

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

12TH OCTOBER 2020, AT 6.00 P.M.

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

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

Officers: Mr K. Dicks, Ms. D. Poole, Ms. A. Scarce and Mrs. J. Gresham

36/20

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies of absence were received from Councillor S. Colella with Councillor S. Douglas as named substitute.

37/20

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS

There were no declarations of interest nor of any whipping arrangements.

38/20

TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 6TH AUGUST 2020

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 6th August 2020 were submitted for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 6th August 2020 be approved as an accurate record.

39/20

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL RECOVERY AND RESTORATION PLAN

The Head of Business Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Strategy presented the report in respect of the Bromsgrove District Council Recovery and Restoration Plan and in doing so explained that this plan had been formulated in response to the Covid-19

pandemic and associated lockdown. It was highlighted that local and national economies had been affected by the pandemic and that this plan was part of a County-wide recovery plan. The Head of Business Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Strategy reported to Members that the Recovery and Restoration Plan was based around the Bromsgrove District Council Plan and its five Strategic Purposes. Officers had resolved to undertake a refresh of the Council Plan in early 2021 in order to ensure that it was still relevant in a post-Covid world. Members were pleased to note that the Council Plan refresh was in the pipeline.

The Chairman invited Councillor K. May, who was in attendance in her role as Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, the Town Centre and Strategic Partnerships to comment on the proposed Plan. She thanked officers for putting together such a comprehensive report in such a short amount of time.

In respect of the Regeneration of the Town Centre, some Members questioned if it was necessary to engage external consultants rather than utilise the resources that were already available to the Council. Councillor May explained that the consultants would be involved in the preparation of the Bromsgrove Town Centre 2040 vision, which had been considered by the Board at a previous meeting in January 2020. The consultants were to be engaged in order to provide advice on a much bigger piece of work, which was a huge opportunity for the District.

There was further discussion around the Burcott Lane Development and also the importance of engagement with park home residents. Kevin Dicks, Chief Executive undertook to ask officers for further details on those areas and circulate to Members of the Board.

It was acknowledged by Members that all high streets going forward faced challenges and an innovative approach to investment was therefore required. The Bird Box was highlighted as a recent success in this area and it was noted that feedback received from residents about this project had been positive. Whilst it was acknowledged that this was set up as a temporary project, Councillor May assured Members that all options would be considered as part of the future plans.

Following discussion of the Bromsgrove District Council Recovery and Restoration Plan, the Chief Executive introduced the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge Follow-Up document which had been delayed due to the pandemic. The feedback document provided an update on the findings that were made during the peer review and

showed that the Council had made good progress on most of the recommendations. It also laid out further recommendations that would be considered by Cabinet on 14th October 2020.

RESOLVED that the Recovery and Restoration Plan and the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge Follow-Up Report be noted.

40/20

REVIEW OF REMOTE MEETING PROTOCOL

The Senior Democratic Services Officer presented the Review of Remote Meeting Protocol. This update had been requested by Members following its consideration at the Board meeting that took place on 2nd June 2020. Members were asked for their comment on the protocol. For the most part Members were happy with the protocol and they hoped that the new IT equipment would enable easier access to their Outlook calendars and in particular the Skype for Business invites.

It was accepted that virtual meetings had been a learning curve for all involved and that Members must be mindful not to be complacent when participating in them and it was suggested that it would be useful for all Members to review the protocol.

RESOLVED that the update of the Remote Meeting Protocol be noted.

41/20

FINANCE AND BUDGET WORKING GROUP - UPDATE

The Chairman introduced the Finance and Budget Working Group update in his role as Chairman of the Group. He explained that the Working Group had met twice since the last Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 6th August.

At the meeting of 24th August 2020, a work programme had been planned for the year ahead. The Group also looked closely at the Revenue Monitoring Outturn report for 2019/20 and more detail had been requested in respect of a number of areas, including the savings which had been made. The Working Group also looked at the Financial Impact - Covid-19 Pandemic report which had been considered by Cabinet on 8th July 2020 and agreed to continue to review the impact of Covid-19 and associated lockdown on the finances and services of this Council.

At the meeting of 8th September 2020, the Working Group looked at the draft Council Tax Support Scheme and considered by Cabinet on 9th

September 2020. A number of Members from the main Overview and Scrutiny Board were present and it was agreed that when the consultation process had been completed and prior to it being reconsidered by Cabinet in January 2021, the Overview and Scrutiny Board would pre-scrutinise the Council Tax Support Scheme once again. The detailed breakdown for the Revenue Monitoring Outturn was presented at this meeting and discussed in some detail. The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling was present at both meetings in order to present the views of the Working Group to the Cabinet meetings.

