

Notice of Meeting

Stronger Communities Select Committee

Tuesday, 16th February, 2010 at 6.30 pm
in Committee Room 1 Council Offices
Market Street Newbury

Date of despatch of Agenda: Monday, 8 February 2010

For further information about this Agenda, or to inspect any background documents referred to in Part I reports, please contact Stephen Chard on (01635) 503041
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Agenda - Stronger Communities Select Committee to be held on Tuesday, 16 February 2010 (continued)

To: Councillors Ellen Crumly, David Holtby, Mollie Lock, Alan Macro (Vice-Chair), Irene Neill (Chair) and Ieuan Tuck

Substitutes: Councillors Jeff Beck, Roger Hunneman, Andrew Rowles and Julian Swift-Hook

Agenda

Part I

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| 1 | Apologies
To receive apologies for inability to attend the meeting (if any). | |
| 2 | Minutes
To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 5 October 2009 and 11 November 2009. | 1 - 6 |
| 3 | Declarations of Interest
To receive any Declarations of Interest from Members. | |
| 4 | Stronger Communities Partnership briefing
Purpose: To receive a briefing on the work of the Stronger Communities Partnership. | |
| 5 | Supporting small schools
Purpose: To consider the Terms of Reference for a review into supporting small schools. | 7 - 8 |
| 6 | Work Programme
Purpose: To consider and prioritise the work programme for the remainder of 2009/10 and 2010/11. | 9 - 14 |

Andy Day
Head of Policy and Communication

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Agenda Item 2

STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 OCTOBER 2009

Councillors: Irene Neill (*Chairman*) (P), Ellen Crumly (P), David Holtby (AP), Mollie Lock (P), Alan Macro (*Vice-Chairman*) (P), Ieuan Tuck (P).

Also present: Councillor Brian Bedwell, Councillor Barbara Alexander, Andy Tubbs (Chief Advisor for School Improvement), Sam Shepherd (Economic Development Officer), Andrew Breavington (School Improvement Advisor), Chris Bryan (National Challenge Advisor), Alan Bartlett (School Improvement Partners), Michael Wheale (Executive Headteacher, John O'Gaunt School), Paul Dick (Executive Headteacher, Trinity School and Interim Executive Board Chairman for Winchcombe Primary School), Linda Valenti (Executive Headteacher, John Rankin Junior School), Charlotte Wilson (Associate Headteacher, Trinity School), Neil Spurdell (Headteacher, John O'Gaunt School) and one member of the press.

PART I

11. APOLOGIES.

An apology for inability to attend the meeting was received on behalf of Councillor David Holtby.

12. MINUTES.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6th July 2009 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RESOLVED that Sam Shepherd would follow up the availability of the Skills and Enterprise Action Plan.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest received.

14. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S TRUST BRIEF.

Andy Tubbs outlined that it was a statutory requirement for the Council to lead a partnership of organisations/agencies working with children and their families through a Children and Young People's Trust. Andy Tubbs indicated that all statutory partners had a duty to co-operate through better information sharing, joined-up working, shared planning/commissioning of services and effective early intervention.

Andy Tubbs stated that the last Joint Area Review (December 07) judged West Berkshire to be providing 'good' services and when this was last updated in the 2008 Annual Performance Assessment by OFSTED (December 2008), services were again rated as 'good' against all categories.

The Children and Young People's Plan covered 2008-11 and was updated annually to guide aims, priorities and action against all five every child matters outcome areas. Andy Tubbs flagged up that planning was guided by two overarching themes:

- reducing inequalities including narrowing the gap between the lowest achievers and the average

- ensuring that we set high expectations for all against our already high baseline.

15. SCHOOLS' STANDARDS REVIEW

Andy Tubbs gave an overview of the criteria for schools in National Challenge which were, those judged against the percentage of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades at A*-C including English and maths. National Challenge started in June 2007 when the Department of Children Schools and Families announced a new floor target of 30% minimum. Andy Tubbs indicated there were two West Berkshire schools in National Challenge (John O'Gaunt and Trinity).

