

THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 6 June 2024

Attendance:

Councillors
Brook (Chairperson)

Achwal V
Batho
Clear
Laming

Pett
Reach
Bolton
Wallace

[Video recording of this meeting](#)

1. **APOLOGIES AND DEPUTY MEMBERS**

Apologies for the meeting were noted as above.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Wallace declared a non-pecuniary interest concerning items upon the agenda that may be related to his role as a County Councillor.

3. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON FOR MUNICIPAL YEAR 2024/25.**

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Wallace be appointed Vice-Chairperson for the 2024/25 municipal year.

4. **CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Brook made the following announcements:

1. She advised that holding a meeting during the pre-election period was unusual, however, this meeting was necessary to address urgent matters requiring decisions by the Cabinet. The agenda for this meeting had therefore been adjusted and the presentation regarding the nutrient mitigation project had been withdrawn.
2. She expressed gratitude to all who attended and supported the Centre for Governance & Scrutiny (CfGS) education and training session recently, highlighting its usefulness.

5. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE 6 MARCH 2024**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 March 2024 be approved and adopted.

6. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Councillor Horrill addressed the committee regarding the agenda item: Procurement of Waste & Recycling Collection Vehicles / Update on Waste and Recycling and her contribution was captured within the agenda item below.

Councillor Lee addressed the committee regarding the agenda items: Procurement of Waste & Recycling Collection Vehicles / Update on Waste and Recycling and The Annual Scrutiny Report 2023/24 and his contributions were captured within the agenda item below.

7. **NUTRIENT MITIGATION PROJECT. (PRESENTATION)**

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

8. **PROCUREMENT OF WASTE & RECYCLING COLLECTION VEHICLES / UPDATE ON WASTE AND RECYCLING. (PRESENTATION)**

Simon Hendey, Strategic Director & Councillor Learney, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency introduced the agenda item regarding Procurement of Waste & Recycling Collection Vehicles.

Simon Hendey advised of the urgent and critical nature of this agenda item which required a decision by Cabinet during the pre-election period and outlined the primary reasons for this urgency as follows:

1. In February 2024, the Cabinet considered a report regarding the introduction of a food waste service and officers were tasked with progressing the implementation of this service, emphasising the pursuit of the lowest carbon viable option. This included specifically focusing on the procurement of vehicles necessary to support the new service.
2. The government had set a deadline of April 2026 for the implementation of the food waste service. Therefore, timely procurement of the necessary vehicles was essential to meet this deadline. A decision was required to facilitate the procurement process, thus the need for this report to be presented to the Cabinet on 19 June 2024

Councillor Learney, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency updated the committee on the following points:

1. The administration aimed to expand the range of materials recyclable at the kerbside in a financially prudent and practical way.
2. The council was in a favourable position compared to other councils to provide a food waste service by the end of March 2026.
3. Extensive consultations on the waste strategy had been conducted, receiving responses from thousands of residents.
4. Collaboration with experts was undertaken to carry out technical studies and research, alongside budget allocation for the project.
5. Emphasis was placed on avoiding delays in the procurement process to prevent falling behind other councils in ordering new vehicles.
6. Detailed planning for the service rollout, including addressing issues such as servicing flats and difficult-to-reach areas, would take place in the autumn.

7. The current focus was on procuring vehicles, and input from the scrutiny committee was welcomed before the final decision by the Cabinet.

Campbell Williams, Service Lead - Environmental Services provided the committee with a detailed presentation, which discussed several matters including the previously confirmed decisions to date, the key elements of a food waste service, an overview of the modelling that supports the procurement decision of vehicle choice and costs, implications of current and future depot infrastructure requirements, the proposed introduction of an electric refuse refuse collection vehicle (RCV), the next steps with respect to food waste collection and the journey to zero avoidable waste. (A copy of these slides are [available here](#))

Councillor Caroline Horrill addressed the committee and highlighted the following points:

1. She sought clarification on the following:
 - Confirmation that the food waste would go to anaerobic digestion (AD) plants within Hampshire.
 - The impact on current services like battery and small electrical collections and whether these would continue unaffected.
 - The expected lifespan of the recommended vehicles.
 - The future of the depot infrastructure given discussions about disposing of the current depot.
 - The handling of round changes and the communication strategy for these changes.
 - Capacity considerations for the anticipated growth in the number of houses in the district.
2. She inquired about the costs to be proposed in the Cabinet paper for the procurement of vehicles.
3. She emphasised the importance of effective communication with residents regarding changes, particularly the introduction of new waste services like pots, trays, and tubs.

These points were responded to by Councillor Learney, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Campbell Williams, Service Lead - Environmental Services and Andy Hickman, Head of Programme: Place.

