

Minutes of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
of the **Test Valley Borough Council**  
held in The Annexe, Crosfield Hall, Broadwater Road, Romsey  
on Wednesday 18 March 2015 at 5.30 pm

Attendance:

<b>Councillor C Lynn</b> <b>(Chairman)</b>	(P)	<b>Councillor P North</b> <b>(Vice Chairman)</b>	(A)
Councillor I Andersen	(P)	Councillor G Bailey	(P)
Councillor D Baverstock	(P)	Councillor K Bird	(P)
Councillor C Borg-Neal	(-)	Councillor P Bundy	(P)
Councillor E Charnley	(-)	Councillor C Dowden	(P)
Councillor B Few Brown	(P)	Councillor A Finlay	(P)
Councillor K Hamilton	(P)	Councillor B Page	(P)
Councillor I Robin	(A)	Councillor K Tilling	(P)
Councillor J Whiteley	(A)		

Also in attendance:

Chris Noble, Head of Project Integra  
Councillor P Giddings  
Councillor S Hawke

Councillor G Stallard

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**Minutes**

**Resolved:**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 February 2015 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.**

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**Project Integra Presentation**

The Chairman introduced Chris Noble the Head of Project Integra who had kindly agreed to give a presentation on the latest developments on the project.

Chris Noble gave some background into the history of the project. Hampshire's waste partnership comprised:

- 11 District/Borough Councils
- 2 City Councils
- Hampshire County Council
- Veolia Environmental Services

It was set up in 1990s as one of the first Waste Partnerships in the UK to respond to challenges presented by new legislation, the waste hierarchy and obsolete infrastructure.

The Project had resulted in high diversion from landfill and a comprehensive set of waste infrastructure including energy recovery facilities and composting facilities.

The decision making body is the Project Integra Strategic Board, which is a Joint Committee operating under a constitution. Each partner has Member representation, usually the Portfolio Holder. The Board meets three times a year.

All partners form part of the Hampshire Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy which guides the partnership through to 2023.

Project Integra has a three year action plan to implement the strategy in the medium term.

The Committee noted that Test Valley was mid table in the performance for recycling rates in Hampshire at 32%. The recycling rate both locally and nationally had dipped recently. The amount of household waste going to landfill had reduced significantly over the lifetime of the project from 80% to just 7%.

The Committee was particularly interested in the way in which the recycling figures were calculated and what other elements of household waste were included in the calculation. It was confirmed that all waste was counted in the calculation except any waste resulting from the collection of fly tips.

Concern was shared about the relatively recent change where autumn leaves that were collected from the highway as part of a street cleaning operation were no longer counted. This was due to above safe levels of chemical compounds found in the leaves making them unable to be composted.

The introduction of food waste recycling was suggested by a Member. Chris Noble commented that after an initial rise in recycling rates after introduction it generally dropped off once households realised how much was wasted and changed their behaviour.

The Chairman thanked Chris Noble for his interesting and informative presentation.

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### **A New Draft Corporate Plan for 2015-19**

The Policy Manager introduced the report which provided Members with an opportunity to consider the new draft Corporate Plan prior to its submission to Council for final approval on 15 April.

The Council's current Corporate Plan "Doing things differently" was approved in 2011 and adopted for a period of four years until April 2015. A new Corporate Plan has now been developed for the period of 2015—19.

The draft Corporate Plan sought to outline the Council's vision and priorities for the Borough for the next four years of the newly elected council. It will set the Council's direction and provide a focus for its activities and services. As a result, it will inform decision making and allocation of resources across the Council.

The plan has been developed using a robust evidence base, which takes into account the views of local people, statistical information and external influences, such as Government policy.

The Policy Manager, James Moody, gave a short update on the proposals contained in the draft Corporate Plan for 2015 -19. The aim over the next four years was to continue to make the best use of the resources available and to ensure that the Borough is a great place to:

- Work and do business
- Live, with the supply of homes reflecting local needs
- Enjoy the natural and built environment
- Contribute and be part of a strong community.

The Committee discussed the draft plan and highlighted the following points for further consideration by the Cabinet:

1. The word “availability” to be substituted for “deliverability” in the Housing section.
2. The Ganger Farm site – the Local Plan Inspector had questioned its deliverability.
3. The Andover Encounters project should be taken out of the text as it was not an ongoing initiative.

Members expressed regret that OSCOM had not been given an earlier opportunity to consider the report in order to give an informed view and positive input to the Corporate Plan.

Members were also dissatisfied with the recommendation that OSCOM should merely “note” the draft Corporate Plan. As a result the Committee decided to ask Cabinet to reconsider points 1-3 above.

**Recommended to Cabinet:**

**That OSCOM, having received the draft Corporate Plan proposed for 2015-19, referred it back to Cabinet with the points 1 - 3 above for consideration.**

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**Amending the Code of Conduct**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which reviewed the Code of Conduct and Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services explained that the report benefited from both the advice of a senior barrister (received in the context of Members’ interests and the Revised Local Plan) and also a wider consultative exercise undertaken by HIOWLA and led by Kevin Gardner in his capacity as Clerk to Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority.

The report recommended revisions to both the Code of Conduct and the Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints, and significantly the substitution of “Personal Interests” for “Code of Conduct Interests”.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services explained each amendment to the Code of Conduct and gave Members the opportunity to ask questions and comment on alternative wordings. The following wordings were suggested:

- Paragraph 4.3 to be amended to read “You must disclose and you may at your discretion”.
- Paragraph 5.2 to be amended to read “a member of your family, or their close friends or associates”.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services also referred to the possibility of introducing a declaration form for Members to complete prior to the meeting which could be read out by the Committee Officer at the start of the meeting. This would remove the onus from Members to make a public declaration.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services also drew the Committee’s attention to the proposed revisions to the procedure for dealing with Member complaints. It was suggested that the initial assessment would be undertaken by means of consultation between the Monitoring Officer and the chairman of the Employment Appeals and Ethics Committee and, upon the request of the subject Member, an Independent Person.

The revised procedure is intended to ensure that there can be

- A. Full consideration of the complaint, with Member participation and
- B. Avoidance of a delay in decision-making, as the result of a protracted committee process, which would only serve to exacerbate the sense of grievance and raise the anxiety levels of complainant and Member alike.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services confirmed that all of OSCOM’s comments would be incorporated into the report to Cabinet on 8 April.

**Recommended to Cabinet:**

**That the revised Code of Conduct and arrangements for dealing with complaints and particularly the text highlighted in yellow at Annex 1 of the report, including the suggested amendments mentioned above, be approved.**

**313 Programme of Work for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Chairman referred to the interesting and informative presentation given by the Head of Project Integra earlier in the meeting. He suggested Members give some thought to other areas of external scrutiny which may be of interest and bring ideas back to the next meeting.

A Member suggested that planning applications, where approval had been granted despite local members' concerns about traffic issues and the traffic figures provided by HCC and Highways, would be a good item for a round table discussion. This was supported by the Committee and would be arranged at the earliest opportunity.

**Resolved:**

**That the outcomes of the OSCOM Actions Update be noted and the future work programme be approved.**

(Meeting terminated at 8.27 pm)