

## **THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Thursday, 3 March 2022**

Attendance:

Councillors  
Brook (Chairperson)

Becker  
Cook  
Craske  
Ferguson  
Horrell

Power  
Weir  
Godfrey  
Cramoysan

Members in attendance who spoke at the meeting

Councillor Learney

Other members in attendance:

Councillors Clear, Cutler and Thompson

[Audio and video recording of this meeting](#)

---

### 1. **APOLOGIES AND DEPUTY MEMBERS**

None.

### 2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None.

### 3. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE 15TH FEBRUARY 2022**

The minutes of the meeting for the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2022 were not available and would be presented at the next meeting of the committee.

### 4. **CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairperson informed the committee that because of a change to committee membership, it was necessary to appoint a Vice-Chairperson for the committee for the remainder of the municipal year and called for nominations.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Cook be appointed as Vice-Chairperson for the remainder of the 2021/22 municipal year.

The Chairperson updated the committee on the previously agreed work programme request item regarding mental health support and informed members of the first of three workshops concerning mental health provision for council staff which she commended to members. Two further workshops were planned on the topics of support for housing tenants and the wider community which would also be reported back to this committee.

The Chairperson, on behalf of the committee, wished to convey support and sympathy to the citizens of Ukraine at this extremely concerning time.

## 5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Martin Wilson addressed the meeting regarding the agenda item "Land transaction in respect of the River Park Leisure Centre (RPLC) site and associated parking area". Mr Wilson referred to the contribution he made at the previous meeting of the committee on 15 February 2022 concerning legal proceedings involving the council and he remained concerned over the councils' actions and intentions for the RPLC site. Specifically, Mr Wilson urged members to pause its decision and to consider undertaking public consultation regarding future proposals for the site. He also reminded the committee of its responsibility in holding the council's executive to account and its role regarding the use of the call-in procedure.

Rose Burns addressed the meeting regarding the agenda item "Land transaction in respect of the River Park Leisure Centre site and associated parking area". Ms Burns stated that the public should be fully consulted on decisions involving the future use of this publicly owned land and felt that this had not happened. Ms Burns referred to the pre-action protocol letter issued by the Friends of River Park (FoRP) and felt that the council had not changed its position as a result of it. She drew the committee's attention to the legal framework referred to in report CAB3190, dated 23 October 2019. Ms Burns also reminded members of the council's call-in procedure.

The Chairperson thanked both speakers for their contributions and advised that the matters raised would be considered and responded to by officers during agenda item 7 of the agenda.

## 6. **COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

The Cabinet Member for the Built Environment and Wellbeing introduced the report, reference SC043, [available here](#) and provided an overview of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), its priorities and the key areas of activity for the previous period.

The Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Manager and Chief Inspector Jon Turton addressed the committee and drew members' attention to several matters, including:

- The headline delivery plan and data
- The fly-tip camera pilot

- Fly-tipping enforcement and prosecution
- The recruitment of additional officers to the neighbourhood services team  
The ongoing impact of the pandemic on police operational issues and crime statistics.
- Actions regarding sexual offences and domestic abuse offences
- Anti-social behaviour in the city
- Police recruitment and additional recruitment resulting in a “proactive high harm” team
- Operation Barnacle
- The key points from the crime summary as detailed in appendix 2 of the report

The committee asked a range of questions which included:

- Assisting with police officer retention
- Police workload because of mental health issues
- The cost/benefit ratio of cameras used in fly-tip hotspots
- Data regarding fraud crime
- Police staffing increases within the rural areas
- Comparing fly-tip statistics with previous years and increasing prosecutions
- The rise in sexual offences
- The allocation and rotation of the Neighbourhood services team
- Incidents of anti-social behaviour along the A33
- Incidents of anti-social behaviour at Kings Walk and actions to improve this
- Vehicle offences and road traffic offences
- Data regarding the numbers charged, prosecuted, and convicted
- Bicycle thefts and preventions
- Borderless policing

These points were responded to by Chief Inspector Turton, the Cabinet Member for Built Environment and Wellbeing and officers accordingly.

Members thanked officers and the Chief Inspector for their continued support.

#### RESOLVED:

1. That officers provide fly-tip comparison data for the most recent and previous years.
2. That officers share the Community Safety Delivery Plan with members once signed off by the Community Safety Partnership each year.
3. That officers consider the following points as part of the preparation of future performance review committee reports:
  - That the chart - figure 2 - on page 21 of the agenda pack may benefit by displaying the scale for the bar chart element and the line chart elements separately

- That officers review whether the data for serious crimes could highlight the numbers charged, prosecuted, and convicted.
- That officers review whether the data could be displayed that would show crimes undertaken in a previous year but resolved in the current year separate from crimes undertaken in the current year.

