

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD
ON 10 NOVEMBER 2010**

Present:

Members of the Board:

Councillors: Sarah Boad
Les Caborn
Michael Doody
Peter Fowler
Tim Naylor
John Ross
Chris Saint (Chair)
Dave Shilton
June Tandy
John Whitehouse
Sonja Wilson

Other Members: Councillor Alan Farnell (Leader of the Council) and Councillor Richard Chattaway.

Co-opted members

For Partnership

Matters

Councillor John Haynes (Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council)
Councillor Claire Watson (Rugby Borough Council)
Councillor Bill Gifford (Warwick District Council)
Councillor Sue Main (Stratford-on-Avon District Council)

Officers: Kushal Birla, Head of Customer Service and Communications
David Carter, Strategic Director Customers, Workforce and Governance.
David Clarke, Strategic Director of Resources
Monica Fogarty, Assistant Chief Executive
Nick Gower-Johnson, County Localities and Communities Manager
Jim Graham, Chief Executive
Jean Hardwick, Principal Committee Administrator
Jack Linstead, Communications Officer
Virginia Rennie, Group Accountant
Monika Rozanski, Senior Project Manager
Jane Pollard, Democratic Services Manager

1. General

(1) Apologies

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Jeremy Bowden (North Warwickshire Borough Council),

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse (replaced by Councillor Sarah Boad for this meeting), Councillor Claire Edwards (Rugby Borough Council)(replaced by Councillor Claire Watson), Clive Parsons (Warwickshire Police Authority), Janet Smith (NHS Warwickshire) and Kim Harlock (Head of Strategic Commissioning and Performance Management).

(2) Members' Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

None

(3) Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 5 October 2010

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 5 October 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. Update Report – Progress on the One-Front Door Programme

Kushal Birla presented the report of the Strategic Director, Customers, Workforce and Governance. The report outlined the good progress that had been made on setting the strategic context and understanding the wider implications of the One Front Door agenda which had been supplemented by significant, detailed research on services, customers, communities and respective demographics.

She highlighted the–

- (1) pressure on public finances to ensure delivery of savings across the service;
- (2) ongoing work being undertaken by officers to ensure accuracy of the statistics and data;
- (3) need to provide choice in terms of how services were delivered around the county and to manage the drive towards “e-ways” of working;
- (4) work being carried out to rationalise the use of property across the partnership agencies.

In reply to questions she -

- (1) gave assurance that, with regard to the comments made in paragraphs 2.6 – 2.7 of the report, Members would not be asked to make any decisions about development of on line services or rationalisation of buildings without being provided with the relevant information to make those decisions;
- (2) undertook to provide Members with a briefing note–
 - (a) of the cost per transaction for providing services for the Police;
 - (b) detailing the services provided on-line;
 - (c) listing the services that were provided now and those that were proposed to be provided in the future.

- (3) highlighted the cost of providing face to face services;
- (4) said that mapping of the county was being done to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery in each locality and to identify locations that were not currently being fully utilised by partner organisations;
- (5) said that “Warwickshire Direct” was the strap-line for delivery of this service and acknowledge that the different terminology used to describe the service might cause confusion;
- (6) said she understood that all local Members had been informed of the closure of Kings House reception which had been done because of the high cost of running this service, involving the need to employ two staff to run the service, when the numbers of enquiries were low.

The Chair thanked Kushal Birla for presenting the report and answering Members’ questions.

3. Sub-Regional Programme of Collaboration

Monica Fogarty presented her report which gave an update on the County Council’s contribution and involvement with the sub-regional work programme building on outcomes from the Total Place Pilot. She highlighted the joint work programme listed in paragraph 3.1 of the report and the successful funding bid made to the Improvement and Efficiency West Midlands Locality Investment Fund.

In reply to questions Monica Fogarty said that –

- (1) whatever the issue, in order for Sub-Regional working to succeed there was the need for a good business case for each project; in addition to a degree of flexibility and the ability to trade services;
- (2) the sub-region referred to in the report was a three way partnership, consisting of Coventry, Warwickshire and Solihull. Over the last few months, however, Solihull had increasingly connected with Birmingham in relation to the health clusters and Local Enterprise Partnerships;
- (3) There were no guarantees to ensure commitment by all three authorities but acknowledging that where resources were involved there was need to have some protection in place but this was a pilot scheme and a learning experience by all partners.

