

Please ask for:

Chris Wrein

Direct dial:

(023) 9254 5288

Fax:

(023) 9254 5587

E-mail:

chris.wrein@gosport.gov.uk

17 September 2008

S U M M O N S

MEETING: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
DATE: 25 September 2008
TIME: 6.00 p.m.
PLACE: Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Gosport
Democratic Services contact: Chris Wrein

LINDA EDWARDS
BOROUGH SOLICITOR

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Councillor Forder (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Salter (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Allen	Councillor Dickson
Councillor Beavis	Councillor Edwards
Councillor Carr	Councillor Mrs Forder
Councillor Champion	Councillor Salter
Councillor Cully	Councillor Miss West

FIRE PRECAUTIONS

(To be read from the Chair if members of the public are present)

In the event of the fire alarm (single continuous sound) being activated, please leave the room immediately.

Proceed downstairs by way of the main stairs or as directed by GBC staff, follow any of the emergency exit signs. People with disability or mobility issues please identify yourself to GBC staff who will assist in your evacuation of the building.

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

- If you are in a wheelchair or have difficulty in walking and require access to the Committee Room on the First Floor of the Town Hall for this meeting, assistance can be provided by Town Hall staff on request

If you require any of the services detailed above please ring the Direct Line for the Democratic Services Officer listed on the Summons (first page).

NOTE:

Please note that mobile phones should be switched off for the duration of the meeting.

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 meetings of the Committee held on 24 July 2008 (attached)

4. DEVELOPMENT OF A WORK PROGRAMME

A) REQUESTS FOR SCRUTINY

To consider any requests for scrutiny received by the Borough Solicitor.

B WORK PROGRAMME

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

C) OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR SCRUTINY

5. REPORTS TO BE RECEIVED

(i) CYCLE LANES WORKING GROUP

To update the Committee on the progress made by the Cycle Lanes Working Group (papers attached).

(ii) NOISE MONITORING WORKING GROUP

To update the Committee on the progress made by the Noise Monitoring Working Group (papers attached).

(iii) SCRUTINY TRAINING FOR MEMBERS

(iv) SELECTION AND PRIORITISATION OF TOPICS FOR SCRUTINY

Paper attached: "Choosing Scrutiny Topics"

Overview and Scrutiny Committee
25 September 2008

(v) SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT 2007

To acquaint Members with the Act, the principal aim of which is to promote sustainability of local communities (briefing note attached)

(vi) GOSPORT'S SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY PROGRESS UPDATE

To provide Members with a progress update on Gosport's Sustainable Community Strategy and its Local Strategic Partnership (briefing note attached)

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

**A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WAS HELD ON 24 JULY 2008**

Councillors Allen (P), Beavis (P), Carr (P), Champion, Cully, Dickson (P), Edwards (P), Mrs Forder (P), Forder (Chairman) (P), Mrs Salter (P), Salter (P) and Miss West (P).

11. APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Champion and Cully.

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

13. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5 June 2008 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

14. DEVELOPMENT OF A WORK PROGRAMME

A. REQUESTS FOR SCRUTINY

(i) Cycle Parking

It was reported that a request had been received from the Policy and Organisation Board (25 June 2008) for the Committee to consider investigating the issues of cycle theft and security in the Borough.

Members of the Cycle Lanes Working Group advised that this aspect of scrutiny could be incorporated into the work they were currently undertaking.

This course of action was approved by the Committee.

The Chairman reported that he had also received correspondence from a member of the public on this issue which he would circulate to Members of the Working Group.

B. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman reported that a constituent had asked whether the Council could look at opportunities arising from the Sustainable Communities Act 2007. The Chairman had undertaken some reading on the subject and thought it would be worthy of further consideration.

Members debated whether this should be a matter for consideration at the Policy and Organisation Board but concluded that the Borough Solicitor should be requested to prepare a briefing note for the next meeting of the Committee. The Committee could then decide whether to proceed further with this issue.

The Borough Solicitor advised that government guidance was still awaited and, once received, could help with the development of this area.

C. OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR SCRUTINY

There were no other suggestions.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) the scrutiny of cycle parking in the Borough be referred to the Cycle Lanes Working Group; and
- b) the Borough Solicitor be requested to prepare a briefing note on the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee.

