

**ENVIRONMENT CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL  
5 OCTOBER 2010**

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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROGRESS REPORT  
Assistant Chief Executive**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1 This report sets out the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) activity over the period February to August 2010, also the significant national and local developments in O&S.

**2 SUGGESTED ACTION**

- 2.1 That the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel notes the Overview and Scrutiny activity over the period February to August 2010, set out in section 3 and Appendices 1 and 2.**
- 2.2 That the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel notes the developments in Overview & Scrutiny set out in section 4.**

**3 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

**(i) Overview and Scrutiny Activity**

Changes to Overview and Scrutiny

- 3.1 Consequent on the reduction in the O&S officer team, various changes were decided upon by the O&S Commission on 28 January. These have included: a reduction in the frequency of O&S Progress reports to CMT and O&S Members from quarterly to six monthly; reductions in the frequency of public meetings, also reductions in the O&S Work programme. The changes have been implemented, and the O&S Commission has asked for a review of these new arrangements during 2010-11. The reduction in frequency of meetings has aligned the production of quarterly Performance Monitoring Reports with the O&S Commission's meetings, but it is causing some difficulties synchronising the PMR's with the Panel meetings, which are now every four months.

Overview and Scrutiny Working Groups

- 3.2 The table at Appendix 1 sets out the current status of the O&S Working Groups, along with the list of completed reviews.

Partnership Scrutiny

- 3.3 Good progress has been made with implementing the agreed approach to partnership scrutiny. The round of questionnaires and meetings with the Theme Partnerships is almost complete, with the final meeting in October. The Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Group held its third meeting on 14 May 2010.

- 3.4 Representatives of the Audit Commission met the Chairman of the O&S Commission and the Head of O&S on 3 February to enquire about O&S of the Bracknell Forest Partnership, as part of the Comprehensive Area Assessment process.
- 3.5 We put forward an entry for the Centre for Public Scrutiny's 'Good Scrutiny Awards' based on our joint working in the field of partnership scrutiny, and received a commendation. The judges said they shortlisted Bracknell Forest Council, *'because the group has created a powerful, independent and respected resource which is able to feed into the development of strategic planning. It also shows a commitment to partnership working and to the continuous development of scrutiny'*.
- 3.6 Over the next quarter, officers will draw together the results of the partnership scrutiny work in the Commission, the O&S Panels, and the Partnership O&S Group. This will be used to compile an annual report of that group as required in its terms of reference.

#### Overview and Scrutiny Commission

- 3.7 The O&S Commission now meets on a quarterly cycle. At its last meeting on 15 July, the main items considered were: receiving a progress update on the Bracknell Healthspace from NHS Berkshire East; considering and adopting the O&S Working Groups' reports on Preparedness for Public Health Emergencies, Housing and Council Tax Benefits, the Supporting People programme, and the Council's Response to Severe Weather; and reviewing the Performance Monitoring Reports for the Chief Executive's Office and Corporate Services Department, also the Corporate Performance Overview Report for quarter four (January to March) of the 2009/10 financial year. The O&S Commission's next meeting is on 28 October.

#### Environment, Culture and Communities O&S Panel

- 3.8 The Panel now meets on a four-monthly cycle. It last met on 22 June, and the main items included: electing a Chairman and appointing a Vice Chairman; considering the Department's Performance Monitoring Report for quarter four; and considering the O&S Working Groups' reports on Preparedness for Public Health Emergencies, Housing and Council Tax Benefits, the Supporting People programme, and the Council's Response to Severe Weather. The Panel's next meeting is on 5 October.
- 3.9 Additional to the work in the Panel and in its Working Groups, the Panel Chairman and a member of the O&S officer team have been involved, in an observer capacity, in an O&S review by Reading BC of the waste recycling contract.
- 3.10 As a number of this Panel's working groups have recently completed their reviews, there is some scope and capacity to undertake further work, and arrangements are in hand to resume the review of Highway Maintenance. Additionally, Members are likely to be involved in a Member reference group currently being established to explore opportunities for commercial sponsorship income from roundabouts and other means.

