

THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

28 May 2012

Attendance:

Councillors:

Pines (Chairman) (P)

Cook (P)

Evans

Gemmell (P)

Gottlieb (P)

Hutchison (P)

Learney (P)

Read (P)

Sanders (P)

Scott (P)

Wright (P)

Deputy Member

Councillors Hiscock (Standing Deputy Councillor Evans)

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillor Phillips

Councillor Humby (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning & Economic Development)

Councillor Godfrey (Portfolio Holder for Finance and Administration)

Councillor Huxstep (Portfolio Holder for Environment)

Councillor Tait (Portfolio Holder for New Homes Delivery)

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillors Wood (Leader), Chamberlain and Power

1. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Councillors Wood, Humby, Godfrey, Huxstep and Tait declared personal and prejudicial interests, due to their involvement as Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holders respectively, in actions taken or proposed in the Reports outlined below.

However, the Committee requested that all the above Councillors remain in the meeting, in their capacity as Leader and Portfolio Holders respectively, under the provisions of Section 21(13) (a) of the Local Government Act 2000, in order that they could provide additional information to the Committee and/or answer questions.

2. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman advised that, during the year, informal meetings with the six scrutiny lead Members would be held to help coordinate the workloads of Informal Scrutiny Groups. He would also invite a representative from each of the political groups on the Council to attend his Chairman's briefing meetings, which were held prior to Committee meetings.

The Chairman also reminded the meeting that the Leader of the Council would be required to attend every meeting of the Committee, unless advised otherwise. He would also ask respective Portfolio Holders to attend meetings, as and when necessary, when matters were to be discussed that were related to the areas of their responsibility.

3. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2012/13 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Read be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the 2012/13 Municipal Year.

4. **FUTURE MEETING DATES AND TIMES**

RESOLVED:

1. That the timetable of meetings for the Committee for the 2012/13 Municipal Year be agreed as set out on the agenda.

2. That meetings of the Committee normally commence at 6.30pm

5. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 19 March 2012 (less exempt item), be approved and adopted.

6. **UPDATE ON 2011/12 INFORMAL SCRUTINY GROUPS,
APPOINTMENT OF BATCH 3 INFORMAL SCRUTINY GROUPS AND
REVIEW OF THE NEW OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURES**
([Report OS43 refers](#))

The Chief Executive reported that officers had found the previous cycle of Informal Scrutiny Groups (ISGs) to have been of particular value to the organisation and that the process had benefited from specific and focussed discussions.

The Committee discussed each of the proposed ISG topics in turn (pages 4 – 8 of the Report refer) after each was introduced by the Head of Policy. It was agreed that several of the proposed topics should not be pursued at this time, some should be deferred, and others were more suited as potential subjects for Member training or briefing events.

With regard to the proposed Access to Services in the Market Towns and Rural Areas ISG, it was agreed that this be selected as an ISG topic. It was also agreed that The Impact of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) on City Estates ISG be established and, in recognition of an increase in the numbers of HMOs generally throughout the District, the scope of the scrutiny investigation should be widened accordingly. A proposed Flexible and Home Working ISG was rejected by the Committee, as it was noted that Internal Audit was currently monitoring implementation of its recommendations, in response to a recent post implementation review of the policy. Any follow up would be more appropriate by the Personnel or Audit Committees.

The Committee referred to the proposed ISG topic on the City Council's shared IT service with Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC), and the City Council's IT Strategy. During discussion, Councillor Wood suggested that it may be preferable to await implementation of the draft IT Strategy, so that an ISG could assess the benefits and savings likely to be achieved over time. However, some Members suggested it would be preferable to analyse the strategy and partnership working now, to provide assurances to Members that the Council was achieving maximum value for money from the expenditure associated with the service. A decision could be made at the next meeting, taking account of Cabinet's consideration of the draft Strategy at its meeting on 13 June 2012.

Members referred to the proposed ISG to consider Section 106 payments and were in agreement that this would be a useful piece of work. The ISG should also ideally influence the development of the Council's approach to the new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). However, the scope of this potential ISG could be considered at the next meeting.

The Committee agreed that further details of the topics selected for ISGs be brought back to the next meeting of the Committee, together with a list of additional topics to be proposed by the Groups outside of the meeting, which were to be collated by the Head of Policy.

The outcome of the Committees discussions are summarised in the chart below:

	Proposed ISG topic	Outcome
1	Sponsorship	Rejected as topic for an ISG.
2	Corporate Customer Service standards.	Rejected as topic for an ISG.
3	Administration of Freedom of Information Requests.	Rejected as topic for an ISG.
4	Cost effectiveness of the Winchester District Strategic Partnership (WDSP) etc	Selected as a potential topic for an ISG to be further considered at the next meeting of the committee.
5	Democracy, effectiveness and economy: striking the right balance in the organisation and conduct of City Council committee meetings.	Rejected as topic for an ISG.
6	Support for Members.	Rejected as topic for an ISG.
7	Sustainable mechanisms for rural economic development etc.	Rejected as a separate topic for an ISG – possibly combined elements with 8 below.
8	Access to Services in the Market Towns and Rural Areas.	Selected as a topic for an ISG.
9	Financial viability assessments for planning applications.	Rejected as topic for an ISG, but approved as a potential topic for Member training or briefing.
10	Winchester Street Market.	Rejected as topic for an ISG, but approved as a potential topic for Member training or briefing.

11	The impact of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) on City Estates.	Selected as a topic for an ISG.
12	The scheme of delegation within the South Downs National Park.	Selected as future topic for an ISG, possibly after completion of batch 3.
13	Flexible and Home working: its value and effectiveness	Rejected as topic for an ISG.
14	The City Council's shared IT service with Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC), and the City Council's IT Strategy.	Selected as a potential topic for an ISG to be further considered at the next meeting of the Committee in the light of Cabinet's consideration of the proposed Information Management Strategy at its meeting on 13 June 2012.
15	Section 106 agreements: lessons to date and future application	Selected as potential topic for an ISG to be further considered at the next meeting of the committee.

RESOLVED:

1 That progress with batch 1 and batch 2 Informal Scrutiny Groups (ISG) appointed in 2011/12 be noted.

2 That the following Councillors be reappointed to the Public Access to Data and Information via the City Council's Website ISG:

Cllr Wright (Chair), Cllr Warwick, Cllr Gemmell, Cllr Maynard

3 That The Overview and Scrutiny Committee support the establishment the following ISGs:

(i) Access to Services in Market Towns and Rural Areas ISG

(ii) Impact of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) ISG

4 That The Overview and Scrutiny Committee give further consideration to the establishment the following ISGs:

- (i) Cost Effectiveness of the Winchester District Strategic Partnership (WDSP) and the feasibility of 'Total Place' ISG
- (ii) The City Council's shared IT service with Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC), and the City Council's IT Strategy ISG
- (iii) Section 106 agreements: lessons to date and future application ISG

5 That The Overview and Scrutiny Committee determine that the following topics are suitable for a Member Training Session or briefing, rather than an ISG.

- (i) Financial viability assessments for planning applications
- (ii) Winchester Street Market

6 That the membership of the continuing ISGs be confirmed and Group Managers be asked to nominate the membership of the three ISGs referred to in Recommendation 3 above to the next meeting of this Committee.

7 That the recommendations for the further development of overview and scrutiny as set out in paragraph 3.6.3 of the Report, as amended below, be agreed.

"That the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the scrutiny lead Members and representatives from Cabinet consider how a productive link can be made between Cabinet and ISGs, to ensure that recommendations are realistic and can be implemented"

8 That the ISGs referred to in Recommendations 3 and 4 above be brought back to the next meeting of the Committee, together with a list of additional topics to be proposed by the groups outside of the meeting and to be collated by the Head of Policy.

7. **FINAL REPORT OF THE LEADER FUNDING INFORMAL SCRUTINY GROUP**
([Report OS38 refers](#))

As Chairman of the Informal Scrutiny Group, Councillor Power introduced the Report. In summary, she explained that the Group had considered both the value for money to the District from the Council's support of the LEADER funding programme, as well as how well the Council worked to successfully deliver the initiative. Councillor Power also advised that the ISG had considered a way forward to potentially secure future funding streams following the cessation of the current programme.

