

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY BOARD

THURSDAY, 25TH FEBRUARY 2010 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors D. L. Pardoe (Chairman), C. B. Taylor (Vice-Chairman),
A. N. Blagg, R. J. Deeming, S. R. Peters and C. J. Tidmarsh

Observers: Councillors S. R. Colella, R. D. Smith and S. P. Shannon

Officers: Mr. H. Bennett, Ms. C. John, Mr. M. Carr and Ms. A. Scarce

63/09 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor C. R. Scurrall.

64/09 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

No declarations of interest or whipping arrangements were received.

65/09 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings of the Scrutiny Board held on 19th and 26th January 2010 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

66/09 **PRESENTATION ON MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE**

The Board received a presentation on Climate Change, including the 10:10 commitment and what it would mean to Bromsgrove District Council (BDC), from the Joint Climate Change Manager. The presentation included background information on the Climate Change Act 2008 and what had been done over the past year to establish what the emissions for BDC were. The Joint Climate Change Manager gave statistical information relevant to BDC and explained why action on Climate Change needed to be taken.

During the presentation Members asked questions on various points including:

- How the CO2 emissions were calculated
- The current BDC building
- Available data for the County
- Why, if it was such an important issue it was not being dealt with at national level
- Domestic usage and any actions being taken by strategic housing services

The Joint Climate Change Manager advised Members that Climate Change was one of the few issues that political parties had a consensus on and that BDC had four priorities, one of which included Climate Change. The Board commented that although it was an important issue, they felt that many people did not understand it and therefore were not interested in making the necessary changes.

The Director of Policy, Performance and Partnership advised Members that a Climate Change Strategy for BDC was currently being prepared and gave background information and explained that a number of associated strategies needed to be in place before the Council's overall position could be clarified. However, it was anticipated that a draft strategy would be available in the summer and this would be available for the Scrutiny Board to comment on if they felt it appropriate.

The Joint Climate Change Manager advised that for 2009/10 and 2010/11 BDC had a reduction target of 2% (National Indicator NI185) year on year and a community reduction target of 3% year on year. She confirmed that currently there was no Government funding available to assist the Council in reaching its targets, nor was there a penalty if the target was not reached. The Joint Climate Change Manager commented that, as had happened with recycling targets, this situation was likely to change in the future and measures may be introduced to encourage local authorities to meet their climate change targets.

It was noted that a proposed motion submitted to the Council on 20th January 2010 seeking support for the 10:10 Campaign had resulted in the matter being referred to the Scrutiny Board to consider. The presentation therefore also contained information on 10:10 and the Joint Climate Change Manager gave a brief overview of what was involved in signing up to this agreement and received questions from Members of the Board. The aim was to reduce emissions by 10% in one year or as close to 10% as possible. The campaign stated that "by reducing emissions you'll be cutting costs, getting ahead of the curve and helping Britain show the rest of the world how it's done." The Joint Climate Change Manager confirmed that although the request was to reduce CO2 emission by 10% in one year, those who signed up could actually set a percentage that they felt was achievable. Members agreed that as the Council already had a target of 2% it would not be unreasonable to sign up to 10:10 at that percentage. By signing up for this it would be a statement of intent from the Council that it was working towards reducing CO2 emissions. After further discussion it was

RECOMMENDED that the Council sign up to the 10:10 campaign on the basis of a commitment to a 2% reduction in carbon emissions as part of the Council's Climate Change priority which seeks to ensure that carbon emissions from the Council and wider community are reduced.

67/09 **SCRUTINY PROPOSAL - ANNUAL BONFIRE EVENT (COUNCILLOR J. DUDDY)**

The Board considered a Scrutiny Investigation Proposal in respect of the Annual Bonfire Event/firework display. The Portfolio Holder for Youth, Sports, Recreation and Culture gave background information on the bonfire event and Members discussed the costs involved. It was commented that the aim of the bonfire event was not, necessarily to make a profit, but was an event organised by the Council for the benefit of the community. The Portfolio Holder for Youth, Sports, Recreation and Culture provided Members with details of the number of people that had attended the event in 2008 and 2009 and also asked them to note that the loss made by the event had been substantially reduced year on year.

The Board discussed the possibility of the event being sponsored by outside bodies and the marketing of the event to encourage a larger attendance. The Portfolio Holder for Youth, Sports, Recreation and Culture advised that these options had been looked at previously, and were constantly under review, but that any recommendations from the Board would be welcomed to assist in the improvement and cost effectiveness of the event. Following further discussion it was

RESOLVED that the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services be asked to provide a comprehensive report on the Annual Bonfire Event and attend the Scrutiny Board meeting on 23rd March 2010.

68/09

VERBAL UPDATE ON PROGRESS OF THE IMPROVING RESIDENTS' SATISFACTION TASK GROUP (TASK GROUP CHAIRMAN: COUNCILLOR S. R. COLELLA)

The Chairman thanked Councillor S. R. Colella, Chairman of the Task Group for attending the meeting and asked him to give a brief update on the progress of the Improving Residents' Satisfaction Task Group.

Councillor Colella explained that since his last update to the Board on 26th January 2010 the Task Group had held 2 meetings. These meetings had been very intense and the Task Group had been provided with detailed reports on the analysis of the Place Survey, a comparison of Communication Strategies and Marketing Communications. They had also received presentations from two witnesses:

- Ms. Fiona Narburgh – Head of Strategy and Communications at Wychavon District Council (a council rated “excellent”). This had been a question and answer session and Ms. Narburgh had discussed how Wychavon District Council (WDC) communicated with residents, the promotion of service delivery and the corporate “branding” of WDC.
- Mr. Peter John – Area Editor for Newsquest. Mr. John had discussed with the Task Group the various forms of media used and how these could be targeted to specific groups of residents. He had also discussed with Members the positive and negative impact the media could have on the Council.

Councillor Colella informed Members that from the information received so far, it was apparent that “branding” would played an important part in improving residents' satisfaction.

69/09 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board considered the work programme and noted that at the Scrutiny Board meeting on 23rd March 2010 a report and presentation on the Arts and Events Strategy 2010/11 would be received. Officers confirmed that the Director of the Artrix would also attend this meeting to add value to the investigation.

Members also discussed the topic Engaging with Young People which would be investigated at the Board meeting on 22nd April 2010. It was confirmed that a report and presentation on the current work being done in this area would be provided by a member of the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships team.

RESOLVED that the work programme be agreed and updated to include consideration of the Annual Bonfire Event on 23rd March 2010.

The meeting closed at 7.35 p.m.

Chairman