

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BOARD

MONDAY, 18TH JANUARY 2010 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors C. B. Taylor (Chairman), Mrs. M. Bunker (Vice-Chairman), S. R. Colella, Mrs. A. E. Doyle, Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths, Ms. H. J. Jones and L. J. Turner

Observers: Councillor G. N. Denaro

Officers: Mr. H. Bennett, Ms. J. Pickering and Ms. A. Scarce

61/09 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

62/09 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

No declarations of interest or whipping arrangements were received at the start of the meeting. During the meeting Councillor S. R. Colella declared a personal interest in the Shared Services Highlight Report (Minute No 68/09 refers) as a member of the Shared Services Board.

63/09 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Performance Management Board held on 16th November 2009 were submitted.

RESOLVED that, subject to the inclusion of Councillor Ms. H. J. Jones in the list of those present, the minutes be approved as a correct record.

64/09 **INTEGRATED FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT - VERBAL UPDATE**

The Head of Financial Services advised that further to the report given to the Board on 16th November 2009, when an estimated over spend of £400,000 was reported, that this has now been reduced to approximately £84,000. The Integrated Finance and Performance Report for quarter 3 of 2009/10 would be completed by the end of the week, when the exact figure would be available.

This reduction had been achieved in several areas, as previously reported. The Assistant Chief Executive confirmed that officers had spent time reviewing departmental budgets. The centralising of stationary had been successful, together with the review of non essential training.

Members again shared their concerns that a reduction in training may have a detrimental effect on the Council's continued improvement. Officers assured Members that any business critical training would continue for staff, and in cases where several members of staff need the training, one person would attend and feedback to the rest of the team.

The Head of Financial Services answered questions from the Board in respect of income from Council Tax and in particular the recovery of unpaid household tax and the number of payments made by direct debit. She confirmed that the Council was on target for the recovery of unpaid household tax and 0.5% down on non-domestic rates. More residents were using direct debit as a form of payment, which was advantageous to the Council.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Financial Services for her attendance.

65/09 **SPATIAL PROJECTS BENEFITS REVIEW**

Councillor G. N. Denaro introduced the Spatial Projects Benefits Review and advised that the report focused on the delivery of benefits rather than efficiency savings, which had been included as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan. The Spatial Project had been completed on time and to budget and had significant benefits and improvements to customer facing areas, as listed in item 3.1 of the report, and in particular to the Planning process.

Members asked at what point the project would become embedded and no longer be a project. Councillor Denaro confirmed that the Council was now at that point as this was the final report, which outlined the benefits and it would be incorporated into the Medium Term Financial Plan. It was also confirmed to Members that all the necessary staff training on the Spatial Project has been completed.

With regard to the Shared Services programme, Members shared their concerns that the Spatial Project would not be compatible with the ICT at Redditch Borough Council (RBC). The Assistant Chief Executive assured Members that the Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) system was more advanced and that RBC was aware that it would need an initial capital outlay to bring this system up to the standard of BDC. He confirmed that the Council had a high quality system in place which would now help it to make a positive move forward with both Shared Services and the Worcestershire Enhanced Two Tier System (WETT).

66/09 **SELBY BENCHMARKING VISIT**

The Assistant Chief Executive introduced the report and advised that it provided the Board with a summary of the lessons learnt from a benchmarking visit to Selby District Council (SDC) in November 2009. Councillors S. R. Colella and L. J. Turner had accompanied the Assistant Chief Executive on this visit.

SDC had provided an abundance of information, both written and verbal and it was agreed by the Board that a copy of this report would be provided for SDC. The Assistant Chief Executive confirmed that he had already written formally to SDC thanking them for the visit, but would write again and provide this.

The Assistant Chief Executive explained that this had been a very positive and informative visit. It had affirmed his view that the Council was doing the right things and moving forward.

The Board agreed that the two councils were very similar and that there was no real discernable difference between the two councils' performance indicators. The areas SDC has concentrated on and which the Assistant Chief Executive said the Council should also now focus on were:

- customer service
- value for money
- delivery of longer term outcomes

It was noted that the Chief Executive at SDC had explained how it had concentrated on delivering the things the Council knew were important to its residents and that excellence had flowed from that.

The Board agreed that BDC's Customer Service Centre was already very good and that a good programme of customer first training was in place. The Assistant Chief Executive gave further details of the work completed under Customer First Part 3 and the 2010 programme which would focus on Plain English with empathy, which was similar to the training undertaken by SDC. Members also discussed working towards the Customer Service Excellence accreditation in the near future.

The Assistant Chief Executive explained that the progress we have made in respect of Shared Services and WETT showed that the Council had made significant strides in providing value for money. Members asked if the vision would be for Bromsgrove to become a commissioning council in line with SDC and this option was discussed at length.

