

5 June 2008

**A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WAS HELD ON 5 JUNE 2008**

Councillors Allen (P), Beavis (P), Carr (P), Champion, Cully, Dickson (P), Edwards (P), Mrs Forder (P), Forder (Chairman) (P), Mrs Salter (P), Salter (P) and Miss West (P).

4. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING COMMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Members of the Committee to the first ordinary meeting of the new Municipal Year.

He drew attention to the invaluable experience of some of the Members currently serving on the Committee, the areas of work that had been scrutinised over the last year and possible alternative methods of scrutinising.

The Chairman stressed that the Committee's function was not to make decisions but to make recommendations to the Council and/or its Boards and, in this role, it had met with some success.

He was keen to see that training for Members of the Committee took place as soon as possible.

5. APOLOGIES

No apologies were received for inability to attend the meeting.

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Dickson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 5B (Travel Token Service).

7. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 27 March and 15 May 2008 be approved and signed by the Chairman as true and correct records.

8. DEVELOPMENT OF A WORK PROGRAMME

A. REQUESTS FOR SCRUTINY

(i) Noise Monitoring Service

Consideration was given to a report of the Environmental Services Manager which outlined key legislation, areas of work and processes related to noise nuisance.

The view was expressed that the service available did not match the expectations of the public in that noise problems were not dealt with by the Police and Council staff were often not available.

Members were advised that more people nowadays had access to powerful equipment. The climate was changing and the level of tolerance had fallen.

Members felt that this area of work should be scrutinised by a working group.

(ii) Cycle Lanes

Consideration was given to a briefing note by the Chief Executive who advised Members that one of the areas the Local Strategic Partnership had decided to concentrate on was transport, including the improvement of cycle lanes, particularly those leading in and out of the Borough. The Council had applied for grants towards this improvement but had not so far been successful.

Views were expressed that certain cycle lanes in the Borough were not greatly used and there were also problems with cyclists riding on the pavement. The Police had taken little action in this area and it was emphasised that people needed to feel safe when walking on the pavement.

Members felt that this area of work should be scrutinised by a working group.

B. TRAVEL TOKEN SERVICE

Note: Councillor Dickson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item, left the meeting for its entire discussion and did not take part in the voting thereon.

Consideration was given to a briefing note by the Borough Solicitor which outlined the work carried out by the Travel Token Working Group.

Members were advised that the Working Group had looked into the introduction of smart cards for use in taxis. A disadvantage of travel tokens was that, although they were not always used by members of the public to whom they had been issued, the Council was still required to pay for them.

A presentation had been made to the Community and Environment Board on 27 September 2007 by the Managing Director of National Transport Tokens Ltd regarding the provision of smart cards to be used in taxis. Members had expressed concerns in that each card would cost £3.50 and there would be slightly less than 10,000 recipients. There would be a cost of £99 for each card reader and there were concerns about who would pay for this. It had been felt by some Members of the Board that the scheme would be too expensive and that there were too many loopholes to make the scheme viable.

The view was expressed that, should the Committee continue the scrutiny, the views of the taxi driver representatives should be sought.

Members subsequently decided to take no action at present on this item but to keep a watching brief on the situation.

C. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman explained that the Work Programme listed items that were due to be considered by the Committee and would vary as items were added or removed when completed.

D. OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR SCRUTINY

It was suggested that the induction and training of new councillors be scrutinised by the whole Committee. Members were in agreement with this proposal and the Chairman undertook to write a paper to be presented at the next meeting of the Committee.

It was noted that the next session of Scrutiny Training for Members had been arranged for the next meeting on 24 July 2008. It was proposed that this training be brought forward to an earlier date.

Members agreed that the following work areas included in the Work Programme should continue:

- Performance Information
- Community Strategy Action Plan
- Disability Equality Scheme

Members agreed that scrutiny of the Noise Monitoring Service and Cycle Lanes should be carried out by Working Groups with a membership of two from the Conservative Group, one from the Labour Group and two from the Liberal Democrat Group. Nominations were agreed as follows:

Noise Monitoring Service

Councillors Allen, Edwards, Cully, Forder and Salter.

Cycle Lanes

Councillors Beavis, Cully, Dickson, Mrs Forder and Mrs Salter.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) New Member Induction and Training be scrutinised and that the scrutiny be carried out by the whole Committee;

- b) the following work areas included in the Work Programme should continue:
 - Performance Information
 - Community Strategy Action Plan
 - Disability Equality Scheme;
- c) Scrutiny Training for Members be brought forward to a date prior to 24 July 2008;
- d) no action be taken at present on the scrutiny of the Travel Token Service but a watching brief be kept;
- e) a Working Group be established on a 2:1:2 basis to scrutinise the Noise Monitoring Service with the membership as detailed above; and
- f) a Working Group be established on a 2:1:2 basis to scrutinise Cycle Lanes with the membership as detailed above.

9. REPORTS TO BE RECEIVED

DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Corporate Policy and Performance, who advised Members that the above scheme had been reviewed by both the Council Management Team and the Disability Equality Group.

Members were informed that 74% of the actions had been completed. The Gosport Access Group and Disability Forum had expressed their pleasure at this situation.

Members were advised that a new Action Plan had been drawn up.

Members were pleased with the progress made and congratulated officers on the quality of the work they had carried out.

RESOLVED: That the annual progress report on the Disability Equality Scheme and the updated Action Plan for 2008/10 be approved and that the annual scrutiny of the scheme be concluded.

10 OTHER BUSINESS

Officers discussed dates of future meeting and officers were asked to liaise with Members over dates for the Noise Monitoring Service and Cycle Lanes Working Groups.

Officers were requested to liaise with the Chairman and the Borough Solicitor with a view to creating a separate training session for Members and a meeting for the Committee to focus on the issue of new Councillor induction.

5 June 2008

The meeting ended at 7.10 p.m.

CHAIRMAN