

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL
MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

TUESDAY, 1ST FEBRUARY 2011 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors S. R. Colella (Chairman), D. L. Pardoe (Vice-Chairman) (Present from Minute No. 1/10 to Minute No. 9/10), R. J. Deeming, Mrs. R. L. Dent, Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths, C. R. Scurrall, Mrs. C. J. Spencer, C. J. Tidmarsh (Present from Minute No. 1/10 to Minute No. 9/10), C. B. Taylor and L. J. Turner

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

1/10 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED that Councillor S. R. Colella be elected as Chairman of the Board for the remainder of the municipal year.

2/10 **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED that Councillor D. A. Pardoe be elected as Vice Chairman of the Board for the remainder of the municipal year.

3/10 **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor J. A. Ruck.

4/10 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

There were no declarations of interest or whipping arrangements.

5/10 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 26TH OCTOBER 2010**

The minutes of the Scrutiny Board meeting held on 26th October 2010 were submitted.

Members noted that the meeting of the Scrutiny Board scheduled for 25th January 2011 had been cancelled.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

6/10 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW BOARD HELD ON 4TH JANUARY 2011**

The minutes of the Overview Board meeting held on 4th January 2011 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

7/10 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 4TH JANUARY 2011**

The minutes of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 4th January 2011 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

8/10 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BOARD HELD ON 17TH JANUARY 2011**

The minutes of the Performance Management Board meeting held on 17th January 2011 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

9/10 **THE DRAFT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2011/12 - 2013/14**

The Board received a presentation on the Draft Medium Term Financial Plan 2011/12-2013/14 from the Executive Director, Finance and Resources who explained that, due to the delay in receiving this year's grant settlement, she had not been able to provide the Board with as much detail as had been the case in previous years. The final Grant Settlement figure had been received on 31st January 2011 and was different again to that which she had been given in December 2010.

The Medium Term Financial Plan for 2011/12 – 2013/14 would be received by Cabinet and full Council on 23rd February 2011. The main purpose of the Board meeting was to give Members the opportunity to discuss the new Revenue and Capital bids and to consider any recommendations they wished to make before the final budget was approved. The Executive Director, Finance and Resources informed Members that only the bids classed as "high" priority on the list before them would be funded and this was the final list and no further bids would be put forward.

The Executive Director, Finance and Resources confirmed that the Grant Settlement for 2011/12 was £3.83m and for 2012/13 £3.27m. The cumulative overall shortfall was £260,000 for 2011/12, £641,000 for 2012/13 and £974,000 for 2013/14. It was also confirmed that the shortfall for 2011/12 would be met from balances.

The Board discussed the following in more detail:

- The level of Grant Settlements received throughout Worcestershire.
- Provisions made for further cuts.
- How the savings would be achieved.

- Investment Income.
- Income shortfalls for car parking and land charges.
- Consolidation of the Shared Services programme and the possible inclusion of other districts in particular areas of work.

The Executive Director, Finance and Resources informed Members that there would not be an increase in the Council's portion of the Council Tax (this would be off set by a 2.5% Government grant). However, that this was not the case for the emergency services and an increase was expected on this portion of the bill. Members asked for assurances that this would be made clear in the information that was sent out to residents with the Council Tax bills and asked if the Board could see the draft documentation prior to distribution.

Members noted that from June 2011 Portfolio Holders would consult with officers and discuss savings and efficiencies and any reduction in services that would need to be made in order to cover the shortfall in future years. It was confirmed that the Board would be given the opportunity of scrutinising the outcomes of these discussions.

