

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 23 OCTOBER 2017

PRESENT:- Councillors Robert Wright (Chair), Mark Dempsey, Dale Heenan, Emma Faramarzi (Vice-Chair), Nick Martin, Des Moffatt, Kevin Parry, Gary Sumner, Caryl Sydney-Smith, Chris Watts and Steve Weisinger

Councillors Fionuala Foley (Cabinet Member for Children's Services and School Attainment), Russell Holland (Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Commercialisation), Mary Martin (Cabinet Member for Communities and Place), Cathy Martyn (Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety) and Garry Perkins (Cabinet Member for Regeneration)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Claire Ellis, Timothy Swinyard and Vera Tomlinson

28. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded members to declare known interests in any matter to be considered. No such declarations were made.

29. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

30. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 11th September 2017, be confirmed and signed.

31. Council Motion - Reducing Drugs Misuse

On consideration of the following motion from Councillor Stan Pajak, seconded by Councillor Steve Allsopp, considered by Council, at its meeting on 28th September 2017:

“This Council notes:

1. Swindon like most towns and cities in this country has seen a shockingly high rise in the number of drug users.
2. That deaths related to drug misuse in this country are at their highest levels since records began.
3. The recent successful court case where drug dealers in Swindon were convicted was accompanied by a statement by Wiltshire Police regarding how London gangs are travelling to our town to sell class A drugs bringing with them violence and blighting the lives of people living within the local communities.
4. The dramatic rise in the highly dangerous disposal by users of needles and syringes in our public parks and open spaces exemplified by many recent cases.

This Council believes amid our continuing efforts with our Health partners to reduce drug misuse we must ensure that members of the public remain safe when using our open spaces and ensure our council workers remain safe when they collect sharps associated with drug usage. It therefore requests the Scrutiny Committee to consider setting up a task group to identify opportunities to reduce the incidence of drug related litter in Swindon.

Resolved – That the motion be referred to the Adults' Health, Adults' Care and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee for its consideration.

32. Consideration of Cabinet Decisions

44. Annual Report of the Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service and Authority

Resolved – That Minute 44 of the Cabinet be noted.

45. Swindon – A Learning Town

Resolved – That Minute 45 of the Cabinet be noted.

46. Council Tax and Care Leavers

Resolved – That Minute 46 of the Cabinet be noted.

47. Fire Safety in High Rise Residential Blocks of Flats

Councillor Cathy Martyn, Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety responded to questions put by Councillors Mark Dempsey and Dale Heenan on the following matters:

- The materials used in cladding the David Murray John (DMJ) Tower
- The use of Sprinklers in the DMJ Tower

Resolved – That Minute 47 of the Cabinet be noted.

48. Budget Update

Councillor Russell Holland, Cabinet Member for Finance and Commercialisation, and Councillor Garry Perkins, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, responded to questions put by Councillors Mark Dempsey and Bob Wright on the following matters:

- The timescale for reorganising STEAM so as to maximise income generation
- The invitation to bid for the 100% business rates pilot scheme for 2018/19
- The Swindon Programme's £30m cuts in 30 months

Resolved – That Minute 48 of the Cabinet be noted.

49. Swindon Museum and Art Gallery – Round 1 Bid Submission

Councillor Garry Perkins, Cabinet Member for Regeneration responded to questions put by Councillors Mark Dempsey and Dale Heenan on the following matters:

- The total exposure to the Council's finances of the Heritage Lottery Fund bid to secure funding to develop a detailed business case for the proposed new Museum and Art Gallery.

Resolved – That Minute 49 of the Cabinet be noted.

50. County Ground Recreation Improvements and Asset Transfer

Resolved – That Minute 50 of the Cabinet be noted.

51. Polling District and Places Review

Councillor Mary Martin, Cabinet Member for Communities and Place responded to a question put by Councillor Chris Watts regarding apparent anomalies between new parishes and existing polling district areas

Resolved – That Minute 51 of the Cabinet be noted.

52. Swindon Borough Local Plan Review – Regulation 18 (Issues and Options) Consultation

Councillor Russell Holland, Cabinet Member for Finance and Commercialisation responded to questions put by Councillors Mark Dempsey and Gary Sumner on the benefits to the Council of producing the Local Plan

Resolved – That Minute 52 of the Cabinet be noted.

