

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 7 JUNE 2016

Councillors Present: Keith Chopping, Nick Goodes (Substitute) (In place of Tim Metcalfe), Mike Johnston, Alan Macro, Emma Webster (Chairman) and Laszlo Zverko

Also Present: Catalin Bogos (Performance Research Consultation Manager), Andy Day (Head of Strategic Support), Ian Pearson (Head of Education Service) and Elaine Ricks-Neal (Principal Adviser for School Improvement), David Lowe (Scrutiny & Partnerships Manager), Charlene Myers (Democratic Services Officer) and Derek Peale (Headteacher - Park House School)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Tim Metcalfe

PART I

4. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2016 and 5 April 2016 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

6. Actions from previous Minutes

There were 3 actions followed up from previous Commission meetings:

- 2.1 Councillor Emma Webster advised that she would confirm the Conservative Member volunteers for the Annual Target Setting meeting.
- 2.2 Members agreed that the topic (To review the existing income generation of the Council) would be directed to the Resource Select Committee Work Programme.
- 2.3 Members agreed that the topic (Delivery of Council Strategy – Priority 3: Enable the completion of more affordable housing) would return to the next Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission in December 2016.

7. West Berkshire Forward Plan 25th May 2016 to 31 August 2016

The Commission considered the West Berkshire Forward Plan (Agenda Item 5) for the period covering 25th May 2016 to 31 August 2016.

Resolved that the Forward Plan be noted.

8. Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Work Programme

The Commission considered a report detailing the new arrangements for Overview and Scrutiny (Agenda Item 6).

David Lowe advised that the report expanded on the new arrangements made at the Council meeting in May 2016. The structure introduced three Select Committees which focused on work according to the Directorates within the Council: Communities; Resources and Environment. Members were invited to consider topics for the respective Committees Work Programmes' which had been outlined within point four of the report.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION - 7 JUNE 2016 - MINUTES

Councillor Alan Macro suggested that the Environment Select Committee should review the outcome of the Library Needs Assessment. Members agreed that it would be beneficial to include the topic in the Work Programme. David Lowe suggested that the sequence of meetings could be altered in order to accommodate deadlines.

Councillor Richard Somner proposed that it would be beneficial to conduct a review into the provision of Key-Workers Housing but it was not clear where this topic would sit within the new structure. David Lowe advised Members that the structure was flexible and Members should be encouraged to consider capacity of each group when allocating work. In light of the proposed topics assigned to the Resources and Communities groups, it appeared reasonable to assign the Key-Worker Housing review to the Environment Select Committee.

Members discussed the new scope of the Commission and concluded that it would consider strategic issues and assign items for further consideration to Select Committees where necessary.

Resolved that:

1. The Chairman of the Environment and Communities Select Committee would confirm whether the existing meeting dates could be swapped in order that a review in to the Libraries Needs Assessment could be carried out in a timely manner.
2. The following items would be assigned under the new Overview and Scrutiny arrangements:

DATE	MEETING	PROPOSED TOPICS
12 JULY 2016	RESOURCES SELECT COMMITTEE	• INCOME GENERATED BY THE COUNCIL
6 SEPTEMBER 2016	COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE	• OFSTED INSPECTION PLAN
1 NOVEMBER 2016	ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE	• LIBRARIES' NEEDS ASSESSMENT
6 DECEMBER 2016	OSMC	
17 JANUARY 2017	RESOURCES SELECT COMMITTEE	
28 FEBRUARY 2017	ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE	• WASTE SERVICE
11 APRIL 2017	COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE	• HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE INTEGRATION

9. Items Called-in following the Executive on 26 May 2016.

No items were called-in following the last Executive meeting.

10. Consideration of Urgent Items

There were no urgent items to consider.

11. Councillor Call for Action

There were no Councillor Calls for Action.

12. Petitions

There were no petitions received at the meeting.

13. Delivery of the Council Strategy - Priority 1 & 2: Close the educational attainment gap & Improve educational attainment.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION - 7 JUNE 2016 - MINUTES

The Commission considered a report (Agenda Item 11) concerning Quarter 3 In Depth Performance Report – Council Strategy Priorities 1 – ‘Improve educational attainment’ and 2 – ‘Close the educational attainment gap’.

Catalin Bogos introduced the report to the Commission, explaining that there were 12 measures in relation the Council Priorities 1 and 2.

Of the 12 reported measures, outturns were available for 10. A total of 8 measures were reported as ‘green’ and 2 measures were reported as ‘red’. The exception report provided comments against items below target to outline remediation actions underway/planned.

