

THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – SPECIAL MEETING

18 April 2016

Attendance:

Councillors:

Simon Cook (Chairman) (P)

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

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

Deputy Members:

Councillors Bodtger (Standing Deputy for Councillor Sanders) and Humby (Standing Deputy for Councillor Thacker)

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillor Godfrey (Leader)

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillors Weston (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Service Delivery) and Byrnes (Portfolio Holder for Local Economy)

1. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillors Humby, Stallard and Tod each declared disclosable pecuniary interests 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. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

As he was not seeking re-election in May, this was the last meeting of the Committee that Councillor Wright was to attend. The Chairman thanked him for his participation and contribution in debates over the years.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of meeting held on 22 February 2016 be approved and adopted.

4. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No comments or questions were made during public participation.

5. **AGREED RESPONSES TO RECOMMENDATIONS – UPDATE
FOLLOWING DISCUSSION OF INFORMAL POLICY GROUP**

(Report OS142 refers)

Councillor Godfrey drew to Members' attention that the Action Plan table appended to the Report had been updated in response to the initial discussions of the Independent Review of Silver Hill Informal Policy Group (IPG). The Audit (Governance) Sub-Committee has also made further refinements at its meeting held the previous week and the Committee was advised of these during its discussion. Councillor Godfrey clarified that the IPG would ensure coordination between itself, the Audit Sub-Committee and The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to ensure continued progress in dealing with each of the recommendations of the Independent Review. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee would specifically look at matters related to the Council's scrutiny function, and the Audit (Governance) Sub-Committee would pursue those matters specifically related to governance.

The Committee considered the updated Action Plan table 1 to 12 and, in summary, made the following points:

- Item 2 – In response to a question, Councillor Godfrey advised that it was not necessary for Members to have professional and commercial skills. However, the Council needed to have appropriate governance processes in place so that its major projects were able to be properly monitored by Members, allowing them opportunities to challenge where appropriate. He advised that any gaps in professional skills amongst officers that may be identified would be addressed. Any increase to the Council's salary bill as a consequence could potentially be met by the overall benefits of delivery of the projects.

The Corporate Director emphasised that all major projects had several stages during their lives. For example, the actual build of a new Leisure Centre would be project managed by external professionals as the Council did not have the capacity, nor the necessary specialist skills, in-house to do this. Initial stages of projects were about gathering the necessary information for the decision-making phases. This would then allow the next stages to go forward.

- Item 3 – Councillor Godfrey emphasised that the two design companies involved with the Leisure Centre project had been brought in via competitive tendering processes. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services clarified that construction capital works of more than £4m and goods/services of more than £160,000 were subject to the Public Contracts Regulations requiring full tender processes. Any procurement below those values would be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Contracts Procedure Rules which provided for competitive processes. Councillor Godfrey was satisfied that any public perception that the Council was 'hostile' to competition was not accurate – competitive procurement processes almost always produced better outcomes. It was for the Council to ensure that the correct message with regard to this matter was communicated to residents.
- Item 5 – The Chief Executive drew Members' attention that in many cases, exempt information was set out in exempt appendices, with the main committee report being an open report available to the public. Some matters were likely to remain confidential (e.g. commercially sensitive information): however, other material associated with projects could be periodically reviewed as to whether it should need to remain exempt. It was agreed that reference within this Item to 'exempt reports' be amended to read '**exempt items**'.
- Item 6 – The Chief Executive suggested that it may be appropriate to see whether more Councillors wished to use the Council's Covalant performance management system. Whilst the system was quite technical, and training sessions may be required, Members may identify additional outputs that could justify the necessary cost of additional licences.
- Item 7 – Councillor Godfrey accepted that the Council must overcome any shortcomings to its existing public engagement strategies. The Council should be clearer in its communication of proposals, such as providing assurances to the public about what it was doing with regard to its projects. Any revisions made to existing strategies should include sufficient flexibility to cover all eventualities as well as focussing on existing examples of good practice and recent successes. These included the "Blueprint" Local Plan process and the public consultation on the Station Approach scheme. The Chief Executive reminded the Committee that Councillors had an important role in public engagement processes with their local communities.
- Item 11 – A governance review should include revisiting the existing role of the Winchester Town Forum. Should it be decided that the scrutiny process required its own staffing resource to support, the Chief Executive advised that this should be investigated alongside the Council's many other priorities.

- Item 12 – The Local Government Association (LGA) could be asked to support any specific training for Councillors that may subsequently be required. A Member suggested that the Council already had a robust schedule of Member training events (including Induction and Code of Conduct) and other varied briefing sessions and it was for them to avail themselves to attend.

RESOLVED:

That the information in the report be noted and where appropriate, actions and milestones be updated in response to the Committee's discussion.

6. **ST CLEMENT'S DOCTORS SURGERY, WINCHESTER (LESS EXEMPT APPENDICES)**
(Report CAB2786 refers)

RESOLVED:

That the decisions of Cabinet and Council be noted.

7. **OUTCOME AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CHOICE BASED LETTINGS INFORMAL SCRUTINY GROUP**
(Report CAB2795(HSG) refers)
MINUTE EXTRACT FROM CABINET (HOUSING) COMMITTEE HELD 22 MARCH 2016
(Report OS143 refers)

The Chairman of the Informal Scrutiny Group (ISG), Councillor Hiscock, introduced the Report. He drew Members' attention that the Cabinet (Housing) Committee had approved the ISG's recommendations, which had additionally made some amendments to the Council's Local Letting policies

RESOLVED:

That outcomes and recommendations of the Choice Based Lettings Informal Scrutiny Group and decision of the Cabinet (Housing) Committee be noted.

8. **CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION TO THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**
(Report OS144 refers)

The Committee noted that the Report had not been notified for inclusion on the agenda within the statutory deadline. The Chairman agreed to accept the item onto the agenda as a matter requiring urgent consideration to allow the introduction to be included in the Annual Report in May, subject to any refinements that the Committee may have.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

9. **UPDATE BRIEFING ON SILVER HILL AND RIVER PARK LEISURE CENTRE**

(Oral Update)

The Committee received an oral update on the next steps on both the Silver Hill, and new Leisure Centre projects.

The Corporate Director explained that Cabinet had considered a report in March setting out a draft plan of the siting and facility mix of the new Leisure Centre. This had taken into account the outcomes of public engagement on the proposals. Further consultative work was underway with local sports clubs, etc., which would also help inform the facility's initial costings. A report to Cabinet in July would set out a number of key decisions related to establishing the facility mix. These proposals will then be further 'tested' with the wider Winchester community across the whole District. Decisions on the new facility would have regard to implications on the net Revenue budget, i.e. indicative running costs, etc, and also the contributions to be achieved from management net income. The highest possible income should be achieved to help offset the capital costs of the new build. A memorandum of understanding had recently been signed with the University of Winchester for a potential future partnership arrangement. Representatives were now involved in the Project Board. Negotiations were also ongoing with the Pinder Trust, Sport England (for potential grant opportunities), Hampshire County Council, the Sports and Leisure Trust and local clubs to help with advice and guidance on specific needs. The potential for the facility to generate heat/power for the local areas, as well as its own energy efficiency, were also being explored.

Councillor Godfrey updated the Committee on the latest position with regard to Silver Hill. There were various capital works necessary to tidy the site, including to the existing Friarsgate Car Park and also to the buildings (including Coitbury House) so to help maximise rental income that may be achieved. Work was now required to deliver a new Central Winchester Supplementary Planning Document and a Cabinet Committee would be appointed in May 2016 to coordinate this work in public meetings and with full engagement with residents and stakeholders.

RESOLVED:

That the oral updates be noted.

10. **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME AND MAY 2016 FORWARD PLAN**
(Report OS132 refers)

RESOLVED:

That the Scrutiny Work Programme and Forward Plan for May 2016, be noted.

11. **VOTE OF THANKS**

This being the last meeting of the Committee of the Municipal Year, and the last that he would attend as he was not seeking re election in May, the Committee passed a vote of thanks to its Chairman, Councillor Cook.

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>
##	St Clement's Doctors Surgery, Winchester (Exempt Appendices)) Information relating to any individual (Para 1 Schedule 12A refers))) Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual (Para 2 Schedule 12A refers))) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). (Para 3 Schedule 12A refers)

12. **ST CLEMENT'S DOCTORS SURGERY, WINCHESTER (EXEMPT APPENDICES)**
(Report CAB2786 refers)

RESOLVED:

That the content of the exempt appendices be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 8.00pm.

Chairman.