

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY 13 OCTOBER 2014 FROM 7.30 PM TO 10.30 PM**

Present:- Councillors Tim Holton (Chairman), Michael Firmager (Vice Chairman), Prue Bray, Mike Gore, Mike Haines, Pauline Helliard-Symons, Nicky Jerrome, Norman Jorgensen, Abdul Loyes, Malcolm Richards and Shahid Younis

Also present:-

Andy Couldrick, Chief Executive

Graham Ebers, Director of Finance and Resources

Julie Holland, Service Manager, Business Improvement

Mike Ibbitson, Head of Customer Services and Information Management Technology

Kevin Jacob, Principal Democratic Services Officer

PART I

19. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28 July 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Kevin Jacob reported that following the Committee's discussion regarding proposals to decommission a number of the Broadmoor Hospital escape sirens, a joint meeting with the Bracknell Forest Overview and Scrutiny Commission had been set for 22 October 2014.

20. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Parry Bath, Kate Haines, (substituted by Mike Haines) and David Sleight, (substituted by Abdul Loyes).

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

22. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions

23. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions

24. COUNCIL EFFICIENCY BRAINSTORMING SESSION

The Committee considered a background report on Agenda pages 13 to 22 prepared by Graham Ebers, Director of Finance and Resources which set out an overview of the financial picture affecting the Council.

At its meeting on 28 July 2014, the Committee had considered a scrutiny review request submitted by Andy Couldrick, the Chief Executive and decided to further consider the issues identified within the request through an open 'brainstorming' style discussion at the next meeting.

In presenting the report, Andy Couldrick and Graham Ebers highlighted the following points in order to set the context of the discussion:

- The Council faced an ongoing reduction in income until at least 2018-2019;

- The Analysis of Types of Savings from 2012-2013 to 2014/2015 set out the significant savings that the Council had already made around the headings of Procurement, Staffing, Income Charges and Alternative Service Delivery Models;
- It was stressed to the Committee that the Council had already taken major steps with regards to efficiency and that therefore the opportunities to make further efficiencies without impacting on services was limited. The more easy to achieve efficiencies had already been implemented;
- As a Council there was a need to engage with deciding what the Council could afford to do in the future and what it could not afford to do in the future through a mature debate around the financial challenges facing the Council and innovative thinking to find the solutions;
- The Council remained committed to protecting front line services as best it could;
- The Strategic Financial Context facing the Council on Agenda page 15 was highlighted in that:
 - Government Grant was reducing by £3m each year;
 - Inflation was expected to generate budget pressures of approximately £2m each year, giving a combined budget pressure of £5m per annum;
 - Adult Social Care – approximately £1.3m extra would be required each year to meet budget pressures;
 - Waste – an extra £200,000 would be required to each year from 2016/2017 onwards;
 - Others – an extra £2m (approximately) would be required each year for Children’s Services and other unavoidable growth.
- Although the Borough was a relatively affluent area it had the lowest sources of income per head of population from Fees and Charges and Grants in comparison to the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council, Reading Borough Council and Bracknell Forest Borough Council as set out on Agenda page 18;
- The Council had the lowest number of Full Time Equivalent, (FTE) Staff per head of population of the four Councils at 838 FTE, but it was stressed that this figure was impacted by issues such as the level of outsourcing and which Councils had a Housing Revenue Account;
- Despite the comparison data shown it was important for Members to understand that there were important differences between the Councils and it was not possible to compare the Council with another Council with complete accuracy.

Members asked a number of questions of clarification at this point. It was confirmed that one of the reasons why fees and charges income was lower for Wokingham than other Councils was that car parking charges were significantly lower. Another reason why investment income was lower was that some other authorities had higher levels of return on property investment through rental income.

The Committee then considered a number of ideas submitted by Members for possible efficiencies or income generation. Initial feedback was given by Andy Couldrick and Graham Ebers in respect of each item followed by Committee discussion. It was noted that all the ideas represented ‘blue sky’ thinking and were not intended to be regarded as definitive proposal, but a potential basis for further discussion and investigation.

