

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON 10 MARCH 2015 FROM 7.05 PM TO 8.55 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Norman Jorgensen (Chairman), Michael Firmager (Vice-Chairman), Chris Bowring, Ken Miall and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey and David Sleight.

Other Councillors Present

Councillor: Lindsay Ferris.

Officers Present

Susan Coulter, Senior Democratic Services Officer,
Simon Price, Head of Housing.

35. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Parry Bath (substituted by David Sleight), Kate Haines and Shahid Younis.

36. MINUTES

The Chairman advised that he had been made aware of a member of the public's concern that the minutes were inaccurate in that the public question had not been recorded as presented at the last meeting. He stated that under Section 4.2.9.3, Notice of Question of the Council's Constitution, a question may be submitted on a matter included in the Public Session of a particular meeting's agenda (except in relation to "business" matters, such as approval of the minutes). A Member suggested that the Constitution Review Working Group might review this but the Committee did not feel that this was necessary.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 27 January 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

37. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Ken Miall declared a personal interest in Item 42.1 on the grounds that he had met Philip Meadowcroft through his work. Mr Meadowcroft would be asking a question later on in the meeting.

38. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Mr Meadowcroft asked the Chairman the following question:

38.1 Question

The January O & S Corporate Committee meeting was deliberately re-scheduled for January 27 - being just two days prior to the January 29 executive meeting – for the prime purpose of enabling the Committee to review the LPEP document and to pass the Committee's comments to the Executive prior to the Executive's vote on January 29 to approve LPEP being put out to public consultation.

I attended the January 29 Executive meeting and so did the Chairman of the O & S Corporate Committee, Councillor Norman Jorgensen.

At the January 27 meeting of the Committee, Councillor Chris Bowring specifically raised his concerns regarding the lack of any definitions of "planning harm" and "not expedient".

His comments were heard by Councillor John Kaiser, the Executive Member for Planning who was in attendance.

At the January 29 meeting of the Executive, in proposing the public consultation for LPEP, Councillor Kaiser did not raise the critical points made by Councillor Bowring. The proposal that LPEP was put out to consultation was approved without any material comment from any member of the Executive.

My question is therefore one of governance – not the LPEP itself which I understand is not an item on the Agenda for the March 10 O & S Corporate Committee meeting:

Will the Committee vigorously protest to the Executive the failure to raise and articulate at the January 29 meeting of the Executive the undefined “no planning harm” and “not expedient” concerns voiced by Councillor Bowring on January 27 - these being factors which apply at the very heart of rigorous planning enforcement if it is to be effective?

Answer provided by the Chairman:

Comments about the LPEP were made by a number of Members of the OSC including Councillor Bowring, at the meeting on 27 January 2015. These points were recorded and are contained within the draft minutes of the meeting.

At the meeting, officers asked for clarification if the comments and minutes of the OSC meeting should be submitted as a formal consultation response to the LPEP and I confirmed that these should be. I understand that these comments/minutes have been received as part of formal consultation process and will be fully considered as part of this.

I understand that Cllr Bowring has replied to you separately following your question to OSC (attached response). In this response he confirmed that as the officer (Clare Lawrence) indicated that no refinement of these terms was possible or advisable, he doesn't see why Councillor Kaiser would need to take any different action when presenting his paper to the Executive.

Supplementary Question:

Has the Committee submitted comments as part of formal consultation process?

Supplementary Answer provided by the Chairman:

I understand that comments contained in the minutes have gone into the consultation.

39. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

40. DECENT HOMES WORKS

The Committee received a report, as set out on Agenda pages 15 to 18 on progress towards meeting the Decent Homes Standard and targets.

The Committee was advised that the completion of the Decent Homes works programme would see all Council owned properties meeting the Government's Decent Homes requirement, which would improve the standard of accommodation for around 1,300 of the Council 2,600 households occupying Council owned dwellings. The works were 100% funded by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) up to the value of the grant, which was £5,117,757 over the two years 2013/14 and 2014/15.

