

Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of meeting held in Court Room - Town Hall, Grove Road, BN21 4UG on 17 January 2019 at 6.00 pm

Present:

Councillor Penny di Cara (Chair)

Councillors Dean Sabri (Deputy-Chair), Colin Belsey, Md. Harun Miah, Pat Rodohan and Robert Smart

Officers in attendance:

Pauline Adams (Head of Finance), Peter Finnis (Assistant Director for Corporate Governance), Homira Javadi (Chief Finance Officer) and Tim Whelan (Director of Service Delivery) and Emily Horne (Committee Officer)

34 Minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2018

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2018 were submitted and approved as a correct record, subject to an amendment to minute 31.

Members noted the addition of the following paragraph: "The Committee expressed strong concern that the relevant officers were not present at the meeting to present the financial quarterly report and that this, along with the late submission of those papers, prevented them from having a meaningful debate at this meeting".

35 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Janet Coles, Pat Hearn, Paul Metcalfe and Steve Wallis.

36 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) by members as required under Section 31 of the Localism Act and of other interests as required by the Code of Conduct

There were none.

37 Questions by members of the public

There were none.

38 Urgent items of business

There were none.

39 Right to address the meeting/order of business

There were none.

40 Performance Monitoring 2018/19 - Quarter 2 (Part B - Financial Performance)

The Chief Finance Officer apologised for the confusion that arose at the previous meeting regarding attendance and the late submission of the supplementary report.

The Scrutiny Committee considered the report of the Chief Finance Officer regarding Quarter 2 2018/19 performance against Corporate Plan priority actions, performance indicators and targets.

Discussion included:

Members sought clarification on Appendix 3 of the agenda, stating that it lacked information and clarity. The Chief Finance Officer noted the request of the Committee and confirmed that Members questions will be reflected in a more transparent way in the future as part of the reporting improvement plan.

Members proposed that a task group could be considered to assist this work. The Assistant Director of Corporate Governance confirmed it would be appropriate for this to be considered during the next review of the Scrutiny work programme.

The Chair requested that training on financial reporting and scrutiny be provided for Members after the local elections in May 2019.

Members sought further information on employee expenditure (analysis by function). The Chief Finance Officer advised that there had been a timing issue in that the Joint Transformation Programme had not been fully implemented in 2018 and that the information will be provided in the budget book for 2019/20. The Committee was further advised that, whilst it was legitimate to take relevant staffing issues into account when undertaking specific performance reviews, there was a line to be drawn in respect of general operational management of staff and staffing levels, and this was not within the remit of the Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Scrutiny Committee note the General Fund, HRA and Collection Fund financial performance for the quarter ended September 2018 as set out in part B of the report;
- 2) That the Scrutiny Committee note the amended capital programme as set out in Appendix 3; and

3) That the Scrutiny Committee note the Treasury Management performance as set out in section 5 in part B of the report.

Reason:

To enable members to consider specific aspects of the Council's progress and performance.

41 Scrutiny Work Programme

The Committee considered the work programme, which set out in-year variations to the annual scrutiny work programme for the forthcoming year.

The Committee was advised that the Team Manager from East Sussex County Council had been invited to provide an update regarding the A27, but had declined as he did not have sufficient information at the time. An update would be provided after the Government's Roads Investment Strategy has been published.

Resolved:

That the Scrutiny work programme be noted.

42 Date of the next meeting

Resolved that the date of the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee be scheduled to be held on Monday, 4 February 2019 in the Court Room, Eastbourne Town Hall, Grove Road, Eastbourne, BN21 4UG.

The meeting ended at 7.00 pm

Councillor Penny di Cara (Chair)