

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

26TH JUNE 2017, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors L. C. R. Mallett (Chairman), S. A. Webb (Vice-Chairman),
C. Allen-Jones, S. R. Colella, M. Glass, C.A. Hotham, R. J. Laight,
C. J. Spencer, P.L. Thomas and M. Thompson

Observers: Councillor C. B. Taylor

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Ms. A. Scarce and Ms. J. Bayley

10/17 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

The Board was advised that Councillors C. Allen-Jones and M. Thompson had advised in advance of the meeting that they would be arriving late due to other commitments.

The Chairman informed the Board that Councillor J. M. L. A. Griffiths had stood down from the Board due to the change in Committee places following the by-election in June 2017. There remained a vacancy on the Board which would be filled in due course.

11/17 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

There were no declarations of interest nor of any whipping arrangements.

12/17 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 24TH APRIL 2017**

Members noted that the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 13th June, and not 24th April 2017 as recorded in the agenda, had been submitted. There was general consensus that the minutes from the April meeting of the Board should therefore be considered at the next meeting.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 13th June 2017 be approved as a correct record.

13/17 **SCRUTINY TOPIC PROPOSAL - PARKING ENFORCEMENT REPORT**

The Board considered a proposal that had been received for there to be a scrutiny review of parking enforcement in the district. The subject had originally been raised in a Notice of Motion at a Council meeting held on

26th April 2017. During the Council meeting Members had concluded that the Board should be asked to consider whether this would be a suitable topic for further scrutiny.

The following points were discussed whilst Members were debating this proposal:

- The costs involved in undertaking parking enforcement work and the extent to which income from fines covered these costs. Officers advised that this income did not always cover the costs of preventative work.
- The extent to which parking problems were greater in parts of the district outside Bromsgrove. Members noted that parking problems were especially acute in some of the other towns in the district and within the vicinity of local schools.
- The number of Parking Enforcement Officers in the district and the extent to which this was sufficient to meet local needs.
- The areas in which the Parking Enforcement Officers were deployed and the frequency with which they visited different areas within the district.
- The time taken by Parking Enforcement Officers to respond to reports about parking violations.
- The extent to which Parking Enforcement Officers focused on patrolling hot spots.
- The potential for a Task Group to investigate the safeguarding implications of parking around schools and whether this should more appropriately be addressed by ward Councillors.
- The extent to which drivers were flouting existing Parking Enforcement Regulations and the action that could be taken to address this.
- The impact of the introduction of new double yellow lines on parking problems in surrounding areas.
- The extent to which parking problems were taken into account by the County Highways Department when considering planning applications for new housing developments.
- The objectives of the Parking Enforcement Service.
- The challenges created by the urban design of many of the streets within the district in respect of parking.
- The problems residents reported with cars parking on pavements.
- The role of the Police in terms of parking enforcement.

The Board noted that there were a number of scrutiny reviews ongoing and that there would be limited capacity to facilitate another review until some of these had been completed. However, Members concurred that it would be helpful to receive further information on the subject in relation to many of the points and concerns that had been raised by Members during the course of the meeting. For these reasons Members concluded that relevant Officers should be invited to attend a future meeting of the Board to discuss the subject of planning enforcement at

which stage a decision would be taken as to whether the matter should be investigated further.

RESOLVED that Officers be invited to attend a future meeting of the Board to discuss Parking Enforcement arrangements in the district and to respond to some of the concerns raised by Members during the course of the meeting.

14/17

FINANCE AND BUDGET WORKING GROUP - UPDATE

The Chairman of the Finance and Budget Working Group, Councillor L. C. R. Mallett, explained that the group's terms of reference had been attached to enable Members to reflect on the group's role at the start of the municipal year. There were only 4 Members on the group and this number was not considered to be ideal when considering budgetary matters from a strategic perspective. The Board therefore welcomed Councillor Laight's offer to join the group.

15/17

MEASURES DASHBOARD WORKING GROUP - UPDATE

The Chairman of the Measures Dashboard Working Group, Councillor S. A. Webb, explained that the group had been holding regular meetings during which Members had scrutinised the measures associated with each of the strategic purposes in turn. In some cases the group had highlighted where the detail provided for the measures was out of date. In other cases Members had suggested that the style in which the measures were being presented could be changed.

Members were reminded that at the April 2017 meeting of the Board a decision had been taken to participate in informal meetings with Members of Redditch Borough Council's Performance Scrutiny Working Group. An invitation had subsequently been sent to the Chairman of the Redditch group to attend one of the Measures Dashboard Working Group's meetings later in the year.

The Board noted that at a recent meeting of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee it had been reported that the internal auditors had commented on the reliability of the dashboard. Officers noted that the level of assurance for the dashboard would continue to be addressed by Internal Audit and Officers could take into account the findings of the Measures Dashboard Working Group as part of this process.

16/17

TASK GROUP UPDATES

The Board received verbal updates in respect of the following scrutiny reviews:

- a) CCTV Short Sharp Review

The Chairman of the CCTV Short Sharp Review, Councillor S. R. Colella, advised that the group had held a meeting on 7th June 2017. The Head of Community Services and the CCTV and Telecare Manager had attended this meeting to discuss the service with Members. Various issues had been addressed during this meeting including the history of the service, funding arrangements, the performance of the service and the extent to which Members could influence the locations in which CCTV cameras were installed.

