

Minutes

Meeting of : Planning and Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel
Meeting held in : Committee Room 1, The Council House, Bourne Hill, Salisbury
Date : Monday 21 August 2006
Commencing at : 6.00 pm

Present:

District Councillors

Councillor P D Edge – Chairman

Councillors L Randall, J Rodell, Mrs C A Spencer and I R Tomes

Councillor Mrs M Peach was also in attendance in her capacity as Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development.

Apologies: Councillors Mrs E A Chettleburgh, Mrs J A Green, A G Peach

Officers

Graham Gould and Emma Tosh (MED&T), S Draper and L Mertens (Democratic Services)

205 Public Questions/Statement Time:

There were none.

206 Councillor Questions/Statement Time:

There were none.

207 Minutes:

Resolved – that the minutes of the last meeting held on 3 July 2006 (previously circulated) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

208 Declarations of Interest:

There were none

209 Chairman's Announcements:

There were none.



210 Update on Agreed Scrutiny Reviews for 2006/7:

Rural Wellbeing Review – Scrutiny Support Officer, Lindsay Mertens, gave the Panel an overview of the work completed to date with regard to the review. The Panel noted that in addition to extensive desk research the review group had met with parish representatives to discuss some of the issues uncovered by the research, along with meeting SDC Policy Director Dave Neudegg and officers of Development Control, Economic Development, Community Initiatives, Financial Services and the Strategic Alliance Partnership Manager to discuss the preliminary findings and conclusions of the review. A workshop was held in July with an independent expert on rural sustainability, in order to gain an expert external perspective on the findings of the review and it was felt by all involved that the session had substantially strengthened the work of the review. The next stage was to finalise a consultation paper to send to parishes and district councillors asking for their views on the review findings. These responses would then be co-ordinated via the Area Committees and incorporated into the review. Members noted that owing to the consultation stage the review would be likely to conclude in November or December.

City Centre Management Review – The Scrutiny Support Officer informed the Panel that the desk research stage of the review was underway and the aim was to schedule a meeting within the following few weeks, when the consultation stage of the Rural Wellbeing review was underway. Members were reminded that the City Centre Management Review was earmarked as a light touch review.

Major Developments and Economic Development Strategy Reviews – The Scrutiny Support Officer reminded the Panel that these reviews were scheduled to commence when the Rural Sustainability Review had been advanced. Owing to the forthcoming elections in 2007, the Panel had agreed to finalise all reviews by February 2007. Members therefore agreed that, as the above reviews would need in depth study and would be unlikely to commence until December 2006, they should be postponed until the 2007/08 municipal year, when sufficient time could be devoted to them.

211 Salisbury Tourist Information Centre and Tourism Special Events Policy:

As requested at the Panel meeting of 23 May 2006, Members considered the previously circulated report and received a presentation from the Head of Marketing, Economic Development and Tourism, Graham Gould, on the above updated policies, with a view to making any recommendations to Management Team. Salisbury TIC Manager Emma Tosh was also in attendance to answer questions raised by the Panel.

The main points raised during the presentation and the ensuing discussion were:

- The tourism industry is critical to the South Wiltshire economy and it is commendable that the Salisbury TIC has received regional and national recognition for its high standards of service.
- Holiday trends alter frequently owing to changes such as inflation and weather patterns. It is important that the industry is able to evolve to keep up with these changes and the TIC policy has therefore been reconsidered and revised in line with this.
- The biggest area of change currently affecting the Salisbury TIC is technology and many more people are now booking holidays on the internet. Accommodation bookings made via the TIC have diminished but this has not affected the business of hotels and guests houses in the city - throughout the summer all possible accommodation in the city was fully booked on most weekends. SDC is doing what it can to keep up with this significant change, and, along with its partners, the council will be purchasing new software to allow customers to book accommodation directly via the web. The Panel noted that despite the higher trend in internet use, the TIC was still seeing significant footfall from visitors to the city who are keen to visit the information centre in person.
- Members commented that the council works hard to promote Stonehenge and asked what level of funding is received from English Heritage. The Head of MED&T explained that English Heritage is an active member of the Salisbury and Stonehenge Tourism Partnership. With the exception of SDC, English Heritage contributes more funding than any other member of the partnership. Members also discussed the likelihood that Salisbury will see increased business when the approved visitor centre is opened at Stonehenge and the visit time to the attraction is increased as a consequence.
- The city is currently in a period of change and the proposed TIC policy is therefore likely to be an interim policy. The council is forming closer working relationships with other local authorities and partners and it is likely that this alliance will make it easier for the council to access RDA funding and split the cost of initiatives. As a result of these changes it is likely that the TIC policy will need revision in approximately 2 years. The Members suggested that it would be beneficial to include this information within the revised policy.
- With regard to the Special Events Policy, the Head of MED&T explained that the council does not have the resources to stage a great number of special events and compete with other tourist destinations in the South. In order to overcome this, the council works closely with its partners to combine funding and

expertise. The staging of the Salisbury Food Festival is one such example of successful partnership working.

- Members discussed the Salisbury Arts Festival and noted that it is one of the largest events of its kind in the UK behind the Edinburgh Festival. The merits of diversifying the festival further were discussed along with the possibility of holding a second festival later in the year.

Resolved – that

- 1) the updated policies be noted
- 2) Management Team be requested to take into account the comments of the Panel when finalising the above policies.

212 Review of the future of CCTV in South Wiltshire:

The Panel considered the previously circulated report. The Chairman, as the lead member of the above Scrutiny Review Group, suggested that the Panel commission a fully costed appraisal of the recommendations contained in the report, in order that Cabinet may consider the scrutiny review along with all costs relating to it and make decisions on the matter accordingly.

Resolved - that

- 1) the P&ED Panel adopt the report on CCTV.
- 2) the Head of Forward Planning and Transportation be asked to undertake a costed appraisal of the recommendations and submit it to the Panel for its consideration in two months time and that the Chairman keeps a watching brief on the matter while the officers collate the cost of the various options.
- 3) subject to the Panel being satisfied with the appraisal, that the scrutiny report and the appraisal be submitted to Cabinet for consideration.

213 Cabinet Work Programme:

The Panel considered the Cabinet work programme items relating to the Planning and Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel (previously circulated). The Scrutiny Support Officer informed the Panel that in addition to those items listed before them, the Hindon Lane Development Brief was also scheduled to be considered by Cabinet in November.

Resolved – that the Cabinet work-programme be noted.

214 Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee

The Scrutiny Support Officer outlined the main points raised during the most recent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.

Resolved – that the minutes be noted.

215 Date of Next Meeting:

Resolved – that the previously agreed date of 25 September 2006, Committee Room 2, for the next Panel meeting be noted and that further meetings of the Panel be held on the following dates:

Monday 23 October 2006, 6pm, Committee Room 1
Monday 27 November 2006, 6pm, Alamein Suite, City Hall
Monday 18 December 2006, 6pm, Alamein Suite, City Hall
Monday 22 January 2007, 6pm, Alamein Suite, City Hall
Monday 26 February 2007, 6pm, Meeting Room, City Hall,
Monday 19 March 2007, 6pm, Meeting Room, City Hall
Monday 23 April 2007, 6pm, Meeting Room, City Hall

Please note: These dates are provisional and are subject to there being sufficient business to cover at the meeting.