

CABINET

13 February 2007

EXTRACT FROM MINUTES OF PRINCIPAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD 15 JANUARY 2007

REPORT OF CITY SECRETARY AND SOLICITOR

Contact Officer: David Blakemore Tel No: 01962 848217 [dblakemore@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:dblakemore@winchester.gov.uk)

RECENT REFERENCES:

None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report sets out the relevant minute extracts from the meeting of the Principal Scrutiny Committee held on 15 January 2007 of items that have been referred to Cabinet for its consideration.

RECOMMENDATION:

To consider and determine the matters set out the minute extracts below.

CABINET13 February 2007EXTRACT FROM MINUTES OF PRINCIPAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD 15 JANUARY 2007Report of City Secretary and SolicitorPRINCIPAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 15 JANUARY 2007

1. **WINCHESTER DISTRICT COMMUNITY STRATEGY UPDATE – DRAFT 2**  
(Report PS268 refers)

The Leader drew the Committee's attention to Appendix 2 of the Report, which set out comments and revisions made following the consultation on the previous draft of the Strategy (including those of this Committee and Scrutiny Panels). He explained that Cabinet had been grateful for the input to the document.

Further to questions, the Chief Executive explained that the Community Strategy was a document that set out priorities and broader level aspirations for the representatives of the Strategic Partnership to achieve, together with appropriate actions and performance indicators. He clarified that the Council was one of the organisations in the Partnership and that the Strategy was drawn up by the Council, in consultation with the Partnership and on its behalf. The Community Strategy would feed into the Council's own Corporate Strategy.

The Committee referred to the Winchester District Community Strategy (Draft 2) as set out at Appendix 1 to the Report and a number of questions were raised and comments made.

- The Leader explained that an expansion of rural public transport was an aspiration to support economic prosperity. All representatives of the Strategic Partnership were committed to aim towards, and influence, such aspirations even though there was a possibility that all outcomes may not be achieved in total.
- It was noted that the Partnership Contacts, as set out on page 55 of the document, were not representative of all the partners. Those listed were secretariat contacts and it was requested that the list be amplified to include lead representatives of the Partnership.
- The Leader explained that the 20 Priorities within the document were not in priority order, but that the five outcomes in the document gave a clear indication of the Partnership's aspirations.
- An error on page 33 of the Strategy in that there were two 'Priority 13's', should be corrected.
- It was suggested that the Strategy should have regard to the importance of the role of the voluntary sector in the community and that it be encouraged and assisted as much as possible. The Leader noted this point.

- The Leader explained that the Council's existing and emerging policies would be applied wherever possible as so to support sustainability within the rural economy.

RESOLVED:

**That Cabinet be asked to consider the Committee's comments on the Corporate Strategy 2007-2012 draft 2, as set out above.**

2. **CORPORATE STRATEGY 2007-2012 (DRAFT 2)**  
(Report PS269 refers)

The Leader explained that the second draft of the Strategy had been drawn up in response to the comments made during consultation on the previous draft (these were set out at Appendix 2 to the Report). Further to questions, he reminded Members that although the Council could not deliver all its aspirations in isolation, it was in a position to use its influence with others to effect change where necessary.

The Committee referred to the Corporate Strategy (Draft 2) as set out at Appendix 1 to the Report and a number of questions were raised and comments made:

- Responding to a request, the Leader advised that although implicit throughout the document, he would consider making more direct reference to requirements of disabled residents. It was requested that the following addition be made (shown in italics) to the first sentence of paragraph three of page 1 one of the Strategy:

‘The City Council will endeavour to meet the needs of all the community and is mindful of its duties in respect of equality and diversity *and disability*’.

- With regard to Economic Prosperity at page 1 of the Strategy, the Leader explained that the aim of encouraging ‘high value jobs’ reflected the high cost of living in this area. High value jobs would bring other employment opportunities in support.
- The Leader advised that the Council could influence High Quality Environment in a number of ways, including via the planning function and the maintenance of open space. A Member suggested that the County Council should be pressed to undertake highway repairs, notably within the City Centre where some of the pedestrianised areas needed enhancement.
- A Member requested that consideration be given to producing an abridged version of the Strategy for young people, specifying the role they are to play in achieving its aims.
- The Leader explained that the aims of the Council as set out in the Strategy were in no particular order. However, it should be recognised that priorities with regard to Economic Prosperity would assist in all their delivery.

- With regard to 'A Modern Council' on page 3, it was suggested that the first bullet be revised with following addition in italics:
  - provides *positive* community leadership
- It was noted that further to their monitoring role, the Scrutiny Panels should have regard to progress of the aims within the Strategy.

RESOLVED:

**That Cabinet be asked to consider the Committee's comments on the Corporate Strategy (draft 2) as set out above.**

### 3. **SCRUTINY REVIEW – EFFICIENCY SAVINGS**

(Report PS264 refers)

As Chairman of the Informal Scrutiny Group, Councillor Hiscock reported that the Council was on target to achieve its cashable efficiency savings. However, the Group was recommending that Cabinet identify further 'non-cashable' efficiencies.

The Committee recognised that improvements to the service provided to the public by the Customer Service Centre were less easily quantifiable in terms of efficiencies. However, Members were concerned that the Centre had yet to achieve cashable savings initially intended to offset some of the Centre's set up costs. The Chief Executive advised that he was satisfied that efficiencies would continue to be pursued, especially as additional service areas were taken on by the Centre. The Director of Finance also reported that she was confident efficiencies would be demonstrated into cashable savings in due course.

As Chairman of the E-Government Informal Scrutiny Group, Councillor Macmillan explained that the apparent problems relating to interfaces between the Customer Service Centre and back office computer systems would be investigated. The Committee agreed that Members should first consider these findings before formally reviewing the broader operation of the Customer Service Centre and associated efficiency savings.

RESOLVED:

1. That the terms of reference for the Gershon Efficiencies Informal Scrutiny Group be confirmed as:
  - *To examine the extent to which the savings identified in the 2006/07 Annual Efficiency Statement are being met;*
  - *To test whether the Council's Efficiency Strategy is 'fit for purpose';*
  - *To review whether the Council's culture helps drive and deliver more efficient working.*
2. That the Informal Scrutiny Group set up by the Resources Scrutiny Panel to review the E-Government programme be asked to consider issues raised in this review about the difficulty of creating interfaces between different systems as part of its work;
3. **That Cabinet note that more work should be done to identify non-cashable savings.**

4. That the Informal Scrutiny Group continues its work to cover the second and third points of its terms of reference.

5. That the Scrutiny Chairs Liaison Meeting give further consideration to a possible scrutiny review at an appropriate time of the broader operation of the Customer Service Centre and efficiency savings to be achieved.