



# Minutes

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| Name of meeting              | <b>SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>  |
| Date and time                | <b>10 APRIL 2008, COMMENCING AT 6.00 PM</b>  |
| Venue                        | <b>COMMITTEE ROOM ONE, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT</b>   |
| Present                      | Cllrs Muriel Miller (Chair), Vanessa Churchman, Ivan Bulwer, William Burt, Heather Humby, Gill Kennett, Brian Mosdell, Lady Pigot  |
| Co-opted Members (voting)    | Mrs Sue Poston, Mr Charles Rogers  |
| Co-opted Member (non voting) | Mr Bob Blezzard  |
| Parent Governor Members      | Mrs Sara Sheath  |
| Other Members Present        | Cllr David Pugh  |
| Officers Present             | Dave Burbage, Jill Laurence-Tilley, Andrea Lisseter, Stuart Love, Chris Mathews, Peter Oakeshott, Paul Thistlewood   |
| Apologies                    | Cllrs Geoff Lumley, Erica Oulton, Garry Price, Margaret Webster  |
| 66.                          | <b>Minutes</b><br><br><u>RESOLVED:</u><br><br>THAT the minutes of the meeting held on <a href="#">28 February 2008</a> be confirmed.   |
| 67.                          | <b>Declarations of Interest</b><br><br>Mr Bob Blezzard declared a personal interest in Minute Numbers 69-75 as he was a member of Sandown Town Council and clerk to Yarmouth Town Council. |
| 68.                          | <b>Public Question Time</b><br><br>There were no public questions.   |

69.

### **Implementation Plan Arising from Final Undercliff Drive Report**

The Committee had been given the responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the action plan on a quarterly basis and considered the first report. Following discussion the following points arose.

Action1 – The Committee will be advised if the audit of all senior officer terms and conditions has been completed.

Action 7 - The Committee will be provided with a copy of the terms of reference of the Directors Team.

Action 9 – The Committee will be advised if the whistle blowing hotline has been used.

Action 11 -The Committee will receive an update on the next quarterly monitoring report regarding recruitment and retention of staff in the Legal Section, as the Committee were alerted to the difficulties in recruiting for these vacant posts.

Action15 - The Committee asked for a review on the Audit Commission's role in the matter of the Undercliff Drive. Further information would be sought before a final report could be produced.

Action 16 - The Committee asked for clarification whether the Council had a duty to report the conduct of staff to their professional or regulatory bodies.

Action 20 - The Head of Procurement advised that procurement training for 800 staff had commenced in the second week of January 2008 starting with the engineering department. 120 staff had completed the course and 70 procurement licences had been issued. It was expected that 100% of staff with procurement responsibility will be trained by the end of the second quarter and updated figures will be shown on the next monitoring report.

Action 23 -The Committee raised concerns that the review of process by the Audit Committee was still outstanding. The Director of Finance would chase this up and report back to the Committee.

#### **RESOLVED:**

THAT the progress is noted but the Committee receive responses to the above points at the next ordinary meeting.

70. **Use of Consultants Enquiry – SC10/06**

The Committee agreed a final report on Use of Consultants at its meeting on 12 June 2007.

Responses to the recommendations made in that report were considered.

The Committee asked for a definition for a “Consultant” and were advised that a protocol will be formulated on the procedures for the engagement of consultants from which clarification as to the definition of contractor or consultant will be gained. The Committee requested a copy of this when it is completed in June.

It was explained that Consultants were only appointed if the in house skills were not available.

The Committee were advised that designated officers would receive training on instructing consultants.

**RESOLVED:**

THAT the Committee receive a copy of the draft protocol when available.

71. **Medium Term Revenue and Capital Budget Strategy 2008/09 – 2010/11**

The Committee raised their concerns over the lateness of the hour on the 19 March 2008 that this item was agreed at the Cabinet. It was explained that due to there being no Cabinet meeting in March the item had to be dealt with before the commencement of the next financial year. It was confirmed that this situation would not be repeated next year as Cabinet will be held in March.

The revenue budget was considered to have been transparent and well received and a noticeable improvement but the Committee requested to have earlier consultation in the future.

It was noted that approximately 22% of Capital Items from last year had not been completed and it was explained that some items were not agreed until late in the year and it was intended to introduce a rolling Capital Programme to accommodate any slippage. This would allow for items agreed at the beginning of the financial year and not completed by the end to be moved on as it was appreciated that not all projects have a clear start date.

A list of a number of detailed questions raised by members of the Committee on the Capital Programme had been circulated, with detailed replies on some of the points.

The Committee was advised that the Capital Programme stood at £63 million and the question was raised whether the £10 million per year borrowing for the next 3 years was required. It was explained that the borrowing would only be required if all the Capital Programme was delivered.

During the debate an issue with regard to the future provision of leisure facilities in Sandown and Ryde was raised. The Leader explained that any plans were in the early stages and no decisions had been reached and all Members and stakeholders would have an opportunity to voice their concerns.

Concern was expressed that the visitors lift at Ventnor Botanical Gardens was still not functioning and asked whether the Council had asked for some redress from the providers before any further spending. The Director of Finance agreed to look into this.

**RESOLVED:**

1. THAT the Committee noted the points and asked the task group to monitor the situation.
2. THAT the Director of Finance will investigate the issues raised regarding the original installation of the lift at Ventnor Botanic Gardens.

72. **Members Allowance Enquiry – SC17/06 Follow up to the Response made to the Recommendations**

The Head of Democratic Services and the Leader of the Council provided responses to this item. It was confirmed that from the Committees eight recommendations all but two had been accepted by full Council.

Concern was raised on how the requirement for all Members to submit a 300 word annual report would be monitored. It was suggested that the Chairman of the Council could be asked to report to the May Council on the level of compliance.

**RESOLVED:**

THAT the Leader raise the issue of Members annual reports with the Chairman of the Council.

73. **Council Constitution – Protocol on the Council's Decision Making Process**

**RESOLVED:**

THAT the Committee agreed to defer this item to the next Scrutiny Committee meeting to be held on 19 June 2008.

74. **Forward Plan**

Members considered the Forward Plan for the period April - July 2008 and noted that there were two entries for the Ryde Interchange and asked for confirmation that the Approval to Accept Government Funding to Support the Development of the scheme (683/08) had been reached. The Director for Environment and Neighbourhood Services advised that the matter was now with Network Rail and the Council were awaiting their decision which could take up to 3 months to receive.

Members asked if the Council had the expertise to negotiate The Isle of Wight Festival Contract (673/08). The Leader of the Council advised that the Chief Executive of the Council and the Communication Consultant from Westminster were well versed in this type of negotiation and it was their hope to secure the Isle of Wight Festival for the next 10 years.

The Chairman queried the Proposed Sale of Freehold Interest to the British Red Cross as a Special Purchaser of the Land Adjacent to 182 York Avenue East Cowes (682/08) regarding it being in the electoral division of East Cowes South. The Head of Democratic Services agreed to check and correct if necessary.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Forward Plan be noted.

75. **Progress Report on Other Current Enquiries**

The lead member on performance reported that he was attending meetings regarding the performance management enquiry. The Cabinet Member for Residents and Resources was chairing these meetings and was showing clear leadership and these discussions may assist the Scrutiny Committee in the longer term. The Committee would consider the report for the final quarter at its meeting in May.

The lead member on the task group for the enquiry into Anti Social Behaviour would attend the Council's Call Centre to understand how it recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour.

It was noted that an enquiry into utilities would commence soon.

RESOLVED:

THAT the updates be noted.

CHAIRMAN