

THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 September 2014

Attendance:

Councillors:

Pines (Chairman) (P)

Byrnes (P)
Cook (P)
Evans (P)
Gemmell
Learney (P)

Power (P)
Sanders (P)
Stallard (P)
Wright (P)

Deputy Members

Councillor Dibden (Standing Deputy for Councillor Gemmell)

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillors Godfrey (Portfolio Holder for Finance and Organisational Development) and Southgate (Portfolio Holder for Communities and Transport)

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillor J Berry

1. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Councillor Stallard declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of agenda items due to her role as a Hampshire County Councillor. However, as there was no material conflict of interest, she remained in the room, spoke and voted under the dispensation granted on behalf of the Standards Committee to participate and vote in all matters which might have a County Council involvement.

Councillor Godfrey declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of agenda items due to him being an employee of Hampshire County Council. However, as there was no material conflict of interest, he remained in the room, spoke and voted under the dispensation granted on behalf of the Standards Committee to participate and vote in all matters which might have a County Council involvement.

Councillor Southgate declared a personal interest with regard to agenda item 7, Provision of Museums Services by Hampshire Cultural Trust (Report CAB2589

refers) due to his role as relevant Portfolio Holder as the Council's trustee on the interim board.

2. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 7 July 2014, less exempt item, be approved and adopted.

3. **ACCESS TO SERVICES IN MARKET TOWNS AND RURAL AREAS
INFORMAL SCRUTINY GROUP – 12 MONTH REVIEW OF
RECOMMENDATIONS**

(Report OS107 refers)

Councillor Evans sought clarification of her role as Chairman of the Informal Scrutiny Group (ISG) in the monitoring of the implementation of the Group's recommendations by Cabinet. Although the Chairman was likely to have a on-going interest in the subject matter, the Chief Executive advised that the ISG's recommendations were effectively 'owned' by the Portfolio Holder who would decide how to implement them, or otherwise.

The Head of Policy undertook to investigate with relevant officers and Portfolio Holder the response to a number of questions raised by Councillor Evans with regard to the progress of several of the ISG's recommendations and report these to the Committee outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee notes the progress made to date in implementing the recommendations of the Access to Services in Market Towns and Rural Areas Informal Scrutiny Group.

2. That Head of Policy investigate with relevant officers and Portfolio Holder the response to questions raised by the Chairman of the Informal Scrutiny Group with regard to the progress of several of the Group's recommendations and report these to the Committee outside of the meeting.

4. **PERFORMANCE MONITORING UPDATE – CHANGE PLANS OUTTURN
2013/14**

(Report OS102 refers)

The Committee noted that this item was deferred by the Committee at its previous meeting due to the volume of other agenda items at that time.

With regard to the Active Communities Outcome on page 4 of the Report, the Committee noted the provision of severe weather emergency bed spaces for

rough sleepers in the Winchester town area. The Assistant Director (Economy and Communities) undertook to report to the Committee outside of the meeting whether the Council (with partner organisations) was also able to provide similar facilities in other areas of the District.

With regard to the Economic Prosperity Outcome on page 8 of the Report, the Chief Executive advised that data may be available via the Living Wage National Committee to demonstrate progress in increasing the numbers of those in receipt of a Living Wage across the District.

The Committee referred to the Key Performance Indicators for each of the outcomes of the Community Strategy in Appendix 2 of the Report and asked a number of detailed questions, the responses to which are summarised below.

- i. With regard to Unemployment Claimant Count on page 21, the Assistant Director explained that whilst the apparent upturn trend of 18-24 year olds claiming unemployment benefits was likely to have been maintained, the Council had recently commissioned a jobseeker mentoring service. Progress on the initiative could be reported on in due course.
- ii. Although the percentage of Household Waste Recycled (page 23) had shown an apparent decrease at outturn, officers were working with the Portfolio Holder to increase rates overall. Projects included improving separation of waste material and also working with WinAcc on new initiatives. The Committee requested that the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing ensure that improvements to the Council's household recycling rates were made over time.
- iii. The Committee agreed that the presentation of the performance information related to Working Days lost due to Sickness Absence (page 24) should be improved for it to be useful to its scrutiny role. However, Members acknowledged that the overview data as presented had indicated a downward trend and also that the Personnel Committee would continue to robustly challenge the more detailed information that was regularly presented.
- iv. The Chief Executive advised that he would discuss with the Assistant Director (Chief Housing Officer) possible underlying trends related to an apparent increase in complaints related to Housing Landlord Services (page 27). However, he pointed out that a number of housing functions had been recently brought together during this period that were previously separately reported on. These included the New Homes Delivery and Housing Allocations Teams.
- v. It was acknowledged that further detail would be helpful to assist the Committee in establishing which areas of the Environment function may be predominantly the source of complaints made to the Council (page 27). The Assistant Director (Economy and Communities) explained that

the Council had recently commenced a new process of recording and monitoring complaints via the organisation's performance management software, Covalent. This would also improve the future presentation of information to Members. The Committee also noted that the Winchester City Council/East Hampshire District Council Environmental Services Joint Scrutiny Committee was also presented with more specific information for more in-depth scrutiny.

RESOLVED:

1. That the performance information in the Report be noted.
2. That the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing ensure that improvements to the Council's household recycling rates are made over time.

