

**SCRUTINY & OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**  
**4<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2011**

Present: Councillors: David Sheldon (Chairman), Brian Donnelly (Vice-Chairman) John Chidlow, Philip Circus, George Cockman, Leonard Crosbie, Laurence Deakins, Andrew Dunlop, Jim Goddard, Josh Murphy, Brian O'Connell, Jim Rae, Kate Rowbottom, David Skipp

Apologies: Councillor: Tricia Youtan

Also present: Councillors: Roy Cornell, Duncan England, Claire Vickers

SO/19 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

SO/20 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

SO/21 **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Chairman of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee announced the dates of the working groups which had not met for their first meeting of the new Council year. The Members noted the following:

The Acorn Plus Working Group was scheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> July 2011 at 12.30pm, the Business Improvement Working Group was scheduled for 12<sup>th</sup> July 2011 at 5.30pm, and Traffic in Villages Working Group was scheduled for 20<sup>th</sup> July 2011 at 5.30pm.

The Chairman explained that a suggestion for the Scrutiny & Overview work programme had been made by the Blue Flash Music Trust, requesting that the Committee review the various issues surrounding the Town Hall.

At an initial meeting held between the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources it was agreed that this was not appropriate for review by the Committee at this stage, as the request was based on a single issue raised by the Blue Flash Music Trust and its concerns regarding the Town Hall.

The Committee noted that there was a piece of marketing work taking place and if successful, it would see a new bidder for the Town Hall and therefore the decision of Council on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2008 would have been implemented. However, if unsuccessful and no operator was found, then this could raise a potential issue for review by the Scrutiny & Overview Committee on why a Council decision had not been implemented. It was agreed that this suggestion would not be pursued any further at this stage.

SO/22 **MATTERS CALLED IN ACCORDANCE WITH RULE 14**

There were no matters called in accordance with Rule 14.

SO/23 **REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE USE BY THE EXECUTIVE OR AN OFFICER OF RULE 15 (URGENT POWERS) OR RULE 16 (SPECIAL URGENCY POWERS) OF THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROCEDURE RULES**

There were no matters called in accordance with Rule 15 or 16.

SO/24 **MATTERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH CRIME AND DISORDER UNDER THE POLICE & JUSTICE ACT 2006**

There were no matters in accordance with the crime and disorder under the Police & Justice Act 2006.

SO/25 **ITEMS UNDER COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION**

There were no items under Councillor Call for Action.

SO/26 **BUDGET REVIEW WORKING GROUP – CHAIRMAN’S UPDATE AND NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD 28<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2011**

The Chairman of the Budget Review Working Group presented the notes of the meeting held 28<sup>th</sup> June 2011.

The purpose of the meeting had been to introduce the functions of the Working Group for the benefit of the new Members and agree the proposed work programme.

The Chairman of the Working Group confirmed that the IT Projects report would be presented at the next meeting of the Group. At the following meeting the Group had requested that a report on the CenSus Partnership be presented on the financial and economical benefits of the Partnership.

However, the Committee discussed that if it was not appropriate for the Group to receive a report on the CenSus Partnership, this could be a separate review for the Scrutiny & Overview work programme, or it could be considered as part of the joint scrutiny work with the partner councils. This would be considered at the next Budget Review Working Group.

At the meeting, Members also received an indication of the outturn of the Budget for 2010/11; this was particularly beneficial for the new Working Group Members.

The Chairman of the Working Group presented the Groups amended Terms of Reference. There was some discussion amongst the Committee on the role of the Working Group at the time of the Budget debate.

SO/26 Budget Review Working Group – Chairman’s update and notes of the meeting held 28<sup>th</sup> June 2011 (cont.)

It was agreed that the Group had an official and vital role, on behalf of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee by participating in discussions, making comments and recommendations on the Budget, but it was not the Group’s responsibility to define the Budget, this was the role of Cabinet and Council.

It was agreed that the revised Terms of Reference which had been presented to the Committee were more defined and precise and did reflect the role of the Working Group, subject to two additions.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the notes of the Budget Review Working Group meeting held 28<sup>th</sup> June 2011 be received
- (ii) That the amended Terms of Reference be approved by the Committee

REASON

All notes of Working Group meetings are to be received by the Committee.

SO/27 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP –CHAIRMAN’S UPDATE AND NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD 15<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2011

The Scrutiny & Overview Committee received the notes of the Performance Management Working Group held 15<sup>th</sup> June 2011.

