

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
01 APRIL 2009
7.30 - 9.15 PM**



Present:

Councillors Edger (Chairman), McLean (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Birch, Leake, Mrs Shillcock, Virgo, Worrall and Dudley (Substitute)

Parent Governor Representative Members:

Dr P Josephs-Franks

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Brunel-Walker, Burrows and Thompson and Mr G S Anderson.

Councillor McCracken, Executive Member for Leisure, Corporate Services and Public Protection.

In Attendance:

Richard Beaumont, Head of Overview & Scrutiny
Priya Patel, Democratic Services Officer

75. Apologies for Absence/Substitute Members

Councillor Dudley attended in place of Councillor Finnie.

The Commission noted that Michael Gibbons had not attended the majority of O&S Commission meetings during the past two years and asked that the Head of Overview and Scrutiny draft a letter to the Portsmouth Diocese raising the Commission's concerns around their representation at meetings.

76. Minutes and Matters Arising

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 19 March 2009 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising

Minute 3: Urgent Items of Business - At the last meeting the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Councillor Leake had agreed to consider further where the new statutory responsibility for the scrutiny of crime and disorder should rest and report back to the Commission.

It was reported that the members concerned had considered this and a paper had been prepared with proposals that had been circulated to members prior to the meeting.

The three members concerned had agreed that the best way forward was to incorporate the Crime and Disorder Committee role into the Commission's role. This should be reviewed once the actual increase in workload arising from the new legislation was clearer. Members agreed that this was the best way forward.

It was reported that the Constitution Review Group (CRG) would consider the Commission's comments at their next meeting on 9 April and it was anticipated that a recommendation would then go forward from CRG to Council, recommending that the O&S Commission's terms of reference be expanded to include the scrutiny of crime and disorder.

Minute 7: Local Area Agreement Performance Progress Report – It was reported that communication issues had now been resolved with the Probation Service.

Minute 11: Annual Report of Overview & Scrutiny – It was reported that this report had been considered by both the Corporate Management Team and the Executive and no amendments had been put forward, the report would now be submitted to Council.

77. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

Councillor Mrs Birch declared a personal interest in Item 7, (Letter of the Working Group on Services for People with Learning Disabilities) as the spouse of the Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing.

78. Report of the Working Group on Children's Centres and Extended Schools Services

The Chairman thanked the Working Group for an excellent report.

With reference to Page 31, paragraph 5.11, it was agreed that it should read 'The Council should require the 14 schools (except Kennel Lane, please refer to paragraph 4.15) yet to achieve fully extended services to publish plans showing how this will be achieved by the end of 2010, with identified progress milestones.'

Members' felt that some schools and in particular Kennel Lane may face financial and practical difficulties around achieving extended services and the feasibility was questioned at Kennel Lane.

It was clarified that the targets for schools as outlined on pages 45 and 46 of the agenda papers were aspirational and the report should make it clear whether these had been agreed with schools.

The Chairman asked that future scrutiny review reports include an Executive Summary at the beginning so that members could easily get a flavour of the report before reading it in full.

The Chairman reported that the Leader of the Council had agreed that Lead members of reviews should attend Executive Briefing meetings to present their reports to the Executive members. This was welcomed by members and it was acknowledged that this approach was considered to be best practice.

With the amendment set out above, the Overview and Scrutiny Commission adopted the report of the Review of Children's Centres and Extended Services in and Around Schools undertaken by the joint working group of the Health and Social Care and

Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panels, to be sent formally to the Executive Members for Children & Young People and Education and Libraries.

79. **Report of the Working Group on Waste & Recycling**

Members commended the working group for an informative and wide ranging report. It was reported that the report had been considered by the Environment, Culture & Communities O&S Panel at their last meeting.

