

THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 3 July 2023

Attendance:

Councillors
Brook (Chairperson)

Horrill
Laming
Pett

Reach
Scott
Williams

Other members in attendance:

Councillor(s) Tod and Wallace

[Video recording of this meeting](#)

1. **APOLOGIES AND DEPUTY MEMBERS.**

No apologies for the meeting were made.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS.**

Councillor Reach declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest concerning the agenda item "Strategic Outline Case for Station Approach" as he was ultimately employed by and owned shares in First Group PLC who controlled South Western Railway who were referenced in the report.

3. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON FOR MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023/24.**

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Horrill be appointed Vice-Chairperson for the 2023/24 municipal year.

4. **CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

There were no announcements made.

5. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 27 FEBRUARY 2023.**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 February 2023 be approved and adopted.

6. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Imogen Dawson addressed the committee regarding the agenda item "Strategic Outline Case for Station Approach and a summary of the matters she raised were as follows.

1. She welcomed the emphasis on regarding carbon net zero, biodiversity net gain, and sustainable development and the focus on environmental, social, and economic benefits.
2. She was encouraged by the environmentally friendly urban mobility and sustainable transport aspects.
3. She welcomed the desire to deliver a high-quality development with a strong sense of place.
4. She was concerned over a lack of emphasis on important matters in the proposals for Gladstone Street and Cattle Market sites and at the possibility of student housing instead of housing for long-term residents.
5. That there was concern about noise disturbance from heavy goods vehicles and congestion.
6. She noted that there was a desire for a mix of housing options, including shared ownership.
7. She referred to the findings from the City Science report on parking usage and forecasting.
8. That there was a need to address traffic and congestion problems, especially at the Carfax Junction.
9. There were concerns about a multi-story car park exacerbating traffic issues.
10. She wanted to highlight the caveats about risks, unpredictability, and financial crisis and was concerned over the challenges in getting a viable scheme in line with the development brief.
11. She believed there to be difficulty in resolving movement-related issues with Hampshire County Council and bus operators.
12. She recommended the council to suspend work and expenditure on the Station Approach development at the current time.

Councillor Tod, Leader and Cabinet Member for Asset Management and Emma Taylor responded to a number of these points within the introduction to the agenda item.

Councillor Malcolm Wallace addressed the committee regarding the agenda item “Q4 Performance Monitoring” and raised the following matters:

1. Regarding Local Suppliers - The Council's spend with local suppliers (KPI VLE13) was declining. What actions was the Council taking to reverse this trend?
2. Concerning Winchester City Council Carbon Emissions (TCE01) - In 2021/22, the Council's carbon emissions decreased by only 3% compared to 2019/20 (excluding COVID impact in 2020/21). What was the breakdown of these emissions, and was the Council still on track to achieve zero emissions by 2024?
3. Concerning Winchester City Council Carbon Emissions - The target for Council carbon emissions in 2022/23 has increased more than threefold to 3,750 tCO₂e (previously 1,075 tCO₂e). How were these targets set?
4. Regarding Traffic Movements - Why does the vehicle movements metric (TCE07) focus only on Winchester City? Additionally, it was forecasted

that the M3J9 works would increase traffic in the district instead of reducing it.

5. Regarding Carbon Neutrality
 - When was the Health & Environment Policy Committee planning to discuss the new initiative for a utility scale renewable energy project?
 - Could Members receive a briefing on the HCC carbon assessment tool that would be used in future council processes and reports (p273)?
 - The Carbon Footprint Report for 2022/23 was scheduled to be delivered to the Carbon Neutrality Board in July 2023 (p273). How could Councillors access this report?
6. Regarding the Winchester Movement Strategy - Could officers clarify the statement made in the project update summary about the reallocation of funding for walking and cycling measures from Active Travel England (DfT) to other areas? Does this mean the mini-Holland bid would not be funded?

Dawn Adey, Strategic Director thanked Councillor Wallace for his questions and proposed that officers convene a meeting with Councillor Wallace, the relevant Cabinet Member(s), and officers.

7. **STRATEGIC OUTLINE CASE FOR STATION APPROACH**

Councillor Tod, Leader and Cabinet Member for Asset Management introduced the report, ref CAB3413 which set out proposals for the Strategic Outline Case for Station Approach, ([available here](#)). Councillor Tod's introduction included the following points.