During the discussions Members also referred to the following particular items:

- Members understood that the Council would make a contribution to the funding of the new railway station. If this is correct, would the monies be ring fenced?
- As the Capital bid from Community Services in respect of Bromsgrove Urban and Rural Transport (BURT) was a "medium" priority, would the service continue if the current bus needed further extensive repair work to be carried out?
- At a previous presentation a large proportion of the car parking overspend appeared to be related to staff overtime. What actions would be taken to reduce this?
- Also at that presentation Members had queried the charges for removal of abandoned vehicles and details of any income generated from this, together with details of charges and/or income received from recycling banks.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the following Revenue Bids for 2011/12 - 2013/14 be reprioritised to "medium" pending the receipt of further information:
- i) Transformation – Member ICT facilities
 - ii) Transformation – MC Office and PC suite
 - iii) Transformation – Voice over IP
 - iv) Leisure and Culture – Options appraisal for new leisure facility;
and
- (b) that the following Capital Bids for 2011/12 - 2013/14 be reprioritised to "medium" pending the receipt of further information:
- i) Community Services – Local Authority Grant to Principal Preferred Partners
 - ii) Transformation – Member ICT facilities at RBC and BDC
 - iii) Transformation – Voice over IP for BDC and RBC
 - iv) Environmental Services – Depot Drive Replacement.

RESOLVED that the Draft Medium Term Financial Plan for 2011/12 - 2013/14 be noted and that relevant Heads of Service respond to the matters referred to in the preamble above.

10/10 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board considered the Work Programme and discussed the format for future investigations. Officers explained that the Task Group procedure notes had been taken out of the Constitution and would be replaced by a more informal and flexible protocol, which would be considered by the Board at a future meeting. Members felt that the format used for short sharp reviews, such as the Inquiry into the Multi-use Games Area (MUGA) at Alvechurch, had been a success and should be used for future investigations, where appropriate. The Board discussed the line of questioning used and felt that a more robust approach should also be taken. The Board discussed witnesses involved and asked Officers to invite the relevant Portfolio Holder to attend together with the lead Officer for each topic.

Members discussed the re-instatement of the Local Food Task Group and felt that, due to the limited time available, this should be re-scheduled and be included for consideration within the Board's Work Programme for 2011/12.

After discussion, the Board also felt that, in order for a more detailed investigation to be carried out, the following topics should be re-scheduled and included within the Work Programme for 2011/12:

- The Corporate Safeguarding Policy (Children and Vulnerable Adults)
- Alcohol and Anti-Social Behaviour

Officers agreed to ask the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services for further information on the Play Strategy topic in order for the Board to consider whether it was necessary for an investigation to be carried out.

Officers explained that there were a number of reports which would, in future, be received by the Board as standing items, which had previously been included within the agenda for the Performance Management Board. After discussion, Members requested that initially the Shared Services Highlight Report should also be included within the standing items at quarterly intervals.

Members asked for an update on the responses received (from external partners) to the recommendations from the MUGA Inquiry and agreed that an additional meeting of the Board should be set up to discuss this. The meeting would also include an update on the Community Safety Partnership Plan and areas of possible scrutiny. An invitation should also be extended to the Crime and Disorder Advisor, Councillor Brandon Clayton, who was appointed at the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting, held on 5th October 2010, to attend.

After further discussion it was

RESOLVED that the Work Programme be noted subject to the above amendments.

11/10 **QUESTIONS TO WITNESSES 1ST MARCH 2011**

Members were informed that the following topics would be discussed at the meeting to be held on 1st March 2011:-

- The Annual Bonfire Event (this could also be carried over to the meeting of the Board on 5th April 2011 if a second meeting was necessary)
- Review of the Hot Food Takeaway Investigation

The Council Plan and Performance Management Strategy, which were items that would previously have been considered by the Performance Management Board, would also be considered at the meeting on 1st March 2011.

The Board asked that they be provided with a full financial breakdown of the Annual Bonfire Event for this and previous years and that the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services be asked to provide information on any alternative formats for the event which might be considered in future.

Members were asked to provide Officers with any questions they would like to put to the relevant Portfolio Holders/Heads of Services, as soon as possible.

The meeting closed at 7.33 p.m.

Chairman