

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT PANEL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Scrutiny Management Panel held on 13 September 2011 at 4.00 pm in the Executive Meeting Room, 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

Councillor Michael Andrewes (Chair)
Councillor Jim Patey (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Margaret Adair
Councillor Peter Eddis
Councillor David Fuller
Councillor Caroline Scott
Councillor Steve Wemyss

14 Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lee Mason and James Williams. Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Steve Wemyss.

15 Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)

Councillor David Fuller declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in agenda item 4 in that he looked after the son (in a residential care home) of one of the contributors of a scrutiny review topic, Ms D Stevenson.

16 Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 March 2011 (AI 3)

The minutes of the Scrutiny Management Panel meeting held on 11 March 2011 were agreed.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2011 be confirmed and signed by the chair as a correct record.

17 Work Programme 2011/12 (AI 4)

The chair suggested that the panel first considered suggestions from members of the public.

Mr Barry Faust suggested

- (1) That perhaps councillors could review councillors themselves

Members considered this suggestion and after some discussion decided that this was not something they wished to pursue.

- (2) That Wymering Manor and Wymering Arms should both be reviewed.

Mr John Slater, Head of Planning, provided some background into this matter. He said that Wymering Manor used to be council owned but that it had now passed out of council ownership and the property now belonged to a local developer. Members felt that a review on this topic would be too narrow and decided not to pursue it at this time. With regard to Wymering Arms, members felt that that could be considered as part of the Economic Development, Culture & Leisure proposed review into public houses which was to be considered later in the meeting.

Mr David Tucker suggested

- (1) Systems

Mr Tucker said that he did not believe that it was for the city council to manage data and telephone networks to schools and other council owned buildings in the city as it would be more cost effective for a communications contractor to provide this service.

The panel considered this suggestion and felt that Mr Tucker's question might be better referred to the Procurement Manager to provide a response.

- (2) Structures

Mr Tucker suggested that councillors should take advice on projects proposed by chief officers before awarding taxpayers' money to them.

The panel considered this but agreed that councillors already take advice on projects before awarding taxpayers' money to them and therefore did not consider this to be a suitable topic for review at this stage.

- (3) Policy

Mr Tucker felt that policies should be achievable and funds should be available before policies are publicised.

The panel decided that this suggested topic was too broad to undertake.

Ms Doreen Stevenson suggested that the Scrutiny Panel should look at the procedures of public utilities to make sure that if they do not reach a satisfactory standard in a reasonable time then PCC would take action. Ms Stevenson was particularly concerned about the sewage smell which pervaded the area.

The panel discussed this topic and said that a scrutiny review had already been done on a similar topic and suggested that the matter could be brought up at a Neighbourhood Forum.

Members expressed their thanks to those members of the public who had put forward their suggestions and the chair of the panel undertook to respond to each contributor personally.

The panel then went on to consider suggested topics for review from the theme panels.

Economic Development, Culture & Leisure Scrutiny Panel (EDCL)

Councillor David Fuller, chair of the EDCL Scrutiny Panel explained that his panel wished to carry out reviews into the following topics in the order shown below.

- (1) A review into whether the resident workforce in Portsmouth has the requisite skills to satisfy the current and future needs of the city, its residents and local employers.
- (2) A review into whether Portsmouth should consider an amendment to planning policy to include a viability test before a public house is converted to another use or is demolished and to include consideration of Wymering Arms
- (3) A review into the future of library provision in Portsmouth.

The chair of the panel, Councillor David Fuller also explained that panel members had agreed that a very worthwhile topic for review would be a review into the development of a thriving evening and night time economy in Portsmouth which offers a variety of leisure and cultural opportunities for its residents and visitors and which places the city on the path towards purple flag accreditation. However, given the fact that this would be an extensive review, the EDCL panel had acknowledged that there would not be time to carry out this review in the current municipal year but felt that it would be useful to agree a scoping document in preparation for the next municipal year. Mr Alan Cufley, Head of Community Housing & Regeneration agreed to assist with a scoping paper on the evening and night time economy in Portsmouth later in the year which would include Southsea.

The Scrutiny Management Panel

RESOLVED that the Economic Development, Culture & Leisure Scrutiny Panel would undertake the following work programme as prioritised below so far as time remaining in the current municipal year would permit.

- (1) **A review into whether the resident workforce in Portsmouth has the requisite skills to satisfy the current and future needs of the city, its residents and local employers.**

- (2) A review into whether Portsmouth should consider an amendment to planning policy to include a viability test before a public house is converted to another use or is demolished (to include reference to Wymering Arms).**
- (3) A review into the future of library provision in Portsmouth.**
- (4) That a scoping document should be produced for a review into the development of a thriving evening and night time economy in Portsmouth which offers a variety of leisure and cultural opportunities for its residents and visitors and which places the city on the path towards purple flag accreditation.**

Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel (TECS)

The chair of the TECS, Councillor Caroline Scott first mentioned that a member of the public had suggested a review of resident parking schemes particularly around Fratton Park on match days and explained that the TECS panel had discussed this but had decided not to prioritise this topic at this stage.

