

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 2nd December 2008 at 2:15pm.

PRESENT:

Councillor C P G Hoddinott - Chairman

Councillor Mrs E Fogg
Councillor Mrs L Mayes
Councillor R Parsons

Councillor J Seed
Councillor Mrs P M Winchcombe
Councillor Mrs S Zweck

Apologies for absence:

Councillor A Lake

Councillor Mrs N G Rawlins

PART 1

Items considered whilst the public were entitled to be present

22. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 7th October 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

23. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

24. CORPORATE FINANCE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on 11th November 2008 were received and noted.

25. JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY UPDATES

Those councillors present who represented the Council on the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Transition Board (JOSTB) and the subsidiary Task Groups made verbal reports.

JOSTB

Councillor Seed spoke on matters discussed at meetings of the JOSTB held on 31st October and 21st November 2008, and highlighted a number of the more significant items.

He said that, subject to the approval of the Implementation Executive (IE), agreement appeared to have been reached on arrangements for development control in the period between 1 April 2009 and the coming into office of the newly-elected members of Wiltshire Council. There would be area planning committees to which the rules on political proportionality would not apply and on which existing District Regulatory members would be invited to sit as co-opted members. The JOSTB had also agreed that the call-in of applications would be permitted during this period at the request of county councillors acting as members of the new Council.

There was a need to establish how the overview and scrutiny function was to be undertaken in the interim period. In the JOSTB's view, insufficient consideration had been given to this question.

The JOSTB were dissatisfied with the officer presentation for member support and democratic services made to it, and had asked for further work to be done.

Because of the importance of many of the matters discussed by the JOSTB, Councillor Seed suggested that the minutes of these two meetings of the JOSTB be appended to the minutes of this meeting of O&S Management Board. This was agreed.

Finally, Councillor Seed remarked that the value of the JOSTB had been demonstrated by the way it had been able to influence final decisions on a number of issues.

Development Control

Councillor Parsons reiterated what Councillor Seed had said concerning the arrangements for the immediate post 1 April period. He noted that all members of Kennet's Regulatory Committee had already been contacted to ascertain which members wished to serve as co-opted members on the area planning committees for the interim period.

Housing

Councillor Seed, on Councillor Mrs Giles' behalf, reported that the main item discussed by the Housing Task Group had been, and continued to be, harmonisation.

Waste

Councillor Seed said that the work of this Task Group had effectively come to an end. Harmonisation of collection services was an issue which was being left to the new Council to resolve.

Customer Access

On behalf of Councillor Lake, Councillor Seed reported that this Task Group was content that the delivery of improved customer access was on schedule.

Community Area Boards (CABs)

In speaking about the work of this Task Group, Councillor Mrs Winchcombe said that there were four areas of concern.

First, the timescale for evaluating the pilot CABs was such that some of the Boards will have been in operation for a very short period of time. Moreover, the academic consultant engaged to carry out the evaluation was not required to deliver his report until after the deadline given to the CAB Task Group to complete its work. In Councillor Mrs Winchcombe's view, this emphasised the need for overview and scrutiny arrangements to be put in place post 1 April.

Secondly, there was much confusion as to how CABs would link and interact with existing community partnerships. This needed to be resolved and made explicit to all concerned.

The third concern was to do with funding; and in particular whether CABs would have custody of s.106 contributions and thus the ability to decide how such income to the new Council would be allocated and spent. Currently, each Council had a different approach to the mechanism for allocating such income.

Fourthly, Councillor Winchcombe emphasised the Task Group's misgivings at the proposals to date regarding officer support to members generally and to the CABs in particular. The Task Group felt that the proposals seriously under-estimated the amount of support needed. There was also concern at the suggestions which were being mooted for members' access to officers. The CAB Task Group and the JOSTB had both asked for this area to be looked at again.

RESOLVED

THAT

- a) Councillors Parsons, Seed and Mrs Winchcombe be thanked for their reports; and
- b) the concerns expressed by Councillors Seed and Mrs Winchcombe regarding member support and Community Area Boards be endorsed.

26. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT – QUARTER TWO REPORT

The Board considered a paper (C/13/08) by the Corporate Services Manager on key performance information for the second quarter of 2008/09.

RESOLVED

THAT

- a) the paper and key performance information for the second quarter of 2008/09 be noted;
- b) it be noted with pleasure that satisfactory levels of performance are generally continuing to be maintained notwithstanding the demise of the Council next March; and
- c) the Director of Environment and Leisure Services be asked to report to the next meeting of this Board on the apparent inconsistencies of some leisure services performance indicators in relation to the relevant targets.
- d) The Corporate Services Officer be asked to investigate the use of USB sticks by the Council.
(Note: The use of USB sticks is acceptable under Kennet District Council's computer security policy. These are available from IT and up to date virus checks are given to such devices.)

PART 2

Items considered whilst the meeting was closed to the public

None

Chairman
10th February 2009