



Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held in the **Ditchling Room, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes, on Thursday, 14 September 2017** at 10:00am

Present:

Councillors P Gardiner (Chair), S Adeniji, B Bovington, J Carter, J Harrison-Hicks, V lent, R O’Keeffe (MBE) and J Peterson.

Officers Present:

R Batho, Performance and Projects Analyst (Minutes 1 to 7)

I Fitzpatrick, Director of Service Delivery

J Gavigan, Head of Democratic Services

M McDevitt, Performance and Programmes Lead (Minutes 1 to 7)

P Sharp, Head of Regeneration (Minute 5)

J Victory, Scrutiny Officer

In Attendance:

B Bix, Committee Services Lead

Councillor S Catlin, Lewes District Council

Also Present:

One member of the public

Minutes
Action**1 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors N Enever, S Osborne and C Sugarman.

3 Written QuestionsQuestionerQuestion/Response

Councillor Ient

Question 1: Transport Panel.

Please could the arrangements for continuing the dialogue with Southern Railways be continued, especially in the light of the ongoing dispute between the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers and the Rail company as well as the introduction of new timetables due in January which may cause difficulties for residents/commuters in our District.

Response:

At the last meeting of the Scrutiny Transport Panel, the panel had discussed reducing the scope of the review. The scope would be set at a subsequent panel meeting and it would be proposed that the group would focus on the A259. The Chair would be prepared to discuss with Councillor Ient and the Council's Chief Executive whether it would be beneficial to send a further letter to the rail franchise. That letter would be instead of any further and ongoing contact by email.

Councillor Ient

Question 2: North Street Quarter Project.

Please would the Scrutiny Committee consider asking for greater granularity concerning the anticipated completion date and progress of each stage of the North Street Quarter Project.

Response:

The North Street Quarter landowners had worked together to progress the development, and recent activities included:

- The purchase of Springman House in order to relocate the current fire station (which was in a flood risk area) and to bring together the police and fire services into

one Hub.

- The construction of a new Gosnell factory on Malling Brooks industrial estate was in development and Gosnells would move to the new eco-friendly building in February 2018. Several other tenants from Phoenix Industrial Estate would also be moved to new units at Malling Brooks.
- The Council would continue to negotiate to secure vacant possession of its buildings to enable the development to progress.
- The final stage of the public consultation on how Malling Fields and Pells Recreation Ground should be upgraded had taken place in July. There had been considerable input from residents, which the landscape architects used when shaping the proposals. The landscape architects were finalising the plans before seeking planning approval.
- The new skate park in Malling Fields had been opened in May 2017, as part of the Section 106 contributions received from the North Street Quarter development. The skate park would allow young people of Lewes and beyond to enjoy the facility earlier than expected within the development period.
- Given the scale of the development, the focus had been to ensure that all of the conditions of the planning approval set by the South Downs National Park Authority had been met. Once Phase 1 pre-commencement conditions had been discharged, demolition of buildings in that area would progress. Demolition would not commence until the Gosnells factory had moved to Malling Brooks.
- The Scrutiny Committee noted that Cabinet had received a report on 26 June, which had set out a number of areas of commercial discussions that the Council had been engaged in with the majority landholder. Subsequently, Cabinet was due to receive a further report on 27 September which would provide information on a Land Collaboration Agreement, and the appointment of a development partner for Phase 1.
- Once a Land Collaboration Agreement was in place, a Development Agreement would be agreed, which would stipulate how the development would be delivered. It

was anticipated that demolition would commence in Spring 2018.

In response to a request by Councillor lent for the Council to create a press pack in order to keep residents informed of the progress of the North Street Quarter Project, the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee advised that the relevant officer would be requested to liaise directly with him.

DRP

Councillor lent

Question 3: Waste Improvement Project and Green Waste Services.

Please could the Portfolio Progress and Performance Report include more detailed information concerning the various stages of the Waste Improvement Project and Green Waste Services, such as;

- How the waste would get to Pevensey.
- What arrangements would be made for those residents who could not take the 240 litre large bins.
- How the performance of each individual stage leading to completion by May 2019 would be monitored.