15. REPORTS TO BE RECEIVED

(i) CYCLE LANES WORKING GROUP

It was reported that the Cycle Lanes Working Group had met on 23 July 2008 and had drawn up a list of areas to be looked into and actions to be undertaken. The actions included:

- investigation of improvements to the website
- investigation of signage
- obtaining details of the inspection and cleansing regime

The Working Group had been particularly concerned that, although there was a prioritised plan, there was also a lack of Hampshire County Council funding for cycle lanes. The Working Group had decided to ask the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to write to Hampshire County Council to ascertain its priorities, the types of cycle lane schemes that would attract funding and the level of funding available.

Members were advised that it may be advantageous for a representative from Hampshire County Council to meet with the Working Group to provide some background information. Although there was no funding at present, this may not be the case in the future. The Local Transport Plan was a five year plan, the current one ending in 2011. It would therefore be advisable to begin preparing bids very soon.

An alternative view was expressed that there were problems with cycle lanes being underused. Cyclists had been shown to ride on pavements, with dog walkers using the cycle lanes.

In conclusion Members were informed that a date was usually set for a Working Group to report its findings to the Committee. It was suggested that this Working Group report to the Committee in January 2009.

(ii) NOISE MONITORING WORKING GROUP

The first meeting of the Working Group was scheduled for 11 August 2008. It was suggested that this Working Group should also endeavour to report its findings to the Committee in January 2009.

(iii) NEW MEMBER INDUCTION AND TRAINING

Consideration was given to a briefing note on the above topic prepared by the Chairman.

Members were in agreement with the points raised and the recommendations in the report. A number of other issues were also raised:

- training on the Council's Constitution and Standing Orders should be provided
- such training should be provided in "digestible chunks"
- training on the Constitution could include examples of its use
- a tour of the Council Chamber should be given prior to the first Full Council meeting in the Municipal Year
- notes should be prepared for new Members in a similar way to those provided for new Mayors
- a Members' Information Pack in a glossy cover should be provided
- a programme should be devised for Councillors to receive training in setting up individual websites

It was agreed that the Chairman incorporate the suggestions into his briefing note and have it circulated to the Members of the Committee. Officers suggested that a report could then be presented to the Standards and Governance Committee with a view to adopting the recommendations.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) the Chairman incorporate the suggestions into his briefing note;

- b) the revised briefing note circulated to the Members of the Committee; and
- c) a report be presented to the Standards and Governance Committee with a view to adopting the recommendations of the briefing note.

(iv) SCRUTINY TRAINING FOR MEMBERS

The Chairman reported that he had recently attended a scrutiny seminar at Birmingham University and he had looked at other publications on the subject. He suggested that training should be arranged and offered to all Members of the Council, falling into two broad categories:

- the purpose of overview and scrutiny and how to choose topics leading to successful scrutiny
- questioning techniques

The Chairman suggested that the first part of the training take place at 6.00 p.m. on 15 (***subsequently amended to 16***) September 2008. Training on questioning techniques should be provided by an outside trainer at a later date.

The Chairman explained that a meeting designed to plan the first session would take place on 3 September 2008 and would be attended by Chief Executive, the Borough Solicitor and himself. Councillor Allen was asked whether he would be prepared to attend the meeting and he stated that he would consider this issue.

Members felt that some guidance should be provided for Members of Working Groups who may well be in the process of questioning officers or external representatives before the questioning techniques training took place. The Borough Solicitor undertook to provide assistance should this arise.

(v) PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Consideration was given to a briefing note by the Development Services Manager which provided Members with information related to Performance Indicators for the year 2007/08.

Members were advised that local authority performance was now subject to considerable scrutiny and the Council had been required to produce an annual Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) giving details of its performance last year and its plan for the next year. The objective was for Councils to improve through monitoring.

The Best Value Performance Indicators had now been replaced by a series of national indicators which were similar but were less target orientated. They were more to do with the Borough itself than the Council; 2007/08 would be the last year of the Best Value Performance Indicators.

The officers' Performance Sub-Group reviewed internal performance four times a year, each Service Unit Manager being requested to present his or her unit's Performance Information and Service Improvement Plan.

A report on performance indicators was brought twice a year (including once at the end of the financial year) to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Scrutiny by the Committee forms part of the evidence provided to the Audit Commission regarding our Performance Management processes.

Members were advised that generally the Council's performance was improving but there were variations in certain areas.

Members drew attention to the outturn and target of Level One for the Equality Standard for Local Government to which the authority conformed. Officers advised that Level Five was the highest achievable. A new standard for racial equality is currently out for consultation.

A Member view was expressed that some of the criteria were very subjective and gave the impression that, for example, early retirement of officers was not desirable whereas, in reality, some instances may be beneficial to the Council such as when the postholder was not replaced and savings could be made.