#### Health O&S Panel

- 3.11 The Panel now meets on a four-monthly cycle. At its last meeting on 17 June, the Panel elected a Chairman and appointed a Vice Chairman, and other key items included: receiving a presentation on the transfer of Community Health Services from NHS Berkshire East; considering the report of the working group on Preparedness for Public Health Emergencies; reviewing the position on the Bracknell Healthspace, and noting the draft minutes for the Joint East Berkshire Health Overview and Scrutiny

Committee meeting on 30 March 2010. The Health O&S Panel's next meeting is on 7 October.

- 3.12 We have recently secured the agreement of the Chief Executives of the six NHS Trusts serving Bracknell Forest to our updated Health Scrutiny Protocol, summarising the legal and operational framework, and setting out the respective responsibilities of the Trusts and the O&S Panel. In reaching this agreement, we have had some quite complimentary remarks from the Chief Executives, for example:

- *'I am very happy to sign up to the requirements.....I welcome the opportunity to work closely with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel to ensure we are listening and responding to our local community'* (CEO Royal Berkshire Hospital)
- *'I have now reviewed the code of practice that you sent through. It is the only one I have seen and as you know SCAS covers an area with quite a number of HOSCs. It is an extremely helpful and welcome document and one I would certainly like to see adopted as good practice in other areas.'* (CEO South Central Ambulance Service).

#### Children, Young People and Learning O&S Panel

- 3.13 The Panel now meets on a four-monthly cycle. At its last meeting on 30 June the Panel elected a Chairman and appointed a Vice Chairman. The main items considered by the Panel included: the annual reports of the Independent Reviewing Officer and Children's Social Care Complaints; receiving progress reports on new youth facilities in South Bracknell and the Playbuilder project; and receiving an update on the Working Group reviewing arrangements for safeguarding children. The Panel's next meeting is on 27 October.

#### Adult Social Care O&S Panel

- 3.14 The Panel now meets on a four-monthly cycle. At its last meeting on 8 June, the Panel elected a Chairman and appointed a Vice Chairman. The main items considered by the Panel included: meeting officials from the Care Quality Commission to discuss the new role for local authorities to comment on service performance; receiving the annual report on adult social care complaints; and receiving update presentations on the Departmental Service Plan, the Carer's Service, and the Personalisation Pilot. The Panel's next meeting is on 12 October.

#### Joint East Berkshire Health O&S Committee

- 3.15 This Committee now meets on a four-monthly cycle, rotating between the three Councils' venues. Bracknell Forest Council has assumed Chairmanship and officer support for this Committee for the 2010/11 municipal year. The last Committee meeting was on 16 June in Slough, when the Committee: elected a Chairman and appointed two Vice Chairman; appointed co-optees from Runnymede Borough Council and the three Local Involvement Networks; received a presentation from the Director of Public Health; received an update on the Working Group reviewing car parking charges at NHS Establishments; received an update on the budgetary position of Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospitals Trust; and conducted the annual review of the Committee's terms of reference. The Committee's next meeting is on 6 October 2010 at Wexham Park Hospital.

## Other Overview and Scrutiny Issues

- 3.16 Responses to the feedback questionnaires on the quality of O&S reviews are summarised in Appendix 2, showing a consistently high score across the various questions posed.
- 3.17 Four-monthly review and agenda-setting meetings between O&S Chairmen, Vice Chairmen, Executive Members and Directors are taking place regularly for the Panels (quarterly for the O&S Commission).
- 3.18 External networking on O&S in the last six months has included Members and an officer attending the South Central Health O&S Committees meeting on 20 July in Winchester, and Members and officers attending the Centre for Public Scrutiny's annual conference.
- 3.19 Efforts were made to recruit to the vacancies of Parent Governor, Children's Social Care representative, Catholic Church representative and teacher representative in June. This resulted in one vacancy being filled. The other vacancies will be re-advertised in six months time.
- 3.20 The O&S Annual Report was adopted by Council on 21 April.

