

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

**MONDAY, 17TH DECEMBER 2012 AT 6.00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Councillors S. R. Colella (Chairman), P. Lammas (Vice-Chairman), C. J. Bloore, J. S. Brogan, Dr. B. T. Cooper, Mrs. R. L. Dent, Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths, R. J. Laight, P. M. McDonald (Minute No. 69/01 to Minute No. 73/12), S. P. Shannon, Mrs. C. J. Spencer and L. J. Turner

Invitees: Councillor Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP

Officers: Mrs. S. Hanley, Ms. S. Morgan, Ms. R. McAndrews and Ms. A. Scarce

69/12 **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor K. A. Grant-Pearce.

70/12 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

There were no declarations of interest or whipping arrangements.

71/12 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 19th November 2012 were submitted.

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

72/12 **CCTV SHARED SERVICE - PRESENTATION ON THE ROLE OF THE CCTV TEAM**

The Board received a presentation from the CCTV and Telecare Manager, which had been requested following the completion of an Overview and Scrutiny Topic Proposal, by Councillor S. R. Colella. The presentation covered the following areas:

- Details of the team, staffing levels and the areas which the team were involved in (including CCTV, Lifeline monitoring and installations, lone worker monitoring and emergency planning).
- The Council's CCTV Scheme objectives and code of practice (which, although due for review, had been put on hold due to the implementation of new legislation).
- The benefits of a shared service and the role of the host authority, together with the difficulties which had been faced during this process.

- Partnership working, including details of how the CCTV team supported those partners, in particular the Police and the Community Safety Team.
- Routine CCTV functions and the particular areas of interest during the day and evening, for example shop lifters and suspicious behaviour during the day and at night anti-social behaviour in parks and railway station and drunken or lewd behaviour.

The CCTV and Telecare Manager provided Members with details of the number of cameras throughout the district, together with the number at specific locations (for example the railway station) and statistics relating to incidents monitored and investigated, including information in respect of intelligence received from partners.

Following the presentation the Board discussed the following areas and the CCTV and Telecare Manager responded to questions from Members:

- The work undertaken on behalf of the Police and whether the Police made any contribution towards the cost of the service provided – it was confirmed that funding was not provided by the Police.
- Specific incidents (in some cases repeated incidents within the same area) which had not been picked up by the CCTV team and the effect of the Shared Services on the efficiency of the team.
- The priorities of the team – it was confirmed that a Lifeline call would always take priority due to the potential of it being a “life or death” situation.
- Staffing levels at peak times (including shift pattern planning and how this was determined) and training received by the CCTV team – all members of the team undertook initial training and were registered. An annual audit of the service was also carried out by Telecare.
- The type of cameras and equipment used – the CCTV and Telecare Manager informed Members that the system was approximately 2½ years old and was fully digitalised. However, when providing evidence for the Police this was copied on to DVDs which were provided by the Police.
- The effectiveness of CCTV as a monitoring tool and any performance measures which were in place.
- Feedback from the Police in order to monitor the effectiveness of evidence provided – the CCTV and Telecare Manager was reviewing how this could be improved, but in the meantime agreed to contact the Community Safety Team Analyst to enquire whether there was any appropriate data available.
- The response time to calls received – it was confirmed that 95.8% were answered within 1 minute. This was reviewed on a regular basis and adjustments made where necessary.
- The cost and promotion of the Lifeline service – it was confirmed that leaflets were available in libraries and doctors surgeries, the scheme was also promoted for example through the Older Peoples’ Forum and targeted talks to various organisations.

- The potential use of CCTV in other areas, for example on street parking - further consideration would need to be given to this to ascertain whether it would be best use of the cameras, but in theory it would be possible if Members requested such a service.
- The use of images as Court evidence – this did happen; however there was a strict protocol to follow before releasing the images as evidence.
- Members were invited to visit the CCTV Centre in order to see for themselves how the team operated; suitable dates would be circulated by officers in due course.

