



Minutes

Name of meeting	SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date and time	17 JANUARY 2008, 6.00 PM
Venue	COMMITTEE ROOM 1, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT
Present	Cllrs Muriel Miller (Chair), Ivan Bulwer, William Burt, Heather Humby, Gill Kennett, Geoff Lumley, Erica Oulton, Lady Pigot, Garry Price, Margaret Webster
Co-opted Members (voting)	Mrs Sue Poston, Mr Charles Rogers
Co-opted Member (non voting)	Mr Bob Blezzard
Parent Governor Members (voting)	Mr Adrian Smith
Officers Present	Mr Dave Burbage, Stuart Fraser, Miss Andrea Lisseter, Mr Chris Mathews, Mr Paul Thistlewood
Other Members Present	Cllrs Barry Abraham, Vanessa Churchman, Dawn Cousins, David Pugh
Apologies	Cllr Barbara Foster, Mrs Sara Sheath

The Chair welcomed two new members to the Committee Cllrs Oulton and Kennett.

50. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on [6 December 2007](#) were agreed.

RESOLVED:

THAT the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed.

51. **Declarations of Interest**

Mr Bob Blezzard declared a personal and non prejudicial interest in Minute 52-56 as he was a member of Sandown Town Council.

Cllr Erica Oulton declared a personal and non prejudicial interest in Minute 54 as she had shares in Green Cone, a composting company on the mainland.

Cllr Garry Price declared a personal and non prejudicial interest in Minute 53 as he was involved with a company who may bid for a contract with the Isle of Wight Council in the future.

52. **Public Question Time**

There were no public questions.

53. **Revenue Budget 2007-08 and 2008-09**

The Cabinet Member for Residents and Resources and the Interim Director of Finance attended for this item and introduced the report which set out the latest position on the Medium-Term Budget Strategy for 2008/9 – 2010/11. Members were informed that the Interim Director of Finance had been assigned as the link Director for the Scrutiny Committee. Members of the Committee were invited to consider the overall approach to the budget and make their views known to the Cabinet as part of the budget consultation process. The Cabinet would then consider the Committee's response prior to making a decision on the budget at their meeting on 5 February 2008. The budget, as agreed by the Cabinet, would then be submitted to Full Council on 20 February 2008.

Members were informed that the last two pages of Appendix 2 of the report needed to be deleted as this information was irrelevant.

The Director set out some of the strategic budget choices facing the Council including meeting the resource gap, capital investment, and service improvement and growth. The Council would also need to consider savings and reductions in service and increases in fees and charges. Members were informed that the use of the Council's reserves needed to be done in a planned way and that the budget strategy being developed was based on the assumption that there would be prudential borrowing of £10 million each year for the next three years to part fund the capital programme. The savings target for each year would increase and capital receipts would be sought in the disposal of some of the Council's assets. The Director highlighted to the Committee the risks to the budget which were set out in the appendices of the report. The Committee was informed that some consultation on the budget had already taken place with Town and Parish Council's.

Members asked questions relating to potential costs for re-tendering contracts and whether a 2% increase in pay was a fair assumption for next year. Members were informed that any costs for contract re-tendering would come out of prudential borrowing and were informed that 2% was a fair assumption and an extra 0.5% increase in pay would cost in the region of £260,000.

Members asked further questions and the Director explained that savings for 2008/9 would be found in procurement, the renegotiation of contracts and the modernisation agenda for the Council which would involve reinvesting in financial systems resulting in a reduction of staff. A number of detailed questions were asked relating to the figures set out in the appendices to the report including the Council's reserves, landfill tax, Council tax banding, risks, parking charge increases, bereavement services costs, and the highways PFI. Members were informed that an explanation on the significance of each risk would be included in the report to Cabinet and a new submission on the PFI would be submitted soon. A risk profile would be undertaken each year to ensure that the reserves were closely monitored. A question was asked regarding whether privately run playschools on Council land paid rent to the Council. The Director agreed to look into this. (At this point Cllr Garry Price declared a personal and non prejudicial interest as he was involved with Honeybees pre school).

RESOLVED:

THAT the Committee request that there be no cut back in frontline services in the budget.

54.

Waste Management and Recycling Enquiry SC01/07

Mrs Sue Poston, the Lead Member, introduced the final report of the Committee on the waste management and recycling enquiry. The findings had revealed that commercial waste was a major issue on the Island and that alternative arrangements for landfill would need to be put in place as the site at Lynbottom was filling up. There was a need for an integrated approach to managing all waste on the Island and there was scope to improve the handling of green waste which made up 23% of the total Island domestic waste. It was recommended that the Council take a bold approach to recycling and try to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill so to lessen the impact of future increases in Landfill Tax. The enquiry had also concluded that the contract and targets with Island Waste be urgently reviewed.

Members asked questions regarding composting at the Lynbottom landfill site. It was suggested that the Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce, Tourism and Industry could liaise with local businesses to reduce the number of plastic bags used on the Island. It was also suggested that an incentive for composting could be offered. Members were informed that there was a need to raise awareness on how waste was managed as some waste management on the Island was unique.

The Committee agreed the final report and all 19 recommendations. The Cabinet Member and Director would be invited to the next meeting to respond to the Committee's recommendations.

RESOLVED:

THAT the recommendations in the final report be forwarded to the relevant Cabinet Member and Director and that they be invited to respond at the next formal meeting.

55. **Forward Plan**

It was noted that, following the request from the Committee at their previous meeting, the Forward Plan now incorporated the date that each decision was first added. It was noted that the item on Strategic Transformational Partnership: Gateway Review and Next Steps (Future Direction and Management of ICT) had been on the Forward Plan since July 2006. The Cabinet Member for Residents and Resources agreed to liaise with the Director of Customer Services to remove this item from the Forward Plan.

The Committee requested that the anticipated date of decision for each item be included in the Forward Plan.

Further work on the Forward Plan would be undertaken in due course including clarity around report titles.

RESOLVED:

THAT comments on the Forward Plan be noted and that the Leader be asked to include an anticipated date of decision for each item in future editions of the Forward Plan.

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

Members were informed that the antisocial behaviour task group had now met and would be meeting with the Housing Associations at the end of the month. It was noted that there was support for the enquiry from Safer Neighbourhoods.

The performance management task group would draft a document for the next informal scrutiny meeting which would then be considered at the next formal meeting at the end of February.

Members requested that updates on Constructionline, Shanklin Theatre, Members Allowances, Use of Consultants, Planning Section 106 Agreements, and the Undercliff Improvement Plan be included within the workplan.

Members were informed that two enquiries were currently being scoped.

It was noted that the Scrutiny Committee meetings would continue to be held every 6 weeks.

CHAIRMAN