

THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18 March 2013

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 Members

Councillor Hiscock (Standing Deputy for Councillor Evans)

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillor Godfrey (Portfolio Holder for Finance and Administration)

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillors J Berry, Huxstep (Portfolio Holder for Environment), Tait (Portfolio Holder for New Homes Delivery) and Wood (Leader)

1. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman announced that the Scrutiny Lead Members will be attending a course in London on Friday 19 April 2013 entitled 'Maximising the impact of Overview and Scrutiny'.

The Chairman reported that Cabinet's formal response to the recommendations of the Access to Services Informal Scrutiny Group (ISG) was to be discussed in an informal meeting to be arranged with relevant officers, the Leader and Portfolio Holder and with Councillor Evans (Chairman of the ISG).

The Chairman referred to agenda item 11 – Final Report of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Informal Scrutiny Group (Report OS67 refers) and advised that he had decided to defer its consideration to a future meeting of the committee. This was due to his concerns that members of the ISG had not been given sufficient time to comment on the content of the Report before its publication. As Chairman of the ISG, Councillor Scott advised that he did not

expect the Report to be substantially revised, but supported the principle that members of the ISG should have adequate opportunity to revise the contents of its final report.

2. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

There were no interests declared.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 18 February 2013, be approved and adopted.

4. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mr Phil Gagg (Winchester Action against Climate Change, Transport Forum) spoke in support of the recommendations of agenda item 10, the Final Report of the Public Transport Informal Scrutiny Group (Report OS66 refers). With the permission of the Chairman, Mr Gagg addressed the Committee in advance of the Committee's consideration of that item and his comments are summarised at the relevant agenda item below.

5. **PERFORMANCE MONITORING – ONLINE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND CHANGES TO MONITORING CYCLES**

(Report OS64 refers)

In advance of commencement of the formal meeting, the Committee had been given a presentation of the key performance indicators proposed to be publicly available on the Council's website. Councillor Godfrey reiterated how these would be easily accessible and relevant for the public and to Members.

The Committee noted that by reviewing the range of published performance information during the year, Members would be able to assess which of the targets in individual portfolio holder plans were not on target. This could then become the basis by which exception reports were requested for more in-depth scrutiny.

During discussion, the Chief Executive clarified that the Government had not specified which performance information should be published, however, as far as possible, the selected data promoted the Council's desired outcomes (as opposed to measuring internal process information). He suggested that the proposed data sets be published on the website in the first instance and be reviewed and improved upon over time. As well as providing data that was measurable against comparators, it should be as clear and self-explanatory to the public as possible. It should also be consistent and relevant. Sign-posting to

performance information that was not the Council's direct responsibility, but of public interest, should be investigated. It was noted that there would be a link to existing performance information specifically relating to Council housing and tenants. The data presented on the website would complement the more detailed performance information reported to committees. He drew attention that some comparable local authority performance information would be soon available via the Hampshire hub which was a project being led by the Hampshire County Council.

The Committee referred to Appendix 1 to the Report and Councillor Godfrey clarified that some of the key performance indicators related to broader headings which were then supported by additional performance indicators. This included, for example; Communities, Culture & Sport – Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour and Tackling Violence – Assault with injury.

The Committee were generally supportive of the proposed set of Key Performance Indicators as set out in Appendix 1 to the Report, subject to any necessary improvements over time to ensure that they were measurable against comparators and reflected the Council's desired outcomes as far as possible. The data should also be clear, self-explanatory, consistent and as relevant to the public as possible.

It was agreed that further consideration be given to additional performance information that helped measure the relative prosperity of the District, for example, the amount of non-domestic rates collected by the Council compared with other local authorities and also occupancy rates of hotels. Possible indicators to reflect measures of quality of life in the District could also be considered. These could include, for example, adult rates of unemployment, air quality and also details of the number of applicants on the housing waiting list.

With regard to the Planning and Transport indicators, additional information related to processing of developer legal agreements and planning enforcement cases was also requested. It was noted that detailed information related to the delivery of the Council's programme of new Council housing was reported to the Cabinet (Housing Delivery) Committee and it was agreed that this be utilised in the first to identify any particular trends that may require further scrutiny.

At the conclusion of discussion, the Chairman requested that an update be provided to a future meeting of the Committee of the finalised published list of Key Performance Indicators.

RESOLVED:

1. That the changes to the performance monitoring cycle for 2013/14 be noted.

2. That the proposed performance indicators that are to be included on the Council's website and with Portfolio Plans be noted.

