

A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WAS HELD ON 18 MARCH 2009

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

36. APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Champion, Edwards, Mrs Salter and Salter.

37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

38. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 29 January 2009 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

39. DEVELOPMENT OF A WORK PROGRAMME

A) REQUESTS FOR SCRUTINY

There were no requests for scrutiny.

B) WORK PROGRAMME

The updated Work Programme was noted.

C) OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR SCRUTINY

There were no other suggestions for scrutiny.

40. REPORTS RECEIVED

(i) SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY WORKING GROUP

Consideration was given to a report of the Services for the Elderly Working Group which advised Members of its work during December 2008 to February 2009 together with its conclusions and recommendations.

The Chairman reported that the Working Group had held four meetings, two of which had concentrated on questioning people working or involved with the elderly. Three reports had been produced and research had been carried out by officers.

The Working Group had decided to concentrate on the problems of loneliness and isolation amongst elderly people and had discovered that considerable useful work was already being carried out by various organisations. However, it appeared that they were mainly working independently without significant contact with others who may be able to compliment or assist with their work.

The report of the Working Group recommended that the Council organise and host a conference on loneliness and isolation amongst the elderly. Statutory and voluntary bodies would be invited to attend with a view to generating strategies that could help in addressing the issues and considering ways in which they could contribute to alleviating the problems.

Members were advised that the Primary Care Trust (PCT) should be invited to the proposed conference. The PCT formed part of the Local Strategic Partnership.

Officers advised that the forthcoming Comprehensive Area Assessment was likely to place considerable importance on equality and diversity with particular reference to vulnerable people.

It was agreed that a recommendation be made to Council to consider the organisation and hosting of a conference on loneliness and isolation amongst the elderly and that a Steering Group should be established to consider the aims of the proposed conference and how it should be organised. The following Members were nominated by the Committee to sit on the Steering Group:

- Councillor Allen
- Councillor Dickson
- Councillor Mrs Forder
- Councillor Forder

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to consider:

- a) the organising and hosting of a conference on loneliness and isolation amongst the elderly;
- b) the establishment of a Steering Group to consider the organisation and aims of the conference; and
- c) the following nominations to sit on the Steering Group:
 - Councillor Allen
 - Councillor Dickson
 - Councillor Mrs Forder
 - Councillor Forder

(ii) GOSPORT'S SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY –
PROGRESS UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive which provided Members with a with a progress update on Gosport's Sustainable Community Strategy and its Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

Members were advised that the LSP was in the process of dissolving two of its thematic subgroups (Gosport Community Learning Forum and Gosport Regeneration Action Forum) and creating an Employability and Skills Partnership to help address its strategic priority around increasing local employment opportunities.

The recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2008, that there should be greater educational representation on the Board of the LSP, had been implemented. The District Manager for Education and Inclusion at Hampshire County Council had joined the Board in his capacity as Chairman of the Gosport Children and Young People's Locality Partnership. The meeting of the Board in March 2009 would confirm that the Gosport Education and Improvement Partnership should also become a subgroup of the LSP, resulting in the Chairman of that Partnership (currently Ian Johnson, Head of Brune Park Community College), also joining the Board.

The LSP concentrated on areas where it could make a difference, for example, work related to teenage pregnancy and sex education.

It was felt that the Gosport Transport and Sustainability Partnership, a partner on the Board, had been of considerable assistance when the provision of cycle lanes in Gosport was being scrutinised.

RESOLVED: That the six-monthly scrutiny of Gosport's Sustainable Community Strategy be concluded.

(iii) SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT 2007

The Borough Solicitor referred to her report to the meeting of the Committee on 25 September 2008 which resolved that a further briefing take place in six months time.

It was reported that the Secretary of State had written and advised Local Authorities that they had until 31 July 2009 to put forward proposals. All proposals should be sent to the Local Government Association which had been appointed as the "selector" under the terms of the Act.

Members were advised that the Act was regarded as a vehicle for innovation and not a source of funding from Central Government.

It was agreed that officers monitor the website of the Department of Communities and Local Government to help to identify any proposals which may be approved in the future.

RESOLVED: That the website of the Department of Communities and Local Government be monitored.

(iv) ANNUAL REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Consideration was given to a report of the Chairman which provided details of the Committee's work and achievements during the Municipal Year 2008/09.

Paragraph 6.04 of the Council's Constitution provided that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee must report annually to full Council on their working and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.

Members felt that the work of the Committee had had considerable impact in some areas in that the profile of some schemes potentially beneficial to Gosport and its residents had been raised.

The Chairman thanked Members of the Committee for their contributions throughout the year.

RESOLVED: That Annual Report on the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2008/09 be presented to Council on 1 April 2009.

41. HAMPSHIRE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY CONFERENCE

The Chairman advised that an invitation had been received from Hampshire County Council for Members and Officers to attend a conference to take place at East Horton Golf Centre on 21 April 2009.

It was agreed that a copy of the invitation should be provided to all Members of the Committee who would then let the Democratic Services Section know, should they wish to attend the conference.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) a copy of the invitation to the Hampshire Overview and Scrutiny Conference on 21 April 2009 be provided to all Members of the Committee; and
- b) Members advise the Democratic Service Section should they wish to attend.

The meeting ended at 7.00 p.m.

CHAIRMAN