

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

17th March 2010

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Phil Mould (Chair), and Councillors K Banks, G Chance, R King, J Pearce, D Taylor and D Thomas

Also Present:

Councillor J Brunner (Portfolio Holder for Community Safety)

Officers:

M Bough, R Griffin, A Heighway, S Horrobin, D Kesterton, S Lacey, S Morgan, G Revans and L Tompkin

Committee Services Officer:

J Bayley, J Divala and I Westmore

192. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Smith and Fry.

193. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest nor of any Party Whip.

194. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meetings held on 3rd and 24th February 2010 be confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chair.

195. ACTIONS LIST

The Committee considered the latest version of the Actions List and specific mention was made of the following matter:

Action 5 – The Civil Parking Enforcement Scheme

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Chair

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The majority of the actions listed had been completed. However, it was noted that the tour of those areas of Central Ward where the Civil Parking Scheme was in operation had still to be organised.

RESOLVED that

the Actions List be noted.

196. CALL-IN AND PRE-SCRUTINY

Councillors Thomas, Pearce and Banks informed the Committee that they had concerns about the decisions taken by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 10th March 2010 regarding the Voluntary Sector Grants Applications 2010/11 (Minute 269). These Members indicated that they wished this matter to be called-in for the reasons set out in written submissions that were tabled at the meeting.

A further meeting of the Committee was arranged at which the call-in was to be considered. It was agreed that the Committee should meet on Monday 22nd March 2010. The role at this subsequent meeting of Councillor Chance, a member of the Committee and, coincidentally, the Chair of the Grants Panel was clarified for the benefit of those present.

RESOLVED that

a meeting be convened on 22nd March 2010 at which the decisions of the Executive Committee in respect of the Voluntary Sector Grants Applications 2010/11 (Minute 269) would be considered by the Committee.

197. TASK & FINISH REVIEWS - DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENTS

There were no scoping documents for the Committee to review.

198. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

The Committee received reports in relation to current reviews:

a) Local Strategic Partnership – Chair, Councillor W Norton

The meeting was informed that the Group had produced a report detailing a number of interim recommendations arising from the work that had been undertaken to date. Councillor Norton explained that these initial recommendations focused on those matters that could be most easily addressed by the Council and Partnership.

It was acknowledged that performance management would prove a more difficult area on which to make recommendations for improvement. The role of the Group was seen as primarily in devising a structure for performance management but there was uncertainty as to what aspects of the Partnership's activities might most usefully be monitored.

The Committee commended the Group on its work and noted that other authorities had uncovered similar issues in respect of their Local Strategic Partnerships. A final report from the Group was expected to be completed by June 2010.

b) Joint Worcestershire Hub – Redditch representative, Councillor J Pearce

It was reported that no further meetings had been held since the initial meeting of the Group. However, members of the Group had visited both the main Hub facility and various district Hub facilities as part of an evidence gathering exercise.

Local Strategic Partnership

RECOMMENDED that

Engagement recommendations: ensuring that the Redditch Partnership involves the public in its work:

- 1) following pre-scrutiny by the LSP Task and Finish Group, the proposed format and content of the Redditch Partnership's revamped website coverage, to be hosted by Redditch Borough Council, be endorsed;
- 2) an event, along the lines of the We are Redditch exhibition, be held every year in a form determined appropriate by Officers;
- 3) the Redditch Partnership and appropriate partners should publicise their work and invite public reaction by providing regular updates in Redditch Matters;
- 4) the Redditch Partnership should hold and advertise an Annual Meeting, as required by the terms of the Partnership's protocol, which

partners, potential partners and members of the public could attend;

Accountability recommendations: ensuring the transparency and openness of the partnership:

- 5) a new item be added to the full Council agenda requiring the Leader of the Council to deliver regular updates on the work of the Redditch Partnership since the previous meeting of the Council;
- 6) the Leader of the Council formally deliver an Annual Report to the last scheduled full Council meeting of the municipal year covering the work of the Redditch Partnership by formalising the current practice of delivering an annual “State of the Borough” address;
- 7) information about the Redditch Partnership and LSPs should be provided for Members’ consideration as part of the Member induction process;
- 8) a training event focusing on LSPs should be provided as a standard part of the Member training programme each year; and

RESOLVED that

- 9) the Changing Places report should be considered as part of the subsequent Local Area Agreement Task and Finish review;
- 10) the membership of the Local Area Agreement Task and Finish Group should be drawn from the membership of the LSP Task and Finish Group; and

Task and Finish Group – Progress Reports

- 11) the progress reports be noted.

199. CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY PANEL - CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel, Councillor Chance, gave a brief update report on the work of the Panel. Councillor Chance reported that the Panel was in process of

working on a draft protocol and also that the Panel had agreed to co-opt a member of the Police Authority but that such a co-opted member would not be one who was currently sitting on the Executive Committee. The Chair also reported that the Panel had agreed on the work items and that the members were in process of identifying their first piece of work.

However, the Members of the Committee observed that the Community Safety Advisory Panel had a similar remit to the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel and therefore agreed that this duplication was unnecessary and recommended that the Panel be discontinued.

RECOMMENDED that

the Community Safety Advisory Panel be discontinued; and

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

200. BUS PASS SCHEME - COUNTY PROVISION

Officers reported that Government was in process of introducing some changes surrounding the concessionary bus pass scheme, the major implication being that the County would take over administration of the scheme from the Districts. Officers also stated that a lot of consultation had taken place at County level on how the concessionary fares were administered. The members therefore agreed that it would be appropriate for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to continue to monitor developments with regards to County provision of the Bus Pass Scheme.