During discussion, the Head of Economy and Arts advised that as the LEADER funding allocation was sourced from European Union money, there was strict policy guidance as to which areas of the rural economy were able to apply for grants. However, the guidance was fairly applied and the process for claims was transparent, with volunteer officers of the Local Action Group deciding the final awards. Recipients of grants were also required to demonstrate a five year business plan, which was then monitored over this period.

The Committee noted the positive feedback achieved by the Council in facilitating the programme, which itself had benefited several rural businesses throughout the District. In addition, Councillor Humby highlighted that the Winchester Local Action Group (LAG) had been rated as one of the top-ten most successful deliverers of the funds in the country. He also drew attention to the recommendations of the Report that sought to consider how to best support the expertise gained by the LAG beyond the current LEADER programme.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee support the recommendations of the LEADER Informal Scrutiny Group as set out below and refer them to Cabinet for implementation:
 - (i) That Cabinet request Heads of Teams in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder and Head of Finance, to actively seek out relevant funding opportunities in order to deliver the outcomes in the Change Plans.
 - (ii) That Cabinet delegate responsibility to the Head of Economy and Arts in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Local Economy, Tourism, Communications and Special Events, to allocate resources to bidding

for future funding streams in support of the rural economy and market towns as opportunities arise.

- (iii) That Cabinet considers how best to support the LAG in developing its work beyond the current LEADER funding allocation, by remaining key stakeholders in the LAG, and recognising the LAG as a 'key client'.
- (iv) That Cabinet delegate responsibility to Heads of Teams to ensure that any future funding programmes have criteria to measure success agreed with the funders in advance, so as to avoid undue staff time renegotiating such criteria with the funders at a later stage.

2. That Cabinet acknowledge the wider benefits to the local economy of the Fieldfare LEADER programme, and be reassured that Winchester City Council's investment into the scheme has been well placed.

8. **APPOINTMENTS OF COUNCILLORS TO LEAD INFORMAL SCRUTINY GROUPS AND TO EXTERNAL BODIES RELATED TO SCRUTINY FOR THE 2012/13 MUNICIPAL YEAR**
[\(Report OS41 refers\)](#)

RESOLVED:

1. That the following six Councillors be appointed to lead Informal Scrutiny Groups (ISGs) for the 2012/13 Municipal Year

- (a) Councillor Read
- (b) Councillor Sanders
- (c) Councillor Scott
- (d) Councillor Wright
- (e) Councillor Evans
- (f) Councillor Hutchison

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

- (a) The Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) – Scrutiny Champions' Network – Councillor Pines;

- (b) Portsmouth City Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel – Councillor Read (Deputy Councillor Evans);
- (c) Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Councillor Gemmell (Deputy Councillor Achwal).

3. That the Committee receive an annual report on the work of Project Integra to a future meeting and, in light of this, consider whether it wishes to establish a regular process to scrutinise the partnership.

9. **MONITORING REPORT – KEY DECISIONS NOT INCLUDED WITHIN THE FORWARD PLAN DURING THE 2011/12 MUNICIPAL YEAR**
[\(Report OS39 refers\)](#)

The Committee commended officers in ensuring that items listed in the Forward Plan were delivered in a timely fashion.

RESOLVED:

That the monitoring information in the report is noted.

10. **DRAFT ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2011-12**
[\(Report OS40 refers\)](#)

At the invitation of the Chairman, the previous Chairman of the Committee (Councillor Chamberlain) introduced the Report.

Councillor Chamberlain reminded Members that the previous municipal year had been one of change and that the process on Informal Scrutiny Groups had provided opportunities for Members from across the whole Council to be involved in overview and scrutiny.

RECOMMENDED:

THAT THE DRAFT ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2011-12, BE APPROVED AS SET OUT IN REPORT OS40.

11. **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (REPORT OS42 REFERS) JUNE 2012 FORWARD PLAN AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION**

RESOLVED:

That the Scrutiny Work Programme Forward Plan for June 2012 be noted.

12. **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 previous meeting held 19 March 2012: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avalon House) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). (Para 3 Schedule 12A refers)

13. **EXEMPT MINUTE**

The Committee referred to the exempt minute of the previous meeting relating to Avalon House, Winchester (detail in exempt minute).

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minute of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 19 March 2012, be approved and adopted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 8.10pm.