

Minutes

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| Name of meeting | SCRUTINY COMMITTEE |
| Date and time | THURSDAY, 31 JULY 2008 COMMENCING AT 5.00 PM |
| Venue | COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT |
| Present | Cllrs Vanessa Churchman, Heather Humby, Gill Kennett, Erica Oulton, Lady Pigot, Margaret Webster. |
| Co-opted Members (voting) | Mrs Sue Poston (Vice Chairman in the Chair), Mr Charles Rogers. |
| Co-opted Member (non voting) | Mr Bob Blezzard. |
| Officers Present | Mr Steve Beynon, Mr Stuart Fraser, Mrs Jill Laurence-Tilley, Mr Stuart Love, Mr Paul Thistlewood. |
| Other Members Present | Cllrs Barry Abraham, David Pugh. |
| Apologies | Cllr Ivan Bulwer, Cllr William Burt, Mr Tony Blackshaw, Davina Fiore, Cllr Deborah Gardiner, Cllr Muriel Miller, Cllr Brian Mosdell, Cllr Garry Price, Mrs Sara Sheath, Mr Adrian Smith, Mrs Urszula Topp. |
| 25. | Minutes <u>RESOLVED:</u> THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2008 be confirmed. |
| 26. | Declarations of Interest There were no declarations received at this stage. |
| 27. | Undercliff Drive Implementation Plan – Quarterly monitoring The Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Leisure and Governance responded to a number of queries arising from the progress report on implementing actions arising from the Undercliff Drive Report. In particular the following issues were highlighted:- |

- Action point 2 - Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures - Consultation process had now begun. It was recognised that a more realistic timescale was required and this would be incorporated in the next monitoring report.
- Action point 3 – Organisational Health of the Council – The Cabinet would now be considering a report at its meeting on 9 September 2008.
- Action point 4 - Review of the Constitution – To be introduced in full once the Leader’s delegated decision had been implemented.
- Action point 5 - Review of Appraisal scheme – No dates shown in report but advised that an award of contract timetabled to take place in the week commencing 1 September 2008. The Committee noted that all staff now had appraisals.
- Action point 9 – Complaints and whistle blowing – Report to be submitted to the Audit Committee on 16 September 2008.
- Action point 11 - Corporate Support for corporate functions – Recruitment to posts in Human Resources and Legal Services still proving to be a challenge.
- Action point 14 - Review approach to Risk Management – Specific timetable for implementation of associated actions required. Guidance was expected to be completed by the 31 August 2008 and reported to the Audit Committee on 16 September 2008. The importance of member training in this area was highlighted. There was a view that this should be compulsory and members should also utilise the Council’s Lone Worker policy.
- Action point 18 - Professional Legal and Procurement advice - It was noted that alongside the Interim Head of Procurement, an Interim Deputy Head of Procurement was now in post until December 2008. There was a national shortage of senior procurement managers but the interim post holders provided expertise to ensure sound procurement practise was followed.
- Action point 23 – Audit Commission review – Members expressed concern as to the slow progress on this matter but noted that a report was due to go to the Audit Committee on 16 September 2008.

RESOLVED:

THAT the responses be noted and a realistic timetable for implementation of the outstanding actions be included in the report to be submitted to the 30 October 2008 meeting.

28.

Financial Management Report for Quarter 4 – Outturn Position for 2007/08 - as reported to Cabinet on 17 June 2008

The Cabinet Member for Residents, Resources and the Fire Service, the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services and the Head of Financial Management clarified a range of issues contained in the outturn report for 2007-08.

- Due to the economic downturn affecting certain areas, including car parking and planning applications, there could be a reduction in revenue of £2 million;
- The introduction of the National Bus Pass Scheme allowed pensioners to travel anywhere in the country for free. As a holiday destination the Island was experiencing the biggest modal shift in the country. Combined with the increased fuel prices this had resulted in an increase in bus usage of 40% in the first quarter of 2008/09. The Council, together with the Island's Member of Parliament, had approached the Government for additional reimbursement.
- Despite bus services being liable to alteration at short notice and the effect of fuel prices on the frequency of some cross Solent services the production of a public transport handbook was considered to be of great benefit to residents and visitors. Information was updated every six months in conjunction with all the operators.
- Despite the capital programme being reappraised during 2007-08 there was still significant slippage. There was some concern that the 1st quarter for 2008-09 predicated that capital expenditure in 2008-09 would be £44.7m rather than £80m. The One School Pathfinder was responsible for £22.362m of the slippage. The Committee would monitor the delivery of the capital programme carefully.
- Some slippage would take place with schemes included within the 30 One Island Deliverables. This was an area that could be looked at further by the Budget Task Group.
- On efficiency savings it was noted that the target for 2007-08 had been achieved. The Committee was aware of an Internal Audit report relating to Gershon savings. This highlighted the need to improve the collection of data to clearly evidence savings. Members were advised that this might indicate that more efficiency savings were actually being made.
- As part of efficiency savings there was a corporate policy on the filing of vacancies. Additionally posts were not filled unless there was budget provision.

- Although there had been a delay in the gasification plant becoming operational waste had been stored ready for processing rather than being sent to landfill. This had no impact on the revenue budget.

RESOLVED:

THAT the responses be noted and the Budget Task Group look into progress with the 30 One Island Deliverables and report back to a future meeting.

29. **Response by the Cabinet Member for Resources, Residents and the Fire Service to the Recommendations from the Budget Task Group.**

The Committee thanked the Cabinet Member for Resources, Residents and the Fire Service for his positive response to the recommendations made at the previous meeting. Members considered that the Council had made good progress on improving its financial processes in the past year.

RESOLVED:

THAT the response of the Cabinet Member be noted.

30. **Forward Plan**

Members discussed the content of the Forward Plan for the period August 2008 to November 2008.

In relation to the process for strategies and policies Members were advised that if they were on education functions they could only be approved by the Cabinet whereas others could be dealt with by the Cabinet Member under delegated powers.

The Committee noted that the Corporate Plan will be submitted to full Council on 17 September 2008 and the Forward Plan would be amended to reflect this.

Clarification was also given on the proposed delegated decision on the provisions of the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007. It was noted that the decision being taken related to the Fire and Rescue Service only at this stage due to the special risks faced by this service.

It was noted that the relocation of the Heights Leisure Centre was still under consideration. Mr Bob Blezzard declared a personal interest at this stage as he was a member of Sandown Town Council.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Forward Plan be noted.

CHAIRMAN