

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 4 NOVEMBER 2009

Present:

Members of the Group:

Councillors: John Appleton
Sarah Boad (replacing Councillor Jerry Roodhouse for this meeting)
John Ross
Dave Shilton
June Tandy

Martin Davis (North Warwickshire Borough Council)
Valerie Hobbs (Stratford-on-Avon District Council)
Chris Holman (Rugby Borough Council)
Clive Parsons (Warwickshire Police Authority)

Also present: Councillor Bob Stevens

Officers: David Carter, Strategic Director Customers, Workforce and Governance
Monica Fogarty, Assistant Chief Executive
Ann Mawdsley, Principal Committee Administrator
Michelle McHugh, Overview and Scrutiny Manager

Invited

Speaker: Mary-Ann Bruce, Audit Commission

1. General

The Chair welcomed Councillor June Tandy to the Board.

(1) Apologies

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Les Caborn, Councillor Jeff Clarke (Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council), Councillor Michael Doody, Councillor Bill Gifford (Warwick District Council), Councillor Jerry Roodhouse (replaced by Councillor Sarah Boad for this meeting) and Janet Smith (NHS Warwickshire).

(2) Members' Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Councillor John Appleton declared a personal interest in any matter relating to Stratford on Avon District Council as a member and portfolio holder of that authority.

(3) Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 2 September 2009 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)

The Board received a presentation from Mary-Ann Bruce, CAA Lead for Herefordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire, setting out the emerging picture from the Area Assessment. She highlighted the following points:

- a. The results of the Area Assessment were under embargo and would be launched to the public on 10 December through the "Oneplace" website. The new Oneplace website would feature the results of the (CAA), based on the collective assessment of six independent inspectorates, highlighting where things were going well as well as any problems and how councils and their partners were working together to improve quality of life for residents. It was noted that these reports would be written in straightforward, jargon-free language.
- b. There were a number of very positive messages in the Area Assessment, for example the work undertaken in relation to domestic violence
- c. Overall Warwickshire scored well on a range of issues, but there were a number of areas where things could be further improved to improve the quality of life for people in Warwickshire, particularly public health and certain areas of educational attainment.
- d. There were a number of areas where overall county figures masked problems in specific areas of Warwickshire and Members welcomed receiving guidance on areas where Warwickshire was statistically not in line with similar authorities.
- e. While it was recognised that there was engagement and commitment across Warwickshire by most partners, there is a need to recognise the contribution all partners can make to local priorities. For example, it was noted that health partners were not involved in issues such as climate change and economic development, despite being the biggest CO² emitters and employers in the county.
- f. It was noted that the Oneplace website would have the National Indicator set, but would not contain the data underpinning the judgments. It was suggested that the Audit Commission should aspire to making this data available from the Oneplace website. Members were informed that the 2007 area breakdown figures used to determine CO² emission figures were available on the DEFRA website.
- g. There was some concern relating to facilities and inclusion of gypsy/traveler groups and this was an area that was likely to be looked at in future assessments.

The Chair thanked Mary-Ann Bruce for her presentation. He summed up that the purpose of the presentation had been to ensure that work programmes developed by the O&S Board and Committees addressed the right issues, many of which had been highlighted by the CAA. He urged Chairs to review their work programmes in light of the issues highlighted in the presentation.

3. Protocol for the Scrutiny of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in Warwickshire

The Board considered the report of the Strategic Director for Customers, Workforce and Governance introducing a draft protocol aiming to avoid

duplication between the County and District Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committees.

During discussion the following points were noted:

1. Legislation required each authority to have a Crime and Disorder Committee, therefore there is a need to avoid duplication between County and District level of Crime and Disorder Committees.
2. Guidance surrounding the establishment of joint committees has not yet been produced, but local authorities had the power to establish joint committees. It was pointed out that discussions around forming a joint committee between Stratford and Warwick District Committees were ongoing due to the joint CDRP.
3. The community body set up in Rugby as part of the Home Office pilot to scrutinise CDRPs had been disbanded and replaced by the Community Safety Partnership Scrutiny Panel.
4. In response to a query regarding the difficulty in making issues known to the Police Authority, Clive Parsons reported that all members of the Police Authority had now been assigned to Community Forums, and would, where possible, attend. David Carter added that there was a requirement for dialogue between the County Council and the Police Authority and that Member's comments would be taken on board and built into arrangements for the two authorities.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board were impressed and satisfied with the Protocol. They agreed that the reporting relationship between CDRPs and Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committees (District and Borough Councils); and between Community Forums and the County Council should be monitored.

