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28 March 2007

S U M M O N S

MEETING: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
DATE: Thursday 5 April 2007
TIME: 6.00pm
PLACE: Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Gosport
Democratic Services contact: Chris Wrein

LINDA EDWARDS
BOROUGH SOLICITOR

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Councillor Train (Chairman)
Councillor Farr (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Carr	Councillor Kimber
Councillor Davis	Councillor Philpott
Councillor Dickson	Councillor Redrup
Councillor Foster	Councillor Mrs Salter
Councillor Jacobs	Councillor Ward

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AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies, if any, for inability to attend the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All Members present are reminded to declare, at this point in the meeting or as soon as possible thereafter, any personal (including financial) or prejudicial interest in any item(s) being considered at this meeting.

3. MINUTES

To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 25 January 2007 (attached).

4. REQUESTS FOR SCRUTINY

To consider any requests received for matters to be scrutinised.

5. REVIEW OF PROGRESS OF SCRUTINIES BEING UNDERTAKEN

(i) Southern Water

(ii) Waterfront Zoning

6. HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE CONSULTATION

For the Committee to provide a response to a request from the Hampshire County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for items for them to scrutinise in their forthcoming years programme.

7. DEVELOPMENT OF A WORK PROGRAMME

To consider the work programme for the Committee and any suggestions from Members for issues to be scrutinised.

8. TRAINING PROGRAMME

To consider the development of a training programme for Members. Presentation by the Borough Solicitor.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WAS HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2007

Councillors Carr (P), Davis (P), Dickson (P), Farr (P), Foster (P), Jacobs (P), Kimber (P), Philpott (P), Redrup (P), Mrs Salter (P), Train (P) and Ward (P)

Reference was made to the change in the administration of the Council with effect from 8 December 2006 and it was confirmed and noted that Councillor Train would remain Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2006/2007.

9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

10. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 6 December 2006 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

11. REQUESTS FOR SCRUTINY

It was reported that no requests for matters to be scrutinised had been received by the Borough Solicitor and Members were invited to suggest any issues that they felt could be the subject of a scrutiny investigation.

The Chairman suggested that there were possibly two areas of concern that might be investigated, i.e. (i) the Health Authority and (ii) Southern Water Company.

With regard to (i) – Health Authority, the Chairman felt that the representatives from the Primary Care Trust should be invited to outline their future plans for health provision in the borough as there seemed to be little liaison and communication with Gosport Borough Council. It was acknowledged that Hampshire County Council had the remit for scrutiny of health issues on a county-wide basis and Members felt that this matter was not an area of investigation that should be undertaken by this Committee. Information regarding health provision was available on the Hampshire County Council website.

With regard to (ii) – Southern Water, Members discussed the aim of a scrutiny investigation and the expected outcome from the process. Officers informed the Committee that regular updates on works in the Borough were available from the Environment Agency and that the areas of flooding in Bridgemary were being addressed by Southern Water. However, the Committee considered that it would be useful to have a dialogue with the water company to ascertain their future plans for investment in the infrastructure in Gosport and to discuss their business plans for the area.

RESOLVED: That:-

- (i) a scrutiny investigation of the Health Authority not be undertaken; and
- (ii) Councillors Davis and Train to draft the scope of the scrutiny in respect of Southern Water and submit for approval to a future meeting.

12. TOURISM PROMOTION - UPDATE

The Leisure and Cultural Services Manager provided a briefing note to update the Committee on progress made on various developments in the promotion and marketing of tourism in Gosport. A copy of the new Tourism Guide 2007 was tabled at the meeting.

The Committee were informed of ways being explored to use the Borough Crest in appropriate tourism promotion and that, following the launch of the new website, arrangements were in hand to translate the home page into French and Spanish. The impact of this would be evaluated before considering whether this facility should be expanded further.

Members were heartened that the Committee's views on ways to expand the promotion of tourism had been taken into account and thanks were extended to officers and the Tourist Office personnel for their work in this regard.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Manager informed the Committee that officers would continue to monitor progress and work on further promotion aspects. Any relevant issues would be reported to the Community and Environment Board and if further scrutiny investigation was required matters would be referred to the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the report of the Leisure and Cultural Services Manager on tourism promotion in Gosport be noted and that scrutiny of the matter by the Committee is now concluded.

13. BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (BVPIs)

Consideration was given to a report of the Development Services Manager in respect of performance information related to BVPIs and actions agreed by the Chief Officers Management Team.

