

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER 2011

Councillors Present: Brian Bedwell (Chairman), Dominic Boeck, Virginia von Celsing, Marcus Franks, Dave Goff, David Holtby, Mike Johnston, Alan Macro (Substitute) (In place of Jeff Brooks), David Rendel, Tony Vickers, Quentin Webb and Emma Webster

Also Present: Andy Day (Head of Policy and Communication) and Jason Teal (Performance, Research & Consultation Manager), David Baker (Policy Officer) and Councillor Anthony Stansfeld

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Jeff Brooks

Councillor(s) Absent:

PART I

45. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 2nd August 2011 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Page 6, second paragraph - the following topics had been discussed:

The following was added to the list:

- To understand the arrangements in the East of West Berkshire concerning GP Commissioning;
- To understand and review the changes to the ambulance performance indicators.

Note: Councillor David Holtby joined the meeting.

46. Declarations of Interest

Councillor David Rendel declared an interest in Agenda Item 10, 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.

47. Actions from previous Minutes

There was one action followed up from previous Commission meetings:

1. Activities for Teenagers: Examination of the facilities in place for Young People was discussed under agenda Item 9.

48. Items Called-in following the Executive on 8th September 2011

There were no items called-in following the last Executive meeting held on the 8 September 2011.

49. Councillor Call for Action

There were no Councillor Calls for Action.

50. Petitions

There were no petitions to be received at the meeting.

51. Key accountable measures and activities 2011/12. Update on progress: Q1 outturns.

Note: Councillor Emma Webster joined the meeting.

Jason Teal (Performance, Research and Consultation Manager) introduced agenda Item 8, Key accountable measures and activities 2011/12 – Update on progress: Q1 outturns. The report covered data up to the end of June 2011 and was submitted to the Executive on the 8th September 2011. This was a new look report with new information. The report consisted of 39 key measures or activities that had been drawn from individual service plans and focussed on those measures of particular importance / significance to the work of the Council as a whole. Within the 39 measures, 8 were assessed at a single point in time within the year these were currently coded in blue. Of the remaining 31 measures reported at the end of June, 28 were green, 2 amber and one had no data available as yet.

The 2 amber measures reported were:

- **Children in Care** – Core assessments conducted within 35 working days;
- **Housing** – High priority housing grants approved within 9 weeks of receipt of full grant application.

Councillor Brian Bedwell welcomed the much more sensible approach of using fewer measures than the 109 reported within the previous year. He thought the report was much more suitable and easier for both officers to produce and Members to use.

Councillor Tony Vickers enquired who had determined which measures were to be used and how had the targets been derived or justified. Some of the RAG judgements made in Q1 performance report he had caused to doubt the validity of their assessment. For example – **Planning** – The adoption of the Local Development Framework's Core Strategy by March 2012 and Planning applications determined within Government guidelines appeared to be well below target. Similarly Planning appeals upheld at 40% achievement was failing against the national average target of 35%. He was of the opinion that all of these targets should carry an amber or possibly a red assessment.

Jason Teal explained that the RAG assessment was based on the projected year end performance at 31 March 2012. Some measures had profiled targets for each quarter and the RAG assessment was based on the Q1 achievement against the profiled target for Q1.

Councillor Tony Vickers referred to the definition of amber on page 18 of the report: 'Amber means we are behind schedule, but still expect to achieve or complete the measure / activity by year end'

Jason Teal commented that the measures that Councillor Vickers was referring to were assessed green as the Q1 profiled target had been met.

Councillor Anthony Stansfeld (portfolio holder for performance) shared Councillor Vicker's concern and commented that some measures were not linear. A performance plan had been profiled for such measures and the Q1 assessment was based on the performance against the profiled target for that quarter.

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Councillor Dominic Boeck commented that shadow portfolio holders had access to the detailed information behind the measures being reported and were given the opportunity to questions heads of service on the performance measures that officers had reported.

Councillor Brian Bedwell agreed with Councillor Vickers that it would be appropriate to call Planning Officers to attend the next OSMC meeting to enable more detailed scrutiny of the Planning performance to take place.

Councillor Alan Macro commented on **Planning** – determining minor applications – 25% within 8 weeks and an achievement of just 2% in Q1 looked suspect even against a very low profiled target.

Councillor David Rendel agreed that profiled targets needed to be questioned and highlighted the following measures:

- **Page 21: Supporting schools and young people** – young people 16-19 who are NEET;
- **Page 22: Planning** – The proportion of planning appeals which are upheld compared to the national average;
- **Page 23: Customer Focus** – proportion of customers rating Contact Centre customer care as 'good' or 'excellent'

All of these measures Councillor Rendel regarded as Amber not green.

Councillor Dominic Boeck commented that it was important for Members to understand that the targets set for the performance measures were demanding and were intended to stretch achievement over time.

