

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW BOARD**

**TUESDAY, 2ND FEBRUARY 2010, AT 6.00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Councillors S. R. Colella (Chairman), Mrs. M. Bunker (Vice-Chairman), Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths, D. L. Pardoe, Mrs. C. J. Spencer and L. J. Turner

Observers: Councillor Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Mr. M. Carr, Ms. P. Ross and Mrs. A. Scarce

41/09 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs. R. L. Dent.

42/09 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

No declarations of interest or whipping arrangements were received.

43/09 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview Board held on 3rd November 2009 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be confirmed as a correct record.

44/09 **OLDER PEOPLE TASK GROUP REPORT**

The Chairman invited Councillor Mrs. M. Bunker, Chairman of the Older People Task Group to introduce the report.

The Chairman of the Older People Task Group firstly thanked those involved in the Task Group, both Members and Officers and Ms. A. Sowton (Bromsgrove & Redditch Network, BARN) who was co-opted onto the Task Group, for their assistance. She then went on to give details of the work carried out which included presentations from a variety of sources including Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT), Age Concern and an Independent Financial Advisor.

The Task Group Chairman said they had contacted various partner agencies but had been disappointed that they had not received a response from the Parish Councils, as it was felt that they would be a useful contact to assist in making information available to the relevant residents.

Members were advised that Wythall Parish Council were in fact arranging a "Seniors Information Day" in September 2010 and would be writing to all

relevant agencies inviting them to attend in order to promote the services they provided and invited the Portfolio Holder for Vulnerable & Older People (including Lifeline) to attend. The Portfolio Holder agreed that this was an excellent idea and the Board discussed in more detail the use of Older People's Champions and how Parish Councillors could be supportive in this particular area.

The Chairman of the Task Group gave details of the success which was achieved by promoting and publicising events being held with partner agencies to celebrate UK Older People's Day. Positive feedback had been received from residents and the Council's Community Services had successfully participated in this event.

The Task Group had identified the need to provide clear information on key services in a variety of formats and the need to establish a single point of contact for information on what services were available and how to access those services easily. The recommendations within the report highlighted the importance of this and the need to raise awareness of the extensive range of existing services. The creation of an A-Z Directory would be an integral part of communicating this information and it was important that it was done in a format that was "user friendly" and it was hoped that paper copies would be available, not just electronic versions. Members then discussed the various ways in which this information could be made available. The Head of Financial Services confirmed that £8,000 had been made available for 2010/11 and a further £10,000 for the following year. The Portfolio Holder advised that, example A-Z Directories from other councils were being looked at as a template on which to base the Council's own. A working group would be formed to ensure that this was moved forward and updates would be provided to the Board on a regular basis.

Members congratulated the Chairman of the Older People Task Group on completion of an impressive piece of work and the comprehensive topics covered in it. It was a piece of work which should be publicised and used to encourage other Members to participate in Task Groups as this showed that they could make a difference and every opportunity should be used to promote this.

It was agreed that the recommendations should be transferred to the recommendation tracker with a timetable set to ensure that the recommendations were implemented.

The Board discussed, in detail, with the Chairman of the Older People Task Group the origin of the Task Group and if the Chairman felt there was a need to carry out further investigations. The Chairman explained that the Assistant Chief Executive had, during the course of the Task Group, contacted Worcestershire County Council (WCC) in respect of the Older People's Strategy for Worcestershire, which was currently being revised. She confirmed that the Older People Task Group Report covered Levels 1 and 2 and that it would be appropriate for the Board to investigate Levels 3, 4 and 5 which dealt with dependency created by older age. Officers confirmed that

this had in fact been included in the Board's Work Programme, with an initial presentation to the meeting on 27th April 2010.

Having considered the findings and recommendations contained within the report which related to the Overview investigation undertaken by the Older People Task Group, it was

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the report and recommendations contained within it are approved;  
and
- (b) that the report be submitted to Cabinet.

45/09 **REVIEW OF PROCUREMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

The Board received a report on the current procurement arrangements and practices in place across the Council to support the delivery of Value for Money. The Head of Financial Services gave background information and advised Members that the Council had had a procurement advisor since 2006. The officer was shared with Redditch Borough Council in the delivery and advice of procurement activities across both councils.

Members were informed that a procurement code and strategy had been developed to ensure a consistent approach and to provide appropriate levels of internal control when procuring goods and services. It was anticipated that a significant element of the Government efficiency targets would be delivered through collaborative procurement and improved practices within local authorities. The Office of Government Commerce (OGC) had revealed in its annual statement that the public sector had achieved a record £1.4bn savings from procurement collaboration schemes.

Members were advised that the Use of Resources Framework included a focus on procurement and specifically identified improvement to Value for Money that could be delivered through procurement opportunities. The Council had scored 2 (out of 4) on these areas. Officers were preparing a self assessment in relation to the use of resources for 2009/10 which would include the improvements to procurement and identify areas of concern. In addition, a County wide exercise had been undertaken, funded by the Regional Improvement Agency, to identify the supplier base across the County. It was anticipated that this information could be used to drive collaborative working and encourage renegotiation with suppliers. The report in relation to this information would be available shortly.

After detailed discussion, Members agreed that it would be a useful exercise, for both Members and officers, for the Board to consider the procurement arrangements and strategy in more detail.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the Board note the current arrangements in place in relation to procurement and relevant regulations; and
- (b) that a detailed review of the procurement arrangements be included in the Overview Board Work Programme for the year 2010/11.

