

## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 22 JANUARY 2015 FROM 7:00PM TO 8:00PM

*Present:- David Sleight (Chairman), Parry Batth, Michael Firmager, Lindsay Ferris, Abdul Loyes and Malcolm Richards for Bill Soane).*

*Also present:*

*Susan Coulter, Senior Democratic Services Officer*

### **PART I**

#### **31. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11 November 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Councillor Ferris enquired as to what had subsequently happened following the executive meeting where the amenity vehicle item had been considered. He was concerned that this Committee had requested that an update report on this item be presented to it in six months' time but that the Executive decision seemed to be that the amenity service cease with effect from 1 February 2015. He stressed that he was unhappy with this outcome as he felt that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had not completed its consideration of the matter.

#### **32. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Shahid Younis and Bill Soane.

#### **33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made.

#### **34. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions.

#### **35. MEMBER QUESTION TIME**

There were no Member questions.

#### **36. REVIEW OF OUTSIDE BODIES APPOINTMENTS**

The Committee received a report, which was circulated at the meeting by the Chairman.

The report stated that the Outside Bodies Directory produced by Democratic Services recognised that "there is no absolute definition of an Outside Body, but we have defined them as 'organisations which have either asked the Borough Council to nominate a representative to serve on that body, or where historically the Borough Council has always been represented in their governance arrangements.'" The Committee accepted that there was no absolute definition of an Outside Body but the "where historically the Borough Council has always been represented" suggested that the current review may be timely and that changes in circumstances may make continuing representation no longer appropriate.

There also appeared to be a lack of clear distinction between "Other Bodies" as listed in the Council's Year Book and "Outside Bodies". For example, the Thames Valley Police

and Crime Panel was listed as an “Other Body”, while the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority was listed as an “Outside Body”. Representatives on Outside Bodies are required to submit a report to Council (although regrettably some Members had failed to do so in 2014) but there was no such requirement on representatives of Other Bodies. The Committee considered that membership of statutory or quasi- statutory bodies (where the Council was required to nominate representatives) should be listed as ‘Other Bodies’ but, where membership was discretionary, the ‘Outside Body’ terminology should be used. The Committee could see charitable organisations dominating the list of Outside Bodies. Members noted that the Council paid fees or grants to certain Outside Bodies; in these cases , the Committee considered it self-evident that membership should continue to get value for money from the Council’s subscriptions or to have some oversight on charitable spending.

The Committee also noted that various Other Bodies were not listed in the Outside Bodies Directory, such as representation on the Berkshire Local Transport Body. These should be included in the listing in the Council’s Yearbook to inform Members (and others) of the Council’s representation on these bodies.

The Chairman suggested the following recommendations:

- That the Other Body and Outside Body lists are reviewed to consider listing all statutory or quasi-statutory as Other Bodies while Outside Bodies should essentially be bodies where membership is discretionary;
- That the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, Bracknell and Wokingham College, the membership of the LGA General Assembly and the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP should be listed as ‘Other Bodies’;
- That other appointments to bodies, such as the Berkshire Local Transport Body and the Berkshire Strategic Transport Forum should be listed appropriately; in these cases as ‘Other Bodies’; and
- That the requirement of a timely report to Council on their membership of an Outside Body should be stressed to Members.

The Committee was concerned that the Council gave grants / funding to various outside bodies but that the amount and frequency of these payments was not recorded in the Outside Bodies Directory.

The Committee agreed that the term “Outside Bodies” should be changed to “External Bodies”. Members agreed that there was no need for the Council to receive annual reports from joint committees or working groups but that an annual report to Council was required by the Councillor Representative and that the amount of funding the Council gives to each of the external Bodies should be investigated.

The Committee requested that this item be brought back to the March meeting with the additional information sought.

### **37. WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15**

The Committee received its work programme for the remainder of the 2014/15 municipal year, as set out on agenda pages 4 to 7.

It was agreed that the above item relating to the review of outside bodies appointments be added to the work programme for the meeting on 11 March 2015.

The Chairman advised that the potential item listed on the work programme for the Armed Forces Covenant Update should be deleted as this was now an update report to Council.

The Committee agreed that the following items listed as potential items referred from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for 2014/15 should be deleted as the issues were being considered by the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee or the Health and Wellbeing Board:

- Personal Budgets;
- Work Opportunities for People with Learning Difficulties and Mental Health Issues;
- Fairer Contributions - Changes to Charges for Adult Social Care.

Members also discussed the Community Café, which had been operating in Shutters on a Thursday. The Committee was advised that Young people from Addington School gain credits toward a formal qualification as well as experience of running and working in a café, both of which will help their aspirations to find paid employment in the future.

Some Members of the Committee had visited the Café and praised the young people working there and said that they had been impressed with the quality of the food on offer and the service provided. Members also asked who was leading on the project and requested that they be invited to attend the next meeting of the Committee to give a brief update on its progress.

*These are the Minutes of a meeting of the Community Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee.*

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