

## **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 2008 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 2008 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 2009. It met formally on 15 April 2009 to sign off the report. **Review now complete**

#### **2. Twinning.**

The Panel met informally on 15 April 2009 to discuss the aims and objectives for this review. It met on 18 May to consider the project brief. The Panel met again on 15 June to hear from Drusilla Moody, Tourism and Visitor Services Manager, Mandy Lindley, Partnerships Manager (Voluntary and Community Sector) and Teresa Deasy, Democratic Support Officer.

The Panel met on 13 July to hear from:

- David Williams, Chief Executive.
- Councillor Robin Sparshatt.
- Councillor Mike Blake.
- Patricia Coward, Lord Mayor's Butler.
- Brian Hall, Chairman of the Association of the Britain-Australia Society. (Portsmouth Branch) and the Portsmouth-Sydney Sister City Committee.
- Alex Bentley, Chair of the Haifa Twinning Committee.

The Panel met on 11 August to hear about the potential economic benefits of twinning from representatives from the Chamber of Commerce.

The Panel met formally on 10 September to receive details of the twinning budgets. It then moved into an informal session to consider the draft report. It held another informal meeting on 7 October and is due to sign off the report on 10 November 2009.

The report has been signed off by the panel and is awaiting a response report for the strategic director and will go before cabinet in January 2010.

#### **3. Expenditure on Properties under the Culture Portfolio.**

The Panel will meet formally with officers on 10 November 2009 to discuss the scope of the review, objectives, witnesses and to set a programme of meeting dates.

#### 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 will meet 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 will then hear 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 focus of the review has been narrowed to look at the differences in achievement amongst children in receipt of free school meals against those children not eligible for free school meals.

The Panel concluded the evidence gathering for this review on 19 June 2009 and the draft report was taken to the informal meeting on 23 July 2009. The panel will next meet on 17 September 2009 where they will consider the final draft of the report before undertaking their next scrutiny topic, which may change, followed the SMP meeting of 3 September, which will determine the work programme for all scrutiny panels.

The final version of the report "Inquiry into Raising Attainment and Achievement in Portsmouth Schools" is due to be signed off at the Panel's meeting on 20 October 2009.

The final report will be submitted to cabinet in January 2010.

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

This topic is outstanding and remains on the Panel's work programme.

#### **6. How Schools Handle Freedom of Information Requests.**

The Panel considered this issue at an informal meeting held on 24 November 2008 with officers. It resolved that a review was not necessary.

#### **7. Protection of Vulnerable Children.**

The Panel will meet on 20 October 2009 to commence the review into "Protection of Vulnerable Children" where they will consider reports and hear evidence from a range of organisations, such as the police and early years staff, who have direct contact with children and young people who may be at risk of neglect. The review is scheduled to take place over four or five meetings with the next meetings on 12 November and 1 December and further meetings to be arranged in early 2010.

#### **8. Discipline and Control of Unruly Children.**

The Panel agreed to review this topic as part of their work programme for the municipal 2009-10.

#### **9. Teacher and Education Worker Protection and Safety.**

The Panel agreed to review this topic as part of their work programme for the municipal 2009-10.

#### The Finance & Resources Scrutiny Panel.

#### **10. Council Tax Discount for Pensioner Households.**

On 22<sup>nd</sup> 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 2009, with the recommendation that the council does not progress with the proposed council tax discount for pensioner households. The response to the Notice of Motion went before Full Council on 16 June 2009 stating that the NoM lodged on 22 July 2008 was not supported as the Finance & Resources Scrutiny Panel did not agree with introducing a discount for pensioner households during the 2009/10 municipal year. The response also recommended that further consideration be given to the proposal to introduce a discount for pensioner households as part of the 2010/11 budget process. Agreed by Full Council 16 June.

