

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

**TUESDAY, 9TH MARCH 2010 AT 6.00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Councillors S. R. Colella (Chairman), D. L. Pardoe (Vice-Chairman), A. N. Blagg, Mrs. M. Bunker, R. J. Deeming, Mrs. R. L. Dent, Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths, S. R. Peters, C. B. Taylor and C. J. Tidmarsh

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Mrs. A. Heighway, Mrs. S. Sellers, Mr. C. Santoriello-Smith, Mr. M. Carr and Mrs. A. Scarce

21/09 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs. J. D. Luck, Mrs. C. J. Spencer and L. J. Turner.

22/09 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

Councillor S. R. Peters declared an interest in the Worcestershire Hub Joint Scrutiny Committee in view of the fact that he was a Member of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee at Worcestershire County Council that was considering the matter.

23/09 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 19th January 2010 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board be approved as a correct record.

24/09 **BROMSGROVE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP - PRESENTATION**

The Chairman drew Members' attention to the resolutions of the Board on 1st December 2009. These included that the Chairman of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board (JOSB) meet with a representative from the Bromsgrove Community Safety Partnership (BCSP), to discuss the approach for the scrutiny of crime and disorder in line with statutory requirements and that any proposed protocol be submitted to the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board and the BCSP for formal approval.

He reported that he had met with the Chairman of the BCSP and officers to discuss the approach. It had been agreed that a presentation from the Head of Community Services on the role of the BCSP and its responsibilities would be a good introduction for Members of the Board. He reminded the Board that

there was a need to identify and consider the strategic level issues for the BCSP and crime and disorder in Bromsgrove.

Ms. A. Heighway, Head of Community Services, provided the Board with a presentation on the BCSP (also known as the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership) and its responsibilities. She provided the Board with the background of what community safety partnerships are and why they came into existence. She briefed Members on the requirements of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which first established the requirements for partnerships between the police, local authorities, probation service, health authorities, the voluntary sector, and local residents and businesses, to reduce crime and disorder. Section 17 placed a statutory duty on police and local authorities to develop and implement a strategy to tackle problems in their area. BCSP was established in August 1998.

Members were informed that Section 5 (1-3) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 defined responsible authorities as: local and county level authorities, the police, the Metropolitan Police Authority, the Fire and Rescue Authority, and the Primary Care Trust.

The Head of Community Services explained that responsible authorities were also required to work with other 'co-operating bodies', including: the Probation Board, parish councils, NHS Trusts, NHS Foundation Trusts, governing bodies of schools, proprietors of independent schools, governing bodies within further education sector, social landlords and other partners invited to participate.

The BCSP also worked in partnership with a range of local private, voluntary and other public and community groups such as Neighbourhood Watch scheme representatives, the Environment Agency, bodies established to promote retail business, voluntary organisations (e.g. youth work) and drug and alcohol action teams.

It was noted that the members of the BCSP were:

- Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service,
- Herefordshire and Worcestershire Youth Offending Service,
- Bromsgrove District Council,
- Bromsgrove Neighbourhood Watch,
- West Mercia Police,
- West Mercia Police Authority,
- West Mercia Probation Trust,
- Worcestershire County Council,
- Worcestershire Drug and Alcohol Action Team,
- Worcestershire Primary Care Trust.

Examples of the relevant local authority departments involved, included Worcestershire County Council Education, Social Services, Highways, Trading Standards, transport departments, and Planning, Housing, Environmental Services, Environmental Health, Licensing/public entertainment departments at District Council level.

The Head of Community Services also outlined the statutory objectives for Section 17. These were:

- To place ownership and responsibility for crime reduction beyond the police and on to a range of agencies.
- To make it a statutory responsibility to ensure that crime and disorder (etc) is given the same importance in the decision making process as other statutory responsibilities.
- To encourage local authorities to think creatively about crime and disorder reduction strategies.

The new responsibilities for crime and disorder partnerships were also outlined. The Police and Crime Act 2009, which received royal assent in November 2009, had resulted in 3 key changes to Section 17 for CDRPs:

- 1) partnerships would have a statutory duty to reduce re-offending,
- 2) the Probation Service would change in legal status from a co-operating body to a responsible body, and
- 3) responsible authorities would extend Section 17 duties to include routinely reducing re-offending.