Councillor lent also requested that the Scrutiny Committee considered asking for greater granularity in its measurement of the progress of this project to indicate:

- When the various stages were due to be completed.
- What the progress was toward meeting each target stage.
- The provision of an explanatory note relating to the resolution of outstanding items.

Response:

Since the Quarter 1 Portfolio Progress and Performance Report was produced, the Council had more information about the new recycling service.

The communication campaign would begin with the autumn edition of District News, which would be published on 18 September. This would feature a double page article announcing the new service, explaining what could be recycled and detailing how the service would be introduced in stages. The stages were: East Saltdean, Telscombe and Peacehaven from November 2017, and a roll out across the whole District by July 2018.

A press release would be issued, and the Council would begin a social media campaign to raise awareness of and encourage engagement with the new service.

There would also be a targeted leaflet campaign for those

residents about to receive the new service, and additional customer service resources would be in place for residents who had questions.

Additional information, which would address issues such as assisted collection and the size of recycling bin, was available on the Lewes District Council website.

Waste collection vehicles would proceed to the designated waste transfer station when loaded. Currently, Five Heavy Goods Vehicles supported the recycling collection system by picking up the tipped material from drop off points around the District (such as Fairlight Avenue, Piddinghoe car park and the Buckle car park). Those vehicles took loads to destinations including Uckfield, Hailsham, and Brighton for onward processing. This complicated level of pickups and transfers would not be necessary once the new system was fully implemented.

The performance and progress of the roll out of the new service would continue to be reported to Members, and include an overview of the communications activity undertaken.

In response to a request by Councillor lent for more information regarding what happened when a member of the community was unable to move a 240 litre large bin, the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee advised that the relevant officer would be requested to liaise directly with him. DSD

Councillor lent

Question 4: Housing Waiting List.

Please would the Scrutiny Committee consider asking for a report on the housing waiting list.

Response:

The Council could report on the housing register numbers annually. However, aiming for a reduction in numbers had to take into account the following considerations:

- Anyone in housing need could apply for inclusion on the housing register. Housing need could be determined in a number of ways, and therefore could not be used as an accurate reflection of homelessness.
- The Council would like more older people to apply to the housing register, as there was currently a low take-up of sheltered accommodation which could be as a result of people not knowing that it was available.

4 Portfolio Progress and Performance Report 2017/18 – Quarter 1 – (April – June 2017)

The Scrutiny Committee considered Report No 116/17 which set out details of the Council's progress and performance in respect of key projects and targets for the first quarter of 2017/2018, as shown in Appendix 1, and which also set out the same information in respect of the fourth quarter of 2016/2017, as set out in Appendix 2.

A table of amendments to the details in respect of 2017/2018 Quarter 1 had been circulated to members (and a copy of which is also contained in the Minute Book).

Members' discussion included:

- Clarification as to why the status of the North Street Quarter project was 'Performance on track', when some members of the Committee had been aware of delays. Members requested more information regarding the project from the Director of Regeneration and Planning, following the meeting of Cabinet on 27 September 2017.
- The variance in sickness absence, with regard to the Joint Transformation Programme and the mental and physical wellbeing of staff during such a significant change.
- Whether the changes to Business Rates announced by the Government in March 2017 had been the reason for the performance of 'Percentage of Business Rates collected during the year' being below target.
- An interest in the increase in households living in temporary accommodation in Quarter 1. Members also queried what mitigation was in place to help residents that would be affected by the introduction of Universal Credit.
- A request that Air Quality monitoring data be added to the Performance Report for future meetings.

DRP

PPL

Officers responded that:

- The Performance and Programmes Lead would establish whether other indicators such as staff morale, staff turnover and Air Quality monitoring data could be incorporated into future Performance Reports.
- Following the changes to Business Rates, most local authorities were experiencing an increase in Business Rates appeals from larger businesses.
- The Housing team had been restructured and increased resources had been directed into early intervention, including Rent Deposit Schemes.