The Council had undertaken a survey of its social housing stock and identified 1,050 properties requiring works to meet the government's Decent Homes standard. A grant of £2,940,939 was available from the HCA to fund works to 629 properties in the current financial year.

At 13th February 2015, the expenditure in 2014/15 was £1,826,610 with 472 properties delivered as decent leaving £1,517,555 (of which £403,226 was to be funded by the Council) and 157 properties to be completed to meet the HCA requirement (but with a total of 575 properties to be delivered to meet full decency – excluding the South Gorse Ride properties).

There was confidence that the required expenditure will be achieved by the end of March and the required number of decent homes will be delivered to allow the full grant to be claimed.

Two key contracts were underway with completion dates planned before the end of March, these being the replacement roofs at The Courts, a contract with costs of £949,773 outstanding and delivering 70 properties and a contract for repairs to render properties of non-traditional construction, a contract with costs of £152,975 outstanding and delivering 349 properties. A smaller number of kitchen and bathroom and electrical works were also continuing.

Failure to incur expenditure by 31st March to allow the claim of the full grant allocation would result in costs to the Council equal to the full value of unclaimed grant. The HCA's reduction of the number of decent properties to be delivered was welcomed as this reduced the risk of funding being withheld due to any minor slippage in the number of properties to be delivered.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

41. REVIEW OF COMMUTER PARKING

The Committee received a report, as set out on Agenda pages 19 to 22, which asked Members to consider the draft terms of reference for the review.

The Committee amended the draft terms of reference for the review as follows:

Purpose of the Review:

To consider the problems of commuter and other parking at, or near, railway stations.

3. To consider whether a feeder bus service to stations would be desirable. The potential for smart or through ticketing might also be examined
5. To consider the balance of parking restrictions and enforcement as to whether motorists are being discouraged rather than being encouraged to change their mode of travel.
6. To consider the effect on residents living in the area.

Key Objectives:

3. What planning should be initiated for the orbital and for other bus feeder services suggested in the adopted Park & Ride Strategy? What through ticketing might be possible?
4. What improvements in active transport have been achieved since the adoption of LTP3 and what further improvements are planned and what further improvements are needed?
5. Is the current balance between having parking restrictions and encouraging modal shift correct and how should it be changed?

Scope of the Work:

7. To consider the impact of service changes.

Specific Areas for the Committee to Address:

3. The Committee to look at and make recommendations on a Commuter Parking Policy.
5. The Committee invite Councillors Lindsay Ferris and David Sleight to assist as they have knowledge, skills and contacts to help with the review.

Additional witnesses to be invited:

- Rail user groups;
- other Councillors;
- Theresa May MP;
- South West Trains
- LSTP Officers;
- Representative from the LEP

Reason:

To find out what they have done to tackle the problem of commuter parking.

Members discussed whether the review should be carried out by the whole Committee and it was suggested that a Task and Finish Group be set up to undertake the work. Members agreed that a Task and Finish Group of 7 Members was sufficient to allow for the group to be quorate, should any Member be unable to attend a meeting.

RESOLVED: That:

1. the terms of reference for the review of commuter and other parking, be agreed, subject to the above amendments; and
2. a Task and Finish Group of 7 Members, including Councillors David Sleight and Lindsay Ferris, including be set up to undertake the review of Commuter and other parking, to commence in June 2015.

42. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received a report, as set out on Agenda pages 23 to 25, which set out the provisional items for the Committee to consider in 2015/16.

The Committee was advised that Members could suggest items to scrutinise and Members were encouraged to advise the Chairman or the Senior Democratic Services Officer accordingly.

The Committee was advised that as a task and Finish Group was being set up to carry out a review of commuter parking, this item could be removed from the work programme.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Committee's work programme for 2015/16 be noted; and
- 2) Members advise the Chairman or the Senior Democratic Services Officer of any items they wish to scrutinise during 2015/16.