

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 9 JUNE 2011

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

**Also Present:** Councillor Anthony Stansfeld, Councillor Roger Hunneman, Supt Robin Rickard (Thames Valley Police), Nick Carter (Chief Executive), Andy Day (Head of Policy and Communication), Susan Powell (Safer Communities Partnership Team Manager) and Ian Priestley (Chief Internal Auditor), Stephen Chard (Policy Officer), Councillor Roger Hunneman, David Lowe (Partnerships & Scrutiny Manager), Supt Robin Rickard (Thames Valley Police) and Councillor Anthony Stansfeld

**Apologies for inability to attend the meeting:** Councillor Virginia von Celsing, Councillor David Holtby and Councillor Tony Vickers

### PART I

#### 8. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2011 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2011 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2011 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendment:

Item 7 – Membership and Terms of Reference for the Resource Management Working Group – resolutions one and two:

- (1) Councillor Tony Vickers would be appointed as the Chairman of the **Resource Management Working Group**.
- (2) Councillor David Holtby would be appointed as the Vice-Chairman of the **Resource Management Working Group**.

#### 9. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Dave Goff and Mike Johnston declared an interest in Agenda Item 8, but reported that, as their interest was personal and not prejudicial, they determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on 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.

#### 10. Actions from previous Minutes

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

**1 March 2011 – the Council's Response to the Severe Weather of Winter 2010/11**

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It was agreed that an update would be requested from the Head of Highways and Transport in relation to the resolutions agreed for this item.

### **18 May 2011 – the Three Year Highway Improvement Programme 2011/12 – 2013/14**

A request had been made for a training session for Members to provide a greater understanding on how the road condition was assessed and the process used in determining the annual Highways Improvement Programme. It was agreed that the Head of Highways and Transport would be asked to confirm progress with this.

**RESOLVED** that the Head of Highways and Transport would be asked to provide an update on the areas described above.

### **11. Items Called-in following the Executive on 24 May 2011**

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

### **12. Councillor Call for Action**

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

### **13. Petitions**

No petitions were brought to the Commission for consideration.

### **14. Transfer of the West Berkshire Council CCTV control room to the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead**

*(Councillor Dave Goff declared a personal interest in Agenda item 8 by virtue of the fact that he worked for Virgin Media, however he was not involved in this project. As his interest was personal and not prejudicial he determined to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).*

*(Councillor Mike Johnston declared a personal interest in Agenda item 8 by virtue of the fact that he worked for a communications company, however it had no involvement in this project. As his interest was personal and not prejudicial he determined to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).*

The Commission considered a report (Agenda Item 8) reviewing the Council's transfer of the CCTV Control Room function to the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM).

Andy Day gave a presentation to the Commission by way of introducing the item and made the following points:

- The responsibility for CCTV had been with Policy and Communication since May 2008.
- The previous system was analogue based and VHS recorders underpinned this system. Reliability was an issue as were the quality of the images produced. The cameras were analogue tilt and zoom. The system was not fit for purpose and had revenue costs of approximately £500k per annum which was unsustainable.
- The provision of CCTV was a non statutory service and as such a full tendering exercise was conducted on the open market.
- The contract was awarded to the RBWM who were found to be the most competitive in terms of price and quality. The contract provided live monitoring for 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The revised contract achieved an annual revenue saving of £250k. In addition the support of the Shop Safe and Pub Watch

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schemes was retained and the improved digital system gave better quality evidential images.