RESOLVED that the Finance and Budget Working Group update be noted.

42/20

TASK GROUP UPDATES

Equalities Task Group – Chairman, Councillor P. McDonald

Councillor P. McDonald in his capacity as Chairman of the Equalities Task Group updated the Board with particular focus on the Terms of Reference of the group. He reported that the name of the task group had been changed from Identifying and Addressing Racial Disparities within BDC Operations Task Group to the Equalities Task Group in order to include all areas across Bromsgrove District Council that were covered by the Equalities Act 2010. Councillor McDonald also explained that the meetings would take place at 6pm and the group had agreed that if any Members missed two meetings they would be removed from the Group. It was hoped that this would encourage a consistent approach for the Task Group. The group met every two weeks and had interviewed senior officers in regard to Human Resources and Transformation. It was hoped that the Task Group would be finished within a reasonable and appropriate time frame.

Impact of Review of Library Services Task Group – Chairman, Councillor S. Colella

The Democratic Services Officer updated the Board in respect of the Impact of Review of Library Services Task Group and in doing so highlighted to Members that the group had met once since the last meeting of the Board.

Impact of Flooding in the District Task Group – Chairman, Councillor R. Hunter

Councillor R. Hunter, in his capacity of Chairman on the Impact of Flooding in the District Task Group informed the Board that the group had met three times. During these meetings they had interviewed officers from Bromsgrove District Council and North Worcestershire Water Management. The group were now looking to interview officers from the wider partners including Worcestershire County Council Highways and Severn Trent. The Chairman of the Task Group reported good progress had been made and that work towards the recommendations were underway.

RESOLVED that the verbal updates in respect of the Task Groups be noted.

43/20

WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - UPDATE

Councillor J. Till presented the update from the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) and in doing so highlighted that the last meeting of the Committee had taken place on 30th September 2020. She explained that there had been speakers from the following organisations:

- Healthcare Trust
- Herefordshire and Worcestershire CCGs and NHS Trusts
- Healthwatch
- Public Health England

The organisations provided updates on each of their services and of the success of Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust exiting special measures. Councillor Till added that there had been a request that anyone wanting to attend the Minor Injuries Unit (MIU) that a call be made to 111 prior to attendance.

Councillor Till undertook to circulate to the Board any information or minutes received.

RESOLVED that the verbal update in respect of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

44/20

CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Senior Democratic Services Officer presented the Cabinet Work Programme. She highlighted that a number of items had already been picked up including the following:

- District Level Economic Recovery Framework (November meeting)
- Domestic Abuse Policy (November meeting)
- Fees and Charges - this item was to be included in the Finance and Budget Working Group work programme and would be brought to the main Overview and Scrutiny Board if there was anything that needed to be further scrutinised.

Councillor C. Hotham raised with the Board that he wished to see an item placed on the Board's Work Programme for the next meeting regarding the decision for the Alvechurch Mop to take place on the previous weekend. He questioned whether there was an opportunity to receive a report from officers regarding the decision-making and risk-assessment process undertaken that allowed the event to take place.

The Chairman queried with the Senior Democratic Services Officer whether this was an area that could be scrutinised by the Board and it was agreed that, if Members were in agreement that the Senior Democratic Services Officer would undertake to making enquiries as to whether this would be possible.

Councillor R. Hunter also requested assurance that the Safer Roads Partnership would be in attendance in the January 2021 meeting.

Councillor A. Kriss was pleased that the CCTV item was due to be scrutinised by the Board and enquired whether a visit to the Monitoring Centre would be possible once the lockdown had been lifted. It was confirmed that this had happened previously and would be available again at an appropriate time. He also questioned whether it would be possible to look at the Fair that took place on the Recreation Ground. After a short debate it was agreed that this and the Alvechurch Mop item could be part of a wider item rather than looking at specific events.

RESOLVED that subject to the preamble above the Cabinet Work Programme be noted and that the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Work Programme for 2020-21, be updated to include the items discussed and agreed during the course of the meeting.

45/20

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

This item was discussed as part of the previous item.

Overview and Scrutiny Board
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The meeting closed at 6.58 p.m.

Chairman

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