

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW BOARD

TUESDAY, 3RD MARCH 2009 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors P. M. McDonald (Chairman), L. J. Turner (Vice-Chairman), Mrs. M. Bunker, Miss D. H. Campbell JP and S. R. Colella

Officers: Mr. P. Street, Mrs. C. Felton, Mrs. S. Sellers and Ms. D. McCarthy

31/08 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. N. Blagg and Dr. G. H. Lord.

32/08 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest or whipping arrangements were received.

33/08 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview Board held on 3rd February 2009 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

34/08 **SPONSORSHIP FUNDING**

Consideration was given to the report relating to Council sponsorship (policy and activities) which had been requested by the Board in order for it to undertake an overview and scrutiny exercise.

With regard to the Sponsorship and Advertising on Roundabouts Policy which had been approved and adopted by the Cabinet in July 2008, questions were raised regarding sponsorship price. It was noted that within section 9 of the policy, it stated that the sponsorship price was £12,000 per annum. However, it was clarified that in relation to road traffic islands, sponsorship price was no less than £4,000 per annum for each location and £12,000 referred to three locations. Officers accepted that the policy was unclear on this point and suggested that this was amended accordingly.

It had been reported to the Cabinet in July 2008 that it was intended that £80,000 in sponsorship would be generated in 2008/09, however, Mr. Street, the Executive Director – Partnerships and Projects, stated that £80,000 had perhaps been over ambitious for the timeframe and in-house resources. Details of sponsorship activity since July 2008 were referred to as outlined in appendix 2 of the report.

It was believed that Bromsgrove District Council was amongst the few local authorities to obtain commercial sponsorship funding on recycling vehicles and it had negotiated very competitive packages in the hope it would attract other businesses. Other sponsorship activities included four road traffic islands, the bandstand programme, Christmas lights switch-on event and donation of Christmas trees.

Mr. Street explained to Members that previously, a systematic approach had not been taken. However, it was reported that the Council was in the process of producing a sponsorship prospectus that would detail sponsorship opportunities in the District. It was anticipated that this would be circulated to a targeted selection of larger local businesses.

The flexibility of sponsorship duration was raised. It stated within section 6 of the policy that each agreement would be for a minimum of one year with an option to extend. However, it was questioned whether in some circumstances a period of 6 months could be offered.

Discussions with the West Midlands Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (WMRIEP) were referred to during the meeting. It was reported that WMRIEP provided the Council with contact details of a company which dealt with sponsorship for other local authorities. Officers had investigated this option, however, due to the significant financial implications, it was believed that sponsorship should be dealt with in-house and this would also enable the Council to offer a more competitively priced service to local businesses.

In relation to the road traffic island located near to the Artrix and David Lloyd, Members were informed that it had not yet been adopted due to highways issues and therefore could not be used for sponsorship purposes. It was confirmed that the District Council had entered into an agreement with the County Council that five road traffic islands could be used for sponsorship purposes with the understanding that the Council would look to expand on this in the future (e.g. the roundabout in Wythall close to Becketts Farm). It was also noted that road safety considerations needed to be taken into account and that some road traffic islands belonged to the Highways Agency.

It was suggested that the Council could seek funding through sponsorship for high profile events (e.g. Older People Day national event). Officers agreed that this would be explored and could be added to the prospectus where viable. However, it was explained that officers were currently focusing on existing Council events and facilities. Other suggestions included play areas (e.g. planters and litter bins) and car park banners. However, it was noted that the Council would need to take any planning issues into consideration where necessary.

It was pointed out that there had been no impact assessment undertaken and although the ethicality of adverts was included within a legal agreement for sponsorship, the ethicality of advertisers had not been covered.

Attention was drawn to unacceptable sponsorship types referred to within the sample legal agreement at appendix 3, which included offering or promoting the sale of tobacco or tobacco relating products, however, it was noted that these did not include alcohol. Therefore, it was questioned whether there were other types of unacceptable sponsorship which should also be included.

The Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services, Mrs. Felton, agreed with Members' suggestions and pointed out that an equalities impact assessment should have been undertaken before the policy was adopted.

It was also suggested that sponsorship for good causes could be included to try and support charities by donating a proportion of the funding raised. Mr. Street agreed and informed Members that officers were exploring the possibility.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Executive Director – Partnerships and Projects and the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services report the results of the Equalities Impact Assessment back to the Board at its next ordinary meeting; and
- (b) that the Overview Board discuss this item further at its next ordinary meeting and agree recommendations it would like to put forward to the Cabinet.

35/08 **BIODIVERSITY PLEDGE AND ACTION PLAN**

The Board considered the report relating to the West Midlands Biodiversity Pledge and revised Biodiversity Action Plan which summarised the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Guidance for local authorities on implementing the Biodiversity Duty produced by the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

Members believed that education and training were crucial, however, it was questioned whether the new shared Climate Change Officer post to deal with biodiversity issues would be sufficient. The Executive Director – Partnerships and Projects, Mr. Street, informed the Board that there was currently an officer undertaking some work related to this area (e.g. promoting Eco School Award Programme) and the Energy Efficiency Group had been re-titled the Climate Change Group. However, he agreed that the issues of climate change and biodiversity were a challenge.

It was noted that themes within the Worcestershire Local Area Agreement (LAA) included the outcome 'To protect and improve Worcestershire's natural environment/biodiversity' and it was questioned how this would be measured. Furthermore, queries regarding benchmarking were also raised. Mr. Street stated there was a Biodiversity Action Plan and guidance from Defra and it was anticipated that Worcestershire County Council would assist in measuring the delivery of outcomes and benchmarking.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the report be noted; and

- (b) that the Executive Director – Partnerships and Projects report back to the next ordinary meeting of the Board clarifying the following:
- Plans relating to education/training on biodiversity issues
 - Further details on benchmarking and how the delivery of outcomes of the Biodiversity Action Plan would be measured.

