

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

1ST OCTOBER 2018, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors L. C. R. Mallett (Chairman), S. A. Webb (Vice-Chairman), C. Allen-Jones, C. J. Bloore, S. R. Colella, R. J. Deeming, R. L. Dent (Substitute), C.A. Hotham, P.L. Thomas, M. Thompson and M. J. A. Webb (Substitute)

Officers: Mr M. Austin, Ms F. Mughal, Ms. J. Pickering and Ms. A. Scarce

39/18 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors M. Glass and R. Laight. Councillor R. Dent was attending as substitute for Councillor R Laight and Councillor M. Webb was attending as substitute for Councillor M. Glass.

40/18 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

There were no declarations of interest or whipping arrangements.

41/18 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 3 SEPTEMBER 2018**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on the 3rd September, 2018 be approved as an accurate record.

42/18 **COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME - PRE-SCRUTINY - VERBAL UPDATE**

The Executive Director of Finance and Resources advised Members that the updated report in respect of the Council Tax Support Scheme would be provided at the next meeting of the Board on 29th October, 2018.

It was reported that the consultation would not include the banding scheme. Members recognised that further work had to be done in order to adjust to the current model.

Members were informed that the revised modelling scheme would be implemented for the financial year 2020/21, as opposed to 19/20. Members commented that the proposed scheme was good in principal.

In response to Members' question, Members were informed that Redditch Borough Council had commenced the formal consultation in respect of the proposed council tax scheme. It was noted that Universal Credit had already commenced in the Redditch area and that the demographics of Redditch were very different to those of Bromsgrove.

RESOLVED that the revised Local Council Tax Support Scheme report for 2020/21 be considered at the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 29th October, 2018.

43/18

WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE - UPDATE ON CURRENT POSITION AND FUTURE PLANS

At its meeting on 3rd September, 2018, the Board requested an update in respect of the Waste Collection Service. This was following the issues that had led to problems with the collection of residents' bins across the District. Members had asked that the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing and Environment Services and Head of Environmental Services be invited to the meeting to discuss the issues highlighted. It was noted that the Portfolio Holder had sent her apologies due to illness and that the Head of Service was on annual leave, with the Environmental Services Manager attending in his absence.

The Executive Director of Finance and Resources provided the Board with an overview of the Waste Collection Services. The Waste Collection Team provided a service to every household in the District on a two week cycle of four day working from Tuesday to Friday. Members suggested that the waste service look at working on a five working day basis and the Environmental Services Manager stated that this would be incorporated in a revised business plan which would come forward to Members in due course.

In addition, a Garden Waste Service was provided, for which a charge was made, that operated across part of the District in conjunction with the grey bin service, and the other part of the district in conjunction with the green bin service. The Depot also provided a commercial waste service and a commercial tanker service for Cesspool emptying that generated an income for the Council. This had experienced strong growth in the last three years.

The resources to provide the services were as follows:

- 51 staff
- 13 full crews (Nine for Domestic Waste Services and four for Garden Waste)
- 2 crews of 2 (Trade and Rural Domestic Round)
- 1 Tanker (Cesspools).

To provide the service 44 staff were required on a day to day basis, leaving seven staff every day to cover any annual leave and sickness.

Members were informed that in 2017/18, the Council spent £93,641 on agency staff to support the service due to staff sickness. Between April to June 2018/19, it was identified that there was approximately £90,000 expenditure on agency staff across Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils, part of this was to cover vacancies and long term sickness. This meant that ten to twelve agency staff were required on a daily basis across the joint Environmental Services Waste Team. This had been discussed as a concern with the Portfolio Holder, and it was agreed that the Council would review how it delivered the service in order to assess what was achievable with the current resources.

As part of reviewing the service, temporary staff were recruited to support the growth in the service area, together with route optimisation data and staff finishing times which would be used to determine how the service should be delivered. This would then form part of the business case for the service review which was planned. Further detail in respect of these areas was provided within the written report.

Members outlined the problems that had been raised with them by residents in respect of missed bin collections in their wards. The issues had first been reported on 17th August, 2018, and some of the residents' bins had not been collected for a further two weeks. Members asked what areas in the District had been a priority for the missed bins to be collected. The Environmental Services Manager explained that the areas where prioritised were there would be minimal disruption to other parts of the service, such as the Town Centre.

