

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY STEERING BOARD**

**TUESDAY, 6TH FEBRUARY 2007**

PRESENT: Councillors Miss D. H. Campbell J.P. (Chairman), C. J. K. Wilson (Vice-Chairman), Mrs. J. M. Boswell, Mrs. R. L. Dent, Mrs. A. E. Doyle, J. T. Duddy, W. R. Newnes, S. R. Peters, N. Psirides J.P., J. A. Ruck, S. P. Shannon and C. J. Tidmarsh

**Observers:** Councillors B. L. Fuller C.B.E., Q.F.S.M. and Mrs. K. M. Gall

**Officers:** K. Dicks, P. Street, Mrs. C. Felton, Mrs. S. Sellers, J. Wright and Miss D. McCarthy

89/06 **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor A. J. Dent.

90/06 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

No declarations of interest or whipping arrangements were made.

91/06 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny Steering Board held on 2nd January 2007 were submitted.

**RESOLVED:** that the Minutes be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

92/06 **ATTENDANCE OF THE LEADER**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services presented a report relating to the attendance of the Leader. It was explained that the call for the Leader to attend this Scrutiny Steering Board meeting had been reviewed by the Acting Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer. Due to the impending review of the scrutiny system and the high priority training programme which formed part of the member development programme scheduled to be delivered over the next few months, it was suggested that the attendance of the Leader be postponed until after the forthcoming training programme.

There was a lengthy debate regarding the need for funding for the implementation of any scrutiny recommendations with financial implications. Many members stated their frustration over scrutiny reports not being approved by the Executive Cabinet, particularly those with financial implications and this had led to disappointment. However, members agreed that being involved in scrutiny exercises had been enjoyable and they had

often worked very well. Although there were some questions on the commencement date of the training, the Board welcomed further training for scrutiny which would include training for the Executive Cabinet to enable them to support Overview and Scrutiny effectively.

The Board was informed that two similar scrutiny proposals had been submitted recently and had not yet been considered by the Board. It was explained that as the process dictated, the scrutiny proposers had attended a meeting with the Chief Executive, Corporate Director (Services) and Chairman of the Scrutiny Steering Board to discuss the scrutiny proposals put forward. Due to a number of issues, officers had sought advice from the Chairman of the Scrutiny Board and the Chairman of the relevant Advisory Group, however, members were reassured that there was no resistance to putting forward the scrutiny proposals to the Board and officers would ensure members were kept informed in future to avoid any further misunderstandings.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) that the report be noted; and
- (ii) that the scrutiny proposals from Councillors Mrs. A. E. Doyle and S. P. Shannon be included on the agenda for the next ordinary meeting of the Scrutiny Steering Board scheduled to be held on 6th March 2007.

93/06 **PROPOSAL TO CLOSE BROMSGROVE MUSEUM**

The Portfolio Holder for Culture and Community Services was welcomed to the meeting. Members were reminded that the Museum and Tourist Information Centre Task Group had been set up by the former Health and Leisure Scrutiny Committee following a Notice of Motion to the Council meeting in March 2004. The Board was assured that the Executive Cabinet had taken note of the report put forward by scrutiny relating to the Bromsgrove Museum, however, it was believed that the option of setting up a Trust had not been considered by the Task Group and it was felt that this might be the way forward to ensuring the museum remained open.

It was stated that a report relating to the future management of the museum would be considered at the next meeting of the Executive Cabinet and the Portfolio Holder for Culture and Community Services was hopeful that the recommendation to keep the museum open for the forthcoming year (2007/08) and that officers be instructed to investigate the feasibility of a Trust to manage the museum from 2008/09, would be agreed and recommended to Council.

After a discussion on various aspects relating to Bromsgrove Museum, the Board thanked the Portfolio Holder for Culture and Community Services for his verbal report and reassurance that the scrutiny report had been taken into consideration by the Executive Cabinet.

**RESOLVED:** that the verbal report be noted.

94/06 **COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT (CPA)**

The Corporate Director (Services) presented a report relating to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) on behalf of the Assistant Chief Executive. It was reported that the Council had completed its CPA self assessment which was a key document for the inspectors. It was explained that it was written against five lines of enquiry: ambition, prioritisation, capacity, performance management and achievement/improvement. It was stated that the self assessment provided a wealth of information about the District and the Council and as a result provided the Board with a useful overview document with which to consider issues the District and Council faced and in turn could be used to influence the future work of the Scrutiny Steering Board.