Councillor Danny Lee addressed the committee and highlighted the following points:

1. He expressed enthusiasm for the electric vehicle (EV) trial and the potential to learn from other areas like Manchester, which had significant experience with EV fleets.
2. He raised concerns about the long-term environmental impact of the vehicle procurement, particularly regarding the full lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions.
3. He questioned the flexibility within the procurement contracts to adapt to rapidly changing technology and environmental standards.

4. He raised concerns about the sustainability and supply of hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO), particularly the potential indirect environmental impacts related to its production.
5. He emphasised the need for a risk register to address potential future supply chain and environmental risks.

These points were responded to by Councillor Learney, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Campbell Williams, Service Lead - Environmental Services and Andy Hickman, Head of Programme: Place.

The committee proceeded to ask questions and debate the report. In summary, the following matters were raised:

1. Clarification on the decision-making process and the urgency of the procurement.
2. The costs associated with the kitchen caddies and whether these would be provided free of charge to households.
3. The use of solar panels on vehicles and whether this could enhance fuel efficiency.
4. The potential benefits of mixing hydrogen with diesel for better environmental performance.
5. The feasibility of the council establishing its own anaerobic digester for kitchen waste.
6. Clarification on the proportion of residual waste that was food waste and the overall strategy to reduce this waste.
7. The potential for increased vehicle movements and how this would be managed alongside existing collections.
8. The infrastructure requirements for electric vehicles and the steps taken to secure necessary power supplies.
9. Clarification as to why detailed costings and a comprehensive business case for the procurement was not available.
10. The estimated CO2 savings from the new vehicles the basis for these calculations and whether the cost of construction had been considered
11. The anticipated government funding and its reliability of being provided.
12. The alignment of the waste strategy with national recycling targets and future statutory obligations.

These points were responded to by Councillor Cutler, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance, Councillor Learney, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Campbell Williams, Service Lead - Environmental Services, Andy Hickman, Head of Programme: Place and Simon Hende, Strategic Director.

RESOLVED:

The committee agreed to recommend that the Cabinet consider implementing education programmes to encourage composting and food waste reduction alongside the new collection services.

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 Governance and Scrutiny – Southeast Regional Network: Councillor Brook.
3. Partnership for South Hampshire Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Councillor S Achwal (deputy: Councillor Batho).

10. **ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2023/24**

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.

Councillor Danny Lee addressed the committee and highlighted the following points:

1. Regarding the review of the work of the Economic and Housing Policy Committee, he welcomed the aim of making the district a premier business location but noted the lack of support for rural district areas.
2. He observed the importance of linking the cultural strategy to business needs in both the city and district areas.
3. He highlighted the focus on climate change mitigation but emphasised the need to consider adaptation strategies as well.
4. Regarding the Community Safety Partnership, he queried the follow-up actions from the last meeting, particularly concerning the closure of landlines by the end of the year and residents' anxieties surrounding this issue.
5. He questioned the statement on page 27 regarding being carbon neutral by 2030, suggesting it needed qualification between operational and embodied carbon and the status of the carbon credit trading initiative mentioned with in the report.

Councillor Caroline Brook responded with the following points:

1. She clarified that many recommendations go to the Cabinet for consideration, and it is up to the Cabinet to decide on their implementation.
2. She acknowledged the importance of the landline closure issue raised and noted that it was taken up for consideration at the last meeting and agreed that it should be followed up.

The committee noted that the report represented a succinct summary of the main work it had conducted during the previous municipal year. The committee wished to express thanks to the previous committee members for their contributions over the past year and to Councillor Horrill for her contribution to the committee and the Performance Panel.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

That Council note the annual scrutiny report for 2023/24.

11. **ANNUAL REPORT - EXCEPTIONS TO FORWARD PLAN 2023/24**

The Chairperson introduced the report, ref SC094 which set out the annual report concerning exceptions to the forward plan, ([available here](#)). The committee considered the report and noted that during the 2023/24 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 LATEST FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS**

RESOLVED

That the Forward Plan of Key Decisions - July to September 2024 be noted.

13. **TO NOTE THE DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2024/25**

The committee proceeded to discuss the draft work programme. In summary, the following matters were raised:

1. The process of adding topics to the Draft Work Programme and the need to define the function and terms of reference for task and finish groups.
2. The composition of task and finish groups, including the number of members and officer involvement.
3. The method for determining the necessary time, involvement, and number of officers for each task and finish group was discussed, emphasising the flexibility depending on the topic and guidance from relevant officers.
4. It was highlighted that priorities should align with the most significant concerns for residents. Emphasis was placed on the agile and flexible nature of task and finish groups, allowing for quick deep dives into specific issues without a rigid format, as supported during the training session.
5. The committee acknowledged these points and noted the draft work programme for 2024/25, with the understanding that it would be further developed based on these discussions ahead of the next meeting of the committee.

RESOLVED:

That the draft work programme be noted.

14. **TO NOTE THE DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE**

The dates of meetings were noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 8.40 pm

Chairperson