

## **SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP BOARD**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Leadership Board held on 14 January, 2010 at 4.00 p.m. in the Civic Offices, Telford**

**PRESENT:** Councillors D.R.W. White (Chairman), R. Aveley, J.A. Francis, A.A. Mackenzie, A.A. Meredith and K.L. Tomlinson

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor S.M. Kelly (for Minute No. SLB-, Richard Partington (Assistant Chief Executive), J. Eatough (Head of Governance), Fiona Bottrill (Scrutiny Manager), Stephanie Jones (Scrutiny Officer) and Debrah Byle (Performance & Planning Officer/Suggestion Scheme Project Lead)

#### **SLB-101     MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Leadership Board held on 19 November, 2009 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

#### **SLB-101     APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

#### **SLB-102     DECLARATION OF INTEREST/PARTY WHIP**

None.

#### **SLB-103     RESPONDING TO THE EMPLOYEE SURVEY 2009**

The report of the Chief Executive informed the Board of the ways in which the organisation had responded to the findings of the carried out in early Summer 2009 with the detailed results of which had been available from mid-September.

The organisation's response to the Survey's findings had been at two levels, corporate and Service Area/Business Unit with the key corporate response being to develop 'One Council, One Team, One Vision' which set out proposals to reorganise and reshape the organisation structurally, operationally and culturally in order to create a "*a Refocused, Re-energised and Affordable Organisation to deliver Council Priorities*". This Vision set out very clearly that it was drawing from the key 'headline' messages for improvement which had emerged from the Employee Survey, as listed in the report. The report also set out the actions taken to date to respond to the Employee Survey.

In the Employee Survey only 33% of employees felt that the Council would act on the issues raised and, as the Corporate Management Team took such comments very seriously, the development and implementation of 'One Council, One Team, One Vision' was comprehensive and fundamental response to some of the key messages in the Survey. While the Council had quickly to progress and implement this Vision for the organisation, there was much still to be done through 2010 to change the way in which the Council operated and to improve the impact it made.

The Assistant Chief Executive added that wide engagement had been entered into with employers and elected members, including the Cabinet, on the implementation of 'One Council One Vision'. The next stage of the organisational momentum would be to carry out a restructuring exercise to bring teams together and to focus on the culture and behaviour of management and employees. In particular, it was important that senior managers became more visible throughout the organisation. A key tool within this process would be the introduction of a Suggestion Scheme,

Councillor Kelly stressed that the organisational change was primarily for the benefit of the community and would enable the Council to deliver services more efficiently which, in turn, would lead to improved outcomes for local people.

In response to a number of questions from the Board the Assistant Chief Executive said that 'One Council One Vision' was taking a very comprehensive approach to the concerns raised in the Employee Survey. With regard to Job Evaluation, organisational changes were being implemented in conjunction with the Job Evaluation Team in order to align the two and take the volatility out of the model being used as far as was possible.

The Chairman concluded that the next Employee Survey would show the outcome of the current organisational changes and a report would be made to the Board at an appropriate time. However, 'One Council One Vision' was a more important development at the moment and it was requested that a report on progress be brought back to the Board in six months time.

#### **SLB-104     SCRUTINY REVIEW OF BUS SERVICES FINAL REPORT**

Councillor R. Aveley presented the final report of the Scrutiny Review of Bus Services. The Review had been undertaken as, being were aware of concerns raised by residents about various aspects of the service in Telford & Wrekin, Members had wished to consider how the Council could support improvements to the service for the future. The Review noted the continuing misapprehension of some members of the public that the Council had responsibility for bus services and the risk that undertaking this review could raise unrealistic expectations. Although the Council was committed to working in partnership with Arriva, in practice it had no influence over the company other than on the tendered and subsidised routes and the Review's recommendations could only focus on the Council's role in developing the bus network and the ways in which it could work with Arriva to deliver more reliable, frequent and affordable services to more residents.

The review had had four main objectives:

- To address immediate and future issues of reliability and quality of provision, and to improve the bus services in Telford & Wrekin
- To review the Quality Bus Partnership between the Council and Arriva
- To identify the needs of Telford & Wrekin with regard to bus services and assess whether the current provision met these needs
- To change perceptions of the bus services and increase bus patronage.

Whereas Arriva provided the fleet service, the Council was responsible for developing and improving the infrastructure within which the service operated. These improvements were dependent on resources and were not statutory obligations. It was hoped that the Review's recommendations would inform both Arriva's work and the development of strategies arising from the Council's Transport Review. The Review had made five recommendations ( nos. 1 to 5 in the Review) in support of this aim.

The Review was predominantly about issues of reliability, punctuality and quality of service on the commercial network which were within the remit of Arriva, although it had also touched upon Council's Integrated Transport Service and subsidised routes funded by the Council, which were also within the scope of the Transport Review. It was hoped that the findings of the Review would inform both Arriva's work and the development of strategies arising from the Transport Review. Three recommendations (nos. 6-7 in the Review) referred to these issues.

