

SOCIAL ISSUES SCRUTINY PANEL**8 March 2010****Attendance:**

Councillors:

Tait (Chairman) (P)

Achwal (P)

Berry (P)

Clear (P)

Gemmell (P)

Hammerton (P)

Hicks (P)

Love (P)

Nelmes

Ruffell

Thynne (P)

Weston (P)

TACT Representatives:

Mr Rickman and Mrs White

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillor Coates (Portfolio Holder for Housing)

Councillor Cooper (Portfolio Holder for Communities and Safety)

1. CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman welcomed the Panel to the Carroll Centre, Stanmore, Winchester.

2. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Councillors Coates and Cooper declared personal and prejudicial interests, due to their involvement as Cabinet Members in actions taken or proposed in the Reports outlined below.

However, the Panel requested that they remain in the meeting, in their capacity as Portfolio Holders, under the provisions of Section 21(13) (a) of the Local Government Act 2000, in order that they could provide additional information to the Panel and/or answer questions.

Councillor Tait declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest, as he was an observer on the Carroll Centre's Funding Board. He remained in the meeting and spoke and voted thereon.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held 1 February 2010 be approved and adopted.

4. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no comments raised or statements made.

5. **CARROLL CENTRE, WINCHESTER**

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Narissa Dean from the Carroll Centre. Before the meeting, Ms Dean had provided a tour for Members of the Centre's facilities.

Ms Dean gave a presentation to the Panel on the work of the Centre, its client base and its funding and partners. Ms Dean responded to a number of questions.

It was clarified that SureStart funding had been secured for its Children's Centre provision. However, a three-year lottery funding of its youth facility had recently come to an end. Consequently, with no other financial support, the Centre's delivery of its core youth service was proving difficult.

Ms Dean reported on the Centre's various fund raising activities and proactive work undertaken with regard to funding bids. She also drew attention to the Carroll Centre's links with other community organisations in the area.

Councillor Cooper advised that he would be pleased to discuss the possibility of the Centre applying in the future to the Council for capital funding grants.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted.

6. **OLDER PEOPLE INFORMAL SCRUTINY GROUP – FINAL REPORT**
([Report SO106 Refers](#))

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Chair of the Informal Scrutiny Group (ISG), Councillor Weston, introduced the Report. The Panel's attention was drawn to a correction to paragraph 6 on page 5 of the Report. The third bullet point should be corrected to read:

'The next generation of elderly people will have access to **more** information...'

During discussion, it was agreed that the majority of older people and/or their families or carers would increasingly have access to the internet, especially over the longer term. The use of a portal on the Council's website would also

allow for information to be updated as and when required, without the usual costs associated with publishing leaflets etc.

In supporting the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review, Councillor Cooper also drew attention to recent Older People Forums held throughout the District. He encouraged parish council's to take an active part in these 'information exchange' events. Councillor Cooper also reported that Local Access Points would continue to be developed throughout the District and that public access computers would be made available at these facilities.

Councillor Coates also reminded the Panel of the various clubs and events throughout the District for older people that were run by those of a similar age. Some villages also provided welcome packs to new residents detailing local facilities and support services.

On behalf of the Panel, Councillor Tait thanked Councillor Weston for leading the scrutiny investigation.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Scrutiny Panel supports the recommendations of the Informal Scrutiny Group

2. That the Panel request that Cabinet approve the recommendations of the Informal Scrutiny Group as set out at paragraph 3 of the Report and summarised below:

'To create a portal page from Winchester City Council's internet site, specifically for the elderly people, their families and/or carers. This portal will use the same information already available on the site, but will consolidate in one place. In addition, there will be a 'signposting' on the page for links to all other dedicated organisations or pages from the agencies that provide services. (The name of the portal button shall be decided in consultation with the relevant community members).'

3. That the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Safety report on Cabinet's progress to implement the recommendations of the Informal Scrutiny Group to the meeting of the Social Issues Scrutiny Panel on 15 July 2010.

7. **EXTRACTS FROM 2010/11 DIVISIONAL BUSINESS PLANS CONTRIBUTING TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY**
OUTCOME: HEALTH & WELLBEING
PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HERITAGE, CULTURE AND SPORT
PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR COMMUNITIES AND SAFETY
[\(Report SO108 refers\)](#)

During discussion, the Corporate Director (Operations) acknowledged that the non-statutory performance indicators and associated targets within the business plan were relatively difficult to measure success against. For

example, with regard to usage of the River Park Leisure Centre (page 3 of Appendix 3 of the Report refers), officers would have 'set' a target that assumed the contractor was operating the facility appropriately.

