more detailed information about the responses received to the staff survey; and*
- (b) a copy of the survey template be provided for Members' consideration at that meeting.*

3. At its meeting held on 16th June 2014 a further presentation was received from the Head of Business Transformation and Organisational Development – the minute4 extract is provided below:

The Head of Business Transformation and Organisational Development delivered a presentation which summarised the results of the staff survey conducted in August 2013 (Appendix 1).

Following this presentation a number of points were raised by Members:

- *The level of responses that had been received from staff, which represented a third of the employees from both Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council.*
- *The potential to design and promote future versions of the survey in ways that would encourage a larger proportion of staff to respond in future years. Officers confirmed that the survey had been made available both electronically and in paper form for staff to complete.*
- *The value of assessing responses at a departmental level and the challenges this would present to the Staff Survey Working Group due to the fact that staff were not required to indicate which department they worked in when completing the survey.*
- *Some of the feedback that had been received in completed surveys, particularly the qualitative data, had been treated as confidential. This was because in some cases the comments submitted by staff could have enabled observers to identify the respondent or a specific team.*
- *The potential for senior Officers to make themselves available for staff to access across numerous working sites. Members were advised that senior Officers would not focus on one action exclusively but rather would seek to engage with staff face-to-face using a range of methods in order to meet the differing needs across both Councils.*
- *The Working Group's Action Plan, which was in the process of being developed would be utilised to monitor progress in implementing actions taken in response to the feedback, particularly the top ten recommendations.*
- *The benefits of face to face communications between staff arising from "No Email" days.*

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- *How the feedback that had been received compared to the responses to previous versions of the staff survey. Members suggested that in future a record should be kept of the responses received in order to ensure that progress with addressing staff concerns could be monitored.*
- *The importance of 1:2:1 meetings for staff and the need for these to be held regularly. However, it was noted that there needed to be some flexibility across the organisation regarding the frequency of these meetings due to the varying work patterns and demands on staff employed in different services.*
- *The fact that some staff struggled with change and the challenges this presented at a corporate level during the course of service transformation.*
- *The failure of some ICT systems and the financial implications that this presented for the Council.*

Concerns were expressed in respect of the 14.75% of respondents who had indicated that they had been subject to bullying and harassment while at work. Officers confirmed that there was a policy for managing reports relating to bullying and harassment and this was applied by managers when cases were reported directly by members of staff. Improved training of managers would further enable them to respond to reports of bullying and harassment in a sensitive manner. There were also support groups, such as Phone a Friend, which could provide advice to staff. Members concurred that it was important to demonstrate to all staff that the Council would not tolerate bullying and harassment and it was suggested that this could be highlighted within the top ten recommendations.

The Board also discussed the proposal for the staff finder and phone lists to be updated in order to improve internal communications. Members noted that unfortunately they were not able to access the intranet, where the staff finder facility was located, using their Council IT equipment. However, the Board recognised that it was important to provide all elected Members with access to staff contact details as this could help Members to manage issues raised at both Committee meetings and by residents in a constructive manner.

RECOMMENDED that

1. *a statement should be added to the top ten recommendations arising from the staff survey which demonstrates that the Council has a zero tolerance approach to bullying and harassment among staff;*
2. *the contact details for staff, as detailed in the staff finder on the Council's intranet, should be made available for the consideration of elected Members; and*

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

3. **At the meeting held on 21st January 2015 the Board received both a report and presentation, together with a copy of the questionnaire. The relevant minute extract is given below:**

The Acting Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager delivered a presentation on the subject of the staff survey. During the delivery of the presentation she raised the following points for Members' consideration:

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- *The survey, which was circulated in August 2013, had been completed by 40 per cent of staff.*
- *There had been delays in analysing the data due to the complexity and volume of the feedback.*
- *Responses had been treated as confidential and every effort had been made to ensure that individual respondents could not be identified.*
- *There had been a low response rate from Bromsgrove depot, which would be addressed in any future surveys.*
- *A Working Group, comprising senior Officers, had been established to consider the feedback provided in the surveys.*
- *Sub-Groups had also been established to consider four key themes, chaired by members of the Working Group.*
- *The four key themes identified from analysis of the feedback were; management and the need for managers to manage staff in a different way in a changing environment, the need for more effective internal communications, the importance of an appropriate working environment that enabled staff to be a healthy workforce, and failures in ICT support and the impact of IT improvements on wider service delivery.*
- *Action had been taken in a variety of areas to address the concerns raised by staff.*
- *The first event relating to the Council's Time to Change pledge would take place at Bromsgrove Council House on 5th March 2015.*
- *The Council was participating in the Worcestershire Works Well accreditation process.*
- *A new performance management framework was being piloted in the business transformation team.*
- *A new induction process, which would include face-to-face support, mentoring and podcasting, was due to be introduced.*
- *A generic skills matrix was being launched focusing on 25 skills all staff required in addition to any technical and specialist abilities.*
- *Additional support for staff was being made available in Bromsgrove and the Phone a Friend service was due to be re-launched with new volunteers.*
- *Monthly updates were being delivered through Oracle newsletters.*
- *A staff choir had been launched due to identified links between singing and wellbeing.*
- *In total 11% of respondents had reported that they had experienced some form of bullying from either the public or other officers in the workplace. The Council's Bullying Policy had been promoted in an attempt to address this problem.*
- *The information available to staff in respect of corporate priorities, performance measures and strategic purposes had been updated and various ICT policies would be rewritten to ensure they were user friendly for staff.*
- *The new survey would be launched outside the school holiday period in order to maximise the number of responses.*
- *Officers were intending to use the same questions in the survey to ensure that the feedback could be compared to the data from the 2013 survey.*

Following the delivery of the presentation Members discussed a number of points in further detail:

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- *The need for first aider and fire warden training to be delivered as part of the corporate training programme.*
- *The current content of the Bullying Policy and the extent to which changes needed to be made to the policy in order to secure a reduction in bullying.*
- *The type of issues that were considered bullying by staff.*
- *The training delivered in wellbeing sessions, covering healthy eating, physical exercise, breaks from work and health checks.*
- *The potential for exit interviews to take place in order for the Council to have an understanding why staff left. (Members were informed that these would be introduced across the organisation and the fact that these could only be undertaken on a voluntary basis.)*
- *The arrangements for the new Performance Development Review (PDR) framework which would look forward towards achieving objectives rather than backwards at past behaviour.*
- *Some concerns were expressed about the limited number of PDRs that staff had undertaken in recent years and the impact that this could have on both staff morale and performance.*
- *The provision of regular one-to-one meetings for staff and the fact that these varied in content and timescales.*
- *The payment of staff by increments rather than in accordance with an assessment of service performance.*
- *The number of times members of the Corporate Management Team had attended team meetings and the breakdown of attendances at these meetings.*
- *The number of new members of staff who would be employed by the Council in the following year.*
- *The potential value of a podcast in the corporate induction process and the benefits of face-to-face contact when welcoming new staff to the organisation.*
- *The content of the Oracle newsletters and the potential for these newsletters to be sent to Members alongside the monthly newsletter for Councillors.*
- *The operation of staff from Redditch Town Hall and the extent to which the working environment in the building was appropriate for shared services.*
- *The work that had been delivered in accordance with the Council's Equalities Plan.*
- *The reasons why the review of key behaviours in a customer driven organisation had been superseded. Officers explained that this had occurred as part of the on-going work to transform the organisation.*

Members also suggested the following amendments to the survey:

- *An additional question on the subject of health and wellbeing concerning the option to work from alternative locations to the standard Office workspace.*
- *The potential for "paternity" to be added as an additional option as a reason why a member of staff may have been subject to bullying or harassment.*
- *The potential for the option "lack of belief" to be rephrased as "no religious belief".*

Following further discussion the Board

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

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O&S Committee -Staff Survey Update

29th February 2016

Background

A staff survey was distributed to all staff both electronically and in hard-copy format in August 2013. A total of 384 responses were received which equated to roughly one third of all the staff across both Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council. The survey did not cover staff at Worcestershire Regulatory Services as they had recently undertaken a staff survey.

The purpose of the Staff Survey was to capture a snap shot of how staff were feeling and dealing with the rate of change, identify any particular issues and identify steps to address these. The aim was to use the survey to improve staff health and wellbeing and thereby increase employee engagement, motivation and performance. The survey was also to be used to identify areas for further exploration.

A Working Group was established with staff from across the two organisations including a mixture of staff and managers, and office-based / non-office based roles. Four Key Themes were identified - Management, Communication, Working Environment and ICT. Sub-groups were set up to develop recommendations in January 2014. The subgroups reported back at the end of March 2014 and an Action Plan was established.

Since then work has been on-going to deliver the actions identified. Most have now been completed / are in place and a few others are on-going. Summary details can be found in Appendix 1.

It is proposed to distribute the follow-up survey in April 2016 using the same questions asked in the initial survey. This will allow a direct comparison between both sets of results to assess the success of the work carried out as part of the Action Plan.