46/09 **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT PROPOSALS - VERBAL UPDATE**

The Board were advised that due to the new appointments of Heads of Service, the Head of Street Scene and Community was unable to attend the meeting. It was hoped that the new Head of Environmental Services would be in a position to take up some of his role over the next few weeks and Members were asked to bear with the Management Team during this transitional period.

Members were advised that a brief update had been received from the Transport and Engineering Officer in the absence of the Head of Street Scene and Community.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the Head of Environmental Services be asked to attend the Overview Board meeting on 30th March 2010 to provide a verbal update; and
- (b) that the Overview Board receive a written report on the Implementation of the Civil Parking Enforcement Proposals at the Overview Board meeting on 27th April 2010.

47/09 **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS TASK GROUP MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Board considered a report on the Community Involvement in the Democratic Process Task Group. At the Overview Board meeting on 3rd November 2009 Councillor L. J. Turner had been appointed Chairman of the Community Involvement in the Democratic Process Task Group. Members were advised that the Task Group had already had an informal meeting in order to prepare a project plan. A formal meeting would be held on 4th February 2010 to approve the project plan and the Chairman gave details of witnesses they anticipated would attend the meetings and the topics to be covered. The Chairman of the Task Group gave a brief outline of the anticipated objectives.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the membership of the Task Group be agreed;
- (b) that the terms of reference of the Community Involvement in the Democratic Process Task Group as set out in the report be agreed;
- (c) that the Task Group commence its investigation as soon as possible and report back to the Overview Board on 30th March 2010; and
- (d) that the Task Group be re-named "Community Involvement in Local Democracy".

48/09 **OVERVIEW BOARD QUARTERLY RECOMMENDATION TRACKER**

The Board considered the Quarterly Recommendation Tracker and was advised that officers were modifying the template of this document to incorporate more clarified information. Members agreed it would be useful to include the Portfolio Holder's details, the date when the item came before the

Overview Board and a timescale to cover implementation and the outcomes of each recommendation. This would enable Members to monitor more closely the outcomes from recommendations and take any action necessary to ensure these were implemented and to see what had been achieved. Members were advised that the information would also be included in the Overview & Scrutiny Board Annual Report.

The Board discussed the recommendations agreed by the Overview Board at its meeting on 3rd November 2009, on the Communications Strategy Review 2009, "that a simple easy to read breakdown of BDC's responsibilities and service provision be provided periodically at key times of the year to residents to communicate how BDC allocates spending according to residents' priorities and BDC budget allocations, emphasising value for money". Members were advised that it was difficult for the Council to make amendments to the information provided in this way. The Head of Financial Services informed the Board that a full page "advertisement" was usually put in the local press and the information was also contained within Together Bromsgrove. As Members were concerned that this was not published until later in the year, the Head of Financial Services undertook to check this with the relevant department and, if necessary, ask if it would be possible to bring the date forward.

Members drew attention to the recommendations of the Anti-Social Behaviour and Alcohol Free Zones Task Group, agreed by the Board on 3rd February 2009, particularly the recommendation "Maximise use and effectiveness of CCTV" and requested details of the outcome of the implementation of this decision.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the Overview Board Quarterly Recommendation Tracker be noted and updated;
- (b) that officers make enquiries in respect of the implementation of the Anti-Social Behaviour and Alcohol Free Zones Task Group recommendations and report back to the Overview Board at the meeting to be held on 30th March 2010; and
- (c) that a new template for the Quarterly Recommendation Tracker be submitted to the Overview Board meeting on 30th March 2010 for approval.

49/09

**FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS - 1ST FEBRUARY TO 31ST MAY 2010**

The Board considered the Forward Plan of Key Decisions 1st February to 31st May 2010 and expressed concern that several items which had been placed late on the Forward Plan did not give the Overview Board sufficient time to consider them before being presented to Cabinet. The Head of Financial Services advised Members that she understood their concerns but explained that in some cases circumstances changed and Cabinet needed to take action as quickly as possible.

The Board was also concerned that there was an element of slippage on some items on the Forward Plan and asked for clarification as to why this had

occurred. The Head of Financial Services advised that this was, in some cases due to the implementation of the Shared Services Management Team structure and asked Members once again to bear with the Management Team during this transitional period.

Members discussed possible items on the Forward Plan to investigate such as the Economic Development Strategy. However, officers confirmed that the Economic Development Strategy was in fact an item that was already included on the Scrutiny Board Work Programme.

50/09 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board gave consideration to the Work Programme and discussed future topics. Officers confirmed that at the meeting to be held on 30th March 2010 Members would be given the opportunity to investigate both the planning policy (in light of the Planning Peer Review) and the licensing policy of the Council. The Head of Financial Services confirmed that this would be dealt with by the Executive Director (Planning, Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services).

Members agreed that by planning the work programme in advance it gave the relevant departments the opportunity to provide a comprehensive response to assist Members in the decision making process.

As there were very few items programmed in for the Overview Board meeting to be held on 2nd March 2010, after discussion, Members agreed that this meeting time should be used as a meeting for the Community Involvement in Local Democracy Task Group.

**RESOLVED** that the Overview Board Work Programme be agreed.

The meeting closed at 7.55 p.m.

Chairman