

# MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 JUNE 2011

## Present:

Councillor Philippa Broom (Chairman)  
Councillor Mrs Marian Rough (Vice-Chairman)

## Councillors:

A. Ayub	M.P.C. Francis	Miss D. Patel
Mrs C.A. Bannister	D. Gohil	A.C. Patterson
I.J. Beardsmore	Mrs I. Napper	Ms J.R. Sexton
Ms M. Bushnell	Mrs C.E. Nichols	Ms S. Webb

R.D. Dunn

## In Attendance

The following Cabinet Members were in attendance and at the invitation of the Chairman took part in the discussion of those items relevant to their Portfolio.

Councillor Mrs V.J. Leighton – Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Staff

Councillor Mrs J.M. Pinkerton – Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Older People and Health Liaison

Councillor C.A. Davis – Cabinet Member for Economic Development

Councillor Penny Forbes-Forsyth – Cabinet Member for Parks and Leisure

Councillor R.L. Watts – Cabinet Member for the Environment

## 164/11 DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

No disclosures of interests reported

## 165/11 INTRODUCTIONS – ROLE OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Vice Chairman, Councillor Mrs M. Rough, had prepared a short paper on the role of scrutiny which had been circulated at the meeting. In introducing the paper she identified that scrutiny was about a positive activity and contributes to the delivery of efficient and effective services that meet the needs and aspiration of the local community. The Committee should not shy away from the need to challenge and question decisions.

The Vice Chairman explained the role of task groups which were intended to identify why services were provided, how things work, why they are done in a particular way and what changes are needed to bring about improvements. The overall purpose was to achieve improvements for the community.

As this was the first meeting of the new administration the Chairman of the Committee invited each member of the committee to introduce themselves,

including which Ward they represented and to identify areas of particular interest.

The list of issues raised by the committee members is **attached**.

The Chairman advised that the list of issues identified by the committee would be grouped into areas and reported back to the committee at its next meeting.

**166/11 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2011 were approved as a correct record.

**167/11 MEETING ARRANGEMENTS**

The Committee discussed and noted the need to change the meeting arrangements for the Municipal Year.

**RESOLVED** that the meetings of the Committee be held on 13 September, 15 November 2011 and 7 February 2012, with authority being given to the Chairman in consultation with the Lead Officer to amend the start time, venues and dates for meetings during the course of the Municipal Year.

**168/11 CALL IN OF CABINET DECISIONS**

No decisions had been called in

**169/11 FOOD WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE**

The Committee received a presentation from the Head of Sustainability and Leisure on the progress being made with the introduction of the food waste scheme. A copy of the presentation is **attached**.

In support of the presentation and for background information the report that had been considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 30 March 2011 had been included on the agenda. It was noted that at that time it had been agreed that the weekly collection of food waste would commence from October this year.

The Committee discussed how this new collection would increase recycling rates by or to over 50%. Since 2007 the overall recycling rates had increased from 18% to over 37% but that the rates could be increased considerably with the introduction of the food waste collection. Comparisons had been obtained from neighbouring authorities which had all shown substantial increases in recycling rates following the introduction of the food waste recycling scheme.

The Committee discussed the need for a task group to be established to work with the Cabinet Member for the Environment and Officers to take the scheme forward and replicate the success that was obtained with the introduction of the Alternate Weekly Collection scheme.

General discussion took place on the funding of the scheme where both capital and revenue contributions would be provided by Surrey County Council on the same lines that county had provided financial support for other Surrey borough councils. It was noted that this funding had been initially for three years but that a new arrangement between Surrey County Council and the Surrey Waste Partnership was being progressed, which would involve a base payment plus a performance related element.

Part of the new scheme would be to provide each household with a kitchen caddy and a small container for outside. The officers provided two examples of the type of kitchen waste caddies, food waste bins and liners for the committee to decide which containers to purchase. The committee indicated their preferred choice but requested that the officers go back to the manufacturers to clarify one aspect and that the outcome be reported to the members of the task group.

