

# Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Wednesday 4 November 2009

## PRESENT:

Councillor James, in the Chair.  
Councillor Mrs Watkins, Vice Chair.  
Councillors Coker, Purnell, Roberts, Thompson, Viney and Wildy.

Co-opted Representatives: Douglas Fletcher.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Fox.

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 4.45 pm.

*Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.*

## 37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Members in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

## 38. MINUTES

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2009 be confirmed as a correct record.

## 39. CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of Chair's Urgent Business.

## 40. LEADER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Commission heard from the Leader and the Chief Executive on Council issues relating to the overview and scrutiny work programme, who advised that impending important issues included –

- Building Schools for the Future
- Waste
- Job evaluation
- CityBus Ltd.
- Stock transfer
- Eastern corridor – Sherford
- Northern corridor
- City bid for the World Cup
- Life Centre.

Responses to Members' questions included –

- in their view, scrutiny had substantially improved, had developed a more mature approach and was succeeding in providing effective challenge to officers;
- it was understood that a report from the Independent Remuneration Panel regarding allowances for O & S Management Board Members would be submitted to City Council in February 2010;
- waste, Children's Services and the Council's budget had been major issues to address over recent years;

- Cabinet would bear in mind scrutiny's wish to have involvement in the development of policies and strategies at an early stage, and there were examples of this happening, e.g. Sports Facility Strategy;
- regarding the Life Centre and business plan information requested by scrutiny Members, the Chair of the Customers & Communities OSP and the lead officer should follow this up to ensure information required was provided;
- the Council acknowledged that scrutiny was essential in order to achieve an excellently performing Council and the new Assistant Director for Democracy and Governance, together with the new Assistant Director for Human Resources, would be asked to consider how to achieve dedicated support for scrutiny;
- scrutiny had grown and health scrutiny was a good example of this; support should be sought from the service department as they received benefit from scrutiny and also partners, e.g. health, should be encouraged to provide support to scrutiny;
- engagement with partners was improving and partners were aware that they would be assessed under the Local Area Agreement; it was suggested that Council strategies should be presented to the partners' Boards so that it could be assessed whether partners were signed up to them;
- as community leader, the Council must ensure that good scrutiny focus on health's key objectives was achieved, concentrating on only four or five as a maximum;
- regarding Building Schools for the Future, this was not Private Finance Initiative money but Government money which could only be achieved by the Council funding the necessary bid;
- the issue of schools charging prices too high for the community to pay might be a subject for scrutiny, it was suggested;
- it would be helpful if Members could encourage these new schools to share their facilities as it was intended that they should be at the heart of the community, which could not be achieved if schools closed their doors at 3.30pm;
- the relevant Cabinet Member and the new Assistant Director for Democracy and Governance would be asked to address Member Development issues;
- officers would ensure that the forthcoming finance training event had a revised approach;
- the Council wanted officers to lower down the organisation to be accountable and scrutiny could help in this ambition by challenging in an appropriate way.

Resolved that the Leader and the Chief Executive be thanked for their attendance.

#### 41. **CALL-INS**

**(a) Members will be advised of any executive decisions that have been called in**

The Chair advised that no executive decisions had been called in.

**(b) To monitor actions from Call-ins**

There were no actions from Call-ins to monitor on this occasion.

**(c) Members will receive a schedule of executive decisions that have been deemed urgent with the agreement of the Chair**

The Chair advised that the Assistant Chief Executive had reported that no urgent executive decisions had been taken within the period 21 September to 23 October 2009.

## 42. TRACKING RESOLUTIONS

Members considered a schedule of tracking resolutions from the O & S Management Board and resolutions brought forward from Overview & Scrutiny Commission and the Resources & Performance Overview & Scrutiny Panel, and commented as follows –

- regarding O & S Commission minute 153 (1) (08/09), 'outcome of discussions at Cabinet regarding consideration of including a basic commercial operation in the Life Centre project be provided to Commission in due course' and the update which indicated that Life Centre and related projects including outsourcing management was on the Customers & Communities OSP work programme for 23 November, it was clarified that at this stage it was a business item, not a task and finish group;
- regarding Resources & Performance OSP minute 112 (6) (08/09), 'Cross-cutting Corporate Improvement Priorities and themes, e.g. CIP 4, be identified for each panel and measures be put in place for Panels to monitor these as part of their work programme', now that Lead Officers were in place and as resolved by Support Services OSP at their recent meeting, Panel Chairs and Lead Officers were to be asked to meet and review work programmes, and this would provide an opportunity to take into account cross-cutting CIPs;
- regarding Resources & Performance OSP minute 6g, 'quarterly reports', the Support Services OSP had drafted a quarterly report and that template should be used for all OSPs;
- regarding O & S Management Board minute 33b, 'further meetings / discussions with the LSP Theme Groups', the 4 November Chairs' meeting had been cancelled due to low availability of Theme Group Chairs, but it was intended to retain the 20 January date as protocols were being prepared and should be ready for that date.

Resolved that the Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships be requested to take forward with Lead Officers the issue of quarterly scrutiny reports in time for the Panel meetings being held in November 2009.

