Minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 5th April 2012

Present

Members: Councillor John Appleton (Chair)
                Councillor Jeff Clarke (Vice Chair)
                Councillor Les Caborn
                Councillor Tim Naylor
                Councillor Carolyn Robbins (replacing Chris Williams)
                Councillor Jerry Roodhouse
                Councillor Dave Shilton
                Councillor June Tandy
                Councillor John Whitehouse
                Councillor Sonja Wilson

Co-opted members: Councillor Bill Gifford (Warwick District Council)
                Councillor John Haynes (Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough
                Council)
                Councillor Sue Main (Stratford-on-Avon District Council)

Other Councillors: Councillor Butlin, Portfolio Holder, Highways and Transport
                Councillor Colin Hayfield, Portfolio Holder, Customers,
                Access and Physical Assets
                Councillor Martin Heatley, Portfolio Holder Improvement and
                Workforce
                Councillor Richard Hobbs, Portfolio Holder for Community
                Safety
                Councillor David Wright, Portfolio Holder for Finance,
                Governance and IT

Officers: Georgina Atkinson, Democratic Services Team Leader
                Tonino Ciuffini, Head of Information Assets
                Phil Evans, Head of Service Improvement and Change Management
                Gill Fletcher, Manager of Corporate Programme Office
                Claire Saul, Head of Strategic Commissioning
                Philippa Young, Senior Project Engineer

1.   General

(1)   Apologies

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Bernard Kirton and Chris Williams (replaced by Carolyn Robbins for the meeting only) and Councillor Farnell.

(2)   Members' Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Councillor Caborn and Councillor Shilton both declared a personal interest with regard to Item 3, 'Questions to Cabinet and Portfolio Holders'. The nature of the interest being that they were both Elected Members of Warwick District Council.

> **(3)   Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 14th March 2012**
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> The Board agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 14th March 2012 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.
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> Georgina Atkinson, Democratic Services Team Leader, provided an update with regard to Item 3, 'Questions to Cabinet and Portfolio Holders'. The Board had requested clarification regarding a fee for attending a social media training session. The Communications team had confirmed that the fee would be charged directly to the Member Development budget which was held by Democratic Services; therefore, there would be no direct cost to individual members who wished to undertake the training.

2.   Public Question Time

None.

3.   Questions to the Portfolio Holder/Portfolio Holders Update

A question was raised with regard to the relationship between the Learning and Achievement Capital Programme 2012/13 and achievement in schools. In addition, due to the changing landscape of education and the relationship between local authorities and schools, the Board requested that the Leader of the Council advise on the Council's strategic position with regard to the future of schools and academies.

A query was raised with regard to the inclusion of Cabinet decisions in the report. Georgina Atkinson advised that the decisions were in the current Forward Plan and those included in the report were the decisions relevant to the Terms of Reference to the Board, which related to the Resources Group. The Board requested that the report be amended to include:

- Clarification in the report of the responsible Portfolio Holder for each decision; and
- The full list of Forward Plan decisions to be included in future reports, with a distinction between the decisions for information and those that the Board was responsible for scrutinising.

A discussion took place with regard to the decision, 'Delegation to Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council Executive of power to remove unauthorised signs from the highway.' The Board was advised that the decision had been reached following lengthy discussions between the two authorities. The Board considered the decision to be a sensible solution to the issue and recommended that the opportunity be offered to all authorities within the county, if successful.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board agreed to:

1. Request that the Leader of the Council advise on the Council's strategic position with regard to the future of schools and academies;

2. Recommend that the Audit and Standards Committee consider the decision regarding the 'Review of Anti-Fraud Corruption Strategy'; and

3. Recommend to Cabinet that the decision to delegate powers to Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council to remove unauthorised signs from the highway be offered to all authorities within the county, if successful.

4. **ICT Strategy**

Tonino Ciuffini, Head of Information Assets, provided the Board with a summary of the draft ICT Strategy which was scheduled for Cabinet consideration on 19th April 2012, pending consideration by Corporate Board. The Strategy, which had been based on the previous eight-page document, would now be a live electronic document to allow for easier review on an annual basis. Once approved, the Strategy would be available on the Council's web site.

It was reported that the Strategy included the ICT Vision 2012, which underpinned the Council's key ICT requirements regarding systems and solutions that would deliver effective services and positive change. Members were provided with an outline of the key areas of the Strategy, including the ICT Principles.

There was a concern that the majority of Elected Members were currently not fully engaged with social media and were not connected to the Council's social media utility, Yammer. Tonino Ciuffini advised that as social media was an external utility, it was out of the Council's control and therefore could not be a member-led function. However, he acknowledge the importance of ensuring that members were aware of the Council's social media tools and that it was important for the authority to effectively manage its reputation through the use of social media and communication. It was suggested that members could use social media to promote the scrutiny function and deliver messages regarding the work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees. A live Twitter stream could also be used to update the public on topics discussed during meeting, and allow an opportunity for questions to be raised via Twitter.

A query was raised regarding how the Strategy would be assessed to identify its effect on productivity and service delivery. The Board was advised that the Applications Strategy outlined how ICT would be used to deliver services in an efficient and improved way, with enhanced communication to members of the public. Tonino Ciuffini explained that it was not unusual for a local authority to have numerous systems; however, the Strategy aimed to ensure that different systems could work in a co-ordinated manner to the benefit of the organisation.

With regard to data storage, the Board was advised that G-Cloud provided a valuable balance of data storage across a range of sites to ensure that the Council was not reliant on one storage option. This approach also provided the Council with increased resilience as it reduced the dependency on accessing data via the Council's network system.