Catalin Bogos advised that point 2.8 of the report explained how, due to a technical error, the wording ‘To reduce the GCSE educational attainment gap to 22 percentage points’ combined elements that related to two performance measures. Therefore, the Executive had approved a recommendation to use both performance measures:

1. Reduce the attainment gap at KS2 (Level 4+ Treading Writing Maths combined) between disadvantaged and other pupils. (target 14/15 – 22 percentage points)
2. Reduce the attainment gap at GCSE (5A*-C including English and Maths) between disadvantaged and other pupils. (Target 14/15 -30 Percentage Points).

Catalin Bogos concluded by stating that Appendix 3 had been included to illustrate West Berkshire School and Pupil achievements for 2015 against national benchmarks.

Ian Pearson advised that the Education Service operated within a highly regulated area of the Council’s responsibility and all elements of scrutiny (including Ofsted) were considered highly important.

Members heard that the current statistics referred to performance from 2015 exam results and that the service was looking forward to receiving the 2016 results in due course. Furthermore, Members were advised that the basis for comparability had changed over the past years and this presented challenges in terms of monitoring performance year on year; Appendix 3 had been provided to set the wider context for monitoring performance.

Councillor Mike Johnston suggested that comparability was a national issue and that, therefore, it was still possible to compare West Berkshire performance against national benchmarks. Ian Pearson agreed and stated that the overarching challenge related to year on year performance monitoring where the method for attaining results had changed.

Elaine Ricks-Neal stated that it was important that teacher assessed results accurately reflected the student’s capability because results were used as the basis for monitoring performance during a child’s education. Members heard that teachers conducted an assessment of a child aged 7 years old and that a child’s performance was later measured through formal tests, independently marked, when 11 years old.

Members heard that the current attainment level for 11 year olds in mathematics in West Berkshire was just below the national average but that the Education Service was looking forward to seeing the results for 2016. However, these results will be linked to a new test which cannot be compared with previous years. Elaine Ricks-Neal also stated that, due to the size of the Local Authority area, education performance could be easily affected by a few schools which reported lower results.

Nicola Mcveigh, Head teacher at St. Joseph Roman Catholic School, was introduced to the Commission. She advised that, since joining the school in 2014, she had committed time and resources to addressing the downward trend in performance. Upon arrival she

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION - 7 JUNE 2016 - MINUTES

initiated a full moderation of the Year Six pupils' performance through the help of West Berkshire Council. Members heard that, during that time there had been a new curriculum introduced and the method of assessment had changed also.

Nicola Mcveigh informed the Commission that the assessment of a pupil's performance was subjective and, in some cases, there was evidence of inconsistency. The school sought to introduce a variety of assessments which took into account a variety of skills. Teachers were required to assess how a pupil conducted themselves in conversation, their actions and how they completed tasks day-to-day (by reviewing their workbooks). The collection of joint evidence resulted in a fairer assessments of a pupil's attainment.

Teachers met on a regular basis to check consistency of assessments and discuss where resources and time would be required to support pupil's who appeared to be struggling. The meetings were also used as an opportunity to celebrate achievements and track progress.

Nicola McVeigh advised that, in light of the new curriculum, Teachers had opportunities for more flexible planning and increased ownership of their lessons. This method enabled the Teachers to assess comprehension and tailor material to support learning of their pupils.

In conclusion, Nicola McVeigh extended her appreciation to the staff at West Berkshire Council for supporting the rapid improvement at St. Joseph RC School.

Members were informed that many schools, nationally, faced the challenge of recruitment and retention of Teaching staff. Councillor Richard Somner asked whether the schools understood why staff moved and whether there was an opportunity to influence frequency and direction of travel. Nicola Mcveigh advised that recruitment and retention was a national issue.

Derek Peale, Head teacher at Park House School, was introduced to the Commission. He advised that they too had experienced issues with recruitment and retention most notably in the Mathematics department. He did not consider that the issue related specifically to the school – he reinforced the message that it was a national issue in terms of securing Mathematics teachers.

Councillor Emma Webster asked how cohorts were identified and the measures in place to monitor progress. Nicola McVeigh advised that cohorts were identified at the early stages of a pupil's education to allow planning and intervention measures to be exercised where necessary. Members heard that a holistic view was necessary in order to tailor the material for the needs of the students. Ian Pearson added that it was important to factor in the size of the cohort and the percentage impact upon overall performance if the group was smaller.

Furthermore, it was important to recognise that a variety of children entered Secondary school from nearby primary schools and this added new dimensions to the overall cohort.

Members asked what plans were in place to support the development of teachers to become future leaders and encourage succession planning. Ian Pearson stated that successful leadership was an essential element of a school's overall success. He explained that there were many factors influencing a teacher's appetite to progress their career and that a survey had been conducted to understand these factors. The results showed that teachers were under immense pressure due to the volume of workload produced by central systems – it was not the case that schools placed too much pressure on teachers. Ian Pearson explained that the level of pressure teachers were under sometimes deterred them from wanting to take the steps towards becoming a Head Teacher (for example).

