

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT PANEL

Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Management Panel held on Monday, 22 July 2024 at 5.00 pm in the Executive Meeting Room, Portsmouth Guildhall.

Present

Councillor Mary Vallely (in the Chair)

Councillors Simon Boshier
Hannah Brent
Raymond Dent
Graham Heaney
Ian Holder
Abdul Kadir
Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE

Councillor Brian Madgwick was also in attendance as the Chair of the Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel.

7. Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

There were no apologies for absence from members of the panel.

8. Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

9. Minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2024 (AI 3)

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 February 2024 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

10. Scrutiny Work Programme (AI 4)

The panel considered the report of the Senior Local Democracy Officer, which updated on the work of the four themed scrutiny panels and detailed their suggested topics for inclusion into the council's scrutiny work programme.

As updates to the published report, the Chair advised that the Economic Development, Culture and Leisure Scrutiny Panel had met on 18 July and wished to put forward the following topics for consideration:

Culture and literacy - engagement with deprived communities.

The reason for this suggestion was that evidence from the Summer Reading Challenge 2023 had realised lower results for deprived communities. The panel would consider what actions could be taken by Library and Museum

Services to increase take up in cultural activity by deprived or underrepresented communities.

Empty PCC commercial properties.

An external audit report had shown that there were a number of PCC buildings which had been empty for a long time.

The panel proposed to receive a report from the Property Team within the next six months, to learn how many properties the council had, how many were vacant, how long they had been vacant for and how much rental income had potentially been lost. The panel would then consider the effectiveness of the advertising of those properties and potential next steps.

The Scrutiny Management Panel considered the merits of each of the topics put forward by the panels in turn.

Economic Development, Culture and Leisure Scrutiny Panel

- Culture and literacy - engagement with deprived communities.

Agreed in principle and the panel to commence with the planned initial meeting, but the topic required scoping up further in respect of outcomes and methodology. This and an update to be presented at a September Scrutiny Management Panel meeting.

- Empty PCC commercial properties.

Agreed in principle, but the panel felt it to be potentially a very large topic which could be cross cutting and therefore fall into the remit of the Scrutiny Management Panel. To be scoped further in respect of remit, outcomes and methodology. This and an update to be presented at a September Scrutiny Management Panel meeting.

Education, Children & Young People Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Hannah Brent, Chair of the Education, Children & Young People Scrutiny Panel was also a member of the Scrutiny Management Panel and presented the panel's proposed topics.

The Scrutiny Management Panel agreed the below topics but felt that the number of topics put forward was ambitious for completion in one municipal year. Therefore, the topics were agreed to form a two-year work programme for the Education, Children & Young People Scrutiny Panel.

- Work experience opportunities for young adults within PCC;
- Elective Home Education;
- Online Safety for children; and
- Fair Access Protocol.

Housing & Social Care Scrutiny Panel

The Scrutiny Management Panel considered the topic put forward, which was pre-decision scrutiny of the council's approach to asbestos in local authority owned residential properties. This would complement the briefing for the local authority housing asbestos policy report, which would in turn flow into the Housing & Tackling Homelessness portfolio decision meeting.

Given the highly specialist and regulated nature of the subject matter and that a report was already being developed, the Scrutiny Management Panel questioned the value that the Housing & Social Care Scrutiny Panel could add to the process.

The Scrutiny Management Panel did not therefore agree this topic for inclusion into the scrutiny work programme.

The Scrutiny Management Panel did however agree to suggest a topic around the establishment of the Integrated Care Board and any impacts that this had on social care.

This, or any other topics suggested by the Housing & Social Care Scrutiny Panel, to be submitted to a September Scrutiny Management Panel meeting for consideration.

Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Brian Madgwick was present as Chair of the Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel to introduce and explain the rationale for the panel's suggested topics.

- Review of environmental anti-social behaviour.

The Scrutiny Management Panel agreed this topic.

- Police response times

This topic was agreed, but it was questioned what meaningful outcomes or recommendations could arise from scrutiny. The panel noted that the police held public meetings within the city about policing matters. If the scrutiny was to be used as an opportunity to ask similar questions of the police it would be duplicating something which already took place within the community. It was also noted that as an external body, Hampshire Constabulary could not be compelled to attend.

- Sewage discharges into the sea.

This topic was agreed, but it was questioned what meaningful outcomes or recommendations could arise from scrutiny. The panel noted that the matter had been discussed by the council on a number of occasions previously and

that lobbying letters had been sent to the relevant bodies. It was also noted that as an external body, Southern Water could not be compelled to attend.

- A review on the council's work to address its statutory duty under 'PREVENT'

This topic was agreed as a 'reserve' topic, should the other topics above be completed.

The meeting concluded at 6.50 pm.

Councillor Mary Vallely
Chair