



Buckinghamshire County Council

Minutes

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON PARTNERSHIP

AGENDA ITEM: 3

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON PARTNERSHIP HELD ON FRIDAY, 27 JULY 2001 IN MEZZANINE ROOM 1, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.35 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr T J Fowler (in the Chair)

Mr M C Appleyard, Mrs P M Bacon, Mr D C T Graves, Mr C Jones, Mrs V Letheren, Mr W Lidgate, Mr D J Rowlands, Mrs C S Willetts

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

None were received.

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Gerry Batchelor
Mr Roger Edwards
Mrs Claire Street

DECLARTIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

1 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 30 March 2001, copies of which had been circulated, were confirmed.

2 PLANNING A SCRUTINY REVIEW

The Chairman welcomed Members to the Committee, and introduced Judy Billing of the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) who had come to the Committee to facilitate a session regarding the planning of a scrutiny review.

Initially, Members of the Committee were asked to agree the objectives of the review as laid out in Agenda item 5, Appendix 1. Members largely accepted the objectives with the following main points being raised during discussion:

- Regarding objective 2 (obtaining samples of the partnerships), Members expressed the view that the choice of samples should draw on a wide variety of partnerships. It was suggested that information on the samples could be assessed using the existing Best Value template.
- Regarding objective 4 (criteria for evaluating new partnerships), Members felt that there was a need to recognise that small partnerships could be just as effective as large ones and that those involved in such partnerships often gave their time voluntarily. Criteria for assessing partnerships should encompass whether or not they fitted in to the Council structure, whether or not they could be resourced and whether or not there was a clear need for the partnerships to exist.
- Members felt that the monitoring of partnerships would need to be flexible in order to 'fit' the organisation.

The Committee was then asked to consider how they would plan a policy review. A discussion followed which included the following points:

- The review would need to be broken down into smaller, manageable pieces of work in order for the Committee to keep to the timescales
- Clarity of purpose was required and any conclusions reached should aim to strengthen and improve the partnerships
- Part of the policy review could be to examine how the Council interfaces with its partners
- The initial task could be to define what partnerships exist and outline their objectives

Members of the Committee agreed that key actions would be to:

- a) Define the nature of current partnerships
- b) Divide the task into mini projects
- c) Feedback information to the Committee with a view to planning further actions.

It was suggested the organisations should be contacted who had already compiled lists of partnerships in Buckinghamshire, and that the existing listing of Appointments to Outside Bodies could be another useful source of information.

The Chairman thanked Judy Billing for her valuable contribution to the meeting.

3 BACKGROUND TO NHS SCRUTINY

It was reported that the NHS Bill, which could be given Royal Assent in this session of Parliament, contained proposals to give local authorities the power to scrutinise the

NHS at a local level. The scrutinising process would focus primarily on strategy and policy development. The Local Government Association (LGA) was advocating three models through which this scrutiny could take place. These were:

1. Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees
2. Delegation to District Councils
3. Co-option onto the County Scrutiny Committee

It was reported that the third option of co-opting on to the County Scrutiny Committee appeared to be the model most likely to be adopted by the Council, and that this option could include a significant role for the District Councils. There was still no firm indication as to the future of the Community Health Councils (CHC's) but the Committee acknowledged the CHC's considerable reputation and expertise in the area of patient advocacy, and confirmed that the co-operation of the CHC's could be a valuable asset in the NHS scrutiny process. It was noted that there would be no additional resources as such for the scrutiny work.

Committee Members reported that there was a greater awareness of the potential benefits of scrutiny within the health service, and that this positive attitude should bode well for NHS scrutiny work.

The Committee was informed that there would be a forthcoming opportunity to undertake a specific NHS scrutiny pilot project, as there was going to be a major reconfiguration of Stoke Mandeville and South Bucks NHS trusts, due to take place in the Autumn of 2001.

Members of the Committee agreed to recommend to Council that the third model should be adopted and that District Councils should be invited to participate in the NHS scrutiny process. Members of the Committee also agreed that in principle they would be willing to undertake the pilot NHS scrutiny pilot project of the Stoke Mandeville and South Bucks trust reconfiguration. There would be an initial meeting regarding the pilot project in October 2001 with the bulk of the scrutiny work beginning in January 2002.

It was reported that a paper outlining the evolution of scrutiny committees would be presented at the next meeting

4 REVIEW PLANNING

Members of the Committee agreed the draft review programme for the next 8 months, which had been circulated with their Committee papers.

5 DATE OF FURTHER MEETINGS

28 September 2001
26 October 2001
30 November 2001
25 January 2002
22 February 2002
22 March 2002 [to avoid Good Friday]
26 April 2002
31 May 2002

28 June 2002
26 July 2002
27 September 2002
25 October 2002
29 October 2002

**MR T J FOWLER
CHAIRMAN**