

Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held in the **Ditchling Room, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes, on Thursday, 22 February 2018** at 10:00am

Present:

Councillor P Gardiner (Chair)
Councillors N Enever, V Ient and R O’Keeffe (MBE)

Officers Present:

J Gavigan, Head of Democratic Services
J Harper, Head of Business Planning and Performance
M McDevitt, Performance and Programmes Lead
J Victory, Scrutiny Officer

In Attendance:

Councillor S Catlin, Lewes District Council

Minutes

32 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

33 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors S Adeniji and J Carter.

The Chair noted the appointment of Councillor R Robertson to the Scrutiny Committee for the remainder of the current municipal year.

34 Portfolio Progress and Performance Report 2017/2018 – Quarter 3 - (October – December 2017)

The Scrutiny Committee considered the report of the Director of Regeneration and Planning which set out details of the Council’s progress and performance in respect of key projects and targets for the third quarter of 2017/2018, as

Action

shown in Appendix 1.

Members' discussion included:

- With regard to the progress of the North Street Quarter development, members queried why it had been categorised as 'on track', especially considering the following:
 - Changes to the start of demolition date (As the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee was a member of the North Street Quarter Oversight Board, he was able to inform the Committee that the Due Diligence undertaken had contributed to this).
 - The issue of a piece of land which belonged to Lewes Town Council.

Members also requested that the Council provide all Councillors with information regarding the progress of the North Street Quarter development, so that they were able to effectively answer questions from members of the public.

- With regard to the progress of the Joint Transformation Programme, the following concerns were raised concerning the new website:
 - Dissatisfaction regarding the long URL's to links on the website.
 - Dissatisfaction regarding the inaccessibility of certain information on the website, particularly concerning Councillors, Committee meetings and Full Council webcasts.

Members expressed some concerns about the channel shift strategy feeling that those who are unable to use technology might be disadvantaged. It was suggested that the phone menu options be published on the website, so that people phoning in would not have to listen to the entire prerecorded menu before they were redirected to the correct department.

- A request that the Quarter 3 'percentage of invoices paid on time' figure be presented to the Committee as part of the next performance report in June 2018.
- A request that, with regard to the Quarter 4 report, the 'percentage of Council Tax collected' be looked at in conjunction with the 'percentage of rent collected' to ascertain whether any trends could be identified.
- A request for more information regarding what had contributed to tenant dissatisfaction in Quarter 3.
- With regard to the progress of the Neighborhood Planning project, members questioned why there had been no update concerning

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Lewes's Neighbourhood Plan.

- If the Council could provide more information to the public regarding the bin options which were available to them. Members specifically expressed an interest in whether vermin and gull proof bin bags could be used for general waste.
- Expressing gratitude to Scot Reid for his continued high quality of work and helpfulness.

Officers responded that:

- Concerns regarding the performance indicator of the North Street Quarter development were noted. It was agreed that the Scrutiny Committee recommend to Cabinet that the indicator be amended from green to amber.

The request that the Council provide members with more information regarding the progress of the North Street Quarter development was noted and would be passed to the Director of Regeneration and Planning.

- All feedback with regard to the new website was noted and it was suggested that if any future issues arise members contact Bryn Mabey, who chaired the Web Governance Group.

Members were informed that, by encouraging more use of the website, it allowed efficiencies to be achieved, in line with the Joint Transformation Programme. Officers acknowledged that some members of the public did not have access to a computer, did not have access to the internet, or simply preferred to call the Council. With other residents being directed to use the website more, officer time would be freed up to deal with those residents.

- More information on the Quarter 3 figure for 'percentage of invoices paid on time' would be presented to the Scrutiny Committee in its next performance report.

Members were informed that from 1 April 2018 a new finance system would be in place whereby invoices would be paid automatically, therefore it was agreed that the performance indicator for 'percentage of invoices paid on time' be removed from 2018/2019 performance reports, and instead be reported to the Scrutiny Committee annually.

- With regard to any trends being identified between council tax and rent collection. The Head of Homes First would be invited to the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on 28 June 2018 if performance had not

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improved.

- With regard to more information concerning tenant dissatisfaction, the Head of Homes First would be invited to the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 28 June 2018 to provide members with an update.
- The Project and Performance Lead would request information regarding the inclusion of Lewes' Neighborhood Planning project.

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Resolved:

- (1) That the Scrutiny Committee recommends to Cabinet that the performance indicator for the North Street Quarter project be amended from green to amber;
- (2) That the Scrutiny Committee recommends to Cabinet that vermin and gull proof bin bags be made available to members of the public for general waste; and
- (3) That the Portfolio Progress and Performance Report 2017/2018 – Quarter 3 be noted.

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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.

35 Scrutiny Work Programme 2017/18

The Committee considered the Work Programme, which set out in-year variations to the Annual Scrutiny Work Programme for the forthcoming year.

Members were informed that representatives from Rail Future and East Sussex County Council had been invited to attend the next meeting of the Committee on 19 April 2018 to give a presentation and participate in a Q & A session on the Uckfield to Lewes railway line. Rail Future had accepted the invitation and the Scrutiny Officer had yet to receive a response from East Sussex County Council.

Resolved:

- (1) That the Scrutiny Committee Work Programme be noted.

Reason:

To demonstrate the Scrutiny Committee's entitlement of in-year variations to the Work Programme, as indicated by Part 4 Rule 7 (c) of the Constitution of the Council.

36 Forward Plan of Decisions

The Committee received the Forward Plan for the period from 1 February 2018 – 31 May 2018.

Resolved:

- (1) That the Forward Plan of the Council for the period from 1 February 2018 – 31 May 2018, be noted.

Reason:

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

37 Date of Next Meeting

Resolved:

- (1) That the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee scheduled to be held on Thursday, 19 April 2018 in the Ditchling Room, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes, commencing at 10:00am, be noted.

All to note.

The meeting ended at 11:25am.

P Gardiner
Chair