

SCRUTINY & OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
17TH NOVEMBER 2010

Present: Councillors: David Sheldon (Chairman), Jonathan Chowen, George Cockman, Leonard Crosbie, Brian Donnelly, Duncan England, David Holmes, David Skipp.

Apologies: Councillors: Ian Howard (Vice-Chairman) Gordon Brown, Philip Circus, Chris Mason, Jim Sanson, Claire Vickers, Keith Wilkins

Also present: Councillors: Sheila Dale and Ray Dawe

SO/56 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

SO/57 **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Chairman of the Committee announced that the Head of Strategic Planning & Performance would introduce the draft District Plan, this would be followed by comments by the Cabinet Member for Performance and Service Delivery, it would then be opened up to the Committee for questions and discussion.

SO/58 **TO CONSIDER AND COMMENT ON THE DRAFT DISTRICT PLAN**

The Head of Strategic Planning & Performance introduced the draft District Plan for 2011-2015; the existing Corporate Plan was due to expire in March and a the new version which would be named the District Plan would come into force in April 2011.

The officers had been working with the Leader and Cabinet to capture the vision for the Council in the District Plan, linking in the service plans and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Committee noted that the District Plan was about understanding who was in our community and improving engagement and identifying local needs. The District Plan would also link in with the Sustainable Community Strategy 'All Our Futures.'

Members noted that the draft Plan had been before a number of Cabinet Members and a Leader's Advisory Group before it was released for consultation. Both parish and neighbourhood councils were also involved in the consultation process and this would end on 3rd December 2010.

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Service Delivery explained how the presentation of the District Plan differed from previous corporate plans. Research was carried out and district plans from a number of high achieving Councils were researched and compared before producing a draft version

SO/58 To consider and comment on the draft District Plan (cont.)

for Horsham. The format in which it was presented was considered to be the most accessible and acceptable method of presenting the information producing a document that was easy to access and easy to read.

The Committee was invited to comment on and ask questions about the draft District Plan.

Members noted that the District Plan was a flexible living document; any changes occurring from central Government which may impact on the Council could be reacted to in the document.

Some Members had been part of the Leader's Advisory Group and had watched the Plan develop. There had been an improvement in the complex language which was initially used making the revised version clearer, well stated and understandable, the Committee praised this.

Overall the Committee was happy with the presentation of the Plan, there was some concern about the lack of specific detail on how the objectives would be achieved, however Members noted that the bullet points were "illustrative" of the actions and the service plans would be contain more detail.

Members welcomed the flexibility of the document as it was essential that it was able to adapt to any changes which occurred during the five year life of the District Plan.

The Committee made a number of suggestions to the wording of the Plan, the Cabinet Member welcomed these as the document was still in draft format, all the comments and suggested amendments would be considered and the Plan would be amended to reflect the comments if they were agreed to be appropriate.

Members were keen that the Plan be publicised as a District wide document and that it promoted the District as a whole including both the town and the parishes. The town and parishes should be treated alike.

Members were keen to ensure that when the District Plan was reviewed, the Scrutiny & Overview Committee be involved at an early stage of the consultation.

The Committee agreed that it was happy with the six strands of the Plan, however made some suggested changes to the wording.

The Cabinet Member reiterated that the headings were an attempt to wrap up the issues and there would be more details in the individual service plans.

SO/58 To consider and comment on the draft District Plan (cont.)

Any comments, additional points or amendments would be taken into consideration, being mindful of the decision to keep the document restricted in length, making it more appealing to people. The use of colour in the text to make it more appealing would also be considered.¹

The meeting finished at 6.56pm having commenced at 5.30pm.

CHAIRMAN

¹ Please see appendix one for a record of the more specific points raised by the Scrutiny & Overview Committee in relation to the draft District Plan

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APPENDIX ONE

**TO CONSIDER AND COMMENT ON THE DRAFT DISTRICT PLAN -
SPECIFIC POINTS RAISED BY THE SCRUTINY & OVERVIEW
COMMITTEE**

The discussions of the Committee were summarised in the minutes of the meeting however listed in the appendix are details of the specific comments and suggestions made by Members.

Members suggested the following:

1. Economic Development

- A change to the wording to replace “profitable” with “successful” as this would be more appropriate to take into account the non-profitable areas
- That there was nothing under this item to strongly address the issues in the town and Members would like to more relating to the town centre
 - This would be addressed as part of the service plans
- Remove “Identify how best to” under 1.2
- That an additional section five under the heading Economic Development be added on the 2012 Olympics and the last two bullet points under 1.3 be placed under this heading
- The word “tourism” growth be replaced with “visitor” growth, Members supported this

2. Efficiency and Taxation

- The word “customer” be replaced with “resident”
 - Using the word customer encompasses residents, visitors, business etc.
- Members questioned whether the content of 2.3 was duplicating that of 2.1?
 - The Redesign programme applied to the whole of the Council and therefore the section was deemed relevant

3. Arts, Heritage and Leisure

- Members felt that supporting community events and entertainment was often understated and not widely publicised, Members felt this area should be celebrated
- Remove the word “appeal” under 3.1

4. Sustainable Communities

- The sub heading should be replaced with the following wording: “Working together to support the life of the local communities”
- The words “continue to” be removed from item 4.2
- The words “dial-a ride” be removed as this was a form of community transport already mentioned
- Members wanted to see more included actually supporting strong, local communities and fostering/encouraging community spirits – it was suggested an additional point be included under this heading

5. Environment

- Members questioned the use of the word “promote” in terms of good air quality and whether this was appropriate
- Some consideration be given to the wording of item 5.3, the Council had to be careful and try to strike a balance between minimising the impact of development but developing the District

6. Safer and Healthier

- Members questioned whether the word “hospital” should replace “acute provision”
- The rewording of the second bullet point under 6.1 to say “Determine future needs for a healthy district”
- Members suggested linking this item in with leisure services
- Members questioned the last bullet point under 6.2 and suggested that it be reworded to express more clearly what the aim was

It’s your Council. But did you know...?

The Committee also discussed the second page of the draft District Plan and made some suggestions:

- Coloured text be used to highlight some of the most significant comments and to break up the text making it more appealing to the reader
- The average cost of providing Horsham District Services was £2.68 per household in 2009/10 “per week” would be included in this statement
- 47,000 people living in the District lived in Horsham town and the immediate area
- Planning enforcement was now planning compliance
- Horsham District Council has leisure centres “and swimming pools” would be added to this comments
- Members queried whether the figures relating to food safety inspections were up to date
- Members questioned the figures relating stray dogs and it was noted that out of 155 stray dogs – one had not made it.