

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
15 JULY 2010
7.30 - 9.35 PM**



Present:

Councillors Edger (Chairman), McLean (Vice-Chairman),
Mrs Birch, Finnie, Mrs McCracken, Mrs Shillcock, Turrell, Virgo and Worrall
Dr P Josephs-Franks, Parent Governor Representative
Miss V Richardson, Teacher Representative

Executive Member:

Councillor McCracken

Also Present:

Councillors Mrs Angell, Baily, Brossard and Thompson
Dr Lise Llewellyn, Chief Executive, NHS Berkshire East
Mary Purnell, Assistant Director – Locality Development, NHS Berkshire East
Paul Rowley, Berkshire Shared Services

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Harrison and Leake
Mr G S Anderson

In Attendance:

Alison Sanders, Director of Corporate Services
Andrea Carr, Policy Officer (Scrutiny)
Sue Hills, Democratic Services Officer

12. Minutes and Matters Arising

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 27 May 2010 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

13. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Part 4, Section 12 of the Council's Constitution:

Councillor Mrs Birch declared a personal interest in respect of item 6, review of the Bracknell Healthspace, as spouse of the Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing.

14. Exclusion of Public and Press (S100A)

RESOLVED that pursuant to section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and having regard to the public interest, members of the public and press

be excluded from the meeting for consideration of item 6 which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information under category 3 of Schedule 12A of that Act:

- (3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any individual (including the authority holding that information).

15. **Review of the Bracknell Healthspace**

The Chairman welcomed Dr Lise Llewellyn and Mary Purnell from NHS Berkshire East, the local Primary Care Trust (PCT) and Paul Rowley from Berkshire Shared Services and members of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

Dr Llewellyn reported that progress continued and, despite the news of the future demise of PCTs, NHS Berkshire East was still committed to continue the development of the Healthspace and was working with Dr William Tong, the local lead for practice based commissioning. She advised that a paper on the detailed planning options would be submitted to the PCT Board next week for a decision.

Dr Llewellyn suggested that, once this decision had been made, NHS Berkshire East would host an open forum for the plans to be viewed. However, it would not be possible to submit the planning application to the Council until the application in respect of the Town Centre regeneration had been determined owing to a recent change in planning legislation. This had been one of the reasons for the delay.

Arising from members' questions to Dr Llewellyn –

- Useful meetings had been held with planning officers and all matters had been addressed.
- When asked about whether the current financial restraints could affect the provision of the Healthspace, she was confident that the Healthspace could be the answer to some of the financial problems by delivering more community services to Bracknell residents and therefore reducing hospital bed space requirements.
- She was satisfied that the space available within the Healthspace would be effectively used.
- The aim was to submit the planning application by October 2010 and to be operational by September to December 2012.
- GPs had also been frustrated by the delays and the PCT was looking to utilise some current buildings to introduce some local services prior to the new facility being available. The Council would be consulted about these new services before they were launched.
- Health spending had been 'ring fenced' by the new government and therefore the scheme should not be in jeopardy.

Paul Rowley commented that, in relation to the demise of the PCT in 2013, it had health, asset management and estate strategies which were very locality focussed, had longevity and could be inherited by any organisation to deliver the services.

Mary Purnell referred to the striking degree of partnership working between the Council and the PCT on this project.

The Chairman thanked Dr Llewellyn and her colleagues for coming to the meeting and clarifying the current situation and looked forward to meeting again to view the plans.

Having discussed the way forward, the Commission agreed that the Working Group of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel which had reviewed the Bracknell Healthspace be reconvened primarily to view the plans, seek responses to outstanding queries and consider whether the report should be updated.

THE PUBLIC WERE RE-ADMITTED

16. **Bracknell Forest Town Centre Theme Partnership Partnership**

This item was withdrawn and would be submitted to the next meeting.

17. **Executive Forward Plan**

The Commission noted the forward plan relating to corporate issues. The following issues were raised –

1023958 – Introduction of a Change of Name Service – further to a member's query, the Commission was advised that this was a service to be provided by the Registrars to provide a service to people wishing to change their name. The wording of this item would be amended in the interests of clarity.

1020705 – S106 Jennetts Park Community Centre – allocation of the Wykery Copse S106 money towards the neighbourhood centre facilities. Inflation had overtaken estimated costs since the S106 had been negotiated.

1010993 – Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration Strategy – to confirm a strategy for the regeneration of Bracknell Town Centre. The Director of Corporate Services advised that March 2011 was the target date for a decision in respect of the strategy, the preparation of which would involve considerable and commercially sensitive work.

18. **Performance Monitoring Reports (PMRs)**

The Commission considered the Performance Monitoring Reports for the fourth quarter, January to March of the financial year 2009/10, for the Chief Executive's Office and the Corporate Services Department.

Chief Executive's Office

The Deputy Chief Executive responded to a question on page 13 and confirmed that the risk outlined was because the department was small and had vacant posts that the current embargo prevented appointing to.

Corporate Services

The Director of Corporate Services responded to a question that it had been necessary to replace the Pericles system because it had been discontinued.

19. Corporate Performance Overview Report (CPOR)

The Commission considered and noted the Chief Executive's Corporate Performance Overview Report (CPOR) for the fourth quarter, January to March, of the 2009/10 financial year.

