

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

**24<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2017 AT 6.00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Councillors L. C. R. Mallett (Chairman), S. A. Webb (Vice-Chairman), C. Allen-Jones, S. R. Colella (until Minute Item No. 117/16), C.A. Hotham, C. J. Spencer, P.L. Thomas (from Minute Item No. 115/16) and M. Thompson

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering and Ms. J. Bayley

111/16 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor R. J. Laight.

The Board was advised that there was the possibility that absent Members had provided their apologies in advance to a member of staff who was unable to attend the meeting due to unforeseen circumstances. Members agreed that any such apologies should be noted and approved at the following meeting of the Board.

112/16 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

There were no declarations of interest nor of any whipping arrangements.

113/16 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 27TH MARCH 2017**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on Monday 27th March 2017 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2017 be approved as a correct record.

114/16 **TASK GROUP UPDATES**

The Board received updates in respect of ongoing Task Groups and Short Sharp Reviews.

a) **Staff Survey Joint Scrutiny Task Group**

The Chairman of the Task Group, Councillor S. R. Colella, reported that the group had undertaken detailed scrutiny of the staff survey

at various meetings. A number of lessons had been learned about joint scrutiny working and these needed to be taken into account for the future. However, during the course of the review it had become apparent that the situation in respect of the staff survey was changing and some of the group's terms of reference were out of date. The group's findings would be recorded in an interim report and this would be presented for Members' consideration at the following meeting of the Board.

b) Social Media Task Group

In the absence of the Chairman of the Task Group Councillor M. Thompson explained that there had been no meetings of the group since March.

c) CCTV Short Sharp Review

The Chairman of the group, Councillor S. R. Colella, explained that no meetings had been held since the last meeting of the Board. As agreed during the previous meeting Officers had consulted with non-executive Members to find out whether any would be willing to participate in the review. Councillors C. J. Spencer and S. A. Webb explained that they would be interested in becoming Members of the group.

**RESOLVED** that Councillors C. J. Spencer and S. A. Webb be appointed to serve on the CCTV Short Sharp Review.

115/16

**JOINT SCRUTINY WORK WITH REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

The Board considered a proposal that had been received from Redditch Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee to undertake joint performance scrutiny where appropriate.

Members were advised that Redditch Members had established a Performance Scrutiny Working Group, which had a similar remit to Bromsgrove District Council's Measures Dashboard Working Group, in June 2016. At the latest meeting of the Redditch Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members had agreed that the Performance Scrutiny Working Group should continue with its work in 2017/18. Redditch Members had become aware that there were similarities between the work of the Performance Scrutiny Working Group and the Measures Dashboard Working Group and had felt that it might be useful to hold informal meetings to enable Members to share ideas and best practice. The Redditch Overview and Scrutiny Committee had also proposed that joint scrutiny meetings could be held, involving Members of both working groups, where the same issues were identified as suitable for further scrutiny.

Councillor S. A. Webb, the Chairman of the Measures Dashboard Working Group, explained that the group had discussed this proposal at

their latest meeting. Members had had some concerns that due to delays accessing the dashboard on their iPads the group was at a different stage in terms of scrutinising the performance of Council services to Redditch Members. For this reason Members concurred that it would be premature to hold joint scrutiny meetings in 2017/18. However, there was recognition that informal meetings, every 6 months, could add value as it would provide an opportunity for Members from the 2 Councils to share ideas.

**RESOLVED** that in 2017/18 informal meetings should be arranged every 6 months between Redditch Borough Council's Performance Scrutiny Working Group and Bromsgrove District Council's Measures Dashboard Working Group to share ideas and understanding of best practice in performance scrutiny.

