

**A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
WAS HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2011**

*Subject to approval*

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

**45. APOLOGIES**

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

**46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**47. MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 6 and 16 December 2010 and 13 January 2011 be approved and signed by the Chairman as true and correct records.

**48. REPORTS RECEIVED**

(i) PROGRESS REPORT ON GOSPORT'S LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

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

The pressure on public sector resources had resulted in the Gosport Partnership Board carrying out a fundamental review of its operations. Although some Local Strategic Partnerships had been disbanded, the Gosport Partnership had decided to continue as a voluntary partnership so that benefits could still be derived for the Gosport community and partner organisations. The partnership would be known as the Gosport Partnership, however, its structure and reporting mechanisms would be significantly rationalised.

Members were advised that this would therefore be the final report to the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the report of the Chief Executive be noted.

(ii) RACE EQUALITY SCHEME ANNUAL REPORT

Consideration was given to a briefing note of the Chief Executive which provided members with the final annual report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Race Equality Scheme (RES) 2007 - 2010 and its Action Plan.

Members were advised that the Race Equality Scheme with Action Plan had been formally adopted in February 2008, although the period of this scheme was from November 2007 to November 2010.

Progress during this year has been significant and all twelve actions had been completed.

As of April 2011 the scheme would merge into the Council's first Single Equality Scheme to reflect the wider equality provisions included in the Equality Act, passed into legislation last year.

RESOLVED: That the report of the Chief Executive be noted.

(iii) MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

The Chairman reported that, in response to a request from the Standards and Governance Committee, an interesting and informative presentation had been made on 24 January 2011 by the South East Employers and Councillor Barnard of Bracknell Forest Borough Council to which all Members had been invited. This had been well received by Members attending.

A report was to be submitted to the Policy and Organisation Board on 1 February 2011 to decide whether or not the Council should sign up to the South East Charter for Elected Member Development.

(iv) DIAL-A-RIDE

Consideration was given to a briefing note of the Dial-a-Ride Working Group which provided Members with the findings of the Working Group's scrutiny and set out a number of recommendations.

The Working Group felt that the Council was not receiving proper value for its contribution to the scheme and that there was little awareness of the service amongst those who might legitimately be able to benefit from it, some of whom thought it was a taxi service and consequently did not use it.

The re-marketing of the service was felt to be a step forward as well as the introduction of a flat £3.00 return fare which had received the approval of the County Council. These initiatives had come about after the scrutiny had started.

A problem existed where potential new users had not, at the first attempt, been able to book a trip and this had put them off making further attempts. This was a problem that needed to be addressed beyond the marketing plan.

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It was felt that potential new customers should be registered and that this should be monitored and reported to the Working Group on a regular basis. It should be reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee after twelve months. Currently the software in use appeared to favour existing customers.

Members were advised that there was no problem with capacity to provide the service but the contribution from the Borough Council was the same however many people used the service and more customers would represent better value for money.

The view was expressed that the scheme had not worked satisfactorily from the start. When travel tokens were abolished, some people who normally used them to pay for taxi fares would need to use alternative methods of travel. The system needed to be able to react to this situation and the Community Safety Partnership needed to be consulted.

Members were advised that Dial-a-Ride did not include trips to hospitals or for medical appointments. Monitoring meetings did take place but this scrutiny had presented a good opportunity to secure improvements.

It was felt that if the service could not be improved sufficiently it should be discontinued in Gosport.

Members were advised of the existence of access groups and forums who may be able to assist with the marketing.

RESOLVED: That;

- a) The current service did not provide value for money with the cost per passenger trip being double the Hampshire average;
- b) The number of trips must be significantly improved to secure value for money and therefore:
  - I. The remarketing of the Dial A Ride service and the further suggestions detailed in Recommendation 1 of the Working Group's report must be implemented immediately by Community Action Fareham ('CAF');
  - II. Promotion of the service through free press, local press, Coastline, community groups, health services and social services providers must be undertaken immediately by CAF;
  - III. CAF must give higher priority to ensuring new customer enquiries result in regular Dial A Ride users; and
  - IV. CAF must provide details of the number of new customer enquiries; how many of those then use the service and how regularly they use to the Financial Services Manager each month.
- c) The target for a 12.5% increase in trips was acceptable but this should be achieved within 6 months rather than 12 months;

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- d) The Financial Services Manager continues to monitor the performance of CAF and Dial A Ride and also advises HCC of the Committees concerns;
- e) The Dial A Ride Working Group meets in April to review the performance of Dial A Ride service and in particular the progress towards meeting the increase in trips set out in 3 above;
- f) The Overview and Scrutiny Committee receives a further report from the Working Group should they consider that sufficient progress in not being made to improving value for money; and
- g) The Overview and Scrutiny Committee thanked the members of the Working Group, CAF and Officers for their work.

**49. DEVELOPMENT OF A WORK PROGRAMME**

A) REQUESTS FOR SCRUTINY

No requests had been received.

B) WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman suggested that, as the membership of the Committee may well remain unaltered in the next Municipal Year, the discussion at the next meeting should include the work to be undertaken in 2011/12.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) the Work Programme be noted; and
- b) the work to be undertaken by the Committee during the Municipal Year 2011/12 be discussed at its meeting on 24 March 2011.

C) OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR SCRUTINY

No requests were received.

**50. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business to discuss.

The meeting ended at 7.06 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

