

**PRINCIPAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE****5 December 2005**Attendance:

## Councillors:

Allgood (Chairman) (P)

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

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

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillor Learney (Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources)

552. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman advised that the special meeting of the Committee scheduled for Monday 12 December at 4.30pm was to follow Cabinet on the same day at 9am. Both meetings were to deal with the Council's role as landlord in approving the Silver Hill development proposals and Thornfields were to make a presentation to Cabinet on its final proposals and to answer questions. The Chairman suggested that Members of this Committee attend this meeting. Principal Scrutiny Committee was to consider Cabinet's response to the proposals.

553. **MINUTES**

The Committee endorsed a request from Councillor Steel for the following amendment, to the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 17 October 2005 (Page 374, Minute 422 of the Council Minute Book refers).

Amend the final sentence before the Resolution to read: "The Director of Finance was asked to consider specific matters raised by Members in relation to the internal post service *and undertook to produce a further report to Members on the matters raised*"

## RESOLVED:

That, subject to the above amendment, the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 17 October 2005 be approved and adopted (less exempt item).

554. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no questions asked or statements made.

555. **LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP**  
(Oral Update)

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mrs Margaret Newbigin, Chair of the Local Strategic Partnership.

In respect of this item, Councillor Allgood declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest as he was the Hampshire County Council representative on the Partnership. He spoke and voted thereon.

and Mrs Newbigin detailed to the Committee the aims of the Partnership, its membership achievements to date and answered a number of questions. She suggested that Members may wish to attend future meetings. It was agreed that the scheduled dates be promoted via the Members' Briefing Note.

RESOLVED:

That the content of the presentation be noted.

556. **JOINT AUDIT AND INSPECTION LETTER 2004/05**  
(Report PS204 refers)

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mr Rubin and Ms Blackman of the Council's external auditors, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC).

In respect of this item, Councillor Allgood declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest as he was a Trustee of the Hampshire Pension Fund. He spoke and voted thereon.

It was explained that this was an interim letter, pending the work currently taking place on the Use of Resources and Direction of Travel Statements.

The Committee discussed the shortfall in the pensions fund and noted that the current strategy for the fund to recover over a 40 year period was unusually long. However, Mr Rubin suggested that a revision to 20 years may impact on contribution rates. Although there was no apparent risk to the fund at this time, the policy should be re-evaluated in 2007 when the next three-yearly pension revaluation was due.

Members noted that the addressing of the recommendations regarding IT Controls from the 2003/04 Inspection were nearing completion. The Director of Finance stated that she would report back to this Committee in February once this had been fully implemented.

Following discussion of comments referring to the Winchester Alliance for Mental Health (WAMH), the Director agreed to report back to the Committee on the application of the recommendations of Council on 2 November 2005, on policies in respect of payroll services to charities. Furthermore, she would also report back on the outcome of the liquidation of the WAMH.

Members noted that an elector had made formal objections to the 2004/05 Accounts in connection with developers' contributions. The Chief Executive reported that the concerns related to the management of the Open Space Funds and confirmed that the Open Space Funding Informal Scrutiny Group would be informed of the issues raised.

At the conclusion of the debate, Mr Rubin reported that PwC's audit of the accounts went very well and was due to the Council's well managed accounting procedures. The Committee requested that the Director congratulate the Accounting team and all others who had been involved for their good work.

RESOLVED:

That the interim Joint Audit and Inspection Letter for 2004/05 be accepted as presented.

557. **INTERNAL AUDIT FOLLOW UP**  
(Report PS207 refers)

The Director of Finance advised that all of the issues raised by the audit of cash collection procedures would be addressed by end of January 2006. She was requested to advise the Committee once this had been completed.

RESOLVED:

1. That the matters raised by Internal Audit and the action taken by Management be noted.

2. That the Committee be informed when all issues relating to cash collection procedures were resolved.

558. **BUDGET MONITORING OVERVIEW TO OCTOBER 2005**  
(Report CAB1164 refers)

The City Secretary and Solicitor advised that Cabinet was also to consider this report at its meeting on 14 December 2005.

Referring to Appendix 1 of the report, a Member requested further information for the reasons for the revenue budget variance for the Community Services Directorate. The Director of Finance stated that she would obtain the relevant information and contact him in due course.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet note the comments of the Committee as set out in detail above.

559. **CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE - UPDATE**  
(Report PS205 refers)

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mr Paul Wood, the Council's Customer Service Manager. Mr Wood reported to the Committee the results of the most recent Customer Satisfaction Survey (October 2005) from users of the service.

The Director of Finance and Mr Wood answered a number of questions and clarified various issues relating to the Phase 1 implementation of the Centre (and the Post Implementation Review, as set out as an appendix to the report) as well as explaining recent additional improvements. Mr Wood also detailed progress to date in alleviating some of the apparent issues arising from the survey of internal customers. This included ongoing and regular dialogue with representatives from Property Services, SERCO and Development Directorate.

Responding to a question, Mr Wood confirmed that sickness levels within the Customer Service Centre (CSC) were mostly related to accidents outside the place of work. Agency staff had to be appointed to cover the absences accordingly and at associated expense.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Learney responded to Members' concerns regarding the initial External Customer Feedback Survey results. Although acknowledging that some of the results were disappointing, she explained that as the survey had been undertaken in July 2005, much progress and improvement to the service had been made since.

Following discussion of issues related to the overall performance of the CSC and of the 'bedding-in' of procedures, there was some concern that progression of Stage 2 may exacerbate some of the apparent operational difficulties. However, it was acknowledged that additional staff brought into the Centre by implementation of Stage 2, together with further monitoring of overall performance and integration of back office procedures and computer systems would continue the overall progress made since the Centre was first established.

The Director advised that a report to Cabinet in January 2006 was to identify a proposal for Stage 2 implementation and Members noted that the necessary staffing matters would need to be progressed as soon as possible.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee suggest to Cabinet that in making a decision of the next phase of the Customer Service Centre project, it should ensure that solution of the outstanding issues as detailed in the Report are not prejudiced.

2. That Officers be thanked for their work to date in the implementation of the Customer Service Centre.

560. **COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**  
(Report PS201 refers)

It was agreed that, to allow meaningful debate of this matter, this item be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 16 January 2006.

RESOLVED:

That the report be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee.

561. **MINUTES OF SCRUTINY PANELS**

The Committee considered the minutes of the following meetings:

- (i) Social Issues Scrutiny Panel held 18 October 2005  
(Report CAB1145 refers)
- (ii) Resources Scrutiny Panel held 19 October 2005  
(Report CAB1146 refers)
- (iii) Environment Scrutiny Panel held 20 October 2005  
(Report CAB1147 refers)

- (iv) Local Economy Scrutiny Panel held 24 October 2005  
(Report CAB1148 refers)

The City Secretary and Solicitor advised that the minutes of the Scrutiny Panels as set out above had also been considered by the meeting of Cabinet on 16 November 2005.

During consideration of the minutes of the Resources Scrutiny Panel, the City Secretary and Solicitor advised that Cabinet had approved the Panel's request to establish an Informal Scrutiny Group to carry out an in-depth review of the Council's implementation of the E-Government Programme. Cabinet had also supported the principle of a possible review by the Panel of the delivery of Council's Benefits service following its discussion of the scope of the investigation.

RESOLVED:

1 That the minutes of the Social Issues Scrutiny Panel held on 18 October 2005, Resources Scrutiny Panel held on 19 October 2005, Environment Scrutiny Panel held on 20 October 2005, and Local Economy Scrutiny Panel held on 24 October 2005, be received and noted.

2 That in-depth reviews of the Council's implementation of the E-Government Programme and delivery of Council's Benefits service as proposed by the Resources Scrutiny Panel, as detailed above, be approved.

562. **GOOD SCRUTINY GUIDE**  
(Report PS206 refers)

The Chief Executive explained that the Guide would be made available via the Council's website for referral to by Members, Officers and the public. It was agreed that reference be made to the document on the agenda sheet for all Scrutiny Panels and for Principal Scrutiny Committee.

The Chairman suggested that the Guide be circulated to other Hampshire authorities for their information.

RESOLVED:

That the Good Scrutiny Guide be approved subject to any comments from Cabinet.

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

- (i) **CAPITAL FUNDING FOR MUSEUMS PROJECT (LESS EXEMPT APPENDIX 4)**  
(Report CAB1073 and Report PS209 Extract of Minutes (less Exempt Minute refers))

The Committee noted that Cabinet, at its meeting on 16 November 2005, had approved the proposals as set out.

