

EAST DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL

SCRUTINY AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 17th June, 2009 at 7.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor M. G. Simper - Chairman

Councillor T. J. Palmer - Vice-Chairman

Present: Councillors P. G. Cuckston, R. C. Dudman, P. Holden, J. P. Holland, D. Morgan, N. Smith and Mrs A. Warman.

Also in attendance: Councillors Mrs B. T. Manuel (Lead Member for Culture) and S. S. Tong (Lead Member for Environment), Mr A. Breakwell (Chief Executive), Ms S. Griggs (Head of Central Policy and Performance).

96. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P. G. Bennett, Mrs T. B. Coombs, R. E. Daw, Mrs J. M. Hazel, I. J. Monks (Vice-Chairman), B. E. Mortimer, Mrs M. B. Osner and P. W. Richardson.

97. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

98. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8th October 2008, 20th October 2008, 9th February 2009, 6th April 2009 and 11th May, 2009 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

99. Presentations by the Public

There were no questions, petitions or deputations received on this occasion.

100. Sub-Committees of the Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Following a request by the Chairman of the Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee, Members agreed that on this occasion this item would be taken in conjunction with Minute No 104.

DELEGATED BUSINESS

101. Interim Corporate Report

The Head of Central Policy and Performance provided a PowerPoint presentation on the interim one-year Corporate Plan, a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Following the presentation, a brief discussion was held on the interim corporate report. The Head of Central Policy and Performance advised the Committee that topics for review should be prioritised and assessed according to the greatest impact on the Comprehensive Area Assessment, customers, efficiency savings, timescales, etc. Members agreed that there

were clearly areas which could be linked from the interim Corporate Plan to the work of scrutiny.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee noted the presentation.

Voting: Nem. Con.

102. Draft 2008/2009 Scrutiny and Policy Development Annual Report

The Chief Executive submitted a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Members received the draft 2008/2009 Scrutiny and Policy Development Annual Report.

RESOLVED that Members agreed the 2008/2009 Scrutiny and Policy Development Annual Report.

Voting: Nem. Con.

103. Update on Joint Scrutiny Review Panel on Partnerships - Review of the progress of the Dorset Pathfinder

The Chief Executive submitted a report for information, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'C' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Councillor S. S. Tong provided an overview and update to the Committee on the work of the Joint Scrutiny Review Panel on Partnerships.

Discussion then followed on the merits of an opposition Member being Chairman of Scrutiny, sharing of good practice, advantages of joint scrutiny, monitoring progress of recommendations and working with non-Dorset authorities such as New Forest District Council.

The Chief Executive suggested that the 17 conclusions contained within the report should either be monitored by the Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee or forwarded to the Policy and Resources Committee. It was also announced that SOLACE (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives) had recently conducted a review of the Dorset Pathfinder and had reached similar conclusions. Discussion followed and Members agreed that it was important that the report's conclusions were monitored by the Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee.

Members were then updated on the six Pathfinders:-

- Waste – there would be a Members Briefing held on the detailed business case. To move to the next stage around £500,000 would need to be spent to gather the necessary information. Following this it would then cost between £1,000,000 and £5,000,000 to bring the project together. Clarification would also be needed on who would provide the required funding. East Dorset District Council, Dorset County Council and several other Districts were committed to the project, however all seven authorities needed to be onboard.
- Procurement – it was looking likely that there would be a County-wide

solution, where the District Council would buy-in procurement via Dorset County Council.

- Revenues and Benefits – at present there were southern and eastern clusters. The next stage would be a request for the business case to be scrutinised before the project proceeded further.
- Environmental Health – there had been no progress on this, due to 95% of activity being District based. Dorset County Council's involvement was trading standards and it was felt that the two didn't meld. District Councils were now going to move into clusters, to proceed with the project.
- Building Control – the project was moving forward on the western side of the county.
- Buildings - a review was being undertaken of all the buildings in both council and health authority control to see if there was a surplus of buildings.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Members noted the report;**
- (b) the Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee scrutinise the work that the District Council was contributing to pathfinder;**
- (c) that the conclusions of the report are monitored by the Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee; and**
- (d) several times a year, or when appropriate, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee, along with the Chief Executive, provide an overview and identify barriers to the Pathfinder project, along with ways to overcome those barriers.**

Voting: Nem. Con

104. Work Plans of the Scrutiny and Policy Development Sub-Committees

The Chief Executive submitted a report for information, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'D' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Members were updated on the work of each Scrutiny and Policy Development Sub-Committee. In addition, circulated to Members, a copy of which appears as Appendix 'E' to these Minutes, was a list of potential items for review for each Sub-Committee.

The Head of Central Policy and Performance reiterated to the Committee that topics for review should be prioritised and assessed according to the greatest impact on the Comprehensive Area Assessment, customers, efficiency savings, timescales, etc

Following discussion it was decided that some potential topics for review should be moved to more appropriate Scrutiny and Policy Development Sub-Committees, as follows:-

- Open spaces should be moved to Culture and Community;
- Leigh Park should be moved to Culture and Community;
- Concessions Policy should be moved to Performance and Resources;
- Moving forward on the revenues and benefits partnership should be allocated to Performance and Resources; and
- Collaborative agreement with Christchurch should be allocated to Performance and Resources.

Following those amendments the full breakdown of potential Work Plans was as follows:-

Community and Culture

- Community Profile;
- Councillor Call for Action;
- Scrutiny of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership;
- Open Space and Recreation; and
- Leigh Park.

Environment, Health and Housing

- Flooding and Emergency Planning;
- Customer Access/One-stop shop (in conjunction with Pathfinder scheme);
- Review Audit Commission Inspection of Strategic Housing Services (or undertaken by Housing Sub-Committee);
- Review of proposals in principle for bringing Housing Advice and Homelessness Agency back in house (in conjunction with the Housing Sub-Committee);
- To reconsider charging for the treatment of mice in time for the 2010/2011 budget round;
- To reconsider charging for the treatment of rats following pilot scheme for charging of the treatment of mice;
- Review of the Ferndown/West Moors Lenghtsman Scheme;
- Placement of elderly mentally inform (EMI patients who need mental health and nursing care following hospitalisation);
- Asset Management; and
- Tree Planting Policy/National and local indicators.

Performance and Resources

- Review of Postal Costs;
- Distribution of East Dorset News;
- Concessionary Fares;
- Moving forward on the Revenues and Benefits;
- Collaborative agreement with Christchurch;
- Review of the effectiveness of Equality Impacts Assessments – are they making a difference;
- Corporate standards;
- Corporate identity and reputation management;
- Effectiveness of performance management arrangements and value

for money; and

- To examine the case for a consistent corporate policy on concessions.

Concern was raised that clarity was needed as to whether the potential reviews of the Audit Commission Inspection of Strategic Housing Services and Review of Proposals in Principle for Bringing Housing Advice and the Homelessness Agency Back In-House, were a scrutiny or housing sub-Committee function. It was suggested that this would need to be established as quickly as possible.

The Committee was informed by the Head of Central Policy and Performance that external funding was available for a scrutiny peer challenge review. Following discussion Members supported the proposal.

RESOLVED that:

(a) Potential reviews on:-

- (i) Open Spaces and Leigh Park be moved to the Community and Culture Work Plan; and**
- (ii) Concessions Policy, Moving Forward on the Revenues and Benefits Partnership and Collaborative Agreement with Christchurch should be allocated to the Performance and Resources Work Plan.**

(b) Members supported the proposal to hold a Scrutiny Peer Challenge Review.

Voting: Nem. Con

The meeting ended at 8.55 p.m.

CHAIRMAN