

## **THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**26 October 2015**

Attendance:

Councillors:

Simon Cook (Chairman) (P)

J Berry (P)  
Gemmell (P)  
Hiscock (P)  
McLean (P)  
Sanders (P)

Stallard (P)  
Tod (P)  
Thacker (P)  
Wright (P)

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillors Godfrey (Leader), Byrnes (Portfolio Holder for Local Economy), Horrill (Portfolio Holder for Housing Services), Pearson (Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing), Power, Read (Portfolio Holder for Built Environment) and Weston (Portfolio Holder for Service Delivery)

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1. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

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

2. **MEMBERSHIP OF SUB COMMITTEES AND INFORMAL GROUPS**

It was noted that the Conservative Group had requested that in the interests of political proportionality, it retain the right to make an additional appointment to the Hampshire Home Choice Informal Scrutiny Group (ISG). The Chief Operating Officer advised that the strict political balance requirements did not apply to ISGs, and that it was a decision for the Committee as to whether the political balance ratios were used.

## RESOLVED:

That the following change to ISG membership be approved:

- i) Hampshire Home Choice Informal Scrutiny Group (ISG) – At the request of the Liberal Democrat Group, Councillor Scott be appointed as an additional Member to the Group; and
- (ii) That the Conservative Group be also allowed to make an additional appointment to the Hampshire Home Choice (ISG), the nomination to be formally agreed at the next meeting.

3. **MINUTES**

## RESOLVED:

That the minutes of meeting held on 14 September 2015, less exempt minute, be approved and adopted.

4. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Councillor Power addressed the Committee in relation to the Hampshire Home Choice ISG, as set out in Item 2 above. In summary, she welcomed the additional appointment onto the Hampshire Home Choice ISG and stated that she understood that ISG's normally consisted of Members with a particular interest or expertise in the related field, with cross party support for findings and recommendations. Councillor Power sought further clarification on the process of appointments and their formation.

In response, the Chairman addressed Councillor Power's concerns and stated that knowledge within the ISG's was key to achieving the best outcomes at these meetings. However, ultimately the ISG's and the appointments thereon, were a matter for the Committee to determine.

5. **PRESENTATION BY HAMPSHIRE CULTURAL TRUST**  
(Oral Report)

The Committee received a presentation by Alan Lovell, Chair of Trustees and Janet Owen, Chief Executive of the Hampshire Cultural Trust who provided details of the progress made by the Trust in its first year of operation. They outlined the focus of the transferring of services, with 26 assets in the County, primarily museums, with two external facilities and the Wessex Dance Academy which works in collaboration with Hampshire County Council (HCC) Education Services. It was noted that a full team of trustees had been appointed and included representatives from HCC and WCC. An outline of the skills and experience of trustees was provided. Key challenges included the accreditation

of museum venues and increasing commercial income streams to improve financial viability.

The key achievements of 2014/15 were highlighted, as summarised below:-

- Brand launch and formation of the new website;
- £400,000 surplus achieved at year end;
- Growing customer base: 780,000;
- Marked increase on visitors to museums from 2013/14 by 7% with a focus on the achievements of the three Winchester venues:-
  - (i) Winchester City Museum – improved retail in partnership with Hampshire Fare;
  - (ii) Westgate Museum – open daily throughout main Summer 2014, in partnership with the City Council; and
  - (iii) City Space Museum - including the following exhibitions:
    - Dinosaurium: Re-imagined Creatures;
    - Chalk - biannual festival of contemporary art, writing and performance;
    - The return of the Perlins Community Project to City Space; and
    - Planning for exhibitions commemorating 300th birthday of Capability Brown
- Development of a 10 year Strategic Vision and Plans:-

Long term plans included the investigating the possibility of the development of a new cultural attraction for Winchester, promoting its Anglo Saxon heritage and working in partnership with other stakeholder groups such as Hyde900 and The English Project.

In response to questions from Members, it was reported that the work of the Trust extended across the District. Initiatives under its 'Big Theme' banner were delivered in partnership with community groups. The Trust also continued to participate at local fetes and other events to ensure visibility in the parishes.

The Trust stated that they recognised the importance of working with local communities and were keen to do so with programmes specifically aimed at enhancing impact and increasing interest by reaching the community. It was the aim of the Trust to particularly reach disadvantaged groups to encourage cultural education and to actively promote the Trust's objectives and aspirations for the future.

The Chairman thanked Hampshire Cultural Trust for their hard work and for their informative presentation, and congratulated them on their achievements to date.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted.

6. **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2016/17 – 20/21**  
(Report CAB2732 refers)

The Committee noted that the Report had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 21 October 2015 and the recommendations approved.

Councillor Godfrey introduced the Report which looked at the next stage of the budget setting sequence within the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy and the changes to current forecast expenditure. He outlined the latest position in relation to Business Rates appeals and reported that it was now estimated that £3.8 million would be needed for the Business Rates Reserve in 2015/16 to mitigate against potential successful appeals.

