

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

MONDAY, 19TH NOVEMBER 2012 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors S. R. Colella (Chairman), C. J. Bloore, J. S. Brogan, Dr. B. T. Cooper, Mrs. R. L. Dent, K. A. Grant-Pearce, Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths, R. J. Laight, P. M. McDonald, S. P. Shannon, Mrs. C. J. Spencer, L. J. Turner and C. R. Scurrall (Substitute)

Officers: Mr. J. Staniland, Ms. A. De Warr, Mrs. T. Kristunas, Ms. J. Bayley and Ms. A. Scarce

58/12 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor P. Lammas.

59/12 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

There were no declarations of interest or whipping arrangements.

60/12 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 22ND OCTOBER 2012**

The Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 22nd October 2012 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

61/12 **MAKING EXPERIENCES COUNT - QUARTERLY COMPLAINTS REPORT**

The Board considered the Making Experiences Count - Quarterly Complaints Report for the quarter ending 30th September 2012. The Head of Customer Services provided Members with information about the complaints and compliments that Council services had received during the quarter. This included a breakdown of the complaints and compliments that had been received by department, further details about the action that had been taken in response to complaints, the time taken to resolve complaints and feedback from a customer satisfaction survey.

The following areas were discussed in detail:

- Recent problems with the Council's telephone system and actions that were being taken to reduce the potential for similar problems to occur in future. Members were advised that further information on this subject would be provided in the monitoring report for the following quarter.

- Changes to refuse collection arrangements, including greater flexibility in the working hours for operational staff. Clarification was requested on the legal requirements concerning operational start times for waste and recycling collection teams.
- The impact of the recommendations made by the Refuse and Recycling Task Group in 2008/09 on refuse collection arrangements. In particular Members were keen to establish whether operational staff had received NVQ training as suggested by the Task Group.
- The possibility of a representative of the Environmental Services team attending future meetings of the Board to answer specific questions about waste collection and recycling services when Members considered the quarterly update reports.
- The provision of customer services training to fourth and fifth tier managers at the Council and dissemination at staff briefings of information about good practice in customer services.
- The timescales involved in responding to complaints were found to vary. More complex and unusual cases tended to take more time to resolve.
- The impact of staff leave arrangements on the Council's ability to respond to customer complaints within the target time of 15 days.
- The potential for more automated services to be introduced at the Council, which Officers confirmed would not occur unless evidence was provided that there was customer demand for this approach to service delivery.
- The customer service procedures followed when working with customers who had recently experienced bereavement.
- The involvement of the customer services team in the Council's transformation process and the impact of transformation on service delivery. The potential for further information about transformation to be provided for the consideration of the Board was also debated.
- The inclusion of details about complaints that had not been resolved was also debated. Members suggested that, due to the sensitivity of the subject matter, the report should instead focus only on resolved items.

RESOLVED that the Making Experiences Count – Quarterly Complaints Report be noted.

62/12 **POSITIVE ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TASK GROUP**

The Chairman of the review, Councillor Mrs J. M. L. A. Griffiths, presented the terms of reference that had been proposed for the Task Group.

Members discussed the following areas in detail:

- The review would not focus exclusively on positive activities but rather on all youth services available within the district.
- There were appropriate resources available to support the review.
- 8 Councillors had volunteered to serve on the review, though it was recommended that there should be no more than 7 members of a Task Group, including the Chairman.
- Councillors S. R. Colella and Dr. B. T. Cooper agreed to stand down from the Task Group.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the review be renamed the Youth Provision Task Group;
- (b) that the terms of reference proposed by the Chairman of the review, Councillor Mrs J. M. L. A. Griffiths, be approved;
- (c) that the following Members also be appointed to the review: Councillors Mrs S. Baxter, C. J. Bloore, J. S. Brogan, R. J Laight, P. Lammas and Mrs C. J. Spencer;
- (d) that the deadline for completion of the Task Group's draft report be 22nd April 2013; and
- (e) that Officers liaise with the Chairman to arrange the first meeting of the group.

63/12 **AIR QUALITY & CO2 EMISSIONS TASK GROUP**

The Chairman of the review, Councillor S. P. Shannon, presented the terms of reference that had been proposed for the Task Group.

The following areas were discussed in detail.