Andy Tubbs highlighted the criteria for schools in Special Measures which were, those judged by OFSTED as not providing an acceptable standard of education against a range of measures in the Framework for School Inspection. Andy Tubbs indicated there were two West Berkshire schools in Special Measures (John Rankin Junior and Deanefield).

Andy Tubbs drew attention to the fact that there were rising expectations on school performance and an equally increasing number of demands on schools to balance in-class time and overall school management. The Council had provided ongoing support for schools in many different forms but once a school is in National Challenge or Special Measures, powers the Council could enact include:

- Issuing a formal Warning Notice to the governing body
- Placing additional governors on the governing body
- Replacing the governing body with an Interim Executive Board
- Withdrawal of the delegated budget
- Requiring a school to federate with a successful school
- Placing an Executive head teacher in the school to strengthen leadership
- Closure of the school and replacement with a Trust School or an Academy.

Andy Tubbs highlighted that the most important factors in a successful school were strong leadership, good governance and consistently high quality of teaching and learning. Andy Tubbs indicated that weaknesses in leadership had been, among other factors, a prime cause of underperformance in struggling West Berkshire schools. Andy Tubbs drew attention to the high percentages seen in categorising West Berkshire schools and explained that comparison with similar local authorities might be misleading because the number of school in West Berkshire were comparatively low.

Councillor Barbara Alexander added to the presentation by saying that poor results might be explained by certain cohorts. Councillor Barbara Alexander flagged up that parental concern could influence the quality of students that local authority schools receive and that the press could be responsible for influencing parental confidence. Councillor Barbara Alexander discussed the Standards and Effectiveness Panel and suggested it be given more powers to intervene in a school earlier (i.e. before they are placed in a category) and revising the Panel's Terms of Reference might assist this. Councillor Irene Neill supported Councillor Barbara Alexander's comments.

Alan Bartlett said that a School Improvement Partner only had limited time to work with a school to enact improvement and this could at times come too late to assist

certain cohorts. Chris Bryan welcomed the additional funding West Berkshire Council had made available over and above government funding to support struggling schools.

Michael Wheale indicated that strong leadership from the Head Teacher had the biggest impact, particularly because it models for other staff, directs budgets and therefore maintains good teaching staff. Paul Dick suggested that the Council's intervention powers could be used earlier to prevent schools being categorised and advocated Interim Executive Boards as a method. Paul Dick stated that at times too many people could be involved in school improvement.

Linda Valenti said school improvement should focus on what the school did well and build on the strengths through a tailored approach. School Improvement Partners were said to be a vital part of the picture.

Andrew Breavington raised the need to grow local leaders in West Berkshire schools so succession planning was more successful.

Councillor Irene Neill queried the experience of Executive Head Teachers. Linda Valenti said the partnership model worked well but added that teaming up with other schools should not just be over a problem and could be encouraged on an ongoing basis. Chris Bryan agreed that it was important that schools did not become isolated and added that links with universities were crucial for attracting graduates. Michael Wheale indicated that the Executive Head Teacher approach did not work too well in John O'Gaunt as there was a lack of clarity on who held decision making power. Michael added that affordable levels of housing were a significant factor in securing good teachers in this area.

Councillor Irene Neill asked what the impact of the Intensifying Support Programme had been. Andy Tubbs stated that there had been some success in some schools in literacy and numeracy but the picture was complicated and depended on the level of commitment.

Councillor Alan Macro queried how the successful school Head Teachers support the less successful sufficiently, whilst maintaining standards in their own schools. Paul Dick outlined that it was about keeping an eye on the ball but that a Head Teachers own performance could improve as a result of expanding their experience. Alan Bartlett drew attention to 'Gaining Ground' an initiative that joined schools up nationally and was seeing Denefield join with a school in Cirencester.

Irene Neill asked Andy Tubbs how soon he would be alerted to a school in trouble and what would help make intervention more timely. Andy Tubbs mentioned that the Council had introduced a new risk assessment procedure so an early warning system should be in place and following this a 'formal advise notice' could be issued to governors to set out concerns ahead of any formal warnings.

Linda Valenti made a plea that interventions of any kind be managed carefully with staff to prevent morale from deteriorating.

