

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Scrutiny Board

(to be confirmed at the next meeting)

Date: Thursday, 22 January 2015

Venue: Collingwood Room - Civic Offices, Fareham

PRESENT:

Councillor D C S Swanbrow (Chairman)

Councillor Mrs K Mandry (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors: Mrs S M Bayford, Miss S M Bell, Mrs M E Ellerton, A Mandry, Mrs S Pankhurst and P W Whittle, JP

Also Present: Councillor K D Evans, Executive Member for Planning and Development (minute 6); and Councillor Mrs K K Trott (minute 7).



1. APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor M J Ford, JP.

2. MINUTES

It was AGREED that the minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Board held on 20 November 2014 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chairman's announcements.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISCLOSURES OF ADVICE OR DIRECTIONS

There were no declarations of interest or disclosures of advice or directions made at this meeting.

5. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations made at this meeting.

6. PRESENTATION BY, AND QUESTIONING OF, THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Board received a presentation by the Executive Member for Planning and Development on the performance of services within the Planning and Development portfolio over approximately the last two years and on future plans. The presentation included details of services relating to Planning Strategy, Regeneration, Trees, Historic Environment, Environmental Sustainability, together with the Building Control Partnership and the Eastern Solent Coastal Partnership.

The Executive Member for Planning and Development and the Director of Planning and Development answered members' questions concerning the presentation.

It was AGREED that the Executive Member for Planning and Development be thanked for his presentation.

7. MOTION TO COUNCIL UNDER STANDING ORDER 15

The Board was advised that the following motion was proposed by Councillor Mrs K K Trott at the meeting of the Council on 11 December 2014:

"I propose that Fareham Borough Council resolves to write to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to confirm that the Council believes that the Government's Right to Buy Policy represents poor value for money and that Local Authorities should be given the option to suspend the Right to Buy Policy in their local areas."

The Mayor advised that as the subject of the motion comes within the terms of the Executive, then the motion would stand referred without discussion to an appropriate meeting of the Executive. As part of this process, the Executive must consult the Scrutiny Board and so the Scrutiny Board is now required to consider the matter and pass its views to the Executive.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Mrs Trott addressed the Board on her reasons for submitting the motion. Copies of Councillor Mrs Trott's intended address to the Council on 11 December and of her question to the Executive Member for Health and Housing and his response at the Council meeting on 9 October 2014 were circulated to those present.

It was AGREED that the Executive be advised that:-

- (a) the Board did not support the motion in its present form;
- (b) but that it did support the principle of sending a letter to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with copies to the Local Government Association and the Member of Parliament for Fareham;
- (c) the letter should detail the effects of the right to buy scheme on housing in Fareham, including the level of discounts offered, the length of time people had to remain in a property after purchasing it, the destination of the proceeds from the sale of council properties and the system of replacing the properties sold; and
- (d) the letter should include information from the officers illustrating the problems being experienced, such as that submitted to the Local Government Association in its recent questionnaire.

8. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET AND CAPITAL PLANS 2015/16

The Board considered a report by the Director of Finance and Resources on the Housing Revenue Account Budget and Capital Plans 2015/16.

The Director of Finance and Resources advised that he would refer any proposals or comments of the Board to the Executive meeting on 2 February 2015.

It was AGREED that the report as shown in Appendix A be commended to the Executive.

9. FINANCE STRATEGY, CAPITAL PROGRAMME, REVENUE BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2015/16

The Board considered a report by the Director of Finance and Resources on the Finance Strategy, Capital Programme, Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2015/16.

The Director of Finance and Resources advised that he would refer any proposals or comments of the Board to the Executive meeting on 2 February 2015.

It was AGREED that:-

- (a) the Executive be advised that, in the Board's view, the word 'unallocated' should be replaced with 'non-phased' when describing those areas where a budget has been earmarked for a specific purpose, but the details and timing of the schemes are yet to be confirmed, such as in paragraph 12 of page 29 of the report;
- (b) subject to (a) above, the report as shown in Appendix C be commended to the Executive.

10. PRELIMINARY OVERALL REVIEW OF THE SCRUTINY BOARD'S WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15 AND DRAFT PROGRAMME FOR 2015/16

The Board considered a report by the Director of Finance and Resources on its work programme for 2014/15 and a preliminary draft work programme for 2015/16.

It was AGREED that:-

- (a) the 2014/15 programme items as set out in Appendix A to the report be confirmed;
- (b) the progress on actions since the last meeting, as set out in Appendix C to the report be noted; and
- (c) the preliminary draft work programme for 2015/16, as shown in paragraphs 5 – 10 of the report, be noted.

11. EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

The Chairman invited members to indicate if they wished to consider any other item of business dealt with by the Executive since the last meeting of the Board. There were no other items of Executive business considered.

(The meeting started at 6.00 pm
and ended at 8.13 pm).