



## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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MINUTES of a MEETING held at COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE on 9 JUNE 2006.

PRESENT: Mr BE Dalton, Mr A Davis, Dr JM English, Mrs ME Groom, Brig. RW Hall, Mr WR Moss, Mr JB Osborn, Mr RT Rogers, Mrs J Rooke, Mrs P Rugg, and Mr RS While.

Also present Mrs N Bryant, Cabinet Member  
Mr JC Noeken  
Representatives from Sodexo  
Representatives from The Orders of St. John Care Trust

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24. **Election of Chairman** Mr JB Osborn was elected Chairman for the year.

25. **Election of Vice Chairman** Mr A Molland was elected, with permission in his absence, Vice-Chairman for the year.

26. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Resolved: To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2006.

27. **Chairman's Announcement** The Chairman indicated that a report would be brought to the next meeting setting out proposals for the application of the additional responsibility allowances agreed for scrutiny at last Council.

28. **Members' Interests** Brig Hall referred to his involvement in the St. John's Ambulance having a potential minor personal interest in respect of The Orders of St. John, and Mr Rogers declared a personal interest as a contractor and management consultant.

29. **Council's Budget 2006-07 - Corporate Recovery Plan** It was reported that a letter was sent on behalf of the chairmen of the overview and scrutiny committees to all members on 24 May setting out intentions as to how scrutiny might engage with the Corporate Recovery Plan in the light of comments made at full Council on 16 May and the decisions of Cabinet on 23 May. An extraordinary meeting of Council had also been held on 6 June on the issue.

The most significant of the proposals was to consider establishing a joint scrutiny task group of 6 members from the non-executive membership of the Council.

Resolved:

- (1) *To establish a joint scrutiny task group in response to the Corporate Financial Recovery Plan approved by Cabinet on 23 May with the following terms of reference:*
  - (i) *To scrutinise the details of the Executive's proposals in the Corporate Recovery Plan as they are developed and consulted upon with a focus on options, service implications and impact on users.*
  - (ii) *To provide a forum to reflect the voice and concerns of communities and the public, and a focus for non-executive member views on specific service issues.*
  - (iii) *In the first instance, to hold meetings at suitable times in order to give views and make recommendations direct to Cabinet on the detail of the proposals relating to the current year in advance of its meetings on 20 June and 25 July.*
  - (iv) *To be aware that the proposals for increased challenge in respect of budget content and monitoring were set out as recommendations in the annual report of the Budget Process Scrutiny Task Group (see minute no.30), and that this existing standing Task Group was also pursuing the issue of financial management in the Department for Adult and Community Services.*
- (2) *To appoint Brig Hall, Mr Moss, Mr Coleman, Mr Osborn, Mrs Rooke and Mrs White to serve on the joint task group, subject to the agreement of the Children's Services and Health Scrutiny Committees at their meetings next week.*
- (3) *To encourage other members not on the task group to provide evidence of any concerns that may exist in their communities resulting from the recovery measures either in person or in writing.*
- (4) *To acknowledge the positive statements made by the Leader of the Council at Cabinet on 23 May and extraordinary Council on 6 June in respect of scrutiny's involvement in challenging the implications of the content of the recovery plan.*

30. **Budget Process Scrutiny Task Group Annual Report** A draft of  
the annual report reviewing the Council's budget process for 2006/07 was circulated. The members who served on this standing task group were Mr Molland (Chairman), Mr Coleman, Brig Hall, Mr Rogers and Mrs Wayman.

The Task Group met on 2 June and finalised its report. Brig Hall gave an oral update to the Management Committee at the meeting highlighting the significant recommendations relating to bi-monthly meetings of the Task Group in order to monitor the budget more closely and provision for a joint meeting of the overview and scrutiny main committees between Cabinet and full Council each February in order to challenge the content of the budget proposals.

Resolved:

- (1) *To endorse the findings and recommendations of the Task Group as set out in its annual report for submission to Cabinet on 25 July.*
- (2) *To note that some of these were particularly relevant bearing in mind the current financial situation of the Authority, and that the response of the Executive would be reported back to a future meeting of the Task Group.*

31. **Sodexho Support Services – Annual Service Review 2005/06** The Committee received the annual report from Sodexho with a covering report by the Director of Environmental Services. The annual satisfaction survey of primary school children was also tabled.

Mike Swabey on behalf of the Director introduced his covering report and commented that throughout the past year contracted services had continued to operate well with increased customer satisfaction. In particular Sodexho had met national nutritional standards for school meals and demonstrated a willingness to work with individual schools, and an improvement in communication through the establishment of regular meetings with groups of head teachers representing all schools in the contract. Building cleaning, grounds maintenance and County Hall facilities management were operating well with no areas of concern except the loss-making situation with the Byways Catering Service.

