

**A MEETING OF THE EXTRAORDINARY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WAS HELD ON 31 MARCH 2014**

Subject to Approval

Councillors Allen, Mrs Cully(Chairman)(P),Farr(Vice Chairman)(P),Foster-Reed, Geddes, Gill (P),
Hylands(P),Jacobs,(P)Jessop(P),Mrs Morgan, Kimber (P),Scard(P)

24. APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were received from Councillors Allen, Mrs Morgan and Geddes

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

26. REPORTS RECEIVED

(i) BUS SERVICES IN THE BOROUGH

Consideration was given to a presentation by Mr Richard Strong and Mrs Suzanne Pepper of the Gosport Older Person's Forum regarding bus services in the Borough.

Members of the Committee were advised that the Gosport Older Persons Forum was an independent group of Gosport residents over the age of 55, providing information for older people, consulting with older people on issues that may affect them and campaigning on behalf of older people.

The background to the Forum's concerns, along with the principle findings and observations of the current bus service situations and potential future trends were discussed.

A map provided by First Bus was circulated to Members of the Committee detailing historical changes in bus services in Gosport between 1994 -2014.

Following a bus user survey conducted by Hampshire County Council in 2013 inviting Gosport residents to indicate the type of services they required, a limited number of responses (49) had been received. The survey results found that there were several losses of links between residential areas, shops and services, which included a reduced service frequency in Clayhall, Alverstoke, Stokes Bay, Bridgemary, the A32, Elson, Peel Common and Speedfields Park.

A consultation review by Hampshire County Council was currently taking place to look at subsidised bus and community transport services which received financial support from the County Council. The review will end on 31 May 2014 and it was suggested that individual Members respond to the consultation.

It was suggested that a Bus Service Policy be implemented to improve bus services in the Borough with investigations into using Section 106 payments and other subsidy schemes.

Clarification was sought on the Environmental Impact Assessments being carried out by First Bus when bus service routes were changed.

Concerns were raised that bus ticket data was not being accurately recorded at specific stops and that subsequently it was not providing a true reflection of bus service usage in the Borough.

Mr David Jenkinson, Vice Principal of St Vincent College was invited to address the Committee, he advised that up to 1,000 16-19 year old students and 1,500 adults attended the College.

Mr Jenkinson advised the Committee that there were local concerns regarding bus provisions in Gosport. In particular, the withdrawal of the 9A Service with numerous complaints being received from parents regarding the detrimental impact the changes had on both students and staff at St Vincent College that rely on public transport to travel to and from college every day.

Mr Jenkinson further advised that students living in certain areas of Gosport were now subjected to either very long walks to find a bus service which stops nearby to the college (often having to transfer buses) or were finding that the reduced services meant they had to catch buses which drop them off at the college over an hour before it opens or collects them an hour after it closes, which was a safeguarding concern for the college.

Whilst it was appreciated that First Bus must make strategic decisions regarding its services, it was felt they were clearly having a negative impact on the wider Gosport community and that alternative methods of transportation were being investigated by St Vincent College to address issues for its students and staff.

Members of the Committee thanked the Gosport Older Persons Forum and Mr Jenkinson for their presentations. It was recognised that further investigation was required to address concerns in the forthcoming Municipal Year.

It was agreed that the Chief Executive be requested to respond to the current consultation by HCC on public transport reflecting the concerns raised at the meeting.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) A scoping of bus services take place at the next Committee meeting in June 2014 and;
- b) The Chief Executive be requested to respond to the current consultation by HCC on public transport reflecting the concerns raised at the meeting.

(ii) TEXTILE RECYCLING

Consideration was given to a report from Councillor Kimber. Members of the Committee were advised that the steering group comprising Councillors Kimber, Jessop, Hylands and Mrs Cully had met with Charity representatives on the 20th February 2014 to discuss the implications of the proposed textile recycling scheme.

The Working Group concluded that the benefits of joining the framework were outweighed by the disadvantage it would cause to charities currently using Gosport Borough Council sites and that residents of the Borough should be given the choice to which charity they wished to donate.

Members expressed their gratitude towards Councillor Kimber for all his hard work and dedication to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and wished him well in his forthcoming retirement.

RESOLVED: That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommend to the Community Board that Gosport Borough Council:

- a) do not enter the Framework set up by Fareham Borough Council at this time and retain the status quo; and
- b) the charities interviewed be advised to engage and discuss mutual benefits in combining textile operations.

27. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

The Meeting concluded at 7.37pm

CHAIRMAN