

Minutes of: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 7 October 2014

Present: Councillor I Gartside (in the Chair)
Councillors D Bailey, S Carter, D Cassidy, A Cummings,
M James, O'Brien, J Smith and T Tariq

Also in attendance: Councillor R Shori – Deputy Leader of the Council
Councillor J Lewis, Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillor J Daly, Councillor T Holt and Councillor S Nuttall

OSC.355 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor D Bailey declared a personal interest in Minute OSC.359 below, Alternative Services – Under 5's, as a Governor at Radcliffe Hall Primary School.

Councillor James declared a personal interest in Minute OSC.359 below, Alternative Services – Under 5's, as a Governor at Sedgley Park Primary School.

Councillor Cassidy declared a personal interest in Minute OSC.359 below, Alternative Services – Under 5's, as a Governor at St John with St Mark's Primary and as an Advisory Group Member of the Board for Moorside Children's Centre.

Councillor J Smith declared a personal interest in Minute OSC.360, Corporate Financial Monitoring Report – April 2014 to June 2014, as the report made reference to the outturn position for 2013/14 when he was the Cabinet Member with budget responsibility.

OSC.356 MINUTES

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.357 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Sian Crosby raised a number of questions and comments in relation to the proposals for the Borough's Children's Centres, including:

- A request to increase the consultation period by 3 weeks as a result of changes made to consultation documents.
- The importance of user friendly consultation documents

- Concerns that points raised at drop in sessions may not be fed into the consultation process and a lack of Councillor attendance at these sessions.
- The disproportionate affect on women is not reflected in the Equality Impact Analysis

Councillor Shori, Deputy Leader of the Council, stated that the Council would work to ensure all consultation methods were user friendly/accessible and referred to an extra consultation meeting to be held with Officers and Members. It was confirmed that consultation forms had actually been adapted to respond to concerns raised.

Ian Chambers, Assistant Director of Learning, confirmed that all notes and points raised through the parent drop in sessions would be fed into the consultation process. The statutory consultation period would run until 8 December to allow time for the input of views from across the Borough.

OSC.358 ANTI- SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, CRIME AND POLICING ACT 2014

The Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture submitted a report setting out details and implications of the Anti-Social behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 which received Royal Assent on 13 March 2014. The key changes arising as a result of the Act were appended to the report.

It was reported that parts 2 – 6 will be implemented on 20th October 2014 and Part 1, relating to the power to make Injunctions, will be implemented by mid January 2015 (exact date to be confirmed).

Parts 1-6 of the Act cover anti-social behaviour; six new powers replace 19 existing ones and are designed not only to provide effective respite for victims and communities but also to stop future anti-social behaviour by the offender. Through the inclusion of 'positive requirements', perpetrators may be required to address the underlying causes of their behaviour, for example, substance misuse, anger management or problem drinking.

Some of the powers are designed to address the anti-social behaviour of individuals while others relate to environmental nuisance and anti-social behaviour in a particular location. The Act also introduces the Community Remedy and Community Trigger which are designed to give victims and communities a say in the way anti-social behaviour is dealt with.

The report set out the progress made by the Council in planning for the introduction of the new tools and powers and outlined a number of proposals relating to implementation in Bury.

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

- With regard to resource and capacity issues, the Cabinet Member explained that an increased emphasis would be placed on effective partnership working and highlighted the importance of a targeted, streamlined approach, working alongside the Police and Six Town Housing.

- In response to a question from Councillor O'Brien, Rachel Henry, Anti Social Behaviour Manger, highlighted the high level of co-operation across Greater Manchester and referred to cross border initiatives undertaken by the Police. With regard to the issue of dispersal powers it was explained that these had been simplified but it was important to ensure that problems are not merely being displaced to nearby areas.
- During discussion of this item, the Chair, Councillor Gartside, welcomed the Community Remedy aspect of the new powers but expressed concern whether resource levels were sufficient to effectively implement the new powers.

It was agreed:

That the report be noted.

OSC.359 ALTERNATIVE SERVICES - UNDER 5'S

The Deputy Leader of the Cabinet presented a report from the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People proposing a re-design in the way in which Children's Centres in Bury are currently operating to support under 5's and their families.

The proposal involved five Children Centre Hubs and one 'spoke' to deliver targeted services to the most vulnerable families across the borough and would come under the control of the Local Authority. The focus of the Hubs and 'spoke' will be on the delivery of:

- Improved health for U5's
- Improved school readiness for U5's
- Effective early intervention in safeguarding
- Improvements in families' economic prospects

The Hubs will be resourced based upon recognised need as detailed in the Index of Multiple Deprivation Rankings. Staffing would involve a shift in the balance from co-ordination, management and administration posts to front-line outreach support with 24 additional outreach staff being deployed into the community.

