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Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 2013

Councillors Present: Jeff Beck, Brian Bedwell (Chairman), Jeff Brooks (Vice-Chairman), Dave Goff, Mike Johnston, Alan Macro, Gwen Mason, Tim Metcalfe, Andrew Rowles, Garth Simpson, Virginia von Celsing, Quentin Webb and Emma Webster

Also Present: Nick Carter (Chief Executive) and Rachael Wardell (Corporate Director - Communities), David Lowe (Scrutiny & Partnerships Manager) and Charlene Myers (Democratic Services Officer)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Marcus Franks

Councillors Absent: Councillor Tony Vickers and Councillor Laszlo Zverko

PART I

27. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2013 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendments:

Item 19, paragraph 5: was amended to read; Councillor Vickers raised the concern that current reviews underway by the Business Improvement District (BID) and Council Officers considered *issues* related to parking matters for commuters and visitors to Newbury.

Item 19, paragraph 8: was amended to read; Councillor Vickers held *the view* that the Community Right to Bid process required an opportunity for public review and without this the decision lacked transparency.

Item 23, paragraph 13: It was clarified that the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) had considered a number of sites as the potential location for a new fire station.

Item 23, paragraph 14: It would be recorded that the Commission discussed the Highway Agency's proposal to remove the hard shoulder on the M4 and how an emergency response of the RBFRS would be impeded as a result.

Item 23, paragraph 16: The item was in relation to the retained crew at the Newbury fire station.

28. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

29. Actions from previous Minutes

The Commission received an update on actions from the previous meeting and the Chairman agreed to write to the RBFRS to ensure that item 2.3 was not overlooked.

30. West Berkshire Forward Plan 1st September 2013 to 31st December 2013

The Commission considered the West Berkshire Forward Plan (Agenda Item 5) for the period covering 1 September 2013 to 31 December 2013.

Councillor Gwen Mason asked whether any schools had been identified in relation to item EX2721. Rachael Wardell advised that the item was created as a direct outcome of the recent public consultation and that the principle of identifying the schools had been approved. It was hoped that schools would have volunteered during the course of the consultation given this had not occurred the next steps would seek to identify schools in order to create a shortlist.

Resolved that the Forward Plan be noted.

31. Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Work Programme

The Commission considered its work programme for 2013/14.

Item OSMC/12/144: Councillor Jeff Brooks advised that the task group had looked at the current utilisation and income generated, over the course of two meetings, along with opportunities to expand the income stream. The task group would review the Portfolio Holder's report in respect of Shaw House before considering their recommendations to avoid duplication.

OSMC/11/110: Councillor Alan Macro asked that the item was considered earlier than scheduled in the work programme. Councillor Emma Webster advised that the item reviewed the policy and procedures introduced two years earlier. It was agreed that the item should remain on the work programme for discussion in April 2014.

Councillor Brooks asked whether a request to discuss home to school transport had been received from Councillor David Allen. It was agreed that Officer's would add the item to the work programme for future discussion.

OSMC/12/149: Officers' review of the Newbury town centre parking had concluded and the Commission would have the opportunity to review the Officers' report.

Resolved that the work programme be noted.

32. Items Called-in following the Executive on 5th September 2013.

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

33. Councillor Call for Action

There were no Councillor Calls for Action.

34. Petitions

There were no petitions received at the meeting.

35. Performance Report for Level One Indicators

The Commission considered a report (Agenda Item 10) concerning the Quarter one Council performance indicators.

Jason Teal highlighted that the reporting framework contained 50 key accountable measures and activities in total. The quarter one report provided the Commission with an update in respect of 34 measures.

Councillor Brian Bedwell queried why the number of Looked After Children, children and young people subject to a Child Protection Plan and number of adult learners had either

decreased or increased in the opposite direction to that which would be preferred. Jason Teal explained that the number of adult learners had decreased compared to last year due to the reduced level of funding in early 2012; the current statistics were more in line with the reported levels from Q1 2011/12.

Rachael Wardell explained that the increased number of children or young people subject to a Child Protection Plan was as a result of the observations issued by the OFSTED inspection last year. Rachael Wardell advised the Commission that Children's Services was required to amplify vigilance. The number of children placed in care was as a result of the increased focus on addressing Child Sexual Exploitation. The Commission heard that for residential care, children could be placed outside West Berkshire.