The Committee felt that it would be up to individual households as to whether they participate in the scheme and if they did whether they choose to purchase bio degradable liners or the alternative would be to wrap food waste in newspaper.

It was noted that additional recycling of more plastics such as yoghurt pots and food trays would be added to the range of items that could be recycled.

The Deputy Chief Executive reported on the Officer Food Waste Project Group which had been set up to monitor and progress the scheme.

During the general discussion the committee recognised the significant role that food waste collection could play in reducing landfill and improving street cleanliness.

**RESOLVED** that:

1. The presentation from the Head of Sustainability and Leisure on the progress being made with the introduction of the food waste scheme be received;
2. The officers obtain further information about the food waste caddies and food waste bins as indicated at the meeting and inform the members of the task group accordingly.
3. A task group be established to progress the matter and report the findings back to the September meeting of the Committee; and
4. The membership of the task group be Councillors A. Ayub, Mrs C. Bannister, Ms M. Bushnell, Mrs M. Rough, R. Dunn, Ms S. Webb with the Cabinet Member responsible for the Environment, Councillor R.L. Watts participating in the work of the task group.

#### **170/11 WASTE POLICIES**

The Committee discussed the report covering policies on waste collection and how the policies would be enforced which would help minimise rubbish collections and enhance recycling.

The Committee pointed out various errors in the report which the Officers agreed to rectify prior to the matter being considered at the Cabinet Meeting.

**RESOLVED to recommend** to the Cabinet that the implementation of the policies proposed in appendix 1 to the report of the Assistant Chief Executive be approved.

#### **171/11 PARKS AND OPEN SPACES**

The Chairman invited Cathy Munro, the Open Spaces and Sustainability Manager to give a presentation on the current plans for parks and open spaces within the Borough. A copy of the presentation is **attached**.

General discussion took place on the current facilities in the parks and the benefits of establishing a task group to look at the current facilities available and the need to look at how to make them more inclusive to serve all members of the community including facilities for disabled children. The Committee particularly identified the need to review Laleham Park.

The Cabinet Member for Parks and Leisure, Councillor Penny Forbes-Forsyth advised the committee on her wish to see the Parks more inclusive and outlined ideas for the future. In addition the Cabinet Member reported that she was currently in the process of touring all parks and open spaces.

Councillor Mrs Nichols reminded the committee of the concerns previously raised at the lack of playground facilities in the Sunbury East Ward for which there was a demand by local residents. The Cabinet Member for Parks and Leisure, Councillor Penny Forbes-Forsyth invited the councillor to forward exact details to her to investigate.

The Committee went on to consider allotments and felt that it would be beneficial for members to work with the officers on reviewing allotments and how they are managed. In particular that a member be appointed to work with the Allotment Liaison Group.

**RESOLVED** that:

1. A task group be established to review parks and open spaces in the borough and report back to the September meeting of the Committee;
2. The membership of the Task Group be Councillors Philippa Broom, Ms M. Bushnell, R. Dunn, Mrs I. Napper, Ms J. Sexton with the Cabinet Member for Parks and Leisure, Councillor Penny Forbes-Forsyth and the Cabinet Member for Economic Development Councillor Colin Davis participating in the work of the task group; and
3. Councillor M. Francis be appointed to work with the Allotment Liaison Group.

#### **172/11 ELECTION ISSUES**

At the request of the Chairman the Committee considered a briefing paper from the Chief Executive and Deputy Returning Officer on various aspects of the recent Borough Council Elections.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) A task group be established to work with the Election team to review the processes used at the count and report the findings back to the September meeting of the Committee; and
- (2) The members of the task group to be Councillors I.J. Beardsmore, Mrs I. Napper and A.C. Patterson with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Councillor C.A. Davis participating in the work of the task group

#### **173/11 REVIEW OF THE CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

The Committee discussed with the Monitoring Officer, Michael Graham, his report on the recent review of the local Code of Corporate Governance which

formed part of the Council's Constitution and based upon the CIPFA / SOLACE framework.

The Committee noted that the review of the code had examined the policies, documents and processes within the Council which support the six principles of corporate governance. The annual review ensured that the Council was doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open and honest and accountable manner.

