

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY STEERING BOARD**

**THURSDAY, 22ND MAY 2008 AT 6.00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Councillors A. N. Blagg, Mrs. M. Bunker, S. R. Colella, Dr. G. H. Lord,  
D. L. Pardoe and C. B. Taylor

Observers: Councillor Mrs. J. D. Luck and Councillor S. R. Peters

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Mr. P. Street, Mrs. C. Felton, Mrs. S. Sellers and  
Ms. D. McCarthy

1/08 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

**RESOLVED** that Councillor D. L. Pardoe be elected Chairman of the Board for the ensuing municipal year.

2/08 **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Dr. G. H. Lord be elected as Vice-Chairman for the ensuing municipal year.

3/08 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

(It was noted that a Labour nominee was awaited.)

4/08 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest or whipping arrangements were made.

5/08 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Steering Board held on 29th April 2008 were submitted.

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

6/08 **ENERGY EFFICIENCY GROUP UPDATE**

The Board considered an update of the work of the Energy Efficiency Group which was established to promote and pursue actions to secure more efficient energy use by the Council.

The Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects, Mr. Street, informed Members that the primary purpose of the Energy Efficiency Group was to monitor the implementation of the recommendations made by the Energy Savings Trust and it was reported that considerable progress had been made, as detailed within the appendix to the report. He stated that the Energy Efficiency Group had met twice and a third meeting was planned.

It was explained that the Group had also begun to consider wider sustainability issues as many of the recommendations in the Energy Savings Trust report were inter-linked with other aspects of the Council's activities. This led to a brief discussion as there was a concern that sustainability was not formally one of the Council's priorities.

There were also questions raised relating to Asset Management, the role of the Audit Board in relation to the Council's use of resources and the Asset Management Plan, partnership working with Worcestershire County Council, links with the Bromsgrove Strategic Partnership, funding received from Defra and possible funding for training from Carbon Trust.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the report be noted; and
- (b) that the Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects explore what grants may be available to the Council for training in relation to Energy Efficiency, particularly from Carbon Trust.

7/08

**FORWARD PLAN**

The Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services, Mrs. C. Felton, explained that historically, the Forward Plan had presented limited information whereas the new format provided more details on key decisions. Therefore, it was hoped the new version would be more meaningful for the Scrutiny Steering Board.

It was stated that the Forward Plan included all key decisions to be taken over the next four months as well as non-key decisions. It was clarified that the non-key decisions with an asterisk (\*) were decisions which would be taken by the full Council.

Positive feedback on the new format of the Forward Plan was received from Members of the Board and it was confirmed that the Forward Plan would continue to be updated and published on a monthly basis.

Questions were raised on a number of items contained within the Forward Plan including Single Status (Job Evaluation), the future of Bromsgrove Museum, Gypsy Site Provision Review and Civil Parking Enforcement (also known as decriminalised parking).

It was felt that Bromsgrove Town Centre Issues and Options (item number 18 on the Forward Plan) was an important area with strong public concern and therefore more information was requested. The Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects, Mr. Street, stated that other Members had also

requested further information and consequently a Briefing had been compiled. The Board was also informed that there would be a Bromsgrove Town Centre Issues and Options Consultation in June 2008 where the Council would be consulting with statutory consultees, key stakeholders, Councillors and members of the public. It was suggested that the Consultation Report could be placed on the Agenda for the next meeting of the Board.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the Forward Plan be noted; and
- (b) that the Bromsgrove Town Centre Issues and Options Consultation Report be included on the Agenda for the next Scrutiny Steering Board meeting on 1st July 2008.

8/08

**WORK PROGRAMME**

Due to the change in membership of the Scrutiny Steering Board and the need to clarify how the Board would like to progress items on the work programme, Members considered all topics included on the work programme.

**Anti-Social Behaviour and Alcohol Free Zones Task Group**

It was explained that due to confusion at the last meeting, it was uncertain whether Members had received the opportunity to evaluate all the candidates fully or consider other available options such as having a slightly larger group.