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION - 7 JUNE 2016 - MINUTES

[Councillor Nick Goode joined the meeting at 19:05]

Derek Peale advised that he was part of a group which joined to identify under represented areas of leadership within the Educational setting. The group identified the challenges and obstacles which affected the rate of development into leadership roles and considered how these could be addressed.

Councillor Alan Macro highlighted that reference to the attainment gap often focused upon those students who received free school meals. However, he was aware that some families did not take the offer of a free school meal, although they qualified for them, and asked whether such examples affected the accuracy of reporting and monitoring. Tessa Ford advised that all children under the age of 7 years old were entitled to receive a free school meal – which presented increased challenges in terms of monitoring. She explained that, from the age of 7 years old and up, if a pupil qualified for a free school meal, the school also received a School Premium (additional funding). How the funding was used varied within each school.

Recent figures suggested that there had been a decline in the number of pupils receiving free schools meals. However, it was likely that the social stigma associated free school meals meant that many families would not apply for the provision they were entitled to.

Derek Peale advised that Park House School used the School Premium for intervention measures and as a means to deliver assistance to aid progress of learning. Funds were also used to support purchases of school uniform for disadvantaged students.

Members heard how Park House School facilitated meeting between parents and pupils to encourage attendance and jointly discuss progress. Derek Peale explained that the system seemed to work well and improved the attendance level of students. The system was supported by a dedicated employee whose role was to share information between teachers who worked closely with struggling students. The feedback had been positive so far.

In response to questions asked by Members Elaine Ricks-Neal explained that Academies were entitled to the same funding if a student was eligible to receive a free school meal. Academies also contributed towards a Pupil Premium Network, within West Berkshire, which facilitated collaborative working and opportunities to share best practice. Members heard that there were 21 networks within West Berkshire alone. It was agreed that a school's main focus was to meet the needs of its students – irrespective of the type of school it was.

Councillor Keith Chopping asked to revisit the issue associated with the recruitment and retention of Maths teachers. He acknowledged that it was a national issue but asked whether there was anything which could be done locally to help improve the situation. Derek Peale advised that the schools linked closely to identify opportunities or gaps within teaching posts to support the recruitment process. He stated that there were opportunities to think innovatively in terms of identifying talented students who expressed an interest in teaching. He explained that Park House School considered graduates and offered in-house training in order to promote a career within teaching for interested pupils. Ian Pearson added that many University Graduates had the qualifications required to become a teacher but the challenge related to whether teaching was an attractive career choice when faced with numerous alternatives which offered better salaries.

Councillor Richard Somner suggested that another factor which restricted the rate of recruitment was likely to be the expense of moving and living in West Berkshire. Ian Pearson agreed that the cost of living in West Berkshire factored into the overall decision making for potential candidates. Members heard that there was a small project underway to renovate a building into three units which would be offered, solely, to new teachers

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION - 7 JUNE 2016 - MINUTES

entering West Berkshire. Ian Pearson reminded Members that the Council did not have a housing stock to utilise and that conversations had taken place with local Registered Landlords to discuss housing options but the stock was in high demand for Social Workers and other Key Worker roles.

Members agreed that the project was a good idea and were interested to hear how it developed going forward.

Members discussed the process for identifying attainment gaps within a Primary School and Secondary School. They were interested to hear that teachers worked closely together to understand the cohorts' progress and challenges – this was particularly important for students who were due to move into secondary school. These discussions were useful as they identified opportunities for secondary school students to visit primary schools and develop their skills to meet the needs of the younger group. Members heard how it was well received by younger students and that [higher ability] students enjoyed the opportunity to develop themselves.

Councillor Emma Webster asked the attendees how educational attainment could be increased. Derek People suggested that it would be useful to understand the overarching challenges and opportunities faced by schools within the district. He advised that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission meeting had been a useful mechanism to discuss issues which affected multiple schools.

Tesa Ford suggested that educational attainment could be improved if there was more funding available to schools; Elaine Ricks – Neal stated that an attractive housing package for new employees would encourage people to relocate and work within West Berkshire; Ian Pearson explained that a lot of hard work had been invested into the various working groups across West Berkshire and these acted as an effective mechanism to share best practice and positive partnership working – he was keen to see that these groups continued.

Councillor Webster thanked the attendees for their time and contribution towards the review.

Resolved that:

- The Environment Select Committee be allocated the task reviewing the provision of housing to key workers within West Berkshire (specifically teaching staff);
- The report be noted.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.17 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature