

PRINCIPAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4 June 2007

Attendance:

Councillors:

Learney (Chairman) (P)

Baxter (P)
Biggs (P)
Chamberlain (P)
Chapman (P)
Collin (P)
Cook (P)
Hiscock (P)

Huxstep (P)
Lipscomb (P)
Maynard (P)
Nelmes (P)
Ruffell (P)
Tait (P)
Verney (P)
Worrall (P)

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillor Bell

1. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2007/08 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Worrall be appointed Vice-Chairman for the 2007/08 Municipal Year.

2. **TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

RESOLVED:

That future meetings of the Committee commence at 6.30pm for the 2007/08 Municipal Year.

3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no questions asked or statements made.

4. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Municipal Year and underlined the importance of the Committee's work as a critical friend to Cabinet.

5. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meetings of the Committee held on 26 March 2007 (less exempt minute) be approved and adopted.

6. **PRESENTATION ON THE WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND CORPORATE STRATEGY**

The Head of Partnerships and Communication gave a presentation on the Council's role within the Community Strategy. In summary, the Local Government Act 2000 had required all local authorities to produce a Community Strategy. Following on from this, Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) had been created to develop and deliver the Strategy and the Partnership involved anyone with an interest in achieving the Strategy's targets. Within the LSP, the Council had a leading role.

Following consultation, the Strategy had been revised in early 2007 and was now based on five target outcomes; health and well-being, freedom from fear, economic prosperity, high quality environment, and an inclusive society.

Members noted that the delivery of the Strategy through the LSP was also under review and that a consultation paper would be presented to Cabinet in July 2007 setting out a proposed new structure for the LSP. The new LSP was likely to be headed by a board (chaired by the Leader of the Council) and under that, an executive group which would have Member involvement and would review the LSP's link within regional strategies. However, the main work of the Strategy's delivery would be through the LSP's outcome groups based on the five themes above and these were likely to involve the relevant Portfolio Holders from the Council, together with the relevant partner agencies. Members noted that the new structures had been designed to fit with the emerging role of Hampshire Local Area Agreements.

It was hoped that the new structures would provide better accountability and improved opportunities for scrutiny. Progress with delivering the Strategy would be monitored through performance data from the Council and from partner agencies. With regard to the Council's data, it was noted that much of this information was already collected for other purposes and the process would be further eased by a new computerised performance management system.

As part of the drive to improve communications of the LSP, Members noted the Action Planning Event to be held 28/29 June 2007 that would examine the five key priorities and the new Winchester District Strategic Partnership's website – www.wdsp.co.uk/portal

Members also noted that under the new Government Bill, Scrutiny Committees and Panels would be given more authority to require representatives from partner organisations to attend meetings and account for progress being made towards the shared aims for the community.

At the conclusion of debate, the Committee thanked the officer for an interesting presentation.

RESOLVED:

That the content of the presentation be noted.

7. **INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE TO 31 MARCH 2007**
(Report PS285 refers)

The Head of Finance explained that the Council's internal control systems for the reviewed areas were generally good and that a detailed review of outstanding audit actions was currently underway in order to provide better information in the next quarterly report.

Members asked a number of detailed questions on the Report and the Head of Finance agreed to supply further information to the Committee regarding the Benefits Audit–management request for an emphasis to be given to the recovery of overpayments.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to consider a revised Appendix C (Internal Audit High Risk Recommendations) at the next meeting. It considered that the information set out in Appendix C listed a number of actions which had yet to be completed and that the Report contained too little information as to why this may have been, what the risks were, whether circumstances had changed since the original risk rating was identified, and whether the senior officers responsible for the service shared the auditors' evaluation of the risks involved. The Committee asked that the next report should also give further detail on the recommendations relating to the data base for Section 106 Agreements, given its importance in the planning process, and that the relevant officers be present at the meeting to answer Members' questions.

RESOLVED:

That the high risk recommendations outstanding be reported to the next meeting and be presented in a revised format to provide more information regarding the agreed level of risk and the priority given to addressing issues raised by Internal Audit's recommendations on high risks.

8. **APPOINTMENTS TO INFORMAL SCRUTINY GROUPS AND EXTERNAL BODIES**
(Report PS283 refers)

RESOLVED:

1. That the Business Planning – Post Implementation Review Informal Scrutiny Group and the Gershon Savings Informal Group, having completed their work, not be re-appointed.

2. That the following appointments to Informal Scrutiny Groups be agreed:

(i) Community Call for Action Informal Scrutiny Group: Councillors Collin, Learney, Lipscomb and Tait.

3. That the following appointments be made to external bodies:

(i) South East Employers - Elected Member Overview and Scrutiny Network – Councillors Learney and Worrall;

(ii) The Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) – Scrutiny Champions' Network – Councillor Learney;

3. That Councillor Weston continue as the Council's representative on Portsmouth City Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

9. **ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2006/07**
(Report PS286 refers)

The Chairman introduced the Report and, during debate, the Committee agreed the need to better engage the public in the Council's scrutiny process. In response to a question, the Chairman clarified that Councillor Allgood was responsible for the Depot Service Contract, as the Portfolio Holder for Finance and that this should have been included in the Report.

RECOMMENDED:

THAT SUBJECT TO THE ABOVE AMENDMENT, THE ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2006/07 BE APPROVED.

10. **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (REPORT PS284 REFERS), JUNE 2007 FORWARD PLAN AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION**

The Committee referred to the Forward Plan for June 2006. During debate, the Committee suggested a number of possible areas of work and the Chairman explained that these would be considered in detail at the next Informal Scrutiny Chairs' Liaison Meeting.

Further to this, the Committee requested that a proposed report to the Personnel Committee on the six month review of the recent organisational development changes also be presented to this Committee. Members were particularly interested that the report should examine to what extent the re-organisation had achieved its aims.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Forward Plan for June 2007 be noted.
2. That the six month review of the organisational development changes be presented to Principal Scrutiny Committee in addition to the Personnel Committee.

11. **MINUTES OF SCRUTINY PANELS**

The Committee noted that at its meeting on 11 April 2007, Cabinet had received the minutes of Scrutiny Panels.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Environment Scrutiny Panel held 12 March 2007; Social Issues Scrutiny Panel held 14 March 2007; Local Economy Scrutiny Panel held 15 March 2007; and Resources Scrutiny Panel held 20 March 2007, be received and the recommendations therein be noted.

12. **DEPOT SERVICES CONTRACT – HALF YEAR REVIEW**
(Report PS288 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, so that the Committee were aware of the information without delay.

The Corporate Director (Policy) introduced the Report and apologised that no representatives of Serco were able to attend the meeting.

During debate, Members discussed the number of missed refuse bin collections and the Director explained that on the rare occasions this had happened, the Council had attempted to rectify the problem as soon as possible. The Committee noted that the statistic may include instances where it had not been possible to collect the bins because, for example, of a road blockage or because the resident had failed to put their bin out.

Members noted the poor performance of Serco in dealing with void properties within an acceptable timeframe. The Director explained almost all of this work had now been passed to another contractor and that this had resulted in a significant improvement in performance. He added that where work on void properties had delayed the Council from re-letting properties, the loss in revenue was recovered from the contractor.

The Committee requested that future reports contain trend information over time so that it would be easier to track changes in performance.

RESOLVED:

That performance information of the Depot Services Contractor be noted.

13. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

RESOLVED:

1. That in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

2. 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>
##	Exempt Minute of Meeting held 26 March 2007 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational Development)) Information relating to a) particular individual. (Para 1 to) Schedule 12A refers).)) Information which is likely to) reveal the identity of an) individual (Para 2 to Schedule) 12A refers))) Information relating to any) consultations or negotiations, or) contemplated consultations or) negotiations, in connection with

-) any labour relations matter
-) arising between the authority or
-) a Minister of the Crown and
-) employees of, or office holders
-) under, the authority. (Para 4 to
-) Schedule 12A refers)

14. **EXEMPT MINUTE**

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minute of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 26 March 2007 referring to Organisational Development be approved and adopted.

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

- (i) **REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENT TEAM CLIENT SIDE STAFF**
(Reports PER118 and PS287, Extract of Minutes of Personnel Committee and Cabinet refer)

The Chairman explained that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 8.40 pm.

Chairman