A Member expressed concern about the cost effectiveness of provided training and development sessions under this initiative which, from his experience were very poorly attended. In response David Clarke said that the Learning Academy was a county partnership that provided training and development for Members and Officers and was made up of 13 organisations. The training courses were funded by each participant paying a fee.

The Chair thanked Monica Fogarty for her report which he said had been debated well and looked forward to a further update in the future.

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

Jane Pollard circulated a scoping paper for a scrutiny review on Alcohol Control – Review of Licensing across the County and invited comments.

Councillor John Whitehouse reported that Stratford-on-Avon District Council had just concluded work on restating their licensing policy and he referred to the Drug and Alcohol Management Group (DAMG) work which had not yet started and suggested that the proposed review should be delayed until this work was complete.

During discussion some District Council Members questioned why the County Council was undertaking this review when it was did not exercise the licensing function. Others Members agreed that it might be appropriate if the review had a health focus and that the Police would wish to see a co-ordinated approach to licensing across the county.

The Chair referred to the Government White Paper on Health that would be published shortly and suggested that the guidance contained within that Paper would also influence the scope of any future review.

It was agreed that the review of Alcohol Control be deferred for further discussion to take place with the District and Borough Councils over the scope of the review and to allow the review being carried out by the Drug and Alcohol Management Group (DAMG) to explore the current position in the county and identify how licensing activity can be better co-ordinated across the County, to be completed.

Part 2 – Council Matters

(The order of these minutes is as they appear on the agenda and not the order in which they were considered.)

5. Public Question Time

None.

6. Questions to the Portfolio Holder/Portfolio Holders Update

The Chair invited questions from Member to the Portfolio Holders and said that Councillor Alan Farnell had attended in Councillor Martin Heatley's absence.

A Member asked why Councillor Colin Hayfield (Lead Portfolio Holder for Customers Workforce and Governance) and Councillor Peter Butlin (Support Portfolio Holder for Workforce and Governance) were not present. The Chair said he would convey to the Members the Committee's concern about their absence from the meeting.

Councillor Tim Naylor referred to the decision taken the previous week by full Council to approve the absence of Councillor Martin Heatley from Council business because of ill health, and asked whether consideration had been given

to making a temporary appointment to cover Councillor Heatley's Portfolio Holder duties during his absence.

Councillor Alan Farnell, said that there was no intention of making a temporary portfolio holder appointment in Councillor Heatley's absence. He gave reassurance that Councillor Heatley was regularly in touch by email and kept well briefed by various means and in person by Councillors David Wright and Colin Hayfield.

Councillor John Whitehouse asked a supplementary question and said that he, and Councillor Tim Naylor, represented the County Council on Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) and that Councillor Heatley was the County Council's representative on the Management Committee. There were currently major issues facing ESPO and Councillor Heatley's absence had meant that there was a vacuum and the County Council had not been able to contribute to the consideration of these issues and this needed to be addressed.

In response Councillor Farnell said that he had hoped to persuade Councillor Alan Cockburn to take over Councillor Heatley's role but gave assurance that if this was not possible then he would take on the responsibility himself.

The Chair thanked Councillor Farnell for his responses.

7. Review of Communication with the Public and Financial Accountability Task – Interim Report

Councillor Tim Naylor, Chair of the Task and Finish Group, presented the report.

The report outlined that, since August 2010, a small group of elected members had been working on a two-part review looking at how the County Council was communicating with stakeholders over the financial challenges it was facing and how, to ensure accountability, it would ensure financial information was accessible and transparent. This interim report focused on the first part of the review.

Councillor Naylor thanked Paul Williams, Scrutiny Officer, and the other Members of the Task and Finish group for their help and support in carrying out this task. He said that the recurring theme that came out of the review was that there were a lot of people doing their own thing, under different headings, with little co-ordination, e.g. Tough Choices, Transformation 2013 Working for Warwickshire and Facing the Challenge. There was a lot of good work being done across the Council but this should be under one heading and giving a clear message. There was little evidence of Member involvement. He referred to the excellent examples to be found in Cipfa guidelines.

Councillor Alan Farnell agreed that there were too many initiatives across the Council that needed to be brought together under one heading. He highlighted that the budget proposal this year had been made available to all much earlier than previous years.