Income Generation – Opportunities for increased revenue from the Council’s existing property portfolio or investment in new property as an alternative to other investment income streams

Norman Jorgensen commented that underpinning his suggestion was the choice of balance open to the Council in managing its property portfolio in such a way as to retain

property and therefore maximise the opportunity for long term rental income versus the short term capital receipt boost to the balance sheet arising from the sale of a property. He continued that allied to this, the Council also needed to consider whether it was making the best possible use of the property assets it did retain e.g. Children's Centres so as to reduce costs and maximise income.

Graham Ebers and Andy Couldrick referred to the work being undertaken on these and other areas of the management of the Council's assets by the Strategic Asset Group and of the challenges of the ideal of converting capital income into revenue income. Reference was also made to innovative work being undertaken by Wokingham Housing Ltd, one of the Council's wholly owned companies in using public land to best effect.

Graham Ebers commented that ideally the Council would wish to use cash balances, but that the situation would arise in progressing the Council's Strategic Development Locations, (SDLs) when significant sums would be required upfront. Investing in property involved upfront expenditure whereas the rental income from the investment only came over time. It was expected that there would be many calls on the Council's available balances in the near future.

Members queried what the potential impact of greater investment in a property portfolio might bring to the Council over a 15-20 year period, although it was accepted that any estimate would be an approximate estimate. Graham Ebers informed Members that the potential capital return would need to exceed 6-8

Income Generation – Potential development of Twyford Railway Station as strategic transport hub in light of the advent of Crossrail and other developments through potential additional parking income

In the absence of David Sleight, Norman Jorgensen commented that the advent of the Crossrail project with a connecting station along the route at Twyford offered the potential for Twyford to become a major transport hub within the Borough with an opportunity for the Council to develop an income stream through parking charges. It was an area that he felt was worthy of further investigation and members of the Committee supported this.

Andy Couldrick referred to and paid tribute to the work that David Sleight had undertaken and in his discussions with Network Rail and commented that he felt it was a suggestion that could be taken further.

Members of the Committee discussed the possibility of the development of such a transport hub including the types of transport links that might be provided within such a scheme and the opportunities and potential issues that could arise around parking. Whilst the idea of investigating the options further through a feasibility study type approach were supported, a note of caution was made that the provision of such a project would require significant capital expenditure that could take many years to recoup.

Income Generation – Greater enforcement of the rules around single person Council Tax discount

Graham Ebers informed the Committee that this was an issue on which the Council had taken action on four to five years ago. A significant piece of work had been undertaken by the outside company to identify households where subsidiaries and discounts had been incorrectly claimed. At the time the Council had been able to increase income by approximately several hundred thousand pounds in that financial year and when the

exercise had been repeated generating additional income. The Council has an investigation resource to look into potential fraud and had acted requiring claimants to make positive statements, which had a positive effect.

Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons commented that when undertaking canvassing and other visits, her experience and that of many other Members was that it would become clear that more than one person was living at a particular address even though only one person might be registered on the electoral roll. The number of such instances was thought to be not insignificant and she was aware that a neighbouring local authority had been very successful in recouping lost income in enforcing the conditions for discounts through a system that had links to the mobile phone operator Vodaphone. There was also the principle of fairness in that it was unfair for some residents to pay the full amount when others were incorrectly not paying enough.

Members were informed that it was not possible to defer the application of a Council Tax discount because this would negate the benefit to the vulnerable residents in receipt of it who had claimed it correctly. It was also important that any action to check on eligibility would need to be self-funding, although it was accepted that ways for concerns to be raised regarding people in receipt of Council Tax discount could be made clearer. This also included Members with concerns notifying them to the Council.

Members noted the Council already had one of the highest rates of Council Tax collection in England and Wales. Graham Ebers commented that different Councils did have different approaches and mechanisms for detecting improper claims for single person discount, but they were not necessarily any better than the systems used by Wokingham Borough Council. However, it would be possible to collate information on what work was being undertaken by other authorities and bring it back to the Committee.

Income Generation - Income from waste through a biomass generator or electricity from waste. Reduced costs to the Council of waste disposal.

Andy Couldrick commented that the suggestion was potentially broader than biomass energy generation or electricity from waste as there was also opportunity to explore the greater installation of other infrastructure such as solar panels on Council and other public buildings in ways that could be mutually beneficial.