The format of the survey has been altered slightly so that, where respondents have the opportunity to make comments in relation to a question, the box for the comments sits next to the question rather than at the end of the section. This will make it easier to analyse the responses. A copy of the revised survey is attached as Appendix 2.

The timetable for communicating with staff about the survey, the deadline for completion and the analysis of the outcomes is attached as Appendix 3.

APPENDIX 1


	What	Top 10 Actions	Who	Status / Completion
1.	Increase visibility and get a better understanding of the issues faced by staff by walking the floor, attending Team Meetings on a regular basis and ensuring that suitable one-to-one meetings are held	Yes	Members of CMT	In place
2.	Improve communication to staff particularly around ICT issues, the work done to rectify them and Helpdesk usage	Yes	Deb Poole / Mark Hanwell	In place
3.	Ensure that non-office based staff get paper copies of the Oracle newsletter	Yes	Anne Marie Harley	In place
4.	Improve mechanisms for collecting data on issues relating to the working environment so that they can be actioned / monitored	Yes	Amanda de Warr / John Homer / Helen Mole	In place
5.	Remind staff of the support options available – Employee Assistance Programme, Occupational Health, Phone-a-Friend etc and ensure that they are built into workshops and into discussions with managers		Lindsey Wood	In place
6.	Implement healthy lifestyle pilot workshop for staff		Lindsey Wood	Completed - This was carried out on 9 th January 2015 and was well received by delegates
7.	Clarify the role of managers in a “transformed” organisation – session held at the Managers’ Forum in September 2014	Yes	Becky Talbot / Lindsey Wood	Completed

8.	Familiarise staff with the Strategic Priorities by making them into screen savers		Mark Hanwell	Completed – However, these were removed during the Windows 7 upgrade due to a technical issue. Work will be carried out to reinstate these
9.	Make it easier for staff to find contact details for other members of staff via the Orb / Staff Finder		Mark Hanwell	Completed
10.	Make the policy compliance process more user friendly by presenting staff with summaries of policies via NETconsent and not full policies		Mark Hanwell / Lindsey Wood / Becky Talbot	Work in Progress - A pilot has been carried out using a summarised version of the key ICT policies. This was successful. However we have been unable to roll this out to all staff due to systems issues. Resolution of these is currently being sought and we hope to be in a position to roll out the new approach to all staff shortly
11.	Ensure that staff are kept up-to-date on changes / developments via Staff Briefings and other methods of communication – reviewing approaches to ensure that they deliver what staff need.	Yes	Kevin Dicks / Anne Marie Harley	Ongoing – staff briefings are held whenever there are significant issues or information to communicate. The next round of these begins on 22 nd February 2016. Team briefs are circulated at the beginning of each month and the Oracle newsletter go out to all staff on or around 15 th of each month. Staff who do not have access to the intranet receive hard copies.
12.	Increase the focus on staff wellbeing – initial programme of training for managers is in place which covers Mental Health awareness, mentoring skills and IOSH Managing Safely, and Wellbeing and Developing Personal Resilience for staff	Yes	Becky Talbot / Lindsey Wood	Completed - A range of training courses and initiatives have been put in place over the past year. These have included Mental Health First Aid – Lite, Mental Health Awareness for Frontline Staff, IOSH Managing Safely, Five Ways to Wellbeing activities, Time to Talk events and a pilot for a resilience programme.

13.	Ensure staff have the skills they need to be able to deliver purpose / develop for the future – skills matrix developed and being tested with a view to being used to identify skills and development needs		Becky Talbot / Lindsey Wood	Work in progress - A skills matrix has been developed and piloted within Customer Access and Financial Support. Customer Services and Benefits have completed the Matrix with all staff, and are using the outcomes to develop and train staff in areas identified. The feedback from the manager involved, about the process and outcomes, has been very positive.
14.	Establish an Equalities Training Plan – Plan in place for the remainder of 2014/15 and new one being developed for 2015/16		Becky Dunne / Emily Payne	The 2014 / 2015 training programme was rolled out to staff and feedback collected on the areas that staff wanted to cover going forward. The main topic that was requested was around dealing with customers who have mental health issues, and as a result a programme of training for frontline staff was implemented during 2015 / 2016. Some training was also provided around transgender issues. This work will be extended during the 2016 / 2017 financial year alongside a range of other equalities based workshops.
15.	Re-establish an induction process for both authorities – outline developed and content being developed. Approach to be piloted in March 2015		Becky Talbot / Lindsey Wood	Work in progress - Two modules have been implemented (H&S and Data Protection / Freedom of Information) and work is ongoing at establishing the remainder of the programme as quickly as possible.
16.	Improve the working environment where appropriate (subject to budget availability) and provide showers / a more suitable staff rest room at the Town Hall	Yes	John Homer / Sharon Sharpe	Work in progress - Showers have been installed in conjunction with Choose How You Move. Relocation of staff room is being looked at but is dependent on budget and space availability.
17.	Move towards having single systems across both authorities eg Finance, Procurement, HR etc		Mark Hanwell	Completed - We now have a single system for finance and procurement and the HR databases have been merged into a single one for both authorities.

