

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

MONDAY, 14TH APRIL 2014 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors P. Lammas (Chairman), R. J. Laight (Vice-Chairman), C. J. Bloore, R. L. Dent, K. A. Grant-Pearce, J. M. L. A. Griffiths (Present from Minute No. 108/13 to Minute No. 117/13), H. J. Jones, L. C. R. Mallett, R. J. Shannon, S. P. Shannon (Present from Minute No. 117/13), C. J. Spencer (Present from Minute No. 108/13 to Minute No. 117/13), C. J. Tidmarsh and L. J. Turner

Invitees: Councillors M. Sherrey and M. Webb

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Ms. A. Scarce, Ms. J. Bayley and Ms. R. McAndrews

108/13 APOLOGIES

Members were advised that Councillor S. P. Shannon would be arriving at the meeting slightly late.

The Chairman welcomed Councillor R. J. Shannon to the Board and Members discussed arrangements for delivering updates on the work of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC), following the departure of Councillor B. T. Cooper from the Board. Officers reported that the meeting of the Committee that had been due to take place in March 2014 had been cancelled. Councillor Cooper had agreed to provide a written update on the outcomes of the April meeting of HOSC. Members were advised that it was likely that the Council's appointment to HOSC would be considered in the new municipal year as it was best practice to appoint a member of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Board to HOSC.

109/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS

Councillors J. M. L. A. Griffiths and C. J. Spencer declared Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as members of the Bromsgrove Arts Centre Operating Trust in respect of Item No. 6. Councillor R. J. Shannon declared an other Disclosable Interest in respect of Item No. 6. due to his personal friendship with a member of staff employed by the Artrix. As such Councillors Griffiths, Shannon and Spencer withdrew from the meeting and took no part in its consideration and voting thereon.

110/13 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 24th March 2014 were submitted.

Members noted that Councillor S. R. Colella had been present at the meeting and should have been listed amongst the Councillors observing proceedings.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved.

111/13 **CCTV CODE OF PRACTICE AND IMPACT OF FUTURE FINANCE CUTS**

The CCTV and Telecare Manager presented a briefing paper on the subject of the new CCTV Code of Practice and the impact of future financial cuts on the service. She advised Members that The CCTV Code of Practice had been updated in accordance with legal requirements detailed in The Protection of Freedom Act. In line with the new code an annual report, detailing achievements in the previous years and aspirations for future years, would now need to be prepared. Every three years the Council would also need to review the CCTV system to ensure that operating arrangements remained valid. Consultation with Members would take place as part of this review process.

Members were also provided with an overview of the Council's Lifeline service and the Future Lives scheme. As part of the budget reductions approved by Worcestershire County Council (WCC) funding would no longer be provided by the county Council to tenants who did not have access to a dispersed unit. This did not impact on the Council's existing lifeline customers but would have implications for Bromsgrove District Housing Trust's (BDHT's) tenants. BDHT had contacted all the tenants who would be affected by this change to funding arrangements and a separate arrangements would be made by the Council to offer an alternative service.

Following presentation of the report a number of issues were raised by Members for further discussion.

- Current arrangements for sharing CCTV pictures with the Police at Hindlip Hall and future co-operation following the Council's relocation to Parkside.
- The differences between incidents and reviews. Members were advised that incidents were any report or visual activity, including issues reported by the police or a retail unit, which required the operator to take action. Reviews were a subset of these incidents which specifically related to criminal cases.
- The need for CCTV equipment to be reviewed to ensure that the quality of pictures was useful. Officers explained that whilst cameras had been replaced in Bromsgrove and Rubery in many places equipment purchased in 1998 had been retained as it remained of sufficient quality.
- The Council's maintenance contract and the requirement for contractors to undertake checks of the equipment.

- The fact that CCTV cameras were pre-programmed to focus on specific locations at specific times and the potential for certain incidents to not be recorded as a consequence.
- Restrictions preventing Councils from providing CCTV cameras to private companies on a commercial basis.
- Scenarios where health and morals would require action from CCTV operators, which could include observing street fights or other behaviour endangering a person's life.
- The need for CCTV to avoid discriminating on a number of grounds in respect of the Human Rights Act 1998. Members suggested that sexual orientation should be added to the list of issues that had already been recorded in this section of the code of practice.
- Restrictions on CCTV audio recordings.
- Compliance with data protection rules and the fact that the Council had received a single complaint from a resident since the system had been introduced.
- The use of privacy zones for CCTV cameras located in residential areas.
- The benefits of a dispersed unit which had greater links to a variety of systems that could be useful for customers with multiple needs.
- The support that would be available to BDHT tenants who could not afford to pay for the lifeline service that would be available from the Council.
- The action that was being taken to minimise the risks of some vulnerable customers failing to receive support if they felt they could not utilise the Council's lifeline service.
- The potential financial costs to the Council of taking on more lifeline customers. Officers confirmed that this was likely to be minimal.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

112/13 **LEISURE PROVISION TASK GROUP - MEMBERSHIP**

Officers explained that following the previous meeting of the Board, when Members had agreed that membership of the Leisure Provision Task Group should be restricted to 7, contact had been made with every Member who had expressed an interest in participating in the review. However, none of these Members had indicated that they would be willing to stand down from the review.

In this context, to ensure that membership was determined in a fair manner, the Board agreed that membership should be determined on a first come first served basis. Officers had kept a record of the dates and time when Members had asked to participate in the review and were therefore able to confirm that Councillors R. L. Dent and S. R. Colella had been the last to ask to participate in this review.

RESOLVED that the following Members should participate in this review in addition to Councillor C. J. Spencer, as the Task Group Chairman; Councillors J. M. L. A. Griffiths, H. J. Jones, L. C. R. Mallett, E. Shannon, S. P. Shannon and C. R. Scurrall.