- The Prince 2 Project Management Methodology Principles were adopted for the project. A Project Board and Project Team were also put in place.
- A range of providers were involved. On West Berkshire Council's (WBC's) side, services were procured from BT (Redcare) – which was responsible for BT commissioning; BT (Openreach) – which was responsible for operational activities such as cabling and equipment installation; Virgin Media – which was responsible for operational activities such as cabling and equipment installation and Co Channel – which was responsible for operational activities in respect of radio transmissions. The RBWM procured services from Chubb – which was responsible for operational activities in respect of the CCTV cameras and Access Infrastructure – which was responsible for operational activities in respect of computer equipment and software.
- For compatibility with the digital Control Room and image storage systems new Dome CCTV cameras were installed to replace the 'old' analogue cameras. Dome CCTV cameras have the distinct advantage in that it is not easy to see where they are pointing, a significant improvement on the previous cameras and in addition they provide superior quality images.
- In advance of the 'shift' to the new system there was much close liaison with the RBWM. This involved RBWM CCTV Operators visiting West Berkshire to become familiar both with the area and particular individuals of interest. Visits of this sort would continue.
- Issues which delayed the 'shift' were highlighted as the severe weather experienced in December 2010; technical issues which arose from the cabling diagram and presentation of circuits; an unexpected level of bureaucracy in dealing with other organisations, most particularly BT who gave a 90 day lead in time for each new request regardless of there being a contract in place; and finding an appropriate balance with regard to communications to ensure that while people were informed, they were not unduly concerned by any suggestion that West Berkshire was an unsafe place. It should also be remembered that CCTV was not the only deterrent to criminals, the responsibility for community safety also fell to the public, retailers, the Police and partner organisations.
- The meeting held with all contractors on 26 October 2010 gave every indication that the 'shift' would go smoothly in December 2010. Regular contact continued via a range of e-mails, telephone calls and urgent meetings when necessary. Testing of different aspects of the equipment was another element of the project.
- Parish and Town Councils, Thames Valley Police (TVP), Shop Safe/Pub Watch, Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGs) and the Town Centre Partnership were all briefed prior to the 'shift' and on an ongoing basis to ensure they were kept accurately informed where appropriate. Frequent communication was also conducted with the Portfolio and Shadow Portfolio Holder.
- The media coverage was an issue. This gave an indication that cameras were not working and suggested that Newbury Town Centre was an unsafe place. The information being made public was inappropriate and led to residents being misinformed, potentially generating a false perception. This was detrimental to residents, retailers and the area as a whole.

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- Lessons had been learnt from the process. The decision was taken to keep the control room as operational as possible, but it might have been beneficial to close it for a limited period of time. In terms of communications, greater caution would be exerted with regard to sharing information. The lead up to the local elections was also not considered to be a good time to work on a project of this importance. It was clear that the level of customer service delivered by WBC to its residents was not equalled by that provided to the Council by some of the contractors involved in this project.
- In conclusion, there were delays which were apologised for. However, the service, which was non-statutory, had been protected for a period of five years, there had been no reduction in the live monitoring of CCTV cameras, the system had been significantly improved and would save £1.25m over the next five years.
- Finally, Andy Day paid tribute to the significant level of time and effort put into the project by Susan Powell.

Councillor Anthony Stansfeld, as Portfolio Holder, made the following points:

- CCTV in West Berkshire was fully funded by the Council, other than a financial contribution made by Vodafone some time ago. This differed to the majority of local authorities across the Thames Valley where CCTV was subsidised to some degree by TVP.
- A change had to be made to the previous system and other local authorities were following West Berkshire's lead.
- The RBWM were the right organisation to manage this function for the Council. They had also recently been named as one of the best three CCTV operators in the country (out of 350).
- A lesson had been learnt on timing. The winter was not the ideal time to schedule the 'shift', although the weather experienced in December 2010 was more severe than expected. However, the project could not have been brought forward as not all the elements of the contract were in place and any delay would have created ongoing cost implications.
- Also in relation to timing, the lead up to the local elections was not the ideal time. While Liberal Democrat Members had acted appropriately and responsibly, the same could not be said of the local Labour party which generated inappropriate publicity. Councillor Stansfeld added that the tight timescales were partly due to reduced funding and this came as a result of the funding position inherited from the Labour Government.
- Another lesson related to underestimating the capability of BT to do what was required of them. These problems had been experienced elsewhere.
- Councillor Stansfeld took the opportunity to thank the Officers involved, most notably Andy Day, Susan Powell, Simon Arter (WBC ICT) and Stuart Messum (RBWM ICT).