18.	Review Key Behaviours in a Customer Driven Organisation – superseded. Now looking at establishing Strategic Principles and underpinning practices and behaviours. These will incorporate the Key Behaviours	Yes	Kevin Dicks / Deb Poole	Completed - Strategic Principles were developed in September 2015 and 4 th Tier Managers are now working to these, and challenging one another where appropriate. These principles support those developed by CMT and vice versa.
19.	Provide clear guidance on the organisations' approach to performance management – a pilot using a Systems thinking approach is currently taking place in Environmental Services. This will be extended to a further Service area shortly.	Yes	Deb Poole	Work in progress - Environmental Services have been trialling a “System Performance Framework” and feedback from users will be obtained during the last two weeks of February. Initial feedback has been positive and we are preparing to extend the trial to the Chief Executive Directorate Support Team. It is expected this will provide enough data and evidence to enable finalising the framework before rolling out to other services.

STAFF SURVEY


Statements		Not at all  Completely					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
Role and Skills	I am clear about my role and responsibilities when I am at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	I understand how my role contributes to the purpose of my team and I feel that what I do is important.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	I have all the skills I need to be able to do my job well. (Please give details below if you have any training needs).	1	2	3	4	5	6
	I have the opportunity to do what I do best on a daily basis.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	I have opportunities to develop my skills and knowledge for the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	I am able to meet the needs of my customers (internal or external) on a daily basis.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	I have the materials and equipment that I need to do my job well.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Comments / details of any training needs:						
	Systems, processes, people, cross-site working / travel between sites etc get in the way of me being able to do a good job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Please give details of any issues you encounter in relation to your role or skills						

Role and Skills	I know that the Councils have 6 Strategic Purposes.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	I am able to state what the 6 Strategic Purposes are.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	I am aware that my service area has operational measures or that they are currently being developed.		
	Please add any further comments on these role and skills questions		

	Statements	Not at all Completely					
Health and Wellbeing	I feel that I have a suitable balance between work and the rest of my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	I am able to take a lunch break every day.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	I am able to take other breaks if I need them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	I am generally able to take advantage of flexible working arrangements.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	I would be interested in taking part in health and wellbeing programmes at work (in addition to the smoking cessation and health checks that are already on offer). in the comments section below.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>			No <input type="checkbox"/>		


Health and Wellbeing continued

If you answered "Yes" above, please give details		
Does your working environment hinder your ability to work effectively? (If yes, please give details below)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If you answered "Yes" above, please give details		
Have you suffered from any illness, disability or other physical or mental problem within the last 12 months that was caused or made worse by your job or by work you have done in the past	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If there was one thing in your workplace that we could change that would improve your health and wellbeing, what would it be?		
Please use this box if you wish to make any further comments on health and wellbeing		

Statements		Not at all  Completely					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
My team works well together.		1	2	3	4	5	6
I have a good working relationship with my colleagues.		1	2	3	4	5	6
I understand what my colleagues do and how this contributes to the overall purpose of the team.		1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel that I have the opportunity to contribute to decision making or changes within the team.		1	2	3	4	5	6
Do you feel that you are affected by any conflict within the team?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>			No <input type="checkbox"/>		
Have you been subjected to any bullying or harassment while at work? <i>If yes, there are people available for you to talk to – your line manager, HR Advisers, Phone a Friend volunteer, union reps and the Employee Assistance Programme. Tel: 0800 243 458</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>			No <input type="checkbox"/>		
If you have answered “Yes” to the above question, what were the grounds for the bullying or harassment?							
Age	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Pregnancy and Maternity			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
Disability	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality and caste			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
Gender re-assignment	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Religion or belief - this includes lack of belief			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Sex			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
Sexual orientation	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Caring responsibilities			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
Other (please give details below).	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>						

