

PRINCIPAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6 June 2005

Attendance:

Councillors:

Allgood (Chairman) (P)

Bidgood (P)
Clohosey (P)
Beckett (P)
Cook (P)
Chamberlain (P)

Davies (P)
Lipscomb (P)
Mitchell (P)
Stallard (P)
Steel

Deputy Members:

Councillor Bennetts (Standing Deputy for Councillor Steel)

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillor Collin (Portfolio Holder for Healthy and Inclusive Communities)
Councillor Hiscock (Portfolio Holder for Housing)
Councillor Busher

65. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Steel.

66. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2005/06 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Chamberlain be appointed Vice-Chairman for the 2005/06 Municipal Year.

67. **TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

RESOLVED:

That future meetings of the Committee commence at 6.30pm for the 2005/06 Municipal Year.

68. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mr Robin Atkins, a resident of Alresford. Mr Atkins addressed the Committee.

Mr Atkins referred to an investigation by PricewaterhouseCoopers into the involvement of the Council with the Winchester Alliance for Mental Health (WAMH) and the ensuing matters that led to a debt being incurred by the Council. He noted that the completion date for the investigation had been delayed and he questioned whether the investigation would cost more than originally proposed.

Mr Atkins also referred to audits undertaken by the Council of the Hampshire Playing Fields Association. Mr Atkins was concerned that the Council did not have the internal capacity to manage such external audits in addition to its own matters.

In conclusion, Mr Atkins drew attention to a letter sent from Alresford Town Council to the Chief Executive of the Council regarding a recent Planning Viewing Sub-Committee at The Nythe, Alresford. He was concerned that the cost of organising such meetings was disproportionate to the input (and the weight given to that input) that the local community and parish councils may have in the consideration of the matters leading up to the determination of the application at the Planning Development Control Committee. Mr Atkins suggested that the Committee should undertake an investigation regarding the use and costs of arranging such meetings.

The Chairman thanked Mr Atkins for his comments and advised that the Committee would respond to the points raised regarding Winchester Alliance for Mental Health (WAMH) as part of their consideration of the report on the External Audit and Inspection Plan (Report PS181, minute number 71 refers).

Responding to the point about the auditing of the Hampshire Playing Fields Association, the Director of Finance advised that internal audit staff undertook this audit and also that for another charity. It was explained that the audit referred to was relatively small and that it provided training opportunities and interest for the staff concerned.

With regard to the Viewing Sub-Committee issue, the Chief Executive confirmed that he had received a letter from the Town Council and that it was a complicated issue. He would be replying in due course and this would be copied to this Committee and Mr Atkins.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mr Eric Birbeck, representing Bishops Waltham Parish Council and Mr Andrew Archard, representing Bishops Waltham Chamber of Trade and Commerce. Also present was Councillor Busher as a Ward Member for Bishops Waltham.

Mr Birbeck addressed the Committee regarding matters concerning the implementation and running of CCTV in Bishops Waltham. Mr Birbeck referred to Report PS183 (minute number 70 refers) elsewhere on the agenda.

Mr Birbeck reported that the system was currently very inadequate, with poor strength and signal feed providing incomplete recordings and images of non-evidential quality. Mr Birbeck advised that the hub to the CCTV recording system was currently installed within the Parish Council office and the Parish Council had now requested that the hub be removed from that office, due to the excessive heat and noise generated by the equipment. Mr Birbeck also stated that the hard disc installed as part of the equipment stored images up to 17 days and not the current good practice of 28 days.

Continuing, Mr Birbeck referred to a number of instances of vandalism within Bishops Waltham (including the previous weekend) and that due to the inadequacies of the system, the perpetrators had not been caught. In conclusion, Mr Birbeck requested immediate corrective action regarding the matters described above.

On behalf of Bishops Waltham Chamber of Trade and Commerce, Mr Andrew Archard addressed the Committee. He reminded the meeting of the initial steps to implement CCTV at Bishops Waltham approximately 10 years ago, including technical issues regarding the required cabling to gain the strength of signal for image retrieval and storage.

Before the current system was finally installed, Mr Archard reported that he had urged the appropriate Council officer to have due regard to the original file which referred to the technical issues regarding cabling etc. Mr Archard then detailed the operational problems after this time and he expressed concern that the £50,000 spent on the implementation appeared excessive, especially as the system had, operationally, been a failure since its implementation.

Mr Archard urged immediate action to address the matters described. He also called on the Committee to formally apologise to the Chamber of Trade & Commerce and to the Parish Council for the poor implementation of the project. Furthermore, he suggested that the Committee undertake an investigation of the £50,000 spent to date and also review the procedures of awarding contracts and project management in general.