Councillor Roger Hunneman, speaking as Shadow Portfolio Holder and as the Member who called the item to the Commission, made the following points:

- He called the item to scrutiny as it was an area of public concern in December 2010. Councillor Hunneman was regularly approached at that time with questions and concerns. These concerns were not helped by the many conflicting reports in the press. Also in respect of communications, Elected Members appeared to be

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not as well informed immediately prior to and post Christmas as was necessary and in comparison to, for example, retailers. A communications policy should have been in place in the event of difficulties.

- He felt that the timing of the 'shift' was poor, i.e. in the lead up to Christmas and when there was a risk of severe weather. This did lead to complications.
- It was important to learn lessons from the process for the future.

Councillor Brian Bedwell then questioned the statement in the report that Councillors Hunneman and Stansfeld were regularly updated. Councillor Hunneman advised that this entailed two briefings and a telephone conversation which he did not feel to be adequate.

Councillor Quentin Webb was pleased to note the improvements that had been made and the cost savings achieved. He did however question the reasons behind the delay with the project not being completed in full until May 2011 from an originally planned date of December 2010. These risks seemed to relate to circuitry issues.

In response, Susan Powell made the following points:

- A meeting of all involved contractors was held on 26 October 2010 following which technical specifications were circulated for agreement and the agreed Cabinet Diagram distributed. Importantly it was also understood by all present that the data circuits for each camera would be presented in a 1:1 video and data feed format. This would involve two data streams (video and telemetry – i.e. the image from the CCTV camera and the ability to manipulate the camera). All contractors were believed to be working on this basis.
- All possible preparation work was conducted in advance of the 'shift' on 13 December 2010 which included equipment installation and checks and the installation and testing of the link between the Windsor CCTV Control Room and the Data Centre in Newbury.
- The first eight cameras that were 1:1 presentation were connected and immediately linked to the Windsor CCTV Control Room on 13 December 2010. However, it became apparent immediately the 'shift' commenced that this was not possible for the remaining cameras. The reasons for this was the fact that the video and data feeds from the remaining CCTV cameras were not being presented in the agreed 1:1 format, could not be connected to the data management equipment in the Data Centre and could not be linked to the Windsor CCTV Control Room.
- Many avenues were explored to resolve these difficulties but it was finally agreed that a 1:1 presentation was essential for the project to succeed. However, the issue took a long time to be resolved as the lead in time for BT to complete any work was 90 days. This was the core reason for the delay impacting significantly on the timescale of the 'shift' which would otherwise have been conducted reasonably swiftly. Andy Day added that a decision was made by BT to link the circuits for the cameras via a daisy chain method and not 1:1 presentation. The Council was not informed of this decision. This did not become apparent until the start of the 'shift' on 13 December 2010.

In relation to Member briefings, Susan Powell commented that in addition to the communication referred to by Councillor Hunneman there was an attempt to do so on at least one further occasion which was separate to the briefings/updates provided by Andy Day. Regular updates were also provided to Councillors Jeff Beck and Hunneman prior to them attending meetings of the Newbury Retail Association.

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Councillor Alan Macro questioned the level of delay in the procurement process as it did not initially seem that there was an awareness that a tender exercise was necessary. He also questioned whether lessons could have been learnt from the three Town's CCTV Project. Susan Powell explained that there were differences between the two projects. The tendering for the three Town's Project had to be advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU), which was not the case for this project. The delay encountered with procurement only added three to four weeks to the project as the requirements for the project were clear and the necessary documentation put together without significant delay.

Susan Powell advised that the appointment of a Project Manager and the potential to contract the work out was a possibility, but was an extremely expensive option. The view was taken that the necessary expertise was contained within the Project Board/Team and the RBWM.

