

# **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION**

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 14 SEPTEMBER 2010**

**Councillors Present:** Brian Bedwell (Chairman), Geoff Findlay, Irene Neill, David Rendel, Tony Vickers (Substitute) (In place of Jeff Brooks), Quentin Webb, Emma Webster

**Also Present:** Nick Carter (Chief Executive), Jason Teal (Performance, Research & Consultation Manager), Stephen Chard (Policy Officer), David Lowe (Scrutiny and Partnerships Manager)

**Apologies for inability to attend the meeting:** Councillor Jeff Brooks

### **PART I**

#### **64. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 August 2010 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **65. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Emma Webster declared an interest in Agenda Item 9, and reported that, as her interest was personal and prejudicial, she would be leaving the meeting during the course of consideration of the matter.

Councillor David Rendel declared an interest in Agenda Item 9, but reported that, as his interest was personal and not prejudicial, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

#### **66. Actions from previous Minutes**

The Commission received an update on actions following the previous meeting (Agenda Item 4).

It was noted that all monies from the 16 Section 106 accounts which dated back to Berkshire County Council had been spent in their entirety. This information was originally requested by the Resource Management Select Committee. One question remained to be clarified and this would be reported directly to the Select Committee.

The briefing note clarifying the nationally accepted performance level of 35% for upheld planning appeals was noted.

The first meeting of the Performance Management Task Group was due to be held on 16 September 2010.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

#### **67. Items Called-in following the Executive on 2 September 2010**

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

#### **68. Councillor Call for Action**

No new Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) items were raised for discussion.

#### **69. Council Plan Outcomes 2010/11 - Quarter 1 Performance Update**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION -  
14 SEPTEMBER 2010 - MINUTES**

The Commission considered the quarter 1 Council Plan outcomes performance report (Agenda Item 7).

Jason Teal advised that of the 110 indicators, 19 were annual indicators and therefore had not been reported. Of the remaining 91 indicators, 82% were reported as green with the remaining 18% reported as amber. Activities were in hand to manage issues relating to the amber indicators.

A concern was raised by Members that a similar position was reported a year ago, but there was a deterioration by year end with a number of indicators being reported as red. It was therefore suggested that greater effort be made to avoid the situation in this financial year, with a particular focus on the amber indicators.

Members queried why some indicators had been reported as no longer valid. Jason Teal explained that in many instances this was due to in-year savings needing to be found following in-year Government budget cuts.

Some of these were national indicators that had not been removed from the national dataset and there was therefore still a need to report on them. There had however been agreement by the Executive that, due to the scale of the cuts, these should be reported as no longer valid and separated from any reds that might be reported for other than financial reasons and where actions could be taken to rectify them.

The Performance Management Task Group was asked to give consideration to this matter as part of their review.

**RESOLVED** that the quarter 1 performance report would be noted and that the Performance Management Task Group would give consideration to those indicators reported as no longer valid.

**70. Greener Select Committee**

The Commission considered a report (Agenda Item 8) on the work of the Greener Select Committee.

Councillor Emma Webster advised that the review of local food was concluded at the last meeting on 7 September 2010. A report, including recommendations, would be presented at the next Commission meeting for approval.

The next piece of work was to review the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and terms of reference would be drafted for the Commission's approval.

**RESOLVED** that the report would be noted.

**71. Healthier Select Committee**

*(Councillor Emma Webster declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda item 9 by virtue of the fact that her employer was conducting the public relations work for the Underwood Road development. As her interest was personal and prejudicial she left the meeting at 6.50pm and took no part in the debate or voting on the matter).*

*(Councillor David Rendel declared a personal interest in Agenda item 9 by virtue of the fact that his wife was a GP in West Berkshire. As his interest was personal and not prejudicial he was permitted to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).*

The Commission considered a report (Agenda Item 9) on the work of the Healthier Select Committee.

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION -  
14 SEPTEMBER 2010 - MINUTES**

Councillor Geoff Findlay updated the Commission following the meeting held on 9 September 2010 where the proposal that NHS Berkshire West did not replace the GP surgery in Underwood Road, when/if development work was completed, was discussed as part of the consultation process.

This view had been taken by NHS Berkshire West as the surgery was not able to provide a full range of services and was expensive to run.