**RSOLVED:**

- (a) that the Board be provided with copies of the CCTV Code of Practice; and
- (b) that the CCTV and Telecare Manager contacts the Community Safety Team Analyst in respect of any available date to support the effectiveness of the use CCTV and provides that information to the Board.

73/12 **THE LIVING WAGE - INVESTIGATION REQUEST REPORT**

The Chairman reminded Members that this had been brought before the Board following a requested made at the full Council meeting held on 21st November 2012. It was understood that the Group Leaders had already met with the Chief Executive in respect of employees wages and those discussions were nearing a satisfactory conclusion. Members discussed the following areas in more detail:

- Any legal requirements by the Council to implement the “living wage”
- Whether this would apply to contractors employed by the Council and if so, how this would be monitored. The Financial Services Manager informed Members that this could potentially be done through the procurement process when negotiating future contracts, but it would be difficult to impose this on current contractors.
- Members discussed whether it was appropriate for the Board to make comment/recommendations on the implementation of this scheme.

**RESOLVED** that further information be requested from a relevant source in respect of the areas discussed before the Board decide whether further investigation is required.

74/12 **QUARTER 2 FINANCE MONITORING REPORT**

The Board considered the Quarter 2 Finance Monitoring Report. The Financial Services Manager informed Members that this was broken down into service areas and the Heads of Service were asked to complete the financial commentary section. The main areas of variance in respect of shortfall in income were Car Parking, Building Control and Waste (which related to trade waste and cesspools). In respect of treasury management, the Financial Services Manager informed Members that this was due to lower income than expected from investments, which would be reviewed shortly. The variance

within the capital programme was largely due to delays to the Parkside project which would be utilized in 2014.

The Board discussed the following areas in detail:

- The shortfall in car parking income – possible reasons for this and actions being taken to mitigate the loss.
- The loss of income in respect of trade waste and whether this service was a statutory duty of the Council. Officers informed Members that a review of this service was currently being undertaken in order to promote the service, which would include the feasibility of the collection of trade waste being carried out by outside contractors.
- Members were informed that, as part of the transformation process, efficiencies and route optimisation for household waste were being reviewed and the savings from that work would be picked up in future reports.
- A previous incident of fraud at the depot had been investigated by the Audit Board and the Executive Director, Leisure, Environmental and Community Services confirmed to Members that the investigation report had been endorsed by the Audit Board together with the lessons learnt and all necessary actions had now been taken to ensure such an incident did not happen again.
- The inclusion of any cost for bed and breakfast accommodation within the report – officers to clarify the inclusion of this as a separate item in future reports.
- The reduction in the level of sponsorship – the Financial Services Manager informed Members that further profiling on this element of the budget would be undertaken, which would clarify the position in the Quarter 3 report.
- Members were informed that the current underspend on play areas was due to the majority of scheduled maintenance work being carried out in the autumn/winter months (when use of the areas was at a lower level).
- Members requested confirmation of when the “hardship” fund payments would be made and the criteria that needed to be met in order to receive such a payment.

**RESOLVED** that the Board receive a report detailing the trade waste review.

75/12 **QUARTER 2 WRITE OFF OF DEBTS REPORT**

The Board considered the Quarter 2 Monitoring of Write Offs Report and were informed by the Financial Services Manager that this was provided for noting only.

Members discussed the following areas in detail and officers were asked to provide further information on several points:-

- In respect of the write off of Sundry Debtors as detailed on page 26 of the agenda, Members requested a breakdown to include the number of debtors and transactions.

- Members noted the length of time taken in some cases to recover Council Tax arrears and the Financial Services Manager explained that these were recovered in various ways, for example through benefit payments or through an attachment of earnings. In either case the amount recovered, often on a weekly basis, was minimal and therefore it could take a considerable time to recover the debt.
- Members discussed the debt support which was given to residents and the work of the Citizens Advice Bureau.
- In respect of the aged debt profile Members asked whether this was similar to the previous years and officers agreed to provide comparative data.