Councillor Busher, a Ward Member for Bishops Waltham, addressed the Committee and reported that local residents were very concerned and critical of the Council about this matter. She urged that an immediate solution be found to solve the matters described.

The Chairman thanked Mr Birbeck, Mr Archard and Councillor Busher for their comments and explained that the Committee would respond to the points raised as part of consideration of Report PS183 elsewhere on the agenda (minute number ### refers).

69. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman reported that Cabinet had considered the Scrutiny Review of Emergency Planning Report (Report PS174 refers) at its meeting on 1 June 2005 and had endorsed its recommendations. The Leader had thanked the Committee for undertaking the study, particularly Councillor Chamberlain for leading the Scrutiny Group in its task.

The Chairman then referred to the recommendation of the Scrutiny Review of the Community of Whiteley and reported that Fareham Borough Council had indicated that it would not wish to establish a joint forum. The Chairman advised that in his capacity as a County Councillor he hoped to discuss a way forward with interested parties in due course.

The Chairman reminded Members that a scrutiny training evening had been scheduled for 27 September 2005 and suggested that ideas of subjects to be covered at the session be forwarded to him, so that they can be incorporated into the programme.

The Chairman invited other Members of the Committee to join him in attending the South East Scrutiny Members' meeting on 6 July 2005 at Guildford.

70. **BISHOPS WALTHAM CCTV**

(Report PS183 refers)

The Committee referred to the comments and matters raised by Mr Birbeck, Mr Archard and Councillor Busher in the public participation session of the meeting.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Collin (Portfolio Holder for Healthy and Inclusive Committees) addressed the Committee. He acknowledged that the project to implement CCTV at Bishops Waltham had not gone smoothly and that the system should have been fully operational and integrated by now. He apologised to the representatives for Bishops Waltham for the problems that had occurred. He detailed a number of technical aspects regarding the existing installation, including the recording equipment within the Parish Council offices and specification of the broadband link back to the main control room at Winchester, together with possible solutions and some broad associated costs.

Councillor Collin set out both short and long term proposals to potentially solve the matters raised, subject to their thorough financial and technical appraisal. In the short term, a 'static' system could be set up in Bishops Waltham. There would also be a need to investigate the possibility of linking with the high speed digital systems currently being installed by Hampshire County Council for various initiatives. Finally, Councillor Collin reminded the meeting of the need to relocate the CCTV central control room in Winchester due to the impending Broadway/Friarsgate development. There would also be re-tendering of the control room contract in 18 Month's time and this would give the opportunity to assess technological advances for implementation or expansion of CCTV.

Referring to the officer management of the Bishops Waltham project, Councillor Collin stated that a new corporate project management system was now in place and relevant staff trained accordingly. He also referred to the recent restructuring of the Council Directorates, which gave a clearer client focus for CCTV.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Collin for his comments.

Responding to questions, the Director of Development stated that clear images from the three cameras could currently be downloaded and held for up to 17 days on CD Roms within the hub located in the Parish offices, but those images were not acceptable to the Police, as the system was not sufficiently secure. The pictures conveyed to the control room at Winchester were of poor and of non-evidential quality for police matters. The Director advised that requests for the removal of the hub from the Parish offices would need to be investigated by officers and he confirmed that Bishops Waltham Parish Council and Bishops Waltham Chamber of Trade and Commerce would be fully consulted regarding solutions to the system.

Further to discussion, it was agreed that the matters raised in the report and during public participation should be urgently resolved as far as possible, and that the Portfolio Holder bring a report setting out the costings and possible timetables for implementation of longer term solutions to a future meeting of the Committee.

A Member suggested that the design of the CCTV system was a technical speciality for professionals and it was suggested that it may be more cost-effective for the identification of the best solution to be put out to contract to the private sector. In response, Councillor Collin stated that consultancy advice was to be obtained by officers to identify the technically correct installation.

RESOLVED:

1. That the matters raised in the report and during public participation be noted.

2 That the Committee welcomes the proposals now discussed to resolve the current difficulties and that a future report be submitted to the Committee by the Portfolio Holder for Healthy and Inclusive Communities regarding the timetabling and costing of both short term and long term solutions.

3 That liaison with Bishops Waltham Parish Council and Bishops Waltham Chamber of Trade and Commerce be maintained during all future stages of work.

71. **EXTERNAL AUDIT AND INSPECTION PLAN 2005/06**
(Report PS181 refers)

The Chairman welcomed to the Committee Mr Matthew Hepenstal, Senior Manager of the Council's external auditors, Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC) and Ms Linda Krywald (Relationship Manager of the Audit Commission).

