

THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18 June 2012

Attendance:

Councillors:

Pines (Chairman) (P)

Cook

Evans

Gemmell (P)

Gottlieb (P)

Hutchison (P)

Learney (P)

Read (P)

Sanders (P)

Scott (P)

Wright (P)

Deputy Member

Councillors Hiscock (Standing Deputy for Councillor Evans) and Tod (Standing Deputy for Councillor Cook)

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillors Wood (Leader)

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)

1. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Councillors Wood, Humby, Godfrey and Huxstep 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 thanked those Councillors who had attended the Overview and Scrutiny Member Training that had been held the previous Tuesday evening. The Chairman reported that it had been a very interesting event that had provided an excellent overview of the function.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 28 May 2012 (less exempt item), be approved and adopted.

4. **APPOINTMENT OF INFORMAL SCRUTINY GROUPS FOR 2012/13**

(Report OS45 refers)

The Committee referred to the potential topics for in-depth scrutiny investigation by Informal Scrutiny Groups (ISGs) as set out in the table on pages 4 – 11 of the Report. The Chief Executive introduced each of the subjects in turn and drew the Committee's attention to the respective officer comments, where appropriate.

During discussion, the Committee agreed that several of the proposed ISGs should not be pursued at this time. Members also revised the potential scopes of some of the other investigations.

The Committee considered a potential ISG to investigate existing Section 106 processes and to influence the Council's adoption of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Councillor Humby reiterated that such an ISG might not be timely as it would be likely to divert officer resources from the important on-going work of establishing a new charging schedule.

The Committee referred to the Osborne Housing Maintenance Contract and it was agreed that so to be better informed on the progress and performance of the contract to date, an update report be presented to a future meeting of the Cabinet (Housing) Committee.

The Committee also discussed a suggestion for an ISG to consider the design aspects of new Council homes; however it was agreed that this would be unlikely to have a meaningful impact on the Council's new build programme at this time as the policy issues would be considered by Cabinet shortly.

At conclusion of discussion, the ISGs listed below were established. It was also agreed that their lead Councillors and remaining membership be considered at the next Scrutiny Chairs liaison meeting, for ratification by the next meeting of the Committee. It was noted that the new ISGs were in addition to the two

established at the previous meeting of the Committee - Access to Services in the Market Towns & Rural Areas ISG and The Impact of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) on City Estates ISG.

ISG	Scope of the investigation to include
Provision of Public Transport in Town and Rural Areas ISG	With a particular emphasis on buses, the ISG would investigate provision of public transport to support evening economy in the Town area and also rural services in general. There would also be a link with Dial-A-Ride/community transport.
Impact of the Localism on the City Council and our Communities ISG	The review would help the Council to 'take stock' of the potential impact of the legislation, especially having regard to the large parished area of the District.
Review of the Statutory Basis of City Council Services ISG	To help clarify whether the legislative requirements for services (statutory or discretionary) was meaningful in helping the Council to determine the basis for any future service reviews.

RESOLVED:

1. That The Overview and Scrutiny Committee establish the following ISGs:

- (i) Provision of Public Transport in Town and Rural Areas ISG;
- (ii) Impact of the Localism on the City Council and our Communities ISG;
- (iii) Review of the Statutory Basis of City Council Services ISG.

2. That lead Councillors be considered at the next Scrutiny Chairs liaison meeting, for ratification by the next meeting of the Committee.

3. That Group Managers nominate the membership of the ISGs referred to above, to be considered at the next Scrutiny Chairs liaison meeting, for ratification by the next meeting of the Committee.

4. That the review details as set out in paragraph 3.1 of the report to monitor progress with the implementation of ISG recommendations be added to the Scrutiny Work Programme.

5. **LOCAL AND NATIONAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND THEIR VALUE TO THE COUNCIL INFORMAL SCRUTINY GROUP**

(Report OS44 refers)

As the previous Chairman of the Informal Scrutiny Group, Councillor Huxstep introduced the Report and responded to questions. During discussion, he advised that the ISG had recognised the importance of there being further integration of both quantitative and qualitative performance information within data sets and this was reflected in Recommendation 6 of the Report. Benchmarking the Council's performance information with other local authorities and organisations was also referred to within the Council's Performance Management Guide (Appendix 3 to the Report refers).

The Chief Executive also explained that the presentation of key performance indicators for regular scrutiny by the Committee would allow for proper political accountability by the Portfolio Holder in ensuring that milestones within the plans were delivered in a timely manner. The Portfolio Holder would then work with officers to improve areas of concern as appropriate.

The Committee welcomed the proposals to enhance the accessibility of performance data to the public, via the Council's website, and also within the new performance management committee reports. However, the data should be clear and 'jargon' free and should include only the most relevant key information. Committee reports should only include headline performance information and it was agreed that regular presentation to the committee of the portfolio plans in their entirety would not be conducive to focussed discussion.

The Committee noted that a review of the ISG's recommendations and whether they were accepted and adopted by Cabinet would take place in 12 months' time. In the meantime, the Chairman requested that Councillor Huxstep (as former Chair of the ISG) work closely with Councillor Godfrey (Portfolio Holder for Finance and Administration) to ensure they were implemented as soon as possible.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman also commended the Report as extremely well written and for being clear in drawing out the issues that the ISG had scrutinised in depth.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee support the recommendations of the Local and National Performance Indicators and their Value to the Council Informal

Scrutiny Group as set out below and refer them to Cabinet for implementation:

1. That the Council adopts the identified qualities of a good performance indicator set out in the report at paragraph 7.2 of Appendix 1 to the report.