Jim Graham said that Transformation 2013 provided the opportunity to look at how a downsized authority would be able to deliver quality services. It was not just about the County Council but was also about being a leader to partner

organisations. This was a long process that would go past the life of the current Council.

Councillor June Tandy moved, bearing in mind that this was part of a 4 year programme that the interim report's recommendation should be forwarded to Cabinet for implementation. Councillor Dave Shilton, seconded the motion and suggested that full Council should be kept apprised of the progress of the Review.

It was Resolved that –

- (1) The Task and Finish Group's recommendations be forwarded to Cabinet for implementation and ;
- (2) The Portfolio Holder be asked to inform the full Council on how outcomes from Transformation 2013 will be assessed.

8. Key Messages from recent consultation and engagement and some issues concerning the future of the Council's approach

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Customers Workforce and Governance

Nick Gower-Johnson presented the report which summarised some key messages from consultation and engagement exercises undertaken by the Council during 2009/10, and suggested ways in which the Council could improve and gain greater value from its consultation and engagement activities. He said that the views expressed by Members would be conveyed to Cabinet on the 18 November 2010 when it considered this report.

Members congratulated Monika Rozanski on receiving an Award from the Polish Embassy in London as a recognition for her work on a radio programme "Poles Apart" on BBC Coventry and Warwickshire Radio which she would be presented with in London later that day.

During discussion the following comments were noted:

- (1) That the most interesting part of the report was Section 3.3, which contained proposals for "the fresh vision for consultation and engagement" but it was questioned how this would be controlled in the future;
- (2) Councillor Tim Naylor said that he had been concerned about co-ordination of the County Council's activities with regard to communication with the public and was pleased that the recommendation in the report supported the findings of the Communications with the Public and Financial Accountability Task and Finish Group;
- (3) Concern was expressed about the low response rate to the consultation (listed in page 5 of the report) and that these findings were meaningless without outcomes or actions to be taken in the future;
- (4) That a 50% response rate from the Citizens Panel was a reasonable response but it did reveal that there was a significant lack of awareness of some services and that needed to be addressed;
- (5) Reference was made to the Rugby Consortium and the need to engage with young people across the county and to find out what facilities they wanted and to respond quickly to their needs. .

In reply to questions –

- (1) Monika Rozanski said that a handbook had been drafted setting out consultation and engagement standards;
- (2) Nick Gower-Johnson said that –
 - (a) The Rugby Consortium was a good example of engagement with young people and co-operation between the Youth Services, Parish Council and Borough Council;
 - (b) Future consultation and engagement would be controlled by drawing together an overall programme and co-operation across the Council.

The Board agreed that its comments on the key messages from the corporate, directorate and partnership consultation and engagement activities conducted over the period between 1st April 2009 and 30th March 2010 and the proposed improvements to the Council's approach to consultation and engagement, be conveyed to Cabinet on 18th November 2010.

9. Scrutiny Reviews Progress Report and New Proposals for Task and Finish Groups

The Board considered the report of the Strategic Director for Customers, Workforce and Governance and was asked to comment on the progress of scrutiny reviews and consider any new proposals for task and finish groups to undertake reviews.

Jane Pollard circulated a scoping paper for Scrutiny of the Local Economy, and referred to the scoping paper for Control of Alcohol- review of licensing across the county, circulated earlier in the meeting during discussion of item 4 above.

Following discussion -

The Board agreed the scope and membership of two Task and Finish Groups as follows:

- (1) Supporting the Local Economy – Councillors June Tandy (Chair), Chris Williams, David Johnston, Tilly May, Peter Fowler, Richard Chattaway and a Rugby Borough Councillor (to be nominated);
- (2) Hospital Discharges and Reablement – Councillors Josie Compton (Chair), Sid Tooth, Kate Rolfe, Robin Hazelton, Claire Watson and Martyn Ashford.

0. Work Programme 2010-11

The Board, having considered the report of the Strategic Director of Customers, Workforce and Governance, noted the –

- (1) Forward Plan items relevant to the work of this body;
- (2) Future Work Programme;
- (3) Dates of future meeting.

11. Any Other Items

None.

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Chair

The Board rose at 4.20 p.m.