

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BOARD

MONDAY, 21ST SEPTEMBER 2009 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors C. B. Taylor (Chairman), S. R. Colella,
Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths and Ms. H. J. Jones

Officers: Mr. H. Bennett, Ms. R. Cole and Mrs. A. Scarce

30/09 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs. M. Bunker, Mrs. A. E. Doyle and L. Turner

31/09 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

32/09 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Performance Management Board held on 21st July 2009 were submitted.

RESOLVED that, subject to the inclusion of Councillor S. R. Colella in the list of those present, the minutes be approved as a correct record.

33/09 **COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP - PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2009-2011**

RESOLVED that consideration of this item be deferred to a future meeting of the Board and that the Portfolio Holder and that the Deputy Head of Street Scene and Community be invited to attend.

34/09 **COUNCIL PLAN 2010/2013 PART 1**

Consideration was given to a report on the Council Plan 2010/2013 Part 1. It was reported that the Council Plan was in effect the Business Plan for the Council and therefore was a key document for Members. Part 1 of the Council Plan contained the Council's priorities which arose from the away day attended by senior officers and Members and would drive officers' operational plans. Eventually Part 2 of the Council Plan would govern the allocation of resources and level of performance as part of the 2010/2011 budget process.

It was reported that, following consideration at Cabinet and Council, Value for Money had been added as an additional value, the priorities had been

increased from four to six and there had been some amendment to the key deliverables.

There was particular discussion on Climate Change which had been included for the first time as a Council priority the previous year. New legislation and the introduction of a number of new National Indicators relating to the reduction of CO2 emissions and flooding had focussed attention on these areas which it was recognised would be a huge challenge. At present there was no clear strategy in place to address this although the Assistant Chief Executive reported that a plan was being developed by officers and was likely to be produced within four months.

It was noted that with a view to addressing these issues a Climate Change Officer post had been created on a joint basis with Redditch Borough Council. The Climate Change Officer had recommended that the Council adopts a 2% per annum reduction target for its CO2 emissions (NI 185) and ensures that it continues to work with its partners on meeting the Local Area Agreement target for per capita emissions in the District of 9% over three years (2008/2011).

Members also considered the need to address flooding issues by working jointly with Parish Councils and other partners, particularly in relation to the challenging target NI 188 (Planning to adapt to Climate Change) and the two Local Area Agreement targets LI 1a and LI 1b which dealt with flood risk management plans and parish flood warning systems respectively.

Members felt there should be consideration of how communication with residents could be developed to reflect the reasons for entering into Shared Services arrangements i.e. in order to pre-empt the anticipated stringent cuts in public spending, how the new arrangements would deliver Value for Money and would improve the resilience of the Council's services.

In response to queries from Members relating to GCSE results within the Bromsgrove area, including those achieved by "looked after" children, the Assistant Chief Executive undertook to provide this information to Members of the Board.

There was also discussion on NI 39 which concerned alcohol related hospital admissions and which had increased significantly and therefore received a "red flag" marking from the Audit Commission. It was felt it would be useful to gain a greater understanding of how the figure was arrived at, the factors influencing the figure and what actions were being taken to address the issue. The Assistant Chief Executive suggested that a representative from the NHS Primary Care Trust (PCT) be invited to a future meeting of the Board to discuss the matters raised.

The Board discussed the issue of unemployment, including the impact on school leavers and on "worklessness" within the District, and queried how the issue could be followed up. The Assistant Chief Executive referred to the Forum which had taken place at the Council House earlier in the year and the

Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Economic Theme Group which had last met in May 2009.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that in relation to NI 185, the 2% per annum target suggested by the Climate Change Officer for the reduction in the Council's CO2 emissions be adopted alongside the target of a reduction of 9% for per capita emissions ;
- (b) that the relevant Portfolio Holder be requested to work with the appropriate officers on the development of a long term Climate Change Strategy and action plan in order to address the priority of Climate Change and achieve the 80% reduction by 2050;
- (c) that the relevant Portfolio Holder be requested to work with the Assistant Chief Executive to develop a programme to explain to residents the importance of the Shared Services proposals with a focus on addressing residents' poor perception of the Council's value for money ;
- (d) that the relevant Portfolio Holder be requested to work with partners through the LSP on ways of addressing the levels of unemployment and "worklessness" within the District.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Council's Vision and Council Objectives be noted;
- (b) that the introduction of Value for Money as a corporate value be noted;
- (c) that the new set of priorities and the information on which they are based be noted;
- (d) that the outline key deliverables for each priority together with potential budget bids be noted;
- (e) that the Climate Change Strategy and action plan referred to in recommendation (b) above, be submitted to this Board when available;
- (f) that a representative of the PCT be invited to attend a future meeting of the Board to address the issues behind the worsening situation in relation to NI 39;
- (g) that the Assistant Chief Executive be requested to give an update on how the Council and its partners are responding to the recession, in particular in relation to unemployment issues.

35/09 **PLACE SURVEY**

Consideration was given to a report on the results of the Place Survey. It was reported that this was now a statutory survey which in future would be undertaken every two years. The survey would provide the data on local people's experiences and perceptions by which a number of National Indicators would be measured and in order for the authority to move towards becoming an Excellent Council it was important to demonstrate it was responding positively to the results of the survey.

