



Minutes

Name of meeting	SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date and time	THURSDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 2008 COMMENCING AT 6.00 PM
Venue	COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT
Present	Cllrs Muriel Miller (Chair), Ivan Bulwer, William Burt, Vanessa Churchman, 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)
Officers Present	Mr Steve Beynon, Mr Dave Burbage, Mr Barry Cooke, Mrs Jill Laurence-Tilley, Mr Stuart Love, Mr Bob Streets, Mr Paul Street, Mr Paul Thistlewood.
Other Members Present	Cllrs David Pugh.
Apologies	Cllr Barry Abraham, Mr Tony Blackshaw , Mr Bob Blezzard , Cllr Deborah Gardiner, Cllr Gill Kennett, Cllr Erica Oulton, Cllr Garry Price, Mr Adrian Smith , Mrs Urszula Topp.

31. **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on [31 July 2008](#) be confirmed.

32. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations received.

33. **Fire and Rescue Service Improvement Plans and Performance**

The Chief Fire Officer outlined the progress made on implementing the actions contained in the Integrated Risk Management Plan and Service Improvement and Change Management Plan together with associated steps being taken to address the issues contained in

previous inspections by the Audit Commission. The Committee sought clarification and a range of issues and the following key issues were highlighted:-

- Performance was improving even though the level of financial resources had only slightly increased. There were concerns however in maintaining this if requirements and standards kept rising.
- Problems being encountered with the level of fire cover due to the ability of retained fire fighters to respond at certain times of the day resulting in appliances not being available. Performance information related to this was being introduced to assist in monitoring.
- The operational budget may not be sufficient should a major incident occur.
- The time allowed for retained fire-fighters to turnout to their station had been increased from 5 minutes to 6 minutes to take into account traffic conditions. The whole time appliance from Newport was also being dispatched to the majority of incidents.
- Changes to the Island's infrastructure had to be taken into account when reviewing the location of fire stations.
- Although a high number of false alarms were recorded it was explained that most of the incidents were due to the malfunction of automatic fire detection apparatus and not through malicious calls.
- An independent review had been undertaken on the financial resources for the Service which indicated that these were adequate. A copy of this would be circulated to the Committee.
- The Service also oversaw the Council's emergency planning functions and this activity fitted in well with the overall management.
- Changes to disability standards enabled persons with diabetes and certain eyesight conditions, including colour blindness to be considered for recruitment as a fire-fighter.
- Progress with the Regional Fire Control Centre was delayed and the move of the Island's facility would not take place until 2012. This would create problems with maintaining the existing equipment and this had been raised with central government. The Council would not however agree to the relocation until the full costs had been ascertained.

In discussing the challenges faced by the Fire and Rescue Service, both present and future, it was noted that an exercise was being conducted to look at the range of options that should be considered. The Model for Change project could lead to the relocation of operational resources and changes to manning levels. Given the implications of this the Committee believed that a presentation on the Model for Change project and the options should be made to full Council.

RESOLVED:

- a. THAT the Fire and Rescue Service staff was congratulated on the improvements made since the Comprehensive Performance Assessment in April 2005.
- b. THAT the options from the Model for Change project should be an issue for an informed debate at Full Council on the future of The Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service before any decision is taken.

34. **Quarterly Performance, Risk and Strategic Project Management Reports.**

The Leader indicated that the Committee had forwarded a range of queries prior to the meeting. He would be able to respond to several of these but would need to consult with the relevant Cabinet Member and Director to enable all the queries to be answered.

