

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 7 AUGUST 2017

PRESENT:- Councillors Robert Wright (Chair), Steve Allsopp, Claire Ellis, Emma Faramarzi (Vice-Chair), Dale Heenan, Gemma McCracken, Nick Martin, James Robbins, Gary Sumner and Timothy Swinyard

Councillors Toby Elliott (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Sustainability) and Brian Ford (Cabinet Member for Adults' Health and Social Care)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ray Ballman, Mark Dempsey and Des Moffatt, Kevin Parry and Chris Watts

14. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. The following declarations were made:

- Councillor Gary Sumner made a personal, non-prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of agenda item 6 ("Cabinet Member Question and Answer session - Cabinet Member for Adults' Health and Social Care"), as he was a Director of Nationwide Property Lettings.
- Councillor Toby Elliott made a personal, non-prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of agenda item 5 ("Cabinet Member Question and Answer session - Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Sustainability"), as he worked for Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd.

15. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

16. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 17th July 2017, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

17. Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session - Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Sustainability

Councillor Toby Elliott, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Sustainability, was in attendance and presented to the Committee a detailed report summarising progress and performance in respect of each of the following service areas within his portfolio of responsibility:

- Strategic Spatial Planning and Development Framework Planning
- The New Eastern Villages
- Neighbourhood Planning
- Building Control and Local Land Charges
- Housing Strategy

- Design-based consultancy
- Superfast Broadband
- Wichelstowe (Commercialisation)
- Sustainability
- Strategic flood and water management
- Public Power Solutions (PPS) – Client
- Strategic Transport Network
- New proposed major road schemes
- Major road schemes outside the town centre (inter alia Junction 16, Greenbridge, etc.)

In overseeing these areas, the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Sustainability is responsible for delivering Priority One: Improve infrastructure and housing to support a growing, low-carbon economy and Pledges 1, 2, 4, 9, 13 and 14 of Swindon's vision for 2016-2020, as follows:

- Pledge 1: Deliver the Government standard Superfast Broadband coverage to all commercial and domestic premises in the Borough by 2017.
- Pledge 2: Construct solar arrays on Council-owned land at Common Farm, Chapel Farm and a solar noise barrier along roads including the M4 at Wichelstowe.
- Pledge 4: Make the case to Government to invest in a Thamesdown Drive extension and surrounding road improvements.
- Pledge 9: Develop Council-owned brownfield sites at Oakfield, and other sites as they become available for housing.
- Pledge 13: Improve highway linkages to the Eastern Villages, particularly around the White Hart roundabout.
- Pledge 14: With Barratt Homes we will build up to 3,500 homes in Wichelstowe including the development of a district centre.

At the request of the Chair, Councillor Elliott, in his presentation of the report, commented specifically on those elements within his portfolio which he felt had been most successful, those where a different approach might have produced better results and the lessons that might have been learned as a consequence, and the challenges he expected to be faced by the Council in relation to these service areas in the coming year and beyond, particularly in relation to on-going budgetary constraints.

Councillor Elliott responded to the observations and questions put by the Chair and Councillors Steve Allsopp, Emma Faramarzi, Dale Heenan, Gemma McCracken, Nick Martin, James Robbins, Gary Sumner and Tim Swinyard on the following matters:

- Progress with developers and land owners in relation to the New Eastern Villages development.
- Staffing levels within the New Eastern Villages team.
- Issues affecting the completion of the New Eastern Villages development.
- The Councils relationship with developers from Wiltshire and Oxfordshire.
- The relationship between the Local Plan and developers.
- Land values and the potential effect on developments.

- The impact of the decision by the Secretary of State to allow a housing development in Wroughton.
- The help and support required by the Cabinet member in any future challenge to the decision made by the Secretary of State.
- Regeneration of the town centre.
- The impact of development along the A420 corridor.
- Solar noise barrier along roads including the M4 and Wichelstowe.
- Delivery of superfast broadband for home owners and businesses and new ultrafast broadband locations.
- The capacity of mobile phone company 3, delivering superfast broadband in Swindon.
- Developers and the placing of notices for land in Swindon.
- Issues associated with the current road infrastructure in west Swindon.
- The resourcing of the Planning Team.
- Timescales for considering planning applications.
- Improving the user experience of the Council's planning service through digitalisation.
- The priority given to different planning applications.
- Information available to borough councillors and parish councillors in relation to Section 106 payments and how the fund is utilised in each ward/parish.
- The publication of suitable long term development sites in Swindon.
- Town centre developments, conversion of office buildings to residential and availability of affordable housing.
- The oversupply of car parking spaces in the town centre and potential use by residents during off-peak hours.
- Swindon 2050 and the town's infrastructure needs.
- Future growth of Swindon and cooperation with neighbouring Councils.
- Alternatives to the use of bus lanes, including bus priority and rapid transport schemes.
- Impact of speed bumps on the increase in pollution from diesel cars.
- Connecting green spaces within Swindon for the benefit of cyclists and walkers.

Resolved – (1) That Councillor Elliott be thanked for attending the meeting to present his performance report and for his full and open responses to members' questions and observations on the issues raised.

(2) That information requested by members during the course of the Committee's consideration of this item be forwarded to them via the Committee Clerk.

18. Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session - Cabinet Member for Adults' Health and Social Care

Councillor Brian Ford, Cabinet Member for Adult's Health and Social care, was in attendance and presented to the Committee a detailed report summarising progress and performance in respect of each of the following service areas within his portfolio of responsibility:

- Adult Services (older people, people with a learning disability, physical disabilities, and mental health);
- Adult Voluntary Sector Contracts;

- Implementation of Care Act 2014;
- Adult Local Safeguarding Board;
- Public Health – Adults including Health Improvement and Sexual Health;
- Supported Housing;
- Learning Disability Partnership Board;
- Maintaining links between the Council and partner organisations in the Health Services;
- Oversight of Better Care Fund and integration with Adult Social Care (ASC) and Clinical Commissioning Group Funding (CCG).

The Cabinet Member for Adult Health and Social Care is also responsible for delivering Priority Four and Pledges 26, 27 and 30 of Swindon's vision for 2016-2020, as follows:

- Pledge 26: Working with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and GP surgeries to help people with long term health and social care needs to manage their health effectively with support from community groups and multidisciplinary teams.
- Pledge 27: Ensuring that more people and their carers are supported to live as independently as possible and reducing the length of time people need to spend in residential care.
- Pledge 30: Reducing smoking prevalence to less than England average.

At the request of the Chair, Councillor Ford, in his presentation of the report, commented specifically on those elements within his portfolio which he felt had been most successful, those where a different approach might have produced better results and the lessons that might have been learned as a consequence, and the challenges he expected to be faced by the Council in relation to these service areas in the coming year and beyond, particularly in relation to on-going budgetary constraints.

Councillor Ford responded to questions from the Chair and Councillors Steve Allsopp, Nick Martin, James Robbins and Gary Sumner on the following matters:

- The lack of GP provision in Swindon, impact on the services provided by the Great Western Hospital and discussions with the Clinical Commissioning Group to resolve issues.
- Provision of medical facilities within new developments.
- Local mental health provision and consultation results on the transfer of patients to Green Lane, Devizes.
- Key worker properties included in new developments.
- The programmes in place to help resolve local health inequalities.
- The reduction in diabetes and its impact on health inequalities.
- Statistical information about Chlamydia.
- Savings target within the Adult Social Care budget and how this would be achieved.
- The impact of Brexit on the nursing and care sector and its impact on EU nationals working in Swindon.
- Universal credit and its impact on vulnerable people.

- The impact on Adult Social Care budgets in relation to the funding received from the Government.
- Joint working with the Clinical Commissioning Group.
- The impact of health programmes on residents behaviours and lifestyles.
- The positive impact on the health of residents living in homes fit for purpose.

Resolved – (1) That Councillor Ford be thanked for attending the meeting to present his performance report and for his full and open responses to members' questions and observations on the issues raised.

(2) That information requested by members during the course of the Committee's consideration of this item be forwarded to them via the Committee Clerk.

19. Work Programme 2017/18

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services setting out the topics for inclusion in the 2017/18 Scrutiny Work Programme as agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 19th June 2017 and 17th July 2017.

The Committee received an update about the scheduling of additional reports, requested at the last Scrutiny Committee meeting, within the Work Programme 2017/18.

Resolved – That the work programme 2017/18, as revised, be noted.

20. Status of Requests for Action and/or information

The Committee received an updated report advising on the status of outstanding issues and member requests for information.

Resolved – That the report on the status of outstanding issues and member requests for information be noted.