Councillor Godfrey drew Members' attention to the forecast position over the next five year period which indicated a significant shortfall, with the revenue consequences of proposed projects outlined within the graphs, as set out on page 6 of the Report. He made reference to the importance of Major Projects and the need for the Council to increase its funding stream from its assets to assist with the delivery of its services. It would be necessary to establish sources of income to bridge budget gaps for which the Committee's views and ideas were sought. It was the aim for there to be no changes to charges, in areas such as Council Tax and Parking, and to maintain service levels generally.

In response to concerns raised regarding the increasing levels of deficit over the five year period, Councillor Godfrey outlined the impact of Major Projects, such as Station Approach, which were set to favourably affect budgets. He also drew the Committee's attention to the positive benefits of the Capital Programme on the Revenue Budget. The Committee noted that the deficit figures set out in the Report were based on a prudent approach in order for the Council to mitigate its risks, should the expected income generation and associated assumptions not be realised.

Councillor Godfrey reported that a programme of work was to be carried out with the Business Support Team and Planning Services which would then follow on to other services, seeking to achieve efficiencies by streamlining services. This work was looking specifically at areas such as service improvements, shared business services, business process reviews and efficiency across the Council. It would enable the Council to become increasingly self reliant prior to Government announcements regarding future financial settlements and the outcome of devolution proposals.

## RESOLVED:

1. That the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/17 to 20/21 be noted;
- 2, That the General Revised Estimates (Revenue and Capital) for 2015/16 and the proposed carry forward of budgets be noted; and
3. That the proposed virement from the revenue to capital for flooding resilience schemes, be not called in for review.

**RECOMMENDED:**

**THAT THE COUNCIL BE ADVISED THAT THERE ARE NO MATTERS THAT THE COMMITTEE WISHES TO DRAW TO ITS ATTENTION.**

7. **MID YEAR PERFORMANCE AGAINST PORTFOLIO HOLDER PLANS**

(Report OS131 refers)

The Committee noted that the Report contained mid year performance information for the Housing Services, Environment, Health and Wellbeing, Estates, Local Economy, Service Delivery, Built Environment and Finance & Corporate Policy Portfolio Plans.

In response to questions, Councillor Godfrey confirmed that with the introduction of Universal Credit, there was now a need for applicants to gain computer access to complete all necessary forms. He reported that a Universal Credit Support Officer had been appointed to signpost people to assistance, working in collaboration with the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) to ensure necessary support and computer access was available to all those that required this facility.

Councillor Read advised the Committee that vacant posts in the enforcement team were in the process of being appointed, once in post one of the priorities for the team would be to assess and prioritise the number of open enforcement cases outstanding and to work with Parish Councils to assess aspirations across all areas of the District.

It was noted that Public Realm meetings are attended by officers to ensure the centre of the city is well presented and maintained. Works to the Buttercross had been discussed at these meetings, and the budget for these works formed part of the Estates maintenance budget.

Councillor Pearson clarified that works were to be carried out to open spaces in parishes with pockets of open space to be used for conservation and biodiversity. Proposals had been consulted upon and teams were currently in the process of assimilating data.

In response to questions, Councillor Pearson provided an update regarding the delivery of Council's Policy in relation to Low Carbon District. However, all matters in relation to biodiversity were dependant on feedback by the Environment Agency and impact assessments being carried out.

The Council's Carbon Footprint performance in comparison to that of other similar sized local authorities was raised. Members considered that it would be beneficial for comparative figures to be provided to assess the Council's performance against other authorities and would prove to be a useful tool for future reference.

Councillor Byrnes confirmed that alongside attracting businesses to the new town centre developments at Silver Hill and Station Approach, the Council also needed to look at other development across the District to ensure that businesses were sustainable and would remain in the location for many years.

In response to questions from Members regarding the relocation of Bury Farm occupants following the recently approved planning application for the development of the North of Whiteley Urban Extension, Councillor Byrnes advised that a Bury Farm Project Officer (funded by contributions from Crest Nicholson and the City Council) was currently being advertised. The post holder appointed would work with tenants to assist them with the relocation process. However, with low rental costs at Bury Farm, it was proving difficult for tenants to move for similar rental costs.

Councillor Weston reported on the latest position in relation to the Council's Pay Policy following changes to the living wage; the creation of an mobile app to improve access to Council information; and the implementation of Individual Electoral Registration (IER) which was introduced in June 2014.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the performance information contained in the Report be noted; and
2. That the comments of the Committee be noted, with comparative performance data to be obtained from similar scale local authorities in order to measure the Council's performance, as set out above.

8. **RESPONSES TO NOTICES OF MOTION TO COUNCIL ON RECENT GOVERNMENT HOUSING ANNOUNCEMENTS**

(Report CAB2723 (HSG) refers)

Councillor Horrill introduced the Report which had been considered by Cabinet (Housing) Committee at its meeting on 30 September 2015. Councillor Horrill outlined the response to the two Notices of Motion tabled at the Council meeting on 23 July 2015 in relation to Government proposals to extend “Right to Buy” to housing association tenants and for this to be part funded through the sale of ‘high value’ council homes as they become vacant. Councillor Horrill updated the Committee on the information available to date and advised that officers would revisit housing budgets in the Autumn based on the latest understanding on reduced rent levels and any sales levy.