The cost of early retirements was high and due to underfunding of the retirement scheme, practice had changed over the last 15 years and now required Councils to contribute more directly to the pension fund in these instances. In addition ill-health retirements were not discretionary, since they are only undertaken when unavoidable because of an individual's inability to carry out their duties and responsibilities as certificated by a duly qualified medical practitioner.

Officers were asked which indicators they were most concerned with, and drew attention to the performance information related to front line services. These were a measure of the Council's interaction with the public and, where a reduction in performance was identified, action could be taken to address the situation.

Attention was drawn to the Best Value Performance Indicator BV109 which related to the processing of planning applications. For many years Gosport Borough Council had been in the national top twenty providers of this service. At that time, the section was fully staffed with experienced, long serving officers. In the last two years the supply of good quality planners appeared to have dried up and, as a result, the Development Control Section had not been fully staffed and was currently carrying two vacancies.

The section had, since March 2008, concentrated on the statutory areas of work and, as a result, performance had improved. However, officers felt that a better service would be provided to the public if the section was able to again be fully staffed and reintroduce services which were over and above those it was obliged to provide.

24 July 2008

It was pointed out that the target for Council tenants of not more than seven weeks in rent arrears had not been met. Officers advised that the target had been somewhat ambitious and that the Council's rent collection statistics were amongst the best in the country.

Members raised the issue of the Decent Homes Standard for Council dwellings and were advised that this was a standard set by the government to be achieved by local authorities by 2010. A stock condition survey had been carried out and a programme of works is currently in progress to ensure the target is met. Dwellings were classified as currently decent, non-decent or potentially non-decent but no yearly inspection or survey was required.

RESOLVED: That the briefing note of the Development Services Manager be noted.

16 CLOSING REMARKS

The Chairman thanked Members and officers for their contributions.

17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no further business to discuss.

The meeting ended at 7.20 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: WORK PROGRAMME

Work Area	Lead Officer	Date to be reported to Committee
Performance Information: <i>Consideration of performance information relating to actions agreed by CMT</i>	Mike Jeffery	At 6-monthly intervals. Next report: 29 January 2009
Community Strategy Action Plan: <i>Policy Framework Document</i>	Julie Petty	At 6-monthly intervals: Next report 25 September 2008
Disability Equality Scheme: <i>Receive progress report on an annual basis</i>	Julie Petty	Annually: Next report June 2009
Scrutiny Training: <i>Training for Members on Modules of "Why Scrutiny Matters"</i>	Linda Edwards	25 September 2008
Travel Tokens Working Group: <i>Progress report to decide whether the Committee wishes this scrutiny to continue and, if appropriate, to nominate membership.</i>	Julian Bowcher	Watching brief – no action at present
Noise Monitoring Working Group	David Palmer	Update 25 September 2008
Cycle Lanes Working Group	David Duckett	Update 25 September 2008
New Member Induction and Training		Report to Standards and Governance Committee on 30 October 2008.
Work areas: <i>Review at each meeting</i>		

**NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CYCLE LANES WORKING GROUP
HELD ON 23 JULY 2008**

In attendance: Councillors Beavis, Dickson, Mrs Forder, Mrs Salter

Officers: David Duckett, Mark Simmonds and Chris Wrein

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At its meeting on 5 June 2008, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a briefing note by the Chief Executive which advised Members that one of the areas the Local Strategic Partnership had decided to concentrate on was transport, including the improvement of cycle lanes, particularly those leading in and out of the Borough. The Council had applied for grants towards this improvement but had not so far been successful.
- 1.2 At the meeting, views were expressed that certain cycle lanes in the Borough were not greatly used and there were also problems with cyclists riding on the pavement. The Police had taken little action in this area and it was emphasised that people needed to feel safe when walking on the pavement.
- 1.3 The Committee agreed a Working Group be established to scrutinise Cycle Lanes.

2.0 MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON 23 JULY 2008

2.1 Members made the following observations:

- The Council's cycle lane map was out of date
- The Gosport Cycling Strategy was out of date and not on the GBC website. The website required some improvement.
- There was no link to Fareham or surrounding routes
- The cycle route map should be made available to all
- Cycle lanes crossing roads should carry a warning sign to motorists
- Regular inspections for damage, debris and overgrowth should be carried out
- There was no cycle lane from Mumby Road to Gosport Ferry
- The short cut by the old railway station needed to be made up properly
- Cyclists should be allowed to cross Haslar Bridge when the red traffic light was showing
- The cycle lane did not run fully to Bay House School
- A cycle lane in Newgate lane would be needed for cyclist safety