Whilst the Review Group understood the budgetary pressures faced by the Council, it urged the Council to consider transport not just as a direct cost but as an enabler to unlocking many social and economic problems in the area. Public transport was integral to meeting the economic and social aspirations for Telford & Wrekin as well as delivering the Council's climate change agenda. Without investment national core indicators were in jeopardy, as shown by N177, the national indicator for the number of bus passenger journeys in the local area, which was currently below target. Experience had shown that investment in quality bus routes, bus lanes and the roadside infrastructure would increase passenger numbers and help to address this failing indicator. BV104, satisfaction with local bus services as measured in the Place Survey, had also been identified as a high risk performance indicator which would impact on future Comprehensive Area Assessments. Therefore, recommendations three recommendations (nos. 9-11 in the Review) had been made in support of these aims:

The Review Group had also been concerned to ensure that in contracting out the tendered routes the Council continued to strive to make sure that Telford & Wrekin received the best value for money and, in support of this, had made two recommendations (nos. 12 & 13 in the Review).

The Board thanked Councillor Aveley for an excellent report and the Chairman drew attention to the benefits of scale that might accrue from adopting Recommendation 12 in particular and emphasised the need to highlight this when the Review was considered by the Cabinet.

#### **SLB-105     EMPLOYEE/MEMBER SUGGESTION SCHEME**

The Briefing Note included with the agenda informed the Board that the Council did not currently have an official Employee Suggestion Scheme, although this had been considered a number of times in the past. As set out in the Briefing Note, research into a number of private and public sector organisations had suggested a number of potential benefits such a Scheme.

Employee Suggestion Schemes were a means of giving employees an opportunity to initiate change and a voice when change was happening, an issue that had been raised in the Employee Survey of 2009. Therefore, in response to this, on 10 November 2009 Cabinet had approved the development of a new scheme, as outlined in the Briefing Note.

The Scheme's principles were set out in Appendix 1 of the Briefing Note. An amended version of the Appendix was tabled at the meeting and the Board's attention was drawn to the change in Principle (h) whereby the Scheme would operate for a period of 12 months following which a formal review of its effectiveness would be carried out.

In response to questions from the Board on the operation of the Scheme, the Suggestion Scheme Project Lead, Debbie Byle explained that the reward system would be recognition based rather than monetary based. With regard to costs, those to date had been minimal but a formal review would be undertaken following an appropriate period of operation.

The introduction of a Suggestion Scheme would help to foster 'One Council One Vision' and the recognition and celebration of employees would help to develop a culture of engagement.

#### **SLB-106     SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The report of the Scrutiny Manager requested the Board to review the Scrutiny Work Programme relating to In-depth Reviews, Spot Light Reviews and Special Interest Meetings. It was appropriate that the progress of the work programme was reviewed, given that a number of factors, including staffing cover in the Scrutiny Team and the number and broad scope of the reviews, had resulted in the work programme slipping.

A proposed work programme schedule, attached as Appendix 2, provided a realistic plan for the delivery of the current in-depth reviews, spot light reviews and special interest meetings. It is vital that Scrutiny focuses its efforts on the issues where it can add the greatest value to make the most effective use of Member time and the resources available to support Scrutiny. It should be noted that this work programme is in addition to the work of Scrutiny Assembly and the 5 Sub Groups.

**In Depth and Spot Light Reviews:** In order to effectively manage this work load it was agreed that the In Depth and Spot Light Reviews that have not yet been scoped are deferred until the next municipal year. Members may review the Work Programme in May to determine if these topics were still appropriate issues for Scrutiny to consider.

**Special Interest Meetings:** It was proposed that Special Interest Meetings with less than 3 Members signed up were removed from the Work Programme. Members were asked to decide which two of the remaining Special Interest Meetings topics would take place between February and July. In light of the number of Reviews underway it was agreed that three Special Interest Meetings would be arranged:

- Domestic Violence
- Transition of Disabled Children to Adult Services
- Child Protection and Child Protection Plans

It was agreed that the Scrutiny Leadership Board would receive a report on the Police and Community Together (PACT) meetings which would assess how effective they were in achieving their objectives. It was agreed that the issue of 'Sustainable and Balanced Development' was too large a topic for Special Interest Meeting and, therefore, removed from the work programme.

Members were also asked to consider the two topics that had been submitted as Scrutiny Suggestions, attached as Appendix III of the report. The Chairman said that the Suggestion relating to gypsies and travellers could be addressed through either a Spotlight Review or by asking the Gypsy Liaison Officer to attend a meeting of the Board. The Scrutiny Manager also suggested that it be considered as an In-depth Review and be included in the work programme to be drawn up in May. With regard to the suggestion asking Scrutiny to look at the variation in the formula allocation for school funding, it was agreed that a report be brought to a future meeting of the Board.