Mr Hepenstal provided a summary of the main issues as set out in the Audit Plan for the forthcoming year, including detail of how the base fee was calculated according to the Audit Commission formula.

Mr Hepenstal referred to matters raised within the public participation session of the meeting regarding the Winchester Alliance for Mental Health (WAMH) and confirmed that the timescale of the investigations had been extended due to processes involved in the investigation. However, he confirmed that the investigation was still within budget and that no additional fee would be charged to the Council. The draft report would be issued next week. The Chief Executive confirmed that, once issued, the draft report would first be considered by officers to agree factual detail, and then submitted to a scrutiny panel, Principal Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet, before final referral to Council.

Following questions, the Chief Executive stated that follow-up inspections as determined by the CPA inspection had been identified and that their overall scope had been discussed with the Leader of the Council. Ms Krywald advised that as part of these inspections there may be some liaison with Portfolio Holders.

RESOLVED:

That the External Audit and Inspection Plan for 2005/06 be agreed.

72. **INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE: END OF YEAR REPORT TO 31 MARCH 2005**
(Report PS178 refers)

The Committee referred to the matters raised by the Internal Audit of the Benefits Service as detailed in paragraph 2 of the report. Following questions, the Director of Finance advised that the use of secure areas for the storage of files and the contractual obligations of officers (especially those who worked from home) for security would be given further consideration. However, the Director pointed out that Internal Audit was satisfied that the systems in place for the handling of files were generally adequate.

Following a question, the Director of Development clarified that an internal review of processes relating to the determination of planning applications was being undertaken and that a performance and improvement plan would be produced in due course.

RESOLVED:

1. That the matters raised by Internal Audit and the action taken to date by the appropriate Directors be noted.
2. That further action be taken as necessary on the areas outlined above.

73. **SCRUTINY REVIEW – AFFORDABLE HOUSING**
(Report PS185 refers)

Following questions, the Director of Communities acknowledged that alternative funding for the expansion of the time Rural Housing Enablers spend in Winchester district could not be guaranteed from sources other than from internal Council growth bids. The Committee agreed that Cabinet should be urged to give due regard to this matter.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Hiscock (Portfolio Holder for Housing) addressed the Committee. Councillor Hiscock detailed to the Committee matters relating to affordable housing thresholds and the possibility of the integration of stepped thresholds for those developments of less than 15 units. Councillor Hiscock reminded Members of the need for a sub-regional approach to the development of affordable housing provision.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet be urged to consider increasing the budget to enable the Rural Housing Enablers to spend more time in the Winchester District in order to realise more rural sites and to conduct a strategy for rural homes.
2. That the new supplementary guidance to PPG3 on rural housing issues (January 2005) be closely examined to see where the Council can initiate rural exception sites on its own and in partnership with parishes.
3. That Cabinet be encouraged to continue its investment in capital to support the affordable housing programme.

4. That the issues raised in the Butlers Report of July 2004 be given a more extensive airing through a major discussion at full Council, or another suitable forum, on affordable housing to explore new ideas and raise members awareness on this key subject

5. That the Housing Performance Improvement Committee (or its successor body) be recommended to look at issues concerning the Right to Buy changes made recently by the Government.

6. That the Chief Executive be urged to prioritise the Urban Capacity Sites into those that may be available immediately, those in next five years and those in the longer term.

74. **RE-ALIGNMENT OF FORMER PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEES**
(Report PS180 refers)

Following consideration of this item by the Committee, the City Secretary and Solicitor advised that Cabinet at its meeting on 1 June 2005 had previously considered this report and were recommending to Council that the term "Scrutiny Panels" be adopted, with 11 Members serving on each Panel. The appointments of the Panels would be agreed at the special meeting of Council on 29 June 2005.

RECOMMENDED:

THAT FOUR NEW SCRUTINY BODIES BE ESTABLISHED AS SUGGESTED IN APPENDIX A OF REPORT PS180, EACH WITH A MEMBERSHIP OF 11 COUNCILLORS, AS FOLLOWS:

- A) SOCIAL ISSUES SCRUTINY PANEL;**
- B) ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL;**
- C) LOCAL ECONOMY SCRUTINY PANEL;**
- D) RESOURCES SCRUTINY PANEL.**

RESOLVED:

1. That a report be submitted to Council on 29 June 2005, setting out proposed appointments to these Scrutiny Panels and terms of reference.

