

KENNET DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held in the Council Chamber, Browfort, Bath Road, Devizes on Tuesday 10th July 2007 at 2:15pm

PRESENT:

Councillor C P G Hoddinott - Chairman

Councillor A Lake

Councillor S J Miles

Councillor J Seed

Councillor Mrs S Zweck

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor S Dagger

Councillor Mrs E Fogg

Councillor Mrs L Mayes

Councillor R T Parsons

Councillor Mrs P M Winchcombe

PART 1

Items considered whilst the public were entitled to be present

20 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 5th June 2007, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

21 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were none.

22. TRAINING

The Corporate Services Manager made a short presentation covering the principles of overview and scrutiny and its statutory role within the council structure.

Members were reminded of training sessions during October and November that were being provided through IDeA.

It was agreed that the format of providing a short training session at the start of meetings was successful and that in future the theme of any training to be provided at a meeting would appear on the agenda.

Members requested that the Head of Legal Services be requested to clarify whether decisions made by the Planning Policies Executive Committee should be subject to call-in procedures.

23. CORPORATE FINANCE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

Members questioned whether the matter of outstanding risk action plans referred to in Minute 24 of the Sub-Committee Minutes should be a matter for the Board to monitor, and were informed that the issue would be properly dealt with through the Sub-Committee's resolution.

RESOLVED

THAT the minutes of the Corporate Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on 26th June 2007 be received and noted.

24. HOUSING

The Corporate Services Manager introduced report C/15/07 which outlined the debates that had taken place within the Council during the previous municipal year and sought guidance from the Board as to which specific areas of housing it wished to scrutinise.

During the debate it became apparent that there were sufficient queries and comments that Members wished to make on the proposals considered by the Planning Policies Executive Committee on 1st February and Community Development Executive Committee on 6th March 2007 that it would be necessary to form a small Task Group. Members also debated the choice based lettings policy and the apparent difficulty of local applicants in obtaining lettings for local houses.

RESOLVED

THAT

1. a Task Group of 3 members comprising Councillors Lake, Miles and Seed be established to scrutinise the proposals contained in report HSM/PSM/04/07 to make proposals to the October meeting of the Board for subsequent recommendation to the relevant committees.
2. that staff at Homes@Kennet be requested to report to the Board on Choice Based Lettings policies and allocation policies.

25. ANNUAL MONITORING OF MEMBERS' PLANNING DECISIONS

The Planning Services Manager informed the Board that the annual report to Overview & Scrutiny was an important element in monitoring the integrity of decisions made by the Regulatory Committee. He drew members' attention to a table in the report demonstrating the improvement in the overturn statistics over a 5 year period, and highlighted improved member training and better communication between members and officers as key reasons for the improvement.

RESOLVED

THAT the report on the annual monitoring of members' planning decisions be noted.

26. LITTER BIN POLICY SCRUTINY

Members considered a report by the Chairman of the Task Group which set out details of meetings and sought approval for draft terms of reference contained in the report. Following a brief debate it was

RESOLVED

THAT the terms of reference be approved as set out in the report.

27. BUILDING CONTROL PARTNERSHIP WORKING POLICY SCRUTINY

The Corporate Services Manager explained that this item had been brought to the Board rather than to a Task Group so that the business case for a single building control service for Wiltshire could be examined in advance of any decision being taken.

The Director of Resources outlined the budgetary arguments for closer partnership working and provided details of the work carried out by the Wiltshire Customer First Steering Group.

The Building Control and Property Manager then explained the report in detail, in particular those areas relating to efficiency and competition with the private sector.

In response to questions, Members were informed that any building control partnership would not be subject to tender as it was a statutory local authority function, but rather would be controlled through a joint local authority committee, and that it may prove problematic to include North Wiltshire District Council in any partnership given that its budgets for building control were so far out of alignment with the other authorities.

RESOLVED

THAT the Board

1. Recommends that the relevant executive committees approve in principle the establishment of joint working in building control.
2. Endorse the Joint Working in Building Control business case.
3. Request that a further report is prepared when the detailed information is completed and approved by the Wiltshire Customer Partnership Board.

PART 2

Items considered whilst the meeting was closed to the public

None

Chairman
9th October 2007