

Minutes of the special meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room One East Pallant House Chichester West Sussex on Wednesday 12 December 2012 at 09:32

Members (15)

Mrs C M M Apel (Chairman)

Mr A D Chaplin	Mr D J Myers
Mrs P Dignum	Mr H C Potter
Mrs E Hamilton	Mr F Robertson
Mr G V McAra	

were present (8)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members Absent

Mrs N Graves
Mr R J Hayes (Vice-Chairman)
Mr G H Hicks
Mr S Lloyd-Williams
Mrs J A E Tassell
Mr N R D Thomas
Mrs B A Tinson

Chichester District Council Members Present as Observers or Contributors

Mrs C Purnell
Mrs P M Tull

Officers Present for All Agenda Items

Mrs B Jones – Principal Scrutiny Officer
Mr S Kane – Commissioning Manager
Mr G Thrussell - Senior Member Services Officer

101 Chairman's Announcements

Mrs Apel welcomed everyone to this special meeting of the committee, including Mr Kane who had assumed the lead officer role in advising this committee in succession to Mrs A Jobling (Executive Director of Home and Communities). Mrs Jobling had relinquished that role owing to her many other responsibilities. Mrs Apel expressed gratitude for the invaluable advice and support that Mrs Jobling had given to the committee.

As stated on the face of the agenda, the committee's next meeting would take place at the Jubilee Hall New Park Centre New Park Road Chichester on Wednesday 30 January 2013 at 14:00. It was hoped that just prior to the meeting members would have an opportunity to view the recently completed development of the New Park Centre.

Apologies for absence had been received from Mrs Graves, Mr Hayes, Mr Hicks, Mr Lloyd-Williams, Mrs Tassell, Mr Thomas and Mrs B A Tinson.

102 Deferral of Approval of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's meeting on Thursday 22 November 2012 be deferred for approval until the next meeting.

103 Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interests made at this meeting.

104 Public Question Time

No public questions had been submitted for this meeting.

105 Review of Rural Car Park Charges

This item had been withdrawn from the agenda for the committee's meeting on Thursday 22 November 2012, when it was agreed that a special meeting would be held in December 2012. The date was later fixed so that the committee could take into account the views of the Chichester District Parking Forum which had met the previous day.

The committee considered the agenda report (copy attached to the official minutes).

An amendment to the recommendation in para 2.2 of the report was circulated to the committee at the start of this item (copy attached to the official minutes), namely:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to recommend to the Cabinet that the car parking charges (a) within the coastal car parks of Bosham, Selsey and The Witterings and Bracklesham are increased in accordance with appendix two to the report and (b) within Midhurst and Petworth are put on hold for a year.

Mr K Garraway (Assistant Director Economy) and Mr R Clark (Parking Services Manager) appeared before the committee for this item.

Mr Garraway presented the report. In April 2011 the Council introduced charges for the majority of its rural car parks. The proposal in the report (which had been subject to a recent public consultation) was that the Council should now generate income from its car parks. This was in accordance with a decision of the Executive Board in November 2010, when it adopted a fees and charging policy which required (in the absence of good reasons to the contrary) users of services to pay and services to break even. A copy of the minutes of the Executive Board's fees and charging policy decision was circulated to the committee during this item.

He summarised the sections in the report on deflection issues (if charges were to be increased), (b) impacts on local business and space and (c) the consultation process and

conclusions reached in respect of the six settlements of Bosham, Midhurst, Petworth, Selsey, The Witterings and Bracklesham (paras 3.7 to 3.14).

He informed the committee that at the previous afternoon's meeting of the Chichester District Parking Forum (CDPF) a similar report to this one was considered. The CDPF noted the report and that monitoring would continue to assess the impact of charging in the Council's car parks using the four measures of (a) income versus target, (b) deflection, (c) impact on local businesses and (d) impact on spaces. The CDPF also made a recommendation to the Cabinet requesting that it approve (a) an increase in charges within the coastal car parks as set out in the report and (b) the charges within the Midhurst and Petworth car parks remaining unchanged for 2013-2014.