Various options relating to the future of the Anti-Social Behaviour and Alcohol Free Zones Task Group were discussed including splitting the Task Group back into two separate Task Groups (Anti-Social Behaviour Task Group and an Alcohol Free Zones Task Group) as originally agreed, amending the terms of reference or disbanding the Task Group altogether and scrutinising a different issue.

With regard to the membership of the Task Group, the Board was informed that since the report had been compiled, both Councillor Mrs. McDonald and Councillor McDonald had contacted the Committee Services Officer stating that they wished to withdraw from the Task Group.

Although it was acknowledged that Task Groups did not have to be politically balanced, both Members of the Board and officers believed that cross-party working was important.

**Refuse and Recycling Task Group – Value for Money (VFM)**

The Board agreed that the additional piece of work relating to VFM was a key scrutiny exercise as VFM was one of the Council's priorities. Therefore, it was felt that the Task Group Members should be contacted to ensure they were willing to undertake the investigation.

The suggested terms of reference were also discussed and it was questioned whether customer satisfaction levels needed to be included.

### Concessionary Parking for the over 60s

Mr. Bateman's comments, relating to the need to collect six months worth of data before the issue could be properly investigated, was considered. It was also discussed whether or not this issue was better placed on the work programme for the Performance Management Board.

### 'Older People' and 'Senior Citizens'

Councillor Mrs. Bunker informed the new Members of the Board that, with the help of the Assistant Chief Executive, a rural and an urban focus group were being set up by the Policy and Performance Team to find out the views of older people. It was intended that this would enable Members to better decide the issues to be scrutinised.

It was believed by the Board that there was no distinction between the topic 'Older People' which was already on the work programme and the topic 'Senior Citizens' which had been put forward at the last meeting of the Board.

### Climate Change

The Board was informed that Members had previously decided to include the topic of Climate Change on the work programme. However, to avoid duplicating the work of the Energy Efficiency Project Group, it had been agreed that the Board would request a progress update report to assist them in determining whether or not further scrutiny of this topic was required. As the Board had considered the Energy Efficiency Group Progress Update Report earlier in the meeting, Members discussed whether or not climate change needed to remain on its work programme.

### Joint Countywide Scrutiny on Flooding

There was a brief discussion relating to the Joint Countywide Scrutiny on Flooding in relation to the Council's representative.

It was confirmed that Councillor Pardoe, as the new Scrutiny Steering Board Chairman, would be expected to attend meetings of the Worcestershire Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen Network.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the Anti-Social Behaviour and Alcohol Free Zones Task Group continue as one Task Group with the terms of reference as agreed at the previous Board Meeting and with the following Members: Councillors K. Taylor (Chairman), Mrs. M. Bunker, Mrs. H. Jones, Mrs. C. J. Spencer and C. J. Tidmarsh;
- (b) that, on behalf of the Board, a letter be sent to all Members emphasising the importance of cross-party working and requesting that if any Member would like to join the Anti-Social Behaviour and Alcohol Free Zones Task Group they inform the Board via the Committee Services Officer;

- (c) that Members of the Refuse and Recycling Task Group be contacted to find out if they are willing to undertake the additional piece of work relating to Value for Money;
- (d) that it be noted that the Value for Money Training for Members is scheduled to be held on 11th June 2008;
- (e) that the suggested terms of reference (attached as appendix 3 to the report) be approved, subject to customer satisfaction levels being included;
- (f) that due to the need of appropriate data relating to the concessionary parking for over 60s, the Task Group be disbanded;
- (g) that the topic relating to Older People remain on the work programme and the topic 'Senior Citizens' be removed;
- (h) that the Assistant Chief Executive be requested to update Councillor Mrs. Bunker on the progress of the Older People Focus Groups;
- (i) that the topic Climate Change be removed from the work programme;
- (j) that, due to the change in the Board's Chairman, Councillor Pardoe be nominated as the Council's representative on the Joint Countywide Scrutiny on flooding; and
- (k) that the work programme for the Board be updated accordingly.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Cabinet request that the Performance Management Board considers a report on concessionary parking for over 60s once six months worth of data has been compiled (as requested by a member of the public, Mr. Bateman).

The meeting closed at 7.35 p.m.

Chairman