

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

MONDAY, 21ST NOVEMBER 2011 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors P. J. Whittaker (Chairman), P. Lammas (Vice-Chairman),
C. J. Bloore, J. S. Brogan, Dr. B. T. Cooper, Mrs. R. L. Dent, R. J. Laight,
P. M. McDonald, S. P. Shannon, Mrs. C. J. Spencer and L. J. Turner

Observers: Councillor S. R. Colella

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Mrs. C. Felton, Mrs. A. Heighway,
Mr. C. Santoriello-Smith and Ms. A. Scarce

64/11 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K. A. Grant-Pearce and
Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths.

65/11 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

There were no declarations of interest or whipping arrangements.

66/11 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 24th
October 2011 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

67/11 **12 MONTH REVIEW OF THE ALVECHURCH MULTI USE GAMES AREA
(MUGA) INVESTIGATION**

The Chairman invited the Head of Community Services and the Senior
Community Safety Project Officer to introduce the Alvechurch Multi-Use
Games Area (MUGA) Inquiry 12 Month Review Report. For the benefit of new
Members of the Board, the Senior Community Safety Project Officer provided
background information as to why the investigation had been carried out. The
Review had been carried out in order to up date Members on the
implementation of the 11 recommendations which had been considered and
agreed (subject to minor amendments) by Cabinet at its meeting held on 3rd
November 2010.

Members were informed that recommendations 9 and 11 (removal of the
perimeter wall and the seating panels) had not been completed. This was a
decision made by the Parks and Recreation team, who had suggested that the

relocation of the street lighting and the removal of the basket swing in conjunction with other measures had significantly reduced the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in Swanslength.

The Chairman invited Councillor S. R. Colella, as Chairman of the MUGA Investigation, to comment on the report. The Chairman thanked officers for the update and asked for it be noted that, should the circumstances at the MUGA site change, then the implementation of recommendations 9 and 11 be reconsidered.

The Board discussed the following areas in more detail:

- The youth services provided by the Lounge and funding provided by the Local Strategic Partnership (the Executive Director, Finance and Resources to clarify details of the grant referred to in the appendix to the report).
- The reduction in ASB in Swanslength, the sustainability of the reduction and the extra resources put in place.
- The changes to the recording of ASB and a comparison of the changes to the categories used by the Police in recording ASB (the Senior Community Safety Project Officer agreed to provide this information for Members).

RESOLVED that the Alvechurch Multi-Use Games Area Inquiry 12 month Review report be noted.

68/11 **PLANNING ENFORCEMENT BOARD INVESTIGATION INTERIM REPORT**

Officers informed Members that the Head of Planning and Regeneration was preparing a report which responded to the issues raised at the informal Board meeting held on 27th July 2011. It had been expected that this report would have been available for Members, however due to the complexity of the issues raised, the report had not been finalised, and Officers apologised for this.

Members were informed that several of the areas covered in the Planning Enforcement Board Investigation would also be covered within the Planning Policy Task Group's investigation. The Board was concerned that this would lead to duplication of work. After further discussion it was

RESOLVED that the work of the Planning Enforcement Board Investigation be amalgamated within the work of the Planning Policy Task Group.

69/11 **PLANNING POLICY TASK GROUP**

The Chairman invited Councillor S. R. Colella, as Chairman of the Planning Policy Task Group, to give an update on its investigations to date. The Task Group Chairman informed Members that at its initial meeting it had received a presentation from the Head of Planning and Regeneration. This had covered, the Planning Process, Planning Conditions, Enforcement and Conditions and Retrospective Planning. It had become clear to Task Group Members who

had also been involved in the initial Planning Enforcement Board Investigation meeting that the work of the Task Group would duplicate some of that Investigation's work. A further meeting of the Task Group had been arranged for 30th November 2011.

Some Members felt that a written update on the work of the Task Group would have been more helpful and the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services explained the Task Group process and guidelines. It was explained that the Board would only receive a written report for consideration when the Task Group's investigations had been completed.

70/11 **JULY TO SEPTEMBER (QUARTER 2) FINANCE MONITORING REPORT 2011/12**

The Board considered the Quarter 2 Finance and Monitoring Report for 2011/12. It was requested that further information be provided where necessary on the following items:-

- The role of the Audit Board in relation to Finance Monitoring.
- Savings from Regulatory Services
- Under spend on vacancies, vacancy management, use of temporary agency staff and consultancy fees.
- The accuracy of the budget process
- The delay in resurfacing the High Street (further detailed explanation to be provided by Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Resources)
- Shortfall in Car Parking income
- Streets and Grounds Maintenance – concerns were raised that such a large saving would impact on services and the condition of the footpaths surrounding the Council House were discussed. (Head of Environmental Services be asked to attend a future meeting of the Board in order to provide Members with more detailed information).
- Employment of agency staff and vacant post in Environmental Services (Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Resources to seek clarification on details of vacant post).
- A Member also commented on the response time to a telephone call, which he had made to the Customer Service Centre (and difficulties in contacting Regulatory Services). He was concerned that this may have been due to staffing issues (Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Resources to take up with relevant Heads of Service).
- An overspend on the Bonfire Event in comparison with previous years.
- Leisure and Cultural Services – scheme for Alvechurch Lions football pitch (Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Resources to seek further details).
- The availability of grants.
- Benefit subsidies
- Costs and underspend on Elections and Electoral Services
- Sundry debtors and description used for age of debt.
- Details of developers' contributions to 106 monies (Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Resources to provide further details).
- Process for the monitoring of investments

The Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Resources informed the Board that in future, where there was areas of concern in the Finance and Monitoring Report the relevant Heads of Services would be asked to attend to discuss any concerns raised by Members. After further discussion it was

RESOLVED that the current financial position for Revenue and Capital as detailed in the report be noted, subject to the requests for further information as detailed in the preamble above.

71/11 **SICKNESS ABSENCE AND PERFORMANCE AND HEALTH REPORT**

The Executive Director, Finance and Resources introduced the report and apologised for the discrepancies which had necessitated a revised report being issued in respect of this item.

The Board discussed the following areas in detail:

- Areas of concern – Environmental Services and the use of “typically” in respect of sickness rates.
- The availability of comparable data with other authorities and at national levels.
- Authorised and non authorised absence.
- The Council’s sickness absence policy.

After further discussion it was

RESOLVED that the Board receive a more detailed report covering some of the areas detailed above.

72/11 **WCC HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Officers informed Members that Councillor Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths had resigned as the District representative on the Worcestershire County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) and Councillor Dr. B. T. Cooper had been appointed at full Council on 16th November 2011. Officers would liaise with Councillor Cooper in order to ensure that regular, written, updates on the work of HOSC were provided to the Board in future.

73/11 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME**

RESOLVED that the Work Programme be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.42 p.m.

Chairman