Councillor Irene Neill thanked all the officers and guests for attending the meeting and suggested that the Committee met on another day to allow time to consider their recommendations.

Officers and guests departed.

RESOLVED that the Committee would meet on the evening (6pm) of 11th November to consider their recommendations.

16. WORK PROGRAMME 2009/10.

The Committee discussed item OSMC/09/24 (improved use of public transport) and agreed they would like to look at this between October 2009 and January 2010 in a 'task group' environment. Item OSMC/09/41 (commissioning education and training services for 16-19 year olds) was discussed and considered for a piece of work in the Committee's January meeting. The Committee also wished to consider OSMC/09/42 (supporting small schools) between its January and April meetings in a 'task group' environment.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme would be amended to consider OSMC/09/24 (improved use of public transport) in a task group environment between October 2009 and January 2010. Item OSMC/09/41 (commissioning education and training services for 16-19 year olds) would be considered in January 2010. OSMC/09/42 (supporting small schools) would be considered between January and April 2010 in a task group environment.

FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee agreed to meet at 6pm on 11th November 2009 to consider the evidence from this meeting and make their recommendations around school performance. The January meeting was moved from the 4th to the 18th January 2010.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 8.45pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature:

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

STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE TASK GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 NOVEMBER 2009

Councillors: Irene Neill (*Chairman*) (P), Ellen Crumly (P), David Holtby (P), Mollie Lock (P), Alan Macro (*Vice-Chairman*) (AP), Ieuan Tuck (P).

Also present: Sam Shepherd (Economic Development Officer).

PART I

17. APOLOGIES.

An apology for inability to attend the meeting was received on behalf of Councillor Alan Macro.

18. SCHOOLS' STANDARDS REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS.

Councillor Irene Neill stated that the purpose of the meeting was to determine the Committee's recommendations after the reports and evidence received during its meeting on the 5th October 2009.

Councillor Irene Neill highlighted that the most salient point for the review is children have one chance at an education and this must be as good as it possibly can be. Councillor Irene Neill expressed frustration with the low profile given to the Standards and Effectiveness Panel and suggested that the Panel's concerns go forward as Part II reports to other Councillors and senior officers. Councillors Mollie Lock and Ellen Crumly agreed the Panel's inability to enact change once it identified a problem in a school was frustrating.

Councillor Ellen Crumly stated that the work of the Standards and Effectiveness Panel was valuable in allowing an exchange between Councillors and schools.

The Committee discussed Andy Tubbs' report and recommendations presented on the 5th October 2009 and agreed the following priorities for helping to improve school standards:

1. Where local authority officers and Members have significant concerns about individual schools:
 - a) Ensure that the Standards & Effectiveness Panel has a clear role in monitoring progress and the effectiveness of any early intervention;
 - b) Concerns form a Part II report that goes to the ward member, portfolio holder, shadow portfolio holder, Children and Young People Directorate Management Team and the Chief Executive.
2. Further develop the existing programme of leadership development available across all schools through the local hub of the National College for School Leadership;
3. To improve financial planning and management in schools;
 - a) Bring forward proposals with the School Funding Forum to enhance the provision of School Business Managers in schools in order to

enable Head teachers to concentrate more fully on standards and learning;

- b) Strengthen the monitoring of school financial planning and reporting;
- 4. Enhancing the training available to school governors to strengthen their role in monitoring performance;
- 5. Bring forward proposals in consultation with secondary schools to strengthen the recruitment and retention of specialist teachers, especially in mathematics and science.

RESOLVED that Sam Shepherd would circulate minutes with a draft report for the OSMC and draft Terms of Reference for the review of access to public transport.

19. FUTURE MEETINGS.

The Committee agreed to meet in a task group format in January 2010 to begin considering the accessibility of public transport. The next formal meeting of the Committee would be, as previously agreed, on the 18th January 2010 at 6.30pm.

(The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and closed at 7.10pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature:

Agenda Item 5

Title of Report:	Supporting small schools	Item 5
Report to be considered by:	Stronger Communities Select Committee	
Date of Meeting:	16 February 2010	

Purpose of Report: To consider the Terms of Reference for a review into supporting small schools.