- 2.2 Members were advised that a new cycle lane map was in preparation. They would be made available to the public and 3,000 copies would be produced.
- 2.3 There would be a degree of “joined up thinking” on cycle lanes to link Gosport, Portsmouth, Havant and Fareham
- 2.4 Members were advised that there was no specific budget in the Local Transport Plan for cycle lanes. It appeared that Hampshire County Council’s (HCC) enthusiasm was waning. However, they were actively looking at the Brockhurst roundabout. GBC was keen on the completion of the coastal link but HCC saw this as a recreational route and therefore not a priority. HCC are most likely to support utility cycling such as travelling to work, school or shopping. These would be the best areas on which to lobby them. HCC were aware of the volume of cyclists in Gosport.
- 2.5 Members felt it would be worthwhile writing to HCC to express GBC’s disappointment with the current situation and seeking advice on current policies and priorities and what potential schemes in Gosport would stand a chance of receiving HCC support, and what steps should be taken to promote them. It was felt that GBC could then set more realistic and achievable goals.
- 2.6 Members agreed that it would be appropriate for such a letter to be written by the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the assistance of David Duckett. The letter would also request information about the HCC inspection regime and repairs.
- 2.7 Members raised the issue of cycle lane inspections and were advised that sweeping was the responsibility of Streetscene. It was not known how frequently the cycle lanes were inspected or cleansed. Chris Wrein was requested to obtain this information from Streetscene. It was noted that a mechanism for reporting and responding to broken glass and other deposits on the cycletracks was desirable.
- 2.8 With regard to signage, some doubts were cast upon the value of warning signs at every junction and how effective they would be given that the majority of highway users were familiar with their surroundings. It was noted that GBC’s budgets under the Traffic management Agency were very limited. However it was agreed that there may be some junctions where additional signing would be effective. Councillors Beavis and Mrs Forder undertook to look at signage on the cycle lanes and report back to the Working Group.
- 2.9 Members were advised that the website would be looked into with a view to carrying out improvements. The new cycle lane maps when complete would be included. It was not felt appropriate to include all the Cycle Strategy on the website as this was out of date. David Duckett undertook

to report back to the Working Group regarding progress on the website.

3.0 ACTIONS

- 3.1 Investigate website improvements and the inclusion of the cycle lane map.

Action by: David Duckett

- 3.2 Write to HCC regarding funding and priorities for cycle lanes, including repairs and request an officer to attend the next working group.

Action by: Councillor Forder and David Duckett

- 3.3 Check signage on cycle lanes.

Action by: Councillors Beavis and Mrs Forder

- 3.4 Obtain information from Streetscene on the cycle lane inspection and cleansing regime

Action: Chris Wrein

AGREED:

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE CYCLE LANES

Purpose of scrutiny: To review the cycle lane provision in Gosport

Membership: Councillors Beavis, Dickson, Mrs Forder and Mrs Salter

Areas of investigation	Lead Member/ Lead Officer	Action	By when?	Report to Working Group – date	Progress/status
Website	David Duckett	Investigate possible improvements		Next meeting	
HCC funding and priorities and cycle lane maintenance	Chairman of O/S C'tee and David Duckett	Write to HCC to ascertain funding and priorities so that any GBC bids will be realistic		Next meeting	
Signage on cycle lanes	Councillors Beavis and Mrs Forder	To inspect and ascertain any requirements		Next meeting	
Inspection and cleansing of cycle lanes	Chris Wrein	Ascertain from Streetscene the regime for inspection and cleansing		Next meeting	
Meetings of the Working Group		To be determined		Future meeting	
Questioning of other officers or external bodies		To be determined		Future meeting	

**NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
NOISE MONITORING WORKING GROUP
HELD AT 6.00 P.M. ON 11 August 2008**

Membership: Councillors Allen, Edwards, Forder and Salter

Officers: David Palmer, Mark Simmonds and Catherine McDonald

BACKGROUND

At its meeting on 5 June 2008, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report by the Environmental Services Manager which outlined key legislation, areas of work and processes related to noise nuisance. The view was expressed that the service available did not match the expectations of the public in that noise problems were not dealt with by the Police and Council staff were often not available. Members felt that this area of work should be scrutinised by a working group.

DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

Members considered the election of a Chairman but decided that, at this stage, this was not necessary. Should the Group decide to interview representatives of outside bodies, a Chairman could be elected to move forward the interview procedure.