A number of further meeting dates had been agreed and the group would report back to the Board later in the year.

b) Staff Survey Joint Scrutiny Task Group

The Chairman of the Staff Survey Joint Scrutiny Task Group, Councillor Colella, explained that a meeting of the group was due to take place on 27th June. During this meeting Members would consider a draft report which outlined the group's findings. In particular the group had found that many of the issues arising from the staff survey had already or were in the process of being addressed by the Programme Board. As such the Chairman suggested that it would be appropriate to draw the review to a conclusion. A number of draft recommendations had been identified and these focused on taking constructive action that would have a positive impact in the future. The group's report would be presented for Members' consideration at the following meeting of the Board.

c) Social Media Task Group

The Chairman of the Social Media Task Group, Councillor R. J. Laight, informed Members that a meeting of the group had taken place the previous week. During this meeting the feedback received from Members in completed surveys had been considered and this had revealed that a number were not confident about using social media and required training. The Council's Communications Manager had been invited to attend a future meeting to discuss the group's findings and potential uses of social media. The group was aiming to complete their review by October 2017.

17/17

WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - UPDATE

Councillor S. A. Webb, the Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC), explained that there had not yet been a meeting of the Committee. The first meeting of the Committee in 2017/18 would take place in July.

18/17

CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

Members were advised that there had been no further editions of the Cabinet Leader's Work Programme published since the last meeting of the Board.

A number of items had been selected for pre-decision scrutiny during the previous meeting including; Burcot Lane Site Redevelopment, Industrial Units Outline Business Case and the update report in respect of the Council's economic priorities. However, none of these items were scheduled for the consideration of Cabinet until September 2017 and this meeting would take place before the meeting of the Board that month creating difficulties in terms of scheduling the items for pre-scrutiny. As there were other items due to be considered at the Board's September meeting Members concurred that this should not be rescheduled. Instead there was general agreement that the meeting of the Board that had been due to take place on 31st July should be postponed to provide Members with an opportunity to pre-scrutinise the relevant items. The proposed date for this meeting would be Tuesday 22nd August, subject to the availability of relevant Officers. Members were advised that the meeting of the Measures Dashboard Working Group that had been scheduled to take place that evening could be postponed to start once the meeting of the Board had finished.

19/17

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the Board's work programme and noted that the items scheduled for consideration at the 31st July meeting would now be considered in August, as agreed earlier in the meeting.

20/17

PLANNING BACKLOG DATA

The Board received a report detailing the determination times for major planning applications in the period 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2017 and in so doing noted the following:

- Improvements continued to be made in the processing of major applications by the Council.
- Highways issues presented a challenge in respect of the planning process and this had been discussed at recent Council meetings.
- The Portfolio Holder for Planning Services and Strategic Housing advised that he would shortly be attending a meeting with the Leader of Worcestershire County Council, together with the relevant Cabinet member for Highways at the County Council and the Leader and Deputy Leader of Bromsgrove District Council, to discuss these highways issues further.
- The time taken by the Council to process minor planning applications was not due to be scrutinised at a national level and there were no plans to add data for these applications to the update report.

21/17

PLANNING POLICY REVIEW BUSINESS CASE - PRESENTATION

The Board considered the draft Planning Policy Review Business Case and received a presentation from the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Strategic Housing Services about the proposed structure for the team. Following prior agreement of the Chairman, the Head of Planning and Regeneration called in to the meeting and participated in the presentation and debate on this item through telephone communication.

During consideration of this item the following points were discussed:

- The Planning Policy team dealt with strategic planning documentation and planning policies.
- The proposals in the business case would help both Councils to achieve budgetary savings.
- Under the proposals the assistance provided by the team in relation to conservation issues would be enhanced helping the Council to better meet local demand.
- The proposal would be for Bromsgrove District Council to host the service due to the higher number of listed buildings and conservation areas in the district compared to the Borough of Redditch.
- The structure would enable Officers to represent both Councils in relation Planning Policy issues where the local authorities had differing views.
- The benefits of the shared service would be the enhanced opportunities to share resources and expertise. The service would also be more flexible than existing structures.
- The shared service proposals followed the implementation of the shared Development Control Service across the 2 Councils.
- The introduction of a shared Planning Policy team would not impact on the Planning Officers who presented planning applications at meetings of the Planning Committee.
- The proposals in the business case had been reviewed by the HR team to ensure compliance with legal requirements and Council policies.
- The Council needed to ensure that all roles in the new structure and the financial implications for both Councils were properly assessed.
- The Board suggested that there was a need in all business cases to provided junior staff with an opportunity to achieve career progression.
- The Board also discussed the value of a review of pay grades and the uniformity of job roles within shared services as a whole in future.

RESOLVED that the Planning Policy Review Business Case be noted.

(During consideration of this item Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore

agreed to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed relating to labour relations matters. However, there is nothing exempt in this record of proceedings).

The meeting closed at 7.25 p.m.

Chairman