



Minutes

Name of meeting	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date and time	THURSDAY, 10 MARCH 2011 COMMENCING AT 5.00PM
Venue	COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT
Present	Cllrs Ian Ward (vice chairman in the chair) George Cameron, Vanessa Churchman, Heather Humby, Colin Richards, Margaret Webster
Cabinet members (non-voting)	Cllrs Tim Hunter-Henderson, David Pugh
Officers Present	Mr Steve Beynon, Mr Stuart Love, Mr Chris Mathews, Mr Bob Streets, Mr Paul Thistlewood
Apologies	Cllrs John Hobart, Julie Jones-Evans, Gary Taylor, Wayne Whittle (Chairman),
Other members (non voting)	Cllrs Geoff Lumley, Chris Welsford

29. **Minutes**

RESOLVED :

THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on [3 February 2011](#) be confirmed.

30. **[Update on Action Plan arising from the Audit Commission's Review of Performance Management in May 2010](#)**

The committee was reminded that it had considered a review undertaken by the Audit Commission into the council's performance management arrangements at its meeting on 10 June 2010. An action plan arising from the review had been produced at that time and members indicated that they wanted to be updated on progress after a six month period.

All but two actions had been completed. These had been held in abeyance due to the budget and associated restructuring.

RESOLVED :

THAT the progress made with the action plan be noted and no further updates required.

31. [Quarterly Performance and Strategic Risk Management Report – Quarter 3 2010/11](#)

Consideration was given to the relevant sections of the report submitted to cabinet on 1 March 2011 regarding performance and risk management for quarter 3.

The committee discussed the successful introduction of pool cars and how this not only had led to cost efficiencies but also assisted in reducing carbon emissions. Further vehicles would be obtained in 2011. The Strategic Director of Resources indicated that these would either be leased or purchased outright dependent upon the financial implications and cost benefits.

Members looked at the overall summary of performance and the number of performance targets that had been missed. Whilst it was recognised that by having stretched targets could lead to improved service delivery there was a view that these might be difficult to achieve in some cases. It was important to ensure that targets were realistic and took into account the resources available. It was noted that cabinet members and strategic directors were to meet about target setting and they would take on board the committee's comments.

Difficulties encountered by members in using the special call line were raised. The service provided once a call was connected was good. Part of the transformation programme involved the acquisition of a new telephone system. The aim of the council was to resolve queries at the first point of contact and also encourage use of the council's website. The committee thought that the system for handling elected members calls should be reviewed in the light of the new arrangements.

With regard to exchequer and resident services the time taken to process housing benefit/council tax benefits new claims and change events was above the 11 day threshold. The committee was advised this had only just missed the target set which had also been one of the stretched targets. Additionally the volume of claims had increased so overall although the target had not been achieved performance in this area was satisfactory.

The committee questioned the actions being taken to ensure that the savings target was met. The Chief Executive and Strategic Director of Resources outlined the processes involved. It was anticipated that the revenue budget for 2010-2011 would not be overspent and despite some areas of overspend these would be offset by the identification of additional savings.

RESOLVED :

- a. THAT in setting performance targets for 2011-12 cabinet members and strategic directors ensure that these are set at a realistic level and are not stretched beyond a limit that could not be achieved within the available resources.
- b. THAT the current provision of the separate telephone line for elected members, and how this is answered, be reviewed in the light of the new telephony system.

32. [Remodelling County Hall](#)

Members were given an outline of the key background information relating to the proposed remodelling of County Hall. There was some discussion on the location of elected members

and it was explained that this had been carefully looked at but the key principles behind the project was to make the most effective use of space for staff.

The committee highlighted that the number of staff based at County Hall would be increased from about 350 to about 750. No provision had been made for any refreshment facilities as part of the remodelling. Whilst accepting that there were facilities within the town members indicated that the matter should be looked at again by officers to see if there was a solution available but at no cost to the council.

Officers noted the comments made in relation to the limited amount of car parking but referred to the Council's green travel plan. This encouraged staff to utilise a range of travel options. It was not intended that all staff would have the same working day pattern. Meeting rooms would also be managed to prevent resources being overstretched.

The project would involve works to the council chamber. This would become a more flexible meeting space. Careful consideration would be given to the furniture used. Also with regard to furniture generally this would be re-used where possible to avoid, as far as is possible, any new purchases.

In relation to maintenance of County Hall the project would be principally directed at remodelling the interior. An opportunity would be taken however to carry out some essential works. Maintenance would continue to be undertaken on a rolling programme. It was hoped to keep the costs of the project to within the agreed budget. Areas where it was known there would likely to be additional costs had already been identified together with areas where costs could be reduced. The procurement process used for selection of the main contractor was explained.

The committee sought information on proposed improvements to the ICT network to support the remodelling project. They were advised of how these issues were being addressed which would enable more flexible working.

The risks associated with the project were debated. Timescales and budgets were tight and there was only a small contingency available for unforeseen circumstances. The council had business continuity plans should there be any form of difficulty encountered.

RESOLVED :

THAT officers investigate the possible provision of refreshment facilities within county hall but on the basis that no cost would fall upon the council.

33. **Revised Corporate Plan (Recording [1](#) and [2](#))**

The leader of the council advised the committee of the proposed content of the revised Corporate Plan. This was based upon delivering a number of key projects within the limited resources available over the course of the following two years. The plan would be supported by a revised medium term financial strategy. It was intended that the plan would be submitted to full council on 20 April 2011. The initial comments of the committee were invited on the draft document.

The changes to the priorities from the current plan to the proposed one were outlined together with the reporting mechanisms that would be in place to monitor progress. The priorities were based upon the proposed future shape and direction of the council which

was agreed by the cabinet in December 2010. Further details were still awaited from central government on a range of changes and a number of draft bills were being debated by parliament. These would all impact upon the authority.

Members, whilst accepting that the plan should not be too detailed, believed that additional wording about the Eco-Island initiative should be included. Although the council did not have total ownership of this initiative it was important to recognise the work being undertaken by a range of individuals and organisations. Additionally the support provided by the council for tourism development should be included.

The highway PFI continued to be a priority and members expressed concerns that a final decision on the level of grant was still awaited from central government. Both this council and Hounslow had agreed a revised financial approach to the scheme but this was still to be finalised by Sheffield. Members were still concerned as to the amount of mis-information about the PFI and that a recent television programme had not been helpful in presenting a balanced view. The added benefits to the island, apart from improvements to the highway network, were substantial.

The plan included a new priority in relation to the management of household waste. The problems encountered with the gasification plant had impacted upon the council's recycling targets. It was noted that the council had no direct influence over the plant and was in the process of reviewing its contractual arrangements with Island Waste.

The role of the council in regeneration and the economy was discussed. Whilst there was mention in the draft plan of the memorandum of understanding about activities connected with tourism the committee believed that this should be strengthened by identifying some of the key details behind this.

RESOLVED :

THAT the consideration be given to the inclusion of additional wording about the council's role in Eco-island together with activities connected to tourism development.

34. [Forward Plan](#)

Members were made aware of the items of relevance contained within the forward plan for the period March 2011 to June 2011.

RESOLVED :

THAT the items be noted.

CHAIRMAN