He commented that any ideas around the potential provision of biomass energy generation or energy from waste would probably need to come from the Council's existing joint Re3 waste partnership and that a significant capital investment would be required which might in itself necessitate a new Private Finance Initiative, (PFI) deal.

In addition to any potential to generate income from waste it was also very important to drive changes to residents' behaviour and the culture concerning recycling harder through the existing PFI arrangement. If the amount of waste ending up in landfill could be reduced the amount of tax the Council would have to pay would also reduce. However, efforts to change behaviour had not previously been given enough emphasis within the Re3 arrangement.

Councillor Norman Jorgensen commented that as the Member making the suggestion he agreed with the sentiments expressed and suggested that a possible way to improved recycling rate might be to offer positive incentives to recycle more.

It was confirmed that non recycling waste was weighed on receipt at the Smallmead facility in Reading and an element of that waste was sent to Colinbrook Energy from Waste Facility with the remainder sent for landfill. Land Fill Tax was payable on both elements. Therefore if residents could be encouraged to recycle more this would save money.

Councillor Prue Bray commented that it was a disadvantage of long term PFI contract in general that the contract could become solidified and not able to adapt to changing circumstances. There were innovative energy based measures that could be looked into in order to both generate financial income and reduce emissions. It was her understanding that Wokingham Housing Ltd had looked at the idea of combined heat/powers and she also gave the example of a landowner in Wargrave who had installed floating solar panels on a pond they owned in order to generate electricity. Although subsidies for solar panels had been reduced it was still a potential source of income.

The idea of the Council establishing its own electricity company was also suggested.

In answer to a question, Graham Ebers informed Members that the Council did already jointly procure electricity with the other five Berkshire unitary Councils and that the Council was also looking to reduce its own electricity expenditure by investing in capital spending to upgrade street lighting for example. The ongoing pursuit of reducing energy costs and income generation is considered to be a good area for further exploration.

The comment was made that there was a need for the Council to seek to maximise its income from grants for energy schemes more proactively. Andy Couldrick responded to this by informing the Committee that the Council had learnt from experience in general that a targeted approach to apply for grants was more effective given the limited resources available.

Reduced Costs – reducing postage and paper costs by increasing the amount of communication with customers done electronically to include correspondence, bills etc.

It was accepted that too much of the Council's communications were paper based. Andy Couldrick explained that increasing the amount of communication undertaken electronically was an important element of the ongoing efforts to improve the overall customer experience of residents accessing Council services, although it was recognised that this would not be convenient for all residents. At present, approximately £315,000 was spent per annum on the costs of mailing which included postage and materials, but not the Officer time involved.

As part of the efforts to reduce expenditure on printing it was anticipated for instance that within a year fewer hard copies of Agendas for meeting would be produced as they would be available electronically.

Comment was made by Members that in the case of Council Tax, many Council's gave their residents the option of receiving bills and associated correspondence electronically. The view of Officers was that the best way to encourage this was through incentives. Members were informed that opportunities for greater use of electronic communication were part of ongoing pieces of work being undertaken as part of the Customer Experience programme.

Reduced Costs – Getting it Right First Time as a Council

Andy Couldrick commented that it was accepted that it was important for the Council to get it right first time and that rectifying mistakes often did have cost implications. It was also important to recognise that the Council did operate in a national and local political context centred around the electoral cycle which did make longer term planning more difficult.

The Council had made a lot of progress in moving away from a culture of departmental silos to one where there was a focus upon effectiveness and efficiency.

Councillor Prue Bray commented that it did need to be recognised that the Council did not always get things right and that there was a link between this suggestion and the suggestion she had made around cross party working on issues such as the Council budget where she felt that a wider pool of opinions would help. In her view, the Council needed to plan on a 15 year horizon with interim plans along the way.

Alternative Service Delivery - Further shared services/integration of services with other public sector bodies

The Committee was reminded of the shared services that the Council had already entered into which included Shared Legal Services, Internal Audit and Investigation and Trading Standards and Licensing. It was noted that at Chief Executive level the opportunity for further shared services continued to be actively discussed. It was hoped that these services would grow organically and through planned activities.

