

Draft Minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 23rd October 2007, in Committee Rooms A, B & C, Monkton Park, Chippenham, commencing at 7.00 p.m.

Present:

Chair: C.J. Caswill

Committee Councillors: R.L. Cinnamond, P.C.B. Coleman, P.J. Doyle, J.M. Hartless, A.K. Hill, E. Marston, R.B. McGregor, S.G. Parker, C. Reid and M.L. Singlehurst,

Other Members Present: J.P. Doubell, S.K. Doubell and R.L. Tonge.

Officers Present: S. Pangbourne (Deputy Chief Executive), P. Jeremiah (Legal Team Manager), S. Canter (Customer Focus Manager), C. Pescod (Development Control Manager), T. Phillips (Senior Planning Officer - Enforcement) and J. Whittleton (Policy & Democratic Services Assistant)

O55. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors J.P.S.S. Thomson and N.M. Phillips and from L. Bell (Deputy Chief Executive).

O56. Membership

Councillor to be replaced	Replacement	Political Group
J.P.S.S. Thomson	E. Marston	Conservatives

O57. Public Question Time/Receipt of Petitions

There were no public questions nor petitions received.

O58. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 13th September 2007 were considered.

Resolved that the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, held on 13th September 2007, be approved and signed as a correct record.

O59. Declarations of Interest

Name	Item	Type of Interest	Nature of Interest	Action
J.P Doubell	Item 9 Public Questions – Cattle Market Site	Prejudicial	Member of the Development Control Committee when the Application was considered.	Left the Chamber for the duration of the item.
S.K. Doubell	Item 9 Public Questions – Cattle Market Site	Prejudicial	Member of the Development Control Committee when the Application was considered.	Left the Chamber for the duration of the item.
E. Marston	Item 9 Public Questions – Cattle Market Site	Prejudicial	Member of the Development Control Committee when the Application was considered.	Left the Chamber for the duration of the item.
E. Marston	Item 15 – Health Overview & Scrutiny Update	Personal	Carries out sessional work with teenagers.	Remained in the Chamber.

O60. Chair's Announcements

The Chair, Councillor C.J. Caswill:

Reported on his attendance at a Local Government Chronicle event on October 4th on the impact of the upcoming legislation on O&S. He would be writing a report, which will be circulated to members.

He had had a meeting on Overview & Scrutiny communications with Carole Northam and James Whittleton, which has led to work being done on an Overview & Scrutiny newsletter and publicity material. Work was also being done to improve the Overview & Scrutiny coverage on the council web site.

He informed the Committee that there would be a paper on communications on the next Agenda.

He drew attention to the additional papers made available at the meeting.

O61. Action Report

Consideration was given to Report No. 7, circulated with the Agenda, which provided an update on actions from the meeting held on 13th September 2007.

Issues discussed included:

- An update on the work of the Household Waste & Recycling Task Group was presented orally by Councillor A.K. Hill (attached as Appendix 1).

Resolved that Councillor A.K. Hill's Report be noted.

O62. Planning Enforcement

Consideration was given to Report No. 8, circulated with the Agenda.

The Chair welcomed Ms Canter, Mr Pescod and Mr Phillips to the meeting and thanked them for the work they had done on this issue since the Committee last discussed it in June.

Issues discussed included:

- That records are kept (in line with Government guidance) when no enforcement action is taken;
- The improvements achieved since the last discussion;
- The section on prioritisation;
- Whether complainants will be informed if no action is taken;
- That the new computer system allowed for better tracking of Enforcement decisions and actions;
- That all Councillors will be informed when enforcement related complaints are received in their ward and when consideration of the complaints reach key milestones; and
- Training for Members and Town/Parish Councillors.

Resolved

- 1) That the Protocol be amended to state that complainants will be informed why action was not taken.
- 2) That a flow diagram be produced as an appendix to the Protocol outlining the process which occurs when a complaint is made.
- 3) To welcome the contents of this report, endorse the Enforcement Policy/Protocol, with the inclusion of the two amendments outlined above and recommend that the Development Control Committee consider its adoption.
- 4) To recommend that the Report, once agreed, should be distributed to Town and Parish Councils, and made available to the public in appropriate ways.

- 5) To thank the officers for their work.

O63. Public Questions – Cattle Market Site

Consideration was given to Report No. 9, circulated with the Agenda, which provided a response to two sets of public questions from local residents in Monkton Park, relating to the former Cattle Market Site in Station Road.

The Chair welcomed Mr Pescod, to the meeting for this item.

