

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

10th JUNE 2010 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Neale (Chair); Councillors Bullock, Burnett, Dolling, Gale, Garrett and Rutstein.

CO-OPTED DIOCESAN

REPRESENTATIVE: Mr B. O'Byrne

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Hinkley, M. Hussain, Pedersen, Simmons and Simons

51. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (REF: 1)

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors Riaz and Stewart and J. Chipperton, Co-opted Member.

52. MINUTES (REFS: 2.1 & 2.2)

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meetings held on 22nd April and 18th May 2010 be taken as read, approved as correct records and signed by the Chair.

53. CHAIR'S UPDATE (REF: 3)

On behalf of the Board, the Chair welcomed Councillor Bullock as a newly elected Vice-Chair of the Board and Councillors Burnett, Gale, Riaz and Stewart who had joined the Board at the Annual Council.

The Chair reminded the Board of the Scrutiny away-day on 19th June 2010.

He also advised scrutiny in Luton had been shortlisted for an award from the Centre for Public Scrutiny; this was especially commendable as the new scrutiny arrangements had been in place only since September 2009.

54. URGENT BUSINESS (REF: 5)

The Chair advised that, at its meeting of 25th March, the Board had agreed to establish a financial review group comprising of five members. Only three Councillors had volunteered by the deadline for the submission of names.

He then asked for two volunteers from Members of the Board. Councillors Burnett and Gale offered to join the financial review group.

Resolved: That the financial review group be established with Councillors Burnett, Gale, Pantling, Rutstein and Titmuss as the membership.

(Note: The above item was considered by the Board in pursuance of Sections 100B(4) and 100E(1) of the Local

Government Act 1972, the Chair having considered that the item should be dealt with as a matter of urgency in order that the group could be established sufficiently early in the budget process.)

55. FINAL REPORT OF THE IMPROVING DAY CARE TASK AND FINISH GROUP (REF: 7)

Councillor Simons, the Chair of the Task and Finish Group, presented the final report of the Group. She expressed the thanks of the Group to the two Project Leads and the Overview and Scrutiny Manager for their assistance.

A member of the public commented that the report was a good piece of work. He commented that the report showed a predicted decline in the population of Luton in 2012 and questioned this.

An officer advised that the Council's Research and Intelligence Team had supplied the population figure. The reduction in population would be due to net migration out of Luton.

The Chair of the Task and Finish Group commented that before the report was submitted to Executive, it might be useful to list the sources of data.

A Member asked how successful the Task and Finish Group had been in contacting hard to reach groups who were not receiving Council services. He also commented that the report did not consider 24-hour cover for level of care.

He was advised that the Task and Finish Group had been specifically asked to consider only those groups that currently use Council facilities. A number of areas, such as 24-hour cover, were outside the remit of the Group.

A Member commented that he could foresee problems in bringing diverse groups of users together.

The Chair of the Task and Finish Group advised that experience was that the frail, elderly and those with physical needs did not mix. Experience in Camden was that different ethnic groups could mix, largely due to work by the centre manager.

A Member commented that Recommendation 6 suggested a review of transport.

She was advised that several people interviewed had raised this subject. The view was that there needed to be a wider choice of transport to allow users to attend day centres for longer.

A Member commented that dementia was mentioned in the report but there was nothing about wider mental health problems.

She was advised respondents had mentioned only dementia.

A Member commented that it was reported that White and Asian users were underrepresented in users of day care relative to the general population of Luton. She commented that there was no mention of Afro-Caribbean users.

She was advised that Afro-Caribbean users were statistically over-represented although there was some doubt as to the reliability of the base data.

A Member commented that the report mentioned swimming and sport and commented whether this was something that the new aquatic centre could provide.

She was advised that elderly users had not mentioned swimming. Those with physical needs required specialist equipment such as ramps and hoists; currently these were provided at Woodlands school.

The Aquatic Centre Project Manager advised that the new Woodlands School would include a suitable pool.

A Member commented that the report indicated an increase in the number of dementia sufferers. He enquired if there were plans to increase provision.

The Chair of the Task and Finish Group advised that this had been excluded from the Group's scope because it would require more work than was possible within the timescale set by Overview and Scrutiny Board.

The Interim Corporate Director for Housing and Community Living advised that a dementia strategy was being prepared. She commented that the report was well thought through and it confirmed that the Council was moving in the correct direction.

Resolved: (i) That the Final Report of the Day Care Opportunities Task and Finish Group be approved for submission to the Executive.

(ii) That the Board endorsed the view of the Task and Finish Group that individual needs should be the key factor in determining provision.

(ii) That the Members of the Task and Finish Group be congratulated on their work in producing a comprehensive report.

56. FINAL REPORT OF THE AQUATIC CENTRE TASK AND FINISH GROUP (REF: 8)

Councillor Rutstein, the Chair of the Task and Finish Group, presented the final report of the Group. He expressed the thanks of the Group to scrutiny officers and witnesses for their input into the report.

A Member asked about the relationship between the aquatic centre and the building schools for the future (BSF) project.

He was advised that the aquatic centre was being delivered through the Local Education Partnership (LEP), which was also delivering BSF. There was no funding from BSF. An officer suggested that section 4.1 of the Final Report should be reworded slightly in order to clarify that the aquatic centre was separate from BSF.

A Member asked for confirmation that funding would come from the airport dividend. He asked how secure was this funding stream.

He was advised that funding would be a combination of dividend and prudent borrowing. Funding from the airport was secure in all but the most exceptional scenarios.

A Member commented that section 7.2 stated that 'The assessment [of the traffic capacity of Stockingstone Road] does not reflect reality...' and enquired what was the basis for that statement.

The Chair of the Task and Finish Group responded that three Members of the Group lived in close proximity to Stockingstone Road and this statement was based on observations. He commented that the aquatic centre would replace the existing regional sports centre, which itself generated traffic.

A Member commented that major events would take place at weekends when the loading on local roads was less.

An officer advised that of 10 people who responded to the consultation, the majority was concerned about additional traffic congestion on local roads, including Stockingstone Road. He commented that the Council's Highways Development Manager had also agreed that this road was congested, when giving evidence to the group.

A Member commented that a lot of children would use the centre, which would include a licensed bar. He enquired what safeguarding there would be.

He was advised that the existing regional sports centre had larger bar facilities than was proposed for the aquatic centre and there appeared to be no problems at that site. It was anticipated that a substantial number of users of the aquatic centre would use the café.

Resolved: That the Final Report of the Aquatic Centre Task and Finish Group be approved for submission to the Executive.

57. OPERATION OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY: WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN (REF: 9)

The Overview and Scrutiny Manager advised that the Emergency Planning department had suggested that Scrutiny look into flooding. He suggested that this could be a topic on the agenda for the September meeting.

He also suggested that the July meeting should receive a presentation on the current scrutiny arrangements, mainly for the benefit of new members.

The Head of Strategic Planning, Policy and Performance advised that some councils produced an annual report from the Leader of the Council. Currently talks were taking place about a possible similar arrangement in Luton. He enquired whether the Board would wish to be involved in any such annual report.

After discussion, the Board were of the view that they did not wish to be involved in any annual report.

The Overview and Scrutiny Manager advised that NHS Luton had to find £8.7M savings. One option for savings was integrating services with the Council. He suggested a working group of two or three members should liaise with NHS Luton.

After discussion, it was decided that the general topic of health scrutiny should be considered at the scrutiny away-day on 19th June. Councillors Bullock, Dolling, Gale and Simons expressed an interest in participating in any health scrutiny group.

Resolved: That the Work programme be updated as described above.

(Note: The meeting ended at 8.15 p.m.)