The Board commented on the lack of communication leading up to the disruption and that other areas within the Council had not been informed of the issues. It was felt that there had been no robust action in place in order to inform residents appropriately. The Board was advised that the reason for this was that the senior manager was on holiday at the time. Members felt that this was a failure on a corporate level and suggested the concerns should have been addressed at full Council. The Executive Director of Finance and Resources informed the Board that the Corporate Management Team acknowledged that communication with residents and services was required and that the level of communication was not acceptable.

Members raised concerns in relation to agency staff being discharged and felt that this was not the appropriate decision to be made. The Executive Director of Finance and Resources stated it was deemed that this was a prudent course of action to take at the time as the sickness level of staff which followed was not expected. The Environmental Services Manager clarified that some agency staff had been recruited to permanent posts and that the number of staff employed had therefore not reduced.

Members explained that reports in the media had stated that the disruption was related to agency staff being released; following an overspend on the budget and not due to sickness. The Environmental Services Manager emphasised that the significant issues leading to the disruption of missed bin collections were due to high levels of staff on leave and sickness and this had been communicated to the press. It was confirmed that the sickness was due to staff having a virus and not stress related. Members discussed whether the nature of sickness should be mentioned in the report. It was confirmed that this was acceptable on a general basis as the report did not include details of individual members of staff.

Members further stated that the media mentioned that the housing growth in the District had also impacted on the disruption of the Waste Collection Services and sought clarity in relation to this. Members were informed that due to growth of the number of properties in the District, over recent years and in the future; this would inevitably have an impact on the Waste Collection Services in the long term.

It was recognised that there were challenges around capacity and resources as the staffing in its current form was not sufficient to deliver the service requirements in the long term. The Council recognised the key areas of development for the future. The Board was further informed that a business plan would be devised in order to improve the Waste Collection Services, in particular, reviewing the resources and the vehicles in order to address the issues that had been identified going forward. Members also discussed and requested that a review of the faulty/damaged and lost bins be carried out, to include the financial implications of this.

The Board commented on the openness and transparent approach adopted by officers and thanked them for this. The Board was informed that full and frank discussions had taken place with staff following the disruption and staff had worked hard to avoid further disruptions. The Environmental Services Manager stated that the team moral was low due to the recent events and adverse publicity. However, staff were committed to delivering a high standard of service nonetheless.

The Board noted that the Leader and Deputy Leader had sent their apologies for this meeting; however they would be attending the next meeting of the Board in respect of a number of other items.

It was suggested by the Vice Chairman and agreed by the Board that the Corporate Performance Working Group undertake a full investigation in respect of the issues with the Waste Collection Services. Members were informed that the Head of Environmental Services had been invited to attend the next meeting of the Working Group and the findings of this would be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Board and subsequently to Cabinet, if necessary, in due course.

Furthermore, the Board was reminded that the Corporate Performance Working Group was responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the Measures Dashboard and would be looking at the sickness levels in more detail. A report of any findings would again be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for its consideration. The Chairman of the Corporate Performance Working Group stated that one of the Measures for the Waste Services appeared not to have been updated since 2017 and this would also be reviewed.

Following further discussions Members were assured that no discussions had taken place to outsource the services. In conclusion, Members were invited to visit the depot to see the ongoing work of the operatives. It was noted that a number of Members had already visited and their support had been greatly appreciated by the staff.

RESOLVED that the Waste Collection Service update report be noted.

44/18

**ROAD SAFETY AROUND SCHOOLS TASK AND FINISH GROUP -
FINAL DRAFT REPORT**

Councillor C. Bloore presented the findings and recommendations from the Scrutiny Investigation undertaken by the Road Safety Around Schools Task Group.

The matter was brought to Council's attention at its meeting on 26th April, 2017, when Members considered the following notice of motion, put forward by Councillor P. McDonald:

"That this Council increases its capacity regarding Enforcement Officers to ensure that parking around our schools is safe and that our High streets stop resembling the Wild West because of a lack of enforcement".

Council had requested that the Overview and Scrutiny Board undertook a review of all aspects of Parking Enforcement and that appropriate funding be made available to support the outcome of the review.

The Task Group had met on six occasions from February to September 2018, to discuss the matter in more detail. During the course of the investigation, interviews were undertaken with representatives from Parking Services, County Highways, West Mercia Police, the Environmental Services Manager and the relevant Portfolio Holders.

