

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL
MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

10TH FEBRUARY 2020, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors M. Thompson (Chairman), S. R. Colella, R. J. Deeming, M. Glass, R. J. Hunter, A. D. Kriss, P. M. McDonald, M. Middleton (Substitute), C. J. Spencer and P. J. Whittaker (Substitute)

Observers: Councillor K. J. May and Councillor G. N. Denaro

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Ms. A. Scarce and Mrs. J Gresham

82/19 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Beaumont, C. Hotham and J. Till. Councillor M. Middleton was present as substituted for Councillor Beaumont and Councillor P. Whittaker attended as substitute for Councillor Till.

82/19 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Beaumont, C. Hotham and J. Till. Councillor M. Middleton was present as substituted for Councillor Beaumont and Councillor P. Whittaker attended as substitute for Councillor Till.

83/19 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

84/19 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 13th January 2020 were considered.

Councillor P. McDonald advised that he had not received the information requested on page 3 of the minutes, Minute No. 72/19 in respect of the Redditch Basement Project and officers confirmed that this would be followed up.

Reference was made to the Market Hall site Meanwhile Use, Minute No. 74/19. It was acknowledged that additional information had come to light at the Cabinet meeting on 15th January, but that for the purpose of these minutes the information as stated was correct.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 13th January 2020 be approved as a true record.

85/19

BROMSGROVE SPORTING TASK GROUP - FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a representative from Bromsgrove Sporting was present at the meeting, the Chairman agreed to bring this item forward on the agenda.

The Chairman introduced the draft report (included in the supplementary agenda pack) and drew Members attention to the summary of recommendations on page 10 of the agenda pack. It was noted that the original topic proposal had been put forward by former Councillor Chris Bloore and had considered evidence from a number of witnesses.

A typographical error on page 13 (page 6 of the report) was highlighted, which officers confirmed would be corrected prior to the report being considered at Cabinet. Officers also confirmed that further details in respect of financial implications and resource implications would be included.

Mr. P. Baker from Bromsgrove Sporting was asked whether he had anything to add and he confirmed that he did not.

RECOMMENDED that the report and recommendations as detailed in it be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 1st April 2020.

86/19

STAFF SURVEY UPDATE

The Head of Transformation and Organisational Development together with the Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager provided Members with an update in respect of the staff survey and actions arising from it.

This included:

- The Staff Survey had been delayed until summer 2020 in order to incorporate the culture change programme that was being undertaken by the organisation.

- Workshops were being arranged in order to engage more closely with staff.
- A stress risk assessment would be introduced prior to Easter 2020.

The Chairman invited the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling to comment on the presentation and he thanked the officers for their update and stated that although there had been a delay in co-ordinating the next staff survey the delay was for the right reasons and would enable the culture change programme to embed in to the Council.

Following presentation of the briefing paper Members discussed a number of areas and officers responded to questions raised. Particular reference was made to sickness absence and the retention of staff. Members were advised that sickness absence was recorded on the Corporate Dashboard and Members were provided with the latest figures. However, it was explained that a more holistic view was taken in respect of how staff were feeling and that simply providing the sickness figures did not necessarily give the full picture.

Reference was made to the original survey and how it had been tailored to the needs of the Council with a bespoke methodology and it was questioned whether the same questions would be used again in order to see any trends that may be arising and improvements that were being made. It was confirmed that this would be the case and it was hoped that the results of the next survey would be available, following analysis, in October 2020.

There had been a Task Group set up, which had been a joint piece of work with Redditch Borough Council, which had looked at the staff survey and it was noted that one of the recommendations had been in respect of the appointment of a Staff Champion, at that time this had been Councillor Colella. Councillor Colella gave a brief overview of how this role had originally worked, but he advised that he had had no involvement in more recent months. Following discussion it was agreed that this role should be re-instated.

Officers suggested that as a number of Members were new to the Council and the Board, that at a future meeting the Board receive a presentation of the Corporate Dashboard and how to access this on iPads. It was noted that the Corporate Dashboard was used by the Corporate Performance Working Group and therefore would be useful should that Working Group recommence its work.

RESOLVED that

- a) the Update in respect of the Staff Survey be noted;
- b) the role of a Member as a Staff Champion be revisited; and
- c) Officers include in the Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme and item in respect of a demonstration on the content and workings of the Corporate Dashboard.

87/19

FINANCE AND BUDGET WORKING GROUP - UPDATE

Councillor M. Thompson, Chairman of the Finance and Budget Working Group, explained that at its most recent meeting, when the Working Group had considered the Medium Term Financial Plan, the Executive Director Finance and Resources had discussed the allocation of funds to Worcestershire County Council (WCC) in respect of support for local libraries. The Working Group had put forward a recommendation (which was tabled at this meeting) but the matter was felt to be of such importance that the Leader and Executive Director, Finance and Resources, had been asked to attend this evening's meeting to provide further information on this proposal.