## 7. **LAND TRANSACTION IN RESPECT OF THE RIVER PARK LEISURE CENTRE SITE AND ASSOCIATED PARKING AREA**

Councillor Learney, Cabinet Member for Housing and Asset Management and the Strategic Director introduced the report, ref CAB3342, [available here](#) and provided the committee with a summary of the proposed decision, including its recent history, its links to council policies, the proposals regarding the skate park and the wider benefits to the district of the proposal.

The Strategic Director responded to the points raised by the two public speakers and the Chairperson subsequently invited the public speakers to address the committee again. Ms Burns spoke further regarding the proposals put forward by the FoRP).

The report sought the committee's views regarding the draft cabinet report and specifically the draft recommendations on page 48 of the agenda pack and members were advised that Mr Hutchings QC and other officers were in attendance to respond to their questions.

The committee proceeded to ask questions and debate the application in detail. In summary, questions regarding the following matters were raised.

- Consideration of and responses to the various strands of community engagement, i.e., petitions and letters from residents
- Clarifying the process being proposed including future stages and further opportunities for alternative proposals to come forward
- Dealing with resident's concerns, undertaking further discussions with them, and involving residents from across the district
- The difficulties of undertaking a consultation at this stage
- The ability of others to put forward alternative proposals
- The distinction and separation of the council's role as a landowner and local planning authority
- The function of the council's Planning committee within this process
- The criteria to be applied in moving to the appropriation stage and clarifying who the decision taker was for that stage
- The impact on the site value once all constraints were factored in
- Other liabilities that were the responsibility of the council
- Clarifying the covenant on the land and its implications
- Confirming that the car park was not free to use.
- Understanding why the skate park was not excluded from the lease arrangements.

- Amending the report to give a clearer financial statement
- Understanding the non-financial benefits further, including community and environmental benefits.
- Clarifying the concerns over any future, further land appropriation
- Understanding whether the timescales were realistic and were parties incentivised to meet them
- Confirming the process regarding the publication of notices
- Council actions following receipt of the pre-action protocol letter from the FoRP
- Living accommodation for future students
- The commitment of the University to this site and discussing with the University over their plans for resident engagement
- Mitigating future legal challenges
- The appropriate delegation level for recommendation 3
- Reasons for why the lease only restricts the use of the site for the first 35 years
- Clarification regarding the covenant and the term “industrial dwellings”

These points were responded to by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Asset Management, Matthew Hutchings QC, and officers accordingly. The committee agreed to move into an exempt session to consider the exempt appendix to the report before returning to the open session to debate the report further and to agree the following:

#### RESOLVED:

The committee agreed the following comments be passed to cabinet

That:

1. The report provides further clarification of the sequencing of key milestones, particularly referring to pages 55 and 71 of the report pack.
2. Paragraph 4.5 be amended to reflect that the car park is not a free car park for people visiting local shops and businesses.
3. That additional information be provided to set out a clearer, single summary of financial impacts
4. Discussions are held with the University of Southampton regarding their plans for proactive engagement with residents of the district.
5. That the importance of achievement of net-zero be emphasised.
6. To draw to the attention of the cabinet that this was a significant decision to take whilst some elements were still unknown.
7. Cabinet considers all the committee’s comments raised during the discussion of the item.

8. **Q3 FINANCE & PERFORMANCE MONITORING INCLUDING A VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE PERFORMANCE PANEL**

The Chairperson of the Performance Panel introduced the report and informed that the panel had met on 24 February 2022 to scrutinise the cabinet report, ref CAB3339 [available here](#).

Councillor Horrill confirmed that all members had received the draft cabinet report, the pre-submitted questions, and the draft minutes of the panels meeting. The committee was also advised that an update on any outstanding actions would be circulated to all members.

Councillor Horrill drew members' attention to two issues arising from the panels meeting:

1. The panel welcomed the inclusion on its agenda of the "End of Project Reports" and supported its continuation
2. The panel suggested that as part of the council plan refresh that a review of the key performance indicators used as part of the quarterly performance reports would be appropriate.

**RESOLVED:**

The committee:

1. Noted that the performance panel met on 24 February 2022 to scrutinise the report, CAB3339 and its associated appendices.
2. Noted the draft minutes of the panel and the verbal update provided by the Chairperson.

9. **TO NOTE A CHANGE TO THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE PERFORMANCE PANEL**

**RESOLVED:**

Noted that Councillor Cramoysan replaced Councillor Williams as a member of the Performance Panel.

10. **TO NOTE THE LATEST FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS**

**RESOLVED:**

The forward plan of key decisions for March 2022 was noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 11.40 pm

Chairperson