Mrs Hamilton was a member of the CDPF and she briefly outlined aspects of the debate on this subject at the CDPF's meeting the previous day.

Mr Garraway and Mr Clark responded to members' questions and requests for clarification on points of detail. Among the matters covered were:

- The parking problems in Selsey High Street and the appropriate monitoring of the situation were known to and in hand by officers.
- The decision to treat settlements separately for the purposes of the consultation was in response to the fact that some settlements did not wish any surplus income generated by its car park charges to be applied for improvements to car parks in another settlement. For this reason Chichester city was prepared to accept an increase in the city car park charges and wanted rural settlements to be responsible for their own car parks.
- The income target covered routine maintenance work (including resurfacing), whereas specific infrastructure improvements or refurbishments eg the roof or bridge of the Avenue de Chartres car park would have to be funded separately.
- There were possible displacement and road safety consequences of removing the free period (the first two hours) at the East Street Selsey car park, in particular when children were taken to and collected from the Seal Primary School. It was a pity that this issue had not been raised in the consultation. It was possible to provide temporary parking passes (as happened for some of the Chichester city schools). This would ordinarily be arranged through the relevant school.
- The justification for treating rural car parks in the north of the District differently from the coastal car parks lay in particular with (a) the short-term economic difficulties that had been and were being faced by Midhurst as a result of the Midhurst Rother College construction work and the Grange Leisure Centre re-building project and (b) the coastal car parks having continued to perform as they had traditionally done.
- The case for appointing more civil enforcement officers was kept under regular review in consultation with West Sussex County Council. The creation of more controlled parking zones would be likely to require the recruitment of additional patrol officers.
- The details of the full rural and coastal car parks costs (£332,000) that now needed to be covered by income generation in accordance with the Council's

aforementioned fees and charging policy (a point raised by Mr Robertson) would be supplied by officers to members.

- The reference in appendix one to a current car park charge of £1-05 for two hours in Bosham car park was incorrect; it should state £1-50. The justification for introducing a £3-80 six-hour rate for Bosham was explained. A twelve-month season ticket for Bosham was available on demand.
- There was a replacement programme for the existing pay and display machines in the Bosham and Chichester car parks with chip and pin machines (which coaches could use).
- Mrs Tull queried the reason for removing the free period in the Northern Crescent car park at East Wittering. There were some free parking spaces nearby.
- The view of Mrs C Purnell (a Selsey North ward member) that the potential income generation predicted for Selsey car parks was optimistic was noted. The position in Selsey might mean that the loss of the free periods coupled with the absence of effective enforcement was likely to result in the use of Budgens free car park and displacement on to local roads and streets. Officers would discuss with Selsey Town Council the introduction of charges at the Budgens car park.
- The way in which underlying charges were allocated to car parks should be provided to the committee by officers.

Mr Lloyd-Williams, who was unable to attend this meeting, had commented briefly on this agenda item in an e-mail to Mrs Apel the previous day, which she read out as follows:

In view of the future uncertain financial situation for the CDC, as enunciated at today's Full Council meeting, I feel I have no alternative but to vote to recommend to the Cabinet that the charges within the coastal car parks are increased.

Mr McAra complimented the Car Parking Services for its exemplary work in visiting all the affected communities.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the information provided in the report and the oral report on the meeting of the Chichester District Parking Forum on Tuesday 11 December 2012.
- (b) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes that monitoring (which would be for a further year) will continue to assess the impact of charging in the Council's car parks using the four measures of (a) income versus target, (b) deflection, (c) impact on local businesses and (d) impact on spaces.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET

That the Cabinet approves that car parking charges within the coastal car parks of Bosham, Selsey and The Witterings and Bracklesham are increased in accordance with appendix two to the report and that those within Midhurst and Petworth are put on hold for 2013-2014.

[Note Mr Robertson voted against this recommendation]

106 Review of Scrutiny

The committee considered the agenda report (copy attached to the official minutes), which was introduced by Mrs Apel and Mrs Jones.

