

# **Cabinet Response to the Community Involvement in Local Democracy Task Group Scrutiny Report**

## Introduction

At the Cabinet meeting on 30th June 2010 consideration was given to the report of the Community Involvement in Local Democracy Task Group.

The Cabinet recognised the importance of increasing democratic participation, particularly in the light of recent events at both national and local level. The increased level of public involvement in the democratic process through the work of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to petitions and task group exercises was acknowledged and welcomed.

The recommendations within the report were welcomed, some of which complemented and extended the work already being undertaken by officers from a number of departments within the Authority and in partnership with colleagues from the County Council. Concern was expressed however regarding the current and forthcoming programme of work to be carried out by officers and the potential impact of the additional recommendations.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources, having discussed the proposals with the Head of Legal Equalities and Democratic Services was satisfied that in the main, existing projects and programmes could be extended to include the recommendations from the Task Group and that the resources required were largely internal with officer time and activity able to be redirected. This would need close working between Heads of Service and their respective officers to extend existing work programmes to take account of additional projects.

## Response to recommendations

Please find below responses to the recommendations contained within the scrutiny report:

### **Recommendation 1 – An Invitation to Attend**

That the publication of meeting times and venues of the Council, the Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny and other statutory public meetings be enhanced, with an invitation for the public to attend, including a regular slot publicising meetings in the Together Bromsgrove magazine.

The Cabinet approved this recommendation.

Implementation Date: To commence by April 2011

## **Recommendation 2 – Councillor Calls for Action**

That the Council adopt a procedure for dealing with Councillor Calls for Action to work in concert with the procedures for Councillor Casework Enquiries and providing recourse to Overview and Scrutiny.

The Cabinet approved this recommendation.

Implementation Date: By April 2011

## **Recommendation 3 – Promoting Democracy**

That event stalls be more widely used to promote democracy, to become registered to vote and get involved, including a stall to be set up in the Bromsgrove high street market, in supermarkets and community events.

The Cabinet approved this recommendation.

Implementation Date: Commenced July 2010

## **Recommendation 4 – Cyber Democracy**

That the local democracy pages of the Council website be reviewed to improve the content and to add summary information on how local democracy works in Bromsgrove and how people can get involved, with a special webpage site for the Democracy Year Campaign.

The Cabinet approved this recommendation

Implementation Date: To commence by April 2011

## **Recommendation 5 – Consultation Portals**

That the Council's website use consultation portals to gauge opinion on topics of local interest and local decisions and a means to engage and consult the public in the local democratic decision making process.

The Cabinet approved this recommendation.

Implementation Date: To commence by April 2011

### **Recommendation 6 – Young Citizens Webpage**

That a Young Citizen page be included on the Council internet site specifically aimed at young people, with fun and exciting content, explaining the democratic process and how to get involved.

The Cabinet agreed this recommendation.

Implementation Date: To commence by April 2011

### **Recommendation 7 – Public Petitions**

That the Council adopt a petitions scheme, procedure and guidance to set out how petitions and e petitions will be dealt with and the arrangements for receiving petitions.

The Cabinet approved this recommendation.

Implementation Date: July 2010

### **Recommendation 8 – Citizenship**

That the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services be asked to liaise with Bromsgrove secondary schools to co-ordinate with the Citizenship curriculum being followed in the respective schools to find ways in which the District Council can support the curriculum.

The Cabinet approved this recommendation.

Implementation Date: To commence by April 2011

### **Recommendation 9 – Schools Councils**

That the Council work in partnership with Bromsgrove secondary schools to facilitate the Schools Councils' constitutional arrangements and arrangements for making recommendations to the appropriate local decision making bodies.

The Cabinet approved this recommendation

Implementation Date: To commence by April 2011

### **Recommendation 10 – U Decide**

That the Council investigate the possibility of running a further U Decide or similar event in 2011 to involve young people in making decisions on local projects.

The Cabinet approved this recommendation

Implementation Date: To commence by April 2011

### **Recommendation 11 – A Democracy Year Campaign**

That there be a Democracy Year Campaign to link together all the events for democracy year under the banner of promoting and involving people in local democracy.

The Cabinet approved this recommendation.

Implementation Date: By April 2011

### **Recommendation 12 – A Democracy Champion**

That a Member of the Council be nominated Democracy Champion for one year to champion local democracy.

The Cabinet approved this recommendation.

Implementation Date: By April 2011

### **Recommendation 13 – Democracy Campaign Emblem**

That an emblem be designed for the Democracy Year Campaign to be used as a part of a democracy year campaign and used on all communications for Democracy Year.

The Cabinet approved this recommendation.

Implementation Date: By April 2011

### **Recommendation 14 – Democracy Year Campaign Steering Group**

That there be convened a Democracy Year Campaign steering group, to meet at least 4 times a year during 2010-2011, to co-ordinate the Democracy Year Campaign events and activities.

The Cabinet approved this recommendation.

Implementation Date: July 2010

## **Recommendation 15 – Celebrating Democracy**

That Democracy Year include programmed events to concord with other relevant events in the Council events programme, including International Women's Day 2011, including a celebration of women's suffrage and the history of women's suffrage and Black History Month 2010 celebrating the history and achievements of the black civil rights movement in the USA, South Africa, the British Commonwealth and other parts of the world.

The Cabinet approved this recommendation.

Implementation Date: By April 2011

The Chairman of the Overview Board Councillor S. R. Colella referred to the evidence base considered by the Task Group and the significant amount of work undertaken by Members and officers.

The Leader thanked the Task Group on behalf of the Cabinet for their hard work in producing a very good report.

Councillor G. N. Denaro  
**Portfolio Holder for Resources**

Councillor R. D. Smith  
**Portfolio Holder for Community Cohesion and Engagement**