An appendix to the report provided Best Value Performance Indicator information by Service Unit showing the proposed percentage targets, the targets achieved at the 2nd quarter review 2006/2007, the assessment on whether targets were likely to be met and, in some cases, the remedial action proposed where targets were unlikely to be met.

Discussion ensued and Members questioned or commented on the following BVPIs and the Officers responded accordingly:

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		Questions/Comments
	CORPORATE HEALTH	
BV2b	The duty to promote race equality.	Explanation was sought and given, although the percentage did not give a full picture of criteria.
BV8	The percentage of invoices for commercial goods and services which were paid by the authority within 30 days of such invoices being received by the authority.	This BVPI showed a marked improvement and the Financial Services Manager clarified the definition and reasons for improvement that was due to training and a new creditor system.
BV11b	The percentage of top 5% of earners from black and minority ethnic communities.	Members questioned how these areas were being addressed and how it related to BV2b. The Chief Executive explained that the Council did not discriminate when recruiting and employment did not relate or refer to the definition in BV2b
BV16a	The percentage of employees declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 disability definition compared with...	
BV16b	...the percentage of economically active disabled people in the authority area.	
BV17a	The percentage of employees from minority ethnic communities compared with...	
BV17b	...the percentage of the economically active minority ethnic community population in the authority area.	
BV156	The percentage of authority buildings open to the public in which all public areas are suitable for and accessible to disabled people.	It was reported that Council buildings were as compliant as it was possible to be within the requirements of the DDA Act. Regular audits were carried out.
	HOUSING SERVICES	
BV164	Does the authority follow the Commission for Racial Equality's code of practice in rented housing and follow the Good Practice Standards for social landlords on tackling harassment included in the Code of Practice for Social Landlords: Tackling Racial Harassment?	The Housing Services Manager reported that this BVPI was likely to be met but that at present there were additional criteria to be met to meet the target.
BV184a	a) The proportion of LA homes which were non-decent at the start of the year (1 April).	The Housing Services Manager confirmed that the Council were on target to meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010
BV184b	b) The percentage change in proportion of non-decent LA homes during the year.	
BV212	Average time taken to re-let authority housing.	Performance for this indicator had significantly improved.

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	HOUSING BENEFIT and COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT	
BV76a	The number of claimants visited, per 1,000 caseload.	This BVPI was on target to be met.
BV79a	Accuracy of processing: a) Percentage of cases for which the calculation of the amount of benefit due was correct on the basis of the information available for the determination, for a sample of cases checked post-determination.	<p>Members sought an explanation and clarification of these indicators and what was deemed unrecoverable. The Financial Services Manager informed the Committee that there were several categories of overpayments, that Benefits was a very complex area of work and that write-offs were kept to a minimum.</p> <p>However, a briefing note would be presented at the next meeting to include explanation and guidance on these performance indicators</p>
BV79b(i)	The percentage of recoverable overpayments recovered (HB) The amount of HB overpayments recovered during the period as a percentage of HB deemed recoverable overpayments for the period.	
BV79b(ii)	The percentage of recoverable overpayments recovered (HB) HB overpayments recovered during the period as a percentage of the total amount of HB overpayment debt o/s at the start of the period plus the amount of HB overpayments identified in the period.	
BV79b(iii)	The percentage of recoverable overpayments recovered (HB) HB overpayments written off during the period as a percentage of the total amount of HB overpayment debt o/s at the start of the period plus the amount of HB overpayments identified during the period.	
	ENVIRONMENT	
BV91b	Percentage of households resident in the authority's area served by a kerbside collection of at least two recyclables.	Full recycling facilities/service were to be offered to multi-occupancy premises next month. Officers had been recruited to educate residents and promote recycling.
	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	
BV217	Percentage of pollution control improvements to existing installations completed on time.	Inspection programme was targeted for the next quarter.
	COMMUNITY SAFETY	
BV127a	Violent crimes per year, per 1,000 population in the Local Authority area.	<p>Members commented on incidents of domestic violence and alcohol related offences and questioned whether discussions with the police were carried out. The Environmental Services Manager informed the Committee that there was regular contact with the police regarding licensing of premises and the suitability of objections to applications. There was concern about the rise in crime in the Borough.</p>
BV127b	Robberies per year, per 1,000 population in the Local Authority area.	
BV225	Actions against domestic violence - the percentage score against a checklist of 11 questions.	