Steve Thorns and Alan Bowley representing Sodexho commented that it had been a challenging year with pockets of outstanding success such as the uptake in school meals at Fitzmaurice school. The Annual Review identified concerns relating to the low level of the Retail Price Index applied to the contract and the effects of the new national nutritional standards for school meals both of which continued to put pressure on the successful delivery of the contract.

Members asked a number of questions on various issuing including the amount of extra government funding for school meals flowing through to the contract, minimum wage impact on RPI, grounds maintenance at Braeside, perception of high cost of building cleaning in youth and children's facilities, the potential for savings being discussed under para.27 of the report, and the lead-in time for re-tendering the contract services.

Resolved:

- (1) To thank Sodexho for its annual service review report 2005-06 and for their attendance at the meeting to answer questions from members.*
- (2) To acknowledge the continued levels of performance by Sodexho under the contract and the concerns raised in respect of indexation and increases in Government funding for school meals.*
- (3) To be aware of the action outlined in paragraph 27 of the report with regard to savings.*
- (4) To ask the new Cabinet Member for ICT, Procurement and Partnerships to be aware of the issues raised in the annual review report and the comments of the Management Committee.*

32. **School Catering Scrutiny Task Group - Final Report** A copy of the Task Group final report was circulated. This was a joint task group across all three main scrutiny committees and the members who served were Mrs Rooke (Chairman), Mrs Chettleburgh, Dr English, Mrs Groom and Mrs MacDonald (co-opted education rep). Members recalled that this was the successor to the original Sodexho School Meals Task Group which reported back in May last year, and the Management Committee's primary interest was in respect of the operation of the current contract and future procurement proposals.

Mrs Rooke introduced the report and thanked those who had supported and contributed to the comprehensive review. Her overriding message was one of the need for partnership working to deliver the desired improvement and for children to enjoy the experience of having a nutritious school meal.

Members discussed various aspects of the review including the lifting of the beef ban, the importance of parental awareness and a whole school approach, and the pressure placed on kitchen/dining space for other school activities.

Resolved:

- (1) To endorse the findings and recommendations of the Task Group for submission to Cabinet, subject to the agreement of the Health and Children's Services Scrutiny Committees.*
- (2) To note that the response of the Council's Executive would be reported back at the next meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.*

33. **The Orders of St. John Care Trust Interim Report (October 2005 – March 2006)** A report from the Trust was circulated with a covering report by the Head of Adult Care Services. This report was requested by members at the meeting on 13 January to reflect the interim period before the new reporting timetable was introduced. At the time, members were also keen for the report

to include a breakdown of the £11m of expenditure on refurbishment of the homes and benchmarking of staff training. Representatives from the Trust were in attendance to answer questions.

Members asked about the flexibility within the contract to respond to the current policy of 2 out 1 in, the future provision of day services, how many ex-WCC staff were still employed by the Trust, level of respite provision especially in the South of the County, the successful delivery of the new Coombe End House in Marlborough and the future property refurbishment strategy. In responding to a further question, the Trust's representatives indicated the most challenging issues in recent times had been high energy costs and staff shortages.

Resolved:

*(1) To thank the Trust for the interim review report and for attending the meeting to answer questions.*

*(2) In particular to note the information supplied in respect of refurbishment and staff training, and that future plans for refurbishment would depend on the outcome of the property strategy being submitted to members in September.*

*(3) To ask that the Cabinet Member with responsibilities for Adult Care was made aware of the report and discussion at the meeting.*

34. **Corporate Procurement Strategy – Progress on Implementation** A report by the Director of Environmental Services was circulated. Members asked for this progress report in supporting the approval of the Strategy last July.

Mike Horgan, on behalf of the Director, introduced the report and highlighted progress against the 49 actions in the implementation plan. It was noted that the 6 red actions were all internal targets. Mention was made of the good work being done by the County-wide procurement body involving the districts and emergency services. Explanation was also given to the role of the new Procurement Project 2006 (PP06).

Members discussed a number of issues including the role of procurement in delivering part of the financial recovery plan, further ideas for collaboration with other agencies and the lack of performance information in the current contracts database.

Resolved:

*(1) To note the contents of the report and in particular the progress against the targets in the implementation action plan.*

*(2) To support efforts to continue with the implementation of the Strategy and the realisation of savings and efficiencies as a result.*

*(3) To adopt the protocol set out in appendix 3 to the report for the involvement of overview and scrutiny in major procurement activities which will form an appendix to the Procurement Strategy and Contract Regulations.*

*(4) To receive an update on progress in a year's time but, in the meantime, to consider the latest version of the contracts database incorporating performance information when available with a view to identifying further spot reviews.*

35. **Cycle Lanes Task Group – Executive Response to the Final Report** A letter from the Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport and Economic Development was circulated having previously been sent to the members who served on the Task Group - John English (Chairman), Patrick Coleman, Ross Henning, Margaret Taylor and Charles Winchcombe.