The Leader explained that discussions had taken place regarding the libraries and the part they play in our District in particular with at risk and vulnerable residents. The piece of work currently being proposed was part of a bigger piece of work and would provide connectivity between rural and urban centres.

The Executive Director, Finance and Resources went on to give a short presentation (attached at appendix 1) which set out more detail around the proposals. It was also agreed that the slides would be provide for Members outside of the meeting.

Following the presentation Members discussed a number of areas in more detail including:

- That this was an interesting project that could aid the autism, dementia services in the District and also reduce anti-social behaviour.
- Where the extra services would be sourced from? Currently there was a lack of resources and so why would this be any different going forward?
- The schedule of payments for the £50k needed to be very carefully monitored.

In light of the information provided, Members were in agreement that the recommendation from the Finance and Budget Working Group should be withdrawn.

A recommendation was put forward by Councillor P. McDonald and seconded by Councillor S. Colella that the Libraries Review Task Group should monitor how the funds from the Council were being spent by WCC to ensure that it was appropriate and to the benefit of the district. On being put to the vote this recommendation was lost. However, the Executive Director, Finance and Resources assured Members that this would be monitored through the Quarterly Finance Monitoring Report, which was considered by both the Working Group and Cabinet.

RESOLVED that the presentation and its content be noted.

88/19

LIBRARIES TASK GROUP - MEMBERSHIP

Councillor S. Colella, the appointed Chairman of the Libraries Review Task Group advised that following the presentation it was clear that the task group's role would be an important one moving forward and he would welcome the attendance of the Leader at a meeting to explain in more detail the plans and progress that had been made in the development of the proposals. Members also suggested that as part of the task group's work programme it would be useful if the Programme Manager from Worcestershire County Council could attend their meeting to discuss the proposal. This was agreed and officers agreed to contact the Programme Manager in order that she could attend a future task group meeting.

Officers explained to the Board the process for seeking interest in task group membership. An email had been sent to all Members with the exception of those on the Cabinet, inviting them to join the task group. Whilst there were no hard and fast rules in respect of the numbers of Members who could be on a task group, it was usually restricted to 5 or 6 as it was much easier to set up meetings with a smaller number. However, it was at the discretion of the Board and if it wished to increase this then it was in its gift to do so. Councillor M. Middleton (who was substituting for Councillor Beaumont) asked if she could be considered, she had not put forward her name as she had missed the email sent round.

Following discussions it was agreed that Councillor Middleton be included in the Membership and a quorum of 4 be set for each meeting, in order to aid officers in setting up meetings going forward.

RESOLVED that

- a) the terms of reference of the Libraries Task Group be agreed;
- b) the membership of the Libraries Task Group be agreed as being Councillors S. Colella (Chairman) A. Kriss, P. McDonald, H. Rone-Clarke, J. King, S. Douglas and M. Middleton;
- c) on this occasion a quorum of 4 be set for any meeting of the Libraries Task Group;
- d) the Task Group report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Board with its findings in six months time; and
- e) the Task Group commences its work as soon as possible.

89/19

TASK GROUP UPDATES

These had been covered under other items on the agenda.

90/19

TOPIC PROPOSALS

In line with discussions at the previous meeting, Councillor R. Hunter had submitted a topic proposal in respect of a Review of Services to Prevent Flooding. The Chairman invited Councillor Hunter to present his topic proposal and in so doing he explained that due to the recent flooding in the District residents had become increasingly concerned. Councillor R. Hunter showed a particular interest in the maintenance of culverts.

It was noted that Councillors S. Colella and C. Spencer showed an interest in joining the Task Group.

RESOLVED that

- a) a Task Group be established and Officers canvass interest from Members to join It and report back to the March meeting of the Board; and
- b) Councillor R. Hunter be appointed as Chairman of the Review of Services to Prevent Flooding Task Group.

91/19

WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - UPDATE

It was confirmed that Councillor J. Till, the Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) had attended the most recent meeting and that there had been a

presentation and discussions around the Acute Hospitals Trust. Officers agreed to provide Members with copies of the relevant minutes when these were available.

92/19

CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The most recent Cabinet Work Programme had been provided in the supplementary agenda pack. Officers confirmed that all the items on this had already been incorporated within the Board's work programme.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Work Programme

93/19

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

Officers advised Members that the Work Programme had been updated in line with the discussions at the previous meeting and would further be updated to take account of the Outstanding Actions Update which had been included within the agenda pack.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme be noted.

94/19

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OUTSTANDING ACTION UPDATE

Officers advised that following the last meeting of the Board they had revisited the minutes from previous meetings to ensure that any actions had been picked up. Members could see from the table attached that there were a number of items outstanding and it was confirmed that these would be incorporated within the Board's Work Programme over the coming months. It was noted that this included the items which had been referred to specifically at the previous meeting.

RESOLVED that the Outstanding Actions Update be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.17 p.m.

Chairman