Arising from questions or in discussion –

- Paragraph 3.4 on page 35 – A review of the housing register entries accompanied the launch of the choice-based lettings scheme and resulted in an 18% reduction in the number of households on the register. Councillor Mrs Shillcock expressed concern that people may not have completed their registration forms correctly, resulting in de-registration, and asked if there had been any follow-up action. The Director of Corporate Services did not know the exact process but was sure that they were very careful. The concerns would be conveyed to the Chief Officer: Housing for a full explanation.
- Paragraph 3.7 on page 35 - 70 children were subject to a child protection plan, an increase of nearly 60% on the same period last year, an increase reflected nationally. The Director of Corporate services commented that, following the outcome of the Baby P review, social workers had adopted a more cautious approach. Councillor Mrs Birch also pointed out that children's centres had been very successful and were identifying more cases requiring referral.
- Reference 7.2.5 on page 39 – the Director of Corporate Services confirmed that Communications and Marketing would assist with the campaign to raise awareness of the need for foster carers for children and teenagers throughout the year rather than concentrating on one main campaign.

20. Report of the Review of Preparedness for Public Health Emergencies

The Commission noted the report of the review of preparedness for public health emergencies undertaken by a working group of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel. The report had been noted by the Environment, Culture and Communities O&S Panel who had responsibility for emergency planning and environmental health matters.

In relation to recommendation 5.5 the Commission noted that emergency plans should not involve the army who responded under government instruction.

The Commission adopted the report to send formally to the relevant Executive Members and partners.

21. Report of the Review of the Council's Housing and Council Tax Benefits

The Commission noted the report of the review of the Council's Housing and Council Tax Benefits Improvement Plan. The report had been reviewed by the Environment, Culture and Communities O&S Panel.

The Director of Corporate Services informed the Commission that it was anticipated that the installation of the new IT system to replace Pericles would take place from October to December 2010.

The Commission adopted the report of the review and agreed that the new IT system should be reviewed early next year and thereafter annually.

22. **Report of the Supporting People Programme Update**

Councillor Mrs Shillcock presented the report of the Supporting People Programme Annual Update which monitored the implementation of the programme, a government supported initiative requiring local authorities to provide housing related support, enabling people with specified and assessed needs to live independently in their own accommodation.

The report had been reviewed by the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

The Commission noted –

- the enormous progress made since 2005;
- the very positive feedback received from clients; and
- member induction and briefings would include information relating to the Supporting People programme to enhance members' knowledge and involvement.

The Commission adopted the report for sending formally to the Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing.

23. **Report of the Review of the Council's Response to Severe Weather**

The Commission noted the report of the review of the Council's response to the severe weather experienced in Bracknell Forest during December 2009 and January 2010, undertaken by a working group of the Commission. The review was requested by the Leader of the Council with a view to making recommendations on any actions to be taken based on lessons learned from these events. The report incorporated amendments made by the Environment, Culture and Communities O&S Panel.

Arising in discussion –

- Recommendation 6.3 - the Council's reserves of grit and salt were located at Bagshot. This was to be reviewed and a location in central Bracknell identified for at least a proportion of the reserves.
- Recommendation 6.4 – the continued replenishment of grit in misused bins to be kept under review. It was noted that some bins were serviced by parish councils.
- It was considered helpful to have the comments of the parish councils.

Councillor Turrell thanked Emma Silverton for preparing the report.

The Commission adopted the report to send formally to the Leader of the Council.

24. **Updates from Panel Chairmen**

Environment, Culture and Communities O&S Panel

Councillor Finnie reported that the Panel had been very busy and its working groups had completed numerous reviews recently.

Adult Social Care O&S Panel

Councillor Turrell reported that following the closure of Downside Resource Centre, the Executive Member would give a presentation to the next meeting of the Panel. The working group on the safeguarding aspects of personalisation had now met on five occasions, most recently with service users.

Children's Services and Learning O&S Panel

Councillor Mrs Birch reported that the Panel had an exciting programme which was currently very pertinent. The Working Group on Safeguarding Children had commenced work. Councillor Mrs McCracken, the lead member, reported that the working group had welcomed Paula Ridgway as a member of the group. The Working Group had met social workers and managers and clients at the Family Centre. It hoped also to meet Victim Support and the NSPCC.

Joint East Berks Health Committee

Councillor Virgo reported that now that Bracknell Forest chaired this committee, a re-evaluation was being undertaken and it was hoped to re-engage Slough and Windsor & Maidenhead. Councillor Appleyard from Buckinghamshire had attended the last meeting and Councillor Leake would contact him in an attempt to secure his involvement. Councillor Mrs Shillcock expressed her concerns that this committee was not functioning properly.

At the last meeting the Committee had received a two presentations –

- One from the Chief Executive for Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospital Trust updating on the Turnaround Recovery Plan 2010/11 to 2012/13, which was being adhered to.
- The other from the Director of Public Health, NHS Berkshire East, on key health inequalities and other issues for Berkshire East, and an update on the plans for producing the updated Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Councillor Virgo was disturbed about the possibility of money being redirected from Bracknell Forest and Windsor & Maidenhead to Slough to meet health inequalities.

The working group reviewing hospital car parking charges would have its last meeting next Tuesday – a further explanation of the related figures had been sought.

25. **Overview & Scrutiny Quarterly Working Groups**

Following an interesting talk by the Director of Public Health about children and their health, members of the Children, Young People & Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel wished to undertake a review of the take up and organisation of school meals. This matter came to the Commission as a decision needed to be taken in the context of the overall position on the approved overview and scrutiny work.

Councillor Mrs Birch explained that the members would take responsibility for this member challenge review which would be a short task review of three meetings, involving limited fieldwork and a short four page report.

The Chairman considered that what was described was not a working group but an extension of the work of the panel and the Commission agreed that the piece of work should proceed outside the regular Overview and Scrutiny process.

26. **Good Scrutiny Awards**

The Chairman reported that the Overview and Scrutiny team had been commended in the joint working category at the Good Scrutiny Awards 2010 and he had been extremely proud to be at the award ceremony with Richard Beaumont and Andrea Carr..

CHAIRMAN