**RESOLVED** that the Quarter 2 Monitoring of Write Offs Report be noted.

76/12 **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY TOPIC PROPOSAL REPORT - COMMUNITY SAFETY TEAM**

Members were asked to consider a topic proposal which had been put forward by Mr. P. Rowbottom and which referred to work carried out by the Community Safety Team. The Chairman of the Board confirmed that, as the Chairman of Hagley Parish Council, he had knowledge of both Mr. Rowbottom and the issues which he had raised.

Members agreed that, in the circumstances, it would be appropriate for the Community Safety Team to be asked to provide further information before the Board made a decision on this topic.

**RESOLVED** that information be requested from a relevant source before the Board considers whether further investigation is required.

77/12 **YOUTH PROVISION TASK GROUP - VERBAL UPDATE**

Councillor Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths provided Members with an update of the work of the Task Group to date.

- The first meeting of the Task Group had been held on 5th December and concentrated on work planning. Officers had been tasked with providing further information and setting up various meetings and site visits, including the Ryland Centre, the Trunk, Woodrush Youth Club and the Lounge in Alvechurch.
- Further meeting held on 13th December when the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services was interviewed.
- The Task Group would be visiting the Artrix Centre on 18th December to interview the Artistic Director in respect of working with young people.
- A press release would shortly be issued which would include an invitation to young people to put forward their views and experiences.
- All Councillors had been asked to provide the Task Group with details of activities for young people that they were aware of within their own Ward.

It was anticipated that the Task Group's draft report would be presented to the Board meeting to be held on 22nd April 2013.

78/12 **AIR QUALITY TASK GROUP - VERBAL UPDATE**

Councillor S. P. Shannon informed Members that the first meeting of the Air Quality Task Group had taken place on 4th December when it had discussed work planning and set future meeting dates.

- A press release had been issued and appeared on the Bromsgrove Advertiser website on 12th December. This had included an invitation to residents to put forward their views and experiences. Several responses had already been received from residents in the Hagley area.
- Meetings had been arranged for 9th and 15th January and the Senior Practitioner, Pollution Team at Worcestershire Regulatory Services and a representative from the Public Transport Team at Worcestershire County Council had agreed to attend, together with the Council's Climate Change Manager.
- The Parish Councils had also shown an interest in participating in the investigation and their role would be explored further at a future meeting.

It was anticipated that the Task Group's draft report would be considered at the Board meeting to be held on 26th March 2013.

79/12 **WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL HEALTH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Councillor Dr. B. T. Cooper, the Council's representative on the Worcestershire County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC), informed Members that the meeting due to have been held on 7th December 2012 had been cancelled. The reason given for this was that the Joint Service Review would be issuing a press release on Tuesday 18th December 2012, which would provide an update on the next stage of the Joint Service Review.

80/12 **ACTIONS LIST**

Officers informed Members that updates had now been provided on all outstanding items, with the exception of the item in respect of the Joint Service Review. It was confirmed that actions arising from this meeting would be included within the list.

81/12 **CABINET WORK PROGRAMME - 1ST JANUARY TO 30TH APRIL 2013**

The Board considered the Cabinet Work Programme of key decision for the period 1st January to 30th April 2013. Officers informed Members that the Fees and Charges formed part of the budget process.

It was noted that the Playing Pitch Strategy, which Members were informed had been discussed at the Youth Provision Task Group, was due before Cabinet on 6th February 2013.

**RESOLVED** that the Youth Provision Task Group consider the Play Pitch Strategy as part of its investigation.

82/12 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME**

Members noted that an informal briefing, focusing on the budget would take place on 8th January 2013, commencing at 5.00 p.m. as this was a briefing session, it was confirmed that this was not a public meeting.

**RESOLVED** that the Work Programme be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.38 p.m.

Chairman

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