

**Minutes of: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Date of Meeting:** 12 June 2014

**Present:** Councillor I Gartside (in the Chair)  
Councillors D Bailey, S Carter, D Cassidy, A Cummings,  
M James, Mallon, S Nuttall, O'Brien and J Smith

**Also in  
attendance:**

**Public Attendance:** 1 member of the public were present at the meeting.

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillor J Daly and Councillor T Tariq

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**OSC.30 VOTE OF THANKS**

The Chair, Councillor Gartside, welcomed Members to the first meeting of the Municipal Year and placed on record his thanks to the previous Chair, Michael Hankey, for all his hard work and commitment during his time as Chair of the Committee.

**OSC.31 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

**OSC.32 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

**It was agreed:**

That the Minutes of the meeting, held on 25 March 2014, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**OSC.33 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions asked by members of the public present at the meeting.

**OSC.34 WORKLESSNESS OVERVIEW PROJECT GROUP**

Further to Minute OSC.921 of the last meeting held on 25 March 2014, Andrea Tomlinson, Democratic Services Officer, presented a report on behalf of the Worklessness Overview Project Group. The report set out details of the work, findings and recommendations of the Group, which had been set up to review the work undertaken by the Authority to support unemployed residents across the borough.

It was reported that the Group had analysed a large amount of technical information; taken evidence from Officers working within this area; and undertaken visits to Radcliffe Works and the Council's Whittaker Street site.

During discussion of the report, Councillor John Smith highlighted a recent Member training session around this issue and placed on record his disappointment at the relatively poor attendance levels for the event. The Chair, Councillor Gartside, stressed the need for all Political Groups to address the issue of attendance at Member Training Events.

Councillor Daisy Bailey referred to the issue of computer access and enquired about the scope for an IT module to be developed for Councillors to access information to help signpost members of the public.

**It was agreed:**

1. That this Committee approves the following recommendations of the Worklessness Overview Project Group:
  - i. That the hard work being undertaken across the Council and partners to assist Bury residents in gaining employment, skills and training be recognised.
  - ii. That external funding be sought to provide a key worker/mentor within the Communities section of the Council to support the apprentices.
  - iii. That all Councillors receive a training session and/ or information in relation to the work being carried out by the Council and its partners to help people into work and training.
  - iv. That all options for regularly advertising the available apprenticeships are considered to ensure as large an audience as possible.
  - v. That the work being carried out by Radcliffe and Prestwich Works be supported and promoted to ensure as many customers as possible benefit from the services offered.
  - vi. That the computer access available within Whittaker Street reception is replicated at as many sites as possible across Council buildings in line with the digital inclusion strategy.
  - vii. That a report setting out the work of Ingeus in the borough be submitted to the relevant Scrutiny Committee to inform the Members on their work

**OSC.35 POVERTY STRATEGY REFRESH 2014-2016**

Sarah Marshall, Performance Officer, presented a report setting out details of Bury's Poverty Strategy for 2014-2016. The Strategy is a statutory document originating from the Child Poverty Act 2010, which requires all local authorities to produce child poverty strategies and work with local partners to reduce and prevent child poverty.

It was reported that the Strategy had been refreshed using the following approach:

- The Welfare Reform Board has led the refresh of the Poverty Strategy for 2014-16.
- A sub group for the strategy had been established to identify areas for development.
- Consultations had taken place with project leads and the Welfare Reform Board to update the work referenced in the strategy.
- The Board have identified 5 key indicators to demonstrate the prevalence and travel of poverty in Bury and these have been included in the refresh.
- In addition there will be an appendix of indicators to compliment the strategy and action plan, this will be developed by the board following sign off of the refreshed strategy.

As a result the following changes had been made to the Strategy:

- Removed strategic issues as an objective and included a section on strategic links as part of the context to the strategy.
- Detailed key indicators as identified by the Welfare Reform Board.
- Ensured all statistics referenced are up to date.
- Amended the 'What have we done so far' section to demonstrate progress that has come from the key work areas of the strategy over the past year.
- Consulted with project leads and the Welfare Reform Board to identify key areas of work for each objective.

Questions and comments were invited from the Committee and the following issues were raised:

- In response to a question concerning pay day loans, it was reported that the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) were collecting data which would be reported quarterly.
- With regard to the impact of universal free school meals for the under 7's on the indicator, Claire Jenkins, Head of Customer Support and Collections, explained that it was possible to isolate the indicator. It was stated that indicators would naturally evolve and change as a result of changes in policy.
- Councillor James highlighted the possible effect of universal free school meals for the under 7's on the pupil premium and stressed the importance of schools being reminded of the need to still apply.
- In response to a question from Councillor O'Brien, Claire Jenkins undertook to provide the number of food parcels issued in Bury by Porchbox.
- In response to a question from Councillor Carter, Sarah Marshall undertook to provide a breakdown in relation to referrals to CAB from debt or benefit issues.

**It was agreed:**

That a progress report on the Poverty Strategy be submitted to this Committee in 6 months.

### **OSC.36 DEVELOPMENT OF A WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2014/15**

Leigh Webb, Principal Democratic Services Officer, submitted a report setting out the terms of reference for the Committee along with a Work Programme Prioritisation Protocol to assist members in the development of a Work Programme for 2014/2015. The report included a brief summary of the Overview and Scrutiny structures along with the remit of the Committee, which allows for the setting up of task and finish Overview Project Groups to carry out in depth reviews into specific topics.

The report also highlighted a number of issues/topics carried over from last years programme.

#### **It was agreed:**

1. That the following Performance Monitoring items be included as part of this Committee's Work Programme for 2014/15:
  - Corporate Financial Monitoring Reports (Quarterly)
  - Corporate Plan Progress Reports (Quarterly)
2. That Task and Finish Scrutiny Overview Project Groups be set up to look at the following topics:
  - Children's Safeguarding - (outline scope to monitor and challenge performance in relation to the Single Inspection Framework (SIF) Action Plan)
  - Finance/Efficiencies (outline scope to examine the work being done in relation to efficiency savings including opportunities to share services, sell services)
3. That the following additional issues be considered by the full Committee as part of the Work Programme for 2014/2015:
  - Welfare Reform
  - Staff Sickness Levels
  - Civic Halls – Update from meeting 25.03.14
  - Recycling – Performance update (to include impact of pilot project which has increased resource within the Waste Management Service)

**COUNCILLOR I GARTSIDE**  
**Chair**

**(Note: The meeting started at 7.30 pm and ended at 8.50 pm)**