113/13 **FURTHER RESPONSE FROM CABINET - AIR QUALITY TASK GROUP REPORT**

(Prior to the start of this item there was a ten minute break in the meeting proceedings from 6.35 – 6.45 p.m. This interval occurred due to technical problems with ICT equipment that was scheduled to be used for the delivery of a presentation under Item No. 5 on the agenda).

Officers explained that the Air Quality Task Group's response to the Cabinet's conclusions in relation to the group's initial findings had been considered by the Cabinet at a meeting on 2nd April. The response to the Task Group's proposals had been recorded in the minutes of the meeting, (which would be circulated for Members' consideration following the meeting of the Board). There had been few changes made to the Cabinet's original response.

114/13 **JOINT WRS SCRUTINY TASK GROUP**

The Chairman of the WRS Joint Scrutiny Task Group, Councillor R. J. Laight, advised Members that only one meeting of the group had been held since the last Board meeting. This had involved a number of the members of the Joint Committee who had been invited to attend to respond to pre-prepared questions. Those who were unable to attend had provided written responses to those questions.

The group's recommendations were beginning to be formulated and would be discussed at the following meeting due to be held on 30th April. The draft final report would then be worked on. The group remained on schedule to complete their work by June for presentation at each Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the county.

115/13 **CABINET WORK PROGRAMME 1ST MAY TO 31ST AUGUST 2014**

The Board considered the Cabinet Work Programme for the period 1st May to 31st August 2014.

During consideration of this item questions were raised concerning the inclusion of key decisions on the Work Programme and Members commented that only one of the items had been recorded as a key decision for the period. Members were advised that, as requested at a previous meeting of the Board, the inclusion of information which identified items as key decisions on the Work Programme had been raised with the Officer responsible for producing the document, though it was agreed that a further discussion should take place.

The focus of the subjects scheduled on the Cabinet's Work Programme was also briefly debated. Members commented that it was not always clear from the title of these items what the Cabinet would be invited to consider. In this context the provision of a basic summary of each item was considered useful as this would help to provide Members with clarification. A specific request was also made for further information about the focus of the report concerning

the Review of Policy for the Allocation of Rural Affordable Housing developed under "Exception Site" policy.

116/13 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME**

Members were advised that due to the fact the April meeting was the last scheduled meeting in the municipal year the Board's Work Programme was currently short. Additional items would therefore be added to the Work Programme at the meeting to be held on 16th June 2014.

117/13 **SUMMARY OF RESULTS OF THE STAFF SURVEY**

The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources circulated a copy of a presentation that had been produced summarising the results of the staff survey. She explained that the survey had been completed by 40% of staff. Responses had included 800 comments from individual members of staff. Due to the scale of these responses it had taken time to analyse the feedback that had been received.

Some of the feedback that had been received had been positive. However, there had also been some responses that had caused concern. For example, only 45% of staff had indicated that they took part in regular team meetings and 50% had indicated that they did not receive feedback from their managers regarding their performance.

Members discussed the content of the presentation and highlighted the following points:

- The difficulty for Members to scrutinise the effectiveness of the Steering Group's response to the staff survey results without first having an opportunity to consider the responses that had been received from staff.
- The fact that the Corporate Management Team (CMT) had also not analysed all of the responses received from staff because this feedback had been treated as confidential. Additional information would be presented for the consideration of CMT at the end of April, though this information would have the same level of detail as that which was contained within the presentation to the Board.
- The potential to share general feedback received from staff, trends within departments and in relation to sickness absence rates without breaching staff confidentiality.
- Concerns that one to ones and team meetings were not taking place as regularly as they should be.
- The frequency of the staff surveys.
- The potential for Members to consider a copy of the survey template to enable the Board to assess the feedback provided by staff in context.
- The length of time it had taken to assess the feedback received from staff and how this compared to other organisations where staff surveys were circulated.
- The fact that completion of the survey was not compulsory.

RESOLVED that

- (a) a representative of the Steering Group be asked to attend the Board meeting to be held on either 16th June or 14th July 2014 to present more detailed information about the responses received to the staff survey; and
- (b) a copy of the survey template be provided for Members' consideration at that meeting.

118/13 ARTRIX OUTREACH PROVISION TASK GROUP DRAFT FINAL REPORT

The Chairman of the Task Group, Councillor S. P. Shannon, presented the Artrix Outreach Provision Task Group's final report.

He advised the Board that the group had held a total of 8 meetings and interviewed a number of Officers and representatives of the Artrix and its operating trust. The Chairman also highlighted each of the group's 9 recommendations in turn and briefly described the evidence basis for these recommendations, as detailed in the report.

The Task Group had wanted to highlight the following areas:

- The group had been pleasantly surprised at the number and a wide variety of outreach activities which the Artrix provided throughout both District and other parts of the County.
- The professionalism of the staff at the Artrix and continued efforts to seek out funding for activities.
- The partnership work between the Council's Arts and Events team and the Artrix Centre in order to ensure that the work met the needs of the residents of the District.

The group was keen to ensure that these activities continued and were made available to those residents within the District that needed them the most. Many of the recommendations were therefore based around promotion of the outreach work to both residents and Councillors.

In conclusion to this item the Chairman thanked all of the Officers and representatives of the Artrix who had provided evidence to the group during the review. In particular, he thanked Amanda Scarce, Democratic Services Officer, for her hard work and for the support that she had provided to the group.

RESOLVED that the Artrix Outreach Provision Task Group Report and Recommendations be submitted to Cabinet for approval.

The meeting closed at 7.25 p.m.

Chairman