

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 26 OCTOBER 2015

PRESENT:- Councillors Robert Wright (Chair), Richard Hurley, Gemma McCracken, Stan Pajak, Vera Tomlinson, Oliver Donachie, Colin Lovell, Des Moffatt, Maureen Penny, Chris Watts, and Timothy Swinyard

Councillors Brian Mattock, Deputy Leader of the Council, Vice-Chair of Cabinet, Cabinet Member for Adult Health and Social Care, Toby Elliott, Cabinet Member for Communities and Strategic Planning, Emma Faramarzi, Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety, Fionuala Foley, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Brian Ford, Cabinet Member for Streetsmart, and Dale Heenan, Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Transport.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Ballman, Kevin Parry and Carol Shelley.

25. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

26. Public Question Time

Mr Ray Worman, a local resident, asked a question regarding the issue of insurance cover in relation to Community "clean-up" days. Mr Worman's question was answered at the meeting.

27. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 12th October 2015 be confirmed and signed.

28. Consideration of Cabinet Decisions

The Director of Law and Democratic Services submitted a report introducing decisions arising from the Cabinet meeting held on 21 October 2015.

31. *Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2014/15*

Councillor Fionuala Foley, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, supported by the Board Director, Commissioning, responded to questions put by members concerning:

- financial penalties for parents taking their children out of school during term time
- options for raising educational attainment standards in Schools
- self-harming.

Resolved – That Minute 31 of the Cabinet be noted

32. *Budget Management 2015/16*

Resolved – That Minute 32 of the Cabinet be noted.

33. *Care Act 2014 - Fairer Charging and Deferred Payments*

Resolved – That Minute 33 of the Cabinet be noted

34. *Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy*

Resolved – That Minute 34 of the Cabinet be noted.

35. *Capita Partnership Agreement - IT Service*

Resolved – That Minute 35 of the Cabinet be noted.

36. *Debt Management*

The Council's Head of Finance and Change responded to members' questions on issues raised in the report. It was agreed that a written response be provided in respect of the following matters raised by members:

- overpaid housing benefits
- the breakdown of miscellaneous debts
- council tax write off amounts in 2014/15.

Resolved – That Minute 36 of the Cabinet be noted.

37. *Polling District and Places Review*

Resolved – That Minute 37 of the Cabinet be noted.

38. *Local Government Ombudsman - Annual Review 2014/2015*

Resolved – That Minute 38 of the Cabinet be noted.

39. *Updated Contract Standing Orders*

Resolved – That Minute 39 of the Cabinet be noted.

It was agreed that information requested by members during the course of the Committee's consideration of this item should be forwarded to members via the Committee Clerk.

29. Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session - Cabinet Member for StreetSmart

Councillor Brian Ford, Cabinet Member for Streetsmart was in attendance and presented a detailed report summarising progress and performance in respect of each of the following service areas within his portfolio of responsibility:

- Waterside Depot Management
- Streetsmart
- Public Toilet's
- Waste Disposal/Waste Minimisation
- Street Lighting
- Street Cleaning
- Enviro-crime

- Recycling
- Refuse Collection – Domestic and Trade
- Ground and Tree Maintenance and Open Spaces
- Removal of Graffiti and Abandoned Vehicles
- Parts (Streetsmart services only)
- Environmental Issues. Landscape and Countryside (including Community Forrest)
- Playgrounds – including those not currently utilised
- Maintenance of Roundabouts and non-HRA verges
- Building and Engineering
- Building Services, Cleaning, Catering, and Security Services
- Gullies and Drainage, minor road repairs, potholes

Following his presentation of the report, Councillor Ford responded to members' specific questions and observations on following issues raised in the presentation and also in the accompanying report:

- The frequency and scheduling of street lighting columns replacement.
- The overall response time in relation to queries submitted by members via the Members' Hotline.
- The procedure for the identification, reporting and subsequent removal and replacement of trees.
- The proposal that some existing council services might be appropriately carried out by Parish Councils.
- The frequency and costs related to the replacement of kerbside recycling vehicles.
- The procurement of a "multi-hog machine" by the Highways department to complete repairs and highway patching more effectively.
- The hedge-cutting programme.
- The response to a recent incident of an electrical fire in a public toilet in Wroughton.
- The number and distribution of disabled access public toilets in the Borough.
- The frequency of Winter-gritting of roads carried out by the Highways department.
- Response times for individual complaints made by members of the public to the Council.
- The cost to members of the public for green waste collection and whether this represents good value for money.

Resolved – That Councillor Brian Ford, the Cabinet Member for Streetsmart, be thanked for attending the meeting to present this performance report and for his full and open responses to members' questions and observations on the issues raised.

30. Status of Outstanding Request for Information

Resolved - That the status of outstanding requests for information be considered in greater detail at the next meeting of the Committee.