1. The project aimed to transform the area next to the railway station into a vital transport hub, addressing various issues raised by the community.
2. The vision focused on creating a connected and sustainable development that was carbon neutral and served as an exemplar for low-carbon living and working.
3. The project would consider changing work patterns, housing patterns, and the evolving use of city centres.
4. High-quality design and positive placemaking were essential aspects of the development, complementing the existing character of the city.
5. The project emphasised co-creation with residents, businesses, and stakeholders to adapt to the period of change.
6. A capacity study was conducted, demonstrating the feasibility of development despite the economic challenges.
7. The study did not provide a master plan or answer transport questions but set the stage for the next phase of detailed planning and thinking.
8. The project follows a gated process with clear criteria for each stage.
9. The current report focuses on the five cases (economic, commercial, financial, management, and strategic) to progress to the next stage, which involved creating a master plan.
10. Various activities were undertaken during the last 12 months, including market analysis, parking surveys, stakeholder engagement, and consultation.
11. The area's gateway status and the importance of trees, green spaces, and improving the neighbourhood were highlighted.

12. The capacity study revealed potential development opportunities for specific sites, while network rail sites posed challenges due to parking replacement requirements.
13. The Strategic Outline Business Case was produced, supporting the recommendation to proceed with the next phase of developing a concept and an outline business case.
14. Despite the economic climate, the development work was deemed necessary, as it would be ready when conditions improved in the future.

The committee was recommended to comment on the proposals within the attached cabinet report, ref CAB3413 which was to be considered by the cabinet at its meeting on 18 July 2023.

The committee was supported by Emma Taylor, Project Lead, John East, Strategic Director – Place, Ken Baikie, Director of Regeneration and Dawn Adey, Strategic Director. The committee proceeded to ask questions and debated the report. In summary, the following matters were raised:

1. Concern regarding the time taken to reach this stage of the project.
2. Concern over the absence of the railway companies in the project and how it would impact the development of the transport hub aspects.
3. Clarifying the formation of the master plan team and whether it would consist of local or external experts.
4. Understanding the transparency and flexibility of the procurement process.
5. Whether the reference group would include cross-party members and understanding their role in shaping the project.
6. Understanding the provisions for pickups/drop offs at the railway station, as well as the ease of travel for people going from the city centre to their destination without having to change buses at the station.
7. Concerns about the dependency on Hampshire County Council's support and financial contribution.
8. Whether it could be considered to add the movement strategy and the interrelationship of other corporate projects to the risk management plan.
9. The project's viability in the current economic circumstances and whether the proposals would still be relevant in five years if the economic situation worsens.
10. Clarifying student accommodation needs, and whether the requirements of the University of Winchester and University of Southampton in Winchester were understood.
11. Whether there would be appropriate infrastructure connections to accommodate the potential development and maintain services for existing residents.
12. Concerns over residential car parking and whether alternatives could be considered, for example, parking permits for residents near the station to avoid conflicts with station users and local businesses.
13. Concerns regarding the viability of enhanced office space and its impact on the overall development, including the balance of parking.
14. Understanding the level of confidence in attracting tenants, considering the current vacancy rates in other office sites.

15. The financial projections and the management of the overall financial picture, given the city's recovery from COVID-19, changes in vacancies, and other ongoing developments in the area.
16. Welcomed the adoption of the Central Winchester Regeneration reference group approach, especially the inclusion of experts and members with knowledge of the entire district.
17. Concern that student accommodation could potentially fall under the council's category of affordable housing and recommended that they remain distinct.

These points were responded to by Councillor Tod, Leader and Cabinet Member for Asset Management, Emma Taylor, Project Lead, John East, Strategic Director – Place, Ken Baikie, Director of Regeneration, and Dawn Adey, Strategic Director, accordingly and were noted by Councillor Tod, Leader, and Cabinet Member for Asset Management.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the committee agreed to the following points:
 - a. Regarding Section 10, Risk Management, that the following items be considered for inclusion in the published risk assessment: "Dependency with the Movement Strategy" and the inter-relationship with other council regeneration projects.
 - b. Regarding the future provision of residential car parking, that consideration be given to balancing the potential need of residents requiring parking spaces within a "car-free development" and whether alternative options would be available to them.
 - c. That the cabinet considers all of the committee's comments raised during the discussion of the agenda item.

8. Q4 PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Councillor Caroline Horrill, Chairperson of the Performance Panel introduced the report, reference CAB3403 which set out the Quarter 4 Performance Monitoring report, ([available here](#)).