116/16

### **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17 AND REVIEW OF THE WORK OF THE BOARD**

Members considered a draft copy of the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Annual Report 2016/17. During consideration of the document the following points were raised:

- A similar format had been used for the content of the annual report as had been adopted in previous years.
- The final version of the annual report would be presented by the Chairman of the Board at a meeting of Council in the new municipal year.
- A copy of the Chairman's foreword was circulated for Members' consideration during the meeting and it was agreed that this should be added to the final version of the report prior to publication.
- There was general agreement that reference to the staff survey in the Chairman's foreword should reflect the concerns that had led to the launch of the joint scrutiny review.
- A number of typographical errors were identified in the membership gallery and it was noted Councillor Spencer's profile had been missed accidentally and needed to be added.
- Members suggested that it would be helpful if the report could clarify that the annual report covered the municipal year 2016/17 and the months included within this period.
- The Board agreed that the information provided in respect of the staff survey review should be amended to recognise that the exercise had been launched after the second survey results had been reviewed by Members due to concerns about the level of progress that had been achieved since the first survey had been conducted.

The Board also considered the role of the Finance and Budget and Measures Dashboard Working Groups during the year. There was general consensus that these groups had made a constructive contribution to the scrutiny process and should be retained in 2017/18. Due to the workload of these groups the possibility of reducing the

number of Board meetings had been discussed by the Chairman and Vice Chairman with Officers. However, Members agreed that until the work programme planning process was improved for the Cabinet the number of meetings should remain the same to provide the Board with opportunities to pre-scrutinise relevant items of business.

Finally Members concluded this item by discussing the timing of meetings of the Board. Some Members suggested that it would be preferable to reschedule meetings of the Board so that these did not take place on Monday evenings, as this often conflicted with Parish Council meetings. However, the Chairman noted that the calendar for 2017/18 had already been developed and it would be difficult to reschedule meetings of the Board at this stage. Under these circumstances Members agreed that the day when meetings of the Board were held should be reviewed for subsequent years.

**RESOLVED** that

- (1) The Finance and Budget Working Group and Measures Dashboard Working Group should continue to form part of the Council's scrutiny process in 2017/18; and
- (2) Subject to the amendments detailed in the preamble above, the content of the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Annual Report 2016/17 be approved.

117/16

**CABINET WORK PROGRAMME**

Members considered the content of the Cabinet Leader's Work Programme for the period 1<sup>st</sup> May to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017. The Board noted that the majority of items were scheduled for consideration at a meeting of the Cabinet due to take place on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2017. As this would be on the eve of the general election questions were raised as to whether this meeting would still go ahead and Officers were asked to consult with the Leader in respect of this matter.

The Board's recommendation in relation to the Work Programme, which had been proposed at the previous meeting, had been approved by Cabinet. Senior Officers were also aware of the concerns raised by Members in respect of the amount of notice provided for items on the Work Programme. The subject would be raised again at forthcoming meetings of the Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Members were advised that it was possible some of the items due to be considered in June would need to be rescheduled. In particular, Officers suggested that the *Burcot Lane Site Future Development* item might need to be considered on a different date potentially necessitating an extra meeting of the Board to enable pre-scrutiny of the report.

The inclusion of a number of shared service business cases on the Cabinet Leader's Work Programme was noted by the Board. Members suggested that given the potential relevance of these items to future

service delivery these reports might be suitable for pre-scrutiny. As such the suggestion was made that consideration should be given to postponing these items until July 2017, though it was noted that the business case for Legal and Democratic Services might need to remain on the agenda for the June meeting of Cabinet due to recent changes in personnel.

118/16

### **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME**

Members considered the contents of the Board's work programme and in so doing noted that a number of items which had been scheduled for consideration in April had been postponed. This included an update report in respect of the Council's economic priorities, which had been rescheduled for consideration at the June meeting of the Board to provide time for additional detail to be gathered. The latest biannual update on the planning backlog data, for the period up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, had also been postponed and it was anticipated that this would now be received in June 2017.

The Chairman concluded the meeting by thanking every Member of the Board for their hard work as well as the 2 Democratic Services Officers and the Executive Director for Finance and Corporate Resources for their support during the year. Members also extended their thanks to the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Board.

The meeting closed at 6.40 p.m.

Chairman