

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY BOARD

TUESDAY, 28TH APRIL 2009 AT 5.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors D. L. Pardoe (Chairman), S. P. Shannon (Vice-Chairman), Mrs. J. M. Boswell, C. B. Taylor (during Minute No's 27/08 to 30/08) and C. J. Tidmarsh

Invitees: Councillor Mrs. C. M. McDonald (during Minute No's 24/08 to 29/08)

Officers: Mr. T. Beirne, Mr. P. Street, Mr. M. Bell, Mrs. C. Felton, Mr. R. Goundry, Mrs. S. Smith, Mrs. S. Sellers, Ms. L. Williams and Ms. P. Ross

24/08 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Miss D. H. Campbell JP and R. J. Deeming.

25/08 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest or whipping arrangements were received.

26/08 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the last meeting of the Scrutiny Board held on 24th March 2009 were received.

RESOLVED that the minutes be confirmed as a correct record.

27/08 **AIR POLLUTION - STATIONARY VEHICLES WITH RUNNING ENGINES**

During the last meeting of the Scrutiny Board in March 2009, Members had considered monitoring and enforcement issues relating to taxi drivers and bus drivers leaving their vehicle engines running unnecessarily and therefore impacting on air quality. It was decided that further information would be required from officers in order to provide expert advice before a decision could be taken on the recommendations set out in the initial report.

Mr. R. Goundry, Team Leader – Pollution and General explained the advice he had received from the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA). Their advice had been to target the worst offenders and that VOSA would act upon any information received and that qualified examiners would carry out vehicle emission checks. He suggested liaising with VOSA and using the service they offer as an existing Government Agency to tackle the worst offenders.

Mrs. S. Smith, Principal Licensing Officer briefly detailed information from the Bromsgrove District Council, Taxi Handbook, (adopted February 2009), on MOT and vehicle inspection specifically relating to the age of the vehicles. The Principal Licensing Officer confirmed the number of hackney carriage stands at Market Street Bus Station to be five and indicated that once Worcestershire County Council had amended the Traffic Regulation Orders, the local Police would be able to take any enforcement action against illegally parked vehicles waiting on the Stand that caused traffic problems in the area.

The Chairman invited questions from all Members to which Mr. Goundry and Mrs. Smith responded. During the discussion on air quality and emissions, the Executive Director – Partnerships and Projects briefly informed Members of an initiative at Oxford City Council to introduce 'low emission zones' for buses. The Chairman thanked officers for their advice and information.

RESOLVED that the Executive Director – Partnerships and Projects be tasked to provide further information on Oxford City Council low emissions zones to a future Scrutiny Board Meeting.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the Cabinet be requested to consider and approve the following:
- (i) that the Licensing Section be requested to remind taxi drivers and operators on a regular basis (via a newsletter) not to leave their engines running when stationary, in accordance with the relevant legislation;
 - (ii) that when renewing or issuing new licenses for taxi drivers, the Licensing Section be requested to take the opportunity to encourage taxi drivers to help reduce air pollution by reminding them it is an offence to leave their engines running unnecessarily;
 - (iii) that the Assistant Chief Executive be requested to contact Worcestershire County Council to ask that they communicate with bus operators and drivers on this issue pointing out that it is an offence to leave their engines running unnecessarily and therefore to take heed of the sign located at Bromsgrove bus station; and
 - (iv) that, if in future there is evidence to suggest that taxi and bus drivers have ignored requests to turn off their engines (when appropriate) further investigation be considered in relation to the options for enforcement action that could be taken by the Council.

28/08 **ANNUAL REVIEW OF CALL IN PROCEDURE**

The Deputy Monitoring Officer, Mrs. Sellers, informed the Board that since the improvements to the call-in procedure no call-ins had been received and for these reasons the report made no recommendations for changes.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted and that the operation of call-in be reviewed in 12 months' time forming part of the Scrutiny Board work programme for April 2010.

29/08 **SCRUTINY PROPOSAL**

The Board considered the overview and scrutiny proposal put forward by Councillor Mrs. C. M. McDonald relating to litter picking. Councillor Mrs. McDonald referred to information contained within the proposal form relating to litter picking being infrequent in certain areas and areas being frequently ignored and only cleaned after complaints were made.

All Members of the Board who were present commented on the proposal and a lengthy discussion followed. Several questions were raised on the process of dealing with litter and emergency response to reported incidents. The Head of Street Scene and Community, Mr. M. Bell explained the process as detailed in Bromsgrove District Council's Street Cleansing Policy on responding to areas requiring litter picking reported through the Customer Service Centre. All Members of the Board who were present considered the recommendations and a vote was taken. Under Council Procedure Rule 17.7 the Chairman requested that it be recorded that he abstained from voting on this item.

RESOLVED that no further action be taken.

30/08 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board Considered all the items included within its Work Programme. With reference to the summary of the Public Transport (Buses) Task Group Review, Members discussed the recommendation which had originated from the task group investigation.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Scrutiny Board's Work Programme be noted and updated as necessary; and
- (b) that a presentation be made to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Board by representatives from Worcestershire County Council on the findings from an Accessibility Study and Bus Stop Audit and that all other Members of the Council be invited to attend.

RECOMMENDED that the Cabinet request the Leader and Acting Joint Chief Executive to approach Worcestershire County Council to request that the Task Group recommendation 1 (which related to implementing a new bus station for Bromsgrove and was approved by Cabinet in March 2008) be progressed as soon as possible and that funding be made available (from the County Council) for a full travel and transport assessment to be undertaken to identify the issues which need addressing which could be taken into account as part of the town centre redevelopment.

The meeting closed at 6.20 p.m.

Chairman