

STREETSMART, HIGHWAYS AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 8 MARCH 2017

PRESENT:- Councillors Colin Lovell (Chair), John Ballman, Alan Bishop, Matthew Courtliff, Paul Dixon, Mary Friend, Nick Martin, Jane Milner-Barry, Kevin Parry, Timothy Swinyard, Caryl Sydney-Smith, Vera Tomlinson, Chris Watts, Peter Watts, Steve Weisinger and David Wood.

Councillor Mary Martin, Cabinet Member for Communities, was also in attendance.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Wayne Crabbe and Julie Wright.

31. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 25th January 2017, be confirmed and signed.

32. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. No declarations were made.

33. Public Question Time

Mr Brian Cockbill asked a public question regarding a Government statement that grants to local authorities would be cut by 20% in 2018/19 and should this occur the effect this would have on the provision of streetSMART services. The Cabinet Member for Communities responded at the meeting.

Mr Brian Cockbill asked a public question regarding the improvement to the image of the town centre should homeless people be accommodated through a newly created Mayoral charity. The Cabinet Member for Communities responded at the meeting.

34. Localities and Volunteering

The Committee received a report reviewing the work of the Localities Team in respect of localities and volunteering.

Following the presentation of the report by the Cabinet Member for Communities and the Head of Localities, Community Involvement and Volunteering the Cabinet Member responded to members' specific questions and observations on the following matters:

- The number of registered volunteers and the number of hours work undertaken by volunteers.
- The role of volunteers in supporting home based adult social care and independent living.

- The type of evidence gathered by the Council to identify the benefits provided by volunteers in supporting Council service provision.
- The future development of a Community Strategy for Swindon, together with the role of volunteers within this strategy.
- Volunteer support for Swindon's Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Future Council resources available to support Swindon's voluntary sector.
- The future role of the Council's Localities Team.
- Support available from the localities team to support shadow parish councils.

Resolved – (1) That the Cabinet Member for Communities be thanked for her presentation.

(2) That an item on the role of the Voluntary Sector, in supporting the Council's service provision, be added for consideration as part of the Committee's work programme for the Municipal Year 2017/18.

35. Libraries Strategy Update

The Committee received a report setting out the current position on the implementation of the Libraries Strategy approved by the Cabinet on 8th December 2016.

Following the presentation of the report by the Cabinet Member for Communities and the Head of Localities, Community Involvement and Volunteering and an oral update from the Chair of the Libraries Working Group on its work since the previous meeting of the Committee, the Cabinet Member responded to members' specific questions and observations on the following matters:

- The submission of business plans by groups interested in providing community libraries.
- The allocation of hours for libraries both within and outside of core library service provision.
- Responses received from parish councils in respect of financial assistance to provide additional hours for local libraries.
- The availability of non-Council funding for the library service.

Resolved – That the Cabinet Member for Communities be thanked for her update.

36. Highways Post-Winter Service Review

The Committee received an oral update from the Construction Services Manager, Highways and Transport, setting out the current position in respect of the Highways Winter Service.

Following the oral update the Construction Services Manager, Highways and Transport responded to members' specific questions and observations on the following matters:

- The current Winter Service Programme which continues until 1st April 2017.
- The current composition of the winter service vehicle fleet.
- The current routes covered by Council operated road gritting vehicles and the process for determining when they would be activated.

- The current salt stocks held by the Borough Council and timescales for replenishing these after a protracted period of freezing weather.
- Work to ensure the Council had enough trained staff to fully implement cold weather operations.

Resolved – That the Construction Services Manager, Highways and Transport be thanked for his update.

37. Work Programme 2016/17

The Committee received a report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services setting out the agreed items for inclusion in the Committee's Work Programme 2016/17.

Resolved – (1) That the completion of the Committee's Work Programme for 2016/17 be noted.

(2) That, further to Minute 34(2) an item on the role of the Voluntary Sector, in supporting the Council's service provision, be added for consideration as part of the Committee's work programme for the Municipal Year 2017/18.