Mrs Apel invited the committee to express its views on the proposed reforms to the Council's overview and scrutiny structure and function in paras 5.1 to 5.5 of the report.

Standing Panels/Task and Finish Groups

With respect to standing panels, Mrs Apel remarked that specific task and finish groups were a more efficient and less resource intensive method than fixed standing panels.

Mrs Jones said that in future this committee could consider an annual health and well-being report and specific health reviews conducted by way of a task and finish group if required. The Health Standing Panel could, therefore, be discontinued.

Mrs Dignum (HSP chairman) said that part of the HSP's work was now being undertaken by the Healthier Chichester Partnership and its task and finish groups. She also mentioned the feedback that she was providing to this committee on meetings of West Sussex County Council's Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee (HASC).

Mrs Hamilton described the important and valuable work being done by the Housing Standing Panel. She wondered whether, given the range and volume of work and the number of outside representatives who attended to give presentations, more members ought to be involved in it.

Mrs Jones pointed out that in the review of scrutiny across the layers of government the HASC might in future work with or delegate health scrutiny work to this Council.

It was agreed that in view of the number and importance of housing-related issues in the Council's work programme the Housing Standing Panel should remain in existence, but that the other two current standing panels should be discontinued with immediate effect.

Revised Start Time for Committee Meetings

During discussion the committee supported a proposal that with effect from the new Council year in May 2013 the committee's start time should be changed to 10:00 instead of 09:30, with the preceding pre-meeting for members only commencing at 09:30 instead of 09:00. Members shared their views on how to make the best use of the pre-meeting question planning session.

Scrutiny Work Programme and Issues

The scrutiny work programme for 2013-2014 would need to be prepared in the light of the Council's corporate work plan, which was currently being developed.

Members' points about scrutiny of The Novium and the Westgate/Bournes Leisure Centres were noted by officers. Mrs Apel said that The Novium would be an item for the committee's April 2013 meeting.

In reply to a question about how to scrutinise an issue that came before Full Council for approval, Mr Kane said that ideally and ordinarily policy development should be

scrutinised before a decision came to be taken by the Cabinet and/or Full Council. There was the call-in procedure for decisions made by the executive. Mrs Jones added that where members identified a potential issue for scrutiny they should inform Mrs Apel.

Comments by Simon Lloyd-Williams

Mr Lloyd-Williams, who was unable to attend this meeting, had commented briefly on this agenda item in an e-mail to Mrs Apel the previous day, which she read out as follows:

As you are aware, my belief is that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is here to hold to account those public bodies whose actions directly impinge upon the lives of the 'ordinary' peoples of this District, both within and without Chichester District Council. Consequently, any future structure for the Council's overview and scrutiny function which embodies this vision has my support.

RESOLVED

That having considered paras 5.1 to 5.5 of the report, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agrees that the future structure for the Council's overview and scrutiny function should be as follows:

- (a) Delete with immediate effect the regular meetings of the Scrutiny Planning Group, with *ad hoc* meetings to be arranged to deal with any call-in requests, and scrutiny business planning to be handled by short informal meetings as required or electronically.
- (b) With effect from the 2013-2014 Council year the number of meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should increase to six per year and will commence at 10:00 instead of 09:30 as at present and the preceding member pre-meetings will be held at 09:30 instead of 09:00 as at present.
- (c) The aim should be to have one main item on each Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda with a maximum of two smaller items. The focus should be on policy development/review and on scrutiny/performance review. Developing consultation responses and information-only items should be dealt with by seeking the views and contributions of members via the Members' Knowledge Hub.
- (d) The Crime Standing Panel and the Health Standing Panel should be discontinued with immediate effect, with issues relating to their respective remits in future being addressed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or task and finish groups, either alone or in co-operation with partners. In view of the nature and importance of its work, the Housing Standing Panel should continue in existence until further notice.
- (e) Each time scrutiny of a particular issue is undertaken and in order to give a sharper focus to those involved in the scrutiny process, the question should be asked 'what difference will scrutiny make to the issue?'

[Note The meeting ended at 11:00]

Date _____

CHAIRMAN