



**MINUTES of
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
21 NOVEMBER 2018**

PRESENT

Chairman	Councillor M W Helm
Vice-Chairman	Councillor R P F Dewick
Councillors	I E Dobson, P G L Elliott, M S Heard, N R Pudney and S J Savage

632. CHAIRMAN'S NOTICES

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

633. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Miss S White.

634. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was none.

635. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the Minutes from a meeting of the Committee held on 3 October 2018 be approved and confirmed.

636. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

There were none.

637. REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE - QUARTER TWO 2018 / 19

The Committee received the report of the Director of Resources confirming the Committee's Work Programme for 2018 / 19, attached as Appendix 1 to the report. It was confirmed that the information provided in Appendix 1 was correct as at 30 September 2018.

Councillor M S Heard disclosed a non-pecuniary interest in this agenda item, namely the tracking measure Level of Reported Crime, as an employee of Essex Police.

- Levels of Reported Crime - Members expressed concern at the increase in the levels of reported crime, and requested that this be brought to the attention of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

The Director of Service Delivery confirmed that the Chief Inspector would be present at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (meeting as the Crime and Disorder Committee) on 29 November 2018.

Members stated that they felt despondent toward the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner as they would welcome the opportunity to comment on policies and the spending of funding. It was considered inappropriate to raise these queries with the Chief Inspector.

Members suggested that a letter was sent to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner expressing concern over non-attendance at a meeting of the Committee. Furthermore, they requested that a copy be sent to the Home Office Select Committee.

The Director of Service Delivery informed the Committee that an invitation had been sent and that the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, had suggested a briefing with Members was organised in place of a formal meeting. However confirming a suitable date was proving difficult.

- North Heybridge Garden Suburb - The Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance confirmed that although this was showing as Amber, Maldon District continued to have a five year housing supply and a report on this had been circulated to Members in early November 2018. Members were advised that the figures included a 20% contingency.
- North Heybridge Flood Alleviation Scheme - In response to questions from Members the Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance advised that the scheme was initially hard to deliver as developments were separate to the Local Development Plan (LDP).

The final report from Essex County Council, as the Flood Authority, was still outstanding. If the report confirmed that necessary requirements were met development could go ahead without the need for a Flood Alleviation Scheme. Alternative options were also being considered to resolve underlying issues as a result of the Countryside development.

- Household Waste Sent For Refuse and Recycling - The Committee was advised that figures for refuse were provisional and cumulative. Low figures for Quarter 2 came from a reduction in green waste, this was due to a dry summer.

Members were informed that sacks containing recyclable materials could be refused when containing mixed materials as the potential contamination of recycling would result in the batch being lost. This had been in the contract since commencement.

It was acknowledged that SUEZ attendance at a previous meeting of the Committee was informative.

- Processing of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support Claims - Following previous concerns raised by Members the Director of Service Deliver advised that the backlog in the processing of Benefit Claims was a result of staff sickness and vacancies at the start of the year. The following update was provided on average processing times:
 - Benefit Claims received in June 2018 were processed in 42 days. In October 2018 this figure had reduced to 19.04 days.
 - In June 2018, Change in Circumstance were processed within 18.75 days. In October 2018 this figure had reduced to 9.54 days.

Members raised concern on the commencement of Universal Credit (UC) within the District and the impact this would have on residents. The Director of Service Delivery confirmed that implementation of UC within the district was expected to start at the end of 2018. This had since been revised and Members will be advised of the date in due course.

- Planning Applications - Members reported that some constituents felt Planning Officers were reluctant to converse with applicants. The Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance requested that these complaints be forwarded for further investigation.

The Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance provided the following information in response to Members questions:

- There were no vacancies within the Planning Department therefore missed deadlines were as a result of the process, not the resource.
- As part of the Future Model there would be a 13% reduction of staff across the Council, the planning department would be included in these reductions.
- The rate of winning appeals has gone up.
- The number of applications acknowledged outside of the five working days target was improving.

The Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance welcomed Members suggestion that a crib sheet be developed to help guide applicants through the process.

- Staff Sickness - In response to Members questions the Director of Resources confirmed the number of days absent per full time equivalent (FTE) was currently at 3.64 days. This was below the target of 8 days.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the contents of the report be noted.
- (ii) that the actions detailed above be actioned.

638. 2018 / 19 PROGRAMME OF WORK

The Director of Resources presented the Committee with the 2018 / 19 Programme of Work, which provided Members with an update of the agreed scrutiny topics as shown at Appendix 1 of the report.

- Provision of Healthcare Services – The Director of Resources advised that the CCG were invited to the January 2019 meeting of the Committee.

Councillor N R Pudney provided an update from his latest meeting with the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) which included the following information:

- Across Essex, there is a shortfall of approximately 1400 General Practitioners (GPs). HOSC is working to resolve this.
 - The amalgamation of Braintree, Chelmsford and Southend Hospitals has been delayed.
 - Southend Hospital may lose their stroke unit.
 - The next HOSC meeting is scheduled for December 2018.
- Section 106 Update - an update will come back to this Committee at the 10 April 2019 meeting.
 - Internal and External Communication – this has been incorporated into the Monitoring of the Organisational Change Programme.
 - Monitoring of the Organisational Change Programme - In response to questions, the following information was confirmed:
 - Members signed off the Council restructure as part of the Future Model at Council on 9 August 2018 (minute 339 - Business Case: Full Council Transformation);
 - Phase One is due to be implemented by February 2019;
 - Phase Two is due to be implemented October 2019;
 - Members are included in the staff updates on the Future Model progress;
 - As part of the Future Model, Windows 10 will be rolled out to all staff and Members.
 - Review of Fire and Rescue Service provision in the Dengie – The Director of Service Delivery acknowledged Members frustration and confirmed that Officers were in the process of organising a briefing for Members with the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner outside of this committee.
 - Dealing with Waste Water - The Director of Resources confirmed that a meeting with Anglian Water had been arranged and a report would be provided to a future meeting of this Committee.
 - Provision of Tourist Information Centres in the District - The Committee was informed that a meeting on Tourist Information Centres had been included in the scope of the Future Model review. Suggestions from Members were included as options for consideration in the service review.

- Jobcentre Plus – Representatives from the Jobcentre Plus will be attending the 9 January 2019 meeting.
- Waste Contract – Reliability of the Contractor Vehicles - The Director of Resources suggested the removal of this item from the Programme of Work following helpful discussions with SUEZ. Members requested that this item remained on the Programme of Work to allow for monitoring.
- Provision of a Crematorium within the District - The Committee requested this was added to the Programme of Work as an item of interest and requested updates on the business case.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the contents of the report be noted.
- (ii) that the actions detailed above be actioned.

639. ANY OTHER ITEMS OF SCRUTINY MEMBERS WISH TO CONSIDER

There were none.

640. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, and that this satisfies the public interest test.

641. OFFICE ACCOMMODATION AND LEASE UPDATE

The Committee received the report from the Director of Resources which provided a detailed list of all leases and tenants with ongoing arrangements as found at Appendix 1 of the report.

Members discussed the content of the report and asked further questions which the Director of Resources duly answered.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the content of this report be noted.

There being no further items of business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.50 pm.

M W HELM
CHAIRMAN