2. That the City Secretary and Solicitor bring forward a report to a future meeting to make the necessary consequential changes to the Constitution

75. **WORK PROGRAMME AND APPOINTMENTS TO INFORMAL SCRUTINY GROUPS**
(Report PS182 refers)

Following discussion, it was agreed that the terms of reference for the proposed in-depth studies on Community Engagement and the Local Strategic Partnership be produced for the next meeting of the Committee and that appointments to the Groups be made at that time. The Committee also agreed that the draft Work Programme as set out as Appendix A should also be revisited, so as to spread the workload over the Municipal Year more evenly.

RESOLVED:

That the matters contained within the report be revised as appropriate on the areas outlined above and brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

76. **FOURTH QUARTER PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

(Report CAB1084 refers)

The City Secretary and Solicitor advised that Cabinet at its meeting on 1 June 2005 had previously considered this report and made a number of comments.

The Committee referred to the table monitoring progress against strategic priorities (Appendix 1 of the report refers) and asked a number of questions regarding progress to date. Referring to the establishment of 'It's OK to ask' web pages, the Director of Development stated that there was delayed progress due to continuing capacity issues.

The Director of Communities provided an update on provision of community facilities at Swanmore. The Chief Executive reported on the replacement of the Economic Development Officer and confirmed that the post had recently been advertised for reappointment following an internal assessment as to whether the post should be replaced 'like for like'.

RESOLVED:

That progress on the delivery of actions set out in the Council's strategic priorities and Modernisation and Improvement Plan during 2004/05 be noted.

77. **IDeA PEER REVIEW: REPORT AND CITY COUNCIL RESPONSE**

(Report CAB1081 refers)

The above item had not been notified for inclusion on the agenda within the statutory deadline. The Chairman agreed to accept the item onto the agenda as a matter requiring urgent consideration, as Cabinet at its meeting on 1 June 2005 had, (following its consideration of the report), requested that Principal Scrutiny Committee be given the opportunity to comment on the content of the report and to input to the next stage of improvements.

Members discussed the internal capacity of the Council to deliver proposed improvement following the CPA inspection. The Chief Executive advised that the Corporate Management Team had identified future priorities and that reorganised Directorates would more effectively deliver an agenda for further improvements.

The Chairman confirmed that the Head of Performance and Management had responsibility for 'championing' the scrutiny function at officer level.

RESOLVED:

1. That the conclusions of the IDeA Peer Review be noted and the positive comments on the progress of the Council be welcomed.

2. That the programme of the next phase of improvements, now forming part of the Corporate Strategy, be agreed as set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

78. **PERFORMANCE PLAN 2005- 06**
(Report CAB1086 refers)

The above item had not been notified for inclusion on the agenda within the statutory deadline. The Chairman agreed to accept the item onto the agenda as a matter requiring urgent consideration, as Cabinet at its meeting on 1 June 2005 had, (following its consideration of the report) requested that Principal Scrutiny Committee be given the opportunity to comment on the content of the plan prior to its submission to Council on 29 June 2005.

The Chief Executive advised that consequential changes to the Performance Plan following earlier discussions at Cabinet and any identified by this Committee, together with any other refinements, would be incorporated within the document to be presented at Council on 29 June 2005.

The Chairman suggested that should Members of the Committee identify any matters regarding the format and content of the draft document, these be reported to the Chairman and the Chief Executive as soon as possible.

RESOLVED:

That the Performance Plan 2005/06 be noted and that the Chief Executive be authorised to complete and refine the text of the document, in consultation with the Leader, and a report with the updated version be submitted direct to Council on 29 June 2005.

79. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

RESOLVED:

That the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business because it is likely that, if members of the public were present, there would be disclosure to them of 'exempt information' as defined by Section 100I and Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

<u>Minute Number</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Description of Exempt Information</u>
80	Depot Services Contract – Six Monthly Monitoring and Performance	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (other than the authority). (Para 7 Schedule 12A refers).

80. **DEPOT SERVICES CONTRACT – SIX MONTHLY MONITORING AND PERFORMANCE**

(Report PS184 refers)

The City Secretary and Solicitor advised that Cabinet was to also consider this report at its meeting on 29 June 2005.

The Director of Communities advised that the emerging performance data had broadly shown much improvement. However, Officers would be seeking evidence of continual sustainable improvement to the matters identified and that further reports on contractor performance would continue to be presented to the Committee to demonstrate this.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Hiscock (Portfolio Holder for Housing) addressed the Committee and indicated that he would be continuing to monitor progress to ensure that the improvements demonstrated could be sustained over time and did not result in any loss of performance elsewhere.

RESOLVED:

1. That the performance of the Council and Contractor as described in this report be noted.

2. That a report be brought to Principal Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 12 September 2005 on current performance and that the Managing Director of Serco Local Government be invited to attend this meeting to report on performance and the outcomes of the action plan stemming from the recent review.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 9.30 pm.

Chairman