The new duties were expected to come into force in April 2010. In response to a query as to whether extra funding would be provided from central Government for the new responsibilities; none was expected. In response to a query as to what would happen if the responsible authorities were unable to achieve the targets for reducing re-offending and if there were any penalties, the Head of Community Services responded that this was not known but that it was expected that pressure would be brought to bear by some means to meet the new duties. A Member queried if there were some areas, such as homelessness, that the responsible authorities might not be able to change and therefore impede their ability to meet the targets. The Head of Community Services explained that the responsible authorities may, for example, be expected to support offenders to prevent the cycle of homelessness and crime and there was a link between the homelessness and re-offending.

The Head of Community Services provided examples of the types of work undertaken by crime and disorder partnerships in different fields. In Housing this included crime prevention training, tenancy enforcement, through Neighbourhood Wardens and tackling hate crime. In Planning this included consultation with the police on planning applications. In Environmental Services this included removal of refuse and abandoned vehicles and the regulation of pub licences. In Education Services this included supporting children affected by domestic violence targeted work with persistent truants and excluded pupils.

The Head of Community Services explained the structure of BCSP (see diagram at Appendix 1). The Strategic Board provided leadership and agreed the priorities of the partnership.

It was reported that the BCSP met quarterly, with the following scheduled meeting dates in 2010:

- 24th March

- 23rd June
- 20th October
- 15th December

The Board was informed that the Operational Tasking Group met monthly on the first Wednesday of every month and that it provided operational support, drove activities, monitored performance, facilitated information sharing and identified common issues. The meetings were not held in public, as there may be sensitive issues being discussed, but CSPs were expected to find ways to engage with the public. The PACT meetings had been very effective at the beginning of the process but had possibly become less effective. The Head of Community Services explained that the Portfolio Holder was the link back to elected Members of the Council.

The Head of Community Services explained the funding arrangements for the BCSP. Funding was provided through an Area Based Grant via the Worcestershire Partnership and partner agency contributions. Spending by the BCSP contributed to projects that support delivery of the BCSP priorities.

Mr. C. Santoriello-Smith, the Senior Community Safety Project Officer, provided the Board with examples of projects delivered through the BCSP, including Community Action Days and the "Adopt a Box" scheme to tackle graffiti on utility company boxes in the street. He also advised that the 2010-2011 Partnership Plan would be published in April 2010 and that this may be useful to inform the work of the Board.

The Head of Community Services invited Members of the Board to attend a meeting of BCSP to gain a better understanding of its work. Members of the Board suggested that they would also like to receive an update from the Chairman of the BCSP at a future meeting.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Community Safety and the Senior Community Safety Project Officer for the presentation.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the Chairman of the Bromsgrove Community Safety Partnership be asked to attend the next meeting of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board; and
- (b) that the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety be formally requested to attend all future meetings of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board.

25/09 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The future work programme for the Board was discussed. As there were only two meetings currently scheduled in the Council Calendar of meetings, which were to discuss the annual budget setting reports, the Board was asked to consider the number of meetings required for the next municipal year. It was suggested that four extra meetings should be scheduled around the BCSP meeting dates provided by the Head of Community Services and that the first meeting should be in June 2010. The Scrutiny Officer said that he would inform Members of the Board of the new meeting dates once they had been

scheduled in the Council Calendar.

**RESOLVED** that the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme be updated and that four additional meeting dates be scheduled.

26/09 **VERBAL UPDATE ON PROGRESS OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE HUB JOINT SCRUTINY TASK GROUP (COUNCILLOR C. B. TAYLOR)**

Councillor C. B. Taylor provided the Board with an update on the progress of the Worcestershire Hub Joint Scrutiny Task Group. He spoke about a presentation delivered to the Joint Scrutiny Task Group and Members asked if a copy of this could be distributed for information.

The meeting closed at 8.00 p.m.

Chairman

**APPENDIX 1**