Members praised the Senior Management Team on their efforts and commented that there had been a very positive change during recent years. The Board also commented on the enthusiasm of officers from various service areas who had assisted Task Groups with their scrutiny investigations.

**RESOLVED:** that the report be noted and the information contained within the report be taken into consideration when the Board agreed its future work programme.

95/06 **FLYTIPPING SCRUTINY REPORT**

Councillor Miss D. H. Campbell, Chairman of the Flytipping Task Group, presented the scrutiny report to the Board. Members complimented the Chairman and other members of the Task Group for their hard work and detailed report.

The Board was informed that all scrutiny reports, once approved, were posted on to the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) web site and mentioned in the Members' Bulletin.

**RESOLVED:** that the report be approved and submitted to the Executive Cabinet requesting the recommendations be approved and implemented.

96/06 **PROGRESS ON CURRENT TASK GROUPS**

Car Parking Task Group

It was reported that the Car Parking Task Group had concluded its investigations and the draft report had been circulated to Task Group members. It was confirmed that the scrutiny report from the Task Group would be considered at the next ordinary meeting of the Board scheduled to be held on 6th March 2007.

Watercourses Task Group

Members were informed that the Watercourses Task Group had also completed its scrutiny investigation and the report was in the process of being finalised ready to be submitted to the next ordinary meeting of the Board scheduled to be held on 6th March 2007.

Members went on to praise the Engineering Technician from Street Scene and Waste Management for his valuable contribution to the work of the Task Group.

**RESOLVED**: that the verbal updates given on the progress of the Car Parking and Watercourses Task Groups be noted.

97/06 **WORK PROGRAMME**

Consideration was given to the work of the Scrutiny Steering Board.

**RESOLVED** that the following Work Programme be approved –

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Date to be Considered</b>	<b>Other Information</b>
Health Scrutiny Update	Quarterly (March/June/Sept/Dec)	Councillor D. McGrath, as this Council's representative on Worcestershire County Council's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to provide an update report.
Postwatch Presentation	15th February 2007 (Special Meeting)	A presentation giving background information will be given by representative(s) from Postwatch with a Question and Answer session to follow.
Medium Term Financial Plan and Council Plan	15th February 2007 (Special Meeting)	Members will have the opportunity to consider these items before the Special Meeting of the Executive Cabinet on 21st February 2007.
Car Parking – Task Group	6th March 2007	Final Task Group Report postponed until March 2007 – Task Group set up in September 2006. First Meeting: 3rd October 2006.
Watercourses – Task Group	6th March 2007	Final Task Group Report due March 2007 – Task Group set up in October 2006. First Meeting: 15th November 2006.
Worcestershire County Council's Highways Maintenance Scrutiny Task Group	6th March 2007 / 3rd April 2007	Chairman of the County's Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be invited to attend a meeting to provide information to the Board on the work carried out by the Highways Maintenance Scrutiny Task Group once completed.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Date to be Considered</b>	<b>Other Information</b>
High Hedges Legislation	3rd April 2007	Report relating to the cost incurred by other local authorities. The service at BDC to be reviewed in April 2007.
Culture and Community Services – Task Group Review	June 2007	Task Group to reconvene for a review meeting June 2007.
Use of Consultants – Task Group Review	July 2007	Task Group to reconvene for a review meeting July 2007.
BDHT – Task Group Review	December 2007	Task Group to reconvene for a review meeting December 2007.

98/06 **ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE EXECUTIVE CABINET**

Consideration was given to the items on the agenda for the Executive Cabinet meeting which was scheduled to be held on 8th February 2007.

Regarding the report relating to Rural Settlement List for Rural Rate Relief, clarification was sought on whether it was possible to receive both the rural rate relief and the small business rate relief. The Chief Executive agreed to investigate this and report back.

**RESOLVED:** that no comments be put forward by the Board on any items due to be considered by the Executive Cabinet at its next meeting.

The meeting closed at 7.40 pm

Chairman