## **4 (ii) Developments in O&S**

- 4.1 The O&S provisions in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act commenced in the period. The two new requirements on O&S have been addressed by: the Deputy Chief Executive being appointed as the statutory Scrutiny Officer; and Council adopting a new petitions scheme at its meeting on 21 July, which includes a new role for Overview and Scrutiny to review any petitions where the petitioner is not content with the Council's response.
- 4.2 The monitoring of the O&S function is carried out by the statutory Scrutiny Officer on a quarterly basis, who has commented that good progress has been made on the agreed programme of work by Overview and Scrutiny in the last six months and the quality of the work done continues to be high.
- 4.3 The regulations and guidance for the O&S provisions in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 are still awaited, despite the Act having commenced on 1 April 2009. CLG is continuing to work with the Centre for Public Scrutiny to develop these.
- 4.4 The Government's consultation entitled 'Strengthening Local Democracy', which the Council responded to, resulted in the previous government supporting a Private Member's Bill to extend the remit of O&S. The Private Member's Bill failed to survive its third reading debate.
- 4.5 The Government has published a major White Paper on the NHS, with a series of consultation documents, one of which proposes a complete change to local authority O&S of NHS services. Arrangements are being made to ensure that O&S Members' views are reflected in the Council's response to the consultation.
- 4.6 A new approach to improving public engagement was agreed by the O&S Commission, in consultation with the Leader and Chief Executive. This is in the course of being implemented, and has included the design and issue of a new publicity 'flyer' explaining the role of O&S and encouraging greater involvement

## Background Papers

Minutes and papers of meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Panels.

## Contact for further information

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## Doc. Ref

Alluse/Overview and Scrutiny/2010/11 O&S Progress Report

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORKING GROUPS – 2010/11**

Position at 3 August 2010

<b>Overview and Scrutiny Commission</b>								
WORKING GROUP	MEMBERS	DEPT. LINK OFFICER	O&S LEAD OFFICER	SCOPING	DRAFT REPORT / SUBMISSION	FINAL REPORT / SUBMISSION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE	CURRENT STATUS
The Council's response to the severe weather	Finnie, Harrison, Turrell	Vincent Paliczka	None	√	√	√		Sent to the Leader on 20 July

<b>Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel</b>								
WORKING GROUP	MEMBERS	DEPT. LINK OFFICER	O&S LEAD OFFICER	SCOPING	DRAFT REPORT / SUBMISSION	FINAL REPORT / SUBMISSION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE	CURRENT STATUS
Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults - Personalisation	Mrs Fleming, Turrell (Lead Member), Leake, Edger and Mrs Shillcock	Zoe Johnstone	Andrea Carr	√				Information gathering nearing an end

## Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

WORKING GROUP	MEMBERS	DEPT. LINK OFFICER	O&S LEAD OFFICER	SCOPING	DRAFT REPORT / SUBMISSION	FINAL REPORT / SUBMISSION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE	CURRENT STATUS
Supporting People - Monitoring	Mrs. Shillcock (Lead) & Mrs. Fleming	Simon Hendey / Clare Dorning	Andrea Carr	√	08/09 √ (Annual monitoring)	08/09 √ (Annual monitoring)		Sent to the Executive Member on 21 July
Review of Highway Maintenance  <b>[On hold]</b>	Mclean (Lead) Beadsley, Brossard, Leake and Parish and Town Councillors: Edwards (Binfield) Kensall (Bracknell) Withers (Crowthorne) Mrs Cupper (Sandhurst)	Steve Loudoun	Richard Beaumont	√	The Commission decided on 28 January to suspend this review until other O&S reviews have been completed and resources become available. This is now expected to be in September 2010.			The Group has now met three times. The scoping document has been agreed, also a report to the Panel on the highways maintenance budget reduction.

<b>Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel</b>								
WORKING GROUP	MEMBERS	DEPT. LINK OFFICER	O&S LEAD OFFICER	SCOPING	DRAFT REPORT / SUBMISSION	FINAL REPORT / SUBMISSION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE	CURRENT STATUS
Preparedness for Public Health Emergencies	Burrows (Lead), Mrs. Angell, Thompson. Mrs. Mattick	David Steeds	Andrea Carr	√	√	√		Sent to the Executive Members on 22 July
Bracknell Health Space (Reconvened)	Virgo (lead) Mrs Angell, Baily, Leake, Mrs Shillcock	Glyn Jones/ Mary Purnell	Richard Beaumont					First reconvened meeting arranged for 5 August