The issues that were dealt with during the meeting were as follows:-

- Concern was raised that the normal RAG (Red/Amber/Green) report had not been supplied with the main report although this had now been made available via the internet.
- Recognised that the use of initial letters to signify Red/Amber/Green saved on colour printing but with the new addition of a Grey (Gry) and Blue (Blu) this could add to the lack of clarity.
- Three school measures were reported on a termly basis and therefore the figures would be provided later in the year.
- A new set of Organisational Health Indicators were now in place and these would help managers review potential issues and trends.
- Only 50% of the Personal Development Reviews had been completed to date and Managers has been requested to complete these by the end of August The Chief Executive advised that he would be looking into the Personal Development Review process with a view of asking individuals to record electronically that this had taken place.
- It was recognised that the recent economic downturn was having an effect on the Planning Services revenue as a whole. The appointment of Urban Vision would assist in clearing up any backlog and assist with any particular peaks and their use would be flexible.
- Clarification was still required about the monitoring arrangements for learning outcomes arising from the complaints process.

RESOLVED:

- a. THAT the written responses to the queries raised would be included in the agenda papers for the next meeting so that the Committee could consider if any further action was required.

- b. THAT the quarterly performance management information should be published on the Councils website so that it is publicly available in one location.

35. **The Council's Capital Investment Programme**

The Committee considered a monitoring report on issues relating to the Council's capital programme. This identified the progress being made particularly on the significant schemes. Members were reminded that the programme approved by Cabinet in March 2008 was for a three year period and therefore took into account that slippage would occur. There was some concern however that the forecasted outturn was now estimated to be £44,470,000 compared with the original budget, excluding slippage, of £63,823,000.

The amount anticipated to be received through capital receipts would be affected by the economic downturn and this would also impact on the capital programme.

One significant project that was due for completion related to the Business Systems Improvement Project (BSIP). The implementation of this would lead to revenue savings and would be instrumental in achieving the budgeted efficiency savings identified in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The Committee believed that it was important that capital schemes capable of delivering savings be given priority.

RESOLVED:

- a. THAT the monitoring report from the Director of Finance be welcomed.
- b. THAT the Cabinet members and Directors be requested to review the timescales and expenditure for schemes within the 2008/09 capital programme to ensure that these are made more realistic.
- c. THAT urgent attention is given to capital schemes which may assist the Council in achieving its efficiency savings for 2008/09.

36. **Anti-Social Behaviour Enquiry SCO2/07- Final Report**

The lead member, Councillor Humby, presented the final report and recommendations arising from the enquiry related to anti-social behaviour. The scoping document for the enquiry had been approved by the Committee at its meeting on 3 September 2007.

RESOLVED:

THAT the report be endorsed and the six recommendations be submitted to the Cabinet Member for Safer Communities and Cabinet Member for Residents, Resources and Fire Service.

37. **Cabinet Member Delegated Decisions**

The Committee was reminded that the revised constitution had been approved by full Council at its meeting on 16 July 2008. An issue relating to the process for Cabinet Member delegated decisions had been highlighted since that date by the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee.

There was no specific time limit within which a Cabinet Member had to sign a decision following the closing date for comments.

The Committee considered the following three options:-

Option 1: To make no amendment to the Constitution.

Option 2: To amend the Constitution, so that a Delegated Decision proposed to be taken by a Cabinet Member, must be signed off within 20 working days of the closing date for representations following its publication, but with no provision to enable an extension.

Option 3: As Option 2 but with provision that subject to the approval of the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee an extension can be permitted.

Any change to the Constitution would have to be agreed by full Council.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Committee recommend to Cabinet an amendment to the Constitution, so that a Delegated Decision proposed to be taken by a Cabinet Member, must be signed off within 20 working days of the closing date for representations following its publication, with provision that subject to the approval of the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee an extension can be permitted. And that this amendment to the Constitution is recommended to Full Council.

38. Forward Plan

Members discussed the content the Forward Plan for the period October 2008 to January 2009.

The Committee noted that the Value for Money Review of Leisure –Outcome of the Leisure Needs Analysis had been on the Forward Plan since 2006. There was also a later entry relating to the Leisure Facility Improvement Plan. The Leader advised that a decision on the location of new facilities was linked with the future decision on the proposed new secondary schools.

It was acknowledged by members that the content of the Forward Plan had continued to improve.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Forward Plan be noted

CHAIRMAN