

**TO: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
30 JANUARY 2013**

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OF THE BRACKNELL FOREST PARTNERSHIP

Assistant Chief Executive

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report invites the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Commission to reaffirm the Commission's decisions on 28 October 2010 concerning O&S of the Bracknell Forest Partnership.

2 RECOMMENDATION

That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission reaffirms the Commission's decisions in 2010 that:

- 2.1 **The Bracknell Forest Partnership Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Group should exist in a reference capacity only, meeting exceptionally if required.**
- 2.2 **O&S reviews of partner organisations' activities should only be carried out when they form an integral part of an O&S review of the Council's own activities, or NHS services.**

3 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 At its meeting on 28 October 2010, the O&S Commission received a report on the review of partnership scrutiny in Bracknell Forest¹. The Commission agreed the recommendations in the report, which included:

5.18 The Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Group, having fulfilled its initial functions regrettably can no longer be supported unless and until new resources are made available. In future, the group should exist in a reference capacity only, meeting exceptionally if required. Similarly, the resource constraints mean that O&S reviews of partner organisations' activities should only be carried out when they form an integral part of an O&S review of the Council's own activities, or NHS services (paragraphs 4.20-4.21).

5.19 The approach to O&S of the Bracknell Forest Partnership should be reviewed in the light of the responses to this report's recommendations and in the event that: the powers or funding of the Bracknell Forest Partnership grow; or priorities change; or more resources become available (paragraph 5.14); or in two years' time at the latest.

- 3.2 With the agreement of the Chairman of the O&S Commission, this report was delayed slightly beyond the two years time interval, to await the outcome of the Bracknell Forest Partnership (BFP) Board's review of the BFP's future in the light of less

¹ The Minutes of the meeting and the related reports can be viewed on the Council's website at <http://democratic.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=151&MId=3391>

emphasis being placed by central government on Local Strategic Partnerships, and financial pressure on all public sector organisations.

- 3.3 At its meeting on 22 November 2012 the Bracknell Forest Partnership (BFP) Board considered a report on a review of the BFP. The minutes record:

It was acknowledged that the real value of the Bracknell Forest Partnership Board was that it provided a mechanism to gather together the heads of the main public sector bodies in the area to discuss cross cutting issues. It was stressed that just because it was no longer a statutory requirement to have a local strategic partnership or a Sustainable Community Strategy not having one was not an option because partners considered it to be an effective and efficient method of ensuring both joined up working and joined up thinking.

BFP Board meetings are now held less frequently, and there are fewer Theme Partnerships.

- 3.4 Since October 2010, O&S Reviews have included the activities of partner organisations as appropriate, for example, the recent review of Substance Misuse included discussions with Thames Valley Police and National Health Service staff. With reference to the earlier report's recommendations (paragraph 3.1 above):
- The responses from the Executive and the BFP Board to the report's recommendations were supportive of the approach proposed;
 - The powers and funding of the BFP have not grown, neither have the BFP's priorities changed materially;
 - No more resources have become available.

- 3.5 In conclusion, nothing has changed since October 2010 to cause the Commission's decision to be altered; indeed it has been reinforced by no need having arisen to reconvene the Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Group in the intervening period. Furthermore, should the Partnership O&S Group need to meet again, it would require to be re-formed as the Thames Valley Police Authority has ceased to exist, and the Primary Care Trust is also due to cease in April 2013.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/ ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS/ EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT/ STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES / OTHER OFFICERS/ CONSULTATION – Not applicable

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