

**Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
4 December 2012**

Present:

Councillor Philippa Broom (Chairman)
Councillor Joanne Sexton (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

Mrs M. Bushnell A.J. Mitchell Miss D. Patel

R.D. Dunn Mrs I. Napper Mrs S. Webb

A.E. Friday

Apologies: Councillors A. Ayub, M.P.C. Francis, A.C. Harman, Mrs C.E. Nichols and A.C. Patterson

In Attendance

Councillor F. Ayers, Leader of the Council, Councillor N. Gething, Cabinet Member responsible for Economic Development, Councillor Mrs D. Grant, Cabinet Member responsible for Parks and Assets, and Councillor R. Watts, Cabinet Member responsible for the Environment attended the meeting and took part in the discussion on those items relevant to their portfolio.

306/12 Disclosures of Interest

No disclosures were made.

307/12 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2012 were approved as a correct record.

308/12 Matters arising

No matters reported.

309/12 Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee – Minutes

The Minutes of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 18 September 2012 were approved as a correct record.

310/12 Call in of a Leader, Cabinet or Cabinet Member Decision

No decisions had been called in.

311/12 Net Revenue Monitoring and Projected Outturns

The Committee discussed with Adrian Flynn, Senior Accountant, the report covering the current spend figures for the period April to September 2012 on the Revenue Budget. The Committee noted that the forecast outturn was £12.533m against the revised budget of £12.371m. After taking into account

the use of carry forwards, the net position was approximately £56k favourable variance.

During the course of the discussion the officers agreed to provide further information regarding the portacabins used by the Sea Cadets and the payment of business rates. The information to include details of the exit plan and the costs being incurred for the portacabins and what were the liabilities. The officers also agreed to provide further information about the net projected adverse variance of £55k on the temporary car park staff costs.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the report of the Chief Finance Officer outlining the Revenue Monitoring and Projected Outturn position for the period April to September 2012 be received and the action taken noted; and
- b) the officers to provide further information as identified at the meeting.

312/12 Capital Monitoring 2012/13

The Committee discussed with Adrian Flynn, Senior Accountant, the report covering the current spend figures for the period April to September 2012 on the Capital Programme. The Committee noted that £496k had been spent to date as at end of September. The projected outturn showed that there was an anticipated spend of £1.578m which represented 93% of the revised budget.

It was also noted that the Cabinet had agreed a supplementary estimate of £21,400 for the leisure centre fitness kit.

During the general discussion the officers agreed to provide further information on the borough air quality management boundary and the reasons for the delay in progressing the project work.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the report of the Chief Finance Officer outlining the Capital Monitoring position for the period April to September 2012 be received and action taken noted; and
- b) the officers to provide further information as identified at the meeting.

313/12 Developing the Borough – maximising our assets and opportunities

The Committee discussed a report from the officers on the work being undertaken by Asset Management, Economic Development and Planning on maximising assets and economic opportunities within Spelthorne. In support of this the Head of Planning and Housing Strategy gave a short presentation. A copy of the presentation is attached.

General discussion took place on the need for an economic development strategy and what had been done in preparation for the document.

It was noted that the foundations for the strategy included:

- the policies set out in the Local Development Framework
- the work being undertaken by SEED and its three sub groups

- the Council working closely with the major employers of the borough
- the development of an economic assessment
- the outcome of the parking study and Transport Study

The Committee felt strongly that there was an urgent need for the economic development strategy to be produced and that this should be undertaken as a matter of urgency.

Consideration was also given to the need for the Leader of the Council to appoint a lead Member and a lead officer to oversee the integration of the strategy. The Committee indicated that the lead Member for this should be the Cabinet Member for Economic Development.

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee asked that a complete list of flagship and other projects giving a clear indication of who the lead Member and lead officer were be sent to all members of the committee.

The Committee highlighted the importance of having a well-developed economic strategy which sets out the council's priorities and how these would be delivered. The Committee also identified that in line with the new corporate procedures for project management one lead Member and one lead Officer needed to be appointed to be responsible for overseeing the delivery of the projects. The Committee indicated that the lead Member for this should be the Cabinet Member for Economic Development.

