

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

3RD DECEMBER 2018, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors L. C. R. Mallett (Chairman), S. A. Webb (Vice-Chairman), R. J. Deeming, M. Glass, C.A. Hotham, P. M. McDonald, P.L. Thomas and M. Thompson

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

68/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

The Chairman welcomed Councillor P. McDonald to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

Members were advised that Councillor C. Bloore was no longer a Member of the Board and the Chairman expressed his gratitude for his contribution and commitment to the Board.

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors C. Allen Jones, S. Colella and R. J. Laight.

69/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS

There were no declarations of interest or whipping arrangements.

70/17 TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 29 OCTOBER 2018

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 29th October, 2018 were submitted for Members' consideration. The Senior Democratic Services Officer (Bromsgrove) provided an update on the following recommendations to Cabinet from the last meeting:

- Transport Planning Report - that the Issues and Options consultation process be suspended pending receipt of further information from Worcestershire County Council in respect of the future plans for the infrastructure for Bromsgrove. The recommendation was rejected by Cabinet.
- Corporate Peer Challenge - that the Constitution Review Working Group carry out a wider review of Council procedures to aid the debating process, with particular focus on supplementary questions. The recommendation was carried at Cabinet and would be on the agenda for the next meeting of that Group, planned for February 2019.

- Development of the Burcot Lane Site – The recommendations were carried, with a slight amendment of the wording in respect of recommendation (b).

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 29th October, 2018 be approved as an accurate record.

71/17

FINANCE AND BUDGET WORKING GROUP - UPDATE

The Chairman provided an update in respect of the Finance and Budget Working Group. The Board was advised that at the last meeting of the Group an update in respect of the Fees and Charges budget was provided from the Head of Planning and Regeneration and from the Executive Director, Finance and Resources in respect of Customer Access and Financial Services.

It was agreed that at the next meeting of the Working Group to be held on 17th December, 2018, an update on the Local Government's Settlement would be considered. It was anticipated that this would be received on 6th December, 2018.

Members were further advised that all Head of Services, Portfolio Holders and Group Leaders had been invited to attend the Working Group meeting to be held on 10th January, 2019 to review the Fees and Charges for their respective areas. Members would also consider reports in respect of any Capital Bids and unidentified savings.

72/17

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE WORKING GROUP - UPDATE

The Board received a report which outlined the findings of the Corporate Performance Working Group in respect of paperless committee meetings. In presenting the report, Councillor S. Webb highlighted that the Group had looked into the use of electronic devices (iPads) in place of printed committee agendas and papers. This had included more extensive use of the modern.gov app to access agendas and reports.

The Board was reminded that in December, 2017, Councillor B. Cooper had proposed that a Scrutiny review be launched in order to look at how to reduce paper generated for Committee meetings. The Overview and Scrutiny Board had subsequently concluded that the review should be undertaken by the Corporate Performance Working Group.

Members discussed the cost of printing and noted that the Council had recently taken out a new contract and therefore comparative data was not currently available. However, the Executive Director, Finance and Resources confirmed that she would speak to the relevant officers and clarify savings which had been made from that contract and potential future savings.

Members acknowledged that the potential advantages of paperless working would reduce printing and postage cost, environmental benefits through reduced use of paper, and savings in officer time spent in printing agendas.

The Modern.Gov software allowed Councillors and officers to access committee agendas and minutes for Bromsgrove District Council committee meetings. Members raised concerns in relation to IT issues and accessing the Wi-Fi at the Council building.

The Senior Democratic Service Officer (Bromsgrove) suggested a presentation be given at a future Board meeting to demonstrate to Members how to access agenda packs on their iPads, using the Modern.Gov software.

Councillor Webb reiterated that training would be offered to Members if requested and clarified that the Group had found their experience of using the app was easier than expected to use.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer (Bromsgrove) clarified that Members and respective officers would also be able to access confidential/exempt agendas and papers when provided with the appropriate log in details.

It was agreed that a trial of paperless meetings be undertaken by Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board. A hard copy of agendas would still be provided to Members that did not wish to go paperless.

It was also agreed that the Executive Director of Finance and Resources would ask the relevant officers to provide a breakdown of the cost of maintaining and supporting Members' use of iPads.

RESOLVED:

- a) that a trial of paperless meetings should be undertaken by Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board;
- b) that the Overview and Scrutiny Board should launch a trial whereby the agenda should be displayed on a screen during the future meetings; and
- c) that the Senior Democratic Service Officer (Bromsgrove) arrange a demonstration to Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board in how to access agenda packs in an electronic form, using the Modern.Gov software on their iPads at a future meeting of the Board.

73/17

TOPIC PROPOSAL - BROMSGROVE SPORTING

At the last meeting of the Board, Members agreed to launch a Task Group to review the work of Bromsgrove Sporting Football Club. Members were reminded that Councillor C. Bloore had put forward the topic proposal.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer (Bromsgrove) advised the Board that as Councillor C. Bloore was no longer a Member of the Board he could not be appointed as Chairman to the Task Group, however, he could still take part in the review if he so wished.

The Chairman asked for expressions of interest from Members to Chair the Task Group. Both Councillors S. Webb and M. Thompson expressed their interest.

The Senior Democratic Service Officer (Bromsgrove) advised Members that the terms of reference would be circulated to Members and nominations sought to take part in the review. It was noted that Councillor Webb showed an interest to be part of the review.

RESOLVED:

- a) that a Task Group be established to review the Bromsgrove Sporting Football Club;
- b) that Councillor M. Thompson be appointed as Chairman of the Task Group; and
- c) that officers make the necessary arrangements to set up the Task Group and its work commence as soon as possible.

74/17

TASK GROUP UPDATES

The Senior Democratic Services Officer (Bromsgrove) advised Members that the Cabinet responses in respect of the CCTV Short Sharp Review and the Road Safety Around Schools Task Group would be submitted at the next Overview and Scrutiny Board on 14th January, 2019 for consideration. With regards to further task groups, it was noted that a Task Group had been established to review the Bromsgrove Sporting Football Club in the previous item of the agenda.

75/17

WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - UPDATE

Councillor C. Bloore had provided a written update of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee which was tabled at the meeting.

(The meeting was adjourned at 6:27 pm and resumed at 6:29 pm in order for Members to read the update provided).

Members raised a number of concerns, including pregnant women having to be transported to the Worcester Hospital in taxis; as the Maternity Ward in Redditch was no longer in operation and the shortage of ambulance vehicles which impacted on patients being transported to and from Bromsgrove to Worcestershire Hospital.

Notwithstanding the concerns raised, the Chairman requested that Councillor Bloore be invited to the next meeting of the Board in January 2019, to provide a more detailed update in respect of the information provided and to address the points raised.

RESOLVED that Councillor C. Bloore be invited to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 14th January, 2019 in order to provide Members with an update in respect of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

76/17

CABINET WORK PROGRAMME - TABLED AT THE MEETING

Members considered the Cabinet Leader's Work Programme from 1st January to 30th April, 2019. It was noted that the Finance and Budget Working Group would consider all items related to finance.

The following items were agreed to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Board:

- Homelessness Grant and Flexible Support Grant 2019/20 to be considered at the Board on 14th January, 2019;
- Pay Policy Statement.

RESOLVED:

- a) that the Cabinet Leader's Work Programme from 1st January to 30th April, 2019 be noted; and
- b) that the Overview and Scrutiny Board's work programme be amended subject to the pre-amble above.

77/17

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

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

Members were advised that at the last Council meeting, Members considered the following the Notice of Motion, in respect of Business Rates Relief, put forward by Councillor M. Thompson:

"In 2017 the chancellor committed a £435 million business rate relief package intended on helping high street businesses. The communities secretary at the time, Sajid Javid, promised "absolutely no delay" in allocating and using the money. However, a table of "worst offending councils" shows that Bromsgrove District Council failed to spend almost 70% of their grant. Council notes this waste of central government funding and will set up a cross party investigation into how this was allowed to happen.

During the debate that had followed Councillor S. Baxter had proposed an amendment to the Motion, as detailed below:

“Council notes this waste of central government funding and will refer this matter to the Overview and Scrutiny Board to investigate how this was allowed to happen.”

On being put to the vote the Motion had been carried and the matter referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for further consideration.

The Board discussed the Notice of Motion and agreed that a Short Sharp Review would be established to review the Business Rates Relief. Members also agreed that as Councillor Thompson had put forward the Notice of Motion then he should be appointed as the Chairman of the review.

The Senior Democratic Service Officer (Bromsgrove) advised Members that as there were a number of Members absent from the meeting, that she would email Board Members to canvass any interest in joining this Review.

Councillor P. McDonald asked to be considered for the Group and it was also noted that Councillor S. Colella had expressed an interest in the subject. Councillor C. Hotham requested to be considered as a reserve. The Senior Democratic Services Officer (Bromsgrove) advised that an ideal number for any such review would usually be 4 to 5 Members and that should there be greater interest in the matter then the matter would be referred to the Chairman of the Board or brought back to the next Board meeting for further discussion.

The Board was also advised that Councillor Glass had contacted the Climate Change and Energy Support Officer in respect of an item; this had subsequently been referred to the Technical Services Manager at Worcestershire Regulatory Services. The Technical Services Manager had discussed this with Councillor P. Whittaker, the relevant Portfolio Holder and he had suggested that a report in relation to the Clean Air Fund be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

This report would cover how the Worcester City Task and Finish Group (on Air Quality) worked and present the options available to Bromsgrove District Council to review measures to improve air quality.

Following discussion, the Board agreed that it would be useful to receive a presentation in respect of Clean Air Fund at the meeting held on 11th February, 2019. In addition, Members also requested information to be provided in respect of speed restrictions and the impact on air pollution and low emission zone.

**CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD
HELD ON 29 OCTOBER 2018**

RESOLVED that the confidential minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 29th October, 2018 be approved as an accurate record.

(During consideration of this item Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed relating to financial and business affairs. However, there is nothing exempt in this record of the proceedings.)

The meeting closed at 7.00 p.m.

Chairman