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THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 19 January 2026

Attendance:

Councillors
Brook (Chairperson)

Batho
Laming
Pett
Clear

Power
Murphy
Bolton

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor Wallace

Deputy Members:

Councillor Lee (as deputy for Councillor Wallace)

Other members in attendance:

Councillors, Godfrey, Cutler, and Tod

[Video recording of this meeting](#)

1. **APOLOGIES AND DEPUTY MEMBERS**

Apologies for the meeting were noted as above.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

No declarations were made

3. **CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

No announcements were made.

4. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE 13 NOVEMBER 2025**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 November 2025 be approved and adopted.

5. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRPERSON**

Councillor Bolton was appointed Vice-Chairperson of the committee for this meeting.

6. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Councillor Stephen Godfrey and Ian Tait addressed the committee regarding item 6, Central Winchester Regeneration Scheme Update. A summary of their contributions were captured within the agenda item below.

7. **CENTRAL WINCHESTER REGENERATION SCHEME UPDATE**

Councillor Martin Tod, Leader and Cabinet Member for Regeneration introduced the report, ref CAB3536 which set out proposals for the Central Winchester Regeneration Scheme Update, (available here). The introduction included the following points.

1. The report detailed a change to the consortium partner, specifically that GKRL intended to withdraw and PFP Igloo, by replacing GKRL with another company in the PFP group, had agreed to assume 100% of the consortium responsibilities.
2. It was emphasised that while the consortium makeup was changing, the architects, urban designers, project managers, and the overall vision for the scheme remained unchanged.
3. The change in partnership structure was permitted under the existing development agreement with the Council's consent which should not be unreasonably withheld.
4. The project remained focused on moving towards a planning application later in the year, with a target to start on site in 2027.

Councillor Stephen Godfrey addressed the committee. He expressed disappointment regarding the progress of major projects and questioned the viability of the scheme given the withdrawal of one of the consortium partners. He raised concerns regarding the risks associated with changing the partnership structure, specifically regarding the replacement of skills, potential delays to the planning application, and financial implications. He also noted that the exempt paper provided limited detail on the way forward and asked the committee to ensure sufficient safeguards were in place.

Ian Tait addressed the committee. He requested clarification on the financial benefits of the proposals and the timeline for receiving them, drawing a comparison to the income generated by the Brooks Centre. He noted that the council website had not been updated regarding the changes to the consortium and felt that the public were not being fully informed about the status of the development partner.

The committee was recommended to comment on the proposals within the attached cabinet report, ref CAB3536 which was to be considered by cabinet at its meeting on 21 January 2026. The committee proceeded to ask questions and debate the report. In summary, the following matters were raised.

1. A question was asked regarding the skills and capacity of the remaining partner, and whether the council was satisfied that this change would not increase risk. Following this question, further clarification was sought on how any risks had shifted or been mitigated.
2. A question was raised regarding paragraph 11.2, asking if the withdrawal of one partner could be viewed as a positive move and a de-risking of the project.
3. Clarification was requested as to whether the parent company of Igloo had considered taking on the share of the project themselves.
4. A question was asked to identify what specific contributions GKRL brought to the consortium and whether the revised arrangements would fill those gaps.
5. Clarification was sought regarding an explanation for GKRL's withdrawal.
6. A question was asked whether there were likely to be any delays to the project as a result of the changes.
7. Information was requested on whether there were lessons to be learned to strengthen the consortium going forward.
8. A question was raised regarding paragraph 15.4 and the council's capacity to deliver, particularly considering Local Government Reorganisation.
9. A request was made for a visual timeline of predicted milestones to be shared with members.
10. Clarification was sought on how the process would proceed regarding the handover of council assets and the bank guarantee, and whether this change constituted a call on the guarantee.
11. A question was asked regarding the timing of the phased handover of assets and the existence of other financial guarantees.
12. Confirmation was sought regarding paragraph 13.9 and legal advice, specifically that the disclosure of information was satisfactory and the process was moving smoothly.
13. A question was asked regarding risk mitigation through the phased drawdown structure and performance bonds, and whether this would change.

The committee agreed to move into an exempt session to consider the exempt appendix, during which further questions were raised which included the following: the Council being a party to performance bond arrangements, further detail on the proposed replacement for GKRL, the potential transfer of risk to the Council, any loss of skills and capacity following GKRL's withdrawal, the Council's exposure in a worst -case scenario, matters relating to the financial assessment, and clarification on Parcel B referred to on page 39.

The points from the Open and Exempt sessions were responded to by Councillor Martin Tod, Leader and Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Councillor Neil Cutler, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation and Simon Hendey, Strategic Director, accordingly.

The committee returned to the open session to debate the report further and to agree the following:

RESOLVED:

The committee agreed to recommended to cabinet:

1. That a visual timeline of the project be provided for councillors and the public.
2. That the cabinet considers the committee's comments raised during the discussion of the item.

8. **TO NOTE THE COMMITTEES CURRENT WORK PROGRAMME.**

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.

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

RESOLVED

That the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period February 2026 to April 2026 be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 8.10 pm

Chairperson