Councillor David Rendel commented that the contract should have been negotiated to include a time constraint to either avoid lengthy delays, such as the one encountered with BT, or to receive compensation if delays were unavoidable. Particularly in this instance where the fault lay with BT.

In response, Susan Powell explained that the contract had a clear requirement for 1:1 presentation. Andy Day added that the contract was a BT contract and the Council had no leverage over BT to add or delete clauses within the contract. This was unfortunately a difficulty of BT commanding most of the telecoms market. However Andy Day confirmed that when problems of service were experienced this was escalated by him through BT.

Councillor Rendel felt that a potential recommendation was to ensure that a greater level of work was conducted for future contracts, including standard contracts, with negotiation of compensation clauses, should delays reach an unacceptable level, a consideration. The avoidance of major projects being conducted during events such as Christmas should also be a consideration.

Councillor Stansfeld commented that the potential to negotiate a contract with an organisation like BT was limited as they held the 'monopoly' for such work and there were few alternatives.

Councillor Rendel gave his view that there were other telecoms companies that could have been contacted.

Councillor Beck gave a positive viewpoint on the subject of communication. He and Councillor Hunneman regularly attended meetings of the Newbury Retailers Association and were briefed in advance by Officers on the latest position. This information was presented where appropriate which helped to tackle the misinformation being circulated.

Councillor Bedwell returned to the point made that this was an area of public concern. In his opinion this concern was generated by press reports and asked Officers to provide further information in relation to this point. In response, Susan Powell advised that at no time were none of the cameras working. As already indicated eight cameras 'shifted' across on 13 December 2010 with the remainder coming through in bundles over a period of time. The level of downtime was minimised as much as possible. Andy Day explained that the Council's Public Relations team were approached by the press to request a quote in relation to the number of cameras in operation and their location. The view was taken that this information should not be provided as it could compromise community safety. On balance this approach was felt to be the right one.

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Supt Robin Rickard was then asked to comment on whether he felt the town was rendered unsafe at any stage and whether the press reports giving an inaccurate picture caused an issue. Supt Rickard made the following points:

- There was acceptance that there needed to be some contingency for public surveillance. Additional police resource was always assigned in December and this was enhanced when problems became apparent with the CCTV project. There was a good deal of mischief making that led to misguided press releases and this contributed to the difficulties encountered.
- The benefit of the Safer Communities Partnership Team was felt during this time as regular updates were provided by Susan Powell on the status of the cameras, this helped mitigate the risks. In addition, the Shop Safe and Pub Watch schemes were kept well informed.
- The unexpected difficulties were well managed.

Councillor Stansfeld added that the misinformation was not helped when an individual who purported to be a Councillor or Officer of the Council made contact with the RBWM Control Room and unfortunately information was released to him on the current status of the cameras. This was then passed to the press and made public despite the fact that the situation was constantly changing and the information soon became inaccurate. It was of course inadvisable to release such information on community safety grounds.

Councillor Jeff Brooks then made the following points:

- He accepted the comments made that efforts were undertaken to minimise the risk and a good job was done in difficult circumstances. However, the public perception was that CCTV cameras were important to the security of the area and expected them to be operating. He agreed that informing the public of the cameras that weren't working was inadvisable but greater efforts were needed to manage expectations. The irresponsible actions of an individual did not at all help in this regard.
- Thatcham Town Council, who contributed funding, were not appropriately briefed on the status of the cameras in Thatcham.
- Other methods to exert pressure should have utilised in dealing with BT to help achieve a quicker result. A log would have been beneficial in keeping a full record of the difficulties encountered.
- The timing of the 'shift' on 13 December 2010 was not ideal particularly when it was expected that there would be some downtime. He suggested bringing the project forward to November 2010 would have been preferable.

In response to the point about liaison with BT, Andy Day confirmed that emerging issues were escalated by him through BT for a quicker resolution.