The Committee discussed with the officers the major assets that are within the town centre of Staines-upon-Thames and how these are used to ensure that the vitality of the town is maintained. To ensure that the vitality of the town remains a car parking study had been commissioned to identify parking requirements for the next 10 years.

Consideration was given to the discussions taking place with Ultra a company keen to promote a Personal Rapid Transit system from T5 to Staines-upon-Thames town centre. It was noted that the officers were working with the company to put a funding bid in to the Heathrow Public Transport Forum to cover the cost of a detailed feasibility study.

RESOLVED to recommend to Cabinet:

- a) That to maximise the use of assets the Committee supported a clear vision being established via an economic development strategy and that the Leader of the Council consider appointing the Cabinet Member for Economic Development to lead on its development;
- b) A report on the scheme to introduce a Personal Rapid Transit system from T5 to Staines-upon-Thames be submitted to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- c) The Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be interested in establishing a task group to support the work being undertaken by the Cabinet to introduce a Personal Rapid Transit system; and
- d) Councillor Gething as the Cabinet Member for Economic Development be appointed the lead Member and a lead Officer be appointed to oversee the delivery of the project.

RESOLVED that the discussion on how the Council's assets support the voluntary and community sector of the borough be deferred to the meeting of the Committee taking place on 15 January 2013.

314/12 Leisure Centre Contract – Maintenance and Customer Comments

The Committee discussed the briefing paper on the current contract the Council has with SLM for both Spelthorne and Sunbury Leisure Centres. Consideration was given as to how the Council monitors the maintenance works carried out and on the monitoring of customer satisfaction.

The Committee noted that the monitoring of the work included regular site visits, monthly meetings and six monthly building inspections as well as an annual inspection of the pool plants.

It was highlighted that the GP referral scheme was without a manager at this current time.

In relation to customer satisfaction it was noted that all comments received from customers were recorded on a spread sheet. The information was collated from the various options that customers had to make comments. These included customer comment forms / customer feedback stand points in the reception areas / as well as emailing comments and placing comments on their face book pages.

It was suggested that a further option for customers to make comments would be for a box to be sited in the main reception areas. The Committee noted that regular customer forums were held involving the centre managers and representatives from the council including the Cabinet Member for Parks and Assets. These meetings were open for customers to attend.

During the general discussion of the leisure centres it was raised that the committee would wish to be involved in any plans for the renewal of the leisure centres and for a report on the future of the leisure centres to be submitted to a future meeting.

RESOLVED that:

- a) The briefing paper from the Head of Sustainability and Leisure be received;
- b) Liz Borthwick, Assistant Chief Executive to arrange for Councillor Joanne Sexton to attend Customer Forum meetings; and
- c) A report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee on the future of the leisure centres.

315/12 Food Waste and Recycling Collections

The Committee discussed a briefing paper from the Head of Sustainability and Leisure on the progress being made with the food waste collection scheme which had been introduced in October 2011. It was noted that with the garden waste scheme the recycling rates had increased from 36% in early 2011/12 to 46.8% during the period July / September 2012.

This was a long way from the target for the whole of Surrey of 70% (target for districts of 64%). To further increase the collection rates Cabinet had agreed

an action plan which supported the Municipal Waste Management Strategy. It was noted that a more realistic % was needed for this Borough. Due to the type of housing and difficult properties the figure was 58% by 2014.

A breakdown of the current recycling rates:

Recycling mixed	29.7%
Garden Waste	10.9%
Food Waste	6.2%
Total	46.8%

The Committee discussed the main actions being taken to increase the recycling rates such as road shows, working with schools, articles in the Borough Bulletin, signs on vehicles and working with A2Dominion and management companies for flats.

RESOLVED that the briefing paper from the Head of Sustainability and Leisure be received.