She went on to explain that the topics that TECS wished to undertake were as set out in order of priority below:-

- (1) Review on how the council responds to the issue of surface water flooding in the city – to include a plan that outlines the actions PCC would take in the event of extreme flooding from surface water in the city (this will pick up on issues such as gully cleansing).
- (2) Air quality management

The chair of TECS scrutiny panel explained that the panel had not finalised which of the three aspects of air quality management it wished to pursue and said that this would be decided by the TECS at its next meeting.

- (3) Anti-social behaviour

Again the chair of TECS scrutiny panel suggested that the panel would decide which of the three topics concerning noise nuisance should be dealt with first.

During discussion the following points were made:

- With regard to topics on noise, members said that they were conscious that more complaints were coming forward about this issue.
- A related issue was the lack of building control on conversions which were often non-compliant with regard to noise control measures. Mr John Slater explained that building regulation control was provided by the private sector and that the city council could not change this as it was governed by national legislation.

- Mr Alan Cufley suggested that noise nuisance was a very general topic and that care should be taken to avoid repeating work that had already been carried out on previous occasions.

After discussion, the Scrutiny Management Panel

RESOLVED that the Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel would undertake the following work programme as prioritised below so far as time remaining in the current municipal year would permit.

- (1) Review on how the council responds to the issues of surface water flooding in the city – to include a plan that outlines the actions PCC would take in the event of extreme flooding from surface water in the city.**
- (2) Air quality – to consider one of the following in the priority order the TECS panel decides:**
 - (i) What is the purpose of local air quality management? or**
 - (ii) What are the PCC strategies designed to achieve the national air quality objectives? or**
 - (iii) Why do we need local air quality management and how do we deliver cleaner air? and**
- (3) Anti-Social Behaviour – Noise (domestic) to consider one of the following in the priority order that TECS panel decides:**
 - (i) What is domestic noise nuisance and what can PCC do to combat this problem? or**
 - (ii) Why are complaints of domestic noise nuisance on the increase and what more can PCC do to combat its cause? or**
 - (iii) Ways to tackle and improve domestic noise nuisance investigations across the city towards a speedy and more effective resolution of neighbourhood noise issues.**

Housing & Social Care Scrutiny Panel (H&SC)

The chair of this scrutiny panel, Councillor James Williams could not attend the meeting as his work prevented him from doing so. Mr Alan Cufley explained that he had attended the H&SC Scrutiny Panel meeting that had put forward the topics for Scrutiny Management Panel to agree and prioritise. Mr Cufley explained that the topic on nuisance behaviour and the topic to review the police of re-housing after a relationship breakdown had both been looked at before and these reviews would in fact be updates from previous reviews on closely related topics.

Mr Cufley went on to say that the impact on the rented housing market of changes to welfare reform proposals would in his view be a very useful review to undertake as this would be topical and would address an area that members will need to know about.

Following discussion, members of Scrutiny Management Panel

RESOLVED that the Housing & Social Care Scrutiny Panel would undertake the following work programme as prioritised below so far as time remaining in the current municipal year would permit:-

- (1) to consider the impact on the rented housing market of welfare reform proposals and**
- (2) then to consider in whichever priority the panel chose either**
 - (i) “how nuisance behaviour is tackled by housing providers (ie landlords) in a residential environment” or**
 - (ii) “to review the policy of re-housing after a relationship breakdown”.**

Education, Children & Young People Scrutiny Panel (ECYP)

Councillor Steve Wemyss explained that the Education, Children & Young People Scrutiny Panel were currently engaged in a review on Springfield School admissions but that this was nearing completion. Councillor Wemyss advised the panel that the topics that had been put forward by the ECYP Scrutiny Panel were

- (1) a review on co-ordinated multi-agency interventions for families with multiple problems**
- (2) a review on targeted support for children and young people who demonstrate behaviours that may put them at risk.**

Councillor Wemyss went on to say that following the current review into Springfield admissions, it had become clear in his view that school admissions could be looked at more widely than just for that particular school and that it might be useful also to consider the situation concerning primary school feeders which were also becoming over-subscribed. He felt that there was a particular problem in the Eastney peninsula and that perhaps it would be useful to pursue a city-wide review.

After discussion the members of Scrutiny Management Panel

RESOLVED that the Education, Children & Young People's scrutiny panel would undertake the following work programme in the order that the Education, Children & Young People Scrutiny Panel decides so far as time remaining in the current municipal year would permit:-

- (i) Review on co-ordinated multi-agency interventions for families with multiple problems**
- (ii) Review on targeted support for children and young people who demonstrate behaviours that may put them at risk and**
- (iii) City-wide review on school admissions.**

18 Frequency and Format of Future Scrutiny Management Panel Meetings (AI 5)

The chair of the panel suggested that this should be discussed at the informal meeting of the Scrutiny Management Panel and a decision be taken at the next formal meeting and this was agreed.

19 Date of Next Meeting (AI 6)

The date of the next meeting to be decided after consultation with members.

The meeting concluded at 5.20 pm.

Chair

VJP/DMF
15 September 2011
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