

PRINCIPAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 July 2005

Attendance:

Councillors:

Allgood (Chairman) (P)

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

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

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillor Campbell (Leader of the Council)

162. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Steel and Bennetts (Standing Deputy for Councillor Steel).

163. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman advised that a Scrutiny Chairs Liaison meeting held on Thursday 7 July had considered the roles of the new Scrutiny Panels. He also reported that a Member's Training evening was arranged for the evening of 27 September 2005 on scrutiny matters. Any Members who may have ideas of how to utilise this time effectively should advise the Head of Performance and Management.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the minutes of previous meetings of the Committee, when available, be reproduced for Members of the Committee as an agenda item for their approval. The minutes would continue to be published in the Council Minute Book as usual.

164. **CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS UNDER THE COMMITTEE'S POWERS OF CALL-IN**

- (i) **CAPITAL OUT-TURN 2004/05**
(Report CAB1083 refers)

The City Secretary and Solicitor advised that Cabinet at its meeting on 29 June 2005 had endorsed the proposal for the carry-forward of capital funds as set out in the report.

Responding to a question, the Director of Finance stated that the budget allocation of £1 million within the Capital Programme for Friarsgate Car Park was being retained pending the redevelopment of the Silver Hill area. It was explained that the allocation had been made some years ago for repairs to the Car Park. The budget allocation had, in the meantime, been invested and was earning interest to support the Revenue Account. She also advised that she would clarify whether the proposed £180,000 carry-forward for groundworks in Jewry Street was additional expenditure relating to the Council's own car park, rather than additional funding for the new Cultural Centre scheme itself.

Referring to the £1million budget allocation within the Capital Programme for Guildhall Community facilities, the Director clarified that that the proposal for a carry-forward of £40,000 was part of this amount. Following a question, the City Secretary and Solicitor confirmed that he had had written to the Charity Commission regarding the use of the Bapsy Bequest as part of this project and was seeking a meeting to discuss the issues involved.

RESOLVED:

That the decision of the meeting of Cabinet held on 29 June 2005 regarding the approval to be given to the carry forward of capital funds totalling £1.338m from 2004/05 to 2005/06 in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules 7.7 and 7.8, be not called in for review.

165. **OVERVIEW OF FINAL ACCOUNTS 2004/05**
(Report CAB1088 refers)

The City Secretary and Solicitor advised that Cabinet, at its meeting held on 29 June 2005, had approved the proposals as set out and had also approved an additional £20,000 as requested by the Chief Executive.

The Chief Executive reported that the additional £20,000 to be carried forward was to be allocated as follows: £10,000 in supporting the Joint Procurement Officer with Eastleigh Borough Council and the recent IDeA peer review, and also an additional £10,000 for other performance management work.

Following discussion, it was noted that carry forward of £49,000 regarding liquor licensing was likely to be utilised in 2005/06 for the processing and administration of licences during the transitional period.

RESOLVED:

That the decision of Cabinet held on 29 June 2005 regarding the approval of General Fund carry-forwards to 2005/06 in the sum of £189,520 (including those additional requests as made by the Chief Executive), be not called in for review.

166. **CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**
(Report PS186 refers)

The City Secretary and Solicitor advised that this report was to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 26 July 2005.

Following discussion, the following matters were raised:

- The need to clarify that the membership of the Performance Management Group was an officer rather than a Member Forum.
- The 'comments' table in Appendix B represented the views of Internal Audit; the recommended actions were the response of the Corporate Management Team.
- References to the £1m deficit within Appendix B – 'Dimension 2d' be explained in a footnote to indicate that the issue had been raised in previous budget papers and the current budget review would consider how to address the matter.
- The 'joint ownership' by both the Chief Executive and Leader of the 'Statement on the System of Internal Control' as set out at Appendix D was considered good practice as an indication of effective corporate governance.
- Regarding the section on 'Significant Internal Control Issues' within Appendix D, cross-reference be made to comments within Appendix C regarding the planned action to review the Council's Complaints procedures.