Relationships

	Comments / details:
--	---------------------

		Not at all  Completely					
Statements		1	2	3	4	5	6
Communication	I think that my team meetings are useful.						
	We have regular team meetings so I feel that I am well informed about what is happening.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>			No <input type="checkbox"/>		
	I have regular one-to-one meetings / status updates with my line manager / supervisor.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>			No <input type="checkbox"/>		
	I am encouraged to contribute my thoughts and ideas at team meetings and one-to-one sessions.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>			No <input type="checkbox"/>		
	The way the organisation communicates with staff eg using the Oracle newsletter and Orb notifications etc meets my needs.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>			No <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Please use this space if you would like to make any comments about communication						
Support and Recognition	I get the support I need from my line manager.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>			No <input type="checkbox"/>		
	I get the support I need from my colleagues.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>			No <input type="checkbox"/>		
	I feel that my contribution is recognised and I receive praise when I do a good job.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>			No <input type="checkbox"/>		
	I get regular feedback from my line manager about how I am doing.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>			No <input type="checkbox"/>		

	I am aware of the support on offer through the Employee Assistance Programme, Occupational Health and Union Representatives.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Please use this space if you would like to make any comments about support and recognition			

	Statements		
Change	I am aware of the changes that are happening within the Council.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	I understand why these changes are happening.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	I understand what impact these changes will have on my role and the way that I carry it out.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	I have the support that I need to be able to deal with change effectively.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	I feel that I have the skills I need to be able to deal with the changes that are taking place.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	I feel that I am able to influence the changes taking place around me.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	I feel that I am coping well with the changes that are taking place.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	The changes in my service area have had an impact on how I do my job.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	These changes have been beneficial.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Comments:		

Responsibility	I understand that I have a responsibility to raise any concerns I may have over possible fraud, crime, danger or other serious risk that could threaten customers, colleagues, the public or the organisation's reputation.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	I know how to raise such a concern.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	I feel confident about raising any such concerns.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

General	Please use this space if you would like to add any further comments		
Work Area (Optional)	<p>Which one of the following best describes the main focus of your role?</p> <p>4th Tier / Strategic Management <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Supervisory / Team Leader <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Office-based support role <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Office-based, customer facing role <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Operational / frontline role dealing with external customers and partners <input type="checkbox"/></p>		

Service Area:	
Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Customer Access & Financial Services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leisure and Cultural Services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental Services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community Services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning and Regeneration	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing Services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business Transformation and Organisational Development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chief Executive	<input type="checkbox"/>



Get involved!

We have set up a working group to look at the sort of culture that we need to develop within the two councils to support the effective delivery of services to our customers.

If you would be interested in becoming involved with this work, could you please complete this tear off slip and return it to Phillippa Smith, Training and OD Adviser, Human Resources, Town Hall, Redditch or place it in the collection box.

Name: (please print) Team:

Location: Tel No / Ext:

Internal Staff Survey Communication Plan

1. Key dates
2. Press release schedule
3. Story angles
4. Resources
5. Contacts for sign off

1. Key dates

12th February 2016 – CMT discussion
 29th February 2016 – O&S Committee - BDC
 15th February – Oracle
 1st March – Team Brief
 15th March - Oracle
 Launch date – tbc - April
 1st April – Team Brief
 1st May/15th May – Team Brief/Oracle

2. Information release schedule

Month	Activity	Responsibility
February	Take proposed survey to CMT and O&S	HR
February	Article in Oracle Newsletter to say it's coming	Comms
End February	Design Posters	Graphics
Early March	Get hard copies printed/ready	HR/ print room
Early March	Confirm dates, timescales, arrangements and contacts in Team Brief	Comms
March	Posters issued, launch in March newsletter	Comms/HR/Directorate Support
Mid-March	Email 4 th tier managers to encourage staff participation	HR/Comms
April	Launch the survey Follow with quick updates on level of responses	Comms
June	Update on findings from the survey in TB or Oracle	Comms

3. Angles

Rather than just telling staff about the survey, we need to give them a reason for completing it to encourage more people to fill it in.

Initial ideas:

“You said, we did”

Having your say can really make a difference. Last time we found out that **xxx** was happening. We did this as a result. We need your help to change our organisation for the better.

4. Resources

1. Team Brief
2. Oracle Newsletter
3. Orb
4. Oracle Email (Daily)
5. O&S
6. CMT
7. Internal Post
8. Leader’s Briefings

5. Contacts for sign off

Kevin Dicks (TB)
Deb Poole
CMT
Sue Hanley
Lindsey Wood
Phillippa Smith
Claire Mitchell

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Agenda Item 5

Major application determination times

From 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2015

The two year period (until the end of Dec 2015) for the processing of major applications shows that performance is well improved. The current figure is that over 60% of major applications are determined in a timely manner. The government requirement is for over 50% and Bromsgrove Council was below 40% at the time of designation. The council has written to CLG to ask for designation to be lifted.