PPL

Resolved:

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| 4.1 | That the North Street Quarter project be added to the Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2017/2018 for consideration by the Scrutiny Committee at its next meeting. | SO |
| 4.2 | That the Assistant Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development be requested to provide a report on the variance in sickness absence, with regard to the impact of the Joint Transformation Programme, at the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on 9 November 2017. | ADHR
&OD |
| 4.3 | That the Portfolio Progress and Performance Report, to be presented to the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee in January 2018, include the number of Business Rate appeals which the Council had received in Quarter 2. | PPL |
| 4.4 | That the Transport Panel be requested to reconvene before the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee in order to finalise its scope and terms of reference, and to take into account the Air Quality motion, in accordance with Resolution No 17.1 from the meeting of Full Council on 17 July 2017. | SO |

Reason:

To demonstrate the discharge of the Scrutiny Committee function to monitor all aspects of performance management activities as required by Part 3 section 2.2 (7) of the Constitution of the Council.

5 Scoping Report for proposed Scrutiny Review of Affordable Workspace in Lewes District

The Committee considered a proposal for a future Scrutiny Panel Review into the supply of low-cost and affordable workspace in the Lewes District, with a specific focus on the employment space requirements of the creative sector.

Members' discussion included:

- Whether the three review areas described in the report could be included in the scope of the review. The three areas were:
 - 1) How could Lewes District Council engage and influence South East Creative Economy Network and other strategic partnerships to support the development of affordable workspaces.
 - 2) What could Lewes District Council do better to support creative businesses.
 - 3) How effective were the commercial property databases and the Locate East Sussex service in searching for affordable and

creative workspace.

- Expressions of interest from some members of the Committee who wished to sit on the panel for the review, subject to their work commitments, namely Councillors O’Keeffe, Ient, Adeniji and Carter.

Officers responded that:

- The Scrutiny Officer would liaise with all members of the Scrutiny Committee, including those that had expressed an interest, in preparation for the next meeting of the Committee.

Resolved:

- 5.1** That the Scrutiny Committee be requested to form a Review Panel of 3 or 5 Councillors to review Affordable Workspace in the Lewes District at its next meeting, scheduled to be held on 9 November 2017, and that the Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2017/2018 be amended accordingly.

Reason:

To demonstrate the discharge of the Scrutiny Committee function to put forward suggestions for items for inclusion in the programme as required by Part 4 rule 7 of the Constitution of the Council.

6 Chair of the Council’s Civic Programme

The Committee received Report No 118/17 in respect of the outgoing Chair’s civic programme and the civic programme for the forthcoming year.

Members’ discussion included:

- A request that councillors be able to nominate residents for the Unsung Hero award in both their Ward **and** across the Lewes District.
- Urging all councillors to take a more active interest in the Chair’s future events, and that councillors be notified of events that were open to a wider councillor attendance.

Officers responded that:

- Some events in the Chair’s civic programme were by invitation only and that all events were noted at Full Council meetings. However, the Civic Officer would be asked whether there was an additional way to inform all councillors of upcoming events.

Resolved:

- 6.1** That the Head of Democratic Services liaise with the Civic Officer to revise the Unsung Heroes nomination process to allow councillors to nominate residents from their Ward **and** across the Lewes District.

SO

SO

Civic
Officer

Civic
Officer

HDS /
CO

Reason:

To note the outgoing Chair's civic programme and the civic programme for the forthcoming year.

7 Scrutiny Work Programme 2017/18

The Committee considered Report No 119/17, which detailed the Annual Scrutiny Work Programme for the forthcoming year.

Resolved:

- 7.1** That the Annual Work Programme, as set out in Report No 119/17, be recommended to Council on 6 December 2017.

SO /
CSL

Reason:

To discharge Scrutiny Procedure Rule 11 to prepare and submit the Annual Work Programme to the Full Council.

SO /
CSL

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8 Forward Plan of Decisions – 1 September 2017 – 31 December 2017

The Committee received the Forward Plan for the period from 1 September 2017 to 31 December 2017

Resolved:

- 8.1** That the Forward Plan of the Council for the period from 1 September 2017 to 31 December 2017, be noted.

Reason:

To demonstrate the discharge of the Scrutiny Procedure Rule 9 (d) to have regard to the Forward Plan of Decisions.

9 Date of Next MeetingResolved:

- 9.1** That the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee scheduled to be held on Thursday, 9 November 2017 in the Ditchling Room, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes, commencing at 10:00am, be noted.

All to
note.

The meeting ended at 11.30am.

P Gardiner
Chair