

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL AND
BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

SHARED SERVICES BOARD

17th October 2013 at 5.30pm

COUNCIL CHAMBER, THE TOWN HALL, REDDITCH

Present: Councillors Bill Hartnett (Chair) and Debbie Taylor (Redditch Borough Council)

Councillors Roger Hollingworth and Mark Bullivant (Bromsgrove District Council)

In attendance: Councillors Mike Chalk, John Fisher, Andy Fry, Gay Hopkins, Phil Mould and Pat Witherspoon (Redditch BC)

Councillors Rita Dent and Helen Jones (Bromsgrove DC)

Officers: Emma Aldrick, Gavin Boyes, Kevin Dicks, Chris Franklin, Sue Hanley, Sue Horrobin, Dave Kesterton, Helen Mole, Neil Partridge and Jason Simon

Notes: Michael Craggs

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Juliet Brunner, Greg Chance (both Redditch BC), Margaret Sherrey and Mike Webb (both Bromsgrove DC).

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Board held on 4th July 2013 were approved as a correct record.

CONFIDENTIALITY

These notes are an open public record of proceedings of the Board.

[Meetings of the Board are not subject to statutory Access to Information requirements; but information relating to individual post holders and/or employee relations matters would nonetheless not be revealed to the press or public.]

3. **PRESENTATION – TREES INTERVENTION**

Members received a presentation (attached as appendix 1) on the Tree Transformation work. This provided a background to the new system's introduction and explained the progress that had been made so far.

Members asked number of questions during the presentation which elicited the following information:

- A shift from a reactive to the implementation of a proactive trees work programme has gradually been taking place since the trial began. Significant progress is expected to be made over the next 12-18 months as the backlog of outstanding work reduces.
- The trial will need to take place over a period of at least twelve months in order to gather fair and representative data due to trees maintenance being a seasonal issue. However, changes can still be introduced during this period to ensure that there is ongoing improvement.
- A distinct Trees Team consisting of four Officers has recently been established as part of the trial. This will enable customers to speak directly to the tree experts themselves. It is thought that this has contributed to a saving for BDC, although the exact figures cannot yet be provided.
- A dedicated email address and contact telephone number for the trees team has been introduced. However, most enquiries are still received via the Hub.
- Two thirds of enquiries had been processed as 'no further action' as Officers were unable to take action on various matters under the old system, such as TV signalling and leaf fall. Under the new system, it is hoped that the tree surgeons will help to reduce future demand by pro-actively clearing up other work while they are on a particular job.
- The trees are not routinely inspected on a proactive basis, although Officers do occasionally need to undertake work in response to Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) whenever they arise. There may be greater scope to conduct a proactive review during the winter period when demand for tree maintenance typically decreases.
- Ash dieback has not yet emerged as a significant issue affecting the trees in both towns. It could take approximately fifteen years before this becomes a real issue of concern.
- Officers were receptive to the suggestion of working more closely with schools on the issue of trees. They have already worked with some local school and scout groups around woodland management.
- Around 15-20 hectares of trees are coppiced each year.
- Residents have the right to cut back overhanging branches. However, this right is removed if there is a TPO involved. Residents would then require written consent from the relevant council to undertake any maintenance work.

Officers explained that they were intending to develop a complete shared service across both Councils on trees maintenance. They are currently required to report any enquiries in Bromsgrove to Worcestershire County

Council (WCC) to resolve. However, Members across both councils felt that the current system in Redditch was working far better. Officers were therefore looking to enter into discussions with WCC to explain that it would be far more cost effective for a complete shared service regarding tree maintenance to be rolled out across both towns rather than continue with their current approach of sub-contracting work in Bromsgrove out to private operators.

PRESENTATION – PLACE INTERVENTION

Members also received a presentation (attached as appendix 2) which provided an update on the Place Intervention currently operating in Winyates.

The following information was provided in response to questions posed by Members:

- The team had not yet considered taking on local residents as volunteers, although this could be looked at as the team developed stronger links with the local community. It is thought that this could provide local residents with new skills which they could utilise in future to maintain their area. However, this would not compromise the employment of relevant Council staff.
- The team have been working very effectively with the *Winning Winyates* team in terms of building these links with the local community. This has led to the team receiving very positive feedback from Winyates residents to the work that has already been completed.
- It is hoped that Place Intervention will lead to more residents taking pride in the appearance of their area. Many long term benefits are envisaged. The emphasis is on helping local people to be self-sufficient in improving their area themselves.
- Schemes such as Community Payback have already been successfully utilised to improve the visual appearance of Winyates and other areas within Redditch.
- The team could look to introduce more recycling facilities in the area as part of the Place Intervention, such as dual bins for general waste and recycling, however there would be practical issues around ensuring that residents deposited their waste into the correct bin. However, residents were already being encouraged to recycle properly, notably through the recent introduction of a new bin system.
- New bins with an ashtray top have been very effective in reducing the number of cigarette ends in the near vicinity. This has significantly improved the visual appearance of the area.
- Refuse collectors are expected to leave all areas from which they are collecting tidy, regardless of whether waste had been correctly deposited.

- Dog fouling remains a real area of concern. A recent two month trial clearly indicated that signage was ineffective in tackling the issue. Alternative methods will therefore need to be explored.
- The Place Intervention methods that have been used in Winyates will eventually be rolled out across other areas within the Borough.

Members expressed their satisfaction with the team's excellent work to date in Winyates. They heard that members within the Trees and Place Intervention teams were enjoying far greater job satisfaction through transformation as they were given the autonomy to swiftly resolve issues as they deemed appropriate.

(Both presentations would be circulated to all Members for information)

4. PROGRESS REPORT

The Board noted a progress report which provided an update on all elements of the Shared Services / Transformation work taking place across both Councils.

5. NEXT MEETING

It was noted the next meeting would take place on Thursday 16th January 2014 at Bromsgrove. It was felt that more Members needed to be encouraged to attend future meetings to become better informed about the excellent work that was being achieved through transformation.

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm
and closed at 7.45pm