In addition, Members of the public responded to a press release issued on behalf of the Task and Finish Group. The Head Teachers from Primary, First and Middle Schools had also been contacted for their comments.

The Task and Finish Group had also considered a best practice guide by Living Streets on 'How to get more children walking to school', the

Worcestershire's Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2018-2030 and examples of work undertaken in Manchester, the use and effectiveness of mobile vehicle CCTV cameras and the Solihull Council School Streets Pilot.

Members welcomed the report and supported the recommendations. Furthermore, Members recognised that more work had to be done around road safety and parking around schools.

Members requested that the report to be disseminated to all schools across the Bromsgrove District. The Senior Democratic Services Officer advised that the report would be published on the Council's website.

Councillor Bloore concluded by thanking all Members and officers involved in the Task Group.

RESOLVED that the Road Safety around Schools Task and Finish Group Final Draft Report to be noted.

RECOMMENDED that the Road Safety around Schools Task and Finish Group report and recommendations be submitted to Cabinet for approval:

- (a) That the details on the Council's website in respect of Parking Services be located in a more prominent position to encourage residents to report local parking concerns;
- (b) That Officers' investigate all options for using of mobile CCTV vehicles in Bromsgrove and report back the findings to Members;
- (c) That Members are provided with the contact details of the local Safer Neighbourhood Team in order that this information can be shared with residents to enable local issues to be recorded and enforcement action to be prioritised accordingly;
- (d) That Parking Services and the Safer Neighbourhood Team discuss and jointly prioritise enforcement action; and
- (e) The Officers investigate the option to employ an additional Parking Enforcement Officer whose role would be dedicated to looking at road safety around schools.

RECOMMENDED that the Road Safety around Schools Task and Finish Group report and recommendations be submitted to Worcestershire County Council for approval:

- (a) That Officers from Worcestershire County Council and the Council contact Solihull Council to look at the pilot exclusion zone scheme in order to consider it as an option

in some areas within Bromsgrove District and report back any findings to Members; and

- (b) That Worcestershire County Council Highways Team, together with representatives from the Safer Neighbourhood Team and Parking Services come together to discuss a joint campaign to address parking issues around schools and ongoing collective action on this matter.

45/18

CCTV SHORT SHARP REVIEW - FINAL DRAFT REPORT

Councillor S. Colella presented the findings and recommendations from the Scrutiny Investigation undertaken by the CCTV Short Sharp Review.

On 19th December, 2016, the Overview and Scrutiny Board was provided with an update in relation to CCTV. A number of concerns were raised by Members in respect of the allocation of CCTV cameras and determining the allocation, in particular, the timescales and decision makers. The Board was unanimous in its view that the matter needed further investigation to ensure that the service met the needs of the Council and residents, was fit for purpose and provided value for money.

A Short Sharp Review Group was set up which comprised of Councillors S. Colella, M. Thompson and S. Webb. The Group met on seven occasions from March 2017 to September 2018, to consider the current and future CCTV provision in Bromsgrove District in more detail.

Members felt that a review of the current scheme would provide the opportunity to consider the best system to meet the needs of the Council, together with possible locations to ensure that cameras were placed appropriately.

It was agreed that the analysis which would be undertaken by the Community Safety Partnership was needed to assist in determining the location of cameras. It was suggested that there needed to be a strategy in place for re-deployable cameras and it was highlighted that it would be important to talk to Worcestershire County Council (WCC) to discuss the potential use of lampposts for positioning re-deployable cameras as these cameras would provide the flexibility to meet local concerns.

Members acknowledged that some residents would be concerned if the cameras were removed in their area. Councillor Colella stated that some of the cameras were located in the wrong place and that this had to be addressed as cameras should be located in the hotspot areas to ensure that Bromsgrove was kept safe for all residents.

Councillor S. Colella concluded by thanking all Members and officers involved in the Task Group.

RESOLVED that the CCTV Short Sharp Review Final Draft Report be noted.