3. That consideration be given to the including the following additional performance indicators within the set of Key Performance Indicators shown in Appendix 1 and monitored during 2013/14:

(i) additional performance information that help measure the relative prosperity of the District, for example, the amount of non-domestic rates collected by the Council compared with other local authorities and also occupancy rates of local hotels

(ii) additional performance information that help measure the relative quality of life and wellbeing in the District, for example, adult rates of unemployment and air quality, details of the number of applicants on the housing waiting list

(iii) additional performance information under the Planning and Transport heading with regard to the processing of developer legal agreements and planning enforcement cases

6. **BATCH 4 INFORMAL SCRUTINY GROUPS (ISGs) - APPOINTMENTS**
(Report OS65 refers)

The Committee acknowledged that the membership of the Guildhall as a Commercial Venue ISG was much larger than usual; however this was reflective of the significant interest from Members in the topic. However, it was agreed that so to assist officers in making further improvements to the service, the ISG's discussions should be as focused as possible. To allow the ISG to commence its investigations without further delay, the two additional Liberal Democrat appointments would be agreed informally and endorsed at the next meeting of the Committee.

The Committee referred to the potential topics for other ISGs as set out at Appendix 1 to the Report. Members agreed that a Review of the Museums Service ISG (to be chaired by Councillor Read) and a Consultation undertaken by the Council ISG (to be chaired by Councillor Sanders) should commence work in due course with their membership also to be agreed outside of the meeting for formal endorsement at the next meeting of the Committee. A third ISG would convene later in the year to consider the outcome of the consultant's report on the future of River Park Leisure Centre.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee agree the membership of the following ISGs:

(i) Making Member involvement & decision making more effective:

Councillors Wright (Chair), Mather, Phillips, Witt and Cutler

- (ii) The Council's ability to implement ISG recommendations

Councillors Hutchison (Chair), Phillips, McLean, Laming, Mason and J Berry

- (iii) The Guildhall as a commercial venue:

Councillors Scott (Chair), Miller, Warwick, E Berry, Bodtger, Verney, Izard, Cook, Rutter plus two additional Liberal Democrats to be confirmed (*Bannister and Nelmes*)

- (iv) Access, exclusion and how we address it:

Councillors Evans (Chair), Byrne, Verney, Mason, Power and Pines

2. That the following additional ISGs be agreed with their membership appointed outside of the meeting for formal endorsement at the next meeting of the Committee:

- (i) Review of the Museums Service ISG
- (ii) Consultation undertaken by the Council ISG

3. That a third ISG to consider the outcome of the consultant's report on the future of River Park Leisure Centre convene later in the year.

7. **12 MONTH REVIEW: INFORMAL SCRUTINY GROUP ON YOUNG PEOPLE AND EMPLOYMENT**

(Report OS68 refers)

The Assistant Director (Economic Prosperity) responded to discussion of progress achieved to date in implementing each of the recommendations of the Young People and Employment Informal Scrutiny Group that had undertaken a scrutiny investigation in 2012.

It was noted that due to the pressure on staff resources, the special conference previously arranged for local agencies working with unemployed young people, it was likely that in future, this would only be facilitated bi-annually by the Council. A joint action plan was currently under development, which it was hoped would act as a further catalyst for joined-up work in this area. The action plan would be inclusive of measurable outcomes so to help gauge progress over time. In addition, the subject would be included as actions within the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder Plan.

The Committee referred to the importance of work placement opportunities being as flexible as possible to support the needs of the job seeker. Further work was being undertaken to ensure this.

The Assistant Director also advised that it was being investigated as to why some jobseekers were not attracted to the opportunities presented by some apprenticeship schemes in the District. It was thought that this may be due to the aspirations of some jobseekers being different to the opportunities available. It was noted that the majority of the more traditional industries were likely to be based outside the District.

RESOLVED:

That the progress to date in implementing the recommendations of the Informal Scrutiny Group on Young People and Employment, as set out as an appendix to the report be noted.

8. PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFORMAL SCRUTINY GROUP
(Report OS66 refers)

As Chairman of the ISG, Councillor Read introduced the Report and together with the Head of Access and Infrastructure, responded to the Committee's discussion. The Head of Access and Infrastructure advised that the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport had been unable to attend the meeting; however, he was broadly supportive of the ISG's recommendations subject to further detailed examination of their resourcing.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Phil Gagg (Winchester Action against Climate Change, Transport Forum) spoke in support of the ISG's recommendations.

In summary, Mr Gagg was appreciative that the Council's direct influence on public transport issues in the district was limited although he encouraged it to campaign for improvement to this area. Mr Gagg especially endorsed recommendation 2 to develop a public transport strategy for the District to help the Council influence action and to draw in resources.

With regard to paragraph 3.15 on page 8 of the Report, potential improvements to the Park and Ride service could be considered as part of a wider parking strategy. Any proposals to increase peak time stops in locations such as Kings School would need to be evidenced with regard to the numbers of customers likely to benefit.

The Chairman suggested that consideration be given to one Park and Ride bus per hour serving the Winnall area industrial estates. Currently, some employees here were utilising on-street parking in nearby residential streets. The Head of Access and Infrastructure agreed to investigate this proposal as part of a wider

parking strategy. A Member suggested that taxi drivers could be utilised to serve customers of the park and ride service during off-peak times as it had been noticed that buses were often nearly empty.

During further, discussion it was explained that Hampshire County Council was investigating the potential to draw in funds as part of local sustainable transport bidding via the South Downs National Park. It was envisaged that the City Council could be involved in this work for which a public transport strategy would assist.

