

AT A MEETING of the POLICY AND RESOURCES SELECT COMMITTEE of the COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle Winchester on Thursday, 18 April 2013.

PRESENT

Chairman:
p Councillor Carol Leversha

Vice-Chairman
p Councillor Keith Evans

Councillors:

p Ray Bolton	a Elaine Still
p Adrian Collett	a Bruce Tennent
a Liz Fairhurst	p Chris Thomas
a Brian Gurden	p Pat West
p Robin McIntosh	Sharyn Wheale

140. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Liz Fairhurst, Brian Gurden, Elaine Still and Bruce Tennent.

141. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3 Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Non-Pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 2 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

142. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Policy & Resources Select Committee meeting held on 24 January 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

143. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman wished to express her gratitude to the Committee for their hard work and support during the current administration, and in particular to the Vice-Chairman and Scrutiny Officer to the Committee. Members also wished to record their gratitude to the Chairman of the Committee.

144. **CONSULTATION PRACTICE UPDATE**

The Director of Economy Transport and Environment gave a presentation to summarise the key points of the written report (see Item 5 in the Minute Book and accompanying presentation) which gave an update concerning consultation processes at the County Council, and progress with the development of corporate consultation guidance.

It was reported that since the presentation to the committee in April 2012, work had been undertaken to improve the County Council's consultation practices. Members noted that five key principles consistent with the Cabinet Office's guidelines on consultation had been developed to ensure improvements were maintained. It was indicated that the use of clear, simple information, and feedback to consultation respondents, were key areas where the department felt that improvement would be made as a result of the guidance.

It was highlighted that a checklist of aspects to consider when consulting had been developed, for officers to use when starting a consultation process. A template had also been proposed for summarising the feedback received through consultations, to be appended to decision reports when decisions were taken following consultations.

Members discussed the importance of the use of 'Plain English' in consultation documents which they felt could be improved. Members suggested that acronyms be avoided wherever possible, and terminology that is difficult to simplify be explained in a footnote or glossary. Members also commented on the importance of managing expectations; being clear when consulting about the likelihood of implementing suggestions and also the timescales for when proposals may be implemented. It was also suggested that consultation documents could be proofread by someone not in the service area concerned.

Members commented that better engagement with local Members was needed to assist with communicating proposals with a localised impact to local people. The Chairman commented that the topic of communication to local Members as a whole could be added to the work

That the topic of Communication to local Members be

programme of the Committee.

It was highlighted that social media was increasingly providing the Council with 'real time' feedback from the public, for example via @hantsconnect, the County Council's twitter account. Members heard that the County Council have been progressing work with IBM in undertaking a pilot scheme in Havant which will look at issues raised by the public via twitter connected with streets in the Havant and Emsworth areas, which can then be analysed with the use of IBM systems. Members were keen to learn the results from this study at a future meeting of the Committee.

At a previous request of the Chairman, a consultation case study regarding the District and Borough Transport Statements was presented to the Committee. It was reported that the consultation process had included a six week web-based public consultation. Members heard that the Transport Statements were published on the Council website and contact details were provided so that comments could be made on an ongoing basis. However, some Members commented that the website lacked ease of navigation which was noted by the Department.

Members commented on the importance of those responding to consultations being able to find out the eventual outcome. It was responded that the link to the decision meeting papers was provided on the webpage for the consultation. Members questioned the low number of respondents to the consultation highlighted in the case study. It was noted that the quality of responses received would be the key factor when analysing the process rather than the number of respondents. In this case the responses received were often detailed and from representative groups e.g. parish councils. The Council had also engaged previously on other documents about local transport issues and schemes on which these statements were based. In particular, the Town Access Plans often included significant stakeholder engagement and public consultation exercises to inform final priorities.

Members asked how information regarding forthcoming consultations was publicised to members of the public. It was noted that local newspapers and radio stations were always informed prior to the consultation process. It was suggested by Members that the home page of Hantsweb could highlight information regarding future consultations, and the Department would explore this suggestion further.

RESOLVED:

That the Select Committee note and endorse the emerging

added to the Committee's work programme.

That this topic remain on the work programme for a future update.

proposed improvements to consultation processes.

145. **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

The Director of Economy Transport and Environment gave a presentation (see Item 6 in the Minute Book) regarding the Hampshire economy and how the County Council was planning to support economic development.

It was highlighted that the economy in the South East of the country was expected to play an important part towards the recovery of the UK economy, and Hampshire equated to 20% of the economy for this region. It was noted that Hampshire's close proximity to London was a key asset which the County Council were keen to capitalise on, and this was reinforced by an excellent rail and road network between the two areas. Farnborough Airport was also a significant asset, as the leading business only airport in Europe.

Members heard that leading brand name businesses being based in Hampshire brought credibility to the region for potential investors, and it was noted that this existing employer base included a number of sectors expected to grow such as Aerospace.

It was noted that the concentration of employment in the Hampshire Economic Area was highest in the south of the county, compared to North Hampshire, which could be explained through the closeness to London which enabled residents to live in Hampshire but commute to London for work purposes. It was indicated that an economic strategy for Hampshire needed to reflect the different issues in different geographic areas. Key general issues were congestion, availability of the skills employers were seeking, and housing affordability.