316/12 Progress and Future Plans for the Maintenance of Parks, Cemeteries and Grass Cutting

The Committee discussed a briefing paper from the Head of Streetscene on how the current contractors Lotus Landscaping Limited were performing.

The contract had commenced in 2009 and was for a 10 year period.

It was noted that in addition to the maintenance work to the parks, cemeteries and open spaces, the company had been flexible by providing support to Spelthorne in Bloom, Sponsorship of borough signs and providing floral displays.

The monitoring of the work included weekly inspections, site visits and monthly meetings with officers and the Portfolio Holder. The Streetscene Neighbourhood Officers also regularly undertake visits and report back on any maintenance issues.

RESOLVED that the briefing paper from the Head of Streetscene be received.

317/12 DCLG Bid for Difficult Properties

The Committee considered a briefing paper from the Head of Streetscene setting out the actions taken to submit a bid for government funding to help provide a weekly waste collection service.

The Committee was pleased to see that a grant of £493,000 had been awarded to the Council over a two and half year period.

General discussion took place on the next steps to be taken which involved a procurement process to purchase the vehicles and the appointment of a Project Officer.

RESOLVED to:

- a) receive the briefing paper from the Head of Streetscene,
- b) note that the government funding would enhance the current weekly rubbish collection service provided to the 2000 difficult

access properties, by providing the collection of co mingled recyclables and separate food waste on the same weekly basis;

- c) a progress report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee; and
- d) The Committee placed on record their congratulations to all those involved in obtaining the funding.

318/12 Task Group – Skate Park

Councillor Mrs Suzy Webb, the Lead Member for the Task Group gave a verbal report on the work recently undertaken and the obstacles that she had encountered.

As the Cabinet Member responsible for Parks and Assets, Councillor Mrs D. Grant was in attendance the Chairman asked for her support. The request for support included arranging a meeting with all key members, officers and a youth representative to decide how to take the matter forward, including a site visit to the skate park. To look into the possibility of Councillor Webb and Ward members being invited or receiving details of Police and other events held at the skate parks.

The Chairman expressed grave concern about the lack of cooperation received in the implementation of the work of the Task Group. The Chairman reinforced the need that any task group established by the committee must have full access to information and cooperation from both officers and Cabinet members to ensure that the work of the task group can be carried out.

RESOLVED that the actions outlined by the Chairman and supported by the Portfolio Holder be agreed.

319/12 Task Group – Project Management

Councillor Sexton reported on the progress made by the Task Group set up to establish a project management framework for which future task groups could follow.

RESOLVED that the template and supporting information on procedures be circulated to all committee members for comments prior to it being launch for use for task groups from January 2013.

320/12 Cabinet Forward Plan

The Committee received the Cabinet Forward Plan.

321/12 Work Programme

The Chairman reported that as part of the welfare reform changes, the Government was abolishing the current national Council Tax Benefit Scheme and were asking councils to replace it with their own locally run scheme called Council Tax Support.

The new scheme needed to be in place by 1 April 2013 and this council was currently undertaking public consultation. The Chairman invited members to decide whether or not to hold an additional meeting in January to look at the results of the consultation and any proposed amendments to the new Council Tax Support Scheme prior to the matter being considered by Cabinet and Council.

The Chairman also reported that if a meeting in January was to take place the following matters could also be considered as well as the matter identified during the course of this meeting.

Briefing Paper on how the council is supporting voluntary/community Groups

Briefing Paper on sources of external funding

Laleham Park

The Chairman reported that at the February meeting the main item for discussion would be on community engagement and looking at the Localism Act and the Sustainable Communities Act.

RESOLVED that a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be held on 15 January 2013 to consider the matters outlined by the Chairman.

322/12 Any Other Business

Request from Councillor Friday

The Chairman reported that a request had been received from Councillor Friday for an item to be included on the work programme to review the lessons learned in respect of the recent flooding issues.

RESOLVED that the request from Councillor Friday be accepted and the matter be added to the work programme.

Seasonal Greetings

The Chairman, Councillor Philippa Broom, took the opportunity to wish Members and Officers a very Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.