

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY STEERING BOARD

TUESDAY, 1ST APRIL 2008 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors P. M. McDonald (Chairman), J. T. Duddy (Vice-Chairman), Mrs. M. Bunker, R. J. Deeming, B. Lewis F.CMI, D. L. Pardoe and C. B. Taylor

Observers: Councillor Mrs. J. Dyer M.B.E. and Councillor Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP

Officers: Mr. T. Beirne, Mr. P. Street, Mrs. C. Felton, Ms. D. Poole, Mrs. S. Sellers and Ms. D. McCarthy

98/07 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

99/07 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest or whipping arrangements were made.

100/07 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Steering Board held on 4th March 2008 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting be approved as a correct record.

101/07 **CABINET RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 1 WITHIN THE AIR QUALITY SCRUTINY REPORT**

As requested by the Scrutiny Steering Board, the Cabinet had reconsidered recommendation 1 contained within the Air Quality Scrutiny Report. The written response from the Cabinet was considered and Councillor Mrs. Dyer, the Portfolio Holder for Planning (which included Climate Change), was thanked for attending.

RESOLVED that the response from the Cabinet on recommendation 1 within the Air Quality Scrutiny Report be noted.

102/07 **CABINET RESPONSE TO THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT (BUSES) SCRUTINY REPORT**

The Portfolio Holder for Street Scene and Recycling, Councillor Mrs. Sherrey, was in attendance to present the Cabinet's response to the Public Transport (Buses) Scrutiny Report.

The Board considered the written response and it was pointed out that the Portfolio Holders for both Planning and Street Scene and Recycling were Members of the Integrated Passenger Transport Group and were working closely with Worcestershire County Council. It was also confirmed that no decisions had been made on the location of the new bus station in Bromsgrove Town Centre and that there would be public consultation in the near future.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Mrs. Sherrey for attending.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet's response to the Public Transport (Buses) Scrutiny Report be noted.

103/07 **NEW SCRUTINY TASK GROUPS**

Two membership forms for the Anti-Social Behaviour Task Group received on the day of the meeting were tabled.

Members of the Board were informed that at a recent meeting between the Leader and Chairmen of the Scrutiny Steering Board, Audit Board and Performance Management Board, the new Anti-Social Behaviour Task Group and Alcohol Free Zones Task Group were discussed. Due to the belief that the two task groups were closely linked and as there had been a poor response from Members to join either task group, it was suggested that the new task groups could be amalgamated. This proposal was discussed by the Board.

Under this item, the Chairman raised the scrutiny proposal recently put forward relating to the Spatial Project that was currently listed on the work programme. It was suggested that a presentation on the Spatial Project could be given to the Board at a future meeting covering: effectiveness and efficiency; value for money; added value; and quality of delivery. It was explained that after the presentation, the Board could then decide whether or not this area needed to be scrutinised any further. It was also pointed out that the Performance Management Board were already monitoring the performance of the Spatial Project and had received monthly reports on phase one.

The Refuse and Recycling Scrutiny Report was raised and it was clarified that the Cabinet was due to consider the report at its meeting scheduled to be held on 2nd April 2008. It was anticipated that the Cabinet's response would be presented to the Scrutiny Steering Board at its next meeting later this month.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the newly established Anti-Social Behaviour Task Group and Alcohol Free Zones Task Group be merged to form one Task Group;
- (b) that Councillor K. Taylor be appointed as the Task Group Chairman of the new Anti-Social Behaviour and Alcohol Free Zones Task Group;
- (c) that the new combined terms of reference be drafted by Councillor K. Taylor, as Task Group Chairman, for the Scrutiny Steering Board to consider at its next meeting;
- (d) that all Members who had submitted a Membership Form for either the Anti-Social Behaviour Task Group or the Alcohol Free Zones Task Group be contacted to:
 - (i) inform them that the Task Groups would be amalgamated;
 - (ii) confirm they were still interested in serving on the new combined Task Group; and
- (d) that a presentation on the Spatial Project be added to the agenda for the next meeting of the Scrutiny Steering Board.

104/07 **JOINT COUNTYWIDE SCRUTINY ON FLOODING**

The Chairman gave a verbal update to all Members of the Board on what had been discussed at the last meeting of the Joint Countywide Flooding Task Group. It was explained that the meeting had concentrated on communication.

The Board was informed that there had been a presentation from the Chief Executive from the National Flood Forum who had explained that the Government were looking at giving grants to flood victims to enable them to purchase products to safeguard their homes. It was stated that flood resistant houses were to be built and that following the Pitt Review, in the near future planning approval would be required to tarmac drives. The use of the Human Rights Act was mentioned and it was stated that there would be one telephone number for the public to call in the local area to find out more information when flooding occurred.

The Chairman stated that representatives from the media were in attendance and discussions had included how the media could more responsibly give out flood messages received from individuals and how important websites were during any emergencies in providing information to the public.

The Board then discussed problems with drains, the Land Drainage 1991 Act, riparian responsibilities and building insurance. It was stated that representatives from all agencies, including members of the public present at the Joint Countywide Flooding Task Group Meeting, had agreed that flooding was likely to occur more frequently in future and that it was a major issue.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that a copy of the Pitt Review be circulated to all Members of the Board;
- (b) that the Scrutiny Steering Board Chairman circulate the minutes of the last Countywide Joint Flooding Scrutiny Meeting to Board Members; and
- (c) that the verbal update from the Chairman be noted.

105/07 **CABINET'S FORWARD PLAN**

Consideration was given to the Cabinet's Forward Plan which contained the key decisions scheduled to be made over the next few months.

In relation to item number 8 on Mobile Home Licensing, the Chairman requested an explanation on why the report had been delayed as it was originally expected that a decision would be made in September 2007.

There was also concern over item number 11 which related to the Artrix Service Level Agreement. The Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic explained that as the solicitors who were involved with the original paperwork were no longer at the Council, the report to Cabinet had been delayed to enable the Council's current solicitors to thoroughly go through the Service Level Agreement to ensure it was accurate. However, it was believed this would not hold up the project for any longer than one month. It was also stated that the Artrix Service Level Agreement was on the Work Programme for the Performance Management Board.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that a report be included on the Agenda for the next Scrutiny Steering Board Meeting explaining why a decision on Mobile Home Licensing (item number 8 on the Cabinet's Forward Plan) had been delayed;
- (b) that Councillor Whittaker, as Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing, be invited to attend the next Scrutiny Steering Board Meeting to discuss and answer any further questions in relation to (a) above; and
- (c) that all other items on the Cabinet's Forward Plan be noted.

106/07 **WORK PROGRAMME**

Members considered the work programme for the Scrutiny Steering Board which included details of recent Scrutiny Review Meetings.

The Board was reminded that in relation to 'Older People' which was a possible area for future scrutiny listed on the work programme, it had been decided that focus groups would first be set up to find out specific issues which might need to be scrutinised. It was explained that an agreement with the Assistant Chief Executive regarding the costs of such focus groups was due to be discussed and once the focus groups had been established and information from the focus groups obtained, a scrutiny proposal would be completed and submitted for the Board to consider.

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted and updated (as appropriate) to reflect decisions made at this meeting.

The meeting closed at 6.40 p.m.

Chairman