



# Minutes

Name of meeting	<b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
Date and time	<b>THURSDAY, 26 APRIL 2012 COMMENCING AT 5.00 PM</b>
Venue	<b>COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT</b>
Present	Cllrs Vanessa Churchman (Vice Chairman in the Chair), George Cameron, Paul Fuller, Heather Humby, Stuart Hutchinson, Julie Jones-Evans, Ian Ward, Margaret Webster, Wayne Whittle
Cabinet members present	Cllr George Brown
Officers Present	Mr Steve Beynon, Mr Dave Burbage, Mr Mark Howell, Mr Stuart Love, Mr Chris Mathews, Mr Paul Thistlewood

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33. **Minutes**

**RESOLVED :**

THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on [9 February 2012](#) be confirmed.

34. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations at this time.

35. **Public Question Time**

Ms Tanja Rebel, an Island resident asked a question in relation to the proposed biomass plant in Stag Lane, Newport. The vice chairman indicated that this was not a matter for the committee and representations regarding the planning application should be submitted in accordance with normal requirements.

36. **Capital Receipts and Delivery of the Capital Programme**

Consideration was given to a summary of progress with the delivery of the capital programme for 2011/12. This information included the expenditure to date, by directorate profile, slippage, capital receipts and grants.

Members were assured that the reduced level of capital receipts against that budgeted for would not impact upon the overall funding of the capital programme. It was anticipated that the capital receipts would be forthcoming but slightly later than originally anticipated. The current capital receipts

programme had been considered by the committee at its meeting on 12 May 2011 when changes to its format had been recommended. The committee noted that the updated programme would be the subject of a delegated decision by the end of May 2012.

With regard to slippage in the 2011/12 capital programme members queried some of the areas involved including waste and ICT. It was indicated that cabinet members regularly reviewed progress with capital schemes and challenged the reasons for slippage. Instances where slippage took place were the result of where it was cost effective to delay works to take account of other circumstances. It was also highlighted that the capital expenditure for 2011/12 was £50m compared with £31.6 the previous year.

The strategic director for resources advised that on funding aspects of the capital programme together with capital grants received and the use of section 106 contributions.

The committee queried the effect on the revenue budget of delays in the delivery of the capital programme. In the case of problems with the works to the Heights leisure centre additional use by the public of the council's other facilities was being experienced. Any revenue impact was contained within the overall revenue budget for each service area.

**RESOLVED :**

- (a) THAT consideration be given to the latest capital receipts programme at its meeting on 17 May 2012.
- (b) THAT a half year report on progress with the capital programme for 2012/13 be submitted to the 29 November 2012 meeting and this to detail reasons for any likely slippage, together with progress on completion of schemes contained in the 2011/12 programme.

37. **Procurement**

The committee had previously indicated a wish to look at issues relating to the council's procurement processes. To assist the cabinet member and relevant officers in preparing a report for consideration members were invited to scope the information that was required.

The vice chairman indicated that a range of questions had been drafted and could form the framework for report.

**RESOLVED :**

THAT the questions formulated by the committee regarding procurement be supplied to the relevant cabinet member and officers so that these can be responded to at the meeting on 9 August 2012.

38. **Business Rates Strategy**

Members received a powerpoint presentation from the Strategic Director of Resources outlining the key components of the local government resource review on the retention of business rates. This outlined :-

- Consultation process and timescales for implementation;
- Main elements of the proposed system;
- Impact on the council's budget;
- Link to economic strategies.

A clearer picture of the likely impact on the council would not be known until July 2012 when the final methodology would be published for consultation. The final settlement would be released in late November/early December 2012.

The new system would not be based on any assessment of need to spend. The government would continue to set business rates and the new system was unlikely to be changed for a period of 10 years. It was noted that the level of grant that the council would receive from 1 April 2013 would be based upon the national settlement for 2016/17. This would mean that 30% of business rates would be held centrally. The level of business rates on the island was outlined together with the impact of the proposed level of distribution based on the current assumptions.

The committee discussed the link with economic strategy and ability to give discretionary discounts. If discounts were to be introduced these would have to be on a consistent basis. It was thought that issues such as superfast broadband and renewable energy would be greater key factors in assisting with economic growth.

**RESOLVED :**

THAT the likely implications arising from the government's proposals for business rates retention be noted.

39. **Localism Act 2011**

The committee considered a powerpoint presentation from the Strategic Director of Economy and Environment and the Head of Commissioning – Community Wellbeing on the major aspects of the Localism Act 2011.

Members were reminded of the background to the legislation which would give additional freedoms and flexibilities for local authorities. There was already an awareness of changes to the ethical standards arrangements. Of particular interest was the community right to challenge and community right to bid. There was no definition of what constituted a community. These new rights and powers would place an additional burden on the council. There was also some concern about the blight that may be put on properties whilst the process is undertaken.

With regard to the range of issues relating to planning the actual details would not be fully known until the statutory instruments were published. The council would be formulating a draft policy on the community infrastructure levy by April 2013. This would impact upon the current arrangements for section 106 monies.

The committee was given an outline of changes to social housing allocation and homelessness legislation. The actual details were subject to further legislation. One key issue however was that of having fixed term tenancies. A strategy on this had to be agreed by April 2013. A national home swap scheme was also to be introduced but this did not appear to differ from arrangements already in place.

The chief executive advised members that the council's internal auditors, Price Waterhouse Cooper, would be undertaking a review on the council's ability to deliver aspects of the Act.

**RESOLVED :**

THAT a copy of the informative presentation be sent to all members of the council.

40. **Forward Plan and Consultations**

(a) **Item requiring a decision that has not appeared on the forward plan**

The committee was made aware that the chairman had been advised that a report, considered by full council on 21 March 2012 regarding prayers, had not been on the forward plan and he had not raised any objection.

**RESOLVED :**

THAT the action of the chairman be noted.

(b) **Forward Plan – May 2012 to August 2012**

Members were made aware of relevant items in the current forward plan. Clarification was sought on the reasons for a cabinet member delegated decision being required in connection with the commencement of a consultation exercise. This was where there was to be a change in policy or had a statutory element.

**RESOLVED :**

THAT the forward plan be noted.

(c) **Consultations**

The committee was made aware of consultations being undertaken in relation to the music service, relocation of the pupil referral units and alternative provision which were being dealt with by the children and

young people scrutiny panel. The establishment of a local Healthwatch would be considered by the health and community wellbeing scrutiny panel.

RESOLVED :

THAT the consultations be noted.

41. **Progress report on recommendations and outcomes**

The committee was made aware of progress on its previous recommendations and decisions.

RESOLVED :

THAT the report be noted.

42. **Members' Question Time**

A question was asked by Cllr Ward in relation to the number of employees involved in the Music Service and the number of these who were qualified. The Chief Executive advised that there were 22 and all these were qualified to at least the minimum standard required by the council.

CHAIRMAN