Members discussed the positive response overall but were a little disappointed that the Cabinet Member had just noted the need to improve working relationships with Sustrans.

*Resolved:* *To note the Cabinet Member's approval/comments and that implementation of the Task Group's recommendations will be reviewed in 12 months time.*

36. **Scrutiny and the Local Strategic Partnership (including Streetscene)** A report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services was circulated. This related to an academic research report by Ed Stevens, Graduate Management Trainee, partly commissioned by the Committee earlier in the year.

It was reported that if the recommendations in the report were supported then this would mean establishing a task group to specifically review the street management element of the LSP's Streetscene objective. However members discussed that the start of this work may best be delayed until the autumn in order not to divert capacity away from the corporate recovery plan proposal agreed earlier at minute no. 29.

*Resolved:*

*(1) To agree in principle that it would be appropriate and beneficial to broaden the remit of overview and scrutiny to encompass the work of the Local Strategic Partnership.*

*(2) To defer detailed consideration of this report and the potential establishment of a task group on street management until at least the next meeting in order not to divert capacity away from scrutiny of the corporate recovery plan.*

- (3) *To be aware that in the meantime performance against target for street management under LPSA2 would still be picked up within the work of the Performance Scrutiny Task Group.*

**37. Procurement Outcome Reports**

(1) Framework Agreement for Agency Staff It was reported that this was approved under Cabinet Member delegated decision on 17 May and all members informed with a website link to the report and decision. The comments of Julie Swabey who acted as the scrutiny representative on the project board for this contract were included in the report. The County Council joined with the four district councils and Bath and North East Somerset Council to put in place a series of framework agreements with a number of employment agencies resulting from a reverse eAuction tender exercise. This new arrangement would generate significant savings and efficiencies for the Council (as detailed in the report). The performance of the contract would be reported annually to the Executive (and the Management Committee under the procurement governance protocol).

Resolved: *To thank Mrs Swabey for her contribution on behalf of Scrutiny and to note the successful outcome to this procurement exercise.*

(2) ICT Support Services Contract It was reported that this was approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 10 April to select Steria as the preferred bidder with the formal 5 year contract starting on 1 October. Significant annual savings would result against the current ICT support services spend as summarised in the report. Tony Deane acted as the scrutiny representative on the project board. The performance of the contract would be reported annually to the Executive (and to the Customer First Task Group under the procurement governance protocol).

Resolved: *To thank Mr Deane for his contribution on behalf of Scrutiny and to note the successful outcome to this procurement exercise.*

**38. Work Programme** A copy of the latest version of the Management Committee's work programme was circulated.

Resolved:

- (1) *To note the current work programme and alterations made as a consequence of decisions taken earlier in the meeting.*
- (2) *To note the following scrutiny activities taking place under the direction of the Management Committee and agree:*
- (i) *the appointment of Ross Henning to replace John Noeken on Property Services (as he was now a Cabinet member), and*
  - (ii) *and the increase in the number of members on Budget Process to six and that as a consequence of Bridget Wayman becoming a Cabinet member that two vacancies now existed.*

<b><u>Activity</u></b>	<b><u>Topic</u></b>	<b><u>Members</u></b>	<b><u>Start date</u></b>	<b><u>Next Meeting</u></b>	<b><u>End Date</u></b>
Task Groups	Performance	Mr Newbury (Ch) Mr Osborn Mrs Soden Mrs Taylor Mr While	Nov 02	7 July	Standing
	Budget Process	Mr Molland (Ch) Brig Hall Mr Coleman Mr Rogers Vacancy x2	Sept 01	2 June	Standing
	Customer First	Ms Content Mr Dalton Mr A Davis Mr Deane Mr Newbury Mrs Rugg	June 05	29 June	Standing
	Hay Lane/Croft Road	Mr Noeken (Ch) Brig Hall Mr Rogers Mr Deane Mr West	March 06	1 June	July 06
Procurement Project Boards	Property Services	Mr Henning	Sept 05	-	Sept 06
	Advertising Services	Mr Deane	Nov 05	-	April 06
	Adult Care	Mrs Hill	Jan 06	-	Ongoing

(Duration of Meeting: 10.30 am – 1.35 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Paul Kelly, Democratic & Members' Services, direct line: (01225) 713049.