

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 3 DECEMBER 2019 AT THE KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Chuck Berry, Cllr Christine Crisp, Cllr Stewart Dobson, Cllr Howard Greenman, Cllr Alan Hill (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Ruth Hopkinson, Cllr Gordon King, Cllr Pip Ridout, Cllr John Smale, Cllr Tony Trotman, Cllr Stuart Wheeler and Cllr Graham Wright (Chairman)

Also Present:

Cllr Allison Bucknell, Cllr Richard Clewer, Cllr Simon Jacobs, Cllr Philip Whitehead and Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling

67 **Apologies**

An apology was received from Councillor Jon Hubbard.

Councillor Howard Greenman also gave apologies he would arrive late to the meeting.

68 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2019 were presented for consideration, and it was,

Resolved:

To approve and sign the minutes as a true and correct record.

69 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations.

70 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no announcements.

71 **Public Participation**

A statement had been received from Mr Colin Gale in respect of the Executive Response to the Final Report of the Public Consultations Task Group, as

included in the Agenda Supplement. Additional materials from Mr Gale had been circulated to the Committee members.

72 **Executive Response to the Final Report of the Public Consultations Task Group**

On 20 November 2018 the Committee established the Public Consultations Task Group to examine the number, purpose and method of public consultations taking place in Wiltshire. The Final Report of the Task Group was approved by the Committee at its meeting on 24 September 2019, and the formal response of the Executive was therefore to be considered.

Prior to debate a statement was received from Mr Colin Gale on behalf of the Pewsey Community Area Partnership, Pewsey Parish Council, and Campaign for the Protection of Rural England, that collectively they did not consider the report had captured all points that it should have, had not engaged sufficiently with the public, and that the executive response did not provide clarity on timelines for its actions in response.

Councillor Allison Bucknell, Cabinet Member for Communications, Communities, Leisure and Libraries, presented her report and response to the Task Group recommendations. She added that the Business Intelligence Hub would ensure formal consultations would coordinate with communications and services, and that in implementing the recommendations the new structure would ensure more focused, appropriate consultations.

Councillor Stuart Wheeler, Chairman of the Public Consultations Task Group, welcomed the response of the Cabinet Member as set out in the report, and the recommendations to improve delivery of consultations within Wiltshire. He noted that the Task Group had retained concerns about the responsibilities being placed on the Business Intelligence Hub, and that it was proposed therefore that the Task Group reconstitute within 12 months to assess the new service.

The Committee debated the report and welcomed the suggestion to review the status of the Business Intelligence Hub within 12 months, and also noted the importance of managing public expectations in any public engagement, in particular being clear what was a formal consultation and what was information gathering or surveying.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

- 1) **To note the Executive Response to the Task Group's final report.**
- 2) **To note that in September 2019 the Committee resolved to receive a report in approximately 12 months' time about how those recommendations accepted by the Executive have been implemented.**

73 **Scrutiny of Contracts and Contractors**

The Chairman provided an update regarding discussions between the Overview and Scrutiny Committee chairmen and vice-chairmen and Executive members regarding arrangements for the scrutiny of council contracts and contractors. This had been in response to the publication of new Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in England and Wales, which made reference to Overview and Scrutiny carrying out legitimate scrutiny of council contracts.

It was reported the discussion had focused upon engagement with contractors, scrutiny of the tendering of contracts, and scrutiny of contract performance. It was not considered, given contractors usually engaged well with scrutiny, that including clauses in contracts to mandate this was required at the present time, and that scrutiny of the tendering process was well embedded. Some concerns had been raised regarding how members could be aware of contract performance in order to request scrutiny of it, and members were informed it was intended in early 2020 for a degree of contract performance reporting to be included in performance reports to Cabinet.

The Committee discussed the update, and welcomed the increased transparency of reporting on contract performance. Members also raised the scrutiny of the awarding of contracts, including smaller contracts, to ensure best value, and whether the council had sufficient expertise and capacity at appropriate levels to ensure this,

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

- 1) To note the discussions had with officers and the Executive regarding contract and contractor scrutiny.**
- 2) To agree that, due to a longstanding culture of providers engaging with Wiltshire OS on request, no contract clause requiring this is necessary at present, but to review this in the future if appropriate.**
- 3) To note that, from the New Year, there is an aspiration to add a new section to the quarterly budget, performance and risk reports to Cabinet giving high-level performance information on the council's 'platinum' contracts.**
- 4) To agree that, once performance information is included in the quarterly reports to Cabinet, Financial Planning Task Group will refer any areas of concern to the relevant select committee when appropriate.**
- 5) The Chairman and Vice-chairman to meet with officers and consider the current officer processes and procedures in procuring contracts, with information brought back to the next meeting.**

74 **Joint Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP) Task Group Report on the Chippenham Station Hub Project**

To note that the report requires further discussion by the Task Group and to defer its consideration until the next meeting of Management Committee.

75 **Management Committee Task Group Updates**

The written update on Task Groups was received. Members sought additional details on the level of response to a survey from the Communications with Councillors Task Group, and whether this covered direct email and face to face communication by officers in particular in relation to local division matters.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

- 1) **To note the update on Task Group activity.**
- 2) **To ask the Communications with Councillors Task Group to ensure that the following issues are addressed in its final report:**
 - **officer response times**
 - **the consistency with which officers communicate with councillors; and**
 - **what information needs to be communicated to councillors.**

76 **Forward Work Programme**

The Forward Work Programmes of the Select Committees were received.

In relation to the Environment Select Committee it was stated the Housing Aids and Adaptations Task Group had begin its work, and there would also be a report on the impact of Community Area Transport Groups after their ten years in operation.

In relation to the Health Select Committee it was noted that further announcements on social care policy, which could have a big impact on local government, would follow sometime after the General Election.

In response to a query it was stated the proposed reorganisation of the senior staff structure would need to be resolved before any consideration of if the committee structure for overview and scrutiny would be affected.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

Resolved:

To note the Overview and Scrutiny work programme.

77 **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 28 January 2019.

78 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 - 11.25 am)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Kieran Elliott of Democratic Services,
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