

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 25 APRIL 2016

PRESENT:- Councillors Robert Wright (Chair), Colin Lovell, Gemma McCracken, Des Moffatt, Kevin Parry, Vera Tomlinson, Oliver Donachie, Maureen Penny, Carol Shelley and Chris Watts

Councillors Dale Heenan (Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Transport), Russell Holland (Cabinet Member for Finance, People and Performance), Brian Mattock (Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Adult Health and Social Care) and Garry Perkins (Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration and Skills) were in attendance.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Ballman, Richard Hurley and Stan Pajak

64. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting.

(1) The following declarations of interest were made in respect of Agenda Item 5 – Consideration of Cabinet Decisions:

- a. Councillor Gemma McCracken made a prejudicial declaration of interest and left the room during the discussion and voting on this matter.
- b. Councillor Bob Wright made a personal declaration of interest, continued to Chair the meeting, but did not vote on this matter.

65. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

66. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 21st March 2016, be confirmed and signed as a correct record, subject to Councillor Maureen Penny's concern being recorded that other Councillor's, who were not members of the Scrutiny Committee, being allowed to ask questions at the meeting.

67. Consideration of Cabinet Decisions

The Director of Law and Democratic Services submitted a report introducing decisions arising from the Cabinet meeting held on 20th April 2016.

87. *Budget Management*

Councillor Russell Holland, Cabinet Member for Finance, People and Performance, responded to questions put by the Chair, Councillors Des Moffatt, Vera Tomlinson and Oliver Donachie on the following matters:

- Underspends from the early delivery of savings or efficiency savings in the Council-wide General Fund included changes in the delivery of library services and the transfer of services to Parish Councils
- The budget for the refurbishment to the World War One War Memorial
- Comparing the delivery of services with standards previously achieved rather than with other Councils.
- The rising costs associated with Children's Social Care and the ability of the Council to reverse this trend.
- Policy development in relation to recruitment and housing for key workers
- The effect on Council budgets if it was deemed necessary to transfer a service back in-house following its previous transfer to an outside operator.

Resolved – That Minute 87 of the Cabinet be noted.

88. *Land at Central Swindon*

Councillor Garry Perkins, Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration and Skills, responded to questions put by the Chair and Councillors Oliver Donachie and Des Moffatt on the following matters:

- The investment required for the premises and details of the lease with Network Rail.
- The rental cost of the current Forward Swindon premises
- The benefit of Forward Swindon Limited relocating to new offices which reflected their dynamic approach to regeneration.
- Details about the proposed model and land swap/purchase with Network rail.
- The provision of a start-up centre for high tech innovation businesses.

Resolved – That Minute 88 of the Cabinet be noted.

68. 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.

Councillor Penny reported that she had met with officers about the possibility of including the consideration of outsourcing the Library Service as part of the public consultation about the future of the Service. However, Councillor Penny expressed a concern that some senior officers were unable to attend the meeting and it would have been helpful if she was aware of this before the meeting and that other officers attending could have been suitably prepared for the meeting. The Chair asked for feedback to be given to all officers that when members request their attendance at a meeting or arrange a meeting with them that they actually attend or inform them as

early as possible about their potential absence so that other arrangements can be made.

Resolved - (1) That the report on the status outstanding issues and member requests for information be noted.

(2) That it be noted that the issue raised by Councillor Penny in relation to the future delivery of the Library Service and a request for a meeting to discuss the possibility of outsourcing the Library Service, was now complete following a meeting with officers.

69.

Chair's Thanks

The Chair thanked the Committee for their help, support and depth of understanding of issues throughout the year.