

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CULTURE & LEISURE SCRUTINY PANEL**

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Economic Development, Culture & Leisure Scrutiny Panel held on Thursday, 26 June 2014 at 6.00 pm at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

### **Present**

Councillor Julie Swan (in the Chair)

Councillors Simon Boshier  
Ben Dowling  
Matthew Winnington

#### **16. Apologies for absence & Introductions (AI 1)**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hannah Hockaday and Councillor Lee Hunt.

#### **17. Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)**

There were no declaration of members' interests.

#### **18. Election of Vice-Chair (AI 3)**

It was proposed by Councillor Julie Swan and seconded by Councillor Simon Boshier that Councillor Matthew Winnington be appointed vice-chair of the panel and this was agreed.

**RESOLVED that Councillor Matthew Winnington be elected vice-chair of the Economic Development, Culture & Leisure Scrutiny Panel.**

#### **19. Minutes of Previous Meeting - 1 April 2014 (AI 4)**

It was reported under this item that the Economic Development, Culture & Leisure report on pathways into work for young people would not be on the agenda for the Cabinet meeting on 10 July but that it was being postponed to a meeting in September. This was to enable the response report to provide further information and clarification and also to enable the new members of the scrutiny panel to see both the signed-off report and the response report.

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the Economic Development, Culture & Leisure Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 1 April 2014 be confirmed and signed by the chair as a correct record.**

#### **20. Discussion of Future Topics for the Economic Development, Culture & Leisure (EDCL) Scrutiny Panel (AI 5)**

The panel was advised that the Scrutiny Management Panel were due to meet on 4 July 2014 to allocate and prioritise review topics for this scrutiny panel. The topics being considered for review had been this panel's second and third proposals from last year. The chair of the panel, Councillor Julie Swan invited Matt Birch, Sports Officer and Andrea Wright to provide background information to the panel on improving sport and physical activity participation in the city. Mr Birch said that currently officers are working on a sports development strategy and this was expected to be completed by autumn 2014. A strategy on physical activity would follow at a later date. He said that a consultation event had already been held by the University of Portsmouth to feed into the strategy.

During discussion the following matters were clarified:

- It was confirmed that schools had been involved in the consultation and Mr Birch agreed to advise the panel who had attended the consultation.
- Megan Barnard confirmed that the Health & Wellbeing Board will focus on the issue of physical activity and will link across key partnerships.

Following further discussion the panel felt that as the sports strategy was not yet available, a review of this topic may be more effective if it were carried out after the sports strategy had been written and this was agreed.

The chair of the panel next invited Mr Barry Walker to provide an overview of the issues involved in revitalising local high streets and secondary shopping areas in the city. Mr Walker said that he acts as a go-between between businesses and the city council. His work primarily is to deal with the larger shopping areas but he would also provide help, when asked for, to local centres. He advised that revitalising local high streets and secondary shopping areas in the city was not city council led and that he would not be writing a strategy on that subject.

Councillor Winnington explained that the reason this topic was put forward was as a result of several applications to convert shops into houses in a number of different shopping centres. He said that should this happen, there was a likelihood that such development would kill local shopping centres. He said that one of the aims of the review would be to encourage local people who wished to retain local shopping centres to set up groups to represent those interested in maintaining local shopping centres. He said that scrutiny panels could make a difference by making recommendations to Cabinet to enable a focus to be given to local groups.

Councillor Simon Boshier said that although Barry Walker had said that the city council would help local shopping centres when asked, the real issue was how to revitalise them. He said that involving neighbourhood forums could perhaps be utilised as a way to promote and retain local shopping centres. He said that seeing empty shops did not create a good impression and tended to blight the surrounding area.

Councillor Dowling agreed that this review would be useful and suggested that this topic should be the panel's priority.

During further discussion, Mr Barry Walker said that it would not be possible to write one strategy for all the various shopping centres but that in his experience if a number of small businesses who were committed to a cause worked together, they were often successful in their aims. He said that from the city council's point of view, there are issues about where to target limited resources. For example if resources were targeted at small local centres, this may be to the detriment of the main shopping centres.

Councillor Simon Boshier said that in his view there was a need for some kind of overarching strategy in relation to secondary shopping areas and that engaging with neighbourhood forums and ward councillors may well prove to be an effective way forward. He said that something was needed to draw in local shopkeepers and communities to local shopping areas in order to ensure their survival. He felt that a scrutiny review on this topic would be useful.

The panel agreed their prioritised suggestions of suitable review topics for consideration by the Scrutiny Management Panel.

**RESOLVED that the suggested review topics be put forward to Scrutiny Management Panel for agreement in the following order:**

- 1. A review into revitalising local high streets and secondary shopping areas in the city and**
- 2. A review into improving sport and physical activity participation in the city.**

## **21. Frequency, timing and format of EDCL Scrutiny Panel meetings (AI 6)**

Following discussion the panel decided to hold regular meetings on Thursdays at 6.00 pm but that where appropriate sub-groups of the panel would meet with witnesses at different times and provide written evidence to the panel's next meeting for inclusion in the review. It was agreed that once the Scrutiny Management Panel had confirmed its agreement to the first scrutiny topic put forward, work would be done on the scoping document outside a formal meeting so that it could be brought to the next formal meeting which was likely to be in September.

The meeting concluded at 6.45 pm.

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Councillor Julie Swan

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Chair