Councillor Marcus Franks referred Members to **Page 23 Culture** – Number of visits to cultural venues supported by WBC, this measure was reported with a Q1 performance of 399,742 against a year end target of 1,500,000 visits. This was assessed correctly as green but with the very recent closure of the museum the year end target may now be in doubt and he asked that officers should provide more explanation in the supporting commentary.

Councillor Brian Bedwell confirmed that Members would like to see more use made of the supporting commentary and asked Jason Teal to take that request away as an action.

Councillor Alan Macro looked at two measures under **Page 20: Children in Care** – 'Core assessments conducted within 35 working days' and 'The level of commissioned early intervention services in CYP Directorate', he thought that they both needed an aggressive action plan and a written supporting commentary.

Councillor David Rendel challenged the definition of amber as written on page 18. It needed revision and a clearer definition. He agreed with Councillor Boeck that targets should be stretching performance but questioned why 13 of the measures set for 2011/12 had easier targets than in 2010/11. He understood why the performance measures had been taken from service plans as there was no Council Plan available. He questioned why the OSMC had had no voice or opportunity in scrutinising the selection of service plan measures and the setting of targets. He was of the opinion that the Executive and Officers action to reduce the number of measures from 109 to 39 was far too drastic. For example, there was significant public concern over crime in West Berkshire but the number of measures had been reduced from 7 to 1. The measure chosen was the 'number of young people entering the Youth Justice System'.

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Public concern regarded the number of house burglaries to be too high and to be much more important to West Berkshire residents. He questioned why only 3 of the 28 red measures in 2010/11 had been carried over into 2011/12. This seemed a low proportion if the objective was to use challenging targets.

Finally, **Page 20: Housing** – People presenting as homeless who are prevented from being homeless an achievement of 85% appeared to be a suspicious figure.

Councillor Anthony Stansfeld responded to Councillor Rendel concern over crime measures. The Safer Communities Partnership group review all the crime measures in detail. The number of house burglaries that had been reported in West Berkshire had fallen in 2011/12 and was within target. He encouraged all shadow portfolio holders to look at performance data in more detail and discuss any concerns with heads of service.

Councillor Emma Webster commented it was important to select targets that the Council had direct control over. Crime targets were heavily dependent upon the performance of the police and crime targets continued to be measured and reported in partnership through the Safer Communities Partnership group. It was important that the Council performance measures based on the service delivery plans were selected and set with stretching targets. It was realistic however, for some measures, to set lower targets for example where resources had been reduced or the measure was based on a smaller sample size or pool of activity. Councillor Webster supported the action to bring Planning Officers to the next meeting of OSMC.

Several Members added their comments that the definition of amber on page 18 of the report need reworking and Jason Teal was asked to produce a clearer definition in his next report.

Councillors Vickers and Rendel re-iterated the need for OSMC to have the opportunity to scrutinise and influence both the selection of performance measures / activities and the setting of targets in the future.

Councillor Anthony Stansfeld reminded shadow portfolio holders that should they have any concerns on performance data that they did have access to more detailed performance information and they should ask heads of service to provide better commentaries where they thought it was necessary. He reminded all Members that with regard to the selection and setting of performance measures this process always took place each year in the April / May time period.

Councillor Brian Bedwell drew the debate to a close and thanked both Councillor Anthony Stansfeld and Jason Teal for their efforts. He requested that a meeting be set up between the chair and vice chair of the OSMC and the Council's performance portfolio holder and performance officer to follow up on the recommendations and concerns raised by OSMC.

RESOLVED that:

1. Jason Teal was requested to produce a clearer definition of the amber status in his next performance report that addressed the issues raised by OSMC;
2. Heads of Service and performance officers were encouraged to make greater use of the supporting commentary;
3. Planning Officers to be called to the next meeting of the OSMC on Tuesday 1st November to be questioned on planning performance;

4. A meeting to be scheduled between Jason Teal, Councillor Anthony Stansfeld with Councillors Brian Bedwell and Jeff Brooks to take place before the next OSMC meeting on 1st November 2011.

52. Examination of the facilities in place for young people

Note: As this Item 9 was under discussion and the debate moved to include the Greenham project, Councillor Marcus Franks 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 but not to vote on the matter.

Councillor Brian Bedwell introduced the discussion on Item 9 and commented that he was not satisfied with the presentation made on Activities for Teenagers at the August OSMC meeting. He was of the opinion that it raised more questions than it had answered and the topic required further scrutiny. It was important to look at two or three targeted areas and the views of parish councillors should be included.

Councillor Tony Vickers agreed with a focus on some specific areas but added it was most important to include young people's views and consult with young people's groups.