At the request of Full Council in June 2009, this matter was referred back to scrutiny to be considered as part of the budget proposals for 2010/11 financial year. The panel discussed this issue at their meeting on 2 October 2009 and agreed that a report from the Head of Revenue & Benefits would be brought

to Full Council in November. The report will set out details of the Southampton scheme and estimates for set-up and administration costs for a similar scheme in Portsmouth. This will be forwarded to cabinet for review in November and for all political parties to consider whether to include a Council Tax Discount for Pensioner Households in their Budget proposals for 2010/11.

#### **11. The City Council's Use of Consultants (lead with EDLC 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 met again on 19 June and 24 July 2009 to receive reports from the Heads of Legal Services, Audit & Performance, Democratic & Community Engagement, Transport & Street Management and Asset Management.

The Panel have requested more detailed information be brought to their next meeting and anticipate concluding the review by late October and being able to produce a final report with recommendations by late November.

The next meeting will be on 21 August. This meeting was put back to enable officers to provide more detailed information as requested by the panel.

The panel met on 2 October 2009 and received reports from the Heads of Transport & Street Management, Financial Services and Asset Management. This concluded phase 2 of the review and the review is now moving in to phase 3, (which is the final phase) with the next meeting scheduled for 30 October 2009. At this meeting the Cabinet member for resources will attend together with the Head of Procurement.

The panel have received all oral and written evidence for this review and a draft report is being compiled with a view to an informal meeting taking place on 4<sup>th</sup> December (TBC). Following completion of the report, it will be forwarded to cabinet for a formal response.

#### **12. 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.

The Panel agreed that it would be more appropriate to conduct this review after the website manager had been in post (started in June) for at least 3

months to enable him to put in place some of the systems that will enhance the access to and availability of information through the website.

### **13. Public/ Employee Suggestion Scheme.**

Remains on the work programme for 2009/10.

### **14. The Cost of Democracy.**

Remains on the work programme for 2009/10.

### **15. Accommodation in the Civic Offices Asset Management**

Remains on the work programme for 2009/10.

### **16. Property Portfolio**

Remains on the work programme for 2009/10.

### **17. Business Continuity**

Remains on the work programme for 2009/10.

### Transport, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel.

### **18. Review of Cycling in Portsmouth.**

1<sup>st</sup> 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.

On 24 September 2009 the Panel received a presentation on the draft cycling strategy from Jayne Rodgers, Sustainable Transport Officer. The members' comments will be included in the report, which will be presented to the Cabinet Member for Traffic & Transportation at a future meeting.

### **19. 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.

At its meeting on 18 May the Panel heard from Brian Hicks and Lloyd Allen Business Manager. The Chair informed the Panel that she had inspected the work in Old Portsmouth (conservation area) and was satisfied that it was to a high standard.

The Panel met informally on 23 June to discuss the evidence received and decided it needed further information as the Chair had visited a different area

of Old Portsmouth and had some concerns. Officers answered questions from the Panel at the formal meeting on 24 July.

The rest of the Panel visited Old Portsmouth prior to the next meeting, which was held on 1 September at which meeting the Panel received the views of Friends of Old Portsmouth and officers.

The Panel signed off this report at its formal meeting on 24 September.

The final report was submitted to cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> November and the cabinet has requested that scrutiny look at the issue around best value at the end of the initial five-year period of the contract.

### **Recycling.**

The Panel will meet formally on 3 November to get an overview of the recycling service and to decide if a review is required.

The panel received an oral update from the Strategic Waste Manager and Waste Collection Manager on the status of recycling within Portsmouth. The panel were satisfied with the work that is currently being undertaken and did not wish to carry out an in-depth scrutiny review of recycling. ***Review now complete***

### **Suggested topics for TECS**

- Extension of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in Portsmouth
- Flood Risk – the involvement of partner agencies in responding to the threat of flooding in Portsmouth
- Pest Control – including charging structure, value for money
- Trading Standards – light touch regulation, shared services with other LA's, opportunities for income generation, value for money

### Housing & Social Care Scrutiny Panel.

#### **20. 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 Panel concluded its review on 7 May and the report was finally signed off at the meeting 16 July 2009 and is now with the Cabinet member for consideration. The report was submitted to cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> November and the recommendations were noted. The panel was thanked for their hard work during the review. ***Review now complete***

### **21. Mental Health Housing Provision.**

This topic will be incorporated in the topic "Allocation of Housing Provision" (see paragraph 23).