Andy Couldrick commented that Shared Services would be part of the Council's future. They could deliver short term savings, but also longer term service improvements also. In the long term if shared services became big enough there was the potential to develop them into wholly owned Council companies and therefore benefit from any profits made. The Council was not limiting itself to other Councils in terms of future shared services, but also engaging with other public sector bodies like the NHS around areas such as adult social care and it was also expected that discussion would also take place in due course with the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Councillor Pauline Helliar Symons commented that in making the suggestion she also wanted to explore the possibilities for shared services with other partners including those in the voluntary sector to aid the invaluable work that they undertook. This was not just about efficiency savings, but included opening up pathways for customers to receive a better standard of service.

Members were informed that the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service under the leadership of its Chief Executive Andy Fry was keen to work with other public sector provides including the Council to improve and expand joint working across a number of health and wellbeing areas. Pauline Helliar-Symons formally requested that he be invited to address a meeting of the Committee in order to set out his ideas.

Procurement – Combining similar or associated contracts so as to gain efficiencies.

Andy Couldrick explained to the Committee how the Council's approach to procurement was changing. There was an active procurement group comprised of Officers within the Council. This group was led by an experienced professional from the commercial sector Kien Lac, Head of Commercial Services. Procurement was an important area because savings here would help relieve the pressure on front line services. A substantial element of procurement was for the provision of services.

Work was being undertaken around working more closely with service commissioners and seeking to integrate greater levers for the Council to maximise greater flexibility and efficiency. The suggestion of combining contracts was something that could be looked at as part of this including the specific example of combining the contracts for grass cutting and litter collection.

Councillor Michael Firmager commented that in making the suggestion he felt that there was an opportunity for smarter procurement and the combination of the litter and grass cutting contracts.

It was suggested that the Council should consider moving to outcomes based contracts rather than prescriptive output based contracts. An example being the management of the park where the contract outcome was that it be clean and tidy, but how that was achieved would be up to the contractor to decide rather than seeking to set output measures like the number of cuts of grass or occasions that litter was expected to be collected. The Committee was informed that this approach to contracts was being considered.

Councillor Prue Bray questioned the degree to which there was central enough control or oversight of the procurement being undertaken within services so as to ensure that best value was obtained. She referred to the £500,000 savings target for 2014/2015 in procurement and questioned what progress was being made in delivering the saving. She also referred to the use of contract default notices.

Graham Ebers responded that he agreed that the Council did need to maintain an overview of contracts and procurement, but that over centralisation and a rigid system also had disadvantages. The Officer group that was looking at this was chaired by Andy Couldrick, along with himself and other key Officers from within the Council. The group had a number of ongoing pieces of work in progress.

In terms of the Council's contractor relationship with its suppliers, influence could only be brought to bear on the operation of a contract if there were appropriate levers within the contract from the beginning. However, the Council was being more proactive in its use of default notices and the use of such notices did not necessarily imply a breakdown in the relationship with the contractor or supplier concerned. Members felt that there should be use of incentives too.

At this point, the Chairman summarised the position with regard to all the ideas discussed. Members of the Committee felt that the discussion had been useful and should be repeated in subsequent years.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That a briefing paper be prepared for the November 2014 meeting of the Committee setting out the actions taken by Wokingham Borough Council and other authorities to minimise the number of improper single person benefit discounts;
- 2) That Andy Fry, Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, (RBFRS) be invited to attend the January 2015 meeting of the Committee to set out the work of the RBFRS and opportunities for partnership working between the RBFRS and other public sector organisations including the Council to improve and expand joint working across a number of areas;

- 3) That feedback on the specific possibility of the combination of the Council's litter picking and grass cutting contracts be supplied to the Committee in time for the Committee's consideration of the Council's grass cutting review;
- 4) That a report setting out opportunities for a greater use of electronic communication with customers as part of the Customer Experience Project be brought to a future meeting of the Committee as soon as practical in 2015;
- 5) That the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee be asked to consider further the potential for the Council:
 - a) to generate income from energy and/or reduce energy costs;
 - b) to establish an electricity company.
- 6) That the Community Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee be asked to consider further the potential income generation opportunities and costs for the Council associated with the routing of the Crossrail project through Twyford, (and other major national infrastructure projects impacting upon rail travel through Twyford) to include parking provision;
- 7) That Officers be asked to produce a report for the January 2015 meeting on the work of the Strategic Asset Group in developing the Council's Strategic Asset Management Plan