All major applications in the Planning Service have an allocated case officer, i.e. there are no unallocated major cases.

Number of applications	Number in time	Quarter
11	7	Jan - March '14 Q4
6	2	April - June '14 Q1
6	2	July - Sept '14 Q2
3	2	Oct - Dec '14 Q3
5	2	Jan - March '15 Q4
4	3	April - June '15 Q1
7	7	July - Sept '15 Q2
10	8*	Oct - Dec '15 Q3
TOTAL	52	33 33 ÷ 52 = 63.4%

* Two Extensions of Time were requested before the end of the 13 weeks for this Quarter. Both applications were then agreed within the Extended Time.

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

29th February 2016

SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION PROPOSAL – HOMELESSNESS IN BROMSGROVE

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Kit Taylor
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
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 has been submitted by Councillor Chris Bloore, with the aid of Officers, relating to homelessness in Bromsgrove and is presented for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Board following agreement at its previous meeting to set up a Short Sharp Review in to this topic.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That the Board considers the completed proposal form (at Appendix 1) and agrees the terms of reference, subject to any amendments made in the meeting.**

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 An Overview and Scrutiny Topic Proposal Form relating to homelessness in Bromsgrove has been completed by Councillor Chris Bloore. This is as a result of discussions at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 18th January when it was agreed that a Short Sharp Review would be set up to investigate the impact of a number of changes in respect of Homelessness in Bromsgrove.

- 3.2 Councillor Bloore was appointed as Chairman of the Short Sharp Review with the following Membership:

Councillors Sue Baxter, Brian Cooper, Sean Shannon and Roger Smith

- 3.3 For background information, the Board had received a topic proposal from Councillor Sean Shannon in respect of the impending closure of the Burcot Lodge Homeless Hostel at its meeting on 24th August 2016. This led Members to receive a number of update reports on this issue at its October, November 2015 and January 2016 meetings.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

29th February 2016

Financial Implications

- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 There is a cost of setting up a short sharp review in that Members receive a one off allowance for taking part. The Chairman receives £260 with the other Members receiving £130 each.

Legal Implications

- 3.6 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

- 3.7 There are currently no service/operation implications directly relating to this report. However, any implications would be considered as part of the subsequent investigation undertaken by the Short Sharp Review.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.8 The finds of this investigation could have clear implications for vulnerable customers at risk of homelessness.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 None for the purpose of this report.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Overview and Scrutiny Proposal Form

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

7. KEY

None

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Amanda Scarce – Committee Services Officer
E Mail: a.scarce@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Tel: 01527 881443

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY TOPIC PROPOSAL

This form can be used for either a Task Group or a Short Sharp Review topic proposal.

Completed forms should be returned to scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk – Democratic Services, Bromsgrove District Council.

Name of Proposer: Councillor Chris Bloore	
Tel No: 07905612710	Email: c.bloore@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Date: 19/01/16	

<p>Title of Proposed Topic (including specific subject areas to be investigate)</p>	<p>Homelessness in Bromsgrove - the impact of legislative changes on this and action the Council will take to address any problems which may arise.</p>
<p>Background to the Proposal (Including reasons why this topic should be investigated and evidence to support the need for the investigation.)</p>	<p>Following the submission of a topic proposal from Cllr Sean Shannon in respect of the potential closure of the Burcot Lodge Homeless Hostel the Board received a number of reports/briefing papers in respect of action the Council would take to address the loss of this building, this has led to a number of other questions being raised at the Board's meeting on 18/01/16 including the changing housing policy of Central Government and changes to housing benefits.</p>
<p>Links to national, regional and local priorities (including the Council's strategic purposes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help me to live my life independently • Help me find somewhere to live in my locality • Help me to be financially independent
<p>Possible Key Objectives (these should be SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely)</p>	<p>The data shows the Council has to make more and more interventions to prevent homelessness.</p> <p>In light of the need to replace the Burcot Lodge Homeless Hostel, we need to ensure that as a Council we are best placed to meet the needs of</p>

Agenda Item 6

	residents, particularly due to the significant forthcoming changes to the benefit system. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify what the legislative changes will entail; • Clarify the impact of all of these changes on the Council's services and customers; and • ensure that appropriate steps are in place to minimise the impact and support our customers. 			
Anticipated Timescale for completion of the work.	8 to 10 weeks (It is anticipated that the review will hold its first meeting w/c 22/02/16.)			
Would it be appropriate to hold a Short Sharp Inquiry or a Task Group? (please tick relevant box)	Task Group	No	Short Sharp Inquiry	Yes

