

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL
MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

MONDAY, 13TH JUNE 2011 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors C. J. Bloore, J. S. Brogan, Dr. B. T. Cooper, S. Dudley,
K. A. Grant-Pearce, R. J. Laight, P. Lammas, P. M. McDonald,
S. P. Shannon, Mrs. C. J. Spencer, L. J. Turner and P. J. Whittaker

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Mrs. C. Felton, Mr. J. Godwin and
Ms. A. Scarce

1/11 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED that Councillor P. J. Whittaker be elected Chairman of the Board for the ensuing municipal year.

2/11 **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED that Councillor P. Lammas be elected Vice Chairman of the Board for the ensuing municipal year.

3/11 **APOLOGIES**

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

4/11 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

There were no declarations of interest or whipping arrangements.

5/11 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny board meeting held on 5th April 2011 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

6/11 **SILVERDALE PLAY AREA PETITION - REPORT**

The Chairman welcomed the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services to the meeting. The Head of Leisure and Cultural Services gave background information on the Silverdale Play Area Report.

Members discussed the confusion which had been caused by the wording in the initial report to Cabinet on 1st December 2010. The Head of Leisure and Cultural Services confirmed that this had been noted and would be taken on

board in future reports. The Board also noted those that had been consulted in the preparation of the report and after further discussion it was

RECOMMENDED that the Report Template be amended to include, where appropriate, the Ward Councillor under the heading Others Consulted on the Report.

RESOLVED that the Board notes the content of the Silverdale Play Area Report.

7/11

IMPROVING RESIDENTS' SATISFACTION TASK GROUP - 12 MONTH REVIEW REPORT

The Chairman introduced this item and officers explained to the Board that this was the 12 month Review of the Improving Residents' Satisfaction Task Group. The report was for information and it was at the discretion of the Board to consider whether to take any further action on the progress of the recommendations from the Task Group.

Members enquired how satisfaction of residents' was measured. Officers explained that previously it had been through the Place Survey and performance indicators; however, this was no longer a statutory requirement for the Council. Therefore officers were currently exploring other means of monitoring residents' satisfaction. The Board had received an update on this at the meeting held on 5th April 2011.

The Board also discussed staff morale and how this was monitored. Officers informed Members that the Chief Executive regularly held staff forums and drop in sessions and had extended an invitation to each member of staff to speak to him individually about any particular concerns they had within the organisation. Heads of Services also updated staff regularly to try and ensure that concerns were addressed wherever possible. Officers conceded that it was difficult to monitor the success of this and advised Members that although positive feedback was received there had been occasions when points had been raised by staff which had been overlooked by the management team and these were taken on board. Members discussed what effect, if any, this had on sickness absence and whether this was also monitored. Officers informed Members that this was monitored both by the Cabinet and the management team and there was a process in place for managing that absence when the member of staff returned to work.

The Board discussed the decision to defer the internal assessment against the Customer Service Excellence accreditation and confirmed that this should remain on the Board's Quarterly Recommendation Tracker.

RECOMMENDED that sickness absence be included as part of the performance information that the Board received on a regular basis.

RESOLVED that the 12 month Review of the Improving Residents' Satisfaction Task Group be noted.

8/11 **HOT FOOD TAKEAWAY INVESTIGATION - 12 MONTH REVIEW REPORT**

The Board was advised that this report was the 12 month review of an investigation carried out on Hot Food Takeaways and for Members to note whether the recommendations had been carried out and if any further action was necessary. After discussion it was

RESOLVED that the Board receive an update in respect of the Local Development Framework and the consultation exercise which has recently been carried out.

9/11 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11 - FOR INFORMATION**

The Board received the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2010-11 for information.

Members raised concerns and discussed in detail, the workload of the Board in the context of support received from Committee Services Officers, following the amalgamation of the four Boards earlier in the year. A major concern was the ability to carry out additional investigations and task groups outside of the work programme. Officers confirmed that one Committee Services Officer supported the Board and this had been agreed at full Council as part of the final budget settlement in February 2011. Officers confirmed that from a financial point there was an option for Board Members to recommend to Cabinet and then through to full Council, for additional resources to be made available, if the Board feel that the current support was not sufficient for the Board to carry out its work successfully.

10/11 **FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS 1ST JUNE - 30TH SEPTEMBER 2011 (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)**

The Forward Plan of Key Decision was considered and noted by the Board. Officers advised Members that this was an opportunity to look forward to decisions that had not yet been made and to participate in shaping those decisions and policies through the process of pre-scrutiny at an early stage.

The Board discussed the Car Parking Shared Service Business Case and Officers advised Members that this was purely in relation to the management aspect of car parking and not car parking charges. Several options were being considered including out sourcing to another council.

11/11 **THE PLANNING PROCESS - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TOPIC PROPOSAL REPORT**

The Chairman introduced this item as he had put forward the Overview and Scrutiny Topic Proposal in respect of the planning process and asked Members to consider including this within the work programme for the coming year. The Chairman explained he had chosen this topic because the vast majority of communications he received from residents was in relation to some

part of the planning process. An investigation into the planning process would be beneficial in order to enhance the reputation of the Council.

Members aired concerns over the size of such an investigation and that this would take up the capacity of the Board in its entirety. Although the proposal stated scrutiny of all areas of planning it would be necessary to break the process down into specific areas of planning and to concentrate on those areas of most concern to both Members and residents in the first instance. The Board was also concerned about changes that were expected to take place following the implementation of the Localism Bill later in the year and discussed whether it would be appropriate to defer the topic until the Bill was in place.

The Board was also concerned about the resources available to them, as this investigation would take up a large part of both the Board's resources and officer time from the planning department. After discussion it was agreed that Enforcement would be investigated initially with a view to this leading into further areas as the investigation progressed. The options for how the investigation would be carried out were considered and it was felt that an investigation, through both formal and informal meetings, by the Board would be appropriate.

RESOLVED that the Board carry out an investigation into planning enforcement and consider further areas of the planning process for investigation on completion of the initial investigation.

12/11 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME 2011/12**

The Board considered the Work Programme for 2011-12. Officers advised Members that the Work Programme contained several topics which had not been allocated to specific meetings as they were carried over from the previous municipal year and it was at the discretion of the Board as to whether they wished to investigate these topics.

The Board considered topics for future scrutiny and inclusion in the work programme. Members discussed the Council's Ethical Policy which related to advertising on for example traffic islands and advertisements within Council literature such as Together Bromsgrove. Members requested that Officers present a short report to the Board on this topic to ensure that the policy was being adhered to.

Councillor C. J. Bloore proposed a topic, the reduction in bus services due to withdrawal of bus subsidies, for consideration by the Board as a task group. After detailed discussion and due to the limited time available, Members requested a completed Overview and Scrutiny proposal form, with a covering report and background information, be submitted to the Board meeting to be held on 11th July 2011.

Councillor S. P. Shannon advised the Board that he had put forward a topic for possible scrutiny on 13th June 2011, in respect of issues at the pay on foot Recreation Road Car Park. Officers confirmed that background information

would also be obtained in respect of this and the completed Overview and Scrutiny proposal form, together with a short covering report, would be submitted to the Board meeting to be held on 11th July 2011.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that a progress report on Enforcement and Fixed Penalty Notices for Environmental Services be timetabled in for 12 months post implementation;
- (b) that the Worcestershire County Council Draft Older People's Strategy be removed from the Work Programme; and
- (c) that in respect of the Council's Ethical Policy, a report and attendance from the appropriate officer be requested for the meeting of the Board to be held on 11th July 2011.

The meeting closed at 7.15 p.m.

Chairman