

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 5 OCTOBER 2010

Present:

Members of the Board:

Councillors: Les Caborn
Michael Doody
Julie Jackson
Tim Naylor
Jerry Roodhouse
John Ross
Chris Saint (Chair)
Dave Shilton
John Whitehouse
Sonja Wilson

Co-opted members

For Partnership

Matters Councillor Jeremy Bowden (North Warwickshire Borough Council)
Councillor Claire Edwards (Rugby Borough Council)
Councillor Bill Gifford (Warwick District Council)
Councillor Sue Main (Stratford-on-Avon District Council)
Janet Smith (NHS Warwickshire)

Portfolio Holder Councillor Peter Butlin

Officers: Bill Basra, Partnerships Delivery Manager
John Betts, Head of Corporate Finance
David Carter, Strategic Director Customers, Workforce and Governance
Jim Graham, Chief Executive
Ann Mawdsley, Principal Committee Administrator
Richard Maybey, Assistant to Political Group (Labour)
Jane Pollard, Democratic Services Manager
Daniel Rodwell, Student on Work Placement
Steve Smith, Head of Property
Phil Triggs, Group Manager – Treasury and Pensions

1. General

(1) Apologies

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Peter Fowler, Councillor Colin Hayfield, Councillor Martin Heatley, Councillor June Tandy (replaced by Councillor Julie Jackson for this meeting), Councillor John Haynes (Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council), Clive Parsons (Warwickshire Police Authority) and Monica Fogarty.

(2) Members' Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Councillor Julie Jackson declared a personal interest as her daughter uses post-16 transport.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse declared a personal interest in all items relating to health matters as Chair of the Warwickshire LINK Council.

(3) Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 21 July 2010

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 21 July 2010 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair. There were no matters arising that were not covered as part of the Agenda items.

Part 1 – Partnership Matters

2. Proposals for Joint Scrutiny and Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes in Warwickshire

The Board considered the report of the Strategic Director of Customers, Workforce and Governance setting out those proposals for task and finish groups which might benefit from joint scrutiny and containing information about the overview and scrutiny work programmes being undertaken by Warwickshire District and Borough Councils.

Public Service Reform Task and Finish Group – This Group was already underway with Councillor John Ross in the Chair and the membership included Clive Parsons (Warwickshire Police Authority) and Janet Smith (NHS Warwickshire).

Locality Working – There was a corporate review of Locality Working being undertaken at present which was scheduled to be reported to Warwickshire County Council's Cabinet and other agencies in November. Members agreed that a Task and Finish Group should not be commissioned until the outcomes of this review were available.

Alcohol – Review of Licensing across the County - Members agreed that this review could be widened to address the wider issue of alcohol abuse and include all stakeholders (County Council (DAAT and Trading Standards), District and Borough Councils (Licensing), Police and Health). Councillor John Whitehouse noted that the proposal had been put forward by the Communities O&S with the intention of focusing on the licensing element. He agreed that there may be an opportunity to broaden the scope of the review within reasonable limits. Councillor Jerry Roodhouse stated that the Task and Finish Group should be delayed until completion of the Drug and Alcohol Management Group report (as set out in the scope), to avoid duplication.

It was agreed that these proposals would be considered as part of Item 9 – Proposals for Task and Finish Groups, later on the agenda.

Part 2 – Council Matters

3. Public Question Time

None.

4. Questions to the Portfolio Holder/Portfolio Holders Update

The Chair welcomed Councillor Peter Butlin and informed the Committee that Councillor Martin Heatley was still not well and that Councillor Colin Hayfield had been unable to attend the meeting.

In response to questions put to Councillor Peter Butlin, the following points were noted:

1. Councillor Dave Shilton asked if anything could be done in relation to the decision regarding car park attendants.

Councillor Peter Butlin responded that while he agreed that this decision could have negative impacts, that this was not part of his portfolio and that he had brought this issue to the attention of Councillor David Wright (in Councillor Martin Heatley's absence) and was waiting for a response. The Chair reminded the Committee that this situation had arisen from the budget approved in February 2010 and the Committee had previously agreed that this matter should be dealt with by the Cabinet.

