

Minutes

Meeting of : Planning and Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel
Meeting held in : Meeting Room, City Hall, Salisbury
Date : Monday 26 February 2007
Commencing at : 6.00 pm

Present:

District Councillors

Councillor P D Edge – Chairman

Councillors A J A Brown-Hovelt, M A Hewitt, A G Peach, L Randall, Mrs C A Spencer and I R Tomes

Apologies: Councillor Mrs E A Chettleburgh and Mrs J A Green

Officers

Mrs S Hughes (Development Services), G Gould (Head of Marketing, Economic Development and Tourism) and L Mertens (Democratic Services)

239. Public Questions/Statement Time:

There were none.

240. Councillor Questions/Statement Time:

There were none.

241. Minutes:

Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2007 (previously circulated) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

242. Declarations of Interest:

There were none.

243. Chairman's Announcements:

The Chairman informed the Panel that due to unforeseen circumstances there would be no Officers present to discuss Agenda Item 7, on the subject of CCTV. As a consequence, should any particular questions arise, it may be necessary to delay the Panel's determination of the matter until a future point when Officer's would be able to attend and inform discussions.



Awarded in:
Housing Services
Waste and Recycling Services



244. Responses to the Scrutiny Panel Review of CCTV and recommendations for the future direction of the CCTV service:

In the absence of Officers to discuss the report, the Scrutiny Support Officer outlined the main areas of the report and the recommendations contained within it. As the lead Member of the previously adopted Scrutiny Review on CCTV, the Chairman responded to some enquiries made by Panel Members. Councillor Brown-Hovelt informed the Panel that the City Centre Management Partnership had also formed a working group to look at the topic of CCTV. During discussions the following points arose:

- Members recognised that significant technological advancements meant that IP technology would now be a more feasible way forward in relation to CCTV service provision than was identified in the scrutiny review. Members felt that the council should take steps to formulate a business case for a grant towards technological improvements in relation to CCTV, but recognised that such a grant would only be likely to be awarded if the council were prepared to be innovative in its approach to the future direction of CCTV.
- Members felt strongly that discussions with police should be continued to ensure that a contribution may be made to the CCTV service. They also indicated that any savings that may be made as a result of a co-location with the Care Connect service should be pursued.
- It was noted that it is difficult to clearly identify savings in relation to CCTV, as changes to the camera network may lead to the displacement of crime and resulting costs arising in other areas. For this reason, more detailed information would be required for Members to take a view on the future direction of CCTV. Members therefore felt that a comprehensive action plan would be essential to facilitate this decision and requested that no significant changes be made to the system until such time that an action plan had been viewed by the P&ED Panel.

Resolved - that:

- 1) Officers be requested to continue to explore the possibilities outlined in the previously circulated report and to present their conclusions in the form of an action plan.
- 2) The Head of Forward Planning & Transportation be requested to attend the next meeting of the Panel to discuss the contents of the action plan and the associated timescales for finalising this plan.
- 3) Officers be requested to maintain close contact with Global MSC Security, the consultants who prepared the original CCTV report, in order to provide an independent evaluation.
- 4) Cabinet be informed that the Panel would not wish to see the removal of cameras or the transfer of associated costs to parishes at this time, and would instead wish to see the council pursue potential savings in relation to contributions from the police and the co-location of the CCTV and Care Connect services.

245. Proposed changes by the Government to the planning obligations system, and the proposed introduction of a planning gain supplement:

The Forward Planning Officer outlined the key elements of the previously circulated report, in order to inform the Panel's view on the government's consultation paper on the planning gain supplement. Members then discussed the government's proposals along with the Officer's suggested response to which the Panel's endorsement was sought. The following points were raised during the discussion:

- The aim of the PGS is to ensure that all members of the community can benefit from developer contributions on a national level. Whilst it is pleasing that the government is taking an initiative to improve the performance of all councils in relation to the collection of developer contributions, it may result in less flexibility for those councils that are already performing well in this policy area. Salisbury District Council has been relatively successful in collecting developer contributions, particularly towards public open space, and may find that the proposed Planning Gain Supplement (PGS) system results in less flexibility and locally collected funds being used to make infrastructure improvements in other areas of the region in preference to the Salisbury area.
- The consultation document indicates that contributions towards social and community facilities would not be covered by the proposed streamlined system of section 106 agreements. This would be contrary to the council's current initiative to broaden developer contributions policies such as R2 and also contrary to the 'bottom up' approach to policy development which should take account of the local need.

- Although the detail of the proposal has not yet been formalised there are a number of areas where a lack of clarity is particularly concerning. The proposed PGS may result in a lack of control for planning authorities as they will be less able to ensure that locally required infrastructure improvements are made before developments can progress. The paper is also unclear about how PGS funds will be accessed. It is therefore possible that in two tier areas of local government the district council may be in competition to bid for funding along with the county council and even local utility providers.
- Clarification is needed regarding applications to change planning conditions and whether this would result in PGS being collected.
- There is currently no information regarding associated administrative costs that would be required as a result of this proposal. It is likely that these would be a further significant cost to the taxpayer.
- There is no explanation as to the anticipated use of the interest gained from PGS funds. Interest currently earned on developer contributions is returned to enhance the community and this benefit may be lost under the new proposals.
- The proposed system may also be unfair on local developers as it will require developers to pay a PGS and obtain a start notice before commencing works, with this being a non-refundable payment should the work not go ahead. Such a requirement to pay a PGS before commencing development would be unfavourable to small-scale developers with a limited cash flow and whilst this may help to ensure that enabling works are not started as a way of extending permission that is close to expiry, it would be likely that such additional upfront costs to the developer may be reflected in the cost of local housing.
- It is reassuring to know that the work being undertaken to prepare related policies in the Local Development Framework (LDF) would not be wasted in the light of the Government's proposal. A robust evidence base in relation to local infrastructure needs would be required to support both LDF policies and potential bids for funding should the government resolve to implement the PGS system, therefore Officers should be requested to continue this area of work.

Resolved - that:

- 1) The report be noted.
- 2) Cabinet be recommended to make representations on behalf of the council on the consultation as follows:
 - The council wishes to see more information on the interpretation of the principles to be included in planning obligations.
 - The council does not support the introduction of this overly bureaucratic system, which removes an element of local control.
 - If the system is to be introduced then the council consider that payment should be made directly to the local authority.
 - The council would wish to see the promotion of the LDF and SPD as the streamlined system for simplifying planning gain.
 - That the uncertainties outlined in section 9 of the Officer's report be addressed.
- 3) The Panel endorse the detailed responses to questions 1-12 (as contained in Appendix 1 to the Officer's report) and recommend that these be forwarded to the DCLG as the council's response to this consultation exercise.

246. Update on Agreed Scrutiny Reviews for 2006/07:

The Scrutiny Support Officer informed the Panel that the consultation period of the Rural Wellbeing review would end on 2 March 2007, and that a good response rate had been seen to the paper to date. The next stage of the review would be to take account of the responses received and to draw up a final report.

A paper detailing the progress of the City Centre Management review would be drawn up and brought to a future meeting of the Panel for Members to consider how the review should be progressed.

Resolved – that the update be noted.

247. Cabinet Work Programme:

The Panel considered the Cabinet work programme items relating to the Planning and Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel (previously circulated).

Resolved – that further information on the following item be brought to the P&ED Panel:

Land Swap with Persimmon Homes and Council.