



Minutes

Name of meeting	SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date and time	THURSDAY, 18 DECEMBER 2008 6.00 PM
Venue	COMMITTEE ROOM 1, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT
Present	Cllrs Muriel Miller (Chairman), Ivan Bulwer, William Burt, Vanessa Churchman, Deborah Gardiner, Heather Humby, Lady Pigot, Margaret Webster
Co-opted Members (voting)	Mrs Sue Poston, Mr Charles Rogers
Educational Representative Members (voting)	Mrs Sara Sheath (Parent Governor)
Co-opted Member (non voting)	Mr Bob Blezzard
Other Members Present	Cllr George Brown, Cllr Alan Wells
Officers Present	Mr Steve Beynon, , Mr Dave Burbage, Mr Stuart Fraser, Mr Chris Mathews, Miss Pakeezah Sponner, Mr Paul Thistlewood, Mr Chris Vieler-Porter
Apologies	Cllr Erica Oulton, Cllr Gill Kennett

49 **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on [30 October 2008](#) be confirmed.

50 **Declarations of Interest**

Mrs Sara Sheath declared a personal interest in Minute number 52 as she was in the governing body of Trinity Middle School.

Cllr Margaret Webster declared a personal interest in Minute number 52 as she had family working in the education system.

Cllr Deborah Gardiner declared a personal interest in Minute numbers 52 & 53 as she worked for Unison.

Mr Bob Blezzard declared a personal interest in Minute numbers 54 & 57 as he was a member of Sandown Town Council and Clerk to Yarmouth Town Council.

Mr Charles Rogers declared a personal interest in Minute numbers 54 & 56 relating to health indicators as he was Non Executive Director of the IOWPCT.

Cllr Alan Wells declared a personal interest in Minute number 52 as he had family in the education system.

51 **Public Question Time**

Mrs Stephanie Welch asked how much money had been spent on Consultants involved in producing evaluation reports regarding Shanklin Theatre when none of the £313,000 promised for health and safety works had not been spent on the Theatre during the past 18 months. Cllr Brown, the Cabinet Member for the Economy, Leisure, Planning and Property, indicated that he would provide a written response.

Mrs Welch also asked a further question relating to a report by the Tax Payers Alliance about the money, £843,000, the Council had spent on publicity. A written response would be provided by Cllr Brown but the Chief Executive highlighted that this expenditure had also included work on behalf of the Tourism trade on the Island.

52 **Annual Review of Achievement**

Cllr Wells, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, introduced the annual review of achievement and indicated the range of actions that were being taken to improve attainment across all key stages. The Council was not just relying on the proposed school reorganisation to ensure that every pupil realised their full potential. The action taken with regard to Kitbridge Middle School demonstrated the importance that the Council placed upon school improvement. The re-organisation of the Children's Services Directorate was also aimed at improving service delivery together with targeted use of external resources.

In conjunction with the Head of Learning and Achievement, Mr Vieler-Porter, Cllr Wells responded to a range of queries raised by the Committee in relation to the following :-

- Poor progress of English reading in year 9 – work on this would be part of the delivery of the new secondary curriculum
- Unacceptable number of students, 49, not attaining their GCSE's -. Schools being challenged to ensure systems were in place to ensure pupils performance was effectively tracked and the level of support given to achieve appropriate qualifications.
- Kitbridge Middle School – Ability of Council to intervene at an earlier stage difficult due to Ofsted report.
- Persistent absence – work being undertaken in conjunction with Safer Neighbourhood Team and Police together with sharing of data to identify trends thereby enabling intervention work to be focused on hot spots.
- Number of children coming out of school at year 11 and those being educated other than at school (EOTAS) – work was being undertaken to identify reasons and actions required.

In general terms the Committee found the report very comprehensive. In looking at the topic in 2009 it was requested that it would be helpful to have a summary of key issues together with comparative data for previous years to enable comparisons to be made.

The Chairman referred to the Council's annual performance assessment of services for children and young people issued by Ofsted the previous day. In addition to the range of strengths in service delivery that had been identified there were some areas of weakness. She believed that it would be appropriate if the Committee could look at the action plan. The Chief Executive indicated that this would form part of the Children and Young Person's Plan that was to be reviewed in Spring 2009.

RESOLVED:

- (i) THAT consideration be given to the actions proposed on the areas of weakness and for development, as identified by Ofsted, which are to be taken into account in the review of the Children and Young Person's Plan.
- (ii) THAT comparative data be included in the review of achievement report for 2009 together with a summary of key issues.

53 Overall Budget Position 2008/09 and Strategy for 2009/10

The Committee was aware that the Cabinet, at its meeting on 2 December 2008, considered reports on the Medium Budget Strategy and Capital Programme 2009/10-2011/12 and the Revised 2008/09 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme. The Director of Finance gave a short PowerPoint presentation outlining the Council's overall budget position for 2008/09 and strategy for 2009/10. The following key issues were highlighted and discussed :-

- The original medium term financial strategy planned for a net shortfall of £4,150m in 2009/10 and this was now projected to be £8m
- Increased costs of £12,672m were now being assumed for 2009/10, including £4,424m as the result of the recession/credit crunch.
- In addition pressures would result due to a reduced damping grant together with a shortfall in concessionary fares funding from the Government.
- The amount received in respect of Local Authority Business Grant Incentives (LABGI) differed each financial year;
- Budget figures were calculated taking into consideration rising inflation rates and might now be affected by current talks of deflation.
- The 2009/10 budget had not assumed any increases in fees and charges to take into account the current economic climate.
- An Energy Manager had been appointed and this would assist in the identification of areas where operational costs could be reduced.
- Budget reductions had originally been planned in areas such as procurement, postage and car allowances but had not yet been fully achieved and a more robust line would be made with regard to the delivery of savings .
- To achieve expected efficiency savings, especially through the Business System Improvement Project, some services would be affected and difficult choices would have to be made.
- An initial investment by the Council of £3 million for the Highways PFI project could eventually be claimed back.
- £250,000 has been budgeted for a dedicated school re-organisation project team which was necessary so ensure that the changes were effectively monitored and delivered in accordance with the approved timetable and resources.
- The Council's role in Eco Island had changed to one of facilitation rather than as a lead investor.

