

A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WAS HELD ON 24 JUNE 2014

Councillors Beavis, Mrs Cully, Farr (P), Forder(Chairman) (P), Mrs Forder(P), Foster-Reed(P), Gill (Vice Chairman) (P), Hazel (P), Mrs Hook (P), Hylands, Jessop(P), Scard(P)

It was reported that in accordance with Standing Orders, Councillor Mrs Wright had been nominated to replace Councillor Mrs Cully for this meeting.

6. APOLOGIES

An apology for inability to attend the meeting was received from Councillors Beavis, Mrs Cully and Councillor Hylands.

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

8. MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 31 MARCH 2014 AND THE MEETING HELD ON 5 JUNE 2014.

The Committee discussed the contents of the minutes to appraise the Chairman of the progress of the scrutiny detailed.

The Committee were advised that the recommendations of the Textile Recycling Working Group had been approved by the Community Board and the Fareham Borough Council Framework was not to be entered.

The Committee requested an update as to the progress of the discussions with the charities in relation to the combining of textile operations. It was requested that this be reported to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 31 March 2014 and 5 June 2014 be approved and signed by the Chairman as true and correct records.

9. REPORTS RECEIVED

SINGLE EQUALITY BILL

The Head of Policy and Community Safety advised that the annual report was to inform the Committee of the progress of the final year of the Council's Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan and to outline the changes made to maintain compliance with Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

The Committee were advised that the Single Equality Scheme (SES) had expired in March 2014 and that a final progress report of the 2013-14 actions was attached to the report.

The Committee were advised that the Equality and Diversity Steering Group (EDSG) had undertaken a review of the SES and other equality information published by the Council in light of the latest review of the PSED undertaken by the Government Equalities Office.

In answer to Member's questions the Board were advised that some items on the review had been deferred as a result of shared services and that network meetings to improve understanding of particular issues that Black, and Minority Ethnic people may encounter were continuing.

The Committee were also advised that members of the public responded better to community engagement when it was multi agency, rather than just representatives of the Council or the Police.

The Committee were advised that items that had been completed were deleted from the action plan.

The Chairman advised that the volunteer awards event held by GVA was very well supported and welcomed by the volunteers.

The Committee were advised that appendix b of the report detailed the Council's statement of commitment to Equality and Diversity and demonstrated compliance of the statutory requirements. The Committee were advised that employees were required to undertake an E-Learning module on equality and diversity every three years and that it took approximately 1 hour to complete. Line managers were required to complete an additional module and it was reported that overall, staff found this a more flexible way to undertake training.

In answer to a Member's question, the Board were advised that the work surrounding equality and diversity formed part of the Corporate Policy Officer's role and that the EDSG comprised of staff members from each unit.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

10. DEVELOPMENT OF A WORK PROGRAMME

A) REQUESTS FOR SCRUTINY

Consideration was given to a request to scrutinise the review of Polling Districts and Polling Places by producing draft proposals for consultation and recommending them to Full Council. The Committee had been involved in the previous review in 2011.

The Committee was advised that the involvement of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee provided a useful sounding board for proposals. A report would be presented to the Committee in September, detailing proposed changes, before a consultation period. The results of this would be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December before seeking approval at Full Council.

The Committee were advised that all ward councillors would be written to as part of the consultation process in addition to groups with specialism in disability issues. The public report would be available on the website and would be available in soft copy to all Councillors.

In answer to a Member's question, the Board were advised that Local Authority Schools were always considered a starting point for polling places as under law, the Returning Officer could use schools free of charge, with the exception of any additional costs incurred by the school for staffing to open and close the school. It was also important that good access and parking facilities were available and that the safety of polling staff would be considered. Members were advised that venues and potential venues would be visited as part of the scrutiny.

RESOLVED: That the Committee agree to scrutinise the review of Polling Places, by producing draft proposals for consultations and recommending them to Full Council

B) WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee requested that a report on social media usage be brought to the Committee in December 2014.

The Committee requested that a report on the implementation of the new Housing Allocations Policy be brought to the meeting in December 2014.

Members advised that they were still unhappy with the Grounds Maintenance Contract. Members acknowledge that new procedures had been introduced and welcomed officer's response to issues when they occurred.

Members requested a list of areas covered by the contract to allow them to best advise constituents be provided at their next meeting.

Members were advised that there was no update regarding Vascular Surgery and that an update would be given in September 2014, unless a response was forthcoming before the July meeting.

The Committee requested that an update on Waste Policies be brought to the Committee in September 2014.

The work programme was discussed and updated.

C) OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR SCRUTINY

Bus Services in the Borough

The Committee discussed the ongoing issues surrounding bus services within the Borough. Members agreed that a working group be set up to investigate the issues further. It was agreed that Councillors Scard, Farr, Forder comprise the working group and that Councillor Beavis also be approached to become a member. It was recognised that the issues were Borough wide and that a scoping exercise should be undertaken at the first meeting of the Working Group.

RESOLVED: That a Working Group be set up to examine the provision of Bus Services in the Borough.

Review of Portchester Crematorium

The Committee were advised that this had been added to the work programme in light of an additional Crematorium being opened in Havant. Councillor Scard advised that he sat on the Portchester Crematorium Joint Committee (PCJC) and that early indications were that the impact of the Havant Crematorium was minimal. It was requested that a report be made to the September meeting with any update. The Committee recognised that Councillor Wright had sat on the PCJC for many years and should be invited to address the Committee if necessary.

Early Years Education

The Committee recognised that the work on post 16 education had reached a conclusion. It was requested that in light of the ongoing changes at Bridgemary School Councillor Gill be requested to arrange a tour of the School for all Members.

The Chairman advised that he would like investigations into attainment at KS1 to establish whether there was need for scrutiny of education for this age range. He agreed to contact Hampshire County Council to arrange for an officer to address the Committee to establish whether scrutiny was necessary.

Fort Brockhurst

It was requested that this be placed on the work plan for September 2014.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

The Meeting concluded at 7.00pm

CHAIRMAN