The Committee noted that the Group was receiving more detailed reports on complaints and compliments received by the Council; these were broken down into by areas within the District.

At the meeting the officers had produced a list of proposed Performance Indicators for the Council; these would be assessed, pursued and commented on by the Working Group.

Overall the Members of the Working Group were satisfied with the process; however a suggestion was made for the Performance Indicators for the Capitol to be reviewed.

For the benefit of the new Members the Committee noted that the Golden Thread, which was referred to in the notes of the Performance Management Working Group, which was the link between the Council’s District Plan and the performance of the individual officers.

There had been some minor amendments to the Terms of Reference for the Performance Management Working Group.

SO/27 Performance Management Working Group –Chairman’s update and notes of the meeting held 15<sup>th</sup> June 201 (cont.)

RESOLVED

- (iii) That the notes of the Performance Management Working Group meeting held 15<sup>th</sup> June 2011 be received
- (iv) That the amended Terms of Reference be approved by the Committee

REASON

All notes of Working Group meetings are to be received by the Committee.

SO/28 SOCIAL INCLUSION WORKING GROUP – CHAIRMAN’S UPDATE AND NOTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD 6<sup>TH</sup> JUNE AND 27<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2011

The Chairman of the Social Inclusion Working Group presented the notes of the meetings held 6<sup>th</sup> June and 27<sup>th</sup> June 2011.

At the meeting of the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2011 Members received an update on the annual review of the Horsham District Community Partnership which the Group was undertaking.

The Group also received the Horsham District Community Profile, from which two items had arisen for the Group’s work programme: disability access and poverty amongst an ageing population in the District.

An additional meeting of the Working Group was held on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2011 to discuss the list of questions which had been drafted for the interviews of the key personnel involved with the Horsham District Community Partnership, as part of the Group’s annual review.

The Committee noted that, following a request by the Working Group, a letter had been sent from the Chairman of the Group on the proposed changes to the bus services in the District. A response had been received which explained that impact assessments were underway and the Group’s comments would be considered before a final decision was made. A copy of both letters would be circulated to all Members of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee.

The Group had also received a health update; the Committee noted that discussions were taking place on the proposal to transfer certain services from East Surrey Hospital to the North of the District, which Members welcomed; the Group also noted that dementia services in the District had seen a dramatic improvement.

SO/28 Social Inclusion Working Group – Chairman’s update and notes of the meetings held 6<sup>th</sup> June and 27<sup>th</sup> June 2011 (cont.)

RESOLVED

That the notes of the Social Inclusion Working Group meeting held 6<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> June 2011 be received

REASON

All notes of Working Group meetings are to be received by the Committee.

SO/29 **PROGRESS ON CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP – TO RECEIVE THE NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD 7<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2011**

The Chairman of the Progress on Climate Change Working Group presented the notes of the meeting held 7<sup>th</sup> June 2011.

As the subject of climate change proved to be so vast the Environmental Coordination Manager had been asked to suggest the areas on which the Group should focus for the review and also a time frame.

The Working Group would focus on the Council and its estate only in an attempt to streamline the review. There would be a meeting each month until the end of 2011 and it was anticipated that the final report would be presented to the Scrutiny & Overview Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2011.

The Committee suggested some additional aspects which the Group could consider as part of its review, such as whether the Council should consider its position in terms of its commitment to the Nottingham Declaration and whether the Group should consider whether it supported the 50 percent reduction in carbon emissions by 2025, as suggested by the West Sussex Environment & Climate Change Board, to bring the County inline with the Government target.

However it was noted that the primary focus of the review was to consider how the Council was performing against the commitments which it had signed up to under the Nottingham Declaration.

RESOLVED

That the notes of the Progress on Climate Change Working Group meeting held 7<sup>th</sup> June 2011 be received

REASON

All notes of Working Group meetings are to be received by the Committee.

SO/30 **FINAL REPORT OF THE BILLINGSHURST RAIL SERVICE WORKING GROUP**

The Chairman of the Billingshurst Rail Service Working Group presented the final report of the Group along with an update on the progress which had been made since the final report was originally produced.

The scope, as agreed by the Working Group, had been to examine and seek a solution to the additional disruption, delays, noise, traffic and pollution caused at the level crossing in Billingshurst, as a result of the changes by Southern Rail to the rail service provided in the District.

The Committee noted the research which had taken place for the review, including the Chairman's observations of the extensive delays reported at the level crossing in Billingshurst at peak times of the day, and the disruption caused as a result.

