

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

13TH FEBRUARY 2017 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors L. C. R. Mallett (Chairman) (from Minute No. 88/16 to 92/16), S. A. Webb (Vice-Chairman), C. Allen-Jones (from Minute No. 91/16), S. R. Colella, B. T. Cooper, M. Glass, C. J. Spencer, P.L. Thomas (from Minute No. 91/16) and M. Thompson

Observers: Councillors G. N. Denaro, K. J. May and P. J. Whittaker

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Mr. J. Godwin, Mr D. Piper, Ms. A. Scarce and Ms. J. Bayley

88/16

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor S. J. Baxter.

The Chairman announced that he would need to leave during the meeting due to another appointment. Following his departure it was noted that the Board's Vice Chairman would chair the meeting.

89/16

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS

There were no declarations of interest or of any whipping arrangements.

90/16

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 16th January 2017 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 16th January 2017 be approved as a correct record.

91/16

DOLPHIN CENTRE - UPDATE IN RESPECT OF DISPLACED GROUPS

The Head of Leisure and Cultural Services attended the meeting to provide an update on the position in respect of groups that would be displaced following the move to a new leisure centre in Bromsgrove. During the delivery of this update a number of areas were highlighted for Members' consideration:

- The new leisure centre was progressing well; on time and on budget.

- Construction of the new centre would be completed by October 2017 and the Council was aiming for the facility to be opened in November.
- The contractor was due to take ownership of the current Dolphin Centre site on 14th October 2017. At this stage the sports hall would cease to be available for the use of community groups.
- Officers had already held meetings with a small number of groups; the next stage of the process would involve reviewing the specific needs of particular groups.
- The heads of terms had been agreed with BAM for the majority of areas and it was anticipated that these would be finalised alongside contractual arrangements in due course.

Following the verbal update Members discussed a series of points in detail:

- The time that had been taken for the Council to negotiate an agreement with BAM and the need to follow a proper legal process.
- The potential scope of the agreement with BAM; Members were advised that this would cover 48 weeks in the year.
- The arrangements for transferring community groups to utilise BAM facilities if they met after 6.00pm or at weekends.
- The potential for an agreement with BAM not to be reached. Officers suggested that whilst this remained a possibility it was not anticipated that the Council would be unable to reach an agreement with BAM.
- The list of groups given protective status by the Sports Development team. This comprised a number of groups that had long-standing booking arrangements to utilise the sports hall at the Dolphin Centre and had been built into the service specification.

The reasons why officers had not yet arranged to discuss with representatives of some displaced groups the alternative locations in which they could hold their activities was also discussed. Members were advised that some groups were not necessarily sustainable in the long-term. It had also been considered more appropriate for discussions to take place in the new financial year and was more appropriate to liaise with groups closer to the date of the current Dolphin Centre's closure.

In this context Members noted that there were frustrations amongst local community groups potentially affected by the pending closure of the old Dolphin Centre. To address this a number of actions were considered, including holding a meeting with affected groups to discuss available options as soon as possible and holding a public meeting to enable Officers and the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture Services to brief the public. However, there were some concerns that these actions could be too premature as the negotiations with BAM had not yet concluded. For this reason Members agreed that officers arrange, as a first step, to

meet with groups which held their activities in the sports centre in the day time.

RESOLVED that officers should arrange to meet with groups, which currently meet in the sports hall at the Dolphin Centre during the day to discuss future meeting arrangements.

92/16

REVIEW OF ECONOMIC PRIORITIES

The Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Economic Development and Regeneration and the Head of Economic Development and Regeneration for North Worcestershire delivered a presentation on the subject of the changing economy in Bromsgrove district (attached at Appendix 1). During the delivery of this presentation a range of points were highlighted for Members' consideration:

