

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT PANEL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Scrutiny Management Panel held on 16 December 2010 at 9.00 am in the Meeting Room 1, Floor 3, The Guildhall, Portsmouth.

(NB: These minutes should be read in conjunction with the agenda for the meeting, which can be viewed at www.portsmouth.gov.uk)

Present

Councillors Cheryl Buggy (Chair)
Rob Wood (from 09:02 hrs)
Peter Eddis
Jim Patey (from 09:02 hrs)
Andy Fraser (deputising for Cllr C Scott)
Terry Henderson (deputising for Cllr Park)

Officers

Kathy Wadsworth, Director of Regeneration and Strategic Director
Julian Wooster, Director of Children's Services and Strategic Director
Stewart Agland, Local Democracy Manager
Anthony Quinn, Senior Local Democracy Officer

50 Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Caroline Scott, Lynne Stagg, Lee Mason, James Williams and Mike Park

51 Declarations of interest (AI 2)

There were no declarations of interest

52 Minutes from the Meeting of 4 November 2010 (AI3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Scrutiny Management Panel meeting held on 4 November 2010 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

53 Pre-decision scrutiny (AI 4)

The Director of Regeneration and Strategic Director, gave an overview of the work streams that could come out of the Draft Regeneration Strategy, which had been circulated with the papers for this meeting. The panel were advised that the draft strategy was launched at an event held on 18 November which had in excess of 200 attendees including high level input from major local businesses.

The panel were informed that the draft strategy is scheduled to go to Cabinet for approval in January and there could be potential for the panel to engage in pre-decision scrutiny, in respect of some of the potential work streams to come out of the implementation of the strategy.

The panel were advised that the strategy identified assets owned by Portsmouth City Council that were not being fully utilised at present and would look at ways of working with partner organisations to share the risk of regeneration as well as future profits. There are potential long term income generation opportunities such as Dunsbury Hill Farm that could provide future income generation for the authority.

One of the proposals of the strategy is to, not sell assets, but instead put them into a Local Delivery Vehicle to maximise future income. The strategy has identified lots of opportunities from under-performing assets within Portsmouth, not just Portsmouth City Council assets.

The next 8-10 months will be spent working with specialist consultants to set up a delivery team working full-time on regeneration opportunities. The engagement of consultants would be conducted through the Intend Procurement process and require the approval of members.

In answer to questions from the panel, the Director of Regeneration and Strategic Director noted that;

- There are lots of opportunities in Port Solent and the Horsea Island area of Portsmouth and these are currently subject to a public consultation at present
- A meeting with the department of Transport was scheduled for 16th December in respect of funding for the Tipner Link
- The areas that have yet to be addressed within the strategy will be incorporated in the refreshed document following the launch in November. The strategy is developing and will include educational attainment, image and branding of Portsmouth as well as physical connectivity of areas of Portsmouth
- The aim of the strategy was not to duplicate work carried out elsewhere, such as the Seafront Strategy, however, this could be referenced more closely if required
- The Local Transport Plan contains reference to achieving the outcomes of the Regeneration Strategy
- During the consultation period in June/July, the strategy was presented on at least 50 occasions and Neighbourhood Forums were utilised to get residents involved
- Different delivery vehicles are being used across many authorities, including Edinburgh, Croydon and Poole. This enables authorities to work with developers to maximise their profits. A recent project in Poole in respect of car parks has the potential to generate £1/2 billion pounds in revenue
- That caution would be exercised in determining what assets would be

identified for income generation opportunities to minimise the risk

- The range of skills within Finance, Legal and Procurement have improved over the past 12 months and consultants will review the process from an independent commercial perspective and this will keep the costs of consultants to a minimum

RESOLVED that the panel thank the Director of Regeneration and Strategic Director for attending and look forward to working together in respect of potential work streams coming out of the Regeneration Strategy that may be suitable for pre-decision scrutiny.

The Director of Children's Services and Strategic Director explained to the panel the main issues affecting education within Portsmouth at present. The first issue is the current Education White Paper for schools and the future direction of education. Secondly, the Review of Services currently underway which is looking at the weaknesses within our education services, with a view to establishing why our comparator authorities such as Bristol and Sheffield are making greater strides than Portsmouth.

The panel were informed that a new School Strategy was being developed in conjunction with Head Teachers and School Governors and that a School Strategy Board was being established. The revised strategy is due out in May/June and will focus on accountability.

The National Strategies Team (NST) came in at the Director of Children's Services request and highlighted the lack of member involvement as one area for improvement.

It is within the Secretary of State's remit to impose an Academy system on Portsmouth if the schools do not improve. In the event of any Academies setting up across the city, members can still be involved in ensuring Academies are accountable. It was felt that generally there is a lack of robustness and intervention within schools.

In response to questions from the panel, the Director of Children's Services noted that;

- Strong Leadership and Management are key areas with educational attainment
- Schools can opt out of Local Education Authority control, if they so wish
- The authority currently holds Head Teachers and Governors to account
- There are significant challenges ahead
- In looking at what works best and future school models, there is the possibility of merging schools
- Whilst Liverpool is deemed to be the most economically deprived city in England, it out performs Portsmouth in respect of educational

attainment

- There is a need for greater member involvement to take these issues forward
- The authority has no control over the school's curriculum
- Academies still need strong leadership and governance
- There is a need to establishing how best to equip members in engaging with schools and providing the right level of support to members to develop this role

RESOLVED that the panel thank the Director of Children's Services for his time and look forward to working together to enhance educational attainment and achievement across the city.

54 Use of Consultants review (AI 5)

Following a vote, the members of the panel present, agreed to formally sign off the review into the "City Councils Use of Consultants" subject to the following amendments to the published report;

- Amend conclusion 16 to read "might" and not "would"
- Combine recommendations 1 & 3 as presented to the panel

It should be noted that Councillor Henderson did not feel that he could exercise his vote on this matter as he had not regularly attended the meetings for this review due to being a standing deputy, he consequently abstained.

RESOLVED that ;

- 1. the agreed report be published on the council website and forwarded to Cabinet for consideration in accordance with the Scrutiny Procedure Rules.**
- 2. A written explanation be provided to Cllr's Buggy and Henderson in relation to conclusion 18 and when this process was introduced.**

55 Work Programme (AI6)

The panel agreed the content of the scoping documents in respect of Traffic, Environment & Community Safety, Education, Children & Young People and Housing & Social Care Scrutiny Panels, which had been circulated with the agenda.

The panels will work on providing the information on behalf of Health, Overview & Scrutiny Panel and report their findings back through HOSP.

RESOLVED that the scoping documents be agreed and forwarded to the relevant scrutiny panels to commence their reviews.

56 Date of next meeting

Next meeting is scheduled to be held on Friday 4^h February 2011 at 9 a.m. in Executive Meeting Room, 3rd Floor, The Guildhall

Meeting concluded at 10.49 a.m.

Chairman.....

AQ
20/12/10