

HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Scrutiny Board held on 9 September 2014

Present

Councillor Shimbart (Chairman)

Councillors Buckley, Cousins, Lenaghan, Perry, Smith D, Turner, Ponsonby, Mackey and Mrs Shimbart

17 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Keast, K Smith and Tarrant.

18 Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Board held on 22 July 2014 be approved as a correct record.

19 Matters Arising

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

20 Declarations of Interests

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

21 Chairman's Report

There were no matters the Chairman wished to report to the Board.

22 Events Scrutiny Review

The Board considered a report from the Economy and Communities Scrutiny and Policy and Development Panel setting out the Panel's findings in connection with its review of Havant Borough Council's involvement in events held across the borough.

As no Panel members were available the Community Service Manager was invited to join the meeting and answered members' questions in connection with the Panel's report.

A query was raised over the cost of the Council's involvement in several events and whether the money could be better utilised. In response it was confirmed that the Panel's report included a recommendation that the Council becomes a supporter or enabler of events in order to reduce delivery costs. The Board agreed that future events should be evaluated for their impact and a more detailed breakdown of the costs be provided.

The Board was encouraged to note the number and wide variety of events held throughout the borough. To help assist organisers with the costs of holding existing events, whilst encouraging new events, the Board requested that the council investigate the possibility of providing blanket public liability insurance for approved events in the borough. Members' also suggested that for events requiring a road closure officers explore the possibility of storing road closure signs at the depot.

At the conclusion of the debate the Chairman thanked the Panel and the Community Service Manager for all their hard work in producing a comprehensive report.

RECOMMENDED to the Cabinet that:

- (1) The Council to move to become a supporter or enabler of events, except for the few large scale events which have a significant role in drawing visitors into the borough;
- (2) Events that are run or supported by HBC should be evaluated for their impact and reported to the relevant Portfolio Holder with an annual report presented to Cabinet and Scrutiny;
- (3) The Economic Development service continue to allocate the current level of officer resource to the management of events that take place on HBC land;
- (4) The Mayors Secretary role in events management be recognised and that forms part of the overall events function, ensuring that sufficient resource is available to support, enable and run events;
- (5) The Economic Development team actively promote business engagement in the various business networks encouraging businesses to become part of a network;
- (6) The Community service to work with Economic Development to host workshops with businesses to develop events ideas and planning, and promote the benefits of business networks; and
- (7) The possibility of organising blanket insurance schemes for the organisers of approved events in the borough be investigated.

23 Grass Cutting Review

The Board received a report from the Environment and Neighbourhood Quality Scrutiny and Policy Development Panel in connection with its review of grass cutting.

The Operational Services Manager joined the Panel for the debate on this item.

It was confirmed that grass cutting difficulties had been experienced earlier in the year due to the exceptional weather conditions and issues surrounding machinery and staff recruitment. It was felt that the reduction in the number of targeted cuts was not a factor in the problems experienced and with normal weather conditions a target of nine cuts was achievable.

During the course of the discussion the Board enquired how often Portsmouth City Council (PCC) undertook grass cutting on their land which was situated within the borough. It was confirmed that the grass cutting schedule for PCC was currently unknown. The Board requested that the possibility of HBC taking over these duties be investigated to ensure there was a uniform cutting schedule throughout the borough.

At the conclusion of the debate the Chairman thanked the Operational Services Manager for attending the meeting and the Panel for producing an informative report.

RECOMMENDED to the Cabinet that

- (1) The Operational Services Manager and the Executive Head work together to ensure they had correctly trained staff staffing levels before the cutting season started;
- (2) The Workshop Manager, Operational Services Manager and the Executive Head introduce a satisfactory servicing and repair regime;
- (3) An update be provided to the Board in February 2015 on the Council's readiness for the 2015 grass cutting season; and
- (4) The possibility of taking over the grass cutting of open spaces owned by Portsmouth City Council which are situated within the borough of Havant be explored.

24 Scrutiny Board Work Programme - 2014/15

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.

RESOLVED that 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 6.03 pm

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Chairman