The Assistant Director (Chief Housing Officer) informed the Committee that, since the Report was considered by Cabinet (Housing) Committee at its meeting on 30 September 2015, the Housing Bill had been released which included “Right to Buy” to housing association tenants, based on voluntary agreement by associations. Representation had been made to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and our Members of Parliament (MPs) proposing that any repayments be based on actual sales (not an assumed levy). Further detail and clarity was still required on various aspects of the Bill, such as, concerns regarding the risks in relation to the impact of “high value” sales, and the risk that any sales levy would not be linked to replacement housing within the District.

It was reported that there were significant aspects of the Housing Bill that the Local Government Association (LGA) and Winchester City Council were concerned about. The Committee noted that the Housing Bill would receive its second reading next week. The Leader confirmed that MPs had been briefed and updated on the impact on the Winchester District.

At the conclusion of debate, Councillor Horrill reported that she would make further representations regarding the retention and re-investment of receipts from sales within the District.

As soon as the position became clearer and further detail obtained, Cabinet (Housing) Committee would consider the budget impact and would clarify the Business Strategy, reporting back to Council.

**RECOMMENDED:**

**1. THAT COUNCIL BE ADVISED THAT THE RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR HOUSING AND PLANNING – AND THE LATEST INFORMATION ABOUT THE BILL – DOES NOT PROVIDE THE REASSURANCE NEEDED ABOUT THE IMPACT OF THE HOUSING BILL FOR WINCHESTER TENANTS AND DELIVERY OF THE COUNCIL’S HOUSING BUSINESS PLAN.**

9. **WINCHESTER EXTRA CARE SCHEME – AUTHORISATION TO PROCEED (LESS EXEMPT APPENDICES)**

(Report CAB2724(HSG) refers)

**EXTRACTS FROM MINUTES OF CABINET (HOUSING) COMMITTEE HELD 30 SEPTEMBER 2015 (LESS EXEMPT MINUTE)**

(Report OS133 refers)

Councillor Horrill introduced the Report and stated that the Report had been discussed at Cabinet (Housing) Committee at its meeting on 30 September 2015 (relevant minute contained within Report OS133). In addition, the Report had also been considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 21 October 2015..Due to the revised costs involved, Council approval would be required at its meeting on 4 November 2015.

It was reported that the scheme, incorporated the construction of 52 flats with day care facilities to be situated on the Chesil Street surface car park. Councillor Horrill reported that as there no further alteration to the proposed design and number of affordable homes to be provided she believed the comments of local residents had been taken into account.

The importance of the provision of new homes for those in need of extra care in later years was highlighted and the significant benefits to tenants noted.

The Committee noted that negotiations on the contract were ongoing and a revised Financial Viability Summary had been circulated to reflect this (Exempt Addendum to Report CAB2724(HSG) refers which replaced and updated Exempt Appendix 2). The Chairman agreed to accept the updated addendum onto the agenda, as it was necessary to consider it before making a decision.

Members made reference to the analysis of parking in the Town Centre and the impact this may have on parking revenue to the Council. However, it was noted that there was still sufficient levels of parking available in car parks across the Town Centre that were not used to their full capacity.



RESOLVED:

That the Committee note the recommendations of Cabinet (Housing) Committee at its meeting on 30 September 2015 (Report OS133 refers) and Cabinet at its meeting on 21 October 2015.

**RECOMMENDED :**

**THAT THE COUNCIL BE ADVISED THAT THERE ARE NO MATTERS THAT THE COMMITTEE WISHES TO DRAW TO ITS ATTENTION.**

10. **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME AND NOVEMBER 2015 FORWARD PLAN**  
(Report OS132 refers)

RESOLVED:

That the Scrutiny Work Programme and Forward Plan for November 2015, be noted.

11. **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>
##	Extra Care – Authorisation to Process with the Scheme (Exempt Appendices) and Extracts from	) 3 ) ) ) )

	Minutes of Cabinet	)	
	(Housing) Committee	)	
	held on 30 September	)	
	2015 (Exempt Minute)	)	
##	Exempt minute of the	)	3 & 5
	previous meeting held	)	
	on 14 September 2015 -	)	
	St Clement's Surgery	)	

12. **WINCHESTER EXTRA CARE SCHEME – AUTHORISATION TO PROCEED (EXEMPT APPENDICES)**

(Report CAB2724(HSG) and Addendum to Exempt Appendix B refers)

The Committee referred to the contents of the Addendum which had been circulated and replaced the previous Exempt Appendix 2 of the Report. The Chairman agreed that it should be accepted onto the agenda as an urgent matter, to enable the updated financial information to be considered.

The Committee considered the content of the exempt appendices to the Report which contained further detail on financial viability and the tender report (detail in exempt minute).

13. **EXEMPT MINUTE**

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minute of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 14 September 2015, be approved and adopted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 9.42pm.