

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5 NOVEMBER 2013 AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES, MONKTON PARK, CHIPPENHAM, SN15 1ER.

Present:

Cllr Christine Crisp, Cllr Stewart Dobson, Cllr Alan Hill, Cllr Jon Hubbard, Cllr Simon Killane (Chairman), Cllr Gordon King, Cllr Jacqui Lay, Cllr Jeff Osborn, Cllr Mark Packard, Cllr Pip Ridout, Cllr John Walsh, Cllr Bridget Wayman, Cllr Bob Jones MBE and Cllr Roy While (Vice Chairman)

Also Present:

Cllr Richard Clewer, Cllr Mike Hewitt, Cllr Keith Humphries, Cllr John Noeken, Cllr Paul Oatway QPM, Cllr John Thomson and Cllr Philip Whitehead

131 **Apologies**

No apologies for absence were received for the meeting.

132 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Resolved:

To approve and sign the minutes of the meetings held 8 October 2013.

133 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

134 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman advised that the outcome of the Staffing Policy Committee's consideration of staff morale would be reported to the next meeting of the Management Committee.

135 **Public Participation**

There were no comments or questions received from the public.

136 **Housing Allocation Policy**

The Committee were reminded of the process that had taken place for scrutinising the Housing Allocation Policy, and a copy of questions submitted by

Cllr Deane, and officer responses had also been circulated to the Committee. The Chairman outlined the recommendations contained within the Housing Allocations rapid scrutiny report. The Committee discussed the role of campuses and the location of housing allocations teams within them. It was clarified that campuses would act as a central signposting service, with no plans to relocate the staff currently based at Bourne Hill. Following discussion, the Management Committee;

Resolved:

To support the revised Housing Allocations Policy as appended to the report for approval by cabinet on the 21 November 2013 subject to the following being taken into account:

- 1) To support the benefit of seeking a common allocations policy among all social housing providers in Wiltshire.**
- 2) To change the description of the banding structure to a letter or number classification in order to signify that current arrangements have been extensively revised.**
- 3) To provide a graphical presentation of the new process in the form of a flowchart.**
- 4) To allow local connection to also mean officially recognised neighbourhoods as defined within an adopted neighbourhood plan encompassing more than one parish.**
- 5) To rename the new “expression of interest” category to better reflect that it no longer forms part of the revised Policy.**
- 6) To submit a further appendix to Cabinet and Council highlighting where the changes have been made within the banding structure.**
- 7) To utilise the Council’s hubs and new campus provision to improve access to housing services.**
- 8) To support an extensive housing newsletter for stakeholders and councillors.**

137 Highways and Streetscene Contract - Member Request

The Chairman outlined the position, and reminded the committee that the report and debate would direct the committee as to whether a scrutiny exercise would need to be conducted. The report proposed that a scrutiny exercise be undertaken in June 2014 after the first year of the operation of the contract.

The Chairman invited the Committee to comment on the report. There was a division of opinion between committee members with regard to evidence supporting the alleged contractual failings. The Committee discussed the bedding in period and the suggestion to scrutinise the contract document itself following the previous disbanding of the major contracts review task groups.

Cllr Phillip Whitehead (Portfolio Holder for Highways Contracts) responded to the Committee, detailing the arrangements in place for winter preparedness.

The Committee discussed some specific incidents of good and poor performance across the County and were concerned about addressing performance after events had transpired.

The Management Committee debated the potential areas of risk over the winter period and highlighted concern with reviewing performance after the event. At the conclusion of the debate, the Chairman proposed a three stage approach to the future scrutiny of this major contract.

Resolved:

- 1) A Rapid Scrutiny Exercise would be conducted on the content of the report to enable greater clarity on the concerns raised.**
- 2) A progress report would be presented to the Environment Select Committee after the winter, addressing operational performance.**
- 3) Environment Select Committee to conduct a full scrutiny exercise in June 2014 after the first full operational year of the contract.**

138 Overview and Scrutiny Councillor Development

The Management Committee were asked to comment on the Councillor Development: Scrutiny Skills training event held in October 2013, and to propose any recommendations for amendments to the session prior to the wider rollout.

The opinion of some of the Committee was that the session failed to address key training skills for scrutiny. The Committee agreed that for future events to be successful, greater focus would need to be placed on applied skills. Barry Pirie (Associate Director of People and Business Services) commented that the Council would be better placed to source training using in house expertise from the learning and development team.

Resolved:

To review the current training programme based on the comments received, and to make the necessary amendments before rolling out.

139 Task Group Update

Updates were made from the following task groups:

Financial Planning Task Group:

The Committee noted that monitoring procedures had now been more closely aligned with the financial plan, and another session would be held in November to finalise these arrangements. The Committee discussed how to engage members with the Financial Planning process, as the previous briefing session run by the Director of Finance held on 21 October 2013 was attended by only nine Councillors.

The Committee agreed that members could better engage with the process, stating that a lack of knowledge of task group accessibility and of financial reporting as potential reasons for limited member engagement.

Area Boards Task Group

The Committee noted that the Area Board Task Group was in the process of appointing members from a wide geographic area. There had been some opposition to the way appointments had been made. The Committee agreed that the opportunity for members to sit on the Task Group (and other activities) should be made available to all members.

Local Enterprise Partnership Task Group

The Committee noted that guidance on the Joint Scrutiny of the LEP had not been forthcoming, and requested that more rapid progress be made.

Resolved:

To note the updates from Task Groups.

140 **Forward Work Programme**

Following consideration of the Officers Report, the Chairman invited each of the Select Committees to comment on their own work plans.

The Committee expressed concern at the capacity to manage the burgeoning workplan of each of the Select Committees. A review of the work plan priorities was discussed by the Committee, with particular concern expressed over the engagement of members with some task groups. The circulation of the work programme to all Councillors was suggested, with the possibility of a scrutiny newsletter to keep members informed of the work programme also suggested.

Resolved:

- 1) To note the positive work undertaken to date in developing the work programme.**
- 2) To agree the first draft single overview and scrutiny work programme appended to this report.**
- 3) To note that it will continue to be informed through ongoing dialogue with the Executive linked to priorities in the Business Plan and other discussions.**
- 4) To receive an update on progress with activities and to review the content of the work programme at each future meeting.**

5) To note the possible need to prioritise activities in order to best utilise the resources available to each of the Select Committees.

141 Urgent Items

There were no Urgent Items.

142 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was noted as being 14 January 2014.

POST MEETING NOTE:

The date of the next Management Committee was confirmed as being held on the 7 January 2014.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 1.00 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Samuel Bath, of Democratic Services, direct line (01225) 718504211, e-mail samuel.bath@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line (01225) 713114/713115