

Status of Scrutiny Reviews.

Economic Development, Culture & Leisure Scrutiny Panel.

1. The Seafront Strategy.

The Economic Development, Culture & Leisure Scrutiny Panel met on 1 December as part of its stage 1 review of the seafront strategy. It considered the Seafront Strategy Issues Paper and the Overview and Scrutiny Project Briefing and received briefings from key officers and the Cabinet Member for Culture & Leisure.

The Panel met on 16 December to consider a summary document on the seafront strategy and Kathy Wadsworth, Strategic Director gave a corporate overview of the interlinked issues surrounding the seafront strategy. The Panel met informally on 19 January, 9 February, 3, 10 and 17 March. It met formally on 15 April to sign off the report. The report has been submitted to the Cabinet on 8 June. **The Cabinet agreed: that the panel be thanked for its work in undertaking the review and identifying the need for a formal overarching vision and strategy for the seafront; that the proposed responses to the panel's recommendations set out in the schedule attached within the scrutiny report be agreed**

2. Twinning.

The Panel met informally on 15 April to discuss the aims and objectives for this review. It met on 18 May to consider the project brief and will meet again on 15 June to receive introductory presentations by Drusilla Moody, Mandy Lindley and Teresa Deasy.

Later in the work programme:

3. Expenditure on Properties under the Culture Portfolio.

The Education, Children & Young People Scrutiny Panel.

4. Attainment in Schools.

The Education, Children & Young People Scrutiny Panel met with officers informally on 12 January to consider this issue and resolved to commence the review on 3 February. It then met Andy Hough, Head Of Children and Young People's Wellbeing and Targeted Services and Andrew Olive Interim Head of Learning & Achievement who gave an overview of how Portsmouth pupils' performance compare nationally with regard to key stage 2 and 4 indicators.

The Chair of this Panel changed and at its meeting on 3 March decided that it would be beneficial to narrow the focus of the group to concentrate on the four schools currently involved in the National Challenge Initiative to raise standards so that 30% of pupils in all school achieve five good GCSE's by 2011.

The panel met on 30 March to hear verbal presentations from the Head Teachers of St Luke's, Mayfield, King Richard and City Boy's Schools regarding what they are currently doing to raise attainment and achievement.

There will be a particular focus on National Challenge and will look at their Contextual Value Added scores as well as the Building Schools for The Future plans.

The panel then heard from Andrew Olive, Interim Head of Learning & Achievement about what Portsmouth City Council's School Improvement Partners are doing to help the schools raise attainment & achievement.

Jacqueline Coonie from Education HR will attend to advise the panel of the issues around recruitment and retention of qualified and experienced teachers.

The panel met again on 22 May to determine which cohort to concentrate on for this review and agreed to look at the difference in attainment in primary and secondary schools between children eligible for free school meals (FSM) and children not eligible for FSM's.

The panel will meet on 19 June to review the data supplied from Andrew Olive and consider the elements to be included in the final report which will be written following the meeting. The panel will then commence their next topic.

Later in the work programme:

5. Schools' Policies on Sending Information to Separated/ Divorced Parents.

6. How Schools Handle Freedom of Information Requests.

The Panel considered this issue at an informal meeting held on 24 November with officers. It resolved that a review was not necessary.

The Finance & Resources Scrutiny Panel.

7. Council Tax Discount for Pensioner Households.

On 22nd July 2008 the City Council supported a Notice of Motion from Councillor Steve Wemyss proposing that the City Council consider the introduction of a 10% council tax discount for all pensioner households in Portsmouth from April 2009. Officers were instructed to bring forward a report to identify the broader implications of providing Council Tax discounts and to describe the procedural steps, timescale and likely costs of introducing a scheme.

The Council resolved that the Notice of Motion and subsequent Officer reports be referred to the Finance & Resources Scrutiny panel for further consideration.

The Finance & Resources Scrutiny Panel met on 9 December and received a report on matters to be considered before a decision can be made regarding the possibility of introducing council tax discount for pensioner households.

A further report was requested to be brought to the next meeting (21 January) to include decisions made at 9 December meeting. Contact would be made

with Southampton City Council in order to obtain information about their Council Tax discount for pensioner scheme – in particular in relation to legal advice.

A further report was brought to the 21 Jan meeting. Councillors discussed the report and were also apprised of the legal issues by Michael Lawther in light of the legal advice obtained by Southampton City Council. As the meeting was not attended by any Conservative Members and as it was a Notice of Motion from the Conservatives, the Chair decided to delay sending any report to Council until after the budget meeting on 10 Feb.

A meeting of the Panel took place on 6 February 2009 to scrutinise the Budget report. The Strategic Director and Section 151 Officer advised the Panel that the purpose of this meeting was to give an opportunity to receive the slide presentation and make any comments or recommendations, which could be passed on to Cabinet and Council. The Head of Financial Services gave a slide presentation. The Panel recommended to Cabinet that the Head of Financial Services be invited to give her slide presentation to the meeting of full Council on Tuesday 10 February 2009.