25. BALANCED SCORECARD MONTHLY REPORT 2014/2015 – QUARTER 1

The Committee considered a report on Agenda pages 23 to 33 which set out details of the Council's performance as measured by a series of indicators presented as part of a Balanced Score Card.

In presenting the report, Julie Holland referred Members to the Key Points to note as set out on Agenda page 23 which included information on sickness absence, the implementation of the Wisser integrated ledger system and the need to improve upon the capturing and measurement of meaningful data generally, but specifically on customer service.

It was reported that of the total of 49 indicators, 29 had achieved a 'green' indicator, 8 were at 'Amber' and 8 were below target with a 'Red' indicator.

On page 26, it was clarified that in relation to Indicator 39 – Underspend/Overspend Against Budget, both areas of overspend identified within the report commentary related to areas of business within the portfolio of Angus Ross, Executive Member for Environment.

The Committee's attention was drawn to Indicators 63a and 63b on page 27 which set out performance in dealing with different kinds of planning applications. Performance in this area was not being achieved and the Indicators were shown as red. Various members of the Committee commented that this was a matter of concern to them and that residents had complained to them about delays in securing planning decisions and pre-planning application advice. Julie Holland responded that as set out in the commentary to the Indicators, there had been a significant increase in applications linked to the wider economic recovery which had coincided with staff vacancies. An Action Plan was in place and a number of posts within the Development Management Team had now been filled

and contractors utilised when appropriate to help reduce the backlog of planning applications.

Members whilst noting this explanation remained concerned and requested further information about the Action Plan to improve planning application performance to include information on the gap between expected and current performance and an estimate of when it was believed that performance would reach expected levels. It was agreed to feed this request back to the Head of Development and Regulatory Services and for the information to be distributed to members of the Committee by email. If it was felt necessary by Members, the Executive Member could then be requested to attend a future meeting of the Committee.

It was noted that the amount of income recoverable from planning application fees did not adequately reflect the Council's costs, but that as fees were set nationally the Council had no ability to change them.

In relation to Indicator 69 - Proactive Anti-Fraud drive result on Agenda page 27 it was noted that the results of individual drives would be seen later in the year. With regards to Indicator 70 – Value of benefit overpayments detected it was noted that investigations would be transferring to the Department for Work and Pensions from 1 November 2014 and that therefore priority was being given to finalising outstanding cases prior to the transfer. The transfer was expected to free up resources for other types of investigations and Members were also informed that the Council currently utilised data matching services as part of this work.

Members asked whether the Council was able to retain any funds recovered as a result of identifying benefit fraud and the Committee was informed that most of the revenue recovered went back to central government.

A discussion then took place regarding how the report could change for the future and how best performance information could be reported back to the Committee.

Julie Holland commented that the report as currently designed was not a true Balanced Scorecard that set out performance management information on a timely basis. A significant change to the design of the document had recently commenced. A key objective of the review was to ensure that a future Balanced Scorecard would include the right information including the possible use of external data. As an overview and scrutiny committee there were links to this work and the observations made in the Francis Report that scrutiny committees needed to improve their consideration of performance management information. The Committee was invited to indicate what it liked and did not like about the current report and what they felt a future report should include:

- That performance management information needed to be presented by exception in a way that enable Members to quickly grasp the health of the organisation overall at a strategic not detailed level. This meant identifying the critical 'must dos' and a dashboard approach was suggested;
- Reports needed to be timely;
- Use of trends lines to make it possible to identify patterns, but with use of actual figures to give specific context;
- The Council was not unique in having a need for real-time management information, such systems existed within the private sectors.