Regarding the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), it was reported that the County Council would continue to work closely with the two LEP's within the Hampshire area to develop strategies for growth for the respective LEP geographies within Hampshire, with the skills strategies and strategies for growth on course for completion by Autumn 2013. Members heard that the government published last month, a response to the report from Lord Heseltine which provided a comprehensive economic plan with recommendations on how to increase UK growth, of which the government accepted 81 of the 89 recommendations and would strengthen the role of the LEP's as key players in the growth of the economy.

It was reported that the County Council expected growth of the Hampshire economy to come from three angles; the

growth of existing large companies in the area (which provide 80% of new investment), small business growth, and inward investment into Hampshire. The County Council planned to support large businesses via a 'relationship management' approach which will facilitate their interface with local government and the wider public sector support available. In addition, the County Council will champion initiatives for small businesses to navigate more effectively through the range of support available to them (e.g. via a business support portal that brought the information together, similar to the good practice example from Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council).

It was noted that the County Council are working closely with partners to promote economic growth in various locations in Hampshire including the Solent Enterprise Zone on the Daedalus site, Whitehill Bordon, Dunsbury Hill Farm in Havant and Basing View in Basingstoke. It was reported that the County Council would work with different partners and organisations to promote specific Hampshire brands, and promote Hampshire as an attractive prospect for both business opportunities and tourism.

Cllr Bolton left the meeting at this point.

Members discussed opportunities for economic growth in Hampshire. It was noted that the possibilities of closer international business links would be analysed to determine which opportunities would add to the growth of Hampshire's economy. It was suggested that the economy generated by passenger travel on cruise ships through Southampton dockyard could be capitalised on, and it was noted that as part of the Tourism stream of County Council work, a designated County Council officer would focus part of their work on the cruise industry.

Members asked about job opportunities in the Hampshire region. It was noted that links between further education and the economy could be strengthened, and the LEPs would look to analyse where in the region specific skills are needed. Members heard that the balance between job opportunities between the North and South of the County would need to be addressed to ensure the employment needs of both areas are addressed. It was noted that support would be available to workers leaving military employment, and the County Council would encourage businesses offering opportunities suitable to the skills of military personnel.

The Chairman invited the Executive Member for Economic Development and Rural Affairs to comment and he spoke of the achievements made through partnership working, and the importance of enterprise education for school children to

encourage the next generation of entrepreneurs.

RESOLVED:

That the Select Committee supports the approach being taken to economic development activity in Hampshire.

146. **CENSUS DATA BRIEFING**

The Director of Economy Transport and Environment gave a presentation (see Item 7 in the Minute Book) regarding the data from the 2011 census and how this is being analysed to support service provision.

The census showed that Hampshire as a county was ageing at an increased rate compared to other areas of the country, for example the number of people aged 65 years and over had increased by 21% in 10 years (twice the national average increase). The numbers of over 85's had also increased in nearly all parts of Hampshire. In comparison to the census conducted in 2001, the North East of the County remained the youngest area of the County with less people aged 85 years and over residing there. Members heard that the close proximity of London to the North East of Hampshire for workers commuting could provide an explanation to these figures.

Members discussed the data produced from the results of the 2011 census. It was noted that Hampshire had experienced a significant decrease in the number of residents aged between 20 and 44 years old, while Southampton and Portsmouth had seen a rise in the number of people in this age bracket. It was explained that housing affordability could be influencing this trend, as the data showed home ownership with a mortgage had decreased and the percentage in private rented housing had increased.

Members queried whether the census forms were completed by every household in Hampshire and heard that in particular, some of the Nepalese community in Rushmoor may not have completed forms, but this was assumed in the data figures. Members heard that further data was available from the County Council's Hantsweb web page 'Facts and Figures'.

Members were concerned to learn that the continuation of the national census was under threat, as central government was considering using alternative data sources in future to save money. Members understood the importance of the census exercise in producing key data which the Council relied upon to plan services, and wished to ensure that the Leader of the next County Council

administration would reinforce this to the Government.

RECOMMENDED:

1) That the new administration continue to lobby central government as a priority, regarding the need to continue with the census.

2) That the information gained from the 2011 census about Hampshire continue to be shared with Members, for example via a future presentation as part of the Members Briefing Programme.

Recommendations be submitted to the Executive

147. **ANNUAL REPORT APPROVAL**

The Chairman presented for approval the annual report of each of the Select Committees (see Item 8 in the Minute Book).

RESOLVED:

That the Annual Report of the Scrutiny Function is approved by the Select Committee for submission to County Council by the Chairman.

The Annual report be submitted to full Council

139. **WORK PROGRAMME AND ONGOING WORK ACROSS ALL SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

Members noted the overview of scrutiny activity across all Committees. The Chairman went through the Committee's future work programme and invited Members views regarding the items listed. The Chairman proposed the following to which the committee agreed:

- that the item on procurement of temporary agency staff be removed as a decision had now been taken to procure a new contract
- that an update on the Community Infrastructure Levy come to this committee or a member briefing
- that an update be requested on the suggestions made through Employee Voice and whether staff ideas have made an impact

The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairman highlighted the need for a specific Member to be responsible for the remit of Public Health, as the County Council took responsibility for public health as of April 2013.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Leader of the next Council administration include in their Cabinet an Executive Member whose portfolio covers Public Health.

Recommendations be submitted to the Executive

RESOLVED:

That the Committee's Work Programme be approved subject to the amendments made at this meeting.

The work programme be updated

Chairman, 25 July 2013