

A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WAS HELD ON 29 NOVEMBER 2007

Councillors Davis, Dickson (P), Foster (P), Foster-Reed (P), Jacobs (P), Kimber, Mrs Mudie (P), Philpott (P), Mrs Salter (P), Mrs Searle (P), Train and Ward (P).

It was reported that Councillor Allen had been nominated to attend this meeting in place of Councillor Kimber.

38. APOLOGIES

An apology for inability to attend the meeting was received on behalf of Councillors Davis, Kimber and Train.

39. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Dickson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 9(ii) on the agenda (Travel Token Service).

40. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 2 September and 10 October 2007 be approved and signed by the Chairman as true and correct records.

41. BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Development Services Manager introduced his briefing note which invited Members to consider and review performance information relating to Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) and actions agreed by Chief Officers Management Team.

Members raised concerns over staff sickness absence and were advised that additional measures had been put in place over the last year to help combat this problem. If a member of staff was absent through illness on six or more occasions over a twelve month period, the matter would be referred to the Community Physician to ascertain whether there were any underlying trends. The Council provided support for staff members who were or had been absent through illness. Sickness absence was monitored individually and generally throughout the authority.

Members raised the issue of household waste recycling and the fact that the target for 2007/08 was unlikely to be met. Officers advised that problems were still being encountered with recyclable waste being contaminated, although recycling inspectors had been employed and this had met with some success.

Public education campaigns were continuing but success was restricted due to the lack of a kerbside glass collection service and the limited promotion of green waste collection.

There was a requirement to roll out recycling arrangements for harder to reach locations such as blocks of flats and efforts were being made in this direction.

Members inquired whether the use of waste disposal units for food waste should be encouraged. Officers advised that the water authority took the view that this increased the amount of bacteria in sewage plants. It was preferable for food waste to be incinerated as this reduced the amount of land fill and, food waste having a high calorific value, the resultant power produced could be sold on to the national grid.

The Chairman thanked officers for the report and information provided.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) the report of the Development Services Manager be noted;
- b) remedial actions contained in the appendix to the report be accepted; and
- c) the six monthly scrutiny of the Best Value Performance Indicators be concluded.

42. INTRODUCTION OF 20 MPH SPEED RESTRICTIONS

Consideration was given to a minute extract from the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 27 September 2007 at which Members had discussed the above subject with representatives from the Police, Hampshire County Council and Portsmouth City Council.

Members agreed that the evidence obtained at the meeting on 27 September 2007 should be presented to the Community and Environment Board for its consideration.

RESOLVED: That the evidence obtained by the Committee regarding the introduction of 20 mph speed restrictions be presented to the Community and Environment Board for its consideration.

43. WATERFRONT ZONING WORKING GROUP

Consideration was given to a briefing note from the Leisure and Cultural Services Manager which provided the Committee with an update on progress made by the Waterfront Zoning Working Group.

RESOLVED: That the actions proposed by the Working Group to improve information available to the public in respect of water recreation activities be recommended to the Community and Environment Board.

44. CONSIDERATION OF A TIMETABLE FOR THE SCRUTINY OF CAR PARKING CHARGES IN THE BOROUGH AND A POLICY IN RELATION TO PARKING PERMITS FOR VOLUNTARY GROUPS

At its meeting on 10 October 2007, the Committee had decided that car parking charges in the Borough should be scrutinised and that an evidence based report should be brought to one of its future meetings.

Members decided that the scrutiny of this subject should be divided into two parts and that two extraordinary meetings of the Committee should be convened for this purpose. The objective of the first meeting would be to discuss car parking charges with a number of invited individuals and representatives from interested organisations.

The individuals and organisations to be invited were:

- Councillors Cully, Hook and Smith
- Mr John Bowles
- Gosport Chamber of Trade
- Market Operators (Hughmark)
- Gosport Police
- Gosport Business Initiative
- Lee Traders Association

The second meeting would be for the Committee to consider an evidence based report from officers and to debate the matter of car parking charges in the Borough.

It was decided that the meetings would take place on 3 and 9 January 2008.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) extraordinary meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be arranged for 3 and 9 January 2008; and
- b) the following individuals and organisations be invited to the meeting on 3 January 2008 to assist the Committee with its discussion:

- Councillors Cully, Hook and Smith
- Mr John Bowles
- Gosport Chamber of Trade
- Market Operators (Hughmark)
- Gosport Police
- Gosport Business Initiative
- Lee Traders Association

45. REQUESTS FOR SCRUTINY

There were no requests for scrutiny.

46. REVIEW OF PROGRESS OF SCRUTINIES UNDERTAKEN

Southern Water Working Group

Consideration was given to a briefing note from the Borough Solicitor which updated the Committee on the progress made by the Working Group.

Councillor Jacobs advised that the Working Group had met the previous day and that a representative from Hampshire County Council Highways Maintenance had attended.

Co-ordination of works by the utilities providers had been discussed together with the Environment Agency's projected rises in sea levels.

Further meetings of the Working Group had been arranged for January and February 2008. It was intended that interested residents would be attending the January meeting whilst representatives from Southern Water would attend the February meeting.

It was anticipated that the Working Group's final report to the Committee would be ready in April 2008.

Members were advised that any sewers constructed after 1961 were likely to be private. There was a proposal for water companies to take responsibility for such sewers which they had previously rejected due to their being sub-standard.

RESOLVED: That the report and update be noted.

Travel Token Service Working Group

Councillor Dickson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item, left the committee room and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

Consideration was given to a briefing note from the Borough Solicitor which updated the Committee on the progress made by the Working Group.

Members were advised that the Working Group was keen to progress the option of smart cards being used in taxis. Officers would be looking into costs and responsibilities for costs together with the prevention of abuse of the system. It was anticipated that a report to the Working Group would be made in February 2008.

RESOLVED: That the report and update be noted.

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47. DEVELOPMENT OF A WORK PROGRAMME

A copy of the current work programme for the Committee was circulated to Members. The programme contained brief details of areas which were currently being or were due to be scrutinised, together with dates for appropriate reports to be made to Committee.

RESOLVED: That the work programme and the report dates contained therein be approved.

48. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no further business to discuss.

The meeting ended at 7.16 p.m.

CHAIRMAN