RECOMMENDED that the CCTV Short Sharp Review report and recommendations be submitted to Cabinet for approval:

- (a) That the Council's £40k capital funding be used to match-fund a bid to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for CCTV funding in order to replace the current CCTV transmission infrastructure to a digital network and to purchase and resource the introduction of re-deployable cameras;
- (b) The current camera locations be reviewed in accordance with the Surveillance Camera Commissioners guidance and using data from the Community Safety Partnership, to ensure that they still meet their purpose with cameras to be removed as appropriate; and
- (c) That Officers' have a rolling programme target to replace the existing cameras over a 3 year period, by replacing approximately 20 cameras per year, subject to a capital bid.

46/18

TRANSPORT PLANNING REVIEW - VERBAL UPDATE

The Chairman informed the Board that he had met with the Strategic Planning Manager to discuss the issues highlight by the Board. The Chairman reported that a Sub Group had been set up which comprised himself, and Councillors S. Colella, P. Thomas and S. Webb. Members were advised that this was a single subject meeting to meet key officers to discuss the issues in more detail.

The discussions and outcome of the meeting would be provided in a verbal update at the next meeting of the Board on 29th October, 2018.

RESOLVED that an update in relation to the Transport Planning Review be provided at the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 29th October, 2018.

47/18

FINANCE AND BUDGET WORKING GROUP - VERBAL UPDATE

Members were advised that the next meeting of the Finance and Budget Working Group was scheduled to take place on the 16th October, 2018.

48/18

MEASURES DASHBOARD WORKING GROUP - VERBAL UPDATE

Members noted that the Measure Dashboard Working Group was now called the Corporate Performance Working Group.

Councillor S. Webb informed the Board that the next Corporate Performance Working Group was scheduled to take place on the 18th October, 2018. The Head of Environmental Services had been invited to attend the meeting to provide Members with an update in relation to the Waste Collection Services and highlight the issues raised.

49/18

TASK GROUP UPDATES

At the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 3rd September, 2018, it was proposed that a Task Group be undertaken to look at Paperless meetings. The Senior Democratic Services Officer informed the Board that there was only one Member so far who had been appointed to the Group and a minimum of three Members would be ideal.

Councillor S. Webb suggested that if no other Members were appointed that the Paperless Task Group be incorporated in to the work of the Corporate Performance Working Group. Councillor R. Dent stated that she was happy to be part of the Task Group should it go ahead.

50/18

WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - VERBAL UPDATE

Councillor C. Bloore informed the Board that The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) received a presentation of an overview of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). Members were informed that the current service provided to people with mental health was not fit for purpose. It was identified that patients were waiting up to six months to receive the right help. He further reported that patients were either referred incorrectly or no help of support was provided to them.

Councillor Bloore discussed with Members the ongoing problems in regards to the ambulance services and explained some of the complex issues facing the service. It was understood that the West Midlands Ambulance Service was operating in a difficult environment due to a number of issues. It was believed that ambulances were waiting up to five hours outside the hospital to transfer patients to the care of a clinician in hospital due to staffing and resource issues.

Members acknowledged that some of the response times with in the ambulance services had been inadequate due to various reasons. Councillor Bloore explained that additional ambulances were not being provided and it was recognised that this was serious problem.

Members further commented on the recent report in respect of the Worcestershire County Council funding arrangements. Councillor Bloore agreed to disseminate the presentation in relation to the funding arrangements to Members.

51/18 **CABINET WORK PROGRAMME**

Members were circulated the Cabinet Leader's Work Programme from 1st November, 2018 to 28th February, 2019 for consideration.

Councillor C. Bloore asked for the update in relation to the Homelessness Task and Finish Group. The Senior Democratic Services Officer stated that she would circulate the update of progress to him.

Officers highlighted that a number of items on the Work Programme were already on the Board's Work Programme or would be discussed at meetings of the Finance and Budget Working Group.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Leader's Work Programme from 1st November, 2018 to 28th February, 2019 be noted.

52/18 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Senior Democratic Services Officer presented the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Work Programme for 2018/19.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Work Programme for 2018/19 be noted.

53/18 **IN HOUSE MANAGEMENT OF BROMSGROVE MARKET - VERBAL UPDATE**

Members were informed that the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services was unavailable to attend this meeting, due to illness, to provide Members with an update in respect of the market provision in Bromsgrove.

RESOLVED that the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, the Town Centre and Strategic Partnerships and the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services be invited to the next meeting of the Board on 29th October, 2018.

The meeting closed at 7.38 p.m.

Chairman