Having discussed the report in detail, Members expressed the view that there should be a programme, of benchmarking visits to other councils in place for both Members and Officers in order to assist the Council's progression towards excellence.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that Cabinet focus on customer service, long term outcomes and value for money in order to achieve excellence and that staff engagement is key to achieving this;
- (b) that the Council seek Customer Service Excellence accreditation by continuing with the corporate training programme, Customer First and roll out Part 4;
- (c) that the annual report be produced in a more customer focused format;
- (d) that a five year Medium Term Financial Strategy be produced;
- (e) that the Communications Strategy is aligned more closely with the corporate priorities;

- (f) that staff recognition is improved through schemes like the birthday forum and improved long service awards;
- (g) that the service business planning approach used by Selby District Council be adopted;
- (h) that a change management model be developed that builds on the learning of early shared services;
- (i) that the town centre programme be formally reviewed;
- (j) that a more coherent annual community engagement programme be produced;
- (k) that efficiencies are monitored in a similar way to Selby District Council; and
- (l) that Cabinet ensure there is a programme of benchmarking visits to include Members and Officers in areas of interest.

67/09 **TOWN CENTRE UPDATE**

In the absence of the Executive Director (Partnerships & Projects) and the Portfolio Holder, the Assistant Chief Executive updated the Board on the town centre project.

Although it was understood that this was a long term project, Members shared their concerns on several issues including the overall clarity of the report, the late cancellation of meetings, progress being made and the number of items which had been delayed, as detailed in the Highlight Report (Appendix 1). It was felt that it would be helpful to have a “timeline” detailing progress to date and expected future progress. The Board also felt it would be helpful to have details of available funding as this was not clear from the report.

The Assistant Chief Executive advised Members that the new Executive Director would be meeting with the relevant people in February to familiarise himself with the town centre programme. He would also attend a “performance clinic” which would provide an opportunity for the programme to be reviewed.

After discussion it was agreed that the Board would receive a further update at the meeting to be held on 19th April 2010 and that the Portfolio Holder would be asked to attend that meeting.

RECOMMENDED that the new Executive Director undertaken a programme review of the town centre project in particular deliverables over the next 1 – 3 years, interdependencies and risks.

68/09 **SHARED SERVICES HIGHLIGHT REPORT**

The Board received an update report on Shared Services and discussed the progress made to date. The Assistant Chief Executive confirmed that the project was “on track” as detailed in the Highlight Report (Appendix 1).

The Assistant Chief Executive advised that the WETT programme was also progressing well and that he was currently unaware of any problems.

RESOLVED that the Shared Services report be noted.

69/09 **IMPROVEMENT PLAN EXCEPTION REPORT (NOVEMBER 2009)**

The Board considered the Improvement Plan Exception Report for November 2009.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the revisions to the Improvement Plan Exception Report, together with the corrective action being taken be noted; and
- (b) that it be noted that for the 95 actions highlighted for November within the plan 74.7% of the Improvement Plan was on target (green), 5.3% was one month behind (amber) and 2.1% was over one month behind (red). 17.9% of actions had been reprogrammed or suspended with approval.

70/09 **PERFORMANCE REPORT (NOVEMBER 2009)**

The Board considered a report on the Council's performance as at 30th November 2009. Members noted the good performance in respect of the average speed of answering calls at the Contact Centre and Councillor Ms. H. J. Jones commented that she had recently spent several hours at the Contact Centre and the service provided was excellent.

Members shared their concerns over the effect that the recent adverse weather conditions would have on several or the performance indicators, and in particular in respect of refuse collection. The Assistant Chief Executive advised that this would be reflected in the report received by Members at the meeting on 15th March 2010 and that this would be an issue for Councils nationally, and would be taken into consideration.

At reference SC3 (Dolphin Centre Usage) Members enquired about the circumstances under which two swimming galas had been cancelled and what charges, if any would have still been made. The Assistant Chief Executive advised that he would contact the relevant department and feedback to Members with their response.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that it be noted that 47% of performance indicators are stable or improving;
- (b) that it be noted that 76% of performance indicators that had a target were meeting their target at the month end and 90% were projected to meet their target at the year end;
- (c) that the performance figures for November 2009 as set out in Appendix 2 be noted;
- (d) that the particular areas of improvement as summarised in section 3.5 be noted; and
- (e) that the areas of concern as set out in section 3.6 be noted.

71/09 **WORK PROGRAMME**

Having considered the report on the Board's work programme Members discussed the role of the Board and the future work programme. Members suggested several topics for inclusion within the work programme and following discussion, the Assistant Chief Executive advised that this was the appropriate time to review both the role of the Board and items to be included in the new work programme.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme be noted and that at the meeting on 15th March 2010 consideration be given to the role of the Board and the future work programme.

The meeting closed at 7.55 p.m.

Chairman