Issues discussed included:

- Procedures for dealing with amended plans;
- The possibility of a regular procedure for dealing with additional plans submitted after plans had been formally adopted by the Council; and
- That the Development Control Committee will shortly review the Major Applications Protocol.

Resolved

- 1) That the response be noted.
- 2) That when the Development Control Committee review the Major Applications Protocol, they be informed that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee is willing to look at the issue if they consider more work to be necessary.
- 3) To recommend that a new procedure be put in place for communicating with applicants who submit new plans after others have been formally adopted by or on behalf of the Council's Development Control Committee.

O64. Residents Parking

Consideration was given to Report No. 10, circulated with the Agenda, which informed the Committee of the current position in regard to Residents Parking Schemes in North Wiltshire.

Resolved that consideration of the item be deferred to allow the relevant officer to attend and for a revised Report to be produced.

O65. HR issues & Grounds Maintenance

Resolved that consideration of the item be deferred to allow the relevant officer to attend and for a Report to be produced.

O66. Reports of the Housing Advice Task Group

Consideration was given to Report No. 12, circulated with the Agenda, which presented the Final Report of the Overview & Scrutiny Housing Advice Task Group.

Issues discussed included:

- That the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) has very recently commented on the Report; and
- The importance of considering the CABs comments.

Resolved that consideration of the item be deferred in order to allow the Task Group to consider the comments of the CAB.

O67. PLA Sickness Report

Consideration was given to Report No. 13, circulated with the Agenda, which provided Members of the Committee with statistical information on various areas of the Council's performance on Human Resources related matters in 2006/2007.

The Chair welcomed Mrs Orchard to the meeting.

Issues discussed included:

- That the sickness statistics show a 29% improvements based on data from the first 5 months of the year;
- The reasons for this improvement include help given to managers in Cleansing & Amenities to manage sickness, the use of return to work interviews and awareness that sickness is being monitored.
- The Employee Assistance Program which helps staff suffering from stress;
- Last year the Council's sickness rates compared poorly to our benchmark authorities but are thought by officers to be likely to improve; and
- Recently a whole week in the refuse collecting department had passed with no recorded sickness. This was the first such occasion since records were collected.

Resolved that a table be produced and emailed to Committee Members (from information from the first five months of the year), in order to compare with the table on the front page of Appendix B (breakdown of the average number of days lost per employee by business area each year).

O68. Response from the Executive

Consideration was given to Report No. 14, circulated with the Agenda, the Executive Minute which considered recommendations made by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the called in item – Land at Bristol Road, Chippenham.

Issues discussed included:

- That the Executive accepted the Committee's recommendations concerning the production of a new map, the policy of informing ward members and the naming of the Football Club.

Resolved that the resolution of the Executive be welcomed and noted.

O69. Health Overview & Scrutiny Update

The Committee received an oral update on the Wiltshire Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee from Councillor S.G. Parker (attached as Appendix 2).

Resolved that the Committee receive an update every 6 months, and that these reports should if possible be in written form, and circulated in advance.

O70. Overview & Scrutiny Arrangements for One Council Transition

Consideration was given to Report No. 16, circulated with the Agenda, which presented a Wiltshire County Council Report for consideration by the County's Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee.

Issues discussed included:

- The Addendum circulated as a late paper;
- That the new Board will need to ascertain what resources it will need to work effectively;
- The importance of the Board electing its own Chair;
- North Wiltshire District Council representation on the Board; and
- That the model outlined in the Addendum is preferable to that in the original Report.

Resolved

- 1) That Councillor C.J. Caswill be appointed as the Committee's representative on the Board, with Councillor C. Reid acting as deputy.

2) That the following comments be made to Wiltshire County Council's Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee ahead of their consideration of the Report:

- The Committee welcomes proposals for the Joint Scrutiny Board to elect its own Chairman.
- The Committee would rather the Board comprise of 4 Wiltshire County Council Members and 4 District Council Members than a majority of County Members.
- That procedure rules (such as call ins) will need to be clarified before the Board is constituted.

O71. Interim Report

The Chair, Councillor C.J. Caswill stated that an interim Report would be produced for the next meeting and invited Members to notify Mr Whittleton in advance of any issues they particularly wanted to see included.

O72. A Programme of Work for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Consideration was given to Report No. 18, circulated with the Agenda; the Committee's Work Plan.

Resolved that Task Group meetings be included in the Council's four weekly meetings list.

The meeting finished at 8.51pm.

There were 3 members of the public present.