#### **SLB-107      ONE COUNCIL – PRIORITIES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SCRUTINY**

The report of the Scrutiny Manager sought the Board's agreement of the Lead Scrutiny Members' roles in relation to the Council's priority policy areas and its identification of the implications of the recent restructure for Scrutiny.

Under the Scrutiny Arrangements agreed by the Scrutiny Leadership Board at the meeting of 5<sup>th</sup> January 2009 each of the Lead Scrutiny Members had agreed to take a lead in the Community Priority assigned to them, including attendance at regular meetings with the Cabinet Member(s) within their area of responsibility. It had also been agreed that the Scrutiny priorities would mirror those of the Council, as set out in the report.

At the Cabinet meeting of the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2009 the following priority policy areas were agreed with Cabinet Members taking a lead for each of them:

- Housing Regeneration and Prosperity
- Children and young People
- Active Lifestyles Leisure and Culture
- Adult Care and Support
- Environment and Rural Areas
- Community Protection and Cohesion
- Efficient and Community Focused Council

The Members noted that the Community Priorities assigned to each of them accorded with the above with the exception of 'Active Lifestyles Leisure and Culture' for which Councillor K.L. Tomlinson had agreed to take responsibility for.

The Board also received the notes of the Scrutiny Assembly Meeting held on the 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2009, which had considered the implications of the One Council, One Team One Vision proposals.

## **RESOLVED**

- 2.1 That the role of the Lead Scrutiny Members in relation to the Council's priority policy areas be agreed;**
- 2.2 That, following the recent restructure of the Council, Councillor K.L. Tomlinson become the Lead Scrutiny Member with responsibility for Active Lifestyles Leisure and Culture.**

## **SLB-108      TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE JOINT HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The report of the Scrutiny Manager informed the Board that towards the end of 2009 Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire Council's Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) had considered the proposals made by the Primary Care Trusts and Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Trust regarding the future of vascular surgery in the area of the two local authorities. While the NHS Trust had not gone immediately ahead with plans to centralise this service at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, it did plan to consult on this and further plans to centralise acute hospital care on one site. It was the JHOSC that had the statutory Health Scrutiny powers in relation to these proposed changes and related consultations.

The current membership of the JHOSC consisted of 6 Scrutiny representatives from each local authority. From Telford & Wrekin this reflected the membership of the Health Monitoring Sub-Group, i.e. 3 elected Members and 3 independent co-optees. These co-optees had been granted voting rights by Council in respect of matters relating to the re-configuration of NHS services currently subject to consultation by the Telford & Wrekin PCT and Shropshire Council PCT. The six representatives from Shropshire Council were all elected members.

It was proposed that the Membership of the JHOSC should be extended to give both local authorities representation of 6 elected member and 3 co-optees.

The Chairman of the Health Monitoring Sub-Group had met with the Chairman from Shropshire Council. There was further work to be undertaken regarding the role of co-optees but, in anticipation of an agreement with Shropshire Council, it was agreed in principle to extend the representation from Telford & Wrekin Council on the Joint HOSC.

## **RESOLVED**

- (a) That the draft Terms of Reference for the Joint HOSC attached as Appendix 1 to the report be noted;**
- (b) That it be agreed in principle to increase the total membership of the Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee to 18 comprising of 6**

**elected members representatives from each local authority and 3 independent co-opted representatives appointed by each local authority;**

- (c) That it be agreed in principle to appoint 6 elected members and 3 co-optees as representatives on the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee with Shropshire Council and that the process through which these would be appointed would be determined by the Scrutiny Manager in consultation with the Chairman of the Scrutiny Leadership Board.**
- (d) That the voting rights conferred on the co-optees at Full Council on 29 October, 2009 be noted.**

**SLB-109     CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE**

The Chairman sought the Board's agreement to cancel the Scrutiny Assembly scheduled for 21 January 2010 at which the Council's Priority Plans would have been discussed. Given the current restructuring of the organisation, these would not be available in time and the Board agreed that an alternative date for the Scrutiny Assembly be arranged to consider Priority Plans once they had been finalised.

The Chairman informed the Board that Professor Steve Leech would commence his review of the Scrutiny function the following week. The Head of Governance explained that, with regard to Priority Plans, Professor Leech would be looking at the issue of Scrutiny having a more integral role in policy development and at the ways in which Scrutiny and the Cabinet worked together.

**SLB-110     SCRUTINY FORWARD PLAN 2009-10**

The Board noted the Scrutiny Leadership Plan 2009-10 as tabled at the meeting.

**SLB-111     COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN EDITION 100**

Edition 100 of the Council's Forward Plan was noted by the Board.

**SLB-112     DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Board would take place on Thursday, 25 March, 2010.

The meeting ended at 6.03 p.m.

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** .....