

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 9th October 2007 at 2:15pm

PRESENT:

Councillor C P G Hoddinott - Chairman

Councillor S Dobson
Councillor Mrs E Fogg
Councillor A Lake
Councillor Mrs L Mayes

Councillor R T Parsons
Councillor J Seed
Councillor Mrs P M Winchcombe
Councillor Mrs S Zweck

PART 1

Items considered whilst the public were entitled to be present

28 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman and Board Members expressed their sadness on hearing the news of the death of James Bullock, a Policy Officer who had provided assistance to many Task Groups. Members asked that their heartfelt condolences be conveyed to James' family.

29 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 10th July 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

30 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Councillor Dobson declared a personal interest in agenda item 7 as a member of Sarsen Management Board.
Councillor A Lake declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 11 as he had sat on the Executive Committee that made the decision subject to call-in.

31. CORPORATE FINANCE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Chairman of the Sub-Committee introduced the minutes and informed Members that a question raised within the minutes was being dealt with at item 10 on the agenda.

RESOLVED

THAT the minutes of the Corporate Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on 25th September 2007 be received and noted.

32. TASK GROUPS

The Chairman invited Members to re-evaluate the relevance of the task group themes in the light of the ongoing unitary status bid.

There was a brief discussion regarding the staff resources that might be made available for assisting the work of the Task Groups.

Members indicated a desire to continue with the task groups for affordable housing policies and litter bins. Members were reminded that the work on recycling was dependent upon a draft policy being formed by the Community Development Executive Committee.

RESOLVED

THAT

1. the Housing Policy Task Group meet and report to the next meeting of the Board.
2. the Litter Bin Task Group meet to decide whether the project remained relevant.
3. all other task group work be deferred until after the unitary status bid is resolved.

33. THE FUTURE OF SCRUTINY

The Scrutiny Manager for Wiltshire County Council introduced a series of papers inviting the Council to comment on how the transitional governance arrangements for the unitary authority might be scrutinised effectively.

Members voiced concerns over the timescales proposed within the County Council's papers and expressed a view that the autonomy of the District Council should not be seen to be weakened. Members accepted, however, that the Council should flag its intention to be fully involved with any transitional scrutiny arrangements.

RESOLVED

THAT

1. The County Council be informed of the Board's intention to be fully involved in transitional scrutiny arrangements (subject to the outcome of Judicial Review).
2. That an extra meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Management Board be held on 23rd October 2007 on the rising of the Council to consider the papers supplied by the County Council in more detail.

34. CHOICE BASED LETTINGS POLICY

The Environmental Health and Housing Services Manager, supported by the Housing Options Manager, presented a paper on the existing District-wide Choice Based Lettings scheme and the proposals for a County-wide Choice Based Lettings scheme, in response to a request for information from the previous meeting of the Board.

The Housing Options Manager provided a detailed explanation of key areas of the existing scheme, including banding of applicants, priority cards, the mechanics of the bidding scheme, property labelling (to define who can bid for which types of property), allocation of high demand properties and the appeal procedure for dissatisfied customers.

In response to questions from members, the Housing Options Manager explained that in some instances a Section 106 agreement might require that a property only be let to a resident of a particular village, but that on the whole applicants only had to demonstrate a connection the District to be able to bid for any property on the register.

The Housing Options Manager then explained how the county-wide Choice Based Lettings scheme would differ from the existing scheme. Members were informed that applicants would only have to demonstrate a connection with the county, and that it was the officers view that any attempt to restrict properties within a particular village to people with a link to that village would be unlawful.

Members thanked officers for the clarity of the report, and noted that the new county-wide policy was due to go to Community Development Executive in November.

RESOLVED

THAT the report be noted.

35. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Board considered report C/17/07 by the Corporate Services Manager setting out the Council's performance against its own targets and in the national context, in particular for those areas previously identified by the Board as critical indicators. The Corporate Services Manager indicated that customer satisfaction indicators for the Choice Based Lettings scheme could be included in future.

Members noted that the satisfaction indicators relating to waste collection did not appear to correlate with performance targets, and were informed that the satisfaction survey was carried out shortly after the introduction of alternate weekly collections.

RESOLVED

THAT the Board

1. Indicators for customer satisfaction for Choice Based Lettings be included in the range of reported indicators.
2. Detailed figures for BV183b (length of stay in hostel accommodation) be provided.
3. That a benchmarking exercise relating to what materials comparator authorities collect within BV91 (residents served by kerbside recycling).

36. THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 – SECTION 100(A) (4)

RESOLVED

THAT in accordance with the provisions of Section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

PART 2

Items considered whilst the meeting was closed to the public

37. WILTSHIRE PCT CLINIC, NEW PARK STREET, DEVIZES

The Director of Community Services presented a brief paper in response to a question raised through the minutes of the Corporate Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and the Director of Community Services be thanked for his response.

38. LAND IN MARLBOROUGH –CALLED IN

In accordance with procedure rules contained in the Constitution, report DCS/26/2007 was called in for further consideration of the decision reached by the Resources Executive Committee.

A motion that the matter be referred to Council for reconsideration was defeated.

RESOLVED

THAT the decision made by the Resources Executive Committee be endorsed.

Councillor Dobson requested that his vote against the resolution be recorded.

Chairman
4th December 2007