

Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held in the **Telscombe Room, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes** on **Thursday 13 November 2014** at **10.00am**

Present:

Councillors S J Osborne (Chair), P F Gardiner, J V Harris, E E J Russell, C Sugarman and I J White

Officers Present:

R Allan, Scrutiny and Committee Officer
J Harper, Head of Business Strategy and Performance
B Lewis, Head of Property and Facilities

Minutes

32 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

33 Apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors A Dean, S J Gauntlett, C R O'Keeffe and J Stockdale. Councillor C Sugarman declared that he was substituting for Councillor J M Harrison Hicks who had sent an apology for absence.

34 Variation in the Order of the Agenda

Resolved:

34.1 That Agenda Item 7 entitled "Car Parking in Lewes District" be taken immediately before Agenda Item 8 entitled "Forward Plan".

35 Car Parking in Lewes District

The Committee received a presentation from the Head of Property and Facilities regarding car parking in the District. This had been requested at a previous meeting of the Committee on 26 June 2014.

The Head of Property and Facilities took Councillors through the presentation and set out the aims of the parking scheme. She advised the Committee that one of the aims was the reduction of penalty charge notices (PCNs) in the District. She added that the turnover of spaces was one of the key components of a vibrant economy and, whilst free parking may encourage people to stay longer, the spaces don't turn over as quickly. She clarified that as people usually have finite resource to spend in the towns, the turnover helped provide more income to retailers in the District.

In response to a Councillor's question, the Head of Property and Facilities advised that off-street parking had been deliberately designed as cheaper than on-street parking as it encouraged people into the car parks which reduced congestion in the towns.

The Head of Property and Facilities took the Committee through the car parking revenue stream and explained the differences in pricing structure in the different towns in the District. She added that there was a general perception that parking charges were too high, but that this was at odds with visitors who frequently commented how reasonable it was to park, particularly in Lewes and in comparison to other towns in the South East.

In response to a Councillor's question, the Head of Property and Facilities explained that income from PCNs was down year on year and the collection of monies was improving. She added that this demonstrated the parking scheme was working.

The Committee questioned whether free parking was a benefit to the towns in the District. The Head of Property and Facilities explained that recent studies into the relationship between parking and high street prosperity concluded that there was no clear relationship between car parking charges and the amenities on offer in a location. She added that free parking not only meant a reduction in revenue but could also be a drain on reserves. The free parking at Christmas in some towns had received criticism from traders as it had been used by commuters. She further added that more information could be provided to Councillors regarding free parking in Telscombe and Peacehaven.

In response to a Councillor's question, the Head of Property and Facilities explained that there were no plans at present for pay on exit car parks in the District.

Resolved:

- 35.1** That the Scrutiny and Committee Officer be requested to circulate the presentation regarding Car Parking in Lewes District to all members of the Scrutiny Committee;
- 35.2** That the Head of Property and Facilities be requested to update all members of the Scrutiny Committee via email with further information on the potential income from car parking in the District;
- 35.3** That the Head of Property and Facilities be requested to update all

SCO

HPF

	members of the Scrutiny Committee via email with further information of whether there had been any research undertaken that demonstrated the benefits of a pay on exit system for car parks; and	HPF
35.4	That the Head of Property and Facilities be requested to update all members of the Scrutiny Committee via email with further information regarding the running costs for the free car parks in Peacehaven and Telscombe.	HPF
36	Forward Plan	
	<p>The Chair advised that at a previous meeting, members of the Committee had agreed that the Forward Plan of the Council should be considered at each meeting to enable the Committee to get involved with Cabinet decisions at an early stage in the process. The Committee expressed concern that the changes they had suggested at a previous meeting to ensure the Forward Plan was more understandable and informative for residents had not been implemented.</p> <p>The Committee reported that a national newspaper article regarding University Technical Colleges had reported a low uptake in the recruitment of students, with a perception that mainstream educational establishments were not promoting the vacant places to their students.</p> <p>The Chair advised Councillors that the work the Scrutiny Committee had recommended regarding cemetery space in the District was being undertaken, and a report was being tabled at Cabinet on 5 January 2015.</p> <p>The Committee questioned the impact of the development with Ashdown Forest in regard to planning policy, as set out in the Forward Plan.</p> <p><u>Resolved:</u></p>	
36.1	That the Scrutiny and Committee Officer be requested to update the Scrutiny Committee on discussions that were held regarding the redesign of the Forward Plan at the Council;	SCO
36.2	That the Director of Business Strategy and Development be requested to ensure that work was being undertaken to gain maximum recruitment for the University Technical College; and	DBSD
36.3	That the Strategic Policy Officer be requested to update all members of the Scrutiny Committee via email with further information on the impact of the development with Ashdown Forest in regard to planning policy.	SPO
37	Strengthening our Relationship with the Voluntary and Community Sector – Update Report	
	The Committee considered Report No 158/14 which updated the Committee on the recommendations from the Scrutiny Review -	

Strengthening our Relationship with the Voluntary and Community Sector.

The Scrutiny and Committee Officer took the Committee through the Report. She advised that during 2013/14, a Panel of the Scrutiny Committee had undertaken a Scrutiny Review to examine how the Council could strengthen its relationship with the voluntary and community sector. As part of this, the Panel consulted with over sixty voluntary and community organisations, which included an event held at Newhaven Fort.

She explained that the Panel had written a detailed report on their findings, which had six recommendations. All recommendations were agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 24 April 2014.

In response to a Councillor's question, the Scrutiny and Committee Officer took Councillors through the main organisations that were funded by the Council. She added that progress had been made on all of the recommendations, which included the sharing of space within the reception of Southover House, clearer reporting lines and better monitoring. The Head of Business Strategy and Performance advised that members of the voluntary and community sector had welcomed the recommendations from this Report.

Resolved:

- 37.1** That Report No 158/14 which updated the Committee on the recommendations from the Scrutiny Review - Strengthening our Relationship with the Voluntary and Community Sector be noted; and
- 37.2** That a vote of thanks be accorded to the members of the Scrutiny Panel - Strengthening our Relationship with the Voluntary and Community Sector for their excellent work.

SCO

38 Date of Next Meeting

Resolved:

- 38.1** That the next scheduled meeting of the Scrutiny Committee to be held on Thursday 15 January 2015 at 10.00am in the Telscombe Room, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes be noted.

All to note

The meeting ended at 11.03am

S J Osborne
Chair