

LOCAL ECONOMY SCRUTINY PANEL

18 July 2005

Attendance:

Councillors:

Stallard (Chairman) (P)

Anthony (P)

Bennetts (P)

Berry (P)

Cook (P)

Darbyshire (P)

Godfrey (P)

Goodall

Love (P)

Pines (P)

Sutton (P)

Deputy Members

Councillor Hammerton (Standing Deputy for Councillor Goodall)

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillor Evans (Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Sport)

Councillor Knasel (Portfolio Holder for Economy and Transport)

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillors Davies and Lipscomb

183. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Goodall.

184. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No statements or questions were made.

185. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED:

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

186. **FUTURE MEETING DATES**

RESOLVED:

That the future meeting dates of the Panel be agreed as 6.30pm on 24 October 2005, 30 November 2005, 26 January 2006 and 15 March 2006.

187. **COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENTAL REPORT APRIL 2004-05**

(Report LE1 refers)

Councillor Pines declared a personal (but not prejudicial interest) in respect to the Winnall Rock School which was included in the performance monitoring appendix of the report (5.40 refers). Councillor Pines was the Chairman of the Rock School and spoke and voted thereon.

During discussion, the Director of Development explained that the campaign to increase benefits take-up had a presence on the Council's website primarily to assist other interested third party organisations.

The Panel noted the good work undertaken by the tourism section which benefited the wider community and the local economy. With regard to the Hat Fair, it was noted that the event was broadly welcomed by local businesses, despite the temporary closure of some car parks.

The Director of Development also answered questions on the usage of the Guildhall. It was noted that the aims and priorities for the Guildhall were agreed by Cabinet following the Best Value Review in 2001/02. It was hoped that the appointment of a specialist marketing officer, together with a series of incentives, would increase bookings from community based groups.

The Panel discussed the performance monitoring of the Local Strategic Partnership and noted that this would be reviewed by the Principal Scrutiny Committee. The Panel also considered the monitoring value of hits to the tourism website, the availability of open space funding and the maintenance of play-areas.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

188. **COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT – SUMMARY OF ACTUAL EXPENDITURE 2004/05**

(Report LE2 refers)

The Director of Development clarified that the new Scrutiny Panels' terms of reference were focused on the responsibilities of Portfolio Holders, rather than Directorates. As such, some of the 2004/05 spending items, such as CCTV, would appear in the performance monitoring reports of other Scrutiny Panels.

A Member highlighted an overspend in respect of the maintenance of recreation grounds due to vandalism and the Director explained that, whilst the incidences of such vandalism were rare, officers consulted the Police on the design of play equipment so as to reduce the opportunities for vandalism.

In response to questions, the Director stated that the proposed new signs for the Broadway Bean and Gallery at the Guildhall were at an early design stage and confirmed that there would be Member involvement in the final decision.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

189. **CULTURE, HERITAGE AND SPORT PORTFOLIO – FIRST QUARTER MONITORING**

(Report LE3 refers)

Councillor Pines declared a personal (but not prejudicial) in respect to report's references to the Winnall Rock School's collaboration with the Theatre Royal, as he was the Chairman of the Rock School. Councillor Pines spoke and voted thereon.

Councillor Evans, as Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Sport, introduced the report. During discussion, the Panel agreed that future performance monitoring reports should also contain the social inclusion aspects of the Service Level Agreements between the Council and the Theatre Royal and the River Park Leisure Centre.

The Director of Development answered questions on the Conference Winchester event and the proposed coach parking for the new Cultural Centre. It was also explained that the refurbishment of the River Park Leisure Centre was anticipated to be carried out between April and June 2006 but that its closure and re-opening would be managed so as to minimise disruption and maximise the number of returning customers.

With regard to the Bapsy Bequest, the Director reported that a response from the Charities Commission had just been received and that an update report would be presented to Cabinet in due course.

RESOLVED:

1. That satisfactory progress against the targets set by Council and Cabinet in delivering the Council's strategic priorities be noted.
2. That no comment be raised in regard to the format of the report, except for the inclusion of further information relating to performance of the Service Level Agreements in achieving its social inclusion aims.

190. **ECONOMY AND TRANSPORT PORTFOLIO – FIRST QUARTER MONITORING**

(Report LE4 refers)

Councillor Knasel as the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Transport introduced the report. He highlighted the willingness of both the City and County Councils in developing a South of Winchester Park and Ride Site through the next Local Transport Plan.

The Panel discussed the Vision for the Evening Economy and, in response to Members' comments, Councillor Knasel confirmed that the development of this policy would include Member involvement.

During debate, the Panel congratulated the City Centre Manager for his work in covering, on a part-time basis, the vacancy of Economic Development Officer. Members noted that this post had recently been appointed and that a growth bid would be submitted in the 2006/07 budget to sustain the post.

RESOLVED:

1. That satisfactory progress against the targets set by Council and Cabinet in delivering the Council's strategic priorities be noted.

2. That no comment be raised in regard to the format of the report.

191. **WORK PROGRAMME AND APPOINTMENTS TO INFORMAL SCRUTINY GROUPS**

(Report LE5 refers)

The Panel discussed the work programme and proposals for the Parking Informal Group and noted that a Cabinet Sub-Committee had now been established to look at parking issues. Following discussion, it was agreed that the Parking Informal Group (which was established by the discontinued Environment and Access Performance Improvement Committee) should not be re-appointed.

Councillor Knasel, as Portfolio Holder for Economy and Transport, suggested that an informal scrutiny group be set up to examine the costs and scope of the Winchester residents' parking scheme and thereby contribute to the development of a Cabinet report. The Panel considered that this work was more in the nature of policy formation and suggested that it would be appropriate for Cabinet to establish an Informal Member Officer Working Group, to consider the issues raised by the recent changes to the Residents' Parking Scheme.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Chief Executive agreed to discuss with the Chairman the Panel's work programme so that a report could be brought to the next meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Parking Informal Group be discontinued.

2. That Cabinet be recommended to establish an Informal Member Officer Working Group to assist the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Transport to consider the costs and scope of the Winchester Residents' Parking Scheme.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 9.20pm.

Chairman