4. Proposals for Corporate Business Plan and Budget Scrutiny

The Board considered the report of the Strategic Director for Customers, Workforce and Governance outlining a proposed approach to scrutiny of the Corporate Business Plan 2010/13 and budget proposals for 2010/11.

Members noted their concern at the reference in the penultimate bullet point of point 3.1 of the Protocol to the Board "having to consider - how options reflect the voice and concerns of members of the public". It was noted that this referred to Members' knowledge and experience and did not imply any expectation on Members to carry out specific consultations. It was agreed that this point would be reworded.

The Board agreed:-

- i) to hold a single session to undertake the scrutiny of both the Corporate Business Plan and Budget, using the programme provided in the report on a date to be agreed in week of the 4 – 8 January 2010
- ii) the budget protocol which sets out the principles and objectives of budget scrutiny attached to the report as Appendix A.

5. Six monthly Performance Report

The Board considered the report of the Strategic Director for Customers, Workforce and Governance setting out information about the performance of the Overview and Scrutiny function during the first six months of 2009/10.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- i. Not all recommendations were implemented in the same year they were made.
- ii. The reduction in the number of people attending committees reflected the reduction in the number of meetings being held.
- iii. Members agreed it would be useful to have sight of the 16% of recommendations made to the Cabinet that had not been agreed.
- iv. There had been a number of reviews in 2007/08, where the recommendations had been agreed by Cabinet but there had been no budget to implement the actions. These recommendations had not been included in the figures given.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board agreed to:

- i. take forward the issues identified in the CAA, specifically the health related issues and work to do with the Health Authority and PCT.
- ii. report back to the relevant OSC on the 16% of recommendations that had not been agreed by the Cabinet.

6. Overview and Scrutiny Strategy Action Plan

The Board considered the report of the Strategic Director for Customers, Workforce and Governance providing an updated Action Plan for the Overview and Scrutiny Strategy 2009/13 and outlining the progress made against the Action Plan.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

1. There were no joint scrutiny exercises commissioned. The Chair noted that the Board was the only scrutiny body involving representatives from all partners and was well equipped to carry out joint scrutiny. Members were invited to discuss with the Chair, any ideas for joint scrutiny.
2. Following some discussion around the monitoring of issues raised at Community Forums, it was noted that these priorities were collated by the Localities and Communities team. David Carter agreed to arrange for these to be shared with members of the Board. It was further noted that Leaders and partners had agreed to a review of Area Committees and Community Forums, and this would start before the end of this year.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board:

- i) agreed the Action Plan for the Overview and Scrutiny Strategy 2009/13
- ii) noted the progress made against the Action Plan
- iii) requested a collated report on issues raised at Community Forums be forwarded to the Board for information.

7. Scrutiny In-depth Review Work Programme

The Board considered the report of the Strategic Director for Customers, Workforce and Governance outlining the Scrutiny In-depth Review Work Programme.

Michelle McHugh reported that the Exclusions and Safeguarding Reviews were both scheduled to begin in November. She added that there had been a further proposal from the Health OSC to carry out a joint review, with the Children, Young People and Families OSC, of the CAHMS service.

Councillor Shilton, Chair of the Health OSC, stated that the Committee was unable to fit the range of issues that needed to be scrutinized into four meetings a year. Councillor Ross noted that the Children, Young People and Families OSC were in a similar position. The Chair noted that Committees would have to look at different ways to deal with issues that arose as resources were limited. He agreed to look into whether additional resources could be found to support extra Health OSC meetings, in view of the issues raised in the CAA.

The Board agreed the Scrutiny In-depth Review Work Programme with the addition of a joint Health and Children, Young People and Families OSC Task and Finish Group to consider the CAHMS service.

8. Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme 2009/10

The Board noted the work programme for the forthcoming year.

9. Any Other Items

None

10. Date of Next Meeting

The Board noted that their next meeting would be held on 3 March 2010 at 2.00 p.m.

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Chair

The Board rose at 4.05p.m.