



**MINUTES of
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
21 JUNE 2017**

PRESENT

Chairman	Councillor M W Helm
Vice-Chairman	Councillor R P F Dewick
Councillors	N R Pudney, S J Savage and Mrs M E Thompson

173. CHAIRMAN'S NOTICES

The Chairman drew attention to the list of notices published on the back of the agenda.

174. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs P A Channer CCM S Heard and P G L Elliott.¹

175. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED

- (i) that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 29 March 2017 be received.

Minute No. 1120 – Minutes of the Last Meeting

Some concern was raised regarding what the 'trackable, automated process' referred to in this Minute related to. It was agreed that Officers would provide further clarification in respect of this and if Members were mindful the Minutes be agreed with the exception of Minute No. 1120. This was agreed.

Minute No. 1125 – Corporate Communications Protocol

In response to a question regarding the distribution of the Peer Review report to Members, the Chief Executive advised that she thought this had been sent to all Members. She also reported that a report on the Peer Review was due to be considered by the Council at its next meeting but this was currently on hold as the Leader of the Council was undertaking further discussion with the lead peer member.

At this point the Chairman thanked the past Chairman for the work he had done for the Committee.

¹ Minute No. 349 refers

RESOLVED

- (ii) that with the exception of Minute 1120, the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 29 March 2017 be confirmed.

176. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was none.

177. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

There were none.

178. PROGRAMME OF WORK UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Resources providing an update on the work programme of the Committee for 2016 / 17 and to discuss potential areas for the 2017 / 18 work programme.

Appendix 1 to the report provided an update to the Programme of Work agreed at the first meeting of the 2016 / 17 municipal year.

The Committee discussed each of the 2016 / 17 scrutiny topics as set out in the report and whether they should be included in the 2017 / 18 work programme as follows:

- **Section 106** – The Interim Director of Planning and Regulatory Services was setting up a Section 106 group to deal with this going forward.
- **Elections** – Following the recent two elections the next meeting of the Committee on 19 July will consider a report on the delivery of these elections.
- **Planning Enforcement** – This was the subject of a separate item on the agenda of this meeting.
- **Primary School education in the District** – A review of this was scheduled to be brought back to the Committee at a future date and it was also on the agenda for the Locality Board.
- **Stow Maries Aerodrome** – The Council was now receiving monthly management accounts and the Chief Executive had met with the scrutiny lead and management.
- **Community Hospital / Provision of Healthcare Services** – The Chief Executive reported that the Community Services Committee had received a detailed report on this matter at its last meeting. Members were advised of the key messages coming from a recent Health Hub Project Board meeting included a variety of measures to reduce the demands on GPs through use of pharmacists, practice nurses, technology etc.

Members were advised that at the Project Board meeting a GP representative had raised concern that there was a lot of work being undertaken across Mid Essex but the benefit

of this was not reaching GP surgeries in the Maldon District. These surgeries were struggling to recruit into GP roles, with a number of GPs reaching retirement age. In response, the Chief Executive said that if this Committee was minded the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) could be called in to explain how it was ensuring Maldon District primary care establishments were benefitting from this work and demonstrating positive outcomes.

With regards to the Health Hub, Members were informed that three options (as detailed below) for conceptual planning were being worked on for two sites:

- A health hub with beds;
- A health hub without beds;
- A health hub with beds provided from outside of the building e.g. a care home.

The St. Peters site was one of the sites being focussed on and in respect of the second site options appraisals on six sites were being investigated. Members were advised that delays with the reported project plan were expected but that the Council would be kept informed of these. A draft outline business case was expected by 17 December 2017 and a public consultation would take place in October 2017.

