



Minutes of the Scrutiny Board

(to be confirmed at the next meeting)

*Minutes of a meeting held on 22 November 2012
at the Civic Offices, Fareham*

PRESENT: Councillor D C S Swanbrow
(Chairman)

Councillor Mrs K Mandry
(Vice-Chairman)

Councillors: Miss S M Bell, Mrs M E Ellerton, J S Forrest, N R Gregory, Miss T G Harper and P W Whittle, JP.

1. APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence at was received from Councillor J V Bryant.

2. MINUTES

It was AGREED that the minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Board held on 27 September 2012 be confirmed and signed as a correct record ([sb-120927-m](#)).

Councillor Whittle referred the Board to minute 11 of 27 September 2012 and informed members that a scoping report requesting the Scrutiny Board to review education skills and employability across the Borough was no longer required due to proposals that had been announced concerning further educational provision within the Borough.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (i) On behalf of the Scrutiny Board, the Chairman welcomed John Haskell, Clerk to Portchester Crematorium Joint Committee, and James Clark, Manager and Registrar of Portchester Crematorium who were to make a presentation to members (see minute 6 below); and

- (ii) Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Board had been moved from Thursday 24 January 2013 to Wednesday 23 January 2013, to accommodate a special meeting of the Council.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISCLOSURES OF ADVICE OR DIRECTIONS

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

5. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations made at this meeting.

6. PRESENTATION - PORTCHESTER CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

The Board received a presentation, (copy available on request), from John Haskell, Clerk to Portchester Crematorium Joint Committee, and James Clark, Manager and Registrar of Portchester Crematorium. Members received information about the background to and operation of the crematorium and its management structure. The Joint Committee comprised 2 councillor representatives from Fareham, Gosport, Havant and Portsmouth councils. It was noted that the Joint Committee was responsible for:-

- determining overall policy for the crematorium and its facilities;
- capital and maintenance works programme;
- approval of accounts; and
- setting the scale of fees and charges.

Details were presented of the main aims, objectives and policies together with current developments and investments. The Board was informed specifically as to how the Joint Committee responded to Mercury Abatement legislation, which required works to be carried out by 31 December 2012 to abate mercury emissions by 50% nationwide. It was reported that a full abatement of all 6 cremators was approved in September 2008 and following an extensive programme of specialist work the project had been completed in late summer 2012.

A summary of the key achievements included:-

- success of the Joint Committee, being the longest example (since 1958) of joint collaboration between 4 local authorities;
- no financial demand on each local authority;
- large long-term capital investment funded from fees;
- completion of major projects such as grounds remodelling, mercury abatement;
- keeping fees low;
- strengthening governance arrangements.

Information was also provided about future challenges and opportunities, particularly the impact of the opening of a new Crematorium on the Havant/East Hampshire border; meeting customer expectations for funeral dates;

replacement/refurbishing of cremators and upgrading and refurbishment of chapels.

Members asked a variety of questions relating to the matters covered in the presentation and other related issues.

It was AGREED that Mr Haskell and Mr Clark be thanked for a very interesting, informative and comprehensive presentation.

7. REVIEW OF THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY - SCOPING REPORT

The Board considered a scoping report by the Director of Regulatory and Democratic Services and Director of Planning and Environment regarding a review of the Environment Agency's activities insofar as they affect Fareham Borough (copy of report [sb-121122-r02-gwh](#) circulated in advance of the meeting).

Councillor Forrest explained the reasons why he had requested this scoping report.

It was noted that one of the areas of work undertaken by the Environment Agency included providing views/comments in response to consultation on planning development matters. The Chairman expressed the view that on occasion the guidance received from the Agency on planning issues had not always been sufficiently specific to assist the Planning Committee when dealing with certain applications. It was therefore suggested that one of the questions to be put to the Agency might be to ask "what is their approach to providing views on planning applications?"

The Director of Planning and Environment stated that in light of members' comments, he would prepare some appropriate questions to add to the scoping report before a representative of the Environment Agency is invited to address the Board.

It was AGREED that a representative of the Environment Agency be invited to attend a future meeting of the Scrutiny Board, possibly in January or March 2013, to answer members' questions and address the Board on the matters stated in the report.

8. REVIEW OF THE SCRUTINY BOARD'S WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2012/13

The Board considered a report by the Director of Finance and Resources which requested members to review the Board's work programme for 2012/13 (copy of report [sb-121122-r01-awa](#) circulated with agenda).

Councillor Forrest enquired as to whether a response had yet been received from First Bus regarding their attendance at a future Board meeting (Minute 8 of 27 September 2012 refers). It was reported that to date no response had been received; however, officers would pursue the matter further.

It was AGREED that:-

- (a) the updated programme of items set out in Appendix A to the report be confirmed; and
- (b) the progress on actions since the last Board meeting as set out in Appendix B to the report, be noted.

9. EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

Members were invited to indicate if they wished to consider any item of business dealt with by the Executive since the last meeting of the Board.

There were no items of Executive business considered.

(The meeting started at 6:00pm
and ended at 7:15pm).