

Minutes

Name of meeting	ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY PANEL
Date and time	WEDNESDAY, 28 JULY 2010 COMMENCING AT 6.00PM
Venue	COMMITTEE ROOM ONE, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, IOW
Present	Cllrs Ian Ward (Chairman), Roger Dixcey, Lora Peacy-Wilcox, David Whittaker, Wayne Whittle
Officers Present	Jonathan Baker, Stuart Love, John Metcalfe, Paul Thistlewood
Cabinet Members	Cllrs George Brown, Edward Giles

6. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

RESOLVED:

THAT the minutes of the previous meeting held on [26 May 2010](#) be agreed.

7. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations at this time.

8. **Forward Plan**

Members reviewed the Council's Forward Plan for June to September 2010 and in particular those items which fell within the remit of the Panel. The following issues were discussed:

(i) Ref No: 1073/10 – Newport Transport Strategy

Members were advised that this was part of the overall Island Plan and that consultation was ongoing

(ii) Ref No: - 1077/10 – Cowes Chain Ferry – Future Options

The Panel was advised that the report to cabinet would seek agreement to explore all options. It was noted that the Board of Trade licence would not be renewed when it expired due to the age of the vessel.

(iii) Ref No: - 1048/10 – Interim Waste Plan

The Strategic Director Economy and Environment advised members that the report would be an update on development of a long term strategy. With regard to the gasification plant it was anticipated that this would be working to capacity by mid August 2010.

(iv) Ref No: - 1089/10 – Integrated Road Safety Grant

Members were informed that the report would seek to identify a way forward with regard to an in year 75% reduction in grant support.

(v) Ref No: - 1083/10 – Local Transport Plan

This would review issues contained within the LTP2 and consider future requirements arising from the coalition government.

(vi) Ref No: - 1078/10 – 2011/12 Concessionary Fares Scheme

This would be the annual report on levels of re-imburement and was likely to be taken via a delegated decision.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Forward Plan be noted.

9. **Quarterly Performance and Strategic Risk Management Report - Quarter 2010/11**

The Strategic Director Economy and Environment advised members that the targets missed had largely been down to the performance of the Fire and Rescue Service which was being addressed in the Fire Modernisation Programme. It was clarified that the 4.5% of measures with missing /unavailable data did not relate to failed areas performance but data that wasn't available.

With regard to the Future Jobs Fund funding being withdrawn from central government, the council would be launching a virtual website which would enable people to upload CV's which could be seen by potential employers.

The panel was advised that it was the intention of the council to build into agreements for the contractors of the Pan Meadows project, arrangements to employ local people who had been provided with the opportunity to develop key skills. It was also anticipated that a report to cabinet would update on issues of local procurement.

The Cabinet Member for the Environment and Transport stated that the competitive dialogue stage was progressing well within the Highways PFI and that the council was in regular contact with the Department for Transport. Confirmation on whether the funding would be part of the spending review was expected by the end of the summer.

With regard to Section 106 monies, the Strategic Director would confirm the current position relating to the use of these monies.

The Cabinet Member for the Economy, Tourism, Leisure and Planning advised that the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) would cease in March 2012. Initially there would be a reduction of 26% funding in the coming year and then a further 60% reduction thereafter. SEEDA occupied large land holdings on the Island and there was a need to identify a smooth transition to a proposed Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) with a number of neighbouring authorities, forming a Solent LEP. The Strategic Director advised that it was essential that an agreement should be reached as soon as possible in order to provide maximum benefit to the local economy. Members acknowledged that it was good to see the council being proactive within this area.

On the area of leisure and sports members were informed that clients of Island leisure facilities had been contacted to ascertain why usage was not as high as the previous year and a mixed response was received. The Panel was of the opinion that this could perhaps be expected as the leisure industry was often one of the first to be hit in times of financial difficulties. Members were advised that a clearer picture should be made available by the end of the year.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Quarterly Performance and Strategic Risk Management Report - Quarter 2010/11 be noted.

10. **[Economic Development Delivery Action Plan 2010/11 to 2012/13](#)**

The Deputy Director for Economic Development Tourism & Leisure gave a PowerPoint presentation which outlined the progress on actions contained within the Delivery Plan for quarter one.

Members were advised that on the overall plan there was 123 actions to be addressed and of these 74 actions were due to commence within the first quarter. Actions that were either on track or completed amounted to 42 (56%). The remaining actions were broken down into the following three categories:

- Actions on hold – 9 (12%)
- Actions slightly behind planned status – 15 (20%)
- Actions behind planned status – 9 (12%)

With regard to external influence on funding there would be a loss of £80,000 from the Local Authority Business Growth Incentives (LABGI) and a loss of £75,000 of Sub Regional Partnership Funds.

The panel was advised that as a result of the recent Coalition Government along with the cessation of SEEDA and the Development of the LEP, there would also be an end to Business Link.

Members were given a breakdown of actions that were classed as being on hold and these included:

- Investigate with SEEDA development opportunities for the technology park
- Arrangement of targeted recruitment & training workshop around PFI
- Work with business link and SEEDA to develop investment grants to improve quality standards in tourism.
- Engagement with universities with regard to renewable energy test site developments.
- Consider application for funding for commercial tidal R & D facilities

A breakdown of those actions which were behind on the original timescales were:

- i. Formulation of an inward investor client management process – 50% complete
- ii. Development of inward investor web portal and support packages – 50% complete
- iii. Work with Hants Economic Partnership to recruit employers to new sector groups – 20% complete
- iv. Enhancement of prospectus documentation for the island as a centre for wind powered R&D – 50% complete
- v. Support Environment forum to develop initiatives that enhance skills developments in wind energy especially micro schemes – yet to start
- vi. Work with Forestry Commission to ensure that local wood fuel supply chain is linked to planned developments – 10% complete
- vii. Establish a collaborative framework with partners for the development of funding for broadband technologies – 50% complete
- viii. Report on national policy constraints hindering broadband infrastructure investments – 30% complete
- ix. Review the level of activity and impact from it of the Council's involvement with the eHampshire Partnership – yet to start

Members were advised that the main reason for the these actions not being progressed was that data had not been captured, inputted and followed up on time. Whilst this was also the duty of partners to input data, the council did own the plan and therefore had to take responsibility of any actions which were behind schedule.

With regard to action vi, members were advised that the proposed biomass plant needed to be looked at carefully owing to the issue of emissions being released into the atmosphere, therefore appropriate planning procedures would need to be adhered to. It was envisaged that wood chippings would be used initially within the plant, although locally grown crop produce could be encouraged and used at a later time.

RESOLVED:

THAT progress with the Economic Development Delivery Action Plan 2010/11 to 2012/13 be noted.

11. **Reference the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 10 June 2010 – Registration of Bus Routes**

Members were reminded that at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 10 June 2010; a call in relating to the delegated decision on the Site Safety Assessment of Pixley Hill was heard. As a result of the call in it was recommended that the Economy, Environment and Transport Scrutiny Panel include within its work plan an inquiry into the processes and consultations involved when looking at bus routes, including the traffic safety considerations that are taken into account.

Following discussions, the panel decided to establish a task group to undertake this inquiry.

RESOLVED:

THAT Cllr Dixcey, Cllr Ward and Cllr Whittaker be appointed to the Task Group.

12. **Members Question Time**

Cllr Whittle raised several issues relating to car parking to which the Cabinet Member for the Environment and Transport responded accordingly.

CHAIRMAN