

Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Meeting held on Thursday, 31st March, 2011.

Present:- Councillors M S Mann (Chair), Basharat, Haines, O'Connor and Shine (until 8.00 pm)

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillors Long and Matloob

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Coad and Walsh

PART I

81. Declaration of Interest

None.

82. Minutes - 3rd March 2011

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd March 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

83. Vote of Thanks

Councillor O'Connor placed on record the thanks of the Committee to the Chair and Vice-Chair for their work on the Committee over the previous year.

84. Performance and Financial Reporting for 2010/11

The Committee considered the Council's overall performance from delivery of service to financial management covering the period up to and including February 2011 against the Council Wide Balanced Scorecard and the LAA Scorecard and the Revenue and capital monitoring position to February 2011.

The Committee debated the exception performance monitoring against the Balanced Scorecard a number of key projects were discussed including the Housing Futures (ALMO Move) – the Committee asked when the final phase of the ALMO programme environmental improvement would be reported to the Committee. Members were advised that the Assistant Director of Housing had made a presentation to the Neighbourhoods and Renewal Scrutiny Panel and the Assistant Director would be asked to cover any outstanding issues at a future meeting of the Neighbourhoods and Renewal Scrutiny Panel. Members queried why the Transactional services project was not listed as a "gold project" as it was key to the Authority. Members asked a number of detailed questions about the project and how the Council was proposing to ensure that prospective bidders understood the Slough's needs and reflected the economic and poverty issues that Slough experienced. Members were advised that the report to Cabinet had made it clear that there would be jobs for Slough people and the project was in its infancy. It was agreed that the

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Committee would recommend that the Transactional services project became “gold” for report to Committee in future.

Members considered the financial position that had been presented and officers explained the underspend for 2010/11. Members discussed the variances and how underspends were treated with regard to virement and carry forwards. It was noted that the Committee would be able to monitor the action taken with regard to the underspend at its next meeting. In discussing the capital programme the Committee requested that capital commitments be included in the monitoring reports in future.

Resolved – That the report be noted and that the actions detailed in the minute above be implemented.

85. Britwell and Haymill Regeneration Scheme

John Rice, the Interim Assistant Director, Environment and Regeneration gave a detailed update report on phase 1 and 2 of Britwell and Haymill Regeneration Scheme. In addition to the information that had been provided in the report the Assistant Director advised that the Jolly Londoner Pub was now in council ownership. The Assistant Director answered a number of detailed questions on the project and agreed report to a future meeting of the Committee on the condition of the SEGRO land and the relocation options for the Britwell Scouts and Guide Groups currently located in Kennedy Park.

[The meeting adjourned from 8 pm to 8.10 pm.]

86. Census 2011- Progress Update

Andrew Millard, the Policy and Special Projects Manager updated members on the progress with the 2011 Census. Members were advised of the publicity and awareness measures and the proposals with regard to assistance and completion centres. The overall feedback had been positive suggesting that the assistance centres had had the desired impact. Members were advised of the challenges and concerns that remained with regard to the census. These included the allocation of two community advisers who were only part-time and that this was considered inadequate. Slough had also been allocated five area co-ordinators who were actively chasing returns from houses of multiple occupation. The Council was hopefully that they would be allowed to work Borough wide if required as opposed to being confined to their allocated areas. Members discussed the census campaign and a number of areas of concern with regard to non-receipt of forms and language difficulties. After full discussion the Committee:

Resolved -

- (a) That officers of the council and their local partners be thanked and congratulated for running such a high profile and effective awareness campaign.

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- (b) That the linguistic and advice/completion centres support be welcomed but that the Committee remains concerned that the ONS only intends to provide a “cold spot” data for one lower super output area (LSOA) per week and discouraging local door knocking.
- (c) That the local census manager communicate the committees concerns to the ONS and seek a suitable resolution to ensure Census 2011 Slough returns are maximised where possible and report back to the next meeting of the Committee.

87. Constitutional Changes- Joint East Berkshire Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

The Committee considered the resolution of the Joint East Berkshire Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (JEBHOS) to keep holding regular meetings. JEBHOS had agreed that future meetings should only be convened on an “as and when” required basis and in particular should joint working be required on a statutory consultation. The matter had been brought to Health Scrutiny Panel on 21st March and it had been agreed that the main Overview and Scrutiny Committee should consider the matter in order to make recommendations to amend the council’s Constitution for approval by Council.

Resolved –

- (a) That the agreement reached by JEBHOS on 2nd February 2011 and the Health Scrutiny Standing Panel on 21st March 2011 be endorsed and that from the Council meeting on 19th May 2011 Slough Borough Council’s involvement in JEBHOS will be on an as and when required basis.
- (b) That officers discuss and agree with officers at Bracknell Forest and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Best Practice and Protocol should joint working be required and propose amendments to the Councils’ Constitution for approval at Council on 19th May 2011.

88. Improvements to Overview and Scrutiny

The Committee considered a paper suggesting a number of mechanisms for ensuring the continued improvement and effectiveness of scrutiny particularly to the format of meetings to make the whole of scrutiny process going forward more focused and robust. Members noted that the revised scrutiny structure streamlining arrangements for panels and their clerking had been approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2011. Members considered the suggestions within the report and agreed as follows:-

- (a) That the main Overview and Scrutiny Committee and each Panel create their own clear structured work programme which ideally should be in the main stay of the relevant Committee Panel member for the ensuing year.