2. Councillor Tim Naylor made reference to previous discussions about budget scrutiny at both the Board and during the Communication with the Public and Financial Accountability Review, and asked whether there was likely to be any more transparency to the process in the future?

Councillor Peter Butlin replied that the Leader had appointed a Conservative Budget Review Group, who would publish a Budget Framework for discussion at full Council on November 2, with a final decision to be made by full Council in February 2011.

Councillor Tim Naylor responded that there was not enough cross-party Member involvement in the Budget Review Group, and not enough communication with staff or the public.

3. Councillor Dave Shilton asked about the cost effectiveness and implications for District/Boroughs from the possible closure of some waste recycling centres, particularly in light of the focus put on recycling by Local Authorities.

Councillor Peter Butlin undertook to forward this concern to the relevant Portfolio Holder.

Councillor John Whitehouse stated that a report on Household Waste Recycling Centre Provision had been considered by the Cabinet at their meeting on 9 September, and a final decision would be made in

early November 2010. Councillor Whitehouse proposed a single-issue meeting be held during October to consider community issues and to scrutinise the rationale behind the decision.

The Chair thanked Councillor Butlin for his responses and noted that the concerns would be forwarded to the relevant Portfolio Holders.

5. Treasury Management Monitoring Report 2010/11

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director, Resources setting out the progress of the treasury management process during 2010/11.

John Betts summarised the Treasury Management Strategy for the Authority and ran through the performance outlined in the report, covering the first four months of this year.

During the ensuing discussion the following was noted:

1. There was a significant difference in the returns achieved by In house and Aviva Investors (both receiving a 50% investment and Aviva Investors achieving a return three times more than In-House). The Council was reviewing its In-house investments and considering financial instruments paying better rates, such as Treasury Bills. It was agreed that the gap in performance between In house and Aviva Investors should be included in future reports, with an eye to reducing the gap.
2. The Appendix to the report largely reflected the prioritising of the capital programme rather than the funding of the capital programme (in terms of reduced borrowing requirements). Members agreed that this prioritisation needed to be smarter and sharper.
3. The Treasury Management Monitoring Report was produced every four months.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board agreed to receive the next Treasury Management Monitoring Report to their January meeting, in the same format, with the additional of trend information on In house and Aviva Investments.

6. LAA Quarter 1 Performance Report 10/11

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Chief Executive presenting an analysis of the LAA performance as at Quarter 1 for 2010/11. Bill Basra noted that the future of LAAs was uncertain and partnership working was changing to reflect that.

A discussion following and it was noted:

1. In response to a query regarding Warwickshire Partnership, it was noted that in moving forward there were a lot of lessons to be learnt and there were opportunities for the Public Service Reform Task and Finish Group to look at what had worked, what hadn't, and what should be focussed on in the future.
2. The Local Area Agreement should have had a greater focus on outcomes and what value services and partnership working provided to the people of Warwickshire.

3. It was noted that should LAAs be discontinued in the future, there would still need to be some form a measure to work against.
4. It was agreed that “Outcome Based Performance Workshops” should be explored to look at the best way of managing performance.
5. Members agreed there was insufficient information to enable intelligent comment. Fuller information was required, including what the targets had been based on, greater accuracy within reports (particularly in relation to Appendices) to enable Members to give an informed response. Bill Basra noted that information on indicators was held by the relative Directorate or partner agency, and this was also information was also recorded on the Warwickshire Hub. Jane Pollard agreed to assist Members access additional information on any specific areas of concern they may have.
6. There needed to be better public consultation to measure outcomes and any improvement to the lives of citizens, as well as ensuring that resources were targeted to the right areas for support.
7. Members agreed that as the areas of concern highlighted in the report related to the Children and Young People Directorate that the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be in a better position to raise the issues with the Portfolio Holder and Directorate.

The Committee agreed to refer their concerns to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee (as set out in point 7 above), for consideration at their next meeting.

7. Update Report – Progress on Property Review

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director, Resources, providing an update on current progress and the next steps in the programme of projects being undertaken to rationalise the Council’s property/estates.