OFFICE USE ONLY - TO BE COMPLETED WHEN THE TOPIC PROPOSAL IS ACCEPTED

Evidence	
Key documents, data, reports	
Possible Site Visits	
Is a general press release required asking for general comments/suggestions from the public?	
Is a period of public consultation required?	
Witnesses	
Officers	
Councillors (including Portfolio Holder)	
Any External Witnesses	

ACTION SHEET - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD 18th January 2016

ITEM	GENERAL COMMENTS	ACTION	OFFICER DEALING	DATE REQUIRED BY	RESPONSE PROVIDED AND DATE PROVIDED
<p>Medium Term Financial Plan</p> <p align="center">Page 39</p>	<p>Members received a report and presentation in respect of the Medium Term Financial Plan and the Financial Settlement 2016/17 – 2019/20</p>	<p>Members requested:</p> <p>a) The inclusion of the option for a referendum in respect of the Council Tax increase within the Budget Report to be presented to Council.</p> <p>b) Details of the reduction in income from On Street Civil Parking Enforcement.</p> <p>c) Response sent in respect of the reduced Grant Settlement to central Government.</p>	<p>Executive Director, Finance & Resources and Head of Environmental Services.</p>	<p>As soon as possible.</p>	
<p>Cabinet Work Programme</p>	<p>Members considered the Cabinet Work Programme.</p>	<p>Members requested a firm date for when the High Street Refurbishment report would be considered by Cabinet in order for the Board to be able to pre-scrutinise it in a timely manner.</p>	<p>Executive Director, Finance & Resources</p>	<p>As soon as possible.</p>	
14th December 2015					
<p>Dolphin Centre Update</p>	<p>Members received a presentation in respect of the current position with the new Dolphin centre project.</p>	<p>Members requested regular updates be provided by the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services in respect of sports clubs and community groups displaced by the lack of an available sports hall during</p>	<p>Head of Leisure and Cultural Services</p>	<p>The Board need to decide when it would like to receive these updates.</p>	

ACTION SHEET - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD 18th January 2016

ITEM	GENERAL COMMENTS	ACTION	OFFICER DEALING	DATE REQUIRED BY	RESPONSE PROVIDED AND DATE PROVIDED
		the day, to include information about the support provided to enable those groups to find alternative accommodation.			
23rd November 2015					
<p>Item 6 Fees & Charges</p> <p align="center">Page 40</p>	Members considered the report which set out the fees and charges to be levied on services.	Members requested clarification on the following:- a) Clarification in respect of the charges for service and administration improvements under Private Sector Housing. b) The number of Lifeline installation within one year, together with details of the number of those which are paid for. c) Building Control – percentage of the local market the Council has.	Executive Director, Finance and Resources	As soon as possible.	

CABINET LEADER'S WORK PROGRAMME

1 MARCH 2016 TO 30 JUNE 2016

(published as at 1 February 2016)

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 to 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 Parkside, Market Street, Bromsgrove, B61 8DA from 9am to 5pm Mondays to Fridays; or on the Council's web-site 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, Parkside, Market Street, B61 8DA or e-mail: democratic@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

The Cabinet's meetings are normally held every four weeks at 6pm on Wednesday evenings at Parkside. 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 M. A. Sherrey	Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Community Safety and Partnerships
Councillor C. B. Taylor	Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Planning Services and Housing
Councillor G. N. Denaro	Portfolio Holder for Finance, ICT, HR and Enabling Services
Councillor R. L. Dent	Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Regeneration and the Town Centre
Councillor R. J. Laight	Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Cultural Services
Councillor P. J. Whittaker	Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Regulatory Services

Decision Including Whether it is a Key Decision	Decision Taker including Details of Exempt Information (if any)	Date of Decision	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Pay Policy	Cabinet	24 February 2016	Report of the Executive Director Finance and Resources	Jayne Pickering 01527 881400 Councillors Denaro
Budget and Council Tax Recommendations	Cabinet <i>(recommendations to Council)</i>	24 February 2016	Report of the Executive Director Finance and Resources	Jayne Pickering 01527 881400 Councillor G. Denaro
High Street Refurbishment Phase 2 consideration of Options Key Decision	Cabinet	2 March 2016	Report of the Chief Executive	Kevin Dicks 01527 881484 Councillor R. Dent
Council Tax Support Scheme	Cabinet	2 March 2016	Report of the Head of Customer Access and Financial Support	Amanda De Warr 01527 881421 Councillor G Denaro
Homelessness Grant Expenditure 2016/17	Cabinet	2 March 2016	Report of the Head of Community Services	Judith Willis 01527 534149 Councillor K. Taylor