Julie Holland commented that the intention of the redesign was very much to create a dashboard based approach. Graham Ebers in responding to some of the points made by Members commented that service managers did have day to day access to management information at a detailed level and responding to that information in real time. What the Council could improve upon was the way in which detailed management information at service level was brought together across the organisation as a whole and summarised. Julie Holland commented that performance management information needed to be targeted and tailored, depending upon whether the target audience was managers within an individual service, the Corporate Leadership Team or Members.

It was suggested that once further pieces of work had been undertaken an update on the redesign could be brought to the January 2015 meeting. It was expected that the redesign process would be completed in April 2015.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the scorecard of performance indicators be noted;
- 2) That an update on the redesign of the Balanced Scorecard be brought to the January 2015 meeting.

26. UPDATE RESPONSE TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY RESOLUTIONS REGARDING BUSINESS CONTINUITY AND RESILIENCE

The Committee considered a report on Agenda pages 34 to 37 which set out an update on the Council's ICT services following a loss of service over several days in February 2013, the implementation of arrangements for business continuity at the Council and responses to specific question asked by Members of the Committee at the meeting in January 2014.

Mike Ibbison, Head of Customer Services and Information Management Technology, (IMT) commented that since the ICT incident in February 2013 the Council's ICT services had proved to be reliable to a reasonable degree. There was further work to be undertaken, but progress had been good.

Members welcomed the assurances within the report that arrangements for ensuring business continuity were going well, but asked for further clarification as to what this meant and how they as scrutinisers could be assured that this was the case.

The Committee was informed that greater scrutiny was being undertaken of cross council and service area Business Continuity Plans in conjunction with the relevant Officers from those service areas. In addition, Business Continuity Plans were being tested through real life events and Members attention was drawn to page 35 of the Agenda which gave information on the response to flooding within the Borough earlier in 2014 and the problem of a water outage at Grovelands Park in August 2014.

In response to a question regarding the level of significant risk, it was confirmed that Business Continuity Plans were in place in all areas where significant risks to continuity had been identified although those the plans were evolving and lessons had been learnt. Further testing of plans was planned including a potential exercise in the event of an incident at the reservoir South Lake.

Members asked a number of questions regarding the resilience and relating to the Council's ICT infrastructure, summarised below:

- Server contingency and restriction of use of Cloud computing options to those located within the European Union, was this an issue? There remained plenty of flexibility to explore options for Cloud computing within the European Union, (for example Microsoft Cloud Servers were located in the Republic of Ireland);
- The Council might face multiple threats simultaneously, have tests been undertaken to take account of this? Yes, as far as was ever possible all scenarios had been looked at;
- Electronic Traffic Signs displaying real-time and accurate traffic and diversion information would have assisted drivers in avoiding blocked routes during the most recent flooding, could this be explored? Flooded routes had been identified and mapped using a GIS system, but it was recognised that there were potential opportunities from such technologies;
- Cost of splitting data centre locations. The costs of this were highlighted to the Committee as set out on Agenda page 36. The Committee was also informed that it was not the right time to consider such a solution given that the Council was approaching a break point in its contract with Northgate its ICT partner;
- How can the Committee assure itself that the Council does have appropriate Business Continuity Plans and that they are fit for purpose? A list of Business Continuity Plans completed could be supplied to the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted;
- 2) That a report setting out a list of completed and outstanding Business Continuity Plans be brought back to the November 2014 meeting of the Committee.

27. POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OF THE FRANCIS REVIEW WORKING GROUP

The Committee considered the report of the Francis Review Working Group as set out on Agenda pages 38 to 67. The Working Group had been established to consider the implications of recommendations arising from the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust Public Inquiry, (the Francis Report) with a focus towards health overview and scrutiny, but with a view to also identifying common issues related to all aspect of local authority overview and scrutiny.

The Chairman commented that in the time available it was only possible for him to highlight a number of key areas within the Francis Review Working Group report that had particularly important implications for the way in which overview and scrutiny was undertaken by the Council. These included the following paragraphs of the report:

- Recommendation 2.5 – Preparedness for meetings;
- Recommendation 2.7 – Use of Pre-Meetings
- Recommendation 2.10 – Selection of Work Programme items so as to focus on priorities with the greatest impact;
- Recommendation 2.13 – Monitoring of local and national news media regarding providers of services to the Council;
- Recommendation 2.20 – Induction and refresher training
- Recommendation 2.24 – Membership of Overview and Scrutiny Committees to be regarded as a long term commitment

He asked that all Members consider the report, but that the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees consider the recommendations in respect of their own committees and take back to their committees.

