

BROMSGROVEDISTRICTCOUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

2ND JUNE 2020. AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors M. Thompson (Chairman), J. Till (Vice-Chairman),
A. J. B. Beaumont, C.A. Hotham, R. J. Hunter, A. D. Kriss,
P. M. McDonald and C. J. Spencer

Observers: Councillor K. May and Councillor G. Denaro

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Mr D Riley, Ms. A. Scarce, Mr P. Bailey and
J Gresham

5/20

REMOTE MEETING PROTOCOL & VIRTUAL MEETINGS

The Senior Democratic Services Officer introduced the Remote Meeting Protocol to the Board and highlighted the following areas:

- It was vital that attendance at the meeting was made in good time in order to check IT.
- External attendees and presenters were still able to attend and participate in the meeting.
- Etiquette during the meeting including surroundings, other electronic devices and dress code.
- Voting protocols including roll calls, seconders and proposers.
- What to do if technical issues arose.

The Senior Democratic Officer clarified to Members the process that was undertaken in order to get the virtual meetings up and running. It was explained that the Democratic Services team had watched other Councils and understood the possible pitfalls and adopted a protocol that hopefully addressed these prior to commencing virtual meetings.

Members queried some of the processes and officers explained that the reason 'mock' meetings had been carried out was to understand the functionality of Skype prior to the live virtual meetings. It was also explained to Members that there would always be at least two members of the Democratic Services team in attendance – one to facilitate the meeting and one to ensure smooth running of the technical issues and participants.

Councillor S. Baxter expressed that the Planning meeting she had attended on the previous evening had gone very well. This had also been expressed by one of the public speakers who had also been in attendance. She stated that the Remote Meeting Protocol that had been produced was really good and queried if there was a planned review in the future in order to reflect the inevitable changes to future meetings. The Senior Democratic Officer confirmed that the protocol would be regularly reviewed and that it would be put on the Board Work Programme for discussion in three months' time. Councillor Baxter also stated that it was very apparent the amount of work that Democratic Services had done in the background for the Planning meeting, in particular the testing of Skype with Members and the managing of technical issues which had arisen on the night.

The Chairman commented on the possibilities that conducting meetings in a virtual setting could open up and that it would allow greater accessibility for residents to Council meetings. He also expressed that this would be a good opportunity to publicise meetings. The Senior Democratic Officer said that she would be very happy to contact the Communications Team in order to initiate a piece of work promoting the work of Democratic Services and public Council meetings.

Councillor. R. Hunter commented that it would be a really positive outcome of the pandemic that the Council meetings would become more accessible going forward. A representative from IT Services stated that pre-Lockdown devices were installed in some Committee Rooms in order to start the streaming of meetings via YouTube in the future. The current situation had therefore brought this matter to the forefront and it was hoped that this would continue when Members returned to holding meetings at Parkside.

RESOLVED that the Remote Meeting Protocol be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.28 p.m.

Chairman