

Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held in the **Telscombe Room, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes** on **Thursday 18 June 2015** at **10.00am**

Present:

Councillors P F Gardiner (Chair), S Adeniji, N Evever, J M Harrison-Hicks, V Ient, C R O'Keeffe, I Linington, S Murray, S J Osborne, J Peterson and C Sugarman

Officers Present:

R Allan, Performance Officer (Scrutiny)
J Harper, Head of Business Strategy and Performance
S Harvey, Strategic Performance Manager
N Hussain, Director of Business Strategy and Development

Minutes

1 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2 Apologies/ Declaration of Substitute Councillors

Councillor S Murray declared she was acting as a substitute for Councillor J K E Carter.

3 Variation in the Order of the Agenda

Resolved:

- 3.1** That Agenda Item 7 entitled "Forward Plan" be taken immediately before Agenda Item 10 entitled "Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2015/16".

4 Remit of the Scrutiny Committee

The Chair took Councillors through the remit of the Scrutiny Committee, as set out on page 3 of the Agenda.

The Head of Business Strategy and Development took the Committee through the draft guidance on scrutiny at Lewes (a copy of which is contained in the Minute Book).

The Chair of the Committee advised that Councillors would have the time to review this guidance outside of this meeting, and feedback any comments to the Performance Officer (Scrutiny)

Resolved:

- 4.1 That the remit of the Scrutiny Committee be noted;
- 4.2 That the Performance Officer (Scrutiny) be requested to circulate an electronic copy of the Scrutiny Guide to all members of the Scrutiny Committee; and
- 4.3 That Members of the Scrutiny Committee be requested to email the Performance Officer (Scrutiny) with comments on the draft Scrutiny guidance by 8 July 2015.

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5 Chair of the Council's Business Report

The Committee received Report No 70/15 which related to the outgoing Chair's civic programme, the civic programme for the forthcoming year and budget provision.

Resolved:

- 5.1 That Report No 70/15 relating to the Chair of the Council's Business Report be noted.

6 Portfolio Programme and Performance Report Year End: April 2014 – March 2015

The Committee received Report No 71/14 which related to the Council's progress and performance in respect of key projects and targets for the year ending 31st March 2015.

The Head of Business Strategy and Performance took the Committee through the Report. She advised that it was of fundamental importance that the Council monitored and assessed its performance on a regular basis, to ensure it continued to deliver excellent services to the District's communities in line with targets set. Alongside this, it was also vital to monitor progress against the Council's strategic projects, to ensure that the Council was delivering what it had set out to do. She added that the Report would be presented to Scrutiny for consideration ahead of Cabinet throughout 2015/16.

In response to a Councillor's question regarding Impact Seaford, the committee were advised that this target was marked as completed as it related to the establishment of a group, which had been achieved.

In response to a question on the regeneration portfolio, the Director of Business Strategy and Development advised that all the development plans would be subject to public consultation as part of the planning process. The Committee stressed that engagement events the Council run for the public in relation to larger regeneration proposals must be well planned in the future.

The Committee expressed concern that the navigation of the new website made it difficult for residents to search for details about Councillors, along with concerns that some Councillors had found it difficult to contact officers via the new telephony system.

A Councillor raised concern regarding the percentage of invoices paid on time by the Council. As a result the committee requested that further information regarding the late payment of invoices be provided.

The Chair advised Councillors that further information regarding flytipping performance, as set out on page 15 of the Report, would be provided at a future date as to why the target was not met, as this may have been due to errors in the recording system.

In response to a Councillor's question regarding street cleanliness, the Director of Business Strategy and Development explained that there was a large amount of operational performance data that was collected and regularly monitored by officers. Only a small proportion of key indicators were then reported to Members. Scrutiny Committee agreed to recommend the inclusion of additional performance indicators it felt relevant to the Cabinet for consideration.

The Director of Business Strategy and Development advised the Committee that the definition of affordable homes was taken from the National Planning Policy Framework's definition, in regard to the indicator concerning additional homes, as set out on page 17 of the Report. The Committee agreed that it would wish to recommend the inclusion of an indicator relating to affordable housing in the future. In response to a Councillor's question, the Head of Business Strategy and Performance explained that targets could be changed, with Member approval, during a year to respond to changes in material circumstances, however there would be a narrative in the Report where this occurred, to ensure transparency.

In response to a Councillor's question, the Director of Business Strategy and Development advised that the Impact Seaford Group had been established, and delivery of projects and focus on inward investment had superseded the proposed urban and rural regeneration frameworks.

The Committee raised a concern in relation to the lengthy handover period of Newhaven Fort to Wave Leisure, and highlighted that lessons could be learnt for future projects.