RESOLVED:

That subject to Cabinet considering the matters detailed above, the Local Code of Corporate Governance be approved.

167. **FIRST QUARTER PERFORMANCE MONITORING – REPORT OF THE LEADER**
(Report PS188 refers)

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Councillor Campbell, Leader of the Council.

The Leader responded to a number of questions regarding Appendix I of the Report: Progress against Performance Plan Targets. She clarified issues regarding the maintenance of corporate objectives.

Whilst acknowledging the benefits of utilising 'smiley faces' as a visual indicator of progression against Corporate Priorities, it was agreed that there should be a consistent approach to their use.

Following discussion, the following matters were raised:

- Sustainability

The Leader acknowledged that progress regarding this had fallen behind agreed targets. However, she reported that the Council had now been selected to take part in the Carbon Management Programme, forming part of the South-East England cluster. This would assist in informing the Council's own sustainability policies in due course.

- How We Work – Council Offices

The Leader advised that a broad direction for the progression of this issue, utilising existing feasibility work, would be agreed shortly following discussion with Group Leaders.

- How We Work - IT

Members referred to the problems with the progression of the Council's e-governance programme. It was therefore agreed that the 'smiley face' for this be revised accordingly to a 'neutral expression'. Furthermore, whilst acknowledging that the IEG statement was part of a broader corporate timetable, a revised timetable was needed for implementation of the Council's E - Governance programme. This would be considered by Cabinet on 26 July 2005.

- How We Work - Communication

The Committee referred to the comments made within the document and suggested that the indicator may require revision. In reply, the Leader reminded Members of the successful launch of the Perspectives magazine to residents of the District.

- Performance Management – Efficiency/Spending Review

Following discussion, the Leader agreed that should there be a lack of progress regarding the review, the indicator would be revised in due course.

- Appendix 2 - Corporate Dashboard

The Committee referred to Appendix 2 of the report, Corporate Dashboard 2005/06 for May. The Leader confirmed that the use of the elements of the Corporate Dashboard would be constantly reviewed for their appropriateness.

In conclusion, Members were satisfied with the approach taken to quarterly performance monitoring subject to addressing the issues detailed above. In addition, it was requested that in future the report be page numbered to assist the Committee in their scrutiny of the document.

RESOLVED:

1 That the Leader and the Chief Executive have regard to the issues identified from the first quarter performance monitoring as detailed above.

2 That the approach of quarterly performance monitoring as set out be agreed subject to the improvement as suggested by the Committee.

168. **EX GRATIA PAYMENT**
(Report PS187 refers)

RESOLVED:

That the ex gratia payment of £1,500 as authorised by the Chief Executive be noted.

169. **WORK PROGRAMME AND INFORMAL SCRUTINY GROUPS**
(Report PS 189 refers)

The Committee noted the terms of reference as proposed for the Community Engagement and the Local Strategic Partnership Informal Scrutiny Groups. It was agreed that the Groups meet on a timetable which had regard to the need for coordination with the work of the Chief Executive's Unit, which would be providing lead officer support for the areas of study.

RESOLVED:

1 That the following appointments to Informal Scrutiny Groups be agreed:

(i) Community Engagement Informal Scrutiny Group:

Councillors Chamberlain (lead Councillor), Bidgood, Cook, Lipscomb, Mitchell and Stallard.

(ii) Local Strategic Partnership Informal Scrutiny Group:

Councillors Allgood (lead Councillor), Beckett, Clohosey, Davies and Steel.

2. That the following Informal Scrutiny Groups be not reappointed:

(i) Whiteley Informal Scrutiny Group

(ii) Emergency Planning Informal Scrutiny Group

(iii) Affordable Housing Informal Scrutiny Group

3 That the Work Programme for the Committee as set out be agreed.

170. **JULY 2005 FORWARD PLAN AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION**

RESOLVED:

That the July 2005 Forward Plan be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 8.00 pm.

Chairman