Recommended Action: To agree draft Terms of Reference for the review.

Stronger Communities Select Committee Chairman	
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Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The item to support small schools was inherited from the Children and Young People Policy Development Commission to review the educational viability and ongoing sustainability of small schools.
- 1.2 Members are asked to consider what needs to be included in the Terms of Reference for this review. Areas to cover could include the ways in which small schools operate, the obstacles they face and the options available to increase the support provided to them.
- 1.3 The Head of Education Services has been invited for the item to aid discussion, answer any questions and to help frame the Terms of Reference and review methodology.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Stronger Communities Select Committee agrees draft terms of reference for the review, which will then be forwarded to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission for their endorsement.

Appendices

There are no Appendices to this report.

Agenda Item 6

Title of Report:	Work Programme	Item 6
Report to be considered by:	Stronger Communities Select Committee	
Date of Meeting:	16 February 2010	

Purpose of Report: To consider and prioritise the work programme for the remainder of 2009/10 and 2010/11.

Recommended Action: To consider the current items and agree any future areas for scrutiny.

Stronger Communities Select Committee Chairman	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Irene Neill – Tel (0118) 9712671
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Supporting Information

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting of 16 June 2009 the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission agreed the work programme of the Commission and that of the scrutiny select committees for the 2009/10 municipal year.
- 1.2 Members are requested to consider the latest work programme of the Select Committee at Appendix A, prioritise the items listed and discuss any future areas for scrutiny for this year and for 2010/11.
- 1.3 An item in respect of the housing waiting list was added to the Select Committee's work programme by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission when it last met. It is for the Select Committee to prioritise, scope and then consider the item.

Appendices

Appendix A – Stronger Communities Select Committee Work Programme

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission

Officers Consulted: Policy and Scrutiny Manager

Trade Union: N/A

APPENDIX A: STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Reference (a)	Subject/purpose (b)	Methodology (c)	Expected outcome (d)	Review Body (e)	Dates (f)	Lead Officer(s)/ Service Area (g)	Portfolio Holder(s) (h)	Comments (h)
OSMC/09/35	School Standards To assess the performance of schools in the district to understand why some are in 'special measures' or in the 'National Challenge' and identify where possible further measures that could be taken to improve their performance.	Information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers, and other expert witnesses.	Identify where possible further measures that could be taken to improve performance.	SCSC	Start: 06/07/2009 End: 16/02/2010	Andy Tubbs - 2726 Education	Councillor Barbara Alexander	Terms of reference for a review approved by the Management Commission.
OSMC/09/24	Accessibility of public transport Review accessibility of public transport in West Berkshire for all residents.	Information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers, and external partners.	For review.	GSC/SC SC	Start: 19/01/2010 End:	Bryan Lyttle - 2638 and Mark Edwards - 2208 Planning & Trading Standards and Highways & Transport	Councillor Alan Law & Councillor David Betts	Joint work between GSC and SCSC to review accessibility of public transport and contribute to the work on Local Transport Plan 3. Item 68 merged with this item
OSMC/09/36	West Berkshire Partnership sub-partnership briefings To receive a briefing of the work of relevant sub-partnerships.	Information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers, and external partners.	Information items.	SCSC	Start: 06/07/2009 End: 26/04/2010		Councillor Graham Pask	As requested by the Select Committee.
OSMC/09/37	Partnership activity in response to the recession. Assessment of the impact of the measures taken by the West Berkshire Partnership to mitigate the local effects of the recession.	Information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers, and external partners.	Monitoring item	SCSC	Start: 26/04/2010 End:	Mark Harris - 2568 Policy & Communication	Councillor Graham Pask/Keith Chopping	High profile activity that is very topical that will give visibility to the work that the Council and its partners are doing on behalf of residents and businesses.
OSMC/09/43	Policy for Private Housing Sector Renewal To review initiatives relating to private sector housing renewal policy.	In meeting review.		SCSC	Start: 26/04/2010 End:	June Graves - 2733 Housing & Performance	Councillor Alan Law	Meets acceptance criteria re budget examination.
OSMC/09/42	Supporting Small schools To review funding pupil numbers and educational viability.	Information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers, and external partners.		SCSC	Start: End:	Ian Pearson - 2729 Education	Councillor Barbara Alexander	Retaining small rural schools is currently Council policy.

