

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

MONDAY 25TH APRIL 2022, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors C.A. Hotham (Chairman), S. J. Baxter, S. R. Colella, R. J. Deeming, M. Glass, R. J. Hunter, C. J. Spencer and P. J. Whittaker

Observers: Councillor M. Sherrey – Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Community Safety
Councillor M. Thompson – Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Climate Change

Officers: Mrs. S. Hanley, Ms J. Willis and Ms. B. Houghton, Ms. I. Karimi-Fini and Mrs. J. Gresham

86/21

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J. Till and Councillor A. Kriss with Councillor P. Whittaker and Councillor M. Glass respectively in attendance as named substitutes. Apologies for absence were also received from Councillor A. Beaumont and Councillor P. McDonald with no named substitutes.

87/21

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS

There were no Declarations of Interest nor of any Party Whip.

88/21

TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 28TH MARCH 2022

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 28th March 2022 were submitted for Members' consideration.

It was requested that additional wording, as detailed and underlined below, be included in respect of Minute Number 77/21.

'Members felt that this would be a very useful exercise and would provide the most up to date information of the demographic within Bromsgrove which would then enable targeted support to those who needed it most and compare to Bromsgrove District Council's own data.'

The Senior Democratic Services Officer agreed to make the change as requested.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 28th March 2022 be approved as a true and correct record.

89/21

SCRUTINY OF THE NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

The Chairman welcomed the Community Safety Manager to the meeting and explained to Members that the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP) report was presented to the Board annually and that the Board had a statutory duty to scrutinise the work of the Partnership on an annual basis.

During consideration of this item the following was highlighted for Members' attention:

- The background to the NWCSP including the Local Authority representation on the NWCSP and the statutory scrutiny arrangements for the Community Safety Partnership under Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006.
- This was the second year of the three year rolling Partnership Plan however key crime and community safety priorities were picked up through an annual strategic assessment. This annual strategic assessment was designed to provide guidance to resource community safety initiatives among partner agencies on key issues and help direct across North Worcestershire.
- The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) had a duty to cooperate with all CSPs in their geographical area. This duty was reciprocated by all CSPs to also collaborate with the PCC.
- The PCC's Capital Fund had allocated £65k towards NWCSP CCTV in 2021-22 and in September 2021 £100k was released from the PCC's Fly Tipping Fund in order to help address the issues of fly-tipping on private land in North Worcestershire. It was highlighted that there had been an underspend of the funding allocated from the CSP core grant funding for 2020-21 due to the disruptions of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the same

amount of funding (£139,250) was available in 2021-2022 in order to support community safety projects.

- Bromsgrove Community Safety Project Officers worked on behalf of the Council and the CSP and they provided support and guidance to local communities and external partners on a variety of crime prevention and community safety concerns.
- Data was recorded in respect of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and a comparison was provided to the Board with information on years 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21, as detailed in the report. This data helped to highlight the effect that the Covid-19 pandemic had on the instances of recorded ASB.
- There were a variety of tools and powers in place in order to address unacceptable behaviour. These tools included Community Protection Warnings (CPWs) and Community Trigger/ASB Case Reviews. Officers informed the Board that there had been 2 Community Triggers received in 2021-22.
- The use of communications and social media campaigns were highlighted as a particularly useful way to promote key safety messages and the work of the NWCSP. Some of these campaigns over the previous year had included the Nominated Neighbour Scheme, the Respect Programme and Hate Crime Awareness Week.

Following the presentation of the report Officers further detailed the work of the NWCSP and provided a presentation for Members. A number of priorities of the NWCSP, further information on the allocation of additional PCC funding and NWCSP Core Funding and the projects that had been undertaken over the previous year were presented in detail for Members' consideration:

- Key Priorities agreed by partners for 2021-22:
 - Violence and Abuse
 - Theft and Acquisitive Crime
 - ASB, Damage and Nuisance
 - Protecting Vulnerable Communities
- Community Safety Project Updates for 2021-22 were detailed as follows:

The Respect Programme – this was a flagship youth project that had been running for 9 plus years and there was no other project like it in the West Mercia area. The youth work programme focussed on recognising and reporting hate crime, understanding healthy relationships/domestic abuse, the

dangers of substance misuse and promoting respect and community responsibility. The Community Safety Team had seen an increase in referrals from schools for this programme over the years and support was provided for young people who were at a high level of need and were at risk in becoming involved in criminality as either victims or perpetrators.