<b>Joint East Berkshire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>								
WORKING GROUP	MEMBERS	DEPT. LINK OFFICER	O&S LEAD OFFICER	SCOPING	DRAFT REPORT / SUBMISSION	FINAL REPORT / SUBMISSION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE	CURRENT STATUS
Hospital Car Park Charges	Plimmer (Slough, Lead member), Virgo, Endacott (RB W&M) Jacky Flynn (LINK)	TBC	Andrew Millard (Slough BC)	√	√			

**Children's Services and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

WORKING GROUP	MEMBERS	DEPT. LINK OFFICER	O&S LEAD OFFICER	SCOPING	DRAFT REPORT / SUBMISSION	FINAL REPORT / SUBMISSION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE	CURRENT STATUS
Safeguarding Children	Cllrs Mrs McCracken (Lead) , Mrs Birch, Mrs Angell, and Kensall. Miss V Richardson, Mrs P Ridgway	Penny Reuter	Richard Beaumont	√				Information gathering about 1/3 completed

## Completed Reviews

<b>Publication Date</b>	<b>Title</b>
December 2003	South Bracknell Schools Review
January 2004	Review of Adult Day Care Services in Bracknell Forest (Johnstone Court Day Centre & Downside Resource Centre)
May 2004	Review of Community & Voluntary Sector Grants
July 2004	Review of Community Transport Provision
April 2005	Review of Members' Information Needs
November 2005	The Management of Coronary Heart Disease
February 2006	Review of School Transfers and Performance
March 2006	Review of School Exclusions and Pupil Behaviour Policy
August 2006	Report of Tree Policy Review Group
November 2006	Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) – Review of the ASB Strategy Implementation
January 2007	Review of Youth Provision
February 2007	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2006
February 2007	Review of Library Provision
July 2007	Review of Healthcare Funding
November 2007	Review of the Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy
December 2007	Review of the Council's Medium Term Objectives
March 2008	2007 Annual Health Check Response to the Healthcare Commission
April 2008	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2007/08
May 2008	Road Traffic Casualties
August 2008	Caring for Carers
September 2008	Scrutiny of Local Area Agreement
October 2008	Street Cleaning
October 2008	English as an Additional Language in Bracknell Forest Schools

<b>Publication Date</b>	<b>Title</b>
April 2009	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2008/09
April 2009	Healthcare Commission's Annual Health Check 2008/09 (letters submitted)
April 2009	Children's Centres and Extended Services in and Around Schools in Bracknell Forest
April 2009	Older People's Strategy
April 2009	Services for People with Learning Disabilities
May 2009	Housing Strategy
July 2009	Review of Waste and Recycling
July 2009	Review of Housing and Council Tax Benefits Improvement Plan
December 2009	NHS Core Standards
January 2010	Medium Term Objectives 2010/11
January 2010	Review of the Bracknell Healthspace
January 2010	14-19 Years Education Provision
April 2010	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2009/10
July 2010	Review of Housing and Council Tax Benefits Improvement Plan (Update)

## Appendix 2

### **Results of Feedback Questionnaires on Overview and Scrutiny Reports**

Note – Departmental Link officers on each review were asked to score the key aspects of each O&S review on a scale of 0 (Unsatisfactory) to 3 (Excellent)

	Average score for previous 11 Reviews <sup>1</sup>
<b>PLANNING</b> Were you given sufficient notice of the review?	<b>2.8</b>
Were your comments invited on the scope of the review, and was the purpose of the review explained to you?	<b>2.9</b>
<b>CONDUCT OF REVIEW</b> Was the review carried out in a professional and objective manner with minimum disruption?	<b>2.7</b>
Was there adequate communication between O&S and the department throughout?	<b>2.7</b>
Did the review get to the heart of the issue?	<b>2.6</b>
<b>REPORTING</b> Did you have an opportunity to comment on the draft report?	<b>2.9</b>
Did the report give a clear and fair presentation of the facts?	<b>2.5</b>
Were the recommendations relevant and practical?	<b>2.5</b>
How useful was this review in terms of improving the Council's performance?	<b>2.6</b>

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<sup>1</sup> Road Traffic Casualties, Review of the Local Area Agreement, Support for Carers, Street Cleaning, Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities, English as an Additional Language in Schools, Children's Centres and Extended Services, Waste and Recycling, Older People's Strategy, Review of Housing and Council Tax Benefits Improvement Plan, and 14-19 Education.