Consideration was given to a briefing note prepared by Councillor Allen which considered the public expectation on the response to noise disturbance and the service provided both by Gosport Borough Council and other local authorities. It also set out areas for consideration by the Group in order to ascertain the need for an out of hours noise monitoring service in the Borough.

Consideration was also given to a briefing note prepared by the Head of Environmental Health which advised Members of the relevant legislation and the enforcement options available to environmental health officers. Attached to this briefing note were tables containing information on the Out of Hours Noise Services provided by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Authorities (July 2008).

The Head of Environmental Health outlined the procedures followed by Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) when responding to complaints of noise nuisance. This depended on time, frequency and level of noise. Many complaints were a one-off, relating to a late night party or single event. If the noise nuisance was caused over a period of time, the complainant could be provided with a machine to record the noise levels. Usually the machine was operated over the period of a week, the resulting recordings being analysed by the EHO. If in the officer's judgement, it was deemed that a statutory nuisance had occurred, an Abatement Notice would be served.

Members asked the advice of the Head of Environmental Health as to which Hampshire Authority that did operate an out of hours service was closest in size and budget to Gosport, in order to make a comparison between the way in which noise complaints were handled in the two areas. He advised that Hart would be the most appropriate Authority to consider.

Members considered the necessity of gathering evidence from the Police, the 101 Service, Gosport's Housing Services Officers and, if necessary, from complainants themselves, in order to ascertain the need for an out of hours service. The cost of operating such a service also needed consideration as it could be shown that an out of hours service was necessary but the cost could prove prohibitive in the present financial climate.

Gosport Borough Council does not have a Noise Policy. The Head of Environmental Health advised that preliminary work had been carried out previously on the drafting of a policy and this could be revisited should Members deem it necessary. Members felt that the procedures operated by the EHOs were appropriate in dealing with the majority of one-off complaints received from residents.

THE WAY FORWARD

An Action Plan was agreed by Members, a copy of which is attached to these Minutes at Appendix A.

NEXT MEETING

A further meeting of the Working Group would be arranged to take place in October. It was noted that the meeting could take place during working hours.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE NOISE MONITORING SERVICE

Purpose of scrutiny: To review the Council's Noise Monitoring Service; does the Council require an out of hours service/would it be cost effective?

Membership: Councillors Allen, Edwards, Forder and Salter

Areas of investigation	Lead Member/ Lead Officer	Action	By when?	Report to Working Group – date	Progress/status
Discover current Police Policy on noise nuisance and analyse data on the 101 system	David Palmer	Make contact with the Police and the 101 provider	January 2009		
Request the Hart BC noise officer to visit the Noise Nuisance Working Group	David Palmer	Invite Hart BC officer	October 2008		
Undertake a survey of Hants Authorities who do not provide an out of hours service	David Palmer	Survey	ASAP		
Request the GBC Housing officer responsible for noise matters to attend the group	Mark Simmonds/David Palmer	Statistics to be provided	ASAP		

AGENDA NO. 5(iv)

CHOOSING SCRUTINY TOPICS

Introduction

When choosing topics to scrutinise decisions should be made having regard to published criteria aimed at ensuring that the Committee's work programme adds value to the work or relationship of the Council with the community, other agencies and stakeholders and has the greatest impact.

It is useful for the Committee to understand what information is available to help identify issues, drawing out and discussing what matters most to the Councillors and the community, finding out what research has been undertaken and is available.

Sources of work programme ideas

- The concerns that have been raised with Councillors on the doorstep, in surgeries or in their wards
- What has scrutiny looked at in the past
- Issues flagged up through review of Council's performance
- Consultations and Interviews
- Central Government priority changes
- Changes in legislation
- Media issues
- The Council's corporate planning process
- Budget analysis
- Demographic changes

Deciding upon scrutiny topics

Policy framework documents have to be referred to Scrutiny before the Council adopts them.

The work programme should try to include a balance of topics relating to the main functions of scrutiny for example performance review, Policy development, holding decision makers to account and cover the work of the Council and the work of external bodies/partners providing services in the area of Gosport.

Criteria to be used to assist in the decision on which topics to include on the work programme are set out below:-

- The 10 question approach (see diagram). Ideally any topic should meet at least 5 of the criteria but if there is good reason to make something a

priority without meeting 5 this is acceptable as long as the reasons for so doing are clear.