APPENDIX A: STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Reference (a)	Subject/purpose (b)	Methodology (c)	Expected outcome (d)	Review Body (e)	Dates (f)	Lead Officer(s)/ Service Area (g)	Portfolio Holder(s) (h)	Comments (h)
OSMC/09/38	Whether young people moving into adulthood are sufficiently equipped to be independent, including the way they access recreational activities. To give consideration to undertaking a review that examines whether those moving from childhood to adulthood are equipped to be sufficiently independent to operate as young adults, including the way they access recreational activities.	In meeting review with information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers.	To examine whether those moving from childhood to adulthood are equipped to be sufficiently independent to operate as young adults.	SCSC	Start: End:			This was a recommendation of the facilities for young people task group that was endorsed by the OSC.
OSMC/09/39	Playbuilder Programme Assessment of arrangements for improving play provision.	In meeting review with information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers.	To improve play provision.	SCSC	Start: End:	David Hogg - 2815 Children's Commissioning & Quality	Councillor Barbara Alexander	High profile activity that addresses concerns raised consistently by local people.
OSMC/09/40	Aiming High for Disabled Children Review of progress in implementing the strategy.	In meeting review with information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers.	Monitoring item	SCSC	Start: End:	Head of Children's Services - 2735 Children & Youth Services	Councillor Barbara Alexander	The strategy is in its very early stages. Possible review in a years time. HSC have also requested a briefing paper.
OSMC/09/41	Commissioning education and training services for 16-19 year olds To consider whether scrutiny has a role in reviewing diploma provision across the district with local authorities taking over the role of Learning and Skills Councils.	Information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers, and external partners.	To be identified.	SCSC	Start: End:	Ian Pearson - 2729 Education	Councillor Barbara Alexander	An area identified for potential future review by the Select Committee.
OSMC/09/44	Review of special schools To review current role and breadth of needs met by special schools.	Information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers, and external partners.		SCSC	Start: End:	Ian Pearson - 2729 Education	Councillor Barbara Alexander	If role can be extended, potential to reduce out of area placements.
OSMC/09/45	School meals For the Select Committee to discuss.	Information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers, and external partners.	To be identified.	SCSC	Start: End:	Ian Pearson - 2729 Education	Councillor Barbara Alexander	Currently subject of BIEP review.

APPENDIX A: STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Reference (a)	Subject/purpose (b)	Methodology (c)	Expected outcome (d)	Review Body (e)	Dates (f)	Lead Officer(s)/ Service Area (g)	Portfolio Holder(s) (h)	Comments (h)
OSMC/09/46	Implementation of the Social Inclusion Strategy Assessment of the effectiveness of the strategy in addressing the needs of residents most excluded within the district.	Information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officer via in meeting review	To consider ways to increase the inclusion of residents.	SCSC	Start: End:	Teresa Bell - 2730 Community Services	Councillor Joe Mooney	Fits the acceptance criteria and likely to be high profile with inspectors.
OSMC/09/47	Monitor changes introduced to the Youth Service To monitor annually the progress of the changes being introduced to the Youth Service and the impact that they make on an annual basis until 1 year after all changes have been fully introduced.	Information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officer via in meeting review	Monitoring item	SCSC	Start: End:	Mark Vernon - 2552 Children & Youth Services	Councillor Barbara Alexander	This was a recommendation of the facilities for young people task group that was endorsed by the OSC.
OSMC/09/68	Improved access to public transport Review accessibility of public transport	Information supplied by, and questioning of, lead officers, and external partners.	To be identified.	SCSC	Start: End:	Mark Edwards - 2208 Highways & Transport	Councillor David Betts	To review accessibility of public transport. Merged with GSC.
OSMC/10/77	Housing waiting list To be identified.		To be identified.	SCSC	Start: End:	June Graves - 2733 Housing & Performance		As requested by OSMC on 26th January 2010.