During the ensuing discussion the following issues arose:

1. Steve Smith assured Members that the work undertaken since 2007 as part of the Property Review would not be repeated. He added that the Review was coming to an end, and had provided an opportunity to look at both County Council and partner properties, but the programme was ongoing and areas continued to be revisited to ensure the best use was being made of property.
2. The Climate Change Strategy had highlighted the fact that property was one of the largest elements of the County Council’s CO2 blueprint.
3. Steve Smith reported that the rationalisation programme would take place over the next three years, in line with budget timescales. The aim was to reduce the property portfolio by 30% which was expected to have a revenue impact of approximately £4.5m.
4. In response to a query regarding accountability and the involvement of local Members and scrutiny of decisions, Steve Smith stated that there was full awareness of the need for accountability and the programme would definitely be carried out with Local Member input.
5. There were opportunities for the County Council in the smallholdings estates, and these would have to be taken where appropriate.
6. Steve Smith added that the County Council had 911 different pieces of property, only 6% of which was office accommodation. Consideration

had to be given to whether property was needed to deliver services, but there also needed to be change in mindset in relation to associations with buildings rather than services. Where possible there needed to be one front door for all services and more needed to be done to promote hot desking and home working to achieve maximum savings for all services.

7. Where property leases came up for renewal, it was important that the Head of Property was notified as early as possible.
8. Members congratulated Steve Smith on the work that had been done in mapping out the current portfolio of properties and moving this agenda forward.
9. Jim Graham stated that this programme provided an opportunity for Members and would form part of the immediate budget proposals. He added that sacrifices would have to be made and Members needed to separate services from buildings.

The Committee noted the report and requested regular updates on a six-monthly basis.

8. Work Programme 2010-11

The Committee agreed the work programme with the following additions:

- Future Role of Corporate Consultation (10 November 2010)
- One Front Door Update (10 November 2010)
- Treasury Management Monitoring Report 2010/11 (January 2011)
- Update Report – Progress on Property Review (six monthly)
- Updates from Task and Finish Groups.

9. Proposals for Task and Finish Groups

The Committee agreed the scopes and timing allocations for the following Task and Finish Groups, which were already underway:

- Rugby A&E Services Consultation
- Antenatal and Postnatal Services for Teenage Parents
- Communication with the public and Financial Accountability (an update on Phase 1 -Communication with the public, to report to the Board on 10/11/10 for Phase 1 and the final report on Phase 1 and Phase 2 – Financial Accountability to the meeting on 12/01/11, subject to confirmation)
- Public Service Reform.

Following a broad discussion around the 12 topics for consideration, the following Task and Finish Groups were agreed:

Immediate Commissioning

1. Household Waste Recycling Centres – a single issue meeting to be commissioned to take place in October to inform the Leader/Portfolio Holder Decision Making Session to be held at the beginning of November.
2. Adult Social Care Low Level Prevention Services – an in-depth review to be commissioned as a matter of urgency.

Retimed starting date and Rescoping of Reviews

3. Delayed Hospital Discharges and Reablement – extend scope to all hospital discharges to take place once the reablement programme was complete (December start – subject to confirmation).
4. Locality Working – to be reconsidered at a future date dependent on the outcome of the current Locality Review being undertaken.
5. Alcohol Control – review of licensing across the county – Michelle McHugh to rescope, as set out under Item 2 above, and to be reconsidered by the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
6. Supporting the Local Economy to be rescoped, taking into account the Rugby Borough Council scrutiny review into “Inward Investment”, issues arising from Local Enterprise Partnerships and incorporating elements of the proposed Task and Finish Group on the Skills Agenda and Adult Learning. The rescoping to be reconsidered by the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Request for a report

7. One Front Door and Leaner Processes and e-delivery and e-communications – A report to be taken to the 10 November meeting of the Board setting out the findings of the current One Front Door Review being undertaken.

Proposals not taken forward at the present time

8. Post 16 Transport
9. Big Society
10. The future for Performance Management and Business Planning
11. Services for All – Hard to Reach Groups

10. Any Other Items

None.

11. Dates of Future Meetings

Noted.

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Chair

The Board rose at 4.20 p.m.