Members were also reminded of an article on the lessons for Overview and Scrutiny committee arising from the Mid-Staffordshire and Rotherham scandals by the Centre for Public Scrutiny that had recently been sent to all of the Committee. The Chairman referred to an extract from the article that argued that it was not enough for Overview and Scrutiny committees to only consider information presented by a chief officer, Members had to get behind the headline data or they risked entering into a false sense of security. Three questions for overview and scrutiny committees to ask were highlighted:

- How do I know that this Council, and those with whom it works, will be aware when significant problems rear their head – and do I have confidence that this information will be acted on?
- Does scrutiny itself have access to information which will allow me to confidently challenge, on the basis of evidence, the council's assertions about the quality of a service?
- Do council Officers and Officers from other agencies agree and accept that scrutiny has this role to play?

RESOLVED: That the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's be asked to bear in mind the recommendations of the Francis Report Working Group.

28. UPDATE REPORT ON MEETING BETWEEN THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE AND CHAIRMAN OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Committee considered a report on Agenda pages 68 to 70 which set out the key points arising from a meeting between the Chairman of the Audit Committee and Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

Kevin Jacob commented that it was part of the Audit Committee Handbook that regular co-ordination meetings take place between the Chairmen of the Audit Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee with the aim that this would minimise opportunities for crossover and duplication between audit and scrutiny work.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

29. CONSIDERATION OF THE CURRENT EXECUTIVE FORWARD PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the published version of the Executive Forward Programme which set out decisions expected to be taken by the Executive in the month October 2014 to January 2015 on pages 71 to 79.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

30. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMMES 2014/2015

The Committee considered the anticipated Work Programme of the Committee and that of the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees as set out on Agenda pages 80 to 105.

RESOLVED: That the work programme of the Committees be noted subject to the additions to the work programme arising from the previous items.

31. UPDATE REPORTS FROM CHAIRMAN OR NOMINATED MEMBERS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

The Committee considered update reports from the Chairman of the Community Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Chairman of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Chairman of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These were set out on Agenda pages 106 to 111.

The Chairman commented that it was important for members of the Committee to familiarise themselves with and ask questions about the work being undertaken within the Overview and Scrutiny Committees as it was part of remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to maintain an oversight role.

With regards to the report of the Community Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee he highlighted that it had been noted by that Committee that progress in implementing the Wokingham Borough Council Armed Forces Community Covenant had not been as quick as originally intended. He suggested that the Committee should seek to follow this area up by asking for action plan.

Councillor Norman Jorgensen as Chairman of the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee commented that he wished to highlight that the Committee was continuing to take the issue of Planning Enforcement very seriously and it was anticipated that the issue would be further considered at its next meeting. In addition the Committee would be considering a report on preparation for the combined elections in May 2015.

Councillor Tim Holton referred to the consideration by the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee of a report on future provision burials within the Borough. Norman Jorgensen set out how that Committee had considered the issue and that in his view an important strategic question for the Council moving forward was whether burial provision via Council owned cemeteries was an area of activity that it wished to continue with in the future.

Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons referred to the report of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee as Chairman. She highlighted that a future piece of work for the Committee would be to consider the outcome of the anticipated of the Council by Ofsted. This was expected by the time of the next meeting of the Committee.

Councillor Tim Holton asked how the level of assurance the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee had that the appropriate and robust measures were in place within the Borough to prevent the events that had taken place within Rotherham occurring. Pauline Helliar-Symons commented that there no complacency, but that the Committee was a confident as it could be and referred to the joint work being undertaken by the Council with the Police and NHS regarding child protection and safeguarding.

Various members of the Committee commented that the events in Rotherham did highlight the need for overview and scrutiny committees to receive anonymised complaints data.

RESOLVED: That the reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

*These are the Minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee
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print please contact one of our Team Support Officers.*