- The focus of the review would be specifically on air quality across the district.
- Air quality had been the subject of a previous scrutiny review completed in 2007 which would need to be considered as part of the exercise.
- The recommendations that had been made by the previous Task Group in 2007 had been monitored in 2009, though no further tracking had occurred.
- There was the potential to review the subject at both Board level and as the subject of a Task Group exercise. However, the Board had already agreed to launch a Task Group focusing on the subject.
- Traffic congestion and vehicle emissions were subjects that could be considered as part of the review.
- Worcestershire County Council had recently undertaken a review of traffic management flows in the county and the outcomes of this exercise would help to clarify current air quality issues affecting Worcestershire.
- A maximum number of 7 Members was considered desirable for a Task Group. However, the Board agreed that 12 Members should be appointed to the Air Quality Task Group due to the importance of the subject.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the review be renamed the Air Quality Task Group;
- (b) that, subject to the impact of the Air Quality Scrutiny report (2007) and the implications for the review being considered at an early stage in the exercise, the terms of reference proposed by the Chairman of the Task Group, Councillor S. P. Shannon, be approved;
- (c) that the following Members also be appointed to the Task Group: Councillors C. J. Bloore, J. S. Brogan, Margaret Buxton, S. R. Colella, Dr. B. T. Cooper, K. A. Grant-Pearce, P. Lammas, L. Mallett, P. M. McDonald, C. Scurrall and L. J. Turner;

- (d) that the draft report for the review be completed by 26th March 2013; and
- (e) that Officers liaise with the Chairman to organise the first meeting of the Task Group.

64/12 **QUARTER 1 SICKNESS ABSENCE HEALTH PERFORMANCE REPORT - RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS RAISED**

The Board considered written responses that had been provided to a series of questions proposed at the previous meeting on the subject of the Sickness Absence Health Performance Report for the quarter ending 30th June 2012.

The following areas were discussed in detail:

- The impact of staff absences due to sickness for short-term periods on service delivery.
- The number of staff absent for short periods of time due to illness.
- The process for managing staff persistently absent for short periods of time due to sickness.
- Staff perceptions of Return to Work Interviews and the potential to clarify how Officers viewed this process through incorporating specific questions on the subject in the staff survey.
- The frequency of one to one meetings involving staff and managers.
- The reduction in long-term sickness absences for operational staff working in Environmental Services, following changes to working practices.

Officers advised that further information had been provided in response to Members' questions since the previous meeting of the Board and would be circulated for Members' consideration the following day.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

65/12 **ACTION LIST**

The Board considered the Action List and noted that several actions remained outstanding. Officers confirmed that these would be followed up and responses provided as soon as possible. In particular, responses had been requested to the questions raised by the Board on the subject of the Joint Services Review (JSR) in July 2012. Actions arising from this meeting would also be included in the list.

66/12 **WCC HEALTH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Councillor Dr. B. T. Cooper, the Council's representative on the Worcestershire County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC), provided an update on the latest meeting of the Committee.

Members were advised that the options for the JSR continued to be reviewed and it was anticipated that a further announcement would be made on the

subject on 18th December 2012. A further period of public consultation would then follow in the first 3 months of 2013.

67/12 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME**

Members agreed that the deadlines for completion of the 2 Task Groups should be added to the Board's Work Programme.

It was noted that an informal training session, focusing on the Council's budgetary position, would take place on 4th December 2012. The meeting was due to start at 5.00 pm and would be open to all Members to attend.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme be noted.

68/12 **CABINET WORK PROGRAMME OF KEY DECISIONS 1ST NOVEMBER 2012 TO 28TH FEBRUARY 2013**

The Board considered the Cabinet Work Programme of Key Decisions for the period 1st November 2012 – 28th February 2013,

The following areas were discussed in further detail:

- The renaming of the Cabinet's Work Programme, previously known as the Forward Plan, since the previous meeting of the Board.
- The inclusion in the Work Programme of a list of items that had already been considered by the Cabinet at a meeting on 7th November 2012 due to the fact that this had been the latest version of the document available for Members' consideration.
- The introduction of the Bromsgrove War Memorial and the wording that would be included on the memorial.
- Existing records of fallen soldiers across the district.
- Current arrangements for remembrance services in Bromsgrove.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme (formally the Forward Plan) be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.35 p.m.

Chairman

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