- Figures for essential health and safety works at Shanklin and Ryde theatres were just indicative and both premises were safe to continue operating as they were.

The Committee was reminded that the Cabinet would discuss the proposed budget for 2009/10 on 10 February 2009 with recommendations going to full Council on the 25 February 2009.

RESOLVED:

- (i) THAT a copy of the presentation be circulated to the Committee;
- (ii) THAT if a power point presentation is to be made at the next meeting a copy be circulated in advance.

54 Quarterly Performance, Risk and Strategic Programme Management Reports

The Chairman indicated that in accordance with previous practice written questions raised by members of the Committee on specific issues relating to the full performance management quarterly report had been submitted in advance to the appropriate Cabinet Members and Directors. The responses would be forwarded to the Committee once these had been collated.

Issues were however raised regarding the content of the report which was considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 2 December 2008. Concern was expressed by the Committee that the total number of measures which had met their target showed 47% against the aim of 95%. The Chief Executive stated that it would be a worry if all performances were at this stage of the year as it could indicate that these were not challenging enough. He also stated that performance was scrutinised throughout the Council from Head of Service level to Line Management. This would assist in identifying areas where action was required to ensure performance in quarter 3 and 4 came within target.

Discussion took place on the performance figures for waste. It was noted that the existing contract for waste management was being reviewed as there were some elements which required more detailed clarification. Additionally on Learning Outcomes it was advised that the use of the CRM system by all Heads of Service was being addressed.

The Committee also raised the need for it to review its role in scrutinising performance management in the light of experience over the past 12 months.

RESOLVED:

- (i) THAT the Leader of the Council be requested to review the content and style of the information contained in the appendices to the Quarterly Performance, Risk and Strategic Programme Management Reports submitted to the Cabinet.
- (ii) THAT the Committee review its processes for dealing with performance management.

55 External Scrutiny Protocol

Members were advised that following the last meeting an external scrutiny protocol was drafted for submission to the Island Strategic Partnership (ISP) Board meeting on the 26 November 2008. The Board had welcomed the proposals contained within the Protocol and gave its endorsement to it.

The Protocol was intended to assist the Committee in undertaking its scrutiny responsibilities with regard to its partners and the delivery of the Local Area Agreement.

The Chairman reported that it was intended that an informal session would be held between the ISP Board and the Committee.

RESOLVED:

THAT the External Scrutiny Protocol be agreed.

56 Island Strategic Partnership (ISP) – Performance Update – Local Area Agreement (LAA)

The Chairman reported that the report on the first two quarters performance results for 2008/09 had been submitted to the ISP Board's meeting on 26 November 2008. A number of targets were still awaiting clear definitions from central Government and therefore made it impossible to report upon. Additionally some would be affected by the economic climate and have to be re-negotiated.

The Chief Executive stated that the second year would be the key delivery point within the three year target.

In discussing the approach to scrutinising the Partnership and the LAA members believed that this should be done on a themed basis. The partnership had four such themes – Thriving Island; Healthy and Supportive Island; Safe and Well Kept Island and an Inspiring Island. Each theme was supported by a relevant Board. As the Council was due to review the Children and Young Peoples Plan it might be appropriate if the Committee requested the attendance of the Children and Young People's Partnership Board (Children's Trust) which dealt with the Inspiring Island theme.

RESOLVED:

- (i) THAT the performance results for Quarters 1 and 2 of 2008/09 for the ISP Board be noted.
- (ii) THAT representatives of the Children and Young People's Partnership Board be invited to a future meeting of the Committee in connection with the review and delivery of services connected with the Inspiring Island Theme.

57 Forward Plan

The Chairman highlighted that 11 items have been moved back again on the January 2009 to April 2009 Forward Plan. She also indicated that the item on 'Value for Money Review of Leisure – Outcome of the Leisure Needs Analysis' had been on the Forward Plan for two years.

A concern was raised about the level of communication on some of the proposed decisions with relevant local members. The Chief Executive advised that it was planned to improve liaison between senior officers, ward members and Parish and Town Councils. It was anticipated that the plan would be introduced after the Council elections in June 2009.

58 **Members Question Time**

Cllr Gardiner asked whether the Committee would be undertaking an enquiry into child protection arrangements in light of the Baby P case in Haringey. The Committee was advised by the Chief Executive that all authorities had been asked to review their arrangements submit a report to the Secretary of State by the end of February 2009. He also pointed out that the Isle of Wight had no serious case reviews which Ofsted had judged to be inadequate. The Chairman indicated that a way forward would be for the Committee to look at the report that would be submitted to the Secretary of State, possibly at a special meeting for that purpose.

CHAIRMAN