There was some sympathy among Members that residents would need to attend another surgery, but the need of NHS Berkshire West to utilise their resources was understood and the Select Committee supported the view to not replace the Underwood Road surgery.

Separately, the Committee's next review was to consider the issue of bed blocking at the Royal Berkshire Hospital and West Berkshire Community Hospital.

**RESOLVED that** the report would be noted.

**72. Resource Management Select Committee**

*(Councillor Emma Webster rejoined the meeting at 6.55pm).*

The Commission considered a report (Agenda Item 10) on the work of the Resource Management Select Committee.

Councillor David Rendel advised of the discussions held at the Select Committee meeting on 13 September 2010:

- Concern was raised regarding the lack of involvement from the Procurement team on contracts valued at under £10k.
- Feedback was provided from Heads of Service who had been involved in Timelord and generally they were content with how this had progressed. There were some concerns, including desk size and privacy when making confidential telephone calls, but the Select Committee was advised that efforts were being made to address these where possible.
- The risk assessment tool to help manage the stress of employees was supported.
- The timeliness with which the Select Committee could receive budget reports was again discussed and it was resolved that the Head of Finance would circulate some suggested dates.
- There was some concern that potentially vital feedback was lost as a result of the low uptake of exit interviews. The Select Committee requested that efforts were made to increase the level of response.

There was a view among Members of the Commission that even though departing employees had the opportunity to comment they might not wish to and anonymised feedback was a suggested alternative.

Nick Carter repeated the view given by the Head of Human Resources on this issue that retention rates were good and turnover was low and indicators suggested that the majority of staff were content to work for the Council. Therefore feedback from exit interviews was not seen as a priority at this time. Any issues raised within service areas were being addressed directly.

**RESOLVED that** the update would be noted.

**73. Safer Select Committee**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION -  
14 SEPTEMBER 2010 - MINUTES**

The Commission considered a report (Agenda Item 11) on the work of the Safer Select Committee.

Councillor Quentin Webb advised that the fire sprinklers report would hopefully be agreed at the Select Committee's meeting of 20 September 2010, with a likely recommendation being that a policy should be in place for sprinklers in new Council buildings. The Commission asked that information on costs and maintenance be included in the report.

The recommendations produced following the improving public confidence review had been approved by the Executive with some minor amendments.

Work on crime statistics was due to commence at the next meeting.

**RESOLVED that** the update would be noted.

**74. Stronger Communities Select Committee**

The Commission considered a report (Agenda Item 12) on the work of the Stronger Communities Select Committee.

Councillor Irene Neill advised that the first meeting of the Housing Register Task Group had to be postponed and a new date was being arranged. Councillor Tony Vickers, as the Shadow Portfolio Holder for Housing, asked to have the meeting paperwork circulated to him.

The next full meeting of the Select Committee on 21 October 2010 would hopefully consider a report from the task group, as well as to conduct a review of progress with the Playbuilder Programme and to receive a report from the supporting small schools Officer group.

**RESOLVED that** the update would be noted.

**75. West Berkshire Forward Plan - September - December 2010**

The Commission considered the West Berkshire Forward Plan (Agenda Item 13) for the period covering September to December 2010.

**RESOLVED that** the Forward Plan would be noted.

**76. Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission and Select Committee Work Programme**

The Commission considered the work programme of the Commission and Select Committees for 2010/11 (Agenda Item 14).

Councillor Brian Bedwell reminded Members to bring any issues to the Commission's attention so attempts could be made to resolve them.

Councillor Bedwell also informed Members that the recommendations produced following the scrutiny review into the severe winter weather of 2009/10 had been accepted in their entirety by the Executive.

It was advised that parish councils had been pleased with the opportunity to maintain their own grit bins and deciding on their locations. The bins were still to be provided by West Berkshire Council.

Members asked if the issue of whether legal action could be taken against members of the public who had cleared, for example, their own footway had been resolved. Nick Carter was aware of a report that contained information on this issue and he agreed to

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION -  
14 SEPTEMBER 2010 - MINUTES**

forward this to the Commission. Stephen Chard also agreed to discuss this with the Civil Contingencies Manager.

**RESOLVED that:**

- (1) The work programme would be noted.
- (2) Actions relating to the severe weather review would be followed up.

*(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.25 pm)*

**CHAIRMAN** .....

**Date of Signature** .....