

**A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WAS HELD ON 28 JANUARY 2010**

Councillors Allen (P), Beavis (P), Champion (P), Dickson (P), Mrs Forder (P), Forder (Chairman) (P), Foster-Reed, Hylands (P), Mrs Searle, and Miss West (P).

41. MINUTE'S SILENCE

Members stood for one minute in silent tribute to the memory of Councillor Jackie Carr who, until his recent death, had been Vice-Chairman of this Committee.

42. APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs Searle and Foster-Reed.

43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

44. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 26 November and 15 December 2009 be approved and signed by the Chairman as true and correct records.

45. DEVELOPMENT OF A WORK PROGRAMME

A) REQUESTS FOR SCRUTINY

No requests had been received.

B) WORK PROGRAMME

Members were advised that the Budget Issues Working Group had met regularly and was up to date with its work which included looking at the presentation of the Budget Book and the Summary of Accounts together with financial awareness training for Members and budget monitoring.

The Work Programme was noted.

C) OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR SCRUTINY

There were no other suggestions for scrutiny.

RESOLVED: That the Work Programme of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

46. REPORTS RECEIVED

(i) RACE EQUALITY SCHEME ANNUAL REPORT

Consideration was given to a briefing note by the Head of Policy and Performance which presented the second annual report to the Committee on the Race Equality Scheme and its revised Action Plan.

Members were advised that progress had been good with all 17 actions from the Action Plan being delivered.

It was intended to extend the scheme to April 2011 when it was proposed to merge the Race, Gender and Disability Scheme into a single Equality Bill.

Members were advised that the number of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Groups in the Borough was not known (due to the age of Census data) but 45 different first languages were spoken. The percentage of young people for whom English was a second language had risen from 3.8% to 4.3% in 2009.

Members were advised that monthly tension reports were produced through a multi-agency approach which included the Police. This was a requirement due to the Borough having a low perception rating with regard to cohesion amongst neighbours.

With regard to Member training on equal opportunities, officers advised that the Borough Solicitor's report to the Standards and Governance Committee on 18 March 2010 would be recommending the provision of E learning for new Members as part of their induction.

The Committee noted the report and congratulated all staff involved in this area of work.

RESOLVED: That the briefing note of the Head of Policy and Performance be noted.

(ii) POST 16 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Consideration was given to the Chairman's briefing note which advised Members of the provisional findings of the Committee's scrutiny of Post 16 Vocational Education in Gosport. The provisional findings had been obtained through oral and written evidence which had been gathered from a number of witnesses.

The final part of the evidence gathering process would take place on 17 February 2010 when Councillor David Kirk, Hampshire County Council's Executive Lead Member for Children's Services would be attending a meeting of the Committee. The Committee would be seeking Councillor Kirk's general comments and would be taking the opportunity to ask him questions.

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Members were interested in finding out about the process of the transition of responsibility for education provision from the Learning and Skills Council to Hampshire County Council and how it would work. Officers advised that some staff would be transferred as part of the process.

Members drew attention to various projects that would be emerging in Gosport, which would require both skilled and unskilled labour. It was felt that developers had a responsibility to employ local labour and it was important for schools and colleges to have useful dialogue with the local business community.

The Chairman advised that a number of Councillors would be visiting South Downs College on 4 February 2010. The College was considered to be an example of good practice in the area and it was felt that it would be useful to ascertain the level of dialogue the College had with the local business community.

The Chairman advised that he would be writing a report for submission to the Council meeting on 31 March 2010 following the visit to South Downs College, Councillor Kirk's meeting with the Committee and consultation with the Members of the Committee.

47. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to discuss.

The meeting ended at 6.46 p.m

CHAIRMAN