36/08 **CCTV FUNDING**

The Executive Director – Partnerships and Projects, Mr. Street, informed Members that since the last meeting of the Board, officers had received a response to the Council's request for a contribution towards CCTV equipment. It was explained that the Police had also been requested by the Council to support the redevelopment of the Multi Agency Resource Centre (MARC). As the Police had limited funding, it was envisaged that the Council would look to use such funding for neighbourhood redevelopment.

RESOLVED that the verbal update be noted.

37/08 **AIR QUALITY**

Recommendation 1 from the Air Quality Task Group

At the last meeting, the Chairman had requested a progress update be provided in relation to the first recommendation contained within the Air Quality Scrutiny Report (approved by the Cabinet) which asked the Council to consider applying to Worcestershire County Council for certain roads to be made low emission zone (LEZ) roads therefore limiting access to certain types of vehicles which reduce air quality.

The Executive Director – Partnerships and Projects, Mr. Street, had contacted Mr. D. Balme from Worcestershire County Council's Highways who was the officer who had attended Air Quality Task Group meetings. Mr. Balme had responded that he had researched the LEZ in London and believed a meeting was required with representatives from the two Councils and West Mercia Police to explore the issues of implementing an LEZ in Bromsgrove District. However, it was noted by the Board that no timeframe had been provided.

Members were reminded that Mr. Street had informed Members at the last Board meeting that he had proposed a high level technical meeting between key interested parties. It was confirmed that such a meeting had since been arranged to explore air quality issues further and specifically the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) at junction 1 of the M42.

Homeworking and Carbon Emissions

As requested by the Board, the Executive Director – Services, Mr. T. Beirne, provided information relating to the impact homeworking had on the Council's Carbon Footprint.

It was explained that on 3rd February 2009, due to severe weather conditions, 25 members of staff had worked from home. It was estimated that the average round trip was 20 miles which equated to 500 miles (25 staff x 20 miles) or 800 kilometres. It was stated that the measure of CO₂ (Carbon Dioxide) for cars was 180 grammes of CO₂ per kilometre travelled, therefore on the day in question, a total of 144,000 grammes (800km x 180g) or 144 kilograms of CO₂ were not produced due to homeworking. Comparisons were made to a return trip from London to Paris by plane which emitted 244kg of CO₂ per passenger. However, it was pointed out that officers had not been able to do an offset calculation for office heating and lighting against home use of heating and lighting.

In conclusion, the Board was informed that the very basic calculation showed that with an agreed corporate homeworking policy, there could be real opportunity to significantly reduce the Council's carbon emissions. The work of the Asset Management Working Group was also mentioned together with the results of the recent travel plan survey. Members were also reminded of the complexities surrounding homeworking including health and safety home checks and financial allowances.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the verbal updates provided be noted; and
- (b) that Mr. D. Balme from Worcestershire County Council's Highways be invited to attend the next ordinary meeting of the Board due to be held on 31st March 2009.

38/08 **OLDER PEOPLE TASK GROUP**

At the last meeting, the Overview Board had established a new Task Group to look at the mental and physical wellbeing of the older population. Therefore, the Board considered the report which outlined options on the way forward for the Task Group.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that Councillor Mrs. M. Bunker be appointed as Chairman of the Older People Task Group;
- (b) that the Older People Task Group comprise the following Members: Councillors Mrs. M. Bunker (Chairman), D. McGrath, D. L. Pardoe, C. J. Tidmarsh and L. Turner;
- (c) that Ms. A. Sowton, Chairman of the Older People LSP Theme Group, be formally invited to become a co-opted Member of the Task Group;
- (d) that the Overview and Scrutiny Exercise Scoping Checklist, which included the terms of reference of the Older People Task Group, be approved;
- (e) that the Task Group be given 4 months, from the date of its first meeting, to complete its investigation; and
- (f) that the Task Group commences its investigation as soon as there is the necessary officer support from the Assistant Chief Executive (anticipated to be between mid April and end of May 2009).

39/08 **FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS**

Consideration was given to the Forward Plan which included key and non-key decisions due to be taken by the Cabinet over the forthcoming months.

With regard to the Civil Parking Enforcement report due to be considered by the Cabinet in June 2009, it was believed that officers were compiling a business case and project plan.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Head of Street Scene and Community be requested to attend the next ordinary meeting of the Overview Board to discuss civil parking enforcement; and
- (b) that all other items on the Forward Plan be noted.

40/08 **ANTICIPATED CABINET REPORTS - JULY 2009 TO APRIL 2010**

Members considered the list of anticipated reports which had been split into service areas and which were due to be considered by the Cabinet between July 2009 and April 2010.

RESOLVED that the anticipated Cabinet Reports for July 2009 to April 2010 be noted.

41/08 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board considered all the items included within its Work Programme.

The Chairman stated that he wished to call an extraordinary meeting on 12th March 2009 to discuss a proposal relating to the green belt which he hoped could be added to the Work Programme.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Overview Board's Work Programme be noted and updated as necessary;
- (b) that it be noted that an extraordinary meeting would be held on 12th March 2009; and
- (c) that the Head of Planning and Environment Services be invited to attend the extraordinary meeting on 12th March 2009.

The meeting closed at 7.15 p.m.

Chairman