Also referring to this particular target, the Head of Economic and Cultural Services suggested that measures against outcomes (such as numbers of residents becoming 'healthier') may have been a preferable target to monitor, but it was not currently possible to collect such information in a quantifiable way. However, she considered that the indicator provided a sufficient flavour of levels of activity at the Centre and evidence that it was providing value-for-money to the Council in relation to the leisure management contract.

The Panel noted that its quarterly monitoring reports would identify any significant variance against these targets. Further to this, Members were reminded that monthly performance data was accessible to Panel Members via the intranet. They could therefore monitor particular targets and indicators on a more regular basis. Portfolio Holders also had regular meetings with officers to discuss progress against the business plan, including significant exceptions when these occurred.

Councillor Cooper stated that due to the unavailability of the lead officer, in the Community Wellbeing team, key actions within its business plan would be brought forward in due course.

During further discussion, the Director also reminded the meeting that partnership meetings provided regular challenge to those partners not achieving specific agreed targets.

RESOLVED:

That the Panel raises no comment on the Business Plan extracts, attached as Appendices to Report SO108.

8. **EXTRACTS FROM 2010/11 DIVISIONAL BUSINESS PLANS
CONTRIBUTING TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY
OUTCOME: SAFE AND STRONG COMMUNITIES
PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR COMMUNITIES AND SAFETY**
([Report SO109 refers](#))

Councillor Cooper encouraged Panel members to attend Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership meetings. He also explained that some targets within the business plan were dependent on participation with partner organisations. These sometimes operated on different cycles with regard to their corporate decision-making processes.

With regard to Performance Indicator NI 111 on page 8 of Appendix 2 to the Report, Councillor Cooper undertook to investigate how these figures had been achieved and to report his findings to the Panel outside of the meeting.

The Panel also noted its statutory role to directly scrutinise the operation of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

RESOLVED:

That the Panel raises no comment on the Business Plan extracts, attached as Appendices to Report SO109.

9. **EXTRACTS FROM 2010/11 DIVISIONAL BUSINESS PLANS CONTRIBUTING TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY OUTCOME: INCLUSIVE SOCIETY PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING**
([Report SO107 refers](#))

During discussion, the Head of Strategic Housing acknowledged that the actual number of 'rough sleepers' was occasionally disputed, but he was satisfied that the figure continued to be genuinely a small minority. Therefore, the Council's priority should continue to be to deliver support services and access to permanent accommodation to those currently on the Council's housing list. Further to a request by Mr Rickman (TACT), he undertook to investigate the exact amount of capital contribution towards new affordable homes during 2009/10 achieved via the Council's Asset Sales policy, and report this to the Panel outside of the meeting.

Councillor Coates reported on the various activities of the Council and its partners to address homelessness in the District.

With regard to supporting the development and implementation of community plans (Indicator STH/DEV/004 on page 4 of Appendix 2 to the Report) it was confirmed that as well as assistance being provided to those communities or parishes requesting assistance from the Council, other communities were proactively approached in response to their identification via social deprivation indexes.

RESOLVED:

That the Panel raises no comment on the Business Plan extracts, attached as Appendices to Report SO107.

10. **LANDLORD SERVICES DIVISION BUSINESS PLAN 2010/11**
([Report SO110 Refers](#))

The Head of Landlord Services drew attention to the imminent Government announcement on reform of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the significance that this will have on the Division. Therefore, in view of this, a one-year projection business plan had been produced to ensure that the Council was still able to meet its statutory obligations. Government had still not made it clear when the proposed changes would be made.

The Panel noted that Government's reform of the HRA would have significant impact on the Panel's work. Members also shared the frustrations of TACT that a fair and equitable resolution for council house rent subsidy should be achieved for tenants as soon as possible.

The Panel also referred to the various mechanisms to deliver new affordable homes in the District. Mr Rickman (TACT) suggested that construction of new council houses should contribute to this key priority.

RESOLVED:

That the Panel raises no comment on the Landlord Services Division Business Plan 2010/11, attached as to Report SO110.

11. **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (REPORT PS402 REFERS) AND MATTERS ARISING.**

RESOLVED:

That the Scrutiny Work Programme, as set out on the reverse of the agenda, and as extracted from Report PS402, be noted.

12. **VOTE OF THANKS**

The Panel thanked the Chairman for his guidance and the officers for their hard work and support during the past Municipal Year.

The Chairman reciprocated appropriately.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 8.20pm

Chairman