

COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2018

PRESENT:- Councillors Dale Heenan (Chair), Kevin Parry, James Robbins and Gary Sumner.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Ballman, Mary Friend, Vera Tomlinson and Peter Watts.

21. 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.

22. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd November 2017, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

23. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

24. Presentation - Resident Communication and Engagement

The Committee received a presentation by Sam Mowbray, Director of Performance, Organisational Improvement and Communications and Philip Avery, Head of Communications, in relation to the Council's process for communicating with and engaging Borough residents.

Following the presentation the Director of Performance, Organisational Improvement and Communications and, Head of Communications responded to members' questions and observations on the issues raised including:

- That the recent residents' survey was the first undertaken by the Borough since 2012.
- That the residents' survey involved telephone calls to 503 Swindon residents.
- A break-down of questions put to respondents of the residents' survey.
- The future communications strategy which would in part be shaped by feedback from the recent peer review of communications undertaken over a 5 day period and feedback from elected members and service areas within the Council.
- The comparison and close correlation between the results of the Swindon and national survey on priorities of residents and the level of trust residents had in their Local Authority.
- The use of Council staff as ambassadors and their ability to spread key messages and objectives of the organisation.
- A break-down of the current usage figures for the Council's website and social media accounts.
- The prioritisation of the use of the Council's website and other electronic communications in engaging the public and for service delivery.

- That 25% of Swindon residents were signed up to “My Account”.
- The benefits of more closely aligning content on the Borough and Parish Council websites to reflect the work that has been transferred across to Parish Councils.
- That additional information, such as the Council Tax Booklet, should be primarily available in an electronic format.
- That increased use of social media would change the way Councillors work.
- The benefits of electronic communication and social media in engaging people outside of traditional working hours.
- Data Protection issues relating to the use of email addresses held by the Council for the dissemination of other information.
- The need to ensure that feedback could be provided to respondents in future consultations.

Resolved – (1) that the Director of Performance, Organisational Improvement and Communications and, Head of Communications be thanked for an informative and useful presentation.

(2) That the Director of Performance, Organisational Improvement and Communications be requested to present the new Communications Strategy to this Committee as soon as is practicable.

25. Dial-a-Ride Update

The Service Manager, Passenger Transport, submitted a report setting out progress made by the Council in supporting Dial-A-Ride to become a more sustainable service.

Following the presentation the Head of Highways and Transport responded to members’ questions and observations on the issues raised including:

- On-going work by a Cabinet Member Advisory Group in (i) supporting Dial-A-Ride, (ii) monitoring performance data, and (iii) monitoring the contract management of services provided on behalf of the Council.
- The forthcoming contract renewal for subsidised transport contracts operated on behalf of the Council.
- Challenges experienced by Dial-A-Ride vehicles getting around the Borough and special provisions made by the Council to official vehicles operated by Dial-A-Ride to use bus lanes.
- Other potential streams of income available to Dial-A-Ride, for example, school transport, and how tendering for such work might be affected by current demand levels on the service at the busiest hours of service provision.
- The potential for Dial-A-Ride to reduce its operating costs through the use of Council owned facilities.
- The need to continue support to Dial-A-Ride to ensure it remains financially viable.
- The social benefits to vulnerable residents from the Dial-A-Ride service.
- The need to continue monitoring performance data to ensure Best Value is maintained.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

26.

Work Programme 2017/18

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services setting out the Committee's proposed Work Programme for the Municipal Year, 2017/18.

Resolved – (1) That the Committee's Work Programme for the Municipal Year, 2107/18 be noted.

(2) That a review of the actions approved by this Committee during the Municipal Year 2017/18 be submitted to the next meeting.

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