The Chairman advised the committee that this was an important document but which would be effected by the changes being introduced via the Localism Bill. A more in-depth review could wait until the legislation was in place.

**RESOLVED** that the report of the Monitoring Officer on the review of the Code of Corporate Governance be noted.

**174/11          2010 /11 REVENUE BUDGET OUTTURN POSITION**

The Committee discussed with Adrian Flynn, Senior Accountant, the report covering the provisional outturn position which revealed that £13.428m had been spent against the original budget of £13.501m.

A briefing paper explaining the final year-end adjustments for the Revenue Outturn 2010-11 was circulated at the meeting.

General discussion took place on the reasons for the variances to the original budget, the transfer of funds from the interest equalisation account and how future risks were mitigated.

The Committee were pleased to note that the right to buy interest of approximately £161k had been received in relation to prior year sales of shared ownership properties by A2D.

The Committee asked the Chief Finance Office to provide further information about the bad debt provision relating to the car loan repayment that had not been received and the action being taken to rectify the situation.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The report of the Chief Finance Officer on the provisional revenue budget outturn position for 2010/11 be noted; and
- (b) the proposed transfers to and from reserves be supported.

**175/11          2010 / 11 PROVISIONAL CAPITAL BUDGET OUTTURN POSITION**

The Committee discussed with Adrian Flynn, Senior Accountant, the report covering the provisional outturn position and the reasons for variations from the budget. The Committee noted that the provisional capital spend in 2010/11 was £1,792k against a revised budget including carry forwards from 2009/10 of £2,567k with a variance of £775k. The final budget carry forward requirement into 2011/12 was £204k.

General discussion took place on the roll out of the Document Management System and the new Human Resources and Payroll system. The Committee also discussed the reasons for suspending the Decent Homes Grant and the underspend on critical ditches.

**RESOLVED** that:

1. The report of the Chief Finance Officer on the provisional capital budget outturn position for 2010/11 be noted; and
2. the final list of budget carry forwards from 2010/11 be supported.

**176/11      TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11**

The Committee discussed the report of the Assistant Chief Executive on the outturn treasury position and prudential indicators for 2010/11.

The Chairman asked the Chief Finance Officer to invite members of the Scrutiny Committee to the training session being held on 4 July prior to the Audit Committee meeting. The session would cover such issues as what the Council's Statement of Accounts mean and the impact of producing the statements in accordance with International Reporting Standards.

The Chairman also discussed with the Committee the possibility of holding a session prior to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee explaining local government finance.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The report of the Assistant Chief Executive on the Treasury Management Annual report for 2010/11 be noted;
- (b) The Chief Finance Officer to extend an invitation to all members of the Committee to attend the training session taking place on 4 July 2011 covering the Council's Statement of Accounts; and
- (c) Arrangements be made for a training session explaining local government finance to be held at 7.00pm on 13 September 2011.

**177/11      CABINET FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee received the Cabinet Forward Plan

**178/11      WORK PROGRAMME 2011/2012**

The Committee noted the current work programme which would be updated to include those issues that had been identified by the committee members earlier in the evening and reported back to the next meeting of the committee.

**RESOLVED** that the action being taken by the Chairman be noted.

**179/11      ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The following additional matters were reported:

**(1) Ashford and St Peter's Hospital Seminar** – The Chairman confirmed that arrangements were being made for the seminar to be held in July (the seminar is now being arranged for either late August or early September 2011)

**(2) Member IT Equipment Receipts**

The Committee expressed their concerns about the IT proposals for councillors including the taxable / National insurance issues as well as accountability for payment.

**(3) HR and staffing task group**

**RESOLVED** that a task group be established to review HR policies with the membership being Councillors Philippa Broom, D. Gohil, Mrs M. Rough with the Cabinet Member of Strategy and Staff, Councillor Mrs V.J. Leighton participating in the work of the task group.

**(4) Cabinet Members**

The Chairman expressed her thanks and appreciation to the Cabinet members who had attended the meeting and taken part in the debate of those items relevant to their portfolio.