Decision Including Whether it is a Key Decision	Decision Taker including Details of Exempt Information (if any)	Date of Decision	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Q3 Financial Monitoring Report	Cabinet	2 March 2016	Report of the Executive Director Finance and Resources	Jayne Pickering 01527 881400 Councillor G Denaro
Report of the Evening and Weekend Car Parking Task Group	Cabinet	6 April 2016	Report of the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services	Claire Felton 01527 881400 Councillor G Denaro
Modifications to the Bromsgrove District Local Plan	Cabinet <i>(recommendations to Council)</i>	TBC	Report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration	Mike Dunphy Strategic Planning Manager 01527 881325 Councillor K. Taylor

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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD

WORK PROGRAMME

2015-16

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board considers and agrees the work programme and updates it accordingly.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Date of Meeting	Subject	Additional Information
29/02/16	Staff Survey – Update	Requested following presentation at February 2015 meeting.
	Planning Application Backlog Data	
	O&S Work Programme	
	Action List	
	Cabinet Work Programme	
	Evening & Weekend Car Parking Task Group – Verbal update	
	Homelessness in Bromsgrove Short Sharp Review - Update	
21/03/16	WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – update from Representative	
	Quarter 3 Finance Monitoring Report	
	Crime & Disorder Partnership Scrutiny	It is a statutory requirement for the Board to hold at least one meeting a year to scrutinise this partnership.
	High Street Refurbishment Phase 2 – pre-scrutiny	
	Evening & Weekend Car Parking Task Group – Final Report	
	Homelessness in Bromsgrove Short Sharp Review	
	Increasing Physical Activities in Worcestershire Task Group - update	
	O&S Work Programme	
Action List		
Cabinet Work Programme		

Agenda Item 10

Date of Meeting	Subject	Additional Information
	WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – update from Representative	
25/04/16	Annual Report and Review of the Work of the Board	
	Budget Scrutiny – Lesson Learnt and arrangements for the future (discussion)	
	O&S Work Programme	
	Action List	
	Cabinet Work Programme	
	WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – update from Representative	
	Quarterly Recommendation Tracker	

Updates Received - Monthly

The Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (who must be a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Board) provides a verbal update to the Board each month.

The Council's representative on any Joint Scrutiny Task Group's will be expected to provide an update (verbal or written) on the work of that Group at each Board meeting.

The Chairman of any Task Group set up the Board will be expected to provide a written or verbal update in respect of the work being carried out and progress of the investigation by the Task Group Members.

Reports to be Received Annually by the Board (at its discretion)- dates to be confirmed

Write Off of Debts (last report received 22/06/15)
 Sickness Absence Performance (last report received 16/12/13)
 Making Experiences Count - Annually (last report received 13/04/15)
 Summary of Environmental Enforcement (last report received 16/03/15)

Artrix SLA Annual Report – it is anticipated that this will be received at the June 2016 meeting of the Board.

Scrutiny of Crime & Disorder Partnership

The Board must hold at least one meeting at which it considers the scrutiny of Crime and Disorder Partnership. Appropriate date to be agreed (previously looked at in March 2015.)

Items for inclusion at future meetings if the Board feels these are appropriate areas to give further consideration to:

1. Invite Peter Pinfield from Worcestershire Health Watch to a future meeting (as discussed at meeting held on 20th July 2015).

Areas for further discussion and possible inclusion within the Work Programme

- Community Transport facilities
- Planning Issues – Particularly enforcement
- Local Plan Development
- Residential developments causing traffic problems
- Social Housing issues
- Lack of affordable social housing for young people
- BDHT addressing issues re sites.
- Youth provision
- Sports hall for badminton
- Parking availability/charges/policy
- Town Centre shops
- Town Centre Regeneration

When considering topics for investigations Members may wish to take into account the Council's Strategic Purposes as detailed below:

Our Strategic Purposes for Bromsgrove



Help me to live my life independently

Help me to be financially independent

Keep my place safe & looking good

Help me find somewhere to live in my locality

Provide good things for me to see, do & visit

Help me run a successful business

Support services enable us to deliver our purposes

Bromsgrove District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

For more information view the Council Plan at:
<http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/cms/council-and-democracy/council-plan.aspx>