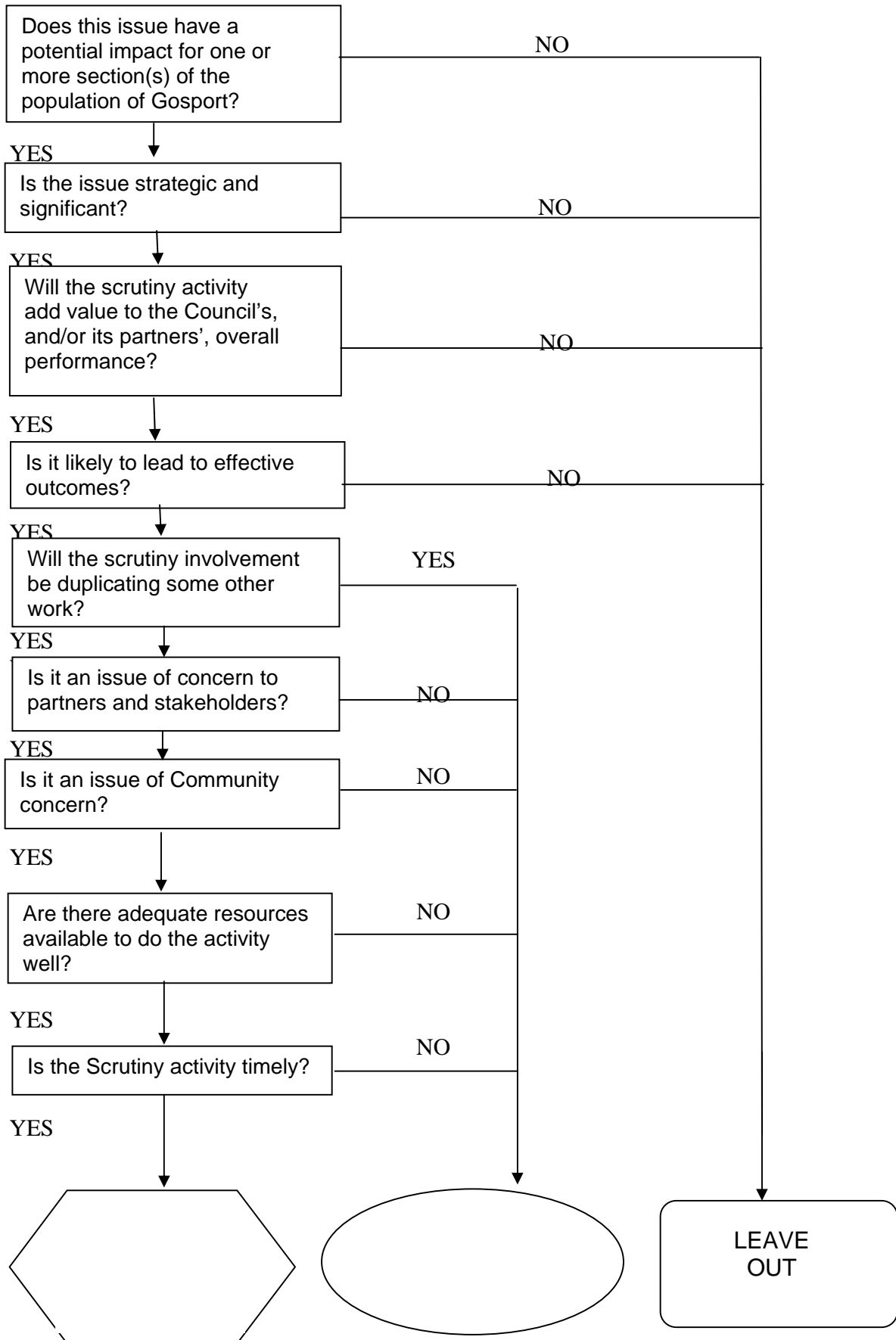
- Risk- what will be the consequences of not including an area/topic in the work programme
- Cost and Duration- is it feasible in terms of costs and the time it will take
- Duplication of activity- is this topic included in the work programme of another body such as Audit or another committee such as Standards and Governance
- Method of working for example Select Committee approach, working group, Q&A at a Scrutiny meeting. Do the members of the Committee have the capacity to carry out the scrutiny

PRIORITISATION AND SAYING NO

It is not possible for Scrutiny to include everything suggested by Councillors and the community in their work programme. What is important is that the Committee is selective and applies the criteria set out above to their decision making to be certain that the very best topics are chosen and that they are able to explain why they made their decision.

The 10 Question approach as set out in the diagram has been adopted to also assist in prioritising the work programme.