Several witnesses had been called to various meetings of the Working Group such as representatives from Tesco and Southern Rail, to provide information and discuss and seek potential solutions.

Since the report had been finalised, the Technical Adviser for Strategic Planning and Performance at the Council had been involved in ongoing discussions with West Sussex County Council regarding several solutions, such as the waiting and loading restrictions on the highway in the vicinity of Billingshurst Station, and with Tesco regarding their delivery arrangements. Investigations had also been carried out in respect of lowering the carriageway under the Natts Lane railway bridge in order to increase headroom. A full update was provided, however discussions were ongoing.

The Committee noted that one of the key problems at Billingshurst station had been the platform length. However, the Committee noted that recently the southbound platform had been extended and works were ongoing on the northbound platform, which should alleviate some of the delays by raising the barriers earlier.

It was suggested that a Member of the Group revisit the level crossing in Billingshurst to examine whether the timings had improved since the extensions to the platforms.

The Committee welcomed the Working Group's report and felt that the Cabinet Member for Living and Working Communities and the Local MP should be given sight of the report, in particular the recorded timings of the trains at the Billingshurst crossing, as these were considered unsatisfactory.

The Committee supported the recommendations to pursue the potential solutions discussed with Tesco and Southern Rail and also to approach the Weald School with a view to educating students to use the footbridge over the level crossing. The Committee suggested that a third more achievable

SO/30 Final Report of the Billingshurst Rail Service Working Group (cont.)

recommendation be made for the Cabinet Member for Living and Working Communities to follow up with West Sussex County Council on its traffic management review.

Therefore the Committee agreed that, subject to the recommendations being amended inline with the discussions at the meeting, these would be presented to the Cabinet Member for Living and Working Communities. The revised wording would be circulated to all Members of the Committee.

The Committee also agreed that the report be published and copied to the press.

RESOLVED

That the final report of the Billingshurst Rail Service Working Group be received

REASON

All final reports of Working Group meetings are to be received by the Committee.

SO/31 TO NOTE THE SCRUTINY GUIDE

The Chairman presented the Scrutiny Guide July 2011 to the Committee allowing the Members an opportunity to comment or ask questions.

The Committee also noted the Scrutiny & Overview training which was taking place on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2011 at 2.00pm at Horsham, along with Members from Crawley Borough Council and Mid Sussex District Council.

SO/32 TO RECEIVE ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR THE SCRUTINY & OVERVIEW WORK PROGRAMME

There were no suggestions for the Scrutiny & Overview work programme.

SO/33 REPLIES FROM CABINET/COUNCIL REGARDING SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

(i) The Budget Review Working Group had requested that a written response be provided by the Cabinet Member for Finance & Assets on the recommendations from the Working Group on the Budget 2010/11.

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Assets had provided a response to each specific recommendation made by the Group and Members were satisfied with the response.

(ii) At the meeting of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2011 a recommendation was made that the Cabinet Member for Housing & Community

SO/33 Replies from Cabinet/Council regarding Scrutiny and Overview recommendations  
(cont.)

Development write to the Chief Executive of Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust expressing the Council's support for investigation into opportunities to increase the Minor Injuries Unit opening hours at Horsham Hospital.

A response was provided to explain that a meeting was being scheduled to discuss the proposals, it was noted that the West Sussex PCT were prepared to fund an extra two hours per weekday at Horsham Hospital Minor Injuries Unit, but no weekend or bank holiday cover had been proposed.

The Committee noted that a meeting had since been scheduled and this would be pursued further.

(iii) An additional two responses were provided by the Cabinet Members following the recommendations made arising from the final report of the Enforcement Working Group.

(a) That the Cabinet Member for Housing & Community Development support the implementation of the proposal to combine Street Scene Officers, Parking Services staff, the mobile security function and other services areas which have a compliance function

(b) That the Cabinet Member for Finance & Assets contact West Sussex County Council asking that consideration be given to increasing the financial benefit for the Horsham District Council for the collection of Council Tax on behalf of West Sussex County Council

Responses were provided for both recommendations, the Committee was satisfied that the Cabinet Member for a Safer and Healthier Districted supported the proposal for combining enforcement functions at the Council and further work was ongoing, however expressed the importance of training for staff and staff input.

The Members requested that the results of the live trial which was to be carried out, be reported back to the Committee.

Members noted the response to the second recommendation: no further action would be taken as the present arrangements were considered to be more favourable.

The meeting finished at 7.17pm having commenced at 5.30pm.

CHAIRMAN