RESOLVED: That

- (a) the report of the Development Services Manager be noted;
- (b) A briefing note to include guidance and clarification on Best Value Performance Indicator BV79 to be provided at the next meeting of the Committee; and
- (c) Members were satisfied that their consideration of the performance information relating to the Best Value Performance Indicators concluded their scrutiny of the Best Value Performance Plan.

14. WORK PROGRAMME/TRAINING PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the development of a work programme.

As discussed earlier in the meeting, the Committee had approved that Councillors Train and Davis would pursue the scope of the scrutiny on Southern Water's plans for investment in infrastructure in the Borough.

It was further considered that scrutiny of waterfront zoning, set up by the previous Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee, should continue with a working group on a 1:1:1 basis.

The Chairman had requested the Borough Solicitor to explore a scrutiny training programme for Members. The Borough Solicitor reported that she had obtained a DVD 'What has scrutiny ever done for us?' from Local Government Association /South East Employers which she felt could be a useful tool as part of a training programme. The content consisted of a series of modules about effective scrutiny and could be tailored to meet the Council's needs.

The Borough Solicitor suggested that module 1 'Why scrutiny matters' could be used as part of a seminar session on 8 February and that all Members of the Council could be invited.

RESOLVED: That the work programme for the Committee be as follows:

- (a) **Southern Water** – Councillors Train and Davis to progress as set out above;
- (b) **Waterfront Zoning Working Group** – comprising Councillors Philpott, Train and Liberal Democrat representative;
- (c) **Training seminar** be held on Thursday 8 February 2007 at 6.00pm to which all Members of the Council be invited.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business discussed.

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and concluded at 7.52pm

CHAIRMAN

GOSPORT BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 APRIL 2007

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION

TITLE: Hampshire County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Consultation

AUTHOR: Environmental Services Manager

PURPOSE:

For the Committee to provide a response to a request from the Hampshire County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for items for them to scrutinise in their forthcoming years programme.

BACKGROUND:

Hampshire County Council is charged with the responsibility to scrutinise the health service. In order to do this they recognise that District Council have close contact with their communities and should therefore have the opportunity to influence there work programme.

REPORT:

The Chairman of the Hampshire County Council Health Overview and scrutiny Committee, Councillor Dr Raymond J Ellis has written to me requesting the following:

- 1 What do we consider to be the main challenges for health services in our area?
- 2 What do we consider to be the top three issues for health overview and scrutiny to review in the coming year?
- 3 What are the key working relationships that need to be in place to enable our organisation to engage effectively with the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee? Do we feel that these are developing? If not what action needs to be taken to address this?

Councillor Ellis indicates that in selecting topics for them to consider we should have regard to the following criteria

- The HCC O&SC ability to influence and improve the issue under consideration
- Timeliness and relevance to local health issues
- Issues not under consideration elsewhere
- Issues not subject to other scrutiny or performance monitoring activities

They would like our feedback by 11th May.

Supporting Information

Financial implications:	There are no financial implications
Legal implications:	None for the purposes of this briefing note
Risk Assessment:	Not applicable
Background papers including previous reports:	None
Enclosures/Appendices:	None
Contact name & tel. no.	David Jago 545517

BRIEFING NOTE

To:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY CCOMMITTEE
Date:	5 April 2007
Title:	FEEDBACK FROM TRAINING SESSION-8 February 2007 'WHY SCRUTINY MATTERS'
Author:	Borough Solicitor
Purpose:	For decision

Training Session

The session was very well attended by members of the Overview and Scrutiny committee and other members.

The session began with a presentation based on material supplied by LGIU and South East Employers. Their DVD 'why Scrutiny matters' was played and then there was a final session for members to discuss the content of the DVD and the presentations. Finally members were asked to complete the Scrutiny Health check and return them to the Borough Solicitor.

The Health check asked the following questions and the members responses are set out below

1. Work Programme- No
2. Call-ins- 2 occasionally 1 never
3. Working Groups- occasionally
4. Dedicated Support staff- 2 yes 1 yes to a degree
5. Item for Information on agenda- 1 often 2 occasionally
6. Use of co-opted members- never
7. gathering evidence- occasionally
8. summonsed executive member- 2 never
9. scrutiny report outside body- 2 occasionally
10. Detailed response to reports- 2 occasionally

Future Training Sessions

From the evaluation sheets it appears that some members would like further training in this area.

The LGIU and SEE material comprises 5 modules and the Committee may wish to work through the following modules beginning in the new civic year

Module 2- Defining priorities

Module 3- Strategies for influence

Module 4- Public partner and media engagement

Module 5- Leadership

The format for each module would be similar to the first session.