The Commission asked that the following points be considered by the Lead Member of the working Group and returned to the relevant Scrutiny Panel before being brought back before the Commission at their next meeting:

- i) Recommendation 5.2 - needed to be clear whether there was a cost involved. Also needed to reflect the experience of some residents that whilst smaller blue bins used to be adequate, they were no longer large enough since cardboard and paper could be added.
- ii) Recycling of glass - could the report comment on the feasibility of having kerbside collections of glass? Members were aware of the health and safety issue and the complications with clearing away broken glass from the kerbside, but thought that if some of the top performing authorities had kerbside collections, and as some older/infirm residents struggle to take bottles to recycling banks, the report should comment on this.
- iii) Did the Working Group consider visiting any of the high-performing local authorities listed in paragraph 3.65?
- iv) Could the report have a recommendation encouraging companies to do more on recycling of tetrapacks?
- v) Could recommendation 5.7 be expanded to recommend that recycling facilities at shopping centres be restored?
- vi) Paragraph 3.21 - Could there be another recommendation for the Council to further promote the use of traditional nappies?
- vii) Paragraph 3.41 - Members would welcome a more explicit recommendation to encourage supermarkets to reduce packaging, and possibly replace plastic bags with paper bags, and to take more responsibility for their actions and the environment.
- viii) Paragraph 4.9 says the Council should consider best practice in these high performing authorities and possibly adopt it. Can there be a recommendation to go with that statement?
- ix) Members asked for the review scoping document to be attached to the report.

80. **Letter of the Working Group on Services for People with Learning Disabilities**

Councillor Mrs Birch declared a personal interest in Item 7, (Letter of the Working Group on Services for People with Learning Disabilities) as the spouse of the Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing.

The Commission considered a report that detailed the outcome of the review of services for people with learning disabilities undertaken by a working group of the Social Care and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

The Commission expressed disappointment that the new building for Bracknell and Wokingham College did not include any provision for adults with learning disabilities nor had it been designed to accommodate people with learning disabilities. The

Commission fully supported the working group's recommendation that the Council further influence the College to be more responsive to the local needs of Bracknell Forest residents with learning disabilities.

Members' asked that the report refer to 'adults' rather than people, to ensure clarity. In addition, Page 124, paragraph 2, last sentence should read: 'We appreciate that this will need to be achieved in collaboration with other Councils *and colleges* in Berkshire.'

The Lead Member of the Working Group highlighted that the Working Group had visited the building that accommodated the Day Services at Eastern Road and found it to be wholly unsuitable for the modern and effective provision of services to residents. The Commission asked that the Executive explore a suitable alternative site as soon as possible.

With reference to page 126, paragraph 7, members' asked that it be clarified that the number of students referred to as being enrolled on courses designed to assist students with learning disabilities, included Wokingham and Woodley students and not just Bracknell Forest pupils.

Subject to the changes set out above, the Commission agreed that the letter with appended summary attached to the agenda papers, relating to the review of services for adults with learning disabilities undertaken by a working group of the Social Care and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel be adopted by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and be sent formally to the relevant Executive Members.

81. Approach to Overview and Scrutiny of Bracknell Forest Partnership

The Commission considered a report that invited them to endorse the proposed approach to Overview and Scrutiny of Bracknell Forest Partnership. The O&S Panels for Environment, Culture and Communities, Health and Social Care and Learning had also been asked to endorse the proposed approach as it was essential for the Council's overall approach to be uniform.

It was reported that the proposed approach had been shaped around national best practice. It was proposed that the first municipal year be used to build information and research and that theme partnership chairmen be invited to O&S meetings.

It was reported that clear and effective collaboration with partners would be vital to the success of O&S of the Partnership. It was therefore proposed that the O&S Commission approach the Boards or other governing authorities of the partner organisations to form a non-statutory Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Group for the Partnership. Each organisation would be asked to nominate to the Group a representative from amongst their Non-Executive Directors, or equivalent positions of those charged with holding the executive of their organisations to account.

Members' felt that this approach represented good governance and was a good way forward. Members expressed concern that this would entail a significant increased workload for both officers and members and whether additional resources could be secured. It was noted that the Centre for Public Scrutiny had recently surveyed all local authorities and the level of support they had for Overview and Scrutiny. It had been found that the average number of O&S officers in each unitary authority was 2.71 full time officers, whilst the Council had almost 3.

The Commission endorsed the proposed approach to Overview and Scrutiny of Bracknell Forest Partnership as set out in Annex 1 of the agenda papers.

82. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that following the annual meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission on 6 May, the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission be convened on 11 June 2009. Members' were asked to delete the other suggested dates of 21 May and 4 June.

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The Vice-Chairman thanked the Chairman on the behalf of the Commission for his excellent chairmanship and stewardship over the last municipal year.

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CHAIRMAN