Councillor Brooks questioned why the number of care assessments conducted had decreased. Rachel Wardell explained that signposting clients to alternative support services via the Access for All team contributed towards the reduced number of assessments required for residents over the age of 65. In addition, the number of clients on the database had decreased but the total number residents waiting for an assessment had increased. Rachael Wardell would investigate how long residents had to wait before receiving an assessment and report back to the Commission.

Councillor Quentin Webb asked whether, in the Officer's opinion, the number of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests would continue to rise. David Lowe advised that the number of FOI requests had consistently increased, it was predicted that the volume would continue to rise. The Strategic Support Service recently recruited 1FTE to assist with the increasing number of requests.

Councillor Jeff Brooks requested that the report provided comments alongside each measure of volume to enhance the Commissions understanding. Jason Teal agreed to look into what could be provided for Q2.

In response to questions asked, Jason Teal explained that the annual measures could not updated in earlier quarters as they related to outturns which could only be compiled at a single point in time (i.e. attainment, or survey results) and so progress could not be demonstrated.

Resolved that the report be noted.

36. Revenue and capital budget reports

The Commission considered a report (Agenda Item 11) concerning the Financial Performance during Quarter One (2013-2014).

The Chairman invited the Commission to comment on the information presented.

Councillor Brooks requested that the Budget Monitoring report contained the previous year's performance so that current statistics could be contextualised. Andy Walker would amend the monitoring tool for Quarter two reporting.

Councillor Simpson highlighted the variances within the budget and questioned whether the monitoring tool was robust. Andy Walker advised that the accountants consulted budget managers to ensure that profiling was accurate and detailed.

Councillor Simpson also asked whether the percentage of remaining budget to be committed (in Appendix 1b) would be spent. Gabrielle Espin explained that the commitment of funds, in some service areas, was delayed due to the process of allocation.

Councillor Mike Johnson asked whether there were measures in the capital programme to assess project spend against project deliverables. In response Gabrielle Espin advised that it was rare for a project to exceed the funding allowance. It was suggested that the

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION - 17 SEPTEMBER 2013 - MINUTES

process had controls in place to ensure savings would be made where possible. Andy Walker explained that each project would complete a post implementation review, during which it was possible to scrutinise the budget. Andy Walker agreed to sample each budget of the top 20% of projects to see whether savings were available and then report back to the Commission.

Councillor Macro asked why the Education Programme was significantly revised. Gabrielle Espin advised that when the programme was approved in March 2013, the increased pupil numbers scheme was incomplete. Since then the scheme had been re-profiled which impacted on the five year programme. The Commission heard that the pupil numbers review was still underway.

Councillor Metcalfe asked whether pupil numbers were affected by some schools transferring to academy status. Rachael Wardell advised that funding for school places was provided centrally, irrespective of whether the place was provided via an academy. Rachael Wardell explained that the Council commissioned pupil places in line with the level of demand.

In response to questioning, Nick Carter explained that as a result of a review conducted 18 months ago, it was agreed that the Adventure Dolphin Centre would take a commercial approach to marketing its facilities. The recent decline in use, and thus pressures within the budget, was thought to be the result of the recent poor summer weather during Q1. Nick Carter advised the Commission that the Adventure Dolphin Centre had a business plan would seek to commercialise the facility.

Councillor Brooks stated that members of the Commission were unable to provide their comments in the report because the Commission could not see the Financial Performance report before submission to the Executive. Councillor Bedwell agreed to write a letter raising Councillor Brook's concern.

Councillor Garth Simpson questioned the justification behind creating the Children's Services Risk Fund. In response, Andy Walker explained that Children Services' was a volatile area and the risk fund was created only in the most volatile of areas in order to manage the level of risk. The reserve would be monitored on a monthly basis and altered dependant on the perceived risk.

Councillor Macro questioned why £100,000 of the S106 funds for the A340 rail bridge at Aldermaston was reprofiled. Andy Walker agreed to investigate this matter and report back to the Commission.

Resolved that the report be noted.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.40 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature