

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

14TH JANUARY 2019, AT 6.00 P.M.

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

Observers: Councillor C. J. Bloore and Councillor C. B. Taylor

Officers: Mr. D. Allen, Ms F. Mughal, Ms. J. Pickering, Ms. D. Poole, Ms. A. Scarce and Mrs B. Talbot

79/18

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors C. Allen-Jones and M. Thompson.

Members were advised that due to prior commitments Councillor S. Colella would need to leave the meeting at 6:30 pm and Councillor P.L. Thomas at 7:00 pm.

80/18

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS

There were no declarations of interest or whipping arrangements.

81/18

MINUTES

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 3rd December, 2018 were submitted for Members' consideration. The Senior Democratic Services Officer (Bromsgrove) advised the Board that in relation to Minute No. 72/18 regarding the demonstration to Members in accessing agenda packs using Modern.Gov, this would be deferred to a future meeting.

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

82/18

HOMELESSNESS GRANT AND FLEXIBLE SUPPORT GRANT 2019/20 - PRE-SCRUTINY

The report sought approval for the programme of grant funding to organisations providing homelessness prevention services for 2019/20.

The Housing Strategy Manager introduced the report which set out how it was proposed that the homelessness resources would be funded. The report referred to the programme of grant funding to organisations providing homelessness prevention services for Bromsgrove. In addition to the Homelessness Grant there were additional resources which had been made available to the Council and the report set out the background to those additional grants together with details of how it was proposed they would be used. As BDHT was the Council's recognised provider for this service the funds would be transferred to them in order for them to deal with matters effectively on the Council's behalf.

It was noted that the Council received an annual homelessness grant and an additional two grants for 2019/20 as follows:

Homelessness Grant	£112,010
Flexible Homelessness Support Grant	£83,012
Homelessness Reduction Act New Burdens Funding	£18,035

Members asked for details in respect of the current number of rough sleepers in the District. It was noted that according to the latest figures collected in 2018, there were zero people estimated to be sleeping rough on a particular date. The Housing Strategy Manager explained how the data was collected and the methodologies used to collate the rough sleeping statistics. The data captured was a snapshot provided by partner agencies and was not a physical count of rough sleepers.

Nonetheless, it was accepted that if the data was gathered on a different night the figure might be different. Members raised concern that, as the data was not done by a physical count it was not a true reflection of rough sleepers in the District. Members proposed that it would be prudent for the Council to do a physical count of the number of people sleeping rough in the District in order to get accurate data.

In respect of the grant funding received, it was clarified that this was not based on the number of people sleeping rough in the District, but was a figure set each year. It was explained that it was difficult to find a suitable way to calculate the funding for each authority, as if it was calculated on the number of rough sleepers then it could be viewed as providing funding to authorities that were not addressing the matter and those that had invested in preventative work were being penalised.

It was clarified that the grant in respect of the Basement Drop in Service was £35,000. Members noted that this was an increase of £15k from the previous year. The Basement Drop in Service provided support to young people at risk of homelessness and it was important that the funding was provided to them by the Council in order to tackle homelessness for young people up to the age of 25.

Members sought clarification in respect of the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and how it improved employment opportunities through the New Starts project and asked for details of the number of young people that had been helped, together with a breakdown of categories. Officers agreed to provide this information outside of the meeting.

The Housing Strategy Manager confirmed that currently there continued to be temporary accommodation for the homeless at the Hostel on the Burcot Lane Site. BDHT provided most of the accommodation and would be potentially looking to provide 36 units in total, as had been discussed at a previous meeting, when the Burcot Lane Site was redeveloped.

RESOLVED that the Homelessness Grant and Flexible Support Grant 2019/20 be noted.

RECOMMENDED that the Council carry out a physical count of the number of people sleeping rough in the area in order to get a record.

83/18

A JOINT PAY SCALE REPORT - PRE-SCRUTINY

The Human Resources and Development Manager introduced the Joint Pay Scale report which set out a two year pay award for Bromsgrove District Council agreed nationally to cover 2018/19 and 2019/20. As part of this agreement there was the introduction of a new pay spine model that would take affect from April 2019.

Implementation of the revised Joint Pay Scale would be subject to formal consultation with the Trade Unions with a view to reaching a Collective Agreement to a joint pay model across both Councils in line with the revised National Pay.

The key changes were highlighted as follows:

- With effect from April 2019, scp 1 would be paid at £9.00 per hour.
- 227 employees would see an immediate pay increase.
- 217 employees would see additional headroom progression.
- 18 employees would see a smaller than expected increase and no employees would be negatively affected.
- Whilst no employees would be negatively affected, some employees would not see the financial gain they had expected in April 2019.

Following presentation of the report Members discussed a number of areas in more detail, this included:

- The Pay model used for the high grade posts - An explanation was provided in respect of the Council's pay and grading structure and the increase for grades as agreed by the National

- Joint Council (NJC).
- The top salary for the new spinal point 43 – this was confirmed at £45,591.

In respect of the fourth tier and above roles, the Executive Director of Finance and Resources stated that the Pay Policy, which would include full details of this, would be presented to Cabinet in February, 2019 for consideration and if the Board so wished it would have the opportunity to pre-scrutinise this document at its next meeting.

RESOLVED that the Joint Pay Policy report be noted.

84/18

TRANSPORT PLANNING REVIEW REPORT - VERBAL UPDATE

The Chairman advised that, as discussed at the previous Board meeting, he, together with Councillors S. Colella, P. Thomas and S. Webb and the Strategic Planning Manager, had met with key officers from Worcestershire County Council's (WCC) Highways Team to discuss the ongoing and historic issues in respect of highways in Bromsgrove.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer (Bromsgrove) informed Members that a draft report had been produced; however, there were a number of areas which needed further work to ensure it gave a true picture of the historic and current position. It was anticipated that the draft report would be submitted to the Board for Members consideration at the February or March meeting at the latest.

85/18

CABINET RESPONSE TO THE ROAD SAFETY AROUND SCHOOLS TASK GROUP REPORT

The Board received an update in respect of the Road Safety Around Schools Task Group. It was noted that the Task Group's recommendations had been agreed by Cabinet.

Members were advised that the relevant officers had been notified of the recommendations and actions were now being implemented. The progress of the recommendations would be monitored and updated on the recommendation tracker.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet response to the Road Safety Around Schools Task Group final report be noted.

86/18

CABINET RESPONSE TO THE CCTV SHORT SHARP REVIEW

The Board received an update in respect of the CCTV Short Sharp Review. It was noted that the review's recommendations had been agreed by Cabinet.

Members were advised that the relevant officers had been notified of the recommendations and actions were now being implemented. The progress of the recommendations would be monitored and updated on the recommendation tracker.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet response to the CCTV Short Sharp Review final report be noted.

87/18

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD RECOMMENDATION TRACKER

The Senior Democratic Service Officer (Bromsgrove) highlighted a number of recommendations that had been completed and suggested that these should now be removed from the Recommendation Tracker.

An update was provided in respect of the outstanding recommendations for the Evening and Weekend Car Parking Task Group. Members were informed that, following Cabinet's approval of the recommendations made by 2020 Consultancy, Officers were putting together tender documentation to engage a consultant who would produce a detailed business plan, including expected costs and realistic timescales for Members approval, taking into account the outline details provided by 2020 Consultancy within their initial study. Officers were also making contact with other authorities who had undertaken similar projects for advice and guidance.

There were a number of financial recommendations which had also been completed and any outstanding actions would be addressed by the Executive Director, Finance and Resources.

RESOLVED that the recommendation tracker be updated as detailed in the pre-amble above.

88/18

FINANCE AND BUDGET WORKING GROUP - UPDATE

The Chairman provided an update in respect of the Finance and Budget Working Group, at its most recent meeting it had met with the Heads of Service and relevant Portfolio Holders to discuss in detail the fees and charges for 2019/20 and considered the Medium Term Financial Plan. A number of areas within the Plan had been discussed including the bids, savings and capital programme. The Working Group had put forward a number of recommendations which it would like Cabinet to consider in more detail. These were tabled at the meeting for the Board's information and attached as an appendix to the minutes.

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on 6th February, 2019.

89/18

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE WORKING GROUP - UPDATE

Members noted that the next meeting of the Corporate Performance Working Group would be arranged in due course.

90/18

TASK GROUP UPDATES

Members were informed that the Business Rates Relief Short Sharp Review, which was chaired by Councillor M. Thompson, had met twice and Members had agreed a work programme going forward, having identified a number of witnesses to interview.

In respect of the Bromsgrove Sporting Task Group, membership was agreed as follows; Councillor M Thompson (Chairman) Councillors C. A. Hotham, R. Jenkins, R. J. Laight and S. Webb.