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- (b) That the performance report and the associated data be provided only to the main OSC and not to each Panel (with exception of Education and Children's Scrutiny Panel) unless scrutiny of a specific matter is considered necessary by OSC and referred to the relevant panel.
- (c) That the number of papers and subject matters considered at each meeting be reduced to 3 or 4 at the most to ensure focused consideration is given to each.
- (d) That a 5 minutes slot only be allocated for consideration of papers to be noted so that if scrutiny is considered necessary these are sent back for clear guidance and recommendations for consideration at a future meeting.
- (e) That the relevant Strategic Director(s) and/or Assistant Directors be allocated a 10-minute slot at beginning of each meeting to answer specific queries or questions (which are likely to have been notified in advance) being raised by members of the Committee / Panel that relate to pertinent topical issues affecting their directorate, the Panel and the local area. For OSC there should be two strategic directors including ideally the Chief Executive and the Director of Resources/Deputy Director of Resources.
- (f) That each agenda is Member led and incorporate indicative time guides for each item. The intention was to give each item a clearly defined amount of consideration time and if it is felt further scrutiny is necessary then the item may be considered further at a future meeting.
- (g) That a more varied and agreed format be implemented for the scrutiny of subject matter as supposed to the now routine Power-point presentation format and that when the guests are invited to attend the relevant committee/panels requirements are made known to them in advance so that there is no confusion as to what is expected of them.
- (h) That the standard question response form already created is used more frequently allowing the faster flow of meetings and follow up responses to be issued accordingly.
- (i) That the location of scrutiny be varied with more meetings held locally in the community as supposed to be at the town hall or SBC offices. Although the meeting format will be formal and follow agreed protocol this would embellish on the scrutiny surgery format introduced two years ago and would encourage greater engagement by local residents.

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- (j) That a clear dedicated listing at scrutiny meetings and the headline subject matter to be considered at these meetings be included within the Council's website and publicise widely elsewhere.

Resolved – That the above decisions be implemented in the new municipal year.

89. Annual Report of Scrutiny 2010/2011

The Committee had been provided with a draft of the Annual Scrutiny Report which highlighted some key achievements from the 2010/11 year. The production of an annual report was a requirement in the Constitution and needed to be reported annually to the Council.

Members of the Committee thanked the scrutiny officer for the production of the draft report and welcomed both the content and format of the report. The report was agreed for submission to the Council.

Resolved – That the Annual Scrutiny Report 2010/2011 be submitted to the full Council.

90. Member Call-In: Integrated Youth Services

The Committee considered a report detailing the receipt of a member call-in on Integrated Youth Support Services.

The Committee was advised that a call-in had been received from Councillors Haines and Shine.

The Call-in read: "we are not calling in the decision made by Cabinet on 14th March 2011 but rather the provision of integrated youth support services for greater review and to seek greater clarity.

We believe that the administration costs associated with youth service provision has increased markedly in the time since responsibility for the funding and organisation of these services has passed from Berkshire County Council to Slough Borough Council.

We are also concerned by SBC's decision to close many Centres down and centralise services in Manor Park.

SBC says that it wants to employ more "street based teams" in order to meet the needs of people in Slough. We wish to query whether the Council has employed enough people with relevant qualification and experience (or has provision to do so) to fulfil these roles adequately. We also wish to enquire into what the budgeted hours will be for these workers in comparison with the hours put in by youth workers at present".

The Committee noted that the call-in was seeking review and clarity rather than formally calling-in the decision made at the Cabinet meeting. Councillor

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O'Connor as Chair of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel advised that her Panel had already requested a report to its meeting on 9th June on the Youth Services Strategy. Councillor O'Connor proposed that all members of the Committee be invited to attend the Scrutiny Panel as this would avoid duplication of work and meetings.

Councillor Haines argued that the call-in had wider issues that needed to be considered. The Director of Education and Children's Services had commented that the call-in would require significant officer time to research and that there had been insufficient time to carry this out between the receipt of the call and this meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Director had proposed that if the Committee agreed to the call-in it could be taken to the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel on the 9th June. After full discussion it was

Resolved - That there would be a joint meeting of the Scrutiny Committee and the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel on the 9th June 2011 to consider the Youth Service Strategy and the issues raised in the call-in.

91. Executive Forward Plan

The Executive Forward Plan for the Cabinet was noted.

The Chair drew attention to a letter he had received from Councillors Walsh and Maclsaac following a meeting of the Health Scrutiny Panel on 21st March, 2011. The Health Scrutiny Panel had considered the public consultation on mental health in patient facilities serving the East of Berkshire. The Panel had agreed to reject the decision of the Board and recommend that the Board did not proceed with the Trust's preferred option to progress the outline business case in option 1 (i.e. that all beds be relocated to Prospect Park Hospital in Reading). The Panel had recommended that an Independent Working Group (Health Scrutiny Task and Finish Group) be set up to consider this matter, consider the evidence used by the Board in reaching its decision and decide what action/recommendations it wished to make. The establishment of a Task and Finish Group required the authorisation of the Chair and Vice-Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Members of the Committee supported the establishment of the Task and Finish Group but were concerned about the timing as it was believed that the Board may make a decision in June and that the Task and Finish Group would not have time to meet to give detailed consideration to the issue.

After discussion it was -

Resolved -

- (a) That the establishment of a Task and Finish Group be endorsed.
- (b) That a letter be written to the Board seeking a postponement of their decision to allow the Council to scrutinise as proposed.

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92. Attendance Record

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee attendance record was noted. It was noted that at the meeting of the Committee on 20th January councillor Bains had presented his apologies and that the record should be adjusted accordingly.

93. Date of Next Meeting- Tuesday, 7th June, 2011

The next meeting of the Committee would be Tuesday, 7th June, 2011.

94. Scrutiny Officer

Members noted that this would be the last meeting that Sunita Sharma's attended as Scrutiny Officer. Sunita had been on a 3 year secondment in the role and the Committee placed on record their appreciation of the work she had undertaken with the Committee and wished her well for the future.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 9.20 pm)