## 43. WORK PROGRAMMES

### **(a) To consider and approve work programmes for each of the Panels**

The work programmes of the Overview & Scrutiny Management Board and the Overview & Scrutiny Panels were submitted and considered.

With regard to the Health & Adult Social Care OSP's very full work programme, it was suggested that the Chair of the Panel should liaise with the Lead Officer to confirm what the priorities for scrutiny were and consider whether some items, e.g. 'Private Rented Housing Issues – Condition Stock Survey Results' and 'Fuel Poverty', might be more appropriately placed with other panels.

### **(b) To consider and approve additions to work programmes**

No additions to work programmes were identified on this occasion.

### **(c) To receive new items from the Forward Plan for 1 November 2009 to 28 February 2010 with a view to identifying items for scrutiny**

New items from the Forward Plan 1 November 2009 to 28 February 2010 were submitted for Members' consideration with a view to identifying items for scrutiny.

Resolved that the Chair of Growth & Prosperity OSP discuss with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning Strategic Housing and Economic Development the reason why the Growth & Prosperity OSP had not been included in the list of persons to be consulted with in respect of Local Development Framework: Annual Review of Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (FP 38 09/10).

**(d) To agree Project Initiation Documents / Task and Finish Groups**

There were no Project Initiation Documents or new Task and Finish Groups to consider on this occasion.

**(e) To receive updates on Task and Finish Groups**

Updates provided by Members were as follows –

- scrutiny of Localities was progressing well;
- scrutiny of Reducing Teenage Conception Rates in the City was progressing well;
- scrutiny of Plymouth CityBus Limited had now been completed and a report would be submitted to O & S Management Board shortly;
- scrutiny of Skateboarding Byelaw was progressing well, the Youth Parliament had agreed to conduct a survey with young people and a press release was to be arranged;
- a final inspection of works being carried out at the Hoe Foreshore was due to take place at the end of November but it was not clear what was to happen regarding West Hoe.

**44. LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP / OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS UPDATES**

Members commented that –

- National Indicators, stretch targets and trends were required for the next meeting in order to identify whether there were any issues that required answers from Theme Group Chairs;
- the Wise Theme Group was to have an away day to which the Chair of the Children & Young People's OSP had been invited but, because of very short notice, regrettably she was unable to attend.

**45. PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

There were no updates from Panels regarding actions/progress on performance issues previously identified.

**46. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PANELS**

**(a) To receive and consider recommendations from Panels for O & S Management Board, Cabinet or Council**

Resolved that –

- (1) the following resolutions from Panels be agreed –
  - (a) Children & Young People's OSP minute 24 - Councillors Bowie and Delbridge to be appointed as nominated substitutes for the O & S Management Board;
  - (b) Growth & Prosperity OSP minute 19 referring to two red risks from the Audit Committee, the Parks/Playgrounds Risk Assessment be transferred to the Customers & Communities OSP for further consideration;
- (2) with regard to Customers & Communities OSP minute 19 'update on tackling anti-social behaviour strategy including the Councillor Call for Action', the Assistant Director for Safer Communities, who was also the lead officer for the Panel, be requested to liaise with the Acting Chief Supt., Devon & Cornwall

Constabulary, with a view to achieving the resources needed for –

- (a) Research on national indicators 17 and 21;
  - (b) Mapping of intergenerational work within the city and further resources to enhance its delivery;
- (3) with regard to Growth & Prosperity OSP draft minute 24, 'Business Improvement District (BID) Veto', the resolution be agreed, to be amended as follows –
- In view of the excellent results achieved by the BID to date, the City Council be recommended not to exercise the power of veto with regard to the renewed BID;
- (4) with regard to Safer & Stronger OSP minute 5, 'terms of reference', resolution (1), the Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships be requested to meet with Panel Chairs and Lead Officers to identify (i) specific Corporate Improvement Priorities (CIPs) relevant to individual Panels and (ii) which cross-cutting CIPs were relevant to Panel(s), in time to meet deadlines for the November City Council agenda dispatch;
- (5) with regard to Safer & Stronger OSP minute 5, 'terms of reference', resolution (2), City Council be recommended to agree resolution (2) which required that –
- the Overview and Scrutiny Panels' terms of reference be amended to read 'to monitor the budget and performance of the Cabinet Members, Department(s) and partners to oversee delivery of the priorities of the area and with regard to better value for money'.

**(b) To monitor actions against recommendations made to Cabinet / Council**

There were no actions to monitor on this occasion.

47. **COMMUNICATIONS**

**(a) To receive reports of any press coverage**

With regard to press engagement with task and finish groups, it was commented that –

- it would be helpful if Task and Finish Group Chairs contacted the press when there were Part 1 items of public interest being scrutinised to encourage them to attend;
- consideration of how best to use the press and other communications should take place when producing the Project Initiation Document;
- Task and Finish Group Chairs should liaise with the Council's press office when scrutiny reports were ready to be published.

**(b) To consider any communication plans**

There was nothing to report at this stage.