

**A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WAS HELD ON 6 DECEMBER 2010**

Councillors Bradley, Dickson, Forder (Chairman) (P), Foster-Reed (P), Geddes, Hylands (P), Jacobs (P), Jessop (P), Kimber (P), Scard (P), Mrs Searle (P) and Miss West.

27. APOLOGIES

An apology for inability to attend the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor Dickson.

28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

29. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 September 2010 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

30. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman explained to the Committee why the dates of meetings had been changed.

- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting scheduled for 25th November 2010 was rearranged to 6th December 2010 as the Chief Executive was attending business awards that evening.
- The Extraordinary Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting scheduled for Thursday 16th December was arranged to meet the Acting Principal for Fareham College, Nigel Duncan.
- The Chairman proposed that the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting be moved from 27th January 2011 to 26th January 2011 and this was agreed.

RESOLVED: That the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee scheduled for 27th January 2011 be moved to 6pm on 26th January 2011.

31. REPORTS RECEIVED

(i) MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

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The Committee was informed that officers submitted a report to the Standards and Governance Committee on 28th October 2010, which summarised the findings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as agreed at the previous meeting. Members of the Standards and Governance Committee concluded that they needed further information regarding the scheme and questioned how the Charter would be funded.

(ii) DIAL A RIDE

Councillor Hylands reported on behalf of the Dial a Ride Working Group and advised that the report was almost complete and was on target to be brought to the January meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Hylands informed the Committee that the Working Group had concluded that the scheme did not represent good value for money and suffered greatly from a lack of awareness from the general public. The Working Group suggested that Dial a Ride needed to focus on new users and meeting the targets from its marketing plan. Councillor Hylands also advised that there were concerns that many issues were not confined to the Dial a Ride scheme but to community transport as a whole. This would be discussed fully by the Committee on 26th January 2010, when the report would be considered.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Hylands and the Working Group for their hard work and welcomed the report being brought to the Committee.

(iii) REPORT OF SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP INTO NURSERY OPERATIONS AT GRANGE FARM

The Chairman stressed that this report would be fully discussed on 26th January 2011. Councillor Kimber introduced the report to the Committee. He informed the Committee that the report did not have direct officer input, but officers had been interviewed during the process of its production. The report attempted to create a true account of the Nursery's working operations.

The inability of the Nursery to meet the business plan targets was discussed. It was thought this was due partly to the frequently changing political climate in Gosport, but primarily due to poor management.

The Committee considered the 5 different options presented in the report, with option 3, commercial partner, the preferred option. It was noted, however, that much ground work would need to be put in place before a commercial partner would be able to step in.

It was agreed that further exploration of the different options was needed before the next meeting so that a decision could be made. It was noted that 'feelers' had been sent out to potential partners.

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The committee agreed that it would speak to the Nursery Supervisor, Head of Environmental Services and Chief Executive at the next meeting, so that they could give their views on the operation of the Nursery and answer the committee's questions.

The Chairman thanked the Working Group for the report and the hard work which went into it. Their time and effort into a difficult enquiry was appreciated.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) further investigation be made into the different options available, especially in regard to option 4, commercial partner; and
- b) the Nursery Supervisor, Head of Department and Chief Executive be invited to the next Overview & Scrutiny committee meeting to give their views on the operation of the Nursery and answer the committee's questions.

32. DEVELOPMENT OF A WORK PROGRAMME

A) REQUESTS FOR SCRUTINY

No requests had been received.

B) WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted.

C) OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR SCRUTINY

No requests were received.

33. POST 16 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The Chief Executive presented a report on Post 16 Education in the Gosport Area (attached to the minutes as appendix A). The report stated that Hampshire County Council had approved a report which began a consultation on the future organisation of Post 16 education in the Gosport Area. The report recognised the consultation undertaken by Gosport's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and as such the Chief Executive suggested that the Committee may wish to respond to the consultation. The deadline was 31st January 2011, so the Committee was advised that any recommendation needed to go to the Policy and Organisation Board on 24th January 2011, so the Council may respond formally to the County Council.

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It was agreed that the Committee should formulate a response to the County Council. The Chairman had drafted a potential response, which was circulated (attached to the minutes as appendix B). It was agreed that Members would bring any amendments or additions to the extraordinary meeting of the Committee on 16th December 2010. This would allow enough time for a response to be presented to the Policy and Organisation Board.

Di Lloyd, Principal for St Vincent College, and Colin Farmery, Assistant Principal Adult Learning and Community, were welcomed to the meeting. Ms Lloyd was asked to present her views on post 16 education in the Gosport area.

Ms Lloyd believed it was time to seize the moment with post 16 education. What was needed was a consensus from all educational institutions in Gosport on what was best for local children. This was particularly important with the rise in age children could leave education. Although post 16 education is important, post 14 education was especially important in Gosport to counter drop out rates for students. Ms Lloyd believed it was necessary to provide alternative education for those disengaged with traditional academic subjects.

Ms Lloyd was concerned that Gosport currently lacked vocational education opportunities. At St Vincent College, 50% of pupils were studying vocational subjects. Ms Lloyd circulated a list of vocational courses offered by St Vincent College (attached to minutes as appendix C). To encourage more children into post 16 education, St Vincent had mixed A levels with vocational training which had worked very well. St Vincent College were keen to develop vocational courses, especially taster courses where students could experience different courses on offer.

Working alongside employers was also considered to be an important aim in post 16 education. It was important for pupils to have the skills that employers wanted.

Ms Lloyd was seeking consensus between all educational institutions and employers in Gosport to develop a formal programme to improve the post 16 education of young people in Gosport. An important way to improve education was through a focus on post 14 education, vocational courses and a working relationship with employers.

Members asked Ms Lloyd what, in her opinion, had prevented the different educational institutions in Gosport working together. Ms Lloyd responded that it was a mixture of personalities, competition and change in governments. In the past there had been competition between Bay House Sixth Form and St Vincent College. Ms Lloyd now wished to leave that to the past and work with all educational institutions.

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A Member of the Committee asked Ms Lloyd who she saw as her partners and rivals. Ms Lloyd saw all schools in the Gosport area as partners, otherwise the consensus she wished to create could not work. However Fareham College did attract many Gosport students. Ms Lloyd stated that Gosport needed to be able to provide for all students so they did not have to travel further afield to continue their education. Ms Lloyd also wished to engage with Gosport College, as St Vincent College was not currently involved with it.

Mr Farmery was asked whether there was to be any investment in the sporting grounds at St Vincent. He replied that there was an investment programme for the sports grounds including use at the weekend, a new sports social club and swimming pool. St Vincent College hoped to become the sporting heart of Gosport.

Members asked why students went to Fareham to continue their education. Ms Lloyd believed that this was because Gosport did not provide the courses that students wanted. Ms Lloyd stated that Gosport had the potential to provide post 16 education to all children in Gosport, but they needed to work together to achieve this aim.

The appearance of buildings at St Vincent College was discussed. Ms Lloyd stated that she hoped to improve these, but her main focus was on providing high quality education for Gosport children.

34. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to discuss.

The meeting ended at 7.40 p.m.

CHAIRMAN