53. Affordable Housing Development Update

Councillor Cathy Martyn, Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety, responded to questions put by Councillors Des Moffatt and Mark Dempsey on the following matters:

- The total number of Council affordable housing units developed this year compared to previous years.
- Consultation with Ward Members on the Queens Drive scheme.

Resolved – That Minute 53 of the Cabinet be noted.

54. Wichelstowe Joint Venture

Councillor Russell Holland, Cabinet Member for Finance and Commercialisation responded to questions put by Councillor Des Moffatt on the following matters:

- Ensuring that the Joint Venture agreement for the development of Middle and West Wichel is the best possible for the Council

Resolved – That Minute 54 of the Cabinet be noted.

55. Site in South East Swindon – Proposed Disposal and Collaboration Agreement

Resolved – That Minute 55 of the Cabinet be noted.

56. Carriage Works Investment

Resolved – That Minute 56 of the Cabinet be noted.

33. Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session - Cabinet Member for Communities and Place

Councillor Mary Martin, Cabinet Member for Communities and Place, was in attendance and presented to the Committee a detailed report summarising progress and performance in respect of each of the following areas within her portfolio of responsibility:

- Waterside Depot Management, including Household Waste Recycling Centre
- Streetsmart
- Public Toilets
- Waste Disposal/Waste Minimisation
- Street Lighting (maintenance and strategic)
- Street Cleaning
- Recycling
- Refuse Collection – Domestic and Trade
- Ground and Tree Maintenance and Open Spaces
- Removal of Graffiti and Abandoned Vehicles
- Parks (Streetsmart services only)
- Environmental Issues Landscape and Countryside (including Community Forest)
- Playgrounds, including those that are not presently utilised
- Maintenance of Roundabouts and non-HRA verges
- Cemeteries and Crematoria Assets
- Building and Engineering
- Building Services, cleaning, catering and security services
- Gullies and drainage, minor road repairs, potholes
- Strategic Transport Network
- Public Transport (including Concessionary Fare, Specialist Transport, Council Transport and Fleet Management)
- Traffic and Transport Forward Planning (including Local Transport Plan and implementation of Local Transport Plan)
- Strategic Highways and Maintenance Works
- Building community capacity
- Liaison with Parishes and increased collaboration
- Libraries
- Leisure Strategy and relationship with GLL

In overseeing these areas, the Cabinet Member for Communities and Place is responsible for the delivery of the following pledges in pursuance of the Council's Vision:

- Priority One: Improve infrastructure and housing to support a growing, low carbon economy

- Priority Three: Ensure clean and safe streets and improve our public spaces and local culture
 - Pledge 23: Find new ways to engage communities and neighbourhoods to increase the cleanliness of their local areas.

Following her presentation of the report, Councillor Martin responded to observations and questions put by the Chair and Councillors Dale Heenan, Chris Watts, Gary Sumner, Mark Dempsey and Kevin Parry on the following matters:

- The allocation of Streetsmart activities between different Parishes.
- Data sharing documentation with Libraries.
- The completion of the final design for the Junction 15 roundabout.
- Signalling and road signage issues at the Greenbridge roundabout.
- Parishes and the responsibility for footpaths.
- No increase in fly-tipping compared to the change of hours at the Household Waste Recycling Centre.
- The change in ownership of Thamesdown Transport to Gosouthcoast
- Charging for clearing up fly-tipping in Parished areas.
- A business case for the renewal of street lighting in relation to energy consumption and structural integrity.
- The monitoring of accident statistics on busy roads.
- The current state of play with regard to the proposed extension to Thamesdown Drive.
- The allocation of Street Wardens within Parished areas.

Resolved – (1) That Councillor Mary Martin be thanked for attending the meeting to present her performance report and for her 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 Officer.

34. Review of Full Council Decisions

The Director of Law and Democratic Services submitted a report concerning the decisions made by Full Council between May 2016 and July 2017, the current status of these decisions (completed or outstanding) and outlining the actions taken by Officers in responding to the decisions.

Resolved – That the report be noted

35. 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 meetings on 19th June and 17th July 2017.

Resolved – That the work programme 2017/18 be noted

36. 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.