The Committee generally considered that Cabinet's endorsement of the supplementary estimate of £15,000 for the new artefacts display area was inappropriate at a time of budgetary constraints. However, it was noted that although

the matter had been included in the report dealing with the request for a supplementary estimate for the roof repairs to the City Museum, it could have been dealt with as a separate item and would have been below the call-in threshold.

RESOLVED:

That the decision of the meeting of Cabinet held on 16 November 2005 regarding the approval to be given for supplementary estimates from the capital programme for £55,000 for works to the roof to the City Museum and for £15,000 for the new window display area at Market Lane Toilets, be not called-in for review.

564. **DECEMBER 2005 FORWARD PLAN AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**  
(Report PS208 refers)

The Chief Executive reported that Members appointed to the Local Strategic Partnership Informal Scrutiny Group would be advised of its first meeting date in due course.

RESOLVED:

That the Scrutiny Work Programme and Forward Plan for December 2005 be noted.

565. **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>
566	Capital Funding for Museums Project (Exempt Appendix 4)	) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (other than the authority). (Para 7 to Schedule 12A refers).
566	Extract of Minutes of Cabinet (Exempt Minute)	) The amount of any expenditure proposed to be incurred by the authority under any particular contract for the acquisition of property or the supply of goods or services. (Para 8 to Shedule 12A

		)	refers)
		)	
		)	Any terms proposed or
		)	to be proposed by or to
		)	the authority in the
567	Exempt Minutes of	)	course of negotiations
	the previous meeting	)	for a contract for the
	held 17 October 2005	)	acquisition or disposal
		)	of property or the
	• Depot	)	supply of goods or
	Services	)	services. (Para 9 to
	Contract	)	Schedule 12A refers).
	• Upper Brook	)	
	Street Car	)	Information relating to a
	Park,	)	particular employee,
	Winchester	)	former employee or
	• Park and Ride	)	applicant to become an
	Bus Contract	)	employee of, or a
	• Internal Audit	)	particular office holder,
	Update	)	former office-holder or
	(Exempt	)	applicant to become
	Appendix B)	)	and office-holder under,
		)	the authority. (Para 1 to
		)	Schedule 12A refers)
		)	
		)	Information relating to
		)	the financial or
		)	business affairs of any
		)	particular person (other
		)	than the authority).
		)	(Para 7 to Schedule
		)	12A refers).
		)	
		)	Any terms proposed or
		)	to be proposed by or to
		)	the authority in the
568 and	Silver Hill	)	course of negotiations
569	Development	)	for a contract for the
	Milestones Report	)	acquisition or disposal
		)	of property or the
		)	supply of goods or
		)	services. (Para 9 to
		)	Schedule 12A refers).
		)	
		)	Any instructions to
		)	counsel and any
		)	opinion of counsel
		)	(whether or not in
		)	connection with any
		)	proceedings) and any
		)	advice received,
		)	information obtained or
		)	action to be taken in
		)	connection with:-
		)	(a) any legal

) proceedings by or  
 ) against the authority, or  
 ) (b) the determination  
 ) of any matter affecting  
 ) the authority,  
 ) (whether, in either case,  
 ) proceedings have been  
 ) commenced or are in  
 ) contemplation).  
 ) (Para 12 to Schedule  
 ) 12A refers).

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

- (i) **CAPITAL FUNDING FOR MUSEUMS PROJECT (EXEMPT APPENDIX 4)**  
 (Report CAB1073 and Report PS209 Extract of Minutes (Exempt Minute refers))

Members referred to the Exempt Appendix 4 that set out details of the procurement of an architectural consultant.

RESOLVED:

That the detail contained in Exempt Appendix 4 be noted.

567. **EXEMPT MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 17 October 2005 be approved and adopted.

568. **SILVER HILL DEVELOPMENT - MILESTONES REPORT**

(Report PS210 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, because of the need for the report at the recommendations of the Committee to be considered at its meeting on 12 December 2005.

The City Secretary and Solicitor advised that Planning Development Control Committee Members could remain for this item. This was because the details of Thornfield's application for landowner approval would not be discussed.

The Committee considered a report that set out the key events in the development programme for Silver Hill (detail in exempt minute)

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 9.45pm.