The Board was requested to consider the findings of the survey with a view to making recommendations to the Cabinet in relation to actions which would improve the public perception at the next survey which was due to take place at the end of 2010.

It was noted that generally, whilst 81% of respondents were satisfied with their local area there was a dichotomy in that there did not appear to be recognition of the contribution made by the Council in terms of the provision of services, infrastructure and support towards improving the area. It was disappointing that satisfaction ratings with the Council had fallen since the previous survey to 34%, although it was recognised this was a national trend.

The following key issues were identified from the results:

- Poor perception of value for money (VFM) given by the Council
- Overall satisfaction with the Council
- Residents' ability to influence local decision making
- Awareness of Civil Protection Arrangements

In addition, the survey had revealed the following were seen as areas which most needed improvement:

- Roads and pavement repairs
- Activities for teenagers
- Shopping facilities
- Public transport

The Board discussed the vital importance of effective communications with residents to reverse some of these perceptions and the correlation between residents being more informed of the services provided by the Council and satisfaction was noted, however, the budget for communications/publicity was bound to be limited by the expected reductions in public spending.

There was discussion on the success of the budget jury process which had enabled residents to gain an insight into the decisions and pressures faced by the Council in allocating limited resources. It was suggested that this process could be expanded to include a larger number of people, possibly by arranging a larger scale event in the Spadesbourne Suite or the Artrix and/or through greater use of the internet. The costs of doing so would be minimal.

It was recognised that it was important that information was included in publicity material to illustrate that the Council was responding positively to feedback received from residents, for example in the provision of the Bromsgrove Urban and Rural Transport scheme. The local paper was felt to be an effective means of communication and the Assistant Chief Executive referred to the production of a "wraparound" to illustrate Council Services.

It was also recognised that, in order to address the priorities identified in the survey, it was vital to ensure that the large scale and high profile projects such as the new Train Station and Town Centre regeneration were proceeding. The importance of working in partnership with other organisations was illustrated by the improved feedback received on areas such as crime levels, affordable housing and clean streets.

There was concern that only 10% of people felt well informed about what to do in the event of a large scale emergency and it was felt this could be addressed relatively simply through the production of a leaflet on emergency planning.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that in order to address concerns such as VFM, lack of ability to influence decisions and satisfaction with the Council, a campaign be developed, including the expansion of the budget jury process, use of the Internet and “wraparounds” in the local press to increase public awareness of Council services, including examples of where the Council has sought and then made use of feedback from the public when introducing or developing services;
- (b) that in view of the importance of the changes arising from the Shared Services agenda, events be arranged to enable the public to meet the Joint Chief Executive and the new Management Team and to understand the new arrangements and their contribution to VFM.
- (c) that in order to improve the public awareness of what to do in the event of a large scale emergency, an emergency planning leaflet be considered.

36/09 **PERFORMANCE REPORT (JULY 2009)**

The Board considered a report on the Council’s performance at 31st July 2009.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that it be noted that 43% of performance indicators were stable or improving;
- (b) that it be noted that 63% of performance indicators which had a target were meeting their target at the month end and 93% were projected to meet their target at the year end;
- (c) that the performance figures for July 2009 as set out in Appendix 2 be noted;
- (d) that the particular areas of improvement as set out in section 3.4 of the report be noted; and
- (e) that the areas of concern as set out in section 3.5 of the report be noted.

37/09 **SICKNESS ABSENCE PERFORMANCE**

The Assistant Chief Executive updated the Board on the actions being taken to improve the Council’s performance relating to sickness absence.

The actions included the provision of detailed information to Heads of Service on specific instances of sickness absence and the amendment of the “trigger points” within the existing sickness policy to bring staff into the sickness regime at an earlier stage. In addition work was being undertaken in conjunction with the trade unions on the possibility of piloting an amended sickness scheme within Street Scene and Community.

RESOLVED that the position be noted.

38/09 **IMPROVEMENT PLAN EXCEPTION REPORT (JULY 2009)**

The Board considered the Improvement Plan Exception report for July 2009.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the revisions to the Improvement Plan Exception report together with the corrective action being taken be noted;
- (b) that it be noted that for the 84 actions highlighted for July within the plan 79.8% of the Improvement Plan was on target (green), 13.1% was one month behind (amber) and no actions were over one month behind (red). 7.1% of actions had been reprogrammed or suspended with approval.

39/09 **SHARED SERVICES HIGHLIGHT REPORT**

The Board considered the latest highlight report in respect of the shared services project. It was noted that a report would be submitted on a monthly basis.

It was felt it would be helpful if the report could illustrate on an on going basis both the proposed savings and the actual savings achieved.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the report be noted; and
- (b) that future reports include a table to illustrate the target savings and that this be updated regularly to reflect the position as savings are achieved and as new services are included.

40/09 **WORK PROGRAMME**

Consideration was given to a report on the Board's proposed work programme for 2009/2010. It was suggested that the item on the Bromsgrove Profile be deleted from the list of items for the next meeting and as an alternative the information on this item be circulated to Members. Members also requested additional information on the complaints system and the Assistant Chief Executive likewise undertook to circulate this information.

RESOLVED that the work programme be approved subject to the deletion of the item on the Bromsgrove Profile listed for consideration at the October meeting of the Board.

The meeting closed at 8.00 p.m.

Chairman