

SOCIAL ISSUES SCRUTINY PANEL**10 November 2009****Attendance:**

Councillors:

Tait (Chairman) (P)

Achwal (P)

Berry (P)

Clear (P)

Gemmell (P)

Hammerton (P)

Hicks (P)

Love (P)

Nelmes

Ruffell

Thynne (P)

Weston (P)

TACT Representatives:

Mr Rickman and Mrs White

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillor Coates (Portfolio Holder for Housing)

1. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Councillor Coates declared a personal and prejudicial interest, due to his involvement as a Cabinet Member in actions taken or proposed in the Reports outlined below.

However, the Panel requested that he remain in the meeting, in his capacity as a Portfolio Holder, under the provisions of Section 21(13) (a) of the Local Government Act 2000, in order that he could provide additional information to the Panel and/or answer questions.

2. MINUTES

Members requested that the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Safety be requested to update the Panel at its next meeting on progress to implement the recommendations of the Youth Facilities Informal Scrutiny Group (Minute 9, Report SO92 refers).

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held 16 July 2009 be approved and adopted.

3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no questions asked or statements made.

4. **OUTCOMES FOR THE COMMUNITY – OVERVIEW FOR SOCIAL ISSUES SCRUTINY PANEL** [\(Report SO99 Refers\)](#)

The Head of Partnerships, Communication and Improvement introduced the Report and referred to the outcomes of the Local Area Agreement relevant to the remit of the Panel.

It was noted that, currently, the Panel were reliant on Portfolio Holders and the officers who attended partnership meetings to assist in the understanding of the issues relevant to the work of the Panel. It was noted that, although there was evidence that the partnerships were generally functioning well, there was a need for more evidence based results and for a sharing of information.

Following discussion, it was agreed that Member representatives from the Panel attend the meetings of the various partnerships responsible for delivering these outcomes. This would ensure that the Panel become better informed to carry out in-depth scrutiny of relevant matters. The Chairman would arrange for representatives to be agreed via email, outside of the meeting.

It was also agreed that, following the attendance of representatives at these meetings, Members would discuss whether it would be appropriate for future Panel meetings to have specific themes, based on the outcomes of the Local Area Agreement. This would allow for a more in-depth scrutiny focus of those issues relevant to the remit of the Panel, including the functioning of associated partnerships.

Councillor Coates also advised that each of the partnerships had overarching strategies and action plans that fed into the Council's divisional business plans. Therefore, Panel members should revisit these documents to see whether key activities etc were on target for delivery and were being delivered by the partnerships. The Head of Partnerships, Communication and Improvement advised that, where the City Council was investing in these programmes, actions were monitored via Covalent

During further discussion of the Report, the Head of Partnerships, Communication and Improvement clarified that local schools were being encouraged to engage with the process to develop local 'children's trusts'. The remit of the trusts was referred to and there was some concern that the new trusts may conflict with the evolving work of the Winchester District and Young People's Partnership. The children's trusts were due to be functioning by April 2010.

Members referred to the extracted results of the 2008 Place Survey as set out at Appendix 2 to the Report. It was clarified that the Place Survey was a statutory requirement, with the questions therein generally set by Government.

A total of 2500 recipients were selected randomly across the District. With regard to question 15 and 16 on pages 21 and 22 (participation in local communities) the Head of Partnerships, Communication and Improvement drew attention to the work of 'Community Action Hampshire', which sought to enhance community involvement.

Following further discussion of the Place Survey results, it was agreed that presentation of the data was challenging in places and not always easy to understand. It was suggested that improvements to the comparative data would assist comprehension, including of inclusion of apparent trends.

RESOLVED:

1. That Member representatives of the Panel attend the meetings of the various partnerships responsible for delivering the outcomes of the Local Area Agreement, relevant to the remit of the Panel (representatives would be agreed outside of the meeting and arranged by the Chairman via email).

2. That, at its meeting to be held on 1 February 2010, the Panel considers whether future meetings should be arranged around specific themes based on the outcomes of the Local Area Agreement, to allow for more in-depth scrutiny focus of those outcomes and associated partnerships relevant to the remit of the Panel.

5. **CORPORATE BUSINESS PLAN 2010-15 – CONSULTATION DRAFT**
[\(Report CAB1922 refers\)](#)

This Report was not 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, in order that Panel's comments could be submitted to Cabinet at its meeting on 9 December 2009.

The Panel noted a correction to paragraph 2.3 of the Report. The Corporate Business Plan would be presented to Cabinet for approval in December 2009, not January 2010 as stated. At this meeting, Cabinet would be advised of feedback to consultation received to date. The Plan would be recommended for approval to full Council on 6 January 2010, with an update provided on any further responses received.

Further to questions, the Corporate Director (Policy) confirmed that the Council would have the capacity to deliver the revised programmes as set out in the Business Plan.

Following further discussion, the Panel raised no comments to Cabinet on the proposed wording of the Corporate Business Plan.

RESOLVED:

That no comments be made to Cabinet on the proposed wording of the Corporate Business Plan 2010-2015.

6. **GENERAL FUND BUDGET CONSULTATION 2010/11**
([Report CAB1923 refers](#))

This Report was not 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, in order that Panel's comments could be submitted to Cabinet at its meeting on 9 December 2009.

The Head of Finance drew attention to the Appendices to the Report, which set out options for income growth and expenditure savings (and related prioritisations) relevant to the areas of responsibility of the Panel.

Following discussion the Panel raised no comments to Cabinet on the proposals as set out.

RESOLVED:

That no comments be made to Cabinet on the initial options for 2010/11 budget savings and growth.

7. **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY OUTCOME: HEALTH AND WELLBEING – QUARTER 2 2009/10 PERFORMANCE MONITORING UPDATE (EXCEPTIONS ONLY)**
PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR COMMUNITIES AND SAFETY
PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HERITAGE, CULTURE AND SPORT
([Report SO95 Refers](#))

The Head of Economic and Cultural Services advised that several of the Council's outcome priorities were cross-cutting and were also likely to be relevant to other Scrutiny Panels, in particular the Local Economy Scrutiny Panel.

In response to questions, she undertook to confirm to the Panel, outside of the meeting, an estimate of the financial impact of the closure of the sports hall at Meadowside, Whiteley following the damage to the heating system.

The Panel referred to the exception performance information and report card as set out as appendices to the Report.

During discussion, it was agreed that resources should continue to be appropriately targeted to outcomes that would have most impact on local communities. It was confirmed that the event referred to under PCI/CWT/020 on page 4 of Appendix 1 (European Day of Solidarity) was an 'inter generational' event designed to enhance relations and community working between all age groups of society.

The Panel also referred to PCI/CWT/002 (page 5) and the successful delivery of the 'It's OK to Play' project. The Head of Performance, Communications and Improvement referred to staffing resource issues that may have impacted on the accurate reporting of milestones successfully achieved. Although she

provided assurances that the project was being delivered on time, she undertook to check the position regarding this.

With regard to free swimming initiative for under 16's (CUL003d on page 7) the Head of Economic and Cultural Services confirmed that its continued success would be tracked over time. She confirmed that the scheme had no direct cost implications to the Council.

RESOLVED:

That the monitoring information in the Report be noted.

8. **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY OUTCOME: INCLUSIVE SOCIETY – QUARTER 2 2009/10 PERFORMANCE MONITORING UPDATE (EXCEPTIONS ONLY)**
PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING
[\(Report SO96 Refers\)](#)

The Head of Strategic Housing apologised that Appendix 2 to the Report – Affordable Housing Quarter 2 report card was not available to the Panel at this time, due to availability of staff resources. However, he advised that, to date, his Division was on target to deliver all targets within its Business Plan.

With regard to STH/DIV/001 on page 3 on Appendix 1 to the Report, the Head of Strategic Housing advised that his Division was on target to complete 100 affordable housing units. However, he was unable to confirm at this time where all these would be located in the District.

RESOLVED:

That the monitoring information in the Report be noted.

9. **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY OUTCOME: SAFE AND STRONG COMMUNITIES - QUARTER 2 2009/10 PERFORMANCE MONITORING UPDATE (EXCEPTIONS ONLY)**
PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR COMMUNITIES AND SAFETY
[\(Report SO97 Refers\)](#)

The Head of Environment advised that he envisaged that there would, in time, be improvements to aligning the reporting of his Division's performance with the new approach to exception-only reporting. However, he advised that he was satisfied that the majority of outcomes expected at this time were on target, and in accordance with his Division's business plan.

During discussion of the expected outcomes of the Community Safety Action Plan, there was concern expressed of apparent continuing CCTV operational problems in Bishops Waltham. The Head of Environment undertook to investigate this as a matter of urgency. He also clarified that fly-tipping in the District was dealt with by a 'hit squad' under contract to the Council. Therefore, there was no additional cost to the Council from each instance reported to the Council and its subsequent removal. He also reported on

initiatives to provide motion sensitive CCTV at various fly tipping hotspots in the District, with a view to prosecuting perpetrators. He invited Members to inform him of particular hotspots that they may be aware of in the areas that they represent.

RESOLVED:

1. That the monitoring information in the Report be noted.
2. That the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Safety note the concerns of the Panel with regard to apparent continuing CCTV operational problems in Bishops Waltham and that he ensures resolution of this as a matter of urgency.

10. **COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT - DRAFT STATUTORY GUIDANCE ON SOCIAL HOUSING ALLOCATIONS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ENGLAND 'FAIR AND FLEXIBLE'**
([Report SO98 Refers](#))

The Panel noted the draft statutory guidance as set out in the Report. Members also asked a number of detailed questions of the Head of Strategic Housing on the operation of the sub regional Choice Based Lettings system, 'Hampshire Home Choice'. He advised that a detailed post implementation Report would be produced for Cabinet in April 2010, 12 months after its implementation.

RESOLVED:

- That the Report be noted.

11. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET 2010/11**
([Report SO100 Refers](#))

This Report was not 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, in order that Panel's comments on proposed revisions to the 2009/10 HRA budget could be submitted to Cabinet at its meeting on 9 December 2009.

The Head of Landlord Services reminded the meeting that the Government had yet to announce draft HRA subsidy determinations and rent increases for the forthcoming year. He drew attention to Government changes to the management, maintenance and major repairs allowances, together with alteration to the principles and assumptions that the Council was to follow in setting the budget. This included maintaining properties to the Decent Home standard, but continuing to suspend some cyclical maintenance work until at least 2012.

Mr Rickman (TACT) reported TACT's concern of the existing HRA subsidy system and that, without significant reform, tenants would continue to get less value for money from their rent payments.

During discussion, the Corporate Director (Operations) recognised that the suspension of some services to tenants was unfortunate, but was a necessity due to the financial pressures facing the HRA and to the Council in general.

RESOLVED:

That no comments be made to Cabinet on the proposals for changes to the HRA budget as set out at Appendix 2 to the Report.

12. **HOUSING PORTFOLIO HOLDER – 2009/10 PERFORMANCE MONITORING QUARTER 2 UPDATE – LANDLORD SERVICES**
(Report SO101 Refers)

The Head of Landlord Services advised that performance reporting for Landlord Services had yet to be incorporated into the new exception reporting system, included in other reports on the agenda. He stressed the importance of clear reporting to tenants of all Landlord actions, which cut across a number of the key outcomes. Options on how best to present this information would be considered as part of third quarter performance reporting.

With regard to the Major Works budget as set out on page 10 of the Report, the Head of Landlord Services advised that he would clarify, outside of the meeting, the accuracy of the average value for bathroom upgrades (£3,075).

The Panel congratulated officers on the Council's Extra Care service being recently assessed as 'Good' by the Care Quality Commission.

RESOLVED:

That the monitoring information in the Report be noted.

13. **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (REPORT PS383 REFERS) AND MATTERS ARISING.**

RESOLVED:

That the Scrutiny Work Programme, as set out on the reverse of the agenda, and as extracted from Report PS382, be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 9.35pm

Chairman