Scrutiny Work Plan Prioritisation Aid



BRIEFING NOTE

To:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date:	25 SEPTEMBER 2008
Title:	SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT 2007
Author:	Linda Edwards
Purpose:	For Decision

REPORT

1. The Sustainable Communities Act 2007 came into force on 23 August 2007. The principal aim of the Act is to promote sustainability of local communities. For Local Authorities this means encouraging the improvement of the economic, social (including participation in civic and political activity), or environmental wellbeing of the Authority's area or part of its area.
2. The Secretary of State is under a duty to assist Local Authorities in promoting sustainability in the ways set out in the Act.
3. Section 2 of the Act provides that the Secretary of State must invite Local Authorities to make proposals which they consider would contribute to improving the sustainability of their local community. This may include a request for a transfer of functions from one person to another person. The Secretary of State's first invitation has to be issued by 23 October 2008. Where a proposal is made to transfer a function between persons, consultation must be undertaken with both the person whose function is to be transferred and the person to whom the function is proposed to be transferred.
4. The Secretary of State has to appoint a Selector before 23 October this year and it is this person who will consider the proposals and, in co-operation with the Secretary of State, draw up a short-list of proposals. Whilst the Secretary of State and the Selector must work together to try to reach agreement, the Secretary of State has the final decision.

5. Details of decisions on proposals and a statement of what action the Secretary of State proposes to take with a view to the implementation of any new proposals must be published by the Secretary of State annually.
6. The details of the procedure to be followed in making proposals are to be set out in regulations which are not yet in place. There is also provision for local spending reports to be produced in areas where arrangements have been made.
7. When drawing up proposals, Local Authorities have to have regard to the matters set out in the schedule to the Act. These include:
 - i. The provision of local services
 - ii. The extent to which the volume and value of goods and services that are offered for sale or procured by public bodies and are produced within 30 miles of their place of sale or of the boundary of the public body
 - iii. The rate of increase in the growth and marketing of organic forms of food production in the local food economy
 - iv. Measures to promote reasonable access by all local people to a supply of food that is adequate in terms of both the amount and nutritional value
 - v. The number of local jobs
 - vi. Measures to conserve energy and increase the quantity of energy supplies which are produced from sustainable sources within 30 miles of the region in which they are consumed
 - vii. Measures taken to reduce the level of road traffic including, but not restricted to, local public transport provision, measures to promote walking and cycling and measures to decrease the amount of product miles
 - viii. The increase in social inclusion, including an increase in involvement in local democracy
 - ix. Measures to increase mutual aid and other community projects
 - x. Measures designed to decrease emissions of greenhouse gases
 - xi. Measures designed to increase community health and wellbeing
 - xii. Planning policies which would assist with the purpose of the 2007 Act, including new arrangements for the provision of affordable housing, and
 - xiii. Measures to increase the use of local waste materials for the benefit of the community.

The Way Forward

8. Whilst this is potentially a very exciting piece of legislation which would enable Local Authorities to be more innovative in the way that they assist in the delivery of sustainable communities, at this time it is unclear what kind of proposals the Government are likely to support.
9. The regulations and the Selector are still to be confirmed and the first invitation has to be issued at the end of October this year. In these circumstances, it is suggested that the Committee note the contents of this report and that I provide an update report next year with details of proposals that have been made and approved or rejected by the Secretary of State.

GOSPORT BOROUGH COUNCIL

POLICY/SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 25th September 2008

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION

TITLE: Gosport's Sustainable Community Strategy – Progress Update

AUTHOR: Chief Executive

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a progress update on Gosport's Sustainable Community Strategy and its Local Strategic Partnership.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Gosport Borough Council has a statutory duty to prepare a Community Strategy through the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

Gosport Borough Council is a key partner in the LSP which is known as the Gosport Partnership. The Partnership also includes representatives from Churches Together, Gosport Voluntary Action, Government Offices for the South East, Groundwork Solent, Hampshire Constabulary, Hampshire County Council, Hampshire Primary Care Trust, Ministry of Defence, Portsmouth Housing Association, South East England Development Agency and St Vincent College.

A new Sustainable Community Strategy has been produced by the LSP and as a policy framework document has been subject to scrutiny as follows:

- October 2006 – scrutiny of the approach and process for reviewing and revising the Community Strategy
- September 2007 – scrutiny of the new Sustainable Community Strategy resulting in a requested for the provision of six monthly progress updates to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- March 2008 – scrutiny of the six monthly progress update regarding the LSP and its Sustainable Community Strategy.

3.0 REPORT

3.1 Action plan

3.1.1 An action plan has been developed to assist with the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy. This action plan focuses on two areas, transport and local jobs, which were identified through the 'Make

your Mark' consultation responses and baseline data evidence. These two areas are interlinked and provide a good opportunity for multi-agency working.