Andy Day then questioned the level of public concern as no complaints were received from members of the public. Neither were concerns raised by those directly affected i.e. traders who were appropriately briefed. The concerns came as a result of the information fed by two individuals to the press. The result of this did nothing to help the perception of the area. Supt Rickard added to this point by stating that no letters or telephone calls of concern were received by the Police.

Susan Powell advised that should the project had gone to plan with 1:1 presentation the level of downtime would have been minimal. Councillors Stansfeld and Hunneman were informed that a disruption of approximately two weeks was expected. A daily log had

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recorded the difficulties. Councillor Brooks noted this comment and stated that BT created the main problem. Councillor Bedwell added his view that Officers involved were sufficiently skilled to manage the 'shift' and were overtaken by events outside of their control.

Susan Powell agreed to brief Councillor Brooks on the situation with the cameras in Thatcham.

The liaison with BT was then queried. Susan Powell explained that the contract was entered into with Redcare with the operational work passed to Openreach. Councillor Mike Johnston asked whether consideration was given to running two systems in parallel. Susan Powell advised that this was not explored, a reason behind this decision was the confidence felt following the contractors meeting that the 'shift' would not cause considerable difficulties and running two systems in parallel unnecessary. This was based on 1:1 presentation. Both Susan Powell and Andy Day acknowledged that the level of trust placed in contractors was a learning element.

Councillor Johnston felt that some form of contingency plan would have been a benefit and would have helped to reduce risks. Susan Powell responded by saying that the problems encountered could not have been anticipated, but when these became apparent all possible actions were undertaken. The closure of the Town Hall Control Room was scheduled for 19 December 2010 as was the redundancy of staff. This date could not have been altered.

Councillor Johnston then referred to the three Towns CCTV project and asked whether this should have been undertaken first. This would have been a useful test to the larger project. Susan Powell explained that this decision was not taken as the three Towns had not been previously monitored and it was agreed that provision of the new system should firstly be installed in those areas where there was already provision. Andy Day added that had the three Towns project been brought forward it would have involved purchasing equipment that would have soon become redundant.

Councillor Marcus Franks queried whether the Project Board had the necessary technical expertise. Andy Day advised that in addition to the expertise held by Officers in ICT and in the RBWM, advice was sought from Masons (CCTV specialists) who helped with the specification. They were not on the Project Board as recruiting them in this way would have incurred an additional cost.

Councillor Rendel then asked whether the potential to retain those staff made redundant was explored beyond the scheduled date in order to continue monitoring. Susan Powell advised that staff were not asked, they were aware of their employment situations for a considerable period of time and continued to work well in difficult circumstances. It was felt unreasonable to ask them to continue in such a limited notice period and in any event the project was at such an advanced stage that staff would have had nothing to monitor.

Councillor Rendel felt that running both a hardwire and internet system was not ideal and asked Officers what elements of the project they would have done differently with the benefit of hindsight. Andy Day responded by saying that had this project been a fresh project without a CCTV system being in place he would have sought professional advice and guidance from Masons, specialists in this area of work.

The future use of Newbury Town Hall was then queried, including the payments made by the Council to Newbury Town Council for the lease. Susan Powell explained that there was a requirement to give six months notice if the lease was to be ended. This had not yet been submitted as discussions were ongoing with the Town Council on potential ways forward.



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The requirement for Police Officers to travel to Windsor to review recordings was queried. Supt Rickard advised that this was a temporary arrangement and the ICT department of TVP was working on a permanent solution. However, it was only necessary to travel to Windsor in certain circumstances as evidence could be provided over the phone or images sent via courier. Supt Rickard added that the quality of the evidence provided to the courts was massively enhanced.

Councillor Brooks then asked what consideration was given to the employment of a Project Manager and whether the allocated budget prevented this. Andy Day explained that this was of course a financial consideration, but a view was taken early on that a Project Manager was not necessary and would add little value.