- The Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Economic Development and Regeneration had requested a review of the economic priorities for the district.
- The local economy had implications both for the sustainability of the Council and for the economic health of the community.
- The review had been commissioned from an external consultant and had already informed constructive discussions during a workshop session held for Cabinet Members and members of the Bromsgrove Economic Development Theme Group.
- The Council had 5 economic priorities for Bromsgrove district which had been adopted in June 2015.
- Since the priorities were adopted progress had been made in delivering on these and performance was generally good. However, there remained a number of challenges for the district.
- Whilst there were highly skilled residents living in the district many of them commuted to work in other parts of the country.
- Jobs within the local economy tended to be lower skilled/paid.
- The demographics of the population impacted on the local economy.
- House prices in the district were relatively high creating affordability problems for people working in the local area; there was reduced number of people in their 20s and 30s living in Bromsgrove as they struggled to get on the property ladder.
- Whilst the Council had not joined the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) their ambitious economic plans would impact in the district; including new retail, commercial and residential opportunities in Longbridge.
- There were various options available to the Council to help address some of the challenges impacting on the local economy.
- The report in respect of economic priorities, originally scheduled for the consideration of Cabinet in March, had been postponed until April to provide more time for officers to meet with key partners to discuss how to address these challenges further.

- A further report would be presented for the consideration of the Board in due course detailing the outcomes of these discussions.

Following the presentation Members discussed matters in detail:

- The need for more houses, including affordable housing, to be built in the district and the impact that this might have on house prices.
- The potential to enhance the local economy and to increase Council revenue generated from any growth in local business rates.
- The benefits of a mixed demographic in the local population and a balanced economy.
- The likelihood that young people in their 20s and 30s would take into account their ability to afford to start a family when selecting a location in which to live.
- The potential impact of local infrastructure on whether people were likely to select Bromsgrove district as a place to live.
- The role of the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) in shaping the local economy and the extent to which the Worcestershire LEP took into account the economic needs of the north of the county.
- The value of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), both as local employers and in terms of contributing to business rates.
- The economic benefits of the district's location close to national motorway networks and to the Birmingham conurbation.
- The availability of land that could be prioritised for development for commercial rather than residential use and the size of this land.
- The extent to which commercial developments were taken into account in the Local Plan No. 4 alongside housing developments and the need to continue to review planning policy documents on an ongoing basis.
- The beneficial impact of local transport links on the local economies in Barnt Green and Hagley respectively.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

93/16

QUARTERLY RECOMMENDATION TRACKER

The Board was advised that there were a number of items listed on the Quarterly Recommendation Tracker. Many of these had been proposed by the Finance and Budget Working Group and would be implemented over the following months.

The recommendations arising from the Evening and Weekend Car Parking Task Group were being implemented on an ongoing basis and were linked to the earlier report the Board had received from the in respect of the review of the Council's economic priorities..

There remained one item on the tracker arising from the Youth Provision Task Group which concluded its investigation in 2013. This proposed further investigation of services for young people who were not in

education, employment or training (NEETs). The Board could chose to reconsider this subject if it felt that this was appropriate.

Officers advised that a decision remained to be made about the Board's proposal for the Task Group guidelines to be added to the Council's constitution as a meeting of the Constitution Review Working Party had not as yet been arranged.

94/16

FINANCE AND BUDGET WORKING GROUP REPORT

In the absence of the Chairman of the Finance and Budget Working Group, Councillor L. C. R. Mallett, Officers presented a report outlining the proposals that had been made by the group on the subject of the Council's budget. The Board was advised that the group had held 3 meetings since November 2016, when its recommendations had previously been reported for Members' consideration. The items discussed during these meetings had informed the group's recommendations, as detailed in the report.

The Finance and Budget Working Group would continue to meet after the Council's budget had been set on 28th February 2017. The group would have a crucial role in terms of monitoring financial developments, including in respect of the Council's Efficiency Statement.

RECOMMENDED that

- (1) Unavoidable pressures under £5k be funded from existing budgets;
- (2) Consideration be give as to how Section 106 monies is accounted for within revenue costs;
- (3) Heads of Service be asked to look at all areas where we provide an additional service and produce a cost recovery statement for further consideration;
- (4) Virements over £40k should be agreed by Cabinet and anything under that amount would be with the relevant Portfolio Holder's agreement; and
- (5) Revised Financial Regulations to include all carry forwards of the Capital Programme to be agreed by Council.