2. That the Council endorses Winchester City Council's Performance Management Guide included at Appendix 3.

3. That the Performance Indicator Check List shown in Appendix 2 be adopted as part of the WCC Performance Management Guide for Heads of Teams to deploy to test the usefulness and quality of each PI to establish its status in the Council's PI data set.

4. That the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader determines through the adoption of recommendations 1, 2 & 3 above, a set of draft key performance indicators given in Appendix 7 to show the degree to which services are performing using: output, efficiency and value for money (VFM) indicators; customer satisfaction with services; as well as relevant qualitative and quantitative (including 'sense of community') and outcome indicators alongside each other.

5. That officers investigate the feasibility of automating the integration of data from third party software systems used by the Council to the Covalent performance management system; starting with an inventory of data bases and systems used by the Council to record PI information, identifying those that can directly interface with Covalent and those that cannot.

6. That the Chief Executive in consultation with the Head of Policy and Head of Customer Services consider the different methods of obtaining qualitative performance data from the residents of the District and the users of Council services (for example through the resident's e-panel) so that it may monitor customer satisfaction levels.

7. That the proposed Performance Monitoring Cycle in Appendix 6 is implemented.

8. That consideration is given to the following designated Members having access to Covalent: Cabinet, The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Personnel Committee and the residual members of this ISG.

6. **CONSIDERATION OF ITEM UNDER THE COMMITTEE'S POWERS OF CALL-IN**

(i) **THE SQUARE, WINCHESTER PHASE 2 – GREAT MINSTER STREET**
(Report CAB2346 refers)

Councillor Wood explained that the proposals outlined in the Report would be undertaken in partnership with the County Council, and provided an excellent opportunity to continue the environmental improvements already completed in Winchester High Street and in The Square.

During discussion, the Head of Access and Infrastructure acknowledged that, despite the Council being required to contribute one-fifth of the overall costs, the capital sum was still considerable. It was also recognised that some of the adjoining streets would also benefit from such enhancements and that similar projects could also be undertaken in market towns.

As Great Minister Street had only recently had its tarmac surface repaired, the Head of Access and Infrastructure would also draw to the attention of the project team to see if the design could minimise further disruption and excavation works.

RESOLVED:

That the decision of Cabinet to approve a supplementary capital estimate of £60,000 as the City Council's contribution towards the refurbishment of Great Minster Street, financed by a release from the Major Investment Reserve, be not called-in for review.

7. **CAPITAL EXPENDITURE OUTTURN 2011/12**
(Report CAB2342 refers)

Councillor Godfrey responded to discussion of Appendix A to the Report and he acknowledged the significant carry forward proposed for 'Affordable Housing funded by Developer's contributions'. The Head of Finance clarified that this was due to contributions yet to be received from developers and therefore it was unable to be spent during the year. For this reason it was unlikely that the sums could be transferred to the Housing Revenue Account to supplement the new homes delivery plans.

A Member was given assurances that the Council continued to prioritise urgent delivery of new affordable housing schemes utilising developer contributions, as opposed to instead focussing officer resources on the Council's new Council House building plan.

RECOMMENDED:

THAT COUNCIL BE ADVISED THAT THE COMMITTEE HAD NO ISSUES THAT IT WISHED TO DRAW TO COUNCIL'S ATTENTION.

RESOLVED:

1. That the capital expenditure and financing for 2011/12 be noted and the implications on the future capital programme.
2. That Cabinet keep the affordable housing/regeneration Capital Programme under regular review to ensure that opportunities to release developers contributions for appropriate schemes were taken.

8. **REVENUE OUTTURN 2011/12**

(Report CAB2343 refers)

During discussion, Councillor Godfrey gave assurances that profiling of the Revenue Budget was as accurate as possible. Income from car parking had been greater than had been predicted, especially during the last few months of the year which had been a result of the Council's success in increasing footfall in the town centre. This was despite the temporary closure of Friarsgate Multi Story car park.

The Chief Executive also explained that Vacancy Management was now an important mechanism in achieving a balanced budget. He gave assurances that service implications were properly considered when holding vacancies and that the use of the '1 Team' initiative had brought further flexibility and resilience to the organisation. It was also explained that the underspend relating to the Tower Arts Centre had been because of a delay in delivery of a youth music programme due to maternity leave within the Council's team.

Councillor Wood thanked officers for their work in ensuring that costs were kept to a minimum wherever possible, which had helped achieve the favourable outturn position as set out in the Report.

The Corporate Director (Governance) advised that the request for carry forward of one-off expenditure as set out in Recommendation 3 would be combined with a separate revenue carry forward to the Housing Revenue Account. As this was for more than £500,000, this would require approval by full Council.

RECOMMENDED:

THAT COUNCIL BE ADVISED THAT THE COMMITTEE HAD NO ISSUES THAT IT WISHED TO DRAW TO COUNCIL'S ATTENTION.

RESOLVED:

That the Revenue outturn position as set out in the report be noted.

8. **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.

9. **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 28 May 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)

10. **EXEMPT MINUTE**

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

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minute of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 28 May 2012, be approved and adopted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 8.35pm.

Chairman