The Empowering Young People Programme – This programme included a focus on ASB, County Lines, Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Misuse and Hate Crime Awareness. The Youth Hub – this was an independent Community Interest Company (CIC) that provided support and activities for young people, offering a space to socialise safely. It was reported that this was an excellent facility that supported drop-in and outreach work for young people within the District. The Board was informed that this had proved to be a fantastic initiative with a previous service user now providing youth worker support as a staff member after gaining a youth worker qualification.

Asda Car Park Project – This project was carried out alongside the Leisure team and provided multi-sport sessions in the location. It was a successful project which helped to build ongoing relationships with young people who reported that they were taking better care of themselves after taking part in the project.

Friday Night Diversionary Sessions – This project took place in the Youth Hub with a cohort of 50 young people and was particularly involved in continuing to divert a high risk group of young people off the streets. Issues that were raised during these sessions included the amount of food and fuel poverty experienced by their families.

Youth Outreach – The Youth Hub and Outreach Bromsgrove worked with Community Safety Youth Workers, to engage with gatherings of young people in the local areas. It was reported that between 600-800 young people were engaged with during the height of the summer. This project was seen as a best practice model across the County.

Bromsgrove Listening Service – This was a volunteer Listening Service for young people who needed lower level support and interventions. It was highlighted to Members that this service was looking to expand in 2022 and that new listeners were currently being recruited.

Young Citizen's Challenge – An interactive online package made available to all Year 6 students in North Worcestershire

middle schools. It was reported that this project would go back to face-to-face sessions in May 2022.

Virtual Decisions Knife Crime Project – This was a Virtual Reality (VR) experience delivered by a Birmingham based theatre company. It provided the opportunity for each participant to use a VR headset and be placed in a real world scenario where they were faced with multiple dilemmas in which they must make a choice. Each choice resulted in various outcomes, showing that every action has a consequence.

Several other projects were discussed including the Nominated Neighbour Scheme and the Tibberton Court project. At a national level further information on Hate Crime Awareness Week and the White Ribbon Domestic Abuse Awareness national campaign was provided to Members. In addition to this, the Board were informed of the work that the Community Safety Officer undertook as part of Planning consultations with a view to making appropriate crime prevention and security recommendations as part of a planning application.

Following the detailed presentation, the Chairman welcomed the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Community Safety to the meeting. Councillor M. Sherrey thanked the Community Safety Manager for providing an excellent background to the NWCSPP and all of the projects undertaken by Officers and explained that she was very proud of all of the staff that undertook this important work.

Members were pleased with all of the work that was in place within Bromsgrove. However, there were some queries regarding whether there were plans in place to work further afield within the District. It was explained that there were some plans in place to bid for external funding to provide services in some of the other areas within the District e.g., Charford and Rubery. It was recognised that there was a need, particularly in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, to ensure that as many young people as possible had access to these kinds of projects across all of the District considering the particular experiences of some groups of young people and their needs.

The Board expressed their great thanks and appreciation to the team and stated that it was humbling to see all of the work that had taken place in this area.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership be noted.

90/21

CCTV UPDATE

The Head of Community and Housing Services presented the CCTV update to Members and in doing so explained that the CCTV Monitoring Centre had dual roles of monitoring Lifeline and CCTV and covered North Worcestershire which included Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest.

The following was also highlighted for Members' attention:

- A review of the CCTV scheme was carried out in 2018 which coincided with a Task Group that had looked at possible improvements of the scheme. The outcomes of the reviews included a digital upgrade and a replacement scheme to replace analogue cameras with high definition cameras.
- CCTV cameras were a tool to reduce the fear of crime, as well as detect crime. The impact of this had been particularly seen in the decrease of incidents at Sanders Park since the installation of a camera. It was reported that there had been 13 incidents in 2020-21 (during the Covid – 19 pandemic lockdown) and 3 incidents in 2021-22.
- Redeployable cameras had been implemented in hotspot areas throughout the District. There was an application process in order to utilise the redeployable cameras and that redeployment would be for 12 weeks which helped to act as a deterrent within the hotspot area. The Board were also informed that these were redeployable cameras and not covert and were subject to the requirements of the Camera Commissioner.