The Committee considered each of the scrutiny topics detailed in the 2016 / 17 work programme and discussed whether they should be carried forward into 2017 / 18. A lengthy debate ensued and the following was agreed:

- **Stow Maries Aerodrome** – It was proposed by Councillor R P F Dewick that this item be removed as he felt that the evidence requested by the Committee had been provided and the first payment made on time. He noted that the Finance and Corporate Services Committee would continue to receive regular updates. This proposal was duly seconded and upon a vote being taken agreed.
- **Primary School Education in the District** – Councillor H M Bass the 2016 / 17 Scrutiny lead on this subject reported on this item of scrutiny. He explained that the work was unfinished as a report on improvements was just one of the matters still outstanding. Councillor Mrs M E Thompson proposed that this item of scrutiny continued and be added to the 2017 / 16 work programme. This was duly seconded and agreed along with Councillor P G L Elliott as the Members sponsor (subject to him not having any conflict of interest). Councillor Mrs Thompson advised that should Councillor Elliott not be able to be the Member sponsor she was happy to do so.
- **GP recruitment and retention** – Following the earlier update from the Chief Executive it was agreed that this be added as a new item of scrutiny. Councillor N R Pudney was agreed as the scrutiny lead.
- **Health Hub (previously named Community Hospital) and Provision of Healthcare Services** – Councillor Mrs M E Thompson proposed that both items of scrutiny be kept. This was duly seconded and agreed. It was noted that the Member sponsors for these topics would remain unchanged.
- **Elections** – Councillor Mrs Thompson proposed that this item of scrutiny remain on the Committees Workplan until it had received the report from

Officers in July 2017. This was duly agreed. It was agreed that Councillor Mrs Thompson would be Member sponsor.

- **Section 106** – Councillor S J Savage referred to the importance of this and also requested that Section 52 be included. This was agreed. It was proposed and agreed the Councillor Mrs Thompson would be the Member Sponsor with assistance from Councillor Savage.
- **Planning Enforcement** - It was agreed that this would continue and Councillor M W Helm would be the Member sponsor with assistance from Councillor R P F Dewick. It was noted that this item may be passed back to the Planning and Licensing Committee at a later stage.
- **Treatment of and Damage to Waste Bins** – Councillor Savage proposed that this be added as a new item of scrutiny, particularly to look at the way in which refuse bins were being handled, damaged and broken and the need to ascertain how serious the problem was. He gave some particular examples that he had been made aware of. In response, the Director of Customers and Community advised that this was an operational issue and one which the team would deal with. He suggested that this could be dealt with through the Community Services Committee. The proposal was not seconded. In light of this the Chairman requested that the Director of Customers and Community referred the matter to the Community Services Committee and report back to this Committee as to whether there was a problem or not. This was duly agreed.
- **Procurement and delivery of 2016 / 17 Capital Programme** – In response to a suggestion from the Director of Resources, the Chairman proposed a new item of scrutiny be added to the work programme to incorporate all capital projects, whether they were being delivered on time and on budget and any issues regarding their procurement. This proposal was duly seconded and agreed with Councillor Helm as the Member sponsor.
- **Staff Sickness** – Councillor N R Pudney proposed that this previous scrutiny topic be added to the 2017 / 18 work programme. This was duly seconded. A discussion ensued and in response the Director of Resources advised that the Finance and Corporate Services Committee reviewed sickness information on a quarterly basis. Sickness information was also available to Members through performance reporting and if improvements were not being seen Members would have the opportunity to raise this with Officers. In response Councillor Pudney withdrew his earlier proposition.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the contents of the report be noted;
- (ii) that the Director of Resources work with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of this Committee to produce a work programme for 2017/ 18 based on the discussion and scrutiny topics identified above.

179. PROGRAMME OF WORK 2017 / 18

Discussion regarding the Programme of Work for 2017 / 18 was undertaken as part of the previous agenda item.

180. REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE - QUARTER 4 2016 / 17

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive supplying Members with details of performance against targets set for 2016 / 17 and to ensure that progress was being achieved towards the overall corporate goals and the outcomes detailed in the Corporate Plan 2015 - 19. The report also reminded Members that they should challenge the performance / allocation of resources where the Committee felt that the Council's corporate goals were not being achieved.