The timing of the project 'shift' was again returned to. Andy Day explained that this was partly driven by the time taken for the equipment build and the closure of the Town Hall Control Room on 19 December 2010. The consensus at the contractors meeting was that the timescale was achievable. Supt Rickard added that the Christmas period was not necessarily the wrong time to schedule the 'shift'. He explained that during this time the Police presence in the town centre was increased, as was the level of security in shops and door staff at clubs. There was also an increase in members of the public in the town centre and this was also good for public order. There were also significantly quiet periods over Christmas and the New Year.

Councillor Brooks suggested that the availability of contractors was more limited during this time.

Councillor Dave Goff queried whether a risk register was in place for the project and, if so, could it be provided. Susan Powell explained that there was a risk assessment and the results of this were largely contained within the report.

Councillor Bedwell felt that the Commission had justifiably tackled the subject and suggested that the notes of the meeting should be reviewed by himself and Councillor Brooks at a separate meeting, with draft recommendations brought to the next meeting of the Commission for approval.

Councillor Bedwell thanked the guests for their contributions and registered his thanks on the Commission's behalf for the work conducted by Andy Day and Susan Powell in extremely stressful circumstances.

Councillor Stansfeld then made the following closing comments:

- The transfer was the right way forward. This was a time of restricted finances and funding was not available to continue to operate the costly old system and running the two systems in parallel would have cost over £100k.
- Had the approach agreed at the contractors meeting been fulfilled then the problems encountered would not have materialised. These problems were largely outside the Council's control.
- The new and vastly improved system would achieve a cost saving of £1.25m over the next five years. In addition, West Berkshire was ahead of neighbouring authorities with regard to the provision of CCTV.

### **RESOLVED that:**

- (1) Susan Powell would brief Councillor Jeff Brooks on the situation with the cameras in Thatcham.

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- (2) Councillors Brian Bedwell and Jeff Brooks would meet to review the notes of the meeting and to consider draft recommendations. These would be presented at the Commission's next meeting for approval.

(The meeting adjourned at 8.35pm).

### 15. Healthier Select Committee Update Report

*(The meeting resumed at 8.38pm).*

*(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 determined 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. This was the last report from the Select Committee, with its workload transferring to the newly formed Health Scrutiny Panel.

Councillor Quentin Webb, as Chairman of the Health Scrutiny Panel, referred to the items on the work programme. The item on the capacity of maternity services at the Royal Berkshire Foundation Hospital could be removed from the work programme. The remaining item would be reviewed when the agenda was set for the next meeting.

**RESOLVED** that the report would be noted and amendments made to the work programme.

### 16. Resource Management Select Committee Update Report

The Commission considered a report (Agenda Item 10) on the work of the Resource Management Select Committee. This was the last report from the Select Committee, with its workload transferring to the newly formed Resource Management Working Group which would be chaired by Councillor Tony Vickers.

Councillor Jeff Brooks, as chairman of the Select Committee, referred Members to two recommendations in the report for the Commission's approval:

- (1) The Head of Human Resources should establish a mechanism whereby Heads of Service provide the relevant data to Human Resources to enable a forecast to be added to future Establishment Reports for both Council and joint/externally funded posts.
- (2) The GIS Projects Analyst should formulate a project plan with the intention of enabling all the Council's systems to be compliant with the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG).

The Commission gave its support to both these recommendations which would be forwarded to the Executive for consideration.

It was confirmed that outstanding actions/requests for information would not be lost as they would be forwarded to the Resource Management Working Group.

The work of the other disbanded select committees had already been or would be reported through to the Commission.

**RESOLVED** that the report would be noted and both recommendations would be forwarded to the Executive for consideration.

### 17. West Berkshire Forward Plan - June - September 2011

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

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

**18. 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 (Agenda Item 12).

Councillors Brian Bedwell and Jeff Brooks agreed that they would spend time, after their meeting to discuss the CCTV recommendations, on the work programme for the year.

**RESOLVED** that the work programme would be noted and Councillors Brian Bedwell and Jeff Brooks would meet to discuss the work programme in advance of the next meeting.

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

**CHAIRMAN** .....

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