Councillor Horrill gave an overview of the following matters:

1. That the panel met on May 22nd with Councillors Horrill, Laming, Pett, and Bolton. Also in attendance were Councillor Porter and Councillor Todd and several officers.
2. 22 questions were provided in advance to officers, the panel had reviewed the report and discussed several issues, including the climate agenda, major projects, and housing matters.

3. A few questions remained outstanding, and officers had, ahead of today's meeting provided an updated list of actions and the associated responses.

4. This document would be circulated to other panel members and any unanswered questions would be brought to the Cabinet meeting for further discussion on 18 July 2023.

5. It was requested that officers provide written clarification on the panel's future way of working, in particular, the Vice Chair requested a copy of the Performance Panels terms of reference, and a process map explaining how the panel should prepare for the Performance Panel meeting.

The committee discussed the report and the points raised by Councillor Horrill and the following additional points were made.

1. That a discussion about the timing of reports and the need for investigation into the process was welcomed. There was a need for clarity on the process, including attendance at panel meetings.
2. It was suggested that publishing the draft report earlier to allow additional reading time may be possible and that efforts to make the report simpler and focused on exceptions were underway.
3. Regarding page 227 - Benches on High Street, these were installed on May 9th, the council had performed better than stated in the report.
4. Regarding page 231 - Carbon statistics, it was queried regarding the accuracy of carbon intensity measures used, as it was important for accurate measurement and evaluation.
5. Regarding page 251 - General invoices, the Council was still issuing paper invoices for certain services, progress needed to transition to digital methods.
6. Regarding KPIs VLE9 and VLE10 - Tourism spending and Winchester's position as the home of English winemaking. Councillor Reach requested a meeting with Councillor Tod to discuss further promoting Winchester's role in English winemaking and showcasing local businesses.

RESOLVED:

The committee:

1. Noted that the performance panel had met on 22 May 2023 to scrutinise the report, CAB33403, and its associated appendices.
2. Noted the draft minutes of the panel's meeting and the verbal update provided by the Chairperson.

3. Requested that officers and the leader of the council review the points raised by the panel as detailed above.

4. That officers clarify the procedures and timescales that future meetings of the performance panel would operate to.

9. **APPOINTMENTS OF EXTERNAL BODIES RELATED TO SCRUTINY**

RESOLVED:

That the following appointments be made to the external bodies listed below:

1. Portsmouth City Council – Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel:
Councillor V Achwal (deputy: Councillor J Williams).
2. Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) – Scrutiny Champions Network:
Councillor Brook.
3. Partnership for South Hampshire Overview and Scrutiny
Committee: Councillor S Achwal (deputy: Councillor Batho).

10. **ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2022/23**

The Chairperson introduced the report, which set out proposals for the Annual Scrutiny Report, ([available here](#)). The committee was recommended to consider the report and make any necessary comments on the content before its submission to full council.

The committee noted that the report represented a succinct summary of the main work it had conducted during the previous municipal year.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

That Council note the annual scrutiny report for 2022/23

11. **ANNUAL REPORT - EXCEPTIONS TO FORWARD PLAN 2022/23**

The Chairperson introduced the report, ref SC087 which set out the annual report concerning exceptions to the forward plan, ([available here](#)). The committee considered the report and noted that during the 2022/23 municipal year, the Chairperson of The Scrutiny Committee was informed of one key decision which was not included in the forward plan.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted

12. **TO NOTE THE MEMBERSHIP AND CHAIRPERSON OF THE PERFORMANCE PANEL.**

RESOLVED:

It was noted that councillors; Horrill (Chairperson), Pett, Williams, Laming and Bolton would form the performance panel for 2023/24.

13. **TO NOTE THE DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE AND THE PERFORMANCE PANEL.**

The dates of meetings were noted.

14. **TO NOTE THE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2023/24**

RESOLVED:

That the latest version of the work programme (which can be found here

<https://democracy.winchester.gov.uk/mgPlansHome.aspx?bcr=1>)

be noted.

1. Movement Strategy (where we are and the inter-relationship to other council projects)
2. Local Plan (consultation post Regulation 18 and where we are heading with regards to Regulation 19)
3. Further Updates regarding regeneration projects, specifically Central Winchester Regeneration.

There was a general caveat that if these items were already planned for a policy committee, then no duplication was required.

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

The forward plan of key decisions for July 2023 was noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 8.40 pm

Chairperson