

Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Meeting held on Tuesday, 12th July, 2011.

Present:- Councillors M S Mann (Chair), Basharat, Davis, Haines, Minhas, O'Connor, Plenty (arrived at 8pm) and Smith

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillor Parmar

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Munawar

PART I

5. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Basharat declared a personal interest in that a member of his family was employed by Slough Borough Council.

6. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 7th June, 2011

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7th June 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

7. Minutes of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel held on 9th June 2011

The Minutes of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel held on 9th June 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

8. Member Questions

None received.

Jane Wood, Strategic Director of Community and Wellbeing, brought to Members attention the following recent developments:

The Dilnot Report

Members were informed that the Dilnot Commission Report had been completed on how to reform the funding system for adult social care. One of the key proposals was to share the costs of care in later life between individuals and the state, with individuals paying for their own care until they reached a 'cap', after which the state would pay for their care.

At present, an individual's contributions towards their care costs was potentially unlimited. The Dilnot Report was proposing to cap the contributions at £35,000, after which the individual would be eligible for full state support. The key points about the practicalities of implementing the proposed funding system were outlined.

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Once the Government's response to the report was known and whether the recommendations were going to be accepted, a further report would be submitted to the Committee for consideration and the potential impacts for those affected within the Borough.

Southern Cross

It was brought to Members' attention that Southern Cross, one of the largest care providers within the private market, had recently announced that due to financial sustainability issues, it would be withdrawing its services from the care market.

It was noted that two residential care homes in Slough were currently in receipt of services from Southern Cross. The Director stated that as the Local Authority, the Council had a responsibility to ensure that the individuals who were affected by these changes continued to receive the appropriate level of care. A number of meetings, with various partner organisations including the PCT and neighbouring authorities had been scheduled to examine in detail the process of the transition of services.

Members asked a number of questions regarding staffing levels at the two affected residential homes and how the suitability of any future care providers would be ascertained. The Committee was advised that any care provider would need to be registered with the Quality Care Commission and a business assessment would be made prior to any decision being made.

9. Revenue Budget Monitoring to 31st May, 2011(Periods 1 and 2)

Julie Evans, Director of Resources, outlined the latest financial position as at the end of May 2011. It was outlined that there was currently a forecast overspend for the 2011/12 general fund at the end of 31 May 2011 of £632,000. This level of overspend related primarily to the costs of Looked After Children which had been anticipated and Members had agreed to a £600,000 contingency sum to be allocated to this area. It was noted that members had requested a full review of all associated costs in this area to ensure adequate resources continued to be maintained.

It was highlighted that another forecast variance from budget was a £13,000 under spend within the Resources and Regeneration directorate. The Committee noted that the position as at the end of May 2011 had left an overall headline over spend of £632,000 against the general fund revenue account.

A Member queried the over spend position relating to Education and Children's Services. The Director explained that this was due to the costs associated with the Improvement Plan following the recent Ofsted inspection and that the £150,000 costs would be met through earmarked reserves.

A Member requested that further details regarding the potential reforms to the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy System and potential flexibilities in how

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the Council may spend housing income and set rents be provided. It was agreed that the matter would be added to the work programme for the Committee to consider at a future meeting.

Resolved – That the report be noted with regard to identified areas of risk and emerging issues and that the contents of the report be included for inclusion to the Cabinet meeting on 18th July 2011.

10. Performance and Project Reporting for 2010/11- end of year out-turns

Kevin Gordon, Assistant Director Professional Services outlined the performance outturns 2010/11 for the Corporate Balanced Scorecard and Local Area Agreement Performance measures. Members were reminded that the Local Area Agreement (LAA) was signed up to in 2008 as a 3 year improvement cycle to address the key priorities for Slough as identified in the Sustainable Community Strategy. However a change in national government and a complete revision of the National Indicator Framework meant that many of the national indicators chosen for monitoring in the LAA had subsequently been abolished; with methods of collection, processing and/or reporting being removed. Consequently, what this meant was that although the end of the LAA had been reached, the Local Authority was unable to quantify a final position on those indicators so affected.

Members were provided with an update on performance covering the period to 31st March 2011. Details relating to the performance monitoring were outlined and the proposal for a new scorecard for use in the remainder of 2011-12 was outlined.

It was brought to Members' attention that the Sustainable Community Strategy was undergoing a review, with the current priority areas for the local area being determined. The end of the LAA and a review of sustainable community strategy mentioned had provided an opportunity to redefine both the priorities of greatest importance to Slough communities in 2011 and the years ahead, and to redefine the quantitative and qualitative measures that would best measure the authority's collective success in addressing those priorities. To this end, a proposed performance management scorecard was under discussion with senior managers of the Council and a draft version had been presented to the Corporate Management Team on 22nd June 2011.

