

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
19 NOVEMBER 2009
7.30 - 8.52 PM**



Present:

Councillors McLean (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair), Mrs Birch, Finnie, Harrison, Mrs McCracken, Mrs Shillcock, Turrell, Virgo, Worrall and Baily (Substitute)

Parent Governor Representative:

Dr P Josephs-Franks

Also Present:

Councillor McCracken, Executive for Member of Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Edger, Hayes, Leake and Ms Whitbread
Mr G S Anderson

In Attendance:

Richard Beaumont, Head of Overview and Scrutiny
Andrea Durn, Head of Performance and Partnerships
Emma Silverton, Democratic Services Officer
Abby Thomas, Head of Community Engagement and Equalities

39. Apologies for Absence/Substitute Members

The Panel noted the attendance of the following Substitute Member:

Councillor Baily for Councillor Edger

40. Minutes and Matters Arising

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 24 September 2009 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

Matters arising –

Minute 29, Centre for Public Scrutiny Self Evaluation – it was reported that the CfPS Self Evaluation had now been completed and circulated to all Members for comments.

Minute 32, Executive Response to the Review of the Implementation of the Housing and Council Tax Benefits Improvement Plan – concerns from Councillor Leake would be passed on to officers by Councillor Finch the Lead Member of the scrutiny working group at the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting on 8 December 2009.

Minute 33, Executive Forward Plan – the Commission would be involved in commenting on the revised strategy for the Bracknell town centre regeneration in due course.

Minute 34, Annual Report on Procurement – information requested regarding total consultancy savings and the review of consultancy contracts had been circulated to all Members.

Minute 35, Performance Monitoring Reports – A list of Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) key dates and details of 'One Place' were circulated to all Members on 28 October 2009. Members comments on print and design had been passed on to officers.

Minute 35, Performance Monitoring Reports – A copy of the Council's RIPA policy was sent to Councillor Leake on 5 October 2009.

Minute 38, Updates from Panel Chairmen – a letter advising as to the use of the information on the O&S Patient Focus review had been sent by Councillor Edger to Councillor Mrs McCracken.

41. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

Councillor Mrs McCracken declared a personal interest as spouse of the Executive member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection.

42. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

43. Appointment of Overview and Scrutiny Panel Members

The Overview and Scrutiny Commission considered the appointments proposed by the Conservative Group in respect of vacancies on Overview and Scrutiny Panels. The supplementary information circulated at the meeting was amended to include the names of the Councillors proposed for each vacancy.

RESOLVED that

- i) Councillor Burrows be appointed to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel
- ii) Councillor Phillips be appointed to the Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel

44. Executive Response to the Review of Waste and Recycling Services

The Commission noted the response of the Executive to the review of Waste and Recycling Services. The report had been written prior to the meeting of the Executive on 20 October 2009 at which the recommendation responses contained within paragraph 5 were approved.

The response would be taken back to the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

Arising from discussion –

- It was noted that the report was well considered and had resulted in helpful recommendations
- The Commission noted that the Executive member had subsequently sent a response to recommendation 5.12 of the Waste and Recycling Services report, and this would be included in the covering report to the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel.
- Information was requested regarding the poor performing areas referred to in the Executive response to recommendation 5.6
- Members raised concerns regarding recommendation 5.7 of the report and wished to reinforce the issue raised regarding the purchase of brown bins or garden refuse sacks as some residents refused to pay the £30 charge
- It was noted that some residents in the borough did not have back gates to provide easy access for the moving of bins from the back of the property to the front for collection or room to store all three coloured bins on their property.
- The Commission noted the comments relating to green cones which were available for food recycling and looked forward to future developments and initiatives in recycling
- The Commission agreed to include the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission discussion in the covering report to Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 8 December 2009.

45. Executive Forward Plan

The Commission noted the Executive Forward Plan relating to corporate issues. It was noted that 6 of the 17 decision items on the Forward Plan had been taken before the date of the Commission meeting. The Executive Forward Plan was an ongoing document therefore items that had recently passed were likely to have been referred to in corresponding reports at previous Commission meetings.

Arising from discussion –

- Members requested that information be provided on the proposed number of houses to be built at Bay Road
- Confirmation be provided on whether a map showing the location of all disabled parking around urban areas in Bracknell Forest was available to the public and distributed with disabled parking badges.

46. 'All of Us' Community Cohesion Strategy and Equality Schemes Monitoring Report 2008-2009

Councillor McCracken introduced the monitoring report on behalf of the Leader of the Council, and stressed the importance placed by the Executive on community cohesion, race, gender and disability equality. The Commission received the monitoring report on the implementation of the Council's 'All of us' Community Cohesion Strategy and the Race, Gender and Disability Schemes during 2008-2009. The report included detailed performance monitoring information against the action plans and examples of success stories promoting community cohesion and equality of opportunity in Bracknell Forest.

The Head of Community Engagement and Equalities described how, working closely with partners including the organisations and groups in the voluntary sector, Thames Valley Police and NHS Berkshire East the Council had made considerable progress with implementation of the Community Cohesion Strategy.

