

LOCAL ECONOMY SCRUTINY PANEL**19 July 2010****Attendance:**

Councillors:

Spender (Chairman)

Nelmes (Vice-Chairman in the Chair) (P)

Anthony (P)
Fall (P)
Love (P)
Nelmes (P)Power (P)
Ruffell (P)
Sanders
Stallard (P)**Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:**

Councillor Hiscock (Portfolio Holder for Economic Prosperity)

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:Councillor Bell (Portfolio Holder for High Quality Environment)
Councillor Tait

1. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Panel agreed that Councillor Nelmes be appointed Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year and, in the absence of the Chairman, would act as Chairman for the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Nelmes be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Panel for the 2010/11 Municipal Year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Power be appointed Vice-Chairman for the meeting.

3. **DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

Councillor Hiscock declared a personal and prejudicial interest, due to his involvement as a Cabinet Member in actions taken or proposed in the Reports outlined below.

Councillor Stallard also declared a personal and prejudicial interest, due to her involvement as a previous Cabinet Member in actions taken or proposed in the Reports outlined below.

However, the Panel requested that both Councillors remain in the meeting, in their capacity as Portfolio Holder and previous Portfolio Holder, 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.

4. **TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

RESOLVED:

That future meetings of the Panel commence at 6.30pm and that the timetable of scheduled meetings for the 2010/11 Municipal Year be noted.

5. **MINUTES**

The Panel queried whether the previously made suggestion, that appropriate planning applications within areas of countryside be forwarded to the Economic Development Officer for comment prior to decision, had been taken forward (Minute 2 refers). The Chairman referred this matter to the Portfolio Holder for High Quality Environment, who was present at the meeting.

One Member requested an update on the current position regarding the Museum Services Manager, who was no longer in post. The Assistant Director (Economic Prosperity) advised that discussions were ongoing on this matter, although it was likely that the Manager would not be replaced and the possibility of partnership working with other museum services was being explored.

A Member queried whether the Theatre Royal consultant's report had been shared with the previous Panel Chairman, as proposed in Minute 4. The Assistant Director advised that timing had prevented this taking place before the change in Council administration, following the local elections in May 2010. Councillor Hiscock confirmed that he and the Leader had recently met with the Theatre Royal Chief Executive and discussions were ongoing regarding possible future arrangements. The Assistant Director explained that the Council were awaiting the Theatre's three year Business Plan, in response to a set of requirements from the County and City Councils.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held 16 March 2010 be approved and adopted.

6. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no questions asked or statements made.

7. **PRESENTATION ON WORK OF TRANSPORT WORKING GROUP
(FORMERLY TRANSPORT FORUM)**

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mr Nick Farthing (Sustrans member and Chairman of the Transport Forum).

Mr Farthing explained that Sustrans was a national charity which had initially been established to promote cycle routes and to link these together to create cycle networks. Its work had expanded to include links with schools and promoting 'active travel', which emphasised the health benefits of cycling and walking. He was currently focussing on completing National Cycle Network 23, which included routes through Winchester.

The Head of Access and Infrastructure advised that the Transport Forum had recently been renamed the "Transport Working Group" to emphasise its active role in a number of matters, such as assisting with the development of the Winchester Town Access Plan, the Local Development Framework and the Hampshire Transport Action Plan. The Group had also been involved in developments to the Park and Ride service, Parchment Street enhancements and helping to find resources to continue the 'Bike-about' scheme.

The Panel noted that Mr Neil Beswick, Operations Manager Passenger Transport Group at the County Council was unable to attend, but had provided a presentation on the Winchester Area Public Transport Provision (available via the following link:

<http://www.winchester.gov.uk/Documents/Committees/Local%20Economy/Reports/100719TransportForumPresentation.pdf>). The Head of Access and Infrastructure introduced the presentation on his behalf.

In response to questions, the Assistant Director acknowledged that the promotion of the 'Wheels to Work' scheme should be improved. The scheme was designed to loan a moped to young people (aged between 16 and 25), to enable them to travel from the rural areas to access work, vocational training or an interview. The Council were in discussions with the Community Transport Organisation operating the scheme to achieve this.

Mr Farthing highlighted that, in general, the biggest issue was the lack of rural and evening public transport. The Group was considering different methods to address this difficult problem, such as using community buses. In addition, he mentioned a taxi-share scheme which was operating in Milton Keynes.

Mr Farthing also mentioned other local initiatives, such as buses from train stations to local attractions (for example, Marwell Wildlife), which were funded by the local attractions themselves.

One Member emphasised that there was not currently a bus service operating from the southern parishes which allowed passengers to access Winchester, without changing buses. Mr Farthing agreed to examine this matter further and suggested there might be scope to provide community bus links to train stations (from where passengers could travel by rail into Winchester). The Head of Access and Infrastructure commented that a community bus was currently situated in Swanmore and he would investigate whether it was located in the best place to meet current requirements.

One Member raised the particular difficulties facing Whiteley residents in travelling into and out of the area, especially by any other means than a car. He also disputed whether the North Whiteley Major Development Area (MDA) would assist in addressing these ongoing problems.

The Head of Access and Infrastructure acknowledged the comments made, but emphasised that the North Whiteley MDA must offer traffic improvements for the area in order for it to gain approval. He advised that the particular issue regarding Yew Tree Drive was to be discussed by the Portfolio Holder for High Quality Environment, together with the Corporate Director (Operations).

In response to questions, Mr Farthing advised that Sustrans were in discussions with both the County Council and the City Council, regarding the adoption of the Hockley Viaduct as a cycle route. The organisation were very keen to progress plans as soon as possible, as it was the last remaining link in the Cycle Network Route 23, referred to above. The Head of Access and Infrastructure agreed to report back on this matter to a future Panel meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted.

8. THE ROLE OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTORS (COMMISSIONING) AND DEVELOPMENT OF NEW 'CHANGE PLANS.'

The Assistant Director (Economic Prosperity) introduced the role of the new Commissioning Team which had been established by the Chief Executive. The Commissioning Team comprised of three Assistant Directors who would each take an overview of all programmes in the area (not just those delivered by the Council) that contributed to the delivery of the three outcomes of the Community Strategy. The Assistant Directors would ensure that, wherever possible, all opportunities were taken for enhanced partnership working to secure these outcomes and for the best value for money.

The Assistant Directors were to work closely with the relevant Portfolio Holder, Heads of Operational Teams and partners to manage any necessary change

to deliver these outcomes. This will be undertaken via 'Change Plans', the monitoring of delivery of which would be reported to Scrutiny Panels. Draft Change Plans would be presented to Scrutiny panels in November for comment and then taken to Cabinet in December for approval. The Plans would form a key element in the budget setting process.

The Assistant Director advised that a high profile Economic Conference was being planned for autumn 2010, which would invite interested parties to sign up to become involved in taking forward significant shared future projects.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted.

9. **RESPONSE TO CULTURE AND ECONOMY INFORMAL SCRUTINY GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS RE SECTION 106 CONTRIBUTIONS**
(Report [LE85](#) refers)

The Head of Strategic Planning and the Head of Legal Services introduced the Report and explained why it was being recommended that it was not possible to progress the Informal Scrutiny Group's (ISG) recommendations at this time.

Whilst accepting some of the Report's recommendations, one Member queried why it was not possible for a single officer to be given total responsibility for negotiating with developers, as he considered that this could offer financial benefits to the Council.

The Head of Strategic Planning explained that under the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) it was anticipated that local authorities would set out relevant 'charges' up-front and would therefore not be involved in negotiations with developers. He also emphasised that the Council did have an Open Space Project Officer.

The Head of Legal Services confirmed that the Council did hold discussions with developers regarding requirements resulting from major developments, such as the West of Waterlooville MDA. However, he emphasised that the Council could not request money from developers without justifying its requirements. In addition, it was not financially viable to involve officers in such discussions with developers on smaller developments.

One Member highlighted the cumulative impact of a number of smaller developments in an area. She requested that if a development was for more than 10 dwellings, officers consult local Ward Members regarding what facilities were required in the area.

In general, Members expressed disappointment that the Report did not suggest any means by which the ISG's recommendations could be achieved. In particular, concern was raised about the requirement for contributions to enable cultural facilities within relevant parts of the District to be improved. One Member asked whether the Council would have to wait until 2014 to introduce changes and she believed this was too long a delay.

The Head of Strategic Planning explained that under the proposed CIL (and the previous S106 arrangements), the Council was required to demonstrate that there was a shortfall in a particular facility and that the proposed development would exacerbate this. It was anticipated that the PUSH study would help identify whether there was a shortfall in, for example cultural facilities. The Assistant Director (Economic Prosperity) added that the process of compiling a Cultural Strategy would include consultation with interested parties, including Councillors, who could identify any deficiencies in their wards.

With regard to likely timing, the Head of Strategic Planning advised that it was not yet clear whether the new Government would continue with the proposed CIL introduction. However, assuming it would go ahead, it would be necessary for the LDF Core Strategy to be completed first, so as to clarify the scale and location of new development. The Council did not have resources to produce a CIL charging schedule at the same time as the Core Strategy, but it would aim to introduce it as soon as possible afterwards.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Informal Scrutiny Group be thanked for its useful work and recommendations, but that its recommendations ii – iv should not be progressed at this stage for the reasons set out in the Report, and summarised in Paragraphs 4.1 to 4.3.
2. That any significant developments regarding the Community Infrastructure Levy or Section 106 agreements be reported to Cabinet, Cabinet (Local Development Framework) Committee, or the Portfolio Holder for High Quality Environment, as appropriate.

10. **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY OUTCOME: ECONOMIC PROSPERITY – QUARTER 4 2009/10 PERFORMANCE MONITORING OUTTURN**
(Report [LE81](#) refers)

The Assistant Director (Economic Prosperity) explained the reasons for progress on the Conservation Area Character Appraisals Programme being behind schedule. She also outlined the changes in working practices which had been adopted to try and address this. These included examining the possibility of a pre-application charging system for conservation advice.

One Member commented that the performance indicators presented to the Panel were of limited use and could be improved. The Assistant Director advised that it was the aim to find a broader set of indicators to enable the Panel to assess the economic health of the District. She welcomed any suggestions from Panel Members as to how this could be achieved.

RESOLVED:

- That the performance information in the report be noted.

11. **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY OUTCOME: ECONOMIC PROSPERITY – QUARTER 1 2010/11 PERFORMANCE MONITORING UPDATE**

(Report [LE84](#) refers)

The Assistant Director (Economic Prosperity) emphasised that the Report contained exception reporting information and did not therefore highlight the number of achievements in recent months. These included:

- a new set of destination marketing films available via the Web;
- Tourism Service nominated for a National Travolution Award (winners to be announced in September 2010);
- the allocation by SEEDA of additional funds, due to the high standard of service and level of success so far;
- Treasures of Hyde exhibition visitors exceeding the target of 10,000.

On behalf of the Panel, the Chairman congratulated the Assistant Director and relevant officers for these achievements.

The Assistant Director advised that the Report was the first in the new style of presenting information, although it was likely it would develop further. She requested that Members advise her if there were any other projects they would like to be included.

RESOLVED:

That the performance information in the report be noted.

12. **REPORT OF THE WINCHESTER ARCHIVIST**

(Report [LE82](#) refers)

One Member noted that parish records from two parishes had recently been deposited at the Records Office and queried whether other parishes were actively encouraged to do this. The Assistant Director (Economic Prosperity) agreed to investigate this suggestion further, with the possibility of the Council assisting in promoting this service through its Parish Connect publication.

The Panel welcomed the proposed visit to the Record Office in September and noted that further details would be provided nearer the time.

RESOLVED:

1. That the service provided by the Winchester Archivist was delivering the Council's corporate objectives and represented value for money for the community.
2. That the visit of the Panel to the Hampshire Records Office be confirmed for 16 September 2010.

13. **'MANAGING THE BUSINESS' – INDICATOR SUITE**
(Report [SO118](#) refers)

The Assistant Director (Economic Prosperity) explained that the same Report would be considered by all four Scrutiny Panels. It was anticipated that after the introduction of the Council's new financial system in September 2010, the Report would also include financial monitoring. It was designed to provide a 'dashboard' of indicators to provide some corporate context for the more community-focused outcome monitoring reports.

Members expressed concern about the inadequate quality of information provided in the Report, and in particular the lack of explanatory notes which made the data difficult to interpret in any meaningful way. However, it was agreed that if amended as requested, the Report could be useful at future meetings.

The Assistant Director acknowledged these criticisms and confirmed that these would be addressed for the next Report. She suggested that it might be useful for all four Panel Chairmen to meet with the three Assistant Directors to suggest improvements to the information provided in future Reports.

The Panel agreed that the quality of the information provided in the current Report prevented it from being able to raise any concerns with relevant Portfolio Holders for further investigation.

RESOLVED:

1. That an amended version of the report, to take account of points raised above and any further amendments to arise out of future discussions, would be useful for the Panel to receive each quarter.
2. That any changes to the suite which might improve it in terms of providing a concise but meaningful overview of the Council's performance in any one quarter, be proposed through further discussions with officers.

14. **APPOINTMENT OF INFORMAL SCRUTINY GROUPS ETC 2010/11**
(Report [LE83](#) refers)

The Assistant Director (Economic Prosperity) suggested the following four topics, contained within the current Economic Strategy, as possible subjects for a future Informal Scrutiny Group (ISG):

- Enterprise Economy – ways by which the Council and its partners fostered graduate/start up businesses and enterprise more generally;
- Knowledge Economy – how the Council could promote this, particularly in the light of changing plans regarding the formerly proposed Knowledge Park at Bushfield Camp;
- Rural Diversification – for example, to consider opportunities for farmers to diversify their business, barriers to diversification and examples of best practice;

- Low-Carbon Economy – how this could evolve in Winchester.

One Member also suggested the Panel could establish an ISG to examine working with market town economies and how local authorities could share knowledge.

Following discussion, the Panel agreed that because of the changing national situation since the new Government in May 2010, it would be preferable to wait until November before establishing an ISG, by which time the situation on a number of these proposed topics might be clearer.

The Assistant Director advised that the Economic Outcome Group did not currently exist, but it was anticipated it would be re-established following the Economic Conference planned for autumn 2010. The Panel agreed that Councillor Stallard be nominated as the observer on this Group.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Culture and Economy Informal Scrutiny Group be not re-appointed for the 2010/11 Municipal Year.
2. That Councillor Stallard be appointed to act as an observer at meetings of the Economic Outcome Group for the 2010/11 municipal year.
3. That consideration of the establishment of an Informal Scrutiny Group be deferred until the 16 November 2010 Panel meeting.

15. **PRESENTATION ON PREPARATIONS FOR 2012**

The Panel agreed that this presentation be deferred until its next meeting on 16 November 2010.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be deferred.

16. **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (REPORT PS413 REFERS) AND MATTERS ARISING.**

RESOLVED:

That the Scrutiny Work Programme, as set out on the reverse of the agenda, and as extracted from Report PS413, be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 8.55pm

Chairman