



Minutes

Name of meeting	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date and time	28 JULY 2011 COMMENCING AT 5.00 PM
Venue	COMMITTEE ROOM ONE, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT
Present	Cllrs Wayne Whittle (Chairman), Jonathan Bacon, George Cameron, Vanessa Churchman, Heather Humby, Gary Taylor, Ian Ward, Margaret Webster
Officers Present	Steve Beynon, Dave Burbage, Davina Fiore, Chris Mathews, Claire Robertson, Paul Thistlewood
Apologies	Cllr Julie Jones-Evans
Cabinet Members (non-voting)	Cllr David Pugh

1. [Minutes](#)

RESOLVED:

THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on [12 May 2011](#) be confirmed.

2. [Election of Vice Chairman](#)

RESOLVED:

THAT Cllr Vanessa Churchman be elected vice chairman for the ensuing year.

3. [Declarations of Interest](#)

Cllr Wayne Whittle declared a personal interest in Minute 5 due to his business connections with tourism and also his membership of the Pensions Committee.

4. [Update on Consultation as Part of the Decision Making Process](#)

The Director of Corporate Governance and the Strategic Manager – Resident Information and Consultation gave a [PowerPoint presentation](#) on how consultation was used as part of the decision making process.

Reference was made to a recent legal decision involving Birmingham City Council which had found that the authority had not properly taken into account its duty on

equalities in relation to a decision on adult social care arrangements. The Committee was made aware of when the Council undertook consultation, what this should consist of, the public sector equality duty and how the results of consultation should be used to inform the final decision.

Members highlighted concerns that had been raised with them about the inclusion of some questions that people had found intrusive and sensitive. Officers advised that it had been necessary to include these to accord with statutory requirements under the Equality Act 2010. They would however review the wording and see if the reasons for including such questions could be highlighted. It was not compulsory however for these questions to be answered when responding to a consultation. Discussion took place on Equality Impact Assessments generally, the timing of these, proportional mitigating actions and how assessments were to be taken into account.

The submission of petitions during a consultation exercise was raised. These could be taken into account if they were deemed to be directly relevant. The Committee raised the need for the Council to ensure that any consultation exercise was not dominated by specific minority group. This required members to be aware of the views of any silent majority which did, or would, not respond to any consultation process.

The Committee noted that there was incorrectly a belief that decisions had already been made before the results of any consultation had been analysed. The outcomes arising from some of the recent consultations had disproved this.

It was indicated that the comments received during each consultation was now available on the Council's website. This was important to ensure that the public had confidence in responding to consultations and also given feedback.

An outline was given on the consultation arrangements on the household waste collection and recycling, future of the youth service, discretionary post 16 and faith transport and the Adelaide and Gouldings/future of care consultations. The Leader indicated that for some of the consultations the Cabinet had set the parameters of the options being considered. The current financial situation also meant that recently there had been a large number of consultations on changes to service delivery. In some instances the relevant scrutiny panel had been involved in the process and able to challenge proposals which were to be the subject of a consultation exercise.

A revised Consultation and Engagement Strategy was being finalised. The Committee requested that it be given an opportunity to comment on this before it was introduced.

RESOLVED:

- a. THAT officers review the wording and questions relating to aspects of the Equality Act 2010 contained within its consultations to see if these can be amended.
- b. THAT the revised Consultation and Engagement Strategy be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee for comment.

5. **Budget**

(During the consideration of this item Cllr David Pugh declared a personal interest in staffing issues due to his partner being an employee of the Council)

The Strategic Director for Resources, together with the Chief Executive, gave a [Power Point presentation](#) on the Council's overall budget and financial position. This provided information on the 2010/11 outturn, 2011/12 savings analysis, reserves and balances and the quarter 1 budget monitor. In addition the projected budget for 2012/13 and beyond was outlined.

It was noted that there had been a net under spend of £787,000 in 2010/11. The measures introduced would provide a stronger financial base for 2011/12. With regard to savings for 2011/12 good progress was being made on the delivery of these. The figures for quarter 1 indicated that the budget was projected to come in on target. There was still however the need to be aware that expenditure in children's placements and adult social care could increase due to unforeseen needs arising.

The capital programme had not required any supported borrowing. The financial situation would impact upon the ability to realise capital receipts from the disposal of surplus properties. Future schemes which would require major capital funding included a landfill site, Cowes chain ferry and a records/heritage office. With regard to schools it was anticipated that the Government would amend the funding arrangements. Bids would have to be made on a sub regional basis. The Island would not generate sufficient works on its own and would have to work with other neighbouring authorities. There were also issues regarding the number of surplus primary places on the Island which was one of the highest in the country.

The projected budgets for 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15 indicated the loss of grant, additional costs, on going savings strategy and the overall budget gap. Despite savings having already being identified to bring expenditure down there was still a requirement to find a further £12m. These would become more difficult to achieve as the amount of controllable budget available was only £98m.

The Committee was advised of the various service areas which were being looked at for possible savings. The Chief Executive outlined discussions being held with neighbouring authorities on sharing services. Different delivery models would also be explored for a number of services.

Members discussed changes to the Council's procurement and contract management arrangements. This was seen as a vital area in achieving savings and ensuring that services undertaken by contractors were delivered in accordance with the council's requirements.

Consideration was then given to the [responses provided](#) in connection with queries raised by the Committee arising from the report to the Cabinet on 21 June 2011 on the outturn position for 2010/11. With regard to the increased costs of the new school transport lift contract it was noted that this was due to the policy decision which made it a closed lift, together with legislative changes to safe routes to school.

A briefing document had also been circulated to the Committee regarding the Government's review of business rates. Further information was due to be published

during August 2011. This would enable the likely impact upon the Council to be more fully assessed.

The updated position on the major project for the remodelling of County Hall was indicated. Final arrangements had been made for the letting of the contract. Works would commence on 8 August 2011 to the Council Chamber. There was an overall 65 week period for all the works and the tender had been below the budget figure. Officers had, as requested by the Committee, investigated the provision of refreshment facilities within County Hall at no cost to the Council. This had not proved to be feasible and it was noted that small kitchen areas would still be available on each floor and the sandwich delivery service would continue in conjunction with the PCT.

RESOLVED :

THAT the update on the budget position be noted.

6. **Progress Report on Recommendations**

The Committee was advised that this was a new feature on its agenda. This identified actions and recommendations arising from its previous meeting and the progress with these. It was noted that since the preparation of the report, details of the new performance indicators had been released. A view was expressed that it would have been useful if the Committee had been more fully involved in the identification of the indicators. There would however be the opportunity for it, and the Panels, to comment on the targets.

RESOLVED :

THAT the progress report be noted.

7. **Forward Plan**

Members noted the Forward Plan for the period August 2011 to November 2011. The Leader outlined the background to the proposed item relating to the Council's financial relationship with the Riverside Centre due to be dealt with by the Cabinet on 16 August 2011.

It was noted that the strategic asset management plan was to be submitted to the Cabinet on 4 October 2011. The Committee believed that this was an important strategy and therefore wished to see it before it was finally submitted to the Cabinet.

RESOLVED :

THAT the Strategic Asset Management Plan be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee before it is agreed by the Cabinet.