The composition of the Panel changed following full Council on 10 February and the new Chair is Councillor Luke Stubbs. A meeting was held by the Chair with the S151 officer, the Head of Financial Services and the Head of Revenues and Benefits. The Panel met on 12 March to consider a further report from the Head of Revenues and Benefits.

The Panel signed off the report on 8 May, which will go to Full Council on 16 June in response to a Notice of Motion.

8. The City Council's Use of Consultants (lead with EDCL feeding into this review).

As the Panel composition had changed, on 29 May the Panel received a summary report from Val Lane and decided that it wished to look at the following departments in detail:

- Legal Services.
- Engineering.
- Community Engagement.
- Project Management and Local Strategic Partnership Work Procurement.

The Panel will meet again on 19 June.

9. Corporate Website & Access Strategy.

Originally this topic was issued to the Panel to be reviewed later in the work programme. However, the Chair of the Finance & Resources Scrutiny Panel has requested that it be considered after its consideration of Council Tax Discount for Pensioner Households, due to a new IT Manager taking up post who will be working on the improvement of the Corporate Website.

Later in the work programme:

- 10. Public/ Employee Suggestion Scheme.**
- 11. The Cost of Democracy.**
- 12. Accommodation in the Civic Offices Asset Management.**
- 13. Property Portfolio.**
- 14. Business Continuity.**

Transport, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel.

15. Review of Cycling in Portsmouth

1st stage review completed in one meeting on 4 December 2008. The Panel will consider the draft new cycling strategy, which should be available in April. A new draft strategy is being worked on and should be available shortly.

16. The City Council's Contract with Colas.

The Panel met informally with officers to discuss how to approach this review on Tuesday 27 January. It commenced the review with a overview of the contract by officers and a presentation by the Director of Ensign at its meeting on 18 March. The Panel met formally again on 17 April to hear from 3 Councillors and a member of the public.

18 May – to hear from Brian Hicks and Lloyd Allen Business Manager.

Next meeting is 23 June (informally) to consider the draft report, conclusions and recommendations.

Housing & Social Care Scrutiny Panel.

17. Neighbour Relationships with Private and Social Lets/ Ownership.

The Panel met informally in January to discuss the project brief for this review. It met formally on 12 February to commence the review. The Head of Revenues & Benefit and the Head of Public Protection gave the Panel an overview of the different types of tenancies and the legislation that exists to empower local authorities to respond to complaints of neighbour nuisance. The Panel met again on 5 March to learn about the response to neighbour complaints given by the City Council and its partners: the City Council's Community Safety Unit, the Police Service, the University of Portsmouth, First Wessex Housing Association and Portsmouth Mediation Service. The Panel will meet again on 26 March to hear evidence from officers and service users to discuss their experience of using the service. These will be verbal submissions to the Panel.

Meetings to be held every three weeks until 28 April when evidence will be heard from witnesses affected by or working in this field, with further informal meetings to consider the Panel's report.

The draft report is being written and will be presented to the panel by the end of June for consideration.

Later in the work programme:

- 18. Mental Health Housing Provision.**
- 19. Fraud in the Housing Service.**
- 20. The Allocation of Housing Provision.**

Health Overview & Scrutiny Panel.

21. Hyperbaric Chamber, Royal Hospital Haslar.

At its meeting on 1 December, the HOSP considered the project brief for this review. It met on Thursday 5th February in order to carry out the stage 1 review of this topic. Witnesses include Portsmouth Hospitals Trust, QinetiQ, Sussex Police, South Central Ambulance Service and HM Coastguard. The HOSP decided to move to a stage 2 review, whereby the witnesses and objectives of the enquiry were expanded to reflect the information members felt they needed to complete the review. The Panel then met on April 15 in order to complete the review and examine final pieces of evidence. They agreed that they had received sufficient evidence in order to complete their report and make recommendations. This report is currently being agreed by the witnesses and officers involved, and will go to the 10 June HOSP in order to be agreed.

Will be held in 2009:

22. St Mary's Community Campus.

The HOSP, together with members of Development Control and local Ward Councillors, attended a Seminar being run by Portsmouth Primary Care Trust around this issue on the 25th March. The information heard at this meeting then formed the project brief, which was agreed at the April 15th meeting. Members are currently being canvassed for dates for a consultation with key stakeholders on the St Mary's site around the new health campus. This engagement exercise will then form the basis for the report, which will go to the PCT before the end of July for inclusion in their Full Business Case.

23. Fluoridation of Drinking Water Supplies.

The South Central Strategic Health Authority decided that areas within Southampton PCT's remit will be fluoridated. Portsmouth PCT are currently awaiting the decision of the SHA in relation to the rest of the South Central Region.

24. Respite Care.

Members considered this item from Rob Watt, Head of Adult Social Care and Angela Dryer, Assistant Head of Adult Social Care, at the HOSP's meeting on 1st December. They decided no further information was required.

25. Care in the Community.

HOSP members heard about this item from Rob Watt, Head of Adult Social Care and Angela Dryer, Assistant Head of Adult Social Care, at the HOSP's meeting on 1st December. They decided no further information was required.

26. Sexual Health.

HOSP members will be hearing about this item in the 09/10 municipal year.