The Chair of the Committee congratulated the housing repairs service for a good outcome and expressed concern that amber status was misleading

with regard to percentage of repairs noted as good or satisfactory by tenants. The Head of Business Strategy and Development advised that in future data would be expressed as a whole number.

In relation to the staff sickness indicator, the Director of Business Strategy and Development explained to the Committee that managers and HR were working hard to reduce staff sickness absence and support staff as required. Sickness absence numbers had reduced over the previous two years. She added that comparisons could be made with other councils, but it must be noted that Lewes District Council employed a direct labour force which affected this figure and therefore it would be beneficial to compare with other similar authorities.

The Committee expressed concern regarding the proportion of staff who felt they were treated with fairness and respect at work and what was being done to address this. The Director of Business Strategy and Development explained that this data was taken from the Council's annual staff survey which contained a number of questions which together gave a much fuller range of staff views. In future the Committee will be provided with a more complete picture of staff satisfaction.

Resolved:

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| 6.1 | That the Portfolio Programme and Performance Report Year End: April 2014 – March 2015 be agreed; | |
| 6.2 | That the Head of Democratic Services be requested to examine the site navigation of the Council's website in regard to information about Councillors to ensure this information was easily accessible; | HDS |
| 6.3 | That the Director of Corporate Services be requested to provide the Scrutiny Committee with further information regarding the late payment of invoices, including a breakdown on departmental performance, if available; | DBSD |
| 6.4 | That the Director of Service Delivery be requested to provide the Scrutiny Committee with further information regarding whether there were any common factors involved in the increase in numbers of households presenting to the council as homeless; | DSD |
| 6.5 | That the Director of Service Delivery be requested to provide the Scrutiny Committee with further information on the geographical breakdown of the location of fly-tipping in the District, if available; | DSD |
| 6.6 | That the Director of Service Delivery be requested to arrange a presentation (which may be in an electronic form) on the forthcoming proposals relating to the waste service, before this is reported on 6 July to Cabinet; | DSD |
| 6.7 | That the Head of Business Strategy and Performance be requested to ensure that figures are rounded to a whole number in future | HBSP |

performance monitoring;

6.8 That the Director of Service Delivery be requested provide information about the total number of repairs undertaken for tenants; and

HBSP

6.9 That the Director of Service Delivery be requested to provide members of the Scrutiny Committee with comparative data, based on the Council's statistical neighbours, on staff sickness if available.

HBSP

and it was further

Recommended:

6.10 That Cabinet be requested to note the Scrutiny Committee's concern about the percentage of invoices paid on time;

6.11 That Cabinet be requested to consider the inclusion, in future performance reports, of an indicator regarding street cleanliness in the District;

6.12 That Cabinet be requested to consider the inclusion, in future performance reports, of the council's performance on the delivery of affordable homes; and

6.13 That Cabinet be requested consider the inclusion, in future performance reports, of a revised measure to provide a broader view on staff satisfaction.

7 Forward Plan

The Chair advised that at a previous meeting, members of the Committee had agreed that the Forward Plan of the Council should be considered at each meeting to enable the Committee to consider Cabinet decisions at an early stage in the process.

The Performance Officer (Scrutiny) advised that a revised version of the Forward Plan was being examined by Democratic Services, and that an update would be provided to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved:

7.1 That the Forward Plan be noted.

8 Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2015/16

The Committee considered Report No 72/15 which related to the Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for 2015/16.

The Performance Officer (Scrutiny) took Councillors through the Report. She advised that it was usual for Committees to agree their work programme at the first meeting of a new Council year. For the Scrutiny

Committee, the work programme may require more flexibility than some other committees, to allow for the scrutiny of emerging issues during the year. However, there were a number of on-going issues that formed the normal part of the Committee's business, such as monitoring of the Council's performance and the Council's budget. She drew the Committee's attention to Appendix B, which contained a potential scoring system for the decision to include topics within the Work Programme.

In response to a Councillor's question, the Performance Officer (Scrutiny) explained that a scoping report concerning Village Agents and Living Wage Accreditation would be brought to the Committee at its meeting on 10 September 2015.

Resolved:

- 8.1** That Report No 72/15 relating to the Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme 2015/16 be agreed; and
- 8.2** That Members of the Scrutiny Committee be requested to email the Performance Officer (Scrutiny) with comments on the draft scoring system, as set out in Appendix D to Report No 72/15, by 8 July 2015.

9 Date of Next Meeting

Resolved:

- 9.1** That the next scheduled meeting of the Scrutiny Committee to be held on Thursday 10 September 2015 in the Telscombe Room, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes be noted.

The meeting ended at 11.30am

P F Gardiner
Chair