The remaining eight current Children's Centres will be de-designated as centres and seven of the centres will be converted to provide for the delivery of the 2 year old childcare offer for the 40% most deprived families in the borough. Currently there is shortage of these places in Bury.

The Local Authority will not run the 2 year old provision but will tender the service out to interested providers. There will be an initial subsidy of the rents for these centres to encourage schools or private providers to enter the market for two year old provision.

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

- Councillor J Smith expressed concerns in relation to the different tiers of funding associated with the 'Hubs' and 'Spokes' and the possibility of further cuts in the future. Councillor Smith enquired about the criteria used to select

the 'Hubs' and highlighted the lack of consultation with Elected Members prior to proposals being formulated.

The Deputy Leader explained that a number of variables were taken into account when deciding on proposals including deprivation and the number of social care contacts. The Deputy Leader highlighted that the proposals reflected a targeted approach based on need but stressed that all proposals were subject to consultation with no decisions having been taken.

- With regard to the issue of outreach workers, the Deputy Cabinet Member explained that it was envisaged that worker would require a base and community venues/Council assets would be looked at for this.
- In response to a question concerning the possible use of school sites to provide nursery provision for 2 year olds, the Assistant Director of Learning referred to ongoing discussions with Primary Heads and Governors. It was reported that there had been some interest, but any decisions would be largely dependent on the development of a viable business model.
- Councillor Carter requested that a map be provided to Members, highlighting the location of Children's Centres in the Borough.
- In response to concerns about the length of time for the tendering process for the 2 year old offer, the Assistant Director explained that tenders cannot be developed until the decision making process has concluded. Furthermore, prospective providers would need to be registered with and inspected by Ofsted.
- The Chair, Councillor Gartside, highlighted the issue of nursery places for 2 year olds. The Assistant Director acknowledged that there was a shortfall, but not in all areas of the Borough. An undertaking was given to provide current figures on this issue.
- Councillor J Smith recognised the financial constraints faced by the Council and welcomed the decision to concentrate on areas of deprivation and the offer of increased nursery provision for 2 year olds.

It was agreed:

1. That the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People be requested to examine whether the consultation period could be extended by 3 weeks to reflect the period that had elapsed between publication of the initial consultation document and the subsequent extended version.
2. That all comments from the drop in sessions be recorded and fed into the consultation process.
3. That, subject to final proposals being agreed by Cabinet, a report be submitted to this Committee 6 months after implementation.

The Deputy Leader of the Council presented a report from the Leader informing Members of the Council's financial position for the period April 2014 to June 2014 and providing a projection of the estimated outturn at the end of 2014/2015.

The report also provided Prudential Indicators in accordance with CIPFA's Prudential Code.

In response to a question from Councillor D Bailey, the Deputy Leader highlighted that a large element of external funding came via the health sector, including provision from the Better Care Fund to integrate health and social care.

During discussion of this item, the Chair, Councillor Gartside, highlighted the historic over estimation of income from the Councils property portfolio. The Assistant Director of Resources and Regulation (Finance and Efficiency) highlighted that this issue was recognised in the 2013-14 budget and explained that the current variance on this issue was largely due to void levels, which, it was reported, are improving.

The Assistant Director also referred to two recent Cabinet reports outlining the Council's new investment strategy and proposals for strategic management of the asset portfolio.

It was agreed:

1. That the financial position of the Council as at 30 June 2014 be noted.
2. That the s151 Officer's assessment of the minimum level of balances be noted.

OSC.361 CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORT Q1 2014-2015

The Leader of the Council submitted a report outlining the progress made on the Corporate Plan during quarter one (2013-2014) for the corporate performance indicators and projects within the Bury Council Corporate Plan.

During discussion of this item Members highlighted that a number of areas had no data available. Harry Downie, Assistant Director of Business Re-Design explained that this was as a result of the transition to a new IT system and re-assured Members that proxy measures were in place to monitor performance in the absence of system data.

The Assistant Director further reported that development of a suite of outcome focussed indicators was currently being undertaken.

It was agreed:

That the report be noted.

OSC.362 CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND CULTURE ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2013-2014

Jane Whittam, Complaints Co-ordinator, submitted a report setting out information in respect of complaints related to Children's Services covering the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014.

During discussion of this item, Members acknowledged and welcomed the increase in the number of compliments.

It was agreed:

That the report be noted.

COUNCILLOR I GARTSIDE
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 8.55 pm)