A discussion took place with regard to sharing ICT systems with other authorities, particularly the districts and boroughs within the county. Tonino

Ciuffini advised that theoretically it was valuable for all authorities to reduce the cost and duplication of ICT systems; however, in practice it was difficult to achieve and decisions needed to be based on the individual business needs of each authority. It was also important to provide a valuable and consistent offer to schools.

In response to a question raised regarding access to services, the Board was advised that the Customer Access Strategy ensured that alternative forms of access would remain available to avoid complete dependency on IT. In addition, it was recognised that support and awareness would be required to encourage individuals to use IT as a form of accessing Council services.

With regard to the Board's request raised at its meeting on 25th January 2012, Tonino Ciuffini advised that the maps outlining areas of poor broadband provision could not be published due to a non-disclosure clause by BDUK. He offered to discuss individual areas with members upon request.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board agreed to:

1. Stress to Cabinet the importance of increased productivity and improved service delivery, as the overall vision of the ICT Strategy;

2. Stress to Cabinet the importance of social media and the role of Elected Members in promoting and being aware of social media as a form of communication;

3. Request that the annual review of the ICT Strategy include a number of key indicators that would demonstrate to members the value of the Strategy in respect of improved service delivery and the achievement of the Council's corporate ambitions; and

4. Request that performance information regarding the impact of the Strategy be available at a future meeting.

5.   Transformation through Strategic Commissioning

Phil Evans, Head of Service Improvement and Change Management, explained that since the last meeting of the Board the three services reviews had progressed and two (the Performance Management element of the Strategic Commissioning and Performance Management review and the IT Infrastructure and Support review) were now at the options appraisal stage of assessment – Gateway 1. At this stage, there were three potential service delivery options available for each key function of the service: decommission the function; redesign and improve the function; or consider different ways of delivering the service.

With regard to the two existing service reviews, an outline of the recommended options for each function was circulated to the Board. The next stage would involve the Outline Business Case which would provide the intended route for service improvement and the Board questioned whether additional information regarding the rationale behind the recommended options would be shared with members.

A number of members expressed concern that the level of Portfolio Holder involvement was ambiguous and that overall leadership for the process appeared to be dominated by officers, rather than members. In response, the Portfolio Holders in attendance confirmed that the Transformation through Strategic Commissioning was a member-led process and that they were fully engaged throughout each service review. It was confirmed that that the final decision regarding future service delivery methods would be made by Cabinet or, where required by the Council's Constitution, by full Council. The Portfolio Holders acknowledged that there had been a few issues at the start of the process, in terms of timing and communication; however, these had been fully addressed and now all Portfolio Holders were satisfied with the process and their level of involvement.

The Board was reassured by the clarification provided by the Portfolio Holders; however, it was considered that their involvement was not accurately reflected in each of the service review scoping documents delivered to date. In light of this, it was acknowledged that future scoping documents needed to clearly outline the involvement of the Portfolio Holders. Furthermore, it was suggested that other documents, such as the initial options appraisal, also include comments by the Portfolio Holder to clearly demonstrate that Portfolio Engagement had occurred.

In response to a query raised regarding the involvement of other Elected Members, Phil Evans advised that in addition to the member involvement procedures agreed for Portfolio Holders and Overview and Scrutiny, any member could request information from the Programme Office. Furthermore, members would also be included as key stakeholders in a number of service reviews where relevant.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board agreed to:

1. Request that future scoping documents clearly outline the role of the Portfolio Holders in the service review process;

2. Request that other documents, such as the initial options appraisal, also include comments of the Portfolio Holder to clearly demonstrate that they had been involved at decision making stages;

3. Request that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Spokesperson always appoint a substitute if they were unable to attend scheduled meetings to discuss the proposed scope of service reviews; and

4. Request that direct communication be improved with Elected Members with regard to overall progress of the programme and decisions taken at key stages of the service reviews.

6.   Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12

Georgina Atkinson, Democratic Services Team Leader, presented the Board with the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12 which provided an overview of the content and structure for the report. The Board was advised that the 2011/12 report had adopted an alternative format to previous years and had a greater focus on the achievements of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The report would demonstrate where the scrutiny

function had added value to the organisation, in terms of improved service delivery and helping the Council to achieve its corporate ambitions.

The Board was advised that the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board had been scheduled for 30th May 2012; however, the Annual Report would need to be presented at the Annual Council meeting which had been scheduled for 15th May 2012. In light of this, it would not be possible for the Board to formally approve the final version of the Annual Report in a meeting. It was suggested that the Board 'virtually' approve the final version.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board agreed to:

1. Approve the proposed structure and content of the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12; and

2. Agree that the final version of the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12 be approved 'virtually' by the Board upon completion and subsequently forwarded to the Annual Council meeting for consideration.

7.   Work Programme and Scrutiny Review Progress Report

Georgina Atkinson referred to the report which included an update on the Work Programme and progress on each of the current Task and Finish Groups.

In addition to the report, the Board was advised that the scoping documents for the review of Post 16 Transport and the Safeguarding Action Plan were currently being considered by the Task and Finish Groups and would be presented at the next Board meeting on 30th May 2012.

During the item, the following points were raised:

1. With regard to the Safeguarding Improvement Plan Task and Finish Group, Councillor Tandy advised that the outcomes and recommendations from the review would be reported to the meeting of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, scheduled for 20th June 2012;

2. Councillor Robbins reported that the Paediatric and Maternity Services Task and Finish Group had been a challenging review and was anticipated for completed in early June 2012. A verbal update on the review would be presented to the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11th April 2012, with the full report scheduled for consideration at the following meeting on 19th June 2012.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board agreed to endorse the report and updated Work Programme 2011/12.

7.   Any Other Items

No further matters were raised for discussion.

8.   Dates of Future Meetings

Agreed.

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                                                                             Chair

The Board rose at 4.00 p.m.