Councillor Marcus Franks commented that a focus on 3 areas – urban, high deprivation and rural would be useful. He thought it was important to map current provision of facilities and build up details such as average number of attendees, cost of provision, cost of attendance and carry out some general research of need and demand.

Councillor Alan Macro wanted to cover provision in general and not just Council provided or facilitated services.

Councillor David Holtby supported Councillor Macro's view and added that the Task Group should look at young people's needs across an age range of either 9-21 or 11-21 and not just teenagers.

Councillor Brian Bedwell stated that the residents' survey had for many years shown that more facilities for younger people was seen as a top priority.

Councillor David Rendel asked for paragraph 3.1 of the covering report to be reworded by replacing 'teenagers' with 'young people' and that the Task Group was best placed to determine the age range it should cover.

Councillor Brian Bedwell agreed that it should be worded as young people and Julia Waldman's Youth Services report should go into the Task Group for consideration.

Andy Day agreed that Julian Waldman's report should go to the Task Group and it was most important to talk to young people. The Greenham project should be consulted for their views as it had been successful and had resulted in a high level of buy-in by young people. Understanding the role of the 'Big Society' and how it could be successfully delivered was key. Examining other youth projects such as the work at Wired Rock, Hungerford, Clay Hill and Kintbury would be helpful.

Brian Bedwell asked Members to consider volunteering to join the Task Group and asked those interested to register that interest with David Baker. The Task Group could also co-opt volunteers from outside OSMC.

RESOLVED that the covering report and the comments made by the OSMC be used as a guide to the Task Group in setting and agreeing their final Terms of Reference.

53. Health Scrutiny Panel

Councillor David Rendel declared an interest in Agenda Item 10, 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.

The Commission considered a verbal report (Agenda Item 10) on the work of the Scrutiny Health Panel (SHP).

Councillor Quentin Webb confirmed that two additional work items had been added to the Health Scrutiny Panel work programme at their last meeting on 19th July 2011.

They were as follows:

- To understand the arrangements in the East of West Berkshire concerning GP Commissioning;
- To understand and review the changes to the ambulance indicators.

These work items would be discussed at the next meeting of the Health Scrutiny Panel to be held on Tuesday 4th October 2011.

RESOLVED that the verbal report would be noted.

54. Resource Management Working Group

The Commission considered a verbal report (Agenda Item 11) on the work of the Resource Management Working Group (RMWG).

Councillor Tony Vickers confirmed that there had been no meeting of the Resource Management Working Group since the last meeting of the OSMC.

The first meeting of RMWG was scheduled for Tuesday 27th September which would be addressing the following work items:

- Quarter 1 Establishment report;
- Legal and Electoral Services Budget;
- Finance Performance Report (Month 4);
- Strategic Risk Register.

The RMWG was also proposing an additional work item to scrutinise part of the Parkway Development in the areas of:

- Car parking fees;
- Commissioning of affordable housing.

Councillor Emma Webster commented that as all the original detailed work on the Parkway Development had been carried out by the Newbury Town Centre Task Group (NTCTG) that the work item should be addressed by that group.

Andy Day (Head of Policy & Communication) commented that he supported the view that Newbury Town Centre Task Group had the expertise and knowledge to address the work item. The OSMC had two Members on the NTCTG in Councillors Mike Johnston and Marcus Franks. Other Councillors on the NTCTG were Paul Bryant, Roger Hunneman, David Allen and Jeff Beck.

Councillor Tony Vickers support the idea that NTCTG should address the Parkway Develop work item.

Councillor David Rendel commented that there were legal and financial areas of the Parkway Development that were important to the whole of West Berkshire and not just

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Newbury Town Centre and these needed wider discussion and may need to come back to the OSMC.

Councillor Brian Bedwell supported the view that NTCTG should address the Parkway Development work item and any feedback could be brought through the RMWG.

RESOLVED that the NTCTG would be requested to review and address the Parkway Development work item.

Councillor Tony Vickers confirmed that the RMWG work programme included the following work items:

- Quarter reports on revenue, capital and establishment;
- Legal and Electoral Services Budget;
- Finance Performance Report (Month 4);
- Strategic Risk Register;
- Highways Asset Management Plan;
- Energy Saving;
- MTFs;
- Timelord;
- Procedures for Blue Badge Holders.

RESOLVED that the report would be noted.

55. West Berkshire Forward Plan September - December 2011

The Commission considered the West Berkshire Forward Plan (Agenda Item 11) for the period covering September to December 2011.

RESOLVED that: The Forward Plan be noted.

56. Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Work Programme

The Commission considered its work programme and that of the Health Scrutiny Panel and Resource Management Working Group for 2011/12.

The changes to the combined OSMC work programme resolved under Items 9, 10 and 11 would be made.

RESOLVED that:

The changes to the work programme would be noted.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.42 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature