

## **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 20 JANUARY 2016 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.50 PM**

### **Committee Members Present**

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

### **Other Councillors Present**

Councillors: Lindsay Ferris, Angus Ross and Malcolm Richards

### **Officers Present**

Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Democratic Services Officer  
Francesca Hobson, Flood Risk Manager

### **17. APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was submitted from Bill Soane (substituted by Mark Ashwell).

### **18. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 November 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **19. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **20. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions.

### **21. MEMBER QUESTION TIME**

There were no Member questions.

### **22. FLOOD RISK UPDATE REPORT**

Francesca Hobson, Flood Risk Manager, gave a summary of the Flood Risk Update Report on progress made in 2015. Wokingham Borough Council is the Lead Local Flood Authority under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The report stated that three new staff have been employed to work in this area within the Planning and Highways Sections. Investigation reports are expected towards the end of February 2016 on the 2013/14 winter floods. Three roads were closed due to flooding over Christmas 2015.

Members asked about dredging local rivers to alleviate flooding. Angus Ross, Executive Member for Environment, responded that this was the responsibility of the Environment Agency and that dredging was not always the best thing to do.

Francesca Hobson also pointed out that riparian owners, those who own land adjacent to rivers, have responsibilities under the legislation and the Council is taking measures to increase owners' awareness of this. This includes holding workshops with landowners.

The Chairman asked how recommendations of investigation reports will be monitored. The Officer responded that the Borough Council will coordinate with Parish Councils on measures to be taken. There are also now monthly meetings of internal stakeholders.

The Flood Risk Manager will give a presentation to the Borough Parish Liaison Forum on 25 January 2016.

In response to questions on how current funding for flooding compared to previous years and how it impacted on Council budgets, the Officer stressed that the figure of £4 million over three years was ring-fenced for roads. The Executive Member reminded the meeting that the Council received Government grants for works two years ago, so the impact on Council funding of spending on flood alleviation was not too onerous. However, he pointed out that flooding resulted in hidden costs to businesses and members of the public through disruption caused.

The Chairman asked if £500,000 spent on reactive works in 2015 was typical. The Executive Member responded that that was close to the figure generally allowed for in the annual budget.

Asked about possible measures at specific flood locations, the Officer told the meeting that first of all it was necessary to identify the cause of the flooding and then check that proposed works would not cause flooding elsewhere.

**RESOLVED:** That

- 1) the update report be noted; and
- 2) the next report be submitted in June 2017.

### **23. REPORT OF THE COMMUTER PARKING TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

David Sleight, Chairman of the Commuter Parking Task and Finish Group, summarised the report which considered problems caused by commuter parking at seven railway stations in, or adjacent to, the Borough. The report recommended the provision of alternative access to the stations covering walking, cycling, bus connections and additional parking. It stressed the importance of the move to Civil Parking Enforcement and the consistent application of parking restrictions. It also recommended the introduction of metered parking on specific roads.

Lindsay Ferris, who made the original suggestion to examine the situation at Twyford, welcomed the report and said that it was correct to expand the scope Borough-wide. He stressed the need for bus links to the new Strategic Development Locations.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey, referring to the recommendation to equalise parking charges for bus and train passengers at Winnersh Triangle, stated that it would be unpopular if charges for bus passengers increased to match the higher charge for train passengers.

David Sleight stated that the Train Operating Companies were aware of the parking problem and in some cases had engaged architects to design solutions but problems remain in identifying suitable locations and funding.

**RESOLVED:** That

- 1) the report be approved and submitted for the attention of the Executive; and
- 2) the Executive be requested to develop an action plan relating to the reports recommendations.

### **24. REVIEW OF EXTERNAL BODIES**

Members had been circulated with copies of the minutes of previous meetings where this item had been discussed, along with an update listing three Bodies that had invited

Executive Members to attend their meetings but where the Executive Member had appointed a substitute.

The Chairman suggested that the Committee should consider a report listing the Bodies along with their aims, the rationale for having a representative on the body and any funding granted by the Council. This was necessary to evaluate the need for a representative.

Mark Ashwell, Deputy Executive Member for Regeneration and Communities, stated that he had started compiling information on funding. He had identified one complication in that some bodies receive grants while others are contracted.

Chris Bowring asked if it could be noted which bodies are statutory.

**RESOLVED:** That the Deputy Executive Member for Regeneration and Communities and the Democratic Services Officer compile a table of information on external Bodies to include the following:

- The name of the Body
- Its aims
- Whether it is a statutory Body
- The Council representative
- The rationale for having a representative
- Funding that the Body receives from Council.

## **25. WORK PROGRAMME**

The draft Work Programme was discussed. It was noted that the date for the March 2016 meeting was incorrect - the meeting will be on 22 March.

The Chairman updated the meeting on the situation regarding the question of confidential information on the Town Centre Regeneration Scheme which had led to the postponement of this item on the Committee's agenda. While legal advice had been received, it had raised other questions on which further advice had been requested.

Members were invited by the Chairman to consider items for inclusion in the Work Programme for 2016/17.

Shahid Younis suggested looking at the possibility of developing shared services with other Councils for back-office services. The Chairman welcomed the suggestion and reminded Members of the process for making formal submissions.

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