The Chief Executive explained that a public transport strategy could also act as an evidence base in developing the Community Infrastructure Levy. This could potentially help inform the charging schedule with regard to developer contributions towards new public transport.

At conclusion of discussion, the Committee thanked the Head of Access and Infrastructure and the members of the ISG for undertaking the scrutiny investigation. The Committee particularly endorsed the ISG's recommendation for the Council to produce a transport strategy noted that Members should lobby Hampshire County Council Councillors directly with regard to improving the District's public transport network. As Chairman of the ISG, Councillor Read agreed to monitor Cabinet and the Portfolio Holder's formal response to the ISG's recommendations.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet implement the following recommendations of The Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- a. The potential to work with the Community Groups and the County Council in developing and promoting community and public transport schemes and information provision. New mechanisms would need to be set up if improvements in this area are to be achieved. It has been suggested that transport workshops could be held in different parts of the District to improve such communications and involvement.

- b. The merit in developing a public transport strategy for the District, as advocated by WinACC. A Cycling strategy recently adopted by the City Council provides a good framework for how this could be done. It would require sufficient resources in order to develop a sound strategy that could gain the support of the County Council, as Transport Authority, and other key stakeholders. As part of this process, Members and officers will need to consider if a step change in the City Council's approach to parking management as suggested by the Friends of the Earth would be the right approach for Winchester.
- c. Maximising uptake of the opportunities provided by the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, which has provided valuable funding to support initiatives in the District to support public transport including both promotional activities and new infrastructure. Making the greatest possible use of this funding, and exploring new future funding opportunities, should be a key focus for the City Council. The new inter-operator and smart ticketing arrangements being developed in South Hampshire may provide benefits for the Winchester District and initiatives should be taken to ensure that such opportunities are used to the fullest extent possible.
- d. Ensuring the Park and Ride service is used to high capacity, with additional stops in locations such as Kings School, and Olivers Battery for services into and out of Winchester including rail commuters. Consideration could also be given to coming to an arrangement with Bluestar for park and ride tickets to be valid on their services after 21.00hrs which would benefit P & R passengers and help maintain Bluestar evening services. Such changes would need to be carefully assessed to determine their impact on the peak hour express services in and out of the town centre. This could be undertaken as part of a wider review of the Park and Ride, which will be necessary to determine how prospective new car park sites at Pitt Manor and Barton Farm could be incorporated to into the services.
- e. That the County Council's scheme to focus public transport on areas of social need and accessibility to key services be cross checked with the City Council's own social deprivation information and networks.
- f. Giving greater focus to providing information to community groups on grants available for promoting services and on how to set up new community transport schemes. The Winchester Passenger Transport Forum provides a good platform from which to learn about such opportunities.
- g. Holding discussions with Winchester Area Community Action to ensure that all opportunities to join-up services are kept under review (for example between Age UK and Dial-a-Ride).

That the Licensing and Regulation Committee be requested to review:

- h. Winchester's taxi fare structure and charges, as these are claimed to be the amongst the most expensive in the country, and the impact and effects this has on residents who live in rural areas who may have to make longer journeys by taxis.

That Cabinet and the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport work with the County Council to ensure:

- i. That, as part of the review of central Winchester's traffic system, consideration is given to how best to take full advantage of systems that bring benefits to buses (such as transponders triggering traffic signals) be considered.
- j. That the County Council be asked if the proposed integrated ticketing service (the Solent Travel Card) could be extended to serve the Winchester District.
- k. That, in light of the recent successful Local Sustainable Transport funding bid for the South Downs, discussions be held with HCC and the Parks Authority to see if the City Council can work jointly on transport schemes which could be of benefit to the Winchester District and the South Downs National Park.

That Cabinet and the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport work with the public transport providers to:

- l. Ensure that Winchester is marketed as a destination in their promotional materials and on their web sites.
- m. Investigate the possible role for Parish Councils, working closely with bus companies and the County Council, in helping update bus timetable information and in promoting the availability of bus and community services.
- n. Request that the bus companies be invited to re-examine their fare structures, particularly with regard to short journeys, such as Stanmore to Winchester town centre, which appear disproportionately expensive compared to other fare structures in other neighbouring areas.
- o. Address the need for better real-time passenger information provision across the whole of Winchester Town. Clarification is needed from the County Council as to when this will be happening and what areas and services that it will cover

9. **FINAL REPORT OF HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION INFORMAL SCRUTINY GROUP**
(Report OS67 refers)

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the Report to a future meeting of the Committee. This was due to concerns of the Chairman that members of the ISG had not been given sufficient time to be consulted on the content of the Report before its publication.

RESOLVED:

That the Report be deferred to a future meeting of the Committee.

10. **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (REPORT OS59 REFERS) AND APRIL 2013 FORWARD PLAN AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION**

RESOLVED:

That the Scrutiny Work Programme and Forward Plan for April 2013 be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 9pm.

Chairman