

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 2016

PRESENT:- Councillors Kevin Parry (Chair), Emma Bushell, Mark Dempsey, Emma Faramarzi, John Haines, Gemma McCracken, Cathy Martyn, Des Moffatt, James Robbins, Caryl Sydney-Smith and Chris Watts.

Councillors David Renard (Leader of the Council), Oliver Donachie (Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness), Toby Elliott (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning), Brian Ford (Cabinet Member for Adults' Health and Social Care), Dale Heenan (Cabinet Member for Sustainability, Highways, and Transport), Russell Holland (Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services), Mary Martin (Cabinet Member for Communities) and Keith Williams (Cabinet Member for StreetSmart).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Robert Wright (Chair), Claire Ellis and Vera Tomlinson.

22. Election of Chair

That Councillor Kevin Parry be appointed Chair for this meeting.

23. Declarations of Interest

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

Councillor Toby Elliott made a personal, non-prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of agenda item (5) Consideration of Cabinet Decisions, Minute 42 - Budget Management 2016-17 and 2016 - 2020 Efficiency Statement as he is employed by Network Rail.

24. Public Question Time

Mr Brian Cockbill, a local resident, asked a question regarding the Highway and Transport public survey undertaken by MORI on behalf of the Council. The Chair thanked Mr Cockbill for his question and advised that a written answer would be provided.

25. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd August 2016, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

26. Consideration of Cabinet Decisions

The Director of Law and Democratic Services submitted a report introducing decisions arising from the Cabinet meeting held on 7th September 2016.

42. Budget Management 2016-17 and 2016-2020 Efficiency Statement

Councillor David Renard, Leader of the Council and Chair of the Cabinet, responded to questions put by Councillors Gemma McCracken, Mark Dempsey, Des Moffatt and Chris Watts on the following matters:

- The Business Improvement District and the prospects of reviewing or extending its boundary.
- The expectation of potential changes to the funding and income of Business Improvement District once the new business rate relief policy comes into effect in April 2017.
- The pressures being experienced by Children Services and potential overspend.
- The one-off funding for Waste Disposal.
- The flexible use of capital receipts enabling the Council to fund certain revenue expenditure projects that are forecast to generate on-going savings.
- The development and management of suitable housing, funded from the Housing revenue Account to relieve pressure on the general fund.
- The funding stream allocated for the development of Akers Way highways project.

Resolved – That Minute 42 of the Cabinet be noted.

43. Apprenticeships and the Apprenticeship Levy

Councillor Russell Holland, Deputy Leader of the Council, Vice-Chair of the Cabinet and Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services, responded to questions put by Councillors Gemma McCracken and Emma Bushell on the following matters:

- The potential target groups being encouraged to apply for apprenticeships in any recruitment campaign.
- The financial and logistical challenges facing apprenticeships and how they would be funded.

Resolved – That Minute 43 of the Cabinet be noted.

44. A Smokefree Bus Station

Resolved – That Minute 44 of the Cabinet be noted.

45. Local Bus Services and Strategy Review

Resolved – That Minute 45 of the Cabinet be noted.

46. School Place Planning Update 2016

Resolved – That Minute 46 of the Cabinet be noted.

47. Swindon Education Improvement Strategy

The Head of Education Services, responded to questions put by Councillors Gemma McCracken, Mark Dempsey and Chris Watts on the following matters:

- The School Strategy Board and the impact it has had on improving education in Swindon.
- The recent primary exam results reported by the Department for Education, reasons for performance issues and the possible future impact on schools in Swindon.
- The resources available to deliver the Education Improvement Strategy and how improvements in education would be measured.
- The resources available to maintained schools and academies.

Resolved – That Minute 47 of the Cabinet be noted.

48. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 – Inspection report from the Office of Surveillance Commissioners

Resolved – That Minute 48 of the Cabinet be noted.

49. References from other Council Bodies – Health and Wellbeing Board and Community Safety Partnership

Resolved – That Minute 49 of the Cabinet be noted.

50. Annual Review of Local Ombudsman Complaints

Resolved – That Minute 50 of the Cabinet be noted.

51. Wichelstowe District Centre

Resolved – That Minute 51 of the Cabinet be noted.

27. Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session - Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning

Councillor Toby Elliott, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, 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 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)

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.

Following his presentation of the report, Councillor Elliott responded to members' specific questions and observations on the following matters:

- The sales figures for superfast broadband in north Swindon.
- The competition generated by suppliers of superfast broadband and the impact on the Council's commitment with Broadband Delivery UK.
- The delivery of funding for vital infrastructure at an early stage of development.
- The roll out plan for superfast broadband for wards in Swindon.
- The important role