

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY BOARD

TUESDAY, 26TH JANUARY 2010 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors D. L. Pardoe (Chairman), A. N. Blagg, R. J. Deeming,
C. R. Scurrall and C. J. Tidmarsh

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Mrs. S. Sellers, Mr. M. Carr and Ms. A. Scarce

54/09 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S. R. Peters and C. B. Taylor.

55/09 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

No declarations of interest or whipping arrangements were received.

56/09 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Board held on 24th November 2009 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

57/09 **QUARTERLY SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION TRACKER**

The Head of Financial Services asked Members to be aware that due to the new appointments of Heads of Service, the Head of Street Scene and Community was unable to attend the meeting. It was hoped that the new Head of Environmental Services would be in a position to take up some of his role over the next few weeks and the Head of Financial Services asked Members to bear with them during this transitional period.

The Board considered the updated Recommendation Tracker and although they appreciated the current situation, shared their concerns that several items in respect of the Refuse and Recycling Scrutiny Investigation continued to be outstanding after some 18 months, and in particular the item referring to NVQ training for all refuse and recycling staff. Members were reminded of information previously provided by the Head of Street Scene and Community advising that this was due to commence in January 2010. Members commented that the refuse and recycling staff had performed very well during the recent severe weather conditions and it was agreed that a letter of thanks should be sent, from the Board, to the relevant Head of Service, congratulating them on their hard work during this difficult period.

After discussion, the Board asked that the new Head of Environmental Services be invited to the Scrutiny Board meeting to be held on 23rd March 2010.

Members agreed that it would be useful in future to have the following information in respect of items on the Recommendation Tracker:

- Has the recommendation been implemented?
- If not why not and when is it expected to be implemented?
- What outcomes have been achieved as a result of the recommendations?

Members were reminded that the Refuse and Recycling (including Value for Money) Task Group would be reconvened in July 2010 to formally review the progress made.

RESOLVED that the new Head of Environmental Services be invited to the Scrutiny Board meeting to be held on 23rd March 2010.

58/09 **RESPONSE FROM CABINET ON HOT FOOD TAKEAWAYS**

The Board were advised that at the Cabinet meeting on 2nd December 2009 consideration had been given to the Scrutiny Board's report on Hot Food Takeaways and it was confirmed that all recommendations had been approved by Cabinet.

Members were pleased with this outcome and officers confirmed that these recommendations would now be included within the Quarterly Recommendation Tracker, in order to monitor their implementation.

Some Members expressed their concerns over what priority would be given to the implementation of these recommendations and it was agreed that the relevant Head of Service would be asked for an estimate of when each recommendation would be implemented and when the Supplementary Planning document would be in place.

RESOLVED that the Hot Food Takeaways Report be included in the Quarterly Recommendation Tracker.

59/09 **VERBAL UPDATE ON PROGRESS OF THE IMPROVING RESIDENTS' SATISFACTION TASK GROUP**

The Chairman thanked Councillor S. R. Colella, Chairman of the Task Group for attending the meeting and asked him to give a brief update on the progress of the Improving Residents' Satisfaction Task Group.

Councillor Colella explained that the first meeting had, unfortunately, been cancelled due to the exceptional weather conditions, but that the Task Group still anticipated being able to receive the first draft report on 31st March 2010. Councillor Colella then gave a brief outline of the areas they hoped to cover at the four meetings that had been arranged:

- A detailed analysis of the Place Survey and comparatives with other Councils.
- Theory and best practice on satisfaction, including review of communication strategies and comparison with those of excellent authorities (Selby and Wychavon).
- Local Practice and local issues

Witnesses to be invited to meetings were:

- Fiona Narburgh - Head of Strategy and Communications (Wychavon District Council)
- Peter John (Newsquest)
- Relevant Portfolio Holders with relevant officers
- PACT Chairman
- A Parish Council representative

The Board held a general discussion around the public's perception of how Council business is conducted, unpopular decisions that the Council has to make, residents' perception of the services provided and the use of various forums and groups to get the Council's message across.

60/09 **MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE**

The Board considered the report on Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change. Members were advised that at the Council meeting on 20th January 2010 a motion had been passed in respect of the Council signing up to the 10-10 Reduction of CO2 emissions and that this matter was referred to the Scrutiny Board to be considered as part of its investigation into Climate Change.

Members were concerned that the commitment to the 10-10 Reduction of CO2 emissions had a strict timescale and after discussion it was agreed that further information on this would be requested from the Climate Change Officer when attending the Scrutiny Board meeting on 25th February 2010. As the motion referred to had been put forward by Councillor S. P. Shannon, it was suggested that it would be appropriate for Councillor Shannon to be invited to attend the Scrutiny Board meeting on 25th February 2010.

A Member of the Board had already attended the training "Climate Change Condensed" and advised that it had been most informative and encouraged Members to attend.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Board receive a presentation on Climate Change Mitigation at the meeting to be held on 25th February 2010;
- (b) that the 10-10 Reduction in CO2 Emissions be included within the Climate Change Investigation;
- (c) that Members endeavour to attend the Modern Councillor Programme Event "Climate Change Condensed" on 16th February 2010; and
- (d) that Councillor S. P. Shannon be invited to attend the Scrutiny Board Meeting on 25th February 2010.

61/09 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board discussed the topics on the Work Programme in detail and shared their concerns that several of these would need to be picked up by the new Executive Director or new Heads of Service, which may result in a delay in them being dealt with. Members were also advised that the quarterly meeting between the Leader and Chairman of the Scrutiny Board would take place shortly.

The Board were advised that it was important that the topics were programmed into future meetings and that it may be useful to invite other relevant bodies to meetings to add value to the investigation. Discussion then followed on the Arts and Events Strategy 2010/11, the Corporate Safeguarding Policy (Children and Vulnerable Adults) and Anti-social Drinking & Alcohol Admissions to Hospitals.

The Senior Solicitor advised that in respect of the topic Street Trading Consent Policy, which had been included in the Work Programme at the request of Members following the meeting on 24th November 2009, this Policy had been approved at the full Council meeting held on 20th January 2010. As the Council had agreed that the Scrutiny Board should investigate this topic after a "settling in" period, it would therefore be included in the Work Programme for the year 2010/11.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Corporate Safeguarding Policy (Children and Vulnerable Adults) be considered at the Scrutiny Board meeting to be held on 23rd March 2010.
- (b) that the topic Anti-social Drinking and Alcohol Admissions to Hospitals be considered at the Scrutiny Board meeting to be held on 22nd April 2010 and a representative from the PCT be invited to attend.

The meeting closed at 6.50 p.m.

Chairman