86 of out 88 keys tasks had been completed many ahead of schedule during 2008-09. In the 2008 Place Survey 82% of residents believed that people from different backgrounds got on well together, placing Bracknell Forest in the top quartile nationally. This was a significantly higher result than the England average of 76.4%.

All 75 key tasks in the Disability and Equality Scheme had been completed. Each of the 14 key tasks in the Gender Equality Scheme were completed or on track for completion within their respective timescales. 25 out of 26 key tasks in the Race Equality Scheme were also completed or on track for completion in their respective timescales.

Arising from Members' questions and comments the following points were noted:

- One Member reported there was growing support in their ward for the British National Party, with reference to white male young people under-achieving at school. Whilst there were no actions in the strategy specifically on white people, there were a number of initiatives in place such as the Crowthorne Carnival and new resident Welcome Packs which were designed to work with all community groups and not any one ethnic group. Another Member commented that under-achievement at school was more of an educational issue than a community cohesion issue.
- Further information on day-time provision for adults with mental health issues, specifically what alternatives are available when 'Rethink' is not open was to be provided for members of the Commission.
- A hard copy of the detailed action plan for the Disability Equality Scheme would be provided for Councillor Mrs Shillcock.
- The priorities in the action plans were based on the current known data. New data would be looked at once it had been validated and became available.

The Vice Chairman thanked the officers for their excellent work, and pointed out that government guidance set an important role for Overview and Scrutiny in reviewing equality impacts and objectives.

47. Corporate Performance Overview Report (CPOR)

The Commission considered the Chief Executive's Corporate Performance Overview Report (CPOR) for quarter one (April to June) of the 2009/10 financial year, introduced by the Head of Performance and Partnerships. The CPOR complimented the Performance Monitoring Report (PMR) circulated to all Members in August 2009. The CPOR contained details of the Council's 282 actions which supported the 13 Medium Term Objectives. At the end of the 1st quarter 273 (95%) of these actions had been completed or were on target to be completed by their due date and nine (3%) were in need of some remedial action. Proposed remedial action was cited within Annex A alongside the action.

The Council was introducing a new Performance Monitoring System known as PARIS across the authority which was due to go live in quarter 3 with a complete system transfer from quarter 4.

As part of the development of the new performance management system the Head of Performance and Partnerships invited Members comments on the reporting format of both the CPORs and PMRs.

Arising from the subsequent discussion the following views were expressed by some members:

- The reports contained a lot of text which made it difficult to pick out key information
- It was often difficult to understand what information was meant to be gained from the graphs and many regularly contained no data
- An improved commentary next to each graph would make interpretation of the data easier
- The timing of Overview and Scrutiny meetings needed to be better coordinated with the publishing of PMRs as reports were often out of date by the time they were brought to the Commission and Panel meetings
- A more comprehensive summary at the beginning of the report would be helpful
- The key issues for possible scrutiny should be highlighted
- Key successes should also be made clear
- Examples of Local Authority best practice in the production of CPORs and PMRs would be provided for members to see which reporting styles might be most appropriate

An opportunity would be given for Members to make an input into the reporting format for CPORs/PMRs.

48. **Government Consultation on 'Strengthening Local Democracy'**

The Overview and Scrutiny Commission noted the Council's response to the government's consultation document on 'Strengthening Local Democracy'. Councillor Edger had finalised the response from Overview and Scrutiny and it had been made clear which comments were from the Overview and Scrutiny Commission in Bracknell Forest Council's Response. A summary of the consultation outcomes would be brought to the Commission once published.

The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill was granted Royal assent on Friday 13 November 2009. The Bill contained implications for Overview and Scrutiny which would come into force once a commencement order was issued by the Secretary of State. Implications included the requirement for upper tier Local Authorities to appoint a Statutory Overview and Scrutiny Officer, further details regarding the new requirement would be brought to the Commission in due course.

49. **Updates from Panel Chairmen**

Adults Social Care and Health O&S Panel

Councillor Turrell reported –

- At the Panel's meeting on 1 September 2009 Members received a presentation on Transforming Adult Social Care. This was followed by a workshop to investigate possible areas for a review, as a result a working group had been set up to look at Safeguarding.
- Members of the Panel had been taking part in a series of visits to see Adult Social Care Services.

Environment, Culture and Communities O&S Panel

Councillor Finnie reported –

- That the Panel was continuing with its program of work and was currently reviewing its working groups.

Children's Services and Learning O&S Panel

Councillor Mrs Birch reported –

- The Panel's 14-19 years education provision working group had nearly completed its review which would be brought to the Panel meeting on 16 December 2009.
- At the December Panel meeting a review to look at Safeguarding Children would commence.

Health O&S Panel

Councillor Virgo reported –

- Awareness of new Angioplasty techniques was raised at the South Central Health Scrutiny meeting.
- A consultation regarding a new out-of-hours facility at the Royal Berkshire Hospital was due to be sent out to Local Authorities.
- On the agenda for the Panel meeting in December was the South Central Ambulance Trust and Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospital Trust's budget.
- The Panel's working group on the Bracknell HealthSpace had been completed, with the draft report under consideration.

CHAIRMAN