91/18

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD TOPIC PROPOSAL - PLANNING DEPARTMENT

The Board considered a proposal that had been received from Councillor P. McDonald for a scrutiny review in respect of the Council Planning Department and to look in particular at processes and breaches of Planning Policy and Regulations. Members were asked to consider whether this would be a suitable topic for further scrutiny.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer (Bromsgrove) informed the Board that this was a subject which had been investigated on a number of occasions. It was suggested that Members may wish to consider inviting the relevant Head of Service to the next meeting of the Board to discuss the planning and enforcement process. Members agreed that it would be helpful to receive further information on the subject. It was, therefore, concluded that the Head of Planning and Regeneration be invited to attend a future meeting of the Board before making a decision as to whether the matter should be investigated further.

RESOLVED that the Head of Planning and Regeneration be invited to attend a future meeting of the Board to discuss the Planning and Enforcement process.

92/18

WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - UPDATE

At the last meeting of the Board, Members requested that Councillor C. Bloore be invited to the meeting to provide a more detailed update in respect of the issues at Worcester Royal Hospital.

Councillor Bloore provided a verbal update and highlighted the ongoing problems at the Hospital:

- There was an all year round pressure on urgent care.
- The quality of Acute Hospital Services in Worcester was getting worse, patients were being transported in taxis and the Fire Services were also transporting patients due to the pressure on Ambulance Services.
- Waiting times were increasing.
- It appeared that the HOSC did not scrutinise particular areas or take any actions in relation to the ongoing problems, but merely received updates in respect of various health services.

Councillor Bloore further advised that any patients with significant concerns would not be left waiting either in corridors or in ambulances, but would be seen straight away. Members acknowledged the issues raised and recognised that this needed to be addressed.

The role of the HOSC was discussed in detail and what, if any, were its terms of reference and its role. It was acknowledged that following the introduction of the CCGs and the Health and Wellbeing Board it appeared that its powers had become diluted.

Members suggested that it would be helpful to receive further information on the subject. It was, therefore, concluded that the Chairman of Worcestershire Health and Scrutiny Committee attend a future meeting of the Board to discuss the issues raised.

RESOLVED that the Chairman of Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee be invited to attend a future meeting of the Board to discuss the issues raised by Members and the role of the HOSC.

93/18

CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the Cabinet Leader's Work Programme from 1st February to 31st May, 2019. The following items were agreed to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Board:

- Investment and Acquisition Strategy Update Report
- Bromsgrove Enterprise Park – Build Out
- Council Tax Support Scheme Review – Final Recommendations
- Pay Policy Statement

- 3 x Business Cases – Domestic Waste Collection, Commercial Services, investment for future growth and Place Team Resources.

It was noted that a number of Finance items on the Work Programme would be considered by the Finance and Budget Working Group at its future meetings.

RESOLVED:

- a) that the Cabinet Leader's Work Programme from 1st February to 31st May, 2019 be noted; and
- b) that the Overview and Scrutiny Board's work programme be amended subject to the pre-amble above.

94/18

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

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

It was noted that the Bromsgrove Market (Six Month Update) would be considered at the Board's meeting in March 2019, and the work programme would be updated accordingly.

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

95/18

CONFIDENTIAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD MINUTES 3RD DECEMBER 2018

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

The meeting closed at 7.15 p.m.

Chairman

Finance and Budget Working Group

Fees and Charges – Meeting 10th January 2019

The Finance and Budget Working Group met with the Heads of Service and relevant Portfolio Holders and discussed in detail the fees and charges for 2019/20. The Working Group put forward a number of recommendations which they would like Cabinet to consider in more detail, these were:

New and Existing Properties

Street naming and numbering – it was noted that the charge for this service should not exceed the cost of providing it to include any share of overhead cost

Recommended:

Officers look at the cost of providing this service and what a reasonable charge would be for it, with a view to doubling this charge if possible.

Private Sector Housing

Strategic Housing – Members discussed the charges at length and proposed that no increase would be made and a comment be made to ensure residents were aware of the financial support that can be made to provide funding for those in crisis.

Housing Fitness Inspections – It was noted that this was a one off payments every three years.

Recommended:

This be increased to £150 per inspection.

Environmental Services

Cemetery charges – particularly in respect of child burials.

It was suggested that the words free of charge be replaced with “no charge”.

Mechanically Sweep Private Road/Car Park – Mini Sweeper per hour

Recommended:

That a charge for travel time be included, in addition to the use of the sweeper and that this be included in the charge

Medium Term Financial Plan

Members also considered the Medium Term Financial Plan and discussed a number of areas including Bids, Savings and the Capital Programme. The following recommendation was made:

Recommended:

An ambition to make clear identified savings in the coming years.