National indicator areas which had had an improvement were noted and included community safety, economy and skills, environment and health and well being.

Members were informed that nine LAA indicators had been given a red status and details relating to corrective actions regarding the indicators were detailed for Members' information.

A Member requested further information regarding the percentage rate for staff appraisals that had been completed. The Assistant Director reported that a number of restructures had taken place across various departments and

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whilst this information was not currently available, it would be included within the performance and project report for the September committee meeting.

The issue of members post was raised and in particular the difficulties associated with late/supplementary reports being circulated after the agenda had been despatched. Whilst the Assistant Director agreed to remind officers of the importance of adhering to report deadlines, it was noted that there were no plans for the twice weekly courier service for members post to be reinstated.

Resolved –

- (a) That the progress and status of performance measures in the Balanced Score Card be noted.
- (b) The actions for those indicators that had not met their targets in the exceptions report be noted.
- (c) The continuing gaps in the report and subsequent endorsement actions be noted.

11. Climate Change Strategy

Roger Parkin, Strategic Director Customer and Transactional Services briefly outlined the strategic framework in which the Council was proposing to address the corporate priority of climate change. It was noted that the strategy would directly contribute to the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy priority, a cleaner greener place to live, work and play by

- Improving public spaces
- Creating a strong culture of recycling: by recycling 60% of waste by 2028
- Improving energy efficiency: by reducing CO₂ emissions by 20% by 2028
- Promoting sustainable public transport: All public transport and Council's vehicles to run on cleaner fuel by 2028.

In order to achieve the objectives with the Climate Change Strategy document, an Action Plan had been formulated to identify monitor and report on the work required and undertaken to develop the improvements needed to tackle climate change. The action plan would outline the ways in which Slough Forward and the Council would try to limit the effects of the climate change by lowering carbon dioxide emission across the Borough and across their own operations. The plan would also outline how the Council and the partnership were to work with members and the community to lower their emissions and to start preparing for the impacts of climate change.

It was highlighted that the Climate Change delivery group would be examining areas to identify where improvements of climate change could be made and

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influenced at a local level. These would include various feasibility studies, addressing transport and air quality issues, liaising with Berkshire Climate Board, working with voluntary groups and working with the council's Carbon Management Board and Asset Managements Team. Members were informed that the Action Plan would be updated on an ongoing basis.

In the ensuing debate a number of issues were raised, including the possibility of a railway link into the Trading Estate, encouraging greater use of public transport by introducing an oyster card system and introducing financial incentives for individuals who recycled. It was noted that information relating to the railway link into the trading estate and the possibility of recycling food waste would be sent to members. The Chief Executive informed the Committee that the issue of oyster cards had been raised at a recent meeting with Mr Hammond, Secretary of State for Transport. It was noted that a new system was likely to be introduced for London within the next two to three years and there was a possibility of Slough joining in with that scheme

Councillor Parmar, Commissioner for Environment and Open Spaces, informed the Committee that recycling rates within the Borough had increased from 8% in 2008 to 35% and that regular monitoring was taking place and reported in the Citizen magazine which was sent to all households in the Borough.

Resolved – That the actions proposed for the development of a Climate Change Action Plan be noted.

12. Provision of Mental Health In- Patient Beds in East Berkshire- Report from Health Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 22nd June, 2011

Members were informed that the report on the future of Mental Health In-Patient facilities in East Berkshire had been considered in detail at the Health Scrutiny Panel on 22nd June, 2011. Naveed Mohammed, Scrutiny Officer, advised that following a lengthy discussion at the Health Scrutiny Panel it was resolved that Members of the Panel did not accept the findings of the public consultation regarding the provision of Mental Health In-Patient facilities in East Berkshire. In the event that the Trust decided to relocate the Mental Health In-Patient provision to Prospect Park Hospital Reading Health Scrutiny Panel Members were recommending that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel refer the matter to the Secretary of State for review.

Resolved – That the recommendations of the Health Scrutiny Panel, as set out in the report, be endorsed.

13. Consideration of reports marked to be noted/for information

None.

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14. Forward Work Programme

Details of the Forward Work Programme were noted. The following items were added to the programme:

- Heart of Slough Update (inc information re Compulsory Purchase Orders) (September Meeting)
- Housing Revenue Account Subsidy System (inc info re Choice Based Lettings) (September Meeting)

Resolved – That the Work Programme be noted.

15. Attendance Record

Noted.

16. Date of Next Meeting- 13th September, 2011

The next meeting of the Committee would be held on 13th September, 2011.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.30 pm)