

**A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**WAS HELD ON 27 MARCH 2008**

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

**64. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were received from Councillors Mrs Mudie and Ward.

**65. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Dickson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 6(ii) (Travel Tokens).

**66. MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 9 and 31 January 2008 be approved and signed by the Chairman as true and correct records.

**67. GOSPORT'S SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

Consideration was given to a briefing note from the Chief Executive which provided Members with a progress update on Gosport's Sustainable Community Strategy and its Local Strategic Partnership.

Members asked what scope there was to increase cycling lanes along the major routes in and out of the Borough. The Chief Executive advised that the Gosport Partnership would concentrate initially on the main routes. A bid for Government finance would be made with Portsmouth City Council through Groundwork Solent. A list of the top ten bidders would be drawn up.

Members felt that "school runs" caused traffic congestion problems and was a major issue. Schools had made efforts to address the problem but success had been limited. The Chief Executive advised that pressure could continue to be applied to Hampshire County Council and money may be available via Local Area Agreements. The problem was partly due to parents not always choosing local schools for their children. This appeared to be a problem with first schools as well as secondary.

Members were concerned at the numbers of cyclists who used the pavement instead of roads or cycle lanes. It was felt that investigations should be made why this practice was so widespread and why people drove such short distances to take their children to and from school.

The Chief Executive advised that the Gosport Partnership would need to draw up an action plan. Parents' choices of senior schools would have a knock on effect with regard to junior schools. The enhancement of the reputation of Bridgemaury School would assist in this area

With regard to cycling on pedestrian areas, the Chief Executive suggested that the dangers associated with roads may encourage people to cycle on footpaths. A voice would need to be given to the community to ensure these problems were understood by Hampshire County Council.

Members felt that cyclists were often placed in danger by car drivers who drove on cycle lanes.

The Chairman advised that considerable investment had been made in cycleways but less thought had been given to what value would be obtained from them. The Committee could look to advise investors on how to use resources more wisely.

Members felt that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should decide in the 2008/09 Municipal Year whether or not to scrutinise the provision of cycle lanes.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) the report of the Chief Executive be noted; and
- b) a decision be made by the Committee in the Municipal Year 2008/09 on whether to scrutinise the provision of cycle lanes.

## **68. REQUESTS FOR SCRUTINY**

The Chairman advised that he had received a request from the Chairman of the Community and Environment Board for the Committee to consider whether or not it wished to scrutinise the Council's noise monitoring service.

It was agreed that a briefing note be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee for a decision to be made as to whether or not it wished to scrutinise this area of work. It was suggested that the briefing note should contain outline information on the volume of noise complaints, how they were dealt with and the Council's out of hours service.

It was suggested that the Committee may wish to scrutinise the relationship between the Council's licensing officers and the police. Members were advised that this would be more appropriately taken through the Community Safety Partnership.

RESOLVED: That a briefing note be submitted to the next ordinary meeting of the Committee to make a decision as whether or not it wishes to scrutinise the Council's noise monitoring service.

## **69. REVIEW OF PROGRESS OF SCRUTINIES UNDERTAKEN**

### Travel Token Service Working Group

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

Consideration was given to a briefing note which updated Members on the progress made by the Travel Tokens Working Group.

Concerns were raised regarding the Working Group's recommendation that the maximum debited amount from a Smart Card for one specific journey be £5 to avert fraudulent use of the concession system. It was felt that £5 was too small an amount as there were single journeys in the Borough whose cost exceed that amount.

The Committee noted its view that a limit of £5 would not be workable and recommended that the Working Group should consider differential limits for differential journeys.

Members were advised that, by law, the Council was required to issue bus passes to people who fulfilled certain criteria. For other schemes the Council could set its own criteria.

The view was expressed that the Working Group could look at the impact of changing the age of entitlement to travel tokens. The Council was one of very few who still issued travel tokens.

RESOLVED: That, with regard to the maximum debited amount from a Smart Card for one specific journey, the Travel Tokens Working Group be recommended to consider differential limits for differential journeys.

### Southern Water Working Group

Consideration was given to the report of the Working Group. Members who had sat on the Working Group were congratulated by the Chairman together with Joe Martin of Democratic Services who had supported the Working Group. A request was made that a formal letter of thanks be written to Mr Martin.

With regard to the adoption in 2010 of all private sewers, it was confirmed that Southern Water would recover its additional costs through higher sewerage charges which, it was understood, would initially amount to approximately £10 per property each year. This was considered to be fairer than the current arrangements for private sewers.

Although many people were insured against damage or problems with private sewers, there were concerns that some would wait until 2010 to report the problem to Southern Water.

Members agreed with the recommendation of the report that the adoption of private sewers should be publicised through Coastline and the Council's website at the appropriate time, probably in 2009.

With regard to the opening of sluice gates, it was noted that this had been carried out on a number of occasions by members of the public. Members were advised that arrangements had now been made with Southern Water for Council officers to open and close the sluice gates as necessary.

The Working Group's report recommended that regular meetings take place between the Borough Council, the County Council and Southern Water. Southern Water had requested a copy of the Working Group's report once it had been considered by the Committee.

Members were advised that, provided the Committee was in agreement, the report should be placed before the next meeting of the Community and Environment Board. If the Board agreed to the recommendations, any resultant liaison groups would need to be set up through the Council and the Board would be required to decide how it wished the Council to receive feedback from the forum.

The Committee agreed that all Members of the Council should be provided with a copy of the Working Group's report.

RESOLVED: That the following recommendations be made to the Community and Environment Board:

- a) a forum of representatives from Southern Water, Gosport Borough Council, Hampshire County Council and other bodies as required meet once every three months to:
  - i) ensure that pollution response and protection procedures are up to date;
  - ii) share ideas on the development of Flooding Emergency Action plans; and
  - iii) discuss operational issues and actions being taken and planned by Southern Water in the Borough;
- b) the Community and Environment Board consider how the Council is to receive feedback from the forum;

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- c) residents be informed via Coastline, the Council's website and elements of the media of the correct procedures for reporting wastewater and pollution concerns;
- d) the adoption of privately owned sewers and drains by Southern Water be publicised and explained to residents by the Council along with the nationwide publication of the changes to be made by the Government in 2009; and
- e) all Members of the Council be provided with a copy of the Southern Water Working Group's report.

#### **70. 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.

The Borough Solicitor advised that she would be unable to attend the meeting of the Committee on 5 June 2008 but would present a report on scrutiny training for Members at the following meeting on 24 July 2008.

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

#### **71. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no further business to discuss.

The meeting ended at 7.38 p.m.

CHAIRMAN