- 3.1.2 A new Gosport Transport and Sustainability Partnership (GTSP) was set up earlier this year to tackle the first priority area in the action plan – work towards reducing traffic congestion. The GTSP has secured funding from the LSP budget, Groundwork Solent and the Gosport Ferry to run a campaign encouraging people to change their travel behaviour. At the centre of this campaign is the development of a dedicated travel website for Gosport. This is currently under development and is being modelled on Brighton's [JourneyOn](http://www.journeyon.co.uk/website) (<http://www.journeyon.co.uk/website>). It will enable people who live, work and visit Gosport to use a journey planner which will show all modes of transport, cost, journey times, distances, traffic information and even how many calories have been used (if cycling or walking). The second part of the campaign will involve putting banners and signs on the A32 – the GTSP is currently in discussion with *The News* regarding sponsorship. It is envisaged that the GTSP will ask the community for ideas on content/design for the banners through a *News-led* competition. The GTSP is also hoping to get sponsorship and support from Portsmouth Football Club.
- 3.1.3 As part of its lobbying role, the GTSP has sent letters to Hampshire County Council regarding the use of Local Transport Plan funding for Gosport and to GOSE protesting the transport implications of the Tesco development at Quay Street roundabout. The GTSP is also in discussion with the Local Area Agreement (LAA) transport leads on becoming the LAA 'reduce' group for Gosport and being named within the LAA as an example of good practice in Hampshire.
- 3.1.4 In terms of the second priority relating to increasing employment opportunities, the LSP funded Gosport's Big Day Out which was hugely successful, attracting 10,000 visitors who were overwhelming positive about the event. The Board has agreed to support the event again next year.
- 3.1.5 Discussions are also taking place towards organising a Skills Festival for 2009 – led by St Vincent College with sponsorship from the Learning and Skills Council and the LSP. The purpose of this event will be to create stronger links between schools and colleges and local businesses.
- 3.1.6 The Board has also identified educational attainment as a major issue in Gosport and one which has a great impact on its second priority. Councillor Kirk will be attending the December LSP Board meeting to take questions on what Hampshire County Council is planning to do to address this issue. Gosport's Children and Young People's Locality Partnership are also being asked to update at that Board meeting and the Primary Care Trust will presenting on its work on addressing

teenage pregnancy – another major issue for Gosport related to this priority.

3.2 Performance management

- 3.2.1 At the recent September Board meeting, the Board agreed its performance management processes and held the first stage of its annual review performance review.
- 3.2.2 The annual review included an assessment of an annual data report for Gosport, the action plan and any future drivers of change. The purpose of the review was to ensure that the two priorities selected were still relevant and also to consider whether there are any other issues arising from the data which should also be elevated to priority status.
- 3.2.3 In light of the annual review, the Board will be investigating health data further with the Primary Care Trust leading a session on this at the March 2009 Board meeting, providing more data and context. The Board will then decide whether this area needs to be added as a priority to the action plan.

3.3 Future challenges

- 3.3.1 The LSP's key challenges in delivering the Sustainable Community Strategy are:
- Making the action plan happen – limited financial and staff resources make delivery challenging. However, a focused action plan and the work that has been undertaken over the past two years will improve the LSP's ability to deliver.
 - Ensuring that all partners contribute to making the action happen and that it is not always Gosport Borough Council-led. For instance although the LSP funded the Big Day Out, it would not have happened without a huge time and staff commitment from Lynda Dine and her team. However, the projects relating to the transport priority are being led very effectively by Groundwork Solent and other partners and the Skills Fair is being led by St Vincent College and the LSC so progress is being made.
 - Local Area Agreement – the District LSP links into this process are still unclear although effort is being made by the LSP to ensure Gosport is included, e.g. through the GTSP.

4.0 CONCLUSION

An action plan for the Sustainable Community Strategy has been produced and tangible outcomes have already taken place and more are under development. A Performance Management Framework has been established and the LSP has undertaken its first annual review.

Supporting Information

Financial implications:	None.
Legal implications:	None
Risk Assessment:	Failure to deliver actions in respect of the Sustainable Community Strategy poses a risk to partnership working and reputation management.
Background papers including previous reports:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A. PowerPoint Presentation to Scrutiny Committee October 2006B. Report to Scrutiny Committee September 2007C. Report to Scrutiny Committee March 2008
Enclosures/Appendices:	None
Contact name & tel. no.	Julie Petty 02392 545381 Julie.petty@gosport.gov.uk