95/16

MEASURES DASHBOARD WORKING GROUP - UPDATE

Councillor S. A. Webb, Chairman of the Measures Dashboard Working Group, reported that a meeting of the group was scheduled to take place on 27th February. Member of the group was asked to bring their iPad to the meeting.

96/16

CCTV SHORT SHARP REVIEW MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Following the previous meeting of the Board all Members who did not serve on the Cabinet had been informed about the launch of the CCTV Short Sharp Review and had been invited to notify Officers if they were interested in participating in the exercise. By the date of the Board's

meeting 3 Councillors had been suggested to sit on the group; Councillors S. R. Colella (Chairman), B. T. Cooper and M. Thompson.

Members noted that generally a minimum of 5 Councillors were appointed to Task Group reviews. However, as this was a Short Sharp Review, and due to the enthusiasm of the 3 Members, the Board agreed that review should go ahead.

RESOLVED that

- (1) Councillors S. R. Colella, B. T. Cooper and M. Thompson serve on the CCTV Short Sharp Review; and
- (2) The Short Sharp Review commence its investigation as soon as possible.

97/16

TASK GROUP UPDATES

The following updates were provided in respect of Task Group activities currently taking place:

- a) Staff Survey Joint Scrutiny Task Group – Councillor S. R. Colella, Chairman

The Board was informed that during a meeting of the group in February Members had interviewed representatives of the Staff Survey Programme Board. Members had been interested to learn about the work of the Programme Board, though had been mindful that the actions arising were based on feedback from 28 per cent of staff. The Task Group was still keen to find out why other members of staff had not responded to the survey and would be exploring this further.

- b) Social Media Task Group – Councillor R. J. Laight, Chairman

In the absence of the Chairman of the Task Group Officers advised that during the latest meeting of the group Members had considered and agreed the content of a questionnaire. This would be circulated amongst elected Members and was designed to find out how Councillors used social media and what training, if any, they required. The Task Group was scheduled to interview a representative of the local press at a future meeting and would also be sending a questionnaire to the Communications Teams at neighbouring authorities to find out how they used social media.

Officers confirmed that the group's focus remained on the benefits of using social media, the legal and data protection implications and how Members could use social media in their wards.

98/16

WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - UPDATE

The Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC), Councillor B. T. Cooper, explained that he had been unable to attend the latest meeting of the Committee. There had been 3 items on the agenda for this meeting:

- The future of acute hospital services and an update on the Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Groups' (CCGs) consultation process.
- A review of urgent winter plans.
- An update on sexual health services.

Following publication of the agenda an emergency item had been added in respect of the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) Section 29a Notice for Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust. The notice highlighted the need for significant improvements to be made to hospital services in a relatively short period of time. The new Chair of the Trust's Board had attended the meeting to outline what she intended to do to resolve the problems identified by the CQC.

During consideration of this item the Board was also advised that Councillor K. May had liaised with Members in respect of the Council's response to the Worcestershire CCGs' consultation regarding the future of acute hospital services in the county. A response would be developed based on feedback received from Members.

99/16

CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Board considered the contents of the Cabinet Leader's Work Programme for the period 1st March to 30th June 2017. During consideration of this document Members were advised that the item in respect of the future development of the Burcot Lane site had been postponed. In this context there was sufficient time for pre-scrutiny of the report and Members agreed that the subject should be considered further at the meeting of the Board scheduled to take place on 27th March 2017.

100/16

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

Officers advised that the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Work Programme would be updated to incorporate the additional items that had been added during the course of the meeting.

Members were advised that following the meeting of the Board in January 2017 Redditch Borough Council and Wyre Forest District Council had been approached about the potential to participate in joint scrutiny of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership. The Chairman of Wyre Forest District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor H. Dyke, had confirmed that she was intending to

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attend the meeting in Bromsgrove on 27th March when Members were due to undertake crime and disorder scrutiny. The Redditch Overview and Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to consider the proposal to participate in joint scrutiny at a meeting on 14th February 2017.

The meeting closed at 7.40 p.m.

Chairman