### **22. Fraud in the Housing Service.**

At its meeting on 10 September the Panel confirmed that the issue of fraud referred to housing benefit claims fraud, particularly the procedures for investigating suspected fraud. A report from the Head of Revenues & Benefits was considered at the Panel's meeting on 6 October and a further report will be considered at its meeting on 27 October.

Following the information submitted by the Head of Revenues & Benefits, the panel was satisfied that there was no need to review this matter further and request that SMP remove the topic from their work programme. ***Action point – request removal from work programme***

### **23. The Allocation of Housing Provision.**

The topic "Allocation of Housing" is on the Panel's work programme for the 2009-10 municipal year and will incorporate the work programme items of the local authority's housing under-occupation policy and mental health housing provision.

The panel will commence this topic at their next formal meeting which is due to be in early January 2010. This topic will be combined with the topic of mental health housing provision (paragraph 20).

### **24. Whether to Re-commence Building Council Homes.**

The Panel commenced their review "Whether to re-commence building council homes" at their meeting on 6 October where they considered a report on the history of selling council homes, the right to buy or acquire council homes and the reasons for stopping building council homes. Further meetings in the review are scheduled for 27 October and 17 November.



A site visit was arranged for 17<sup>th</sup> November and the panel went out to see a variety of projects. The panel has now heard all of the oral evidence for this review and is now in the process of writing their report. They are due to meet informally in December with a view to a final report being submitted to their meeting in January 2010.

## **25. Local Housing Allowance.**

As a result of a Notice of Motion at Full Council, the issue of the way in which Local Housing Allowance (LHA) was administered was sent to scrutiny to investigate. During the meeting of 16 July 2009 the matter was discussed and the panel unanimously agreed that they were satisfied with the way that Portsmouth City Council administered LHA, however, they were unhappy with the government legislation that Revenues & Benefits had to adhere to as they felt this removed tenant and landlord choice and led to increased rent arrears. The panel agreed that they did not wish to scrutinize this matter, however, they have requested that Portsmouth City Council write to the government to express their concerns regarding this legislation and seek to have the way LHA is administered, reviewed.

A letter is being drafted to be sent to central government expressing concerns about the way LHA is administered and seek a review. The Department for Work & Pensions Select Committee have completed a review into the way that LHA is being administered as they have received numerous complaints from tenants and landlords. They are due to report their findings in early January 2010. ***Review is now complete***

### Health Overview & Scrutiny Panel.

## **26. Hyperbaric Chamber, Royal Hospital Haslar.**

At its meeting on 1 December, the HOSP considered the project brief for this review. It met on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> 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. The report was agreed at the HOSP 10 June meeting, and has been sent to external stakeholders (Care Quality Commission, QinetiQ, Portsmouth PCT, Portsmouth Hospitals Trust) for comment. – ***Review now complete***

## **27. 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 25<sup>th</sup> March. The information heard at this meeting then formed the project brief, which was agreed at the April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting. Members then met on June 23<sup>rd</sup> for a consultation with key stakeholders around the new Health Campus, asking questions centred around transport, infrastructure, landscaping and support facilities. Feedback was good, and comment has been summarised in a draft report. This is due to go to the 9 September HOSP meeting for agreement.

At the meeting of 9 September 2009, this report was signed off and sent to the Primary Care Trust for formal response. ***Review now complete***

### **28. 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.

Due to an ongoing Judicial Review, the SHA have decided not to continue with this matter until the outcome of the Judicial Review.

### **29. 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 1<sup>st</sup> December. They decided no further information was required. ***Review now complete***

### **30. 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 1<sup>st</sup> December. They decided no further information was required. ***Review now complete***

### **31. Sexual Health.**

HOSP members will hear about this item at a future meeting.