RESOLVED that

- 1) regular updates be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding developments on the Bus Pass Scheme, and**
- 2) the report be noted.**

201. COUNCIL FLAT COMMUNAL CLEANING - CONSULTATION REPORT

Members discussed the outcome of the consultation process following the Council Flat Communal Cleaning review and expressed disappointment at the low response rate. Members then

noted that a further and more targeted consultation work involving other stakeholders should take place on the issue.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

202. QUARTERLY BUDGET REPORT - THIRD QUARTER 2009/10

Officers presented a Quarterly Budget Report for the Third Quarter 2009/10. The report highlighted that there had been some savings for the period arising from vacancies across the authority.

RESOLVED that

the Quarterly report be noted.

203. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT - THIRD QUARTER 2009/10

Officers informed the Committee that a structure called The Performance Management Group had been established to review performance against performance indicators (PI's) across the Council and to escalate concerns regarding underperformance to Senior Management Team. Officers also reported that the system of measuring performance had changed and that Council was now increasingly using neighbouring authorities to measure its performance, whereas previously Redditch had been part of a national "family group" of authorities.

Overall, officers reported that there had been positive improvement in most of the National Indicators. However, in areas where there was underperformance, officers stated that there were recovery plans whose specific details could be made available to the Members if requested.

RESOLVED that

the Performance report be noted.

204. UPDATE ON FLY TIPPING AND THE PROGRESS OF THE "WORTH IT" CAMPAIGN

Members received a presentation regarding recent performance in relation to tackling fly tipping and considered details that might be included in an Improvement Action Plan to address the problem.

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Members also questioned what impact the installation of security access systems to locations such as Woodrow flats had had on rates of fly tipping in those areas. Officers undertook to provide further information for the Committee following the meeting.

Overall, the Committee commended the officers for the improvements made in this area but also advised that more needed to be done in enforcement, raising of public awareness and increasing Community involvement, for example, by talking to schools.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the draft Improvement Action Plan be endorsed.**
- 2) **updates be provided on progress in relation to tackling fly tipping in the Borough at subsequent meetings of the Committee.**
- 3) **the report be noted.**

205. PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY - ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee received an annual report from Councillor Brunner, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety.

A number of issues were highlighted during the report, some of which were:

- 1) The Committee observed that the Community Safety Panel did not hold any meetings in the previous year and wanted to know why this had happened.
- 2) The Committee also noted that Redditch Fire Authority as a member of the Community Safety Partnership had its crewing levels reduced and wanted to know if this crewing reduction was having an impact on community safety.

Councillor Brunner reported that the Community Safety Panel did not hold any meeting because Members did not request such a meeting. As regards the operational problems being faced by the Fire Authority, Councillor Brunner reported that she felt it was outside her remit to comment on another Partner's internal management. However, the Portfolio Holder stated that there were no safety incidents or concerns reported as a result of the issues stated above.

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The Committee reiterated that it was the responsibility of the Portfolio Holder to call for Community Safety Panel meetings and advised that it would be best to establish communication between the Fire Authority and the Portfolio Holder to share on the effects that operational problems were likely to have on Community Safety.

The Portfolio Holder also reported on a number of areas where progress had been achieved. The Committee commended the officers for job well done. Some of the areas were:

Licensing operations

It was reported licensing operations had been boosted in areas such as door security at night clubs; audit of licensed premises; licensing of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire taxis where a Handbook containing details of taxi drivers had been introduced; and deployment of a Project Liaison and Enforcement officer who carried out random checks on areas where private hire taxis operated.

Bus Shelter

It was reported that old bus shelters had been removed and replaced with new ones resulting in less anti social behaviours in areas around the shelters.

Other Bespoke Projects

It was reported that one of the projects, the 5 aside football pitches, proved extremely popular among young people and the first phase had been completed. As a result of this project's success in the Borough, it was reported that the project was being rolled out Countywide as best practice. The Portfolio Holder also reported that there was an improvement in Hate Crime reporting as a result of introduction of some leaflets such as "See no evil, Hear no evil and Speak no evil"

Underpass Project

It was reported that a lot of young people were involved in this project and it had proved very successful.

Home Security Project

It was reported that this project had been advertised in Redditch Matters. The Portfolio Holder stated that prototype gates were installed in alleyways and as a result there had been reduction in anti social behaviour.

CCTV

The Portfolio Holder reported that there were no immediate plans to expand the service but that the merger of two existing control centres was ongoing. The team had digital covert surveillance that could be deployed as a last resort but the Council was looking to employ mobile overt systems in addition to the present fixed overt cameras as this represented a more effective use of the Council's assets.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

206. QUESTIONS FOR THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP

Members considered the questions to be put to the Portfolio Holder for Community Leadership and Partnership, Councillor Carole Gandy, to address in her Annual Report. The following questions were agreed:

- 1) What was your view of the LSP Task and Finish Group's recommendations?
- 2) What do you feel should be the priority of your Portfolio?
- 3) What do you believe are the:
 - a) strengths;
 - b) weaknesses;
 - c) opportunities; and
 - d) threatsof working in partnership?
- 4) What approach do you intend to take to disseminate information about and performance details for the Local Area Agreement (LAA)?
- 5) What has been most challenging about your role as Portfolio Holder for Community Leadership and Partnership?

207. CENTRE FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY - GOOD SCRUTINY AWARDS

Members received a brief update on the submission from the Council for the Centre for Public Scrutiny's Good Scrutiny Awards.

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Councillors R King and Thomas were due to attend the Conference and Awards Ceremony.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

208. REFERRALS

There were no referrals.

209. WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer reported a change to the current Work Programme, this being that the pre- scrutiny of the Business Centre Review which was previously postponed to the meeting of the Committee on 7th April 2010 had been further postponed to the Committee's meeting in June 2010.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the Work Programme be noted; and**
- 2) the changes stated in the preamble above be incorporated into the current Programme.**

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 9.00 pm

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Chair