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Overview and Scrutiny Board
15th April 2025

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

15TH APRIL 2025, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors P. M. McDonald (Chairman), S. T. Nock (Vice-Chairman), A. Bailes, R. Bailes, A. M. Dale, D. J. A. Forsythe, D. Hopkins, R. J. Hunter, D. J. Nicholl, S. A. Robinson and J. D. Stanley

Officers: Mr. G. Revans and Mrs S. Woodfield

116/24

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor B. Kumar with Councillor D.J.A. Forsythe in attendance as named substitute and Councillor E.M.S. Gray with Councillor D. Hopkins in attendance as named substitute.

117/24

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS

There were no declarations of interest nor of whipping arrangements.

118/24

TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 25TH MARCH 2025

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 25th March 2025 were considered.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 25th March 2025 be agreed as a true and correct record.

119/24

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

The Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/25 was considered by the Board.

Members commented that the Annual Report was a well written, detailed reminder of the wide variety of items covered over the municipal year.

During discussions, Councillor Hunter expressed the view that whilst Recommendations provided by the Board to Cabinet had been included in the report, it would be helpful if a dedicated section were included in the report which “showcased” all the proposed Recommendations. It was agreed by the Democratic Services Officer that the suggestion would be implemented in the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for the following municipal year.

Also during discussions of the annual report, an update was provided to Members regarding the Woodland Creation Application initiative bid.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/25 be noted.

120/24 **WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - UPDATE**

This item was deferred to the next Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting which would take place on 17th June 2025.

121/24 **FINANCE AND BUDGET WORKING GROUP - UPDATE**

There was no Finance and Budget Working Group update for the Board’s consideration.

122/24 **TASK GROUP - UPDATE**

There was no Task Group update for the Board’s consideration.

123/24 **CABINET WORK PROGRAMME**

The Cabinet Work Programme was considered by the Board.

Members requested a brief summary for two items added to the Cabinet Work Programme regarding Warm Homes Local Grants funding and Resources and Revocation of the Bromsgrove Road and Lickey End Air Quality Management Area. It was agreed by the Democratic Services Officer that the information would be sought from relevant Officers and circulated to the Board.

A Member requested further details concerning the Medium-Term Financial Plan Scene Setting Report 2026/27. In response it was advised that the report would be pre-scrutinised at the Finance and Budget Working Group meeting held on 5th September 2025.

Further clarity was also requested on the item provided in the Cabinet Work Programme for Council Tax – Empty Homes Discounts and Premiums 2026/24. In response it was advised that the report would be pre-scrutinised at the Finance and Budget Working Group meeting which would be held on 5th January 2026.

Members also noted that the Local Government Re-organisation (LGR) report had not been scheduled in the Cabinet Work Programme and stressed the importance that adequate time was required to evaluate and scrutinise the report, prior to the final deadline proposal set for 28th November 2025. In response the Executive Director informed the Board that a meeting was being scheduled for all joint Worcestershire Chief Executives to discuss sourcing the relevant consultant to carry out a feasibility study for structural change in the Worcestershire area, focusing on investigating the costs and benefits for one unitary authority and two unitary authorities. An update report would be presented to the June meeting of the O&S Board.

RESOLVED that the content of the Cabinet Work Programme be noted as per the preamble above.

124/24

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ACTION SHEET

The Overview and Scrutiny Action Sheet was considered by the Board.

During consideration of the item the Chairman raised noted that there had not been any progress on the actions requested for the update on Heatwaves Preparedness. It was explained that action responses were in progress for Members' consideration. The Democratic Service Officer agreed to request a detailed update from Applied Resilience and would update the Board accordingly.

Training to enable Members to prepare residents in extreme weather conditions for Heatwaves Preparedness was also raised, querying if training would include both extremities of hot and cold. In response, it was confirmed by the Assistant Director that training would be provided for both.

Further clarity was also sought for Heatwaves Preparedness regarding the Council reviewing plans to expand vulnerable residents onto the Priority Services Register. The Executive Director advised the Board that Applied Resilience provided the priority services register in two parts. Vulnerable residents were sourced from utility providers and an additional Council held Priority Services Register was also held which contained a list of vulnerable residents requiring additional needs. In response Members queried if the Council could confirm how many residents were held on the Council's Priority Services Register. In response Members were advised that the information would be incorporated into Applied Resilience's action plan to retrieve the necessary information.

Councillor Dale requested an update for an outstanding action regarding the Bilberry Hill Tearooms, advising that numerous emails had been received concerning the site and was keen to obtain further assistance from the Conservation Team to address the site's disrepair. In response the Democratic Services Officer informed Members that the Principal Conservation Officer was in the process of contacting Councillor Dale, however, progress would be sought for the outstanding action.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Board Action sheet be noted.

125/24

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme was considered by Members.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be noted.

126/24

TO CONSIDER ANY URGENT BUSINESS, DETAILS OF WHICH HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED TO THE HEAD OF LEGAL, DEMOCRATIC AND PROPERTY SERVICES PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE MEETING AND WHICH THE CHAIRMAN, BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, CONSIDERS TO BE OF SO URGENT A NATURE THAT IT CANNOT WAIT UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING.

There was no urgent business for consideration.

The meeting closed at 6.22 p.m.

Chairman