5. **PUBLIC TRANSPORT ISG – 12 MONTH REVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS**
(Report OS106 refers)

During discussion, Councillor Southgate stated that he would seek assurances at the next meeting of the Solent Travel Group that all County Council subsidised bus services honoured season tickets issued by each carrier. He would also make enquiries about whether ticketing initiatives like Solent Go could cover more of the District. He acknowledged that this was particularly important in some rural areas where residents were reliant on more than one bus company. He also drew attention to the Council's ability as Licensing Authority to control taxi operator fares, which were reviewed annually.

In response to a query about Park and Ride bus operators, the Corporate Director clarified that usual procurement procedures were followed when tendering for bus services from prospective carriers.

The Chairman raised with Councillor Southgate the possibility of greater Member involvement in discussions to deliver a transport strategy for the District.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee notes the progress made to date in implementing the recommendations of the Public Transport Informal Scrutiny Group.

6. **CAPITAL STRATEGY 2014**
(Report CAB2610 refers)

The Committee noted that Cabinet had recommended that Council approve the draft Capital Strategy as set out.

Councillor Godfrey detailed improvements to be made to processes associated with capital project planning.

The Chief Executive also referred to ongoing work to improve the Council's corporate planning processes, including linking the Capital Programme and medium term Financial Strategy so that expenditure could be seen alongside opportunities for income.

The Committee referred to the Capital Strategy and asked a number of detailed questions of Councillor Godfrey and officers.

With regard to the various General Fund Commitments within the Strategy, Councillor Godfrey clarified that a working budget for essential repairs to River Park Leisure Centre was included; however a report would be brought forward in due course setting out more detailed options for the facility over the longer term. He also advised that £20,000 was required to help support the implementation of the Portable Event Space and that Abbey Mill Hydro works could be progressed as soon as the necessary Environment Agency Licence had been obtained. With regard to the replacement lift at City Museum, Councillor Godfrey reminded the Committee that the Cultural Trust would be taking on the responsibility for running the service; not the infrastructure, for which the Council retained overall responsibility. The Strategy also set out a budget for essential maintenance to City Offices, however plans for a replacement (incorporating an extension to the Guildhall) were also to be brought forward for decision soon.

At conclusion of discussion, the Committee raised concerns that the Strategy was not adequate in its forecast projections for the Council's expenditure, having regard to the number of major projects likely to be brought forward. However, Councillor Godfrey was satisfied that outline business cases for these projects would be prepared, which in turn would help inform a medium term Financial Strategy.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee note that draft Capital Strategy 2014.
2. That the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Organisational Development have regard to the Committee's concerns that the Capital Strategy was not adequate in its forecast projections for the Council's expenditure, having regard to the number of major projects likely to be brought forward.

RECOMMENDED:

THAT THAT THE COMMITTEE RAISE NO COMMENTS TO COUNCIL COUNCIL ON THE DRAFT CAPITAL STRATEGY STRATEGY 2014, AS SET OUT IN APPENDIX A OF CAB2610

7. **PROVISION OF MUSEUMS SERVICES BY HAMPSHIRE CULTURAL TRUST**
(Report CAB2589 refers)

Following discussion, the Committee agreed that, notwithstanding the important role of the Museums Informal Scrutiny Group to date, as the ISG had discharged its existing Terms of Reference, it was not necessary for it to be reconstituted. Members considered that the likelihood of an annual presentation to the Committee by representatives of the Trust, in addition to its scrutiny of regular performance information, would be adequate for it to maintain an overview of the Trust's performance. The Committee may choose to carry out more in-depth scrutiny of specific matters of the Trust's work if and when necessary. Therefore, the Committee did not support Recommendation 10 of the Report.

The Corporate Director advised that the Council would be looking for the Trust to run the existing Museum Services in a specific way, but it that would be open to discussion with the Trust on how this may be organised in the future. This may, for example, include changes to the way Council's buildings are used in the delivering the service.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee requests, through Cabinet, clarification on arrangements for the future care and display of the Civic Silver collection, by means of an information item in the Democratic Services Update in due course.

8. **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME AND OCTOBER 2014 FORWARD PLAN**
(Report OS105 refers)

The Chairman announced that he was working with officers to deliver a future process to bring together into a single report, presented half yearly, of 12 month reviews of Informal Scrutiny Group (ISG) Recommendations. This would be by way of flagging up any significant variances and/or lack of progress in implementing specific recommendations.

The Chairman also reported that he had also met with relevant officers to propose an itinerary of meetings of the Flooding ISG, to include with representatives of affected communities, during October and November 2014.

During further discussion of forthcoming items of business for the remainder of the municipal year, it was agreed that the Domestic Violence ISG Recommendations be taken to the meeting of the Committee on 8 December 2014. As Chairman of the River Park Leisure Centre ISG, Councillor Wright suggested that he was to recommend that an interim report on the Group's work be taken to the October Committee meeting.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the comments raised above, the Scrutiny Work Programme and Forward Plan for October 2014 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 the previous meeting held on 7 July 2014 – Silver Hill Regeneration) 3,4,6&7))))

10. **EXEMPT MINUTE**

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minute of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 7 July 2014, be approved and adopted.

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

Chairman