Appendix 1 to the report highlighted the status of all Key Corporate Activities (KCA) with additional commented provided for activities and indicators / measures which were behind schedule, at risk or not on target.

Members discussed the report and in response to a number of questions and comments raised the following information was provided by Officers:

- Work in Partnership to develop community consultation groups re. management / maintenance of existing open spaces - The Director of Customers and Community advised that a programme to deliver specific plans within the new corporate plan focussing on three specific sites was being drawn up. In response to a specific question regarding access onto the Downs, Members were informed that the Director was addressing this through this team as a matter of urgency.
- Missed collections – The Director of Customers and Community advised that the chart shown on page 63 of the report detailed the transition into a new method of collection and the rise and fall was as expected for a new contract. The latest statistics show that of the 16,500 collections made as little as 10 per day were being missed which was a much improved position.
- Percentage of major planning appeals allowed – The Group Manager - Planning Services advised that the Government indicator had recently changed from 20 to 10% earlier this year. Members noted that Officers were continuing to reduce appeals and as a result figures had shown improvement.

A number of concerns were raised regarding inconsistencies across the Planning Inspectorate in the determination of planning appeals.

- Average number of days lost per (Full Time Equivalent) FTE due to sickness – In response to concern raised regarding the level of long term absence, the Director of Customers and Community advised that the figures for this quarter related to one or two people and he reassured Members that the Council through positive engagement was working to get individuals back to work. The Director informed the Committee that stress was complicated and often a mix of issues both at work and at home. Members were advised of the work undertaken by the Council as well as assistance available to individuals.

Members were reminded that absence management had recently been reported to this Committee and the Group Manager - People, Performance and Policy was rigorously looking at and updating policies as well as staff training etc. and as a result the first quarter of 2017 / 18 was showing significant improvement.

The Chief Executive reported that by September the Council would be fully resourced in the Planning department. In addition where there was medium or long term absence it had been agreed that backfilling of these roles would occur. The Chief Executive referred to the recent elections and how the team pulled together assisted by staff across the Council to meet challenges.

RESOLVED that the performance information for Quarter Four be noted.

181. PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive providing an update on the current status of the Planning Enforcement Policy, Practice and Guidance and the Harm Matrix (Appendix 1 to the report).

Councillor E L Bamford, Member sponsor, introduced the report and the work that had been done to produce the Planning Enforcement Policy. Members were advised that the Group Manager - Planning Services had further amendments to make to the policy before it was considered by the Planning and Licensing Committee.

Councillor Bamford also commented on the length of the current Enforcement List received on a quarterly basis by the Area Planning Committees but recognised the work being undertaken to reduce this. Councillor Bamford suggested that this list be updated to ensure that every case had a category detailed along with its harm score. The Chairman thanked Councillor Bamford for the work she had carried out in respect of this matter.

Councillor S J Savage proposed that the suggestion from Councillor Bamford regarding the enforcement list be approved. In response the Group Manager - Planning Services suggested that if Members were mindful to agree this recommendation that it be amended to refer to state all new cases as the Harm Matrix had not been applied to all old cases. Councillor Savage advised he was happy to have this clarified in his proposition.

In response to comments regarding the current resourcing of the enforcement team, the Chief Executive provided Members with details of recent discussions undertaken with the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council, and Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Planning and Licensing Committee. It was noted that the Planning and Licensing Committee would be considering a report on this matter at its next meeting.

RESOLVED that the Planning and Licensing Committee be **recommended** to

- (i) adopt the Planning Enforcement Policy, Practice and Guidance and the Harm Matrix;
- (ii) ensure that the category and harm score was recorded against every new enforcement case and this information be detailed on the Enforcement List considered quarterly by the Area Planning Committees.

182. ANY OTHER ITEMS OF SCRUTINY MEMBERS WISH TO CONSIDER

There were none as these had been covered as part of an earlier agenda item.

There being no further items of business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.08 pm.

M W HELM
CHAIRMAN