Some Members queried whether all of the recommendations from the CCTV Task group investigation had been implemented. Officers explained that the majority of the recommendations had been undertaken however delays had been experienced due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, some of the cameras remained as analogue rather than being upgraded to the higher definition cameras. It was questioned as to when the outstanding cameras would be replaced. The Head of Community and Housing Services stated that plans were underway but that inevitably there was a cost to making these changes. Officers undertook to look at the cost implications and agreed to report back to the Board later in the municipal year.

RESOLVED that the CCTV Update be noted.

91/21

FIREWORKS MOTION

The Cultural Services and Parks Manager presented the briefing note in respect of the Fireworks Motion that had previously been considered by the Board. Members were informed that, although enquiries had been made regarding holding a quieter display in order to consider animals and vulnerable residents, that a decision had been made and that a fireworks display would not take place this year in Sanders Park. Instead, a light show would be organised as it had been for the previous year.

Councillor S. Douglas was invited to address the Board as the proposer of the question at Full Council on 26th January 2022 and explained that the use of fireworks was particularly distressing to animals and vulnerable residents within the District and that the use of fireworks, particularly in a private setting, were problematic.

During detailed consideration of this item Members discussed the effects that they had personally experienced in respect of fireworks. Councillor M. Thompson, who was in attendance in his role as Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Climate Change, was invited to speak and had been in attendance earlier in the meeting. However, Councillor M. Thompson had had to leave during consideration of this item.

Following the discussion the following recommendation was made:

'that Bromsgrove District Council encourages residents to attend professionally organised firework displays and, in private settings, encourages the use of low noise or visual fireworks only.'

On being put to the vote the recommendation was carried.

RECOMMENDED that Bromsgrove District Council encourages residents to attend professionally organised firework displays and, in private settings, encourages the use of low noise or visual fireworks only.

92/21

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

The Chairman presented the Overview and Scrutiny Board Annual Report for the Board's consideration. It was noted that this had been a very busy year and he thanked Members of the main Board and Officers for all of their hard work. In addition to this he thanked the Chairmen and

Members who had taken part in the task groups throughout the last municipal year.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Board Annual Report 2021-22 be noted.

93/21

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD - RECOMMENDATION TRACKER

The Chairman presented the Overview and Scrutiny Board Recommendation Tracker and in doing so, had indicated the recommendations that could now be removed from the tracker.

Some Members were keen to include the recommendations that had not been approved by Cabinet in future iterations of the tracker. The Chairman indicated that he would work with Officers to investigate the potential for this.

RESOLVED that Overview and Scrutiny Board - Recommendation Tracker be noted.

94/21

FINANCE AND BUDGET WORKING GROUP - UPDATE

The Chairman informed Members that there had not been a meeting of the Finance and Budget Working Group since the last meeting of the Board. It was reported that the next meeting was due to take place on 28th April 2022 and that an update would be provided to Members at the next meeting in the new municipal year.

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

95/21

TASK GROUP UPDATES

The Senior Democratic Services Officer explained that an email had been sent out to Members requesting volunteers for the Fuel Poverty Task Group however, so far, not many responses had been received. Councillor R. Hunter, Chairman of the Task Group requested that a reminder email be sent to gather further interest. Officers undertook to do this prior to the next meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED that the Task Group Updates be noted.

96/21

WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - UPDATE

Councillor S. Baxter informed Members that there had not been a meeting of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee since the last meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED that Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Update be noted.

97/21

CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Cabinet Work Programme was presented for Members consideration.

RESOLVED that the contents of the Cabinet Work Programme be noted.

98/21

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

This item was considered as part of the previous item.

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

The meeting closed at 8.01 p.m.

Chairman