

PRINCIPAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 September 2006

Attendance:

Councillors:

Learney (Chairman) (P)

Anthony (P)
Chapman (P)
Clohosey (P)
Collin (P)
Cook (P)
Evans (P)
Chamberlain (P)
Hiscock (P)

Huxstep (P)
Jeffs (P)
Macmillan (P)
Mather (P)
Saunders (P)
Rees (P)
Wood (P)
Worrall (P)

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillor Allgood (Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources)
Councillor Hollingbery (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Performance and Communication)

1. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no questions asked or statements made.

2. **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies received.

3. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman made no announcements.

4. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 10 July 2006, less exempt items, be approved and adopted.

5. **ANNUAL REPORT ON COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY THE COUNCIL – 2005/06**
(Report PS241 refers)

It was noted that the Council's Complaints Procedure would continue to be advertised at key reception points and leaflets included with appropriate letters. The Customer Service Centre would develop a lead role regarding the recording of complaints received, as business processes were changed so that more complaints were handled through the Centre.

It was agreed that Cabinet should be asked to ensure that the leaflet explaining the Council's Complaints Procedure remained accurate, clearly written and the procedures were capable of being easily understood. It was suggested that references to the National Parking Adjudication Service should be reviewed. The leaflet should also be checked to ensure that it was clear that a Parish Council could not make references on its own account to the Ombudsman.

The Committee discussed whether Ward Councillors should have a more defined role as part of the Complaints Procedure, including the possibility of an automatic notification of all complaints received by the Council relevant to their Ward.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Hollingbery (Portfolio Holder for Performance and Communication) addressed the Committee. He suggested that Ward Councillors should only be notified of those relevant complaints due to be referred to the Ombudsman. This was supported and it was requested that the Portfolio Holder investigate further how best to inform Ward Councillors, as part of the review of complaints monitoring procedures, as changes were introduced as part of the development of the role of the Customer Service Centre.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet be requested to review the Council's Complaints Procedure leaflet to ensure that it is accurate, clearly written and the procedures are capable of being easily understood.

2. That the Portfolio Holder for Performance and Communication be requested to investigate how best to involve Ward Councillors in complaints about to be referred to the Ombudsman, as part of the review of the complaints procedures, as changes were introduced as part of the development of the role of the Customer Service Centre .

6. **INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER**
(Report PS244 refers)

RESOLVED:

That the Audit Charter be approved.

7. **EFFICIENCY STRATEGY**
(Reports CAB1291 and PS247 Extract of Minutes of Cabinet refer)

The Committee noted that, at its meeting on 26 July 2006, Cabinet had approved the Efficiency Strategy and Programme as set out.

It was agreed that Report CAB1291 be referred for consideration to the Gershon Savings Informal Scrutiny Group.

RESOLVED:

That the Efficiency Strategy and Programme be referred for consideration to the Gershon Savings Informal Scrutiny Group.

8. **FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2007/08 – 2011/12**

(Reports CAB1269 and PS247 Extract of Minutes of Cabinet refer)

The Committee noted that, at its meeting on 26 July 2006, Cabinet had approved the Financial Strategy as set out.

The Director of Finance advised that the Draft Corporate Strategy and Budget proposals would now be considered by the meeting of Cabinet on 11 October 2006.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Allgood (Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources) answered questions. He reminded the Committee that various assumptions within the Strategy were necessary, due to uncertainties regarding various external funding streams and future inflation and pay awards etc. The Committee noted that further efficiencies and/or reduction in services would be necessary before any budget growth was considered.

RESOLVED:

That the Scrutiny Panels be advised to take into account:

- (i) the current uncertainty that arises from the potential effect of external factors upon the budget;
- (ii) the fact that inflation has only been included for certain elements of the budget for some years and, in effect, this results in a built-in budget reduction each year, and;
- (iii) the need to consider the scope for efficiencies or budget reductions – particularly if proposals for growth are put forward.

9. **MINUTES OF SCRUTINY PANELS**

The Committee considered the minutes of the following meetings:

- (i) Environment Scrutiny Panel held 12 July 2006
(Report PS248 refers)
- (ii) Local Economy Scrutiny Panel held 13 July 2006
(Report PS249 refers)
- (iii) Social Issues Scrutiny Panel held 17 July 2006
(Report PS250 refers)
- (iv) Resources Scrutiny Panel held 20 July 2006
(Report PS251 refers)

During consideration of the minutes of the Local Economy Scrutiny Panel, Members supported the proposed in-depth review of the Museums Forward Plan and noted that the Group's first meeting had already been held.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Environment Scrutiny Panel held 12 July 2006, Local Economy Scrutiny Panel held 13 July 2006, Social Issues Scrutiny Panel held 17 July 2006 and Resources Scrutiny Panel held 20 July 2006, be received and the recommendations therein be noted.

10. **BUDGET MONITORING AND EFFICIENCY OVERVIEW TO JULY 2006**
(Report CAB242 refers)

A request for a supplementary capital estimate of £108,000 for repairs to the Casson Block, as detailed within the Report, was dealt with under the Committee's powers of call-in (Minute ## (ii) below refers).

The Chief Executive advised that the continued use of temporary agency staff was required to ensure the delivery of core services. Members were reminded of the recent negotiations regarding a joint agency procurement contract with the County Council.

It was requested that Cabinet should carefully monitor progress on the implementation of the potential savings from the Council's 'Review of Publications', particularly as there was currently an overspend for agency staff within the recently restructured Design and Print Section, due to work volumes. The Committee also requested that Cabinet monitor current overspend within the Development Directorate.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet be requested to monitor the progress of the Council's 'Review of Publications', particularly the achieving of previously identified potential budget savings.

2. That Cabinet be requested to monitor current budget overspend within the Development Directorate.

11. **CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS UNDER THE COMMITTEE'S POWERS OF CALL-IN**

i) **RIVER PARK LEISURE CENTRE REFURBISHMENT – INTERIM PROJECT REPORT (LESS EXEMPT APPENDICES)**

(Reports CAB1247 and PS247 Extract of Minutes of Cabinet refer, less exempt minute)

RESOLVED:

That the decision of Cabinet on 27 July 2006 to approve a supplementary estimate of up to £100,000 from the 2006/07 Capital Programme, to cover the estimated costs likely to be incurred in the carrying out of the original defined project, and other subsequently defined works as defined in Exempt Appendix 2 of the Report, be not called-in for review.

ii) **BUDGET MONITORING AND EFFICIENCY OVERVIEW TO JULY 2006**
(Report PS242 refers)

Referring to the request for a supplementary capital estimate of £108,000 for repairs to the Casson Block, it was noted that there would be an equivalent reduction in the revenue budget. The Chief Estates Officer confirmed that the necessary repairs were to the roof to the building and were unlikely to be repeated for the foreseeable future.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet's decision to be made on 13 September 2006, regarding the possible supplementary capital estimate of £108,000 for repairs to the Casson Block, be not called-in for review.

12. **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (REPORT PS246 REFERS), SEPTEMBER 2006 FORWARD PLAN AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION**

During discussion of the September 2006 Forward Plan, it was requested that the future report to Cabinet on a new community building for Knowle also be referred to the Committee.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Scrutiny Work Programme be noted.
2. That the Forward Plan for September 2006 be noted and that the future report on a new community building for Knowle also be referred to the Committee.

13. **EXTRACT OF MINUTES OF CABINET – 26 JULY 2006 (LESS EXEMPT APPENDIX)**
(Report PS247 refers)

RESOLVED:

That the Report be noted.

14. **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 Minutes of previous meeting held 10 July 2006-09-08)
##	• New Offices – Feasibility Report Update)
##	• Office Accommodation – Options (Exempt Appendix))
##	River Park Leisure Centre Refurbishment – Interim Project Report (Exempt Appendices)) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). (Para 3 Schedule 12A refers).
##	Avalon House – Future Plans)
##	Historic Resources Centre, Hyde)
##	Extract of Minutes of Cabinet – 26 July 2006 (Exempt Appendix))

15. **CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS UNDER THE COMMITTEE'S POWERS OF CALL-IN**

(i) **RIVER PARK LEISURE CENTRE REFURBISHMENT – INTERIM PROJECT REPORT (EXEMPT APPENDICES)**

(Reports CAB1307 and PS247 Extract of Exempt Minutes of Cabinet refers)

Members noted the information contained within the Exempt Appendices 2 and 3, which set out details regarding issues that emerged during and after the contract works period and an update on project costs, and recommended a way forward.

RESOLVED:

That the information contained in Exempt Appendices 2 and 3 to the Report be noted.

(ii) **AVALON HOUSE – FUTURE PLANS**
(Report CAB1318 refers)

The Committee considered a Report in which the Chief Estates Officer set out a number of options regarding future plans for Avalon House, Chesil Street, Winchester (detail in exempt minute).

16. **HISTORIC RESOURCES CENTRE, HYDE**
(Report CAB1314 refers)

The Committee considered the above Report in which the Chief Estates Officer set out a number of options regarding future plans for the Historic Resources Centre at Hyde, Winchester (further detail in exempt minute).

17. **EXTRACT OF MINUTES OF CABINET – 26 JULY 2006 (EXEMPT APPENDIX)**
(Report PS247 refers)

RESOLVED:

That the Report be noted.

18. **EXEMPT MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minutes of the previous meeting, held 10 July 2006, be approved and adopted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 8.50 pm.

Chairman