

## **HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the Scrutiny Board held on 19 November 2013

Present

Councillor Shimbart (Chairman)

Councillors Bastin, Bolton, Cousins, Edwards, Farrow, Gibb-Gray, Hart, Hilton, Keast, Lenaghan, Mackey, Ponsonby, Mrs Smallcorn, Smith D, Smith G, Smith J, Tarrant, Turner, Wade and Wilson

### **16 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs Blackett, R Galloway, R Heard, O Kennedy and K Smith.

### **17 Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Board held on 10 September 2013 be approved as a correct record.

### **18 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting.

### **19 Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interests from any of the members present.

### **20 Chairman's Report**

The Chairman reminded members that from 14 – 16 January 2014 the LGA Peer Challenge would be taking place.

The Chairman also announced that an Extraordinary Scrutiny Board had been scheduled for 17 December 2013 to discuss the Parking Review.

### **21 Discharges into Local Harbours (Update)**

Following the Environment and Neighbourhood Quality Panels scrutiny of episodes of discharges into local harbours from Southern Water's drainage systems in 2011, the Scrutiny Board requested that a future update be provided on improvements made at the Fort Cumberland plant.

Mark Thompson and Jonathan Kendrick of Southern Water were invited to join the meeting to provide an update and participate in the debate for this item. A presentation was provided to members which detailed the following:

- The area currently serviced by the Fort Cumberland plant;

- The design of the current screens;
- An overview of the drainage system currently in place;
- The proposed new arrangements;
- The engineering processes involved, including the use of 3D modelling; and
- A progress update which confirmed that construction had begun on the plant improvements and was due to be completed by September 2014.

The Board noted that £35 million was being invested in the local area to improve the drainage system which would result in the number of discharges into Langstone Harbour being significantly reduced.

In response to a question over how the system would cope in the event of extreme weather it was confirmed that this would be hard to predict due to the differing nature of storm events, however all Southern Water systems were designed to a one in thirty year storm event standard. Episodes of flooding and other issues were constantly reviewed by Southern Water and this provided them with an understanding of the improvements required to reduce such instances.

At the conclusion of the debate the Chairman thanked Mark Thompson and Jonathan Kendrick of Southern Water for attending the meeting, providing a presentation and answering members questions. Southern Water were invited to attend a future Scrutiny Board to provide an update on the completed works at Cumberland Fort.

RESOLVED that the report and progress made to date be noted.

## **22 The Democratic Process**

The Board considered a report from the Governance and Logistics Panel setting out the Panel's findings in connection with its review of the costs and benefits of the democratic process.

Members of the Scrutiny Panel presented their report to the Board and the Portfolio Holder for Governance and Logistics was invited to join the meeting for the debate to answer members' questions in connection with the Panel's proposals.

The Board discussed the importance of all councillors being involved in the democratic process and ensuring that the process was as transparent as possible. It was remarked that it was important for rigorous, informed debate to take place at Cabinet meetings and concern was expressed that members of the public didn't feel this always occurred.

In response to a question over mayoral events it was suggested that the costs of holding future mayoral events at the Havant Public Service Plaza be reviewed in order to fully understand the financial benefits they provide.

At the conclusion of the debate the Chairman thanked the Panel for all their hard work in producing an interesting and informative report,

RECOMMENDED to the Cabinet that

- (1) The Cabinet agenda be published a minimum of ten working days before the meeting, to allow councillors and members of the public to make effective representation; and
- (2) Informal Cabinet Briefing meetings be opened to all councillors.

### **23 Planning Enforcement**

The Board received a report from the Planning and Built Environment Panel, setting out findings in relation to its review of the resources and work of the Planning Enforcement element of the Development Management team. An Improvement Plan for the Development Management Service had been prepared and a number of actions taken which had resulted in improved performance against national and local targets, at a time when there had been a significant increase in the number of large scale major planning applications across the borough.

The report focused on the Planning Enforcement function and examined the current resource levels, the number and type of enforcement investigations, identified issues and proposed future actions to ensure a focused and effective enforcement service.

The Service Manager (Planning and Development) was then invited to join the meeting and with the Panel answered members' questions in connection with the report.

In response to a question over the types of complaints received it was confirmed that most were small scale in nature and relatively few notices were served as attempts to negotiate before action was taken had proved to be a successful strategy. Sophisticated information on the types of complaints was not available but it was planned to utilise the Acolaid system more fully in future to identify complaints and produce detailed reports.

It was explained that it was important to prioritise enforcement action and it was hoped in future that community/resident groups would be able to play an enforcement role in large development schemes.

A concern was raised over delays in enforcement action being taken but it was considered that the new approach to enforcement was working and councillors were encouraged to play an active role in helping resolve any issues at an early stage.

RECOMMENDED to the Development Management Committee that an Enforcement Plan for Havant Borough Council be prepared to manage enforcement proactively and set out how the Planning Development Service will

monitor the implementation of planning permissions, investigate alleged cases of unauthorised development and take action where it is appropriate to do so.

## **24 Work Programme**

The Board was given an opportunity to review progress with regard to the work undertaken by the scrutiny/policy review panels since the last meeting and to identify any additional matters for inclusion in the Board's work programme.

Councillor David Keast gave an interim report to the Board in relation to the Environment and Neighbourhood Quality Panel's review of Public Space CCTV.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the interim report from the Environment and Neighbourhood Quality Panel in relation to their review of Public Space CCTV be noted; and
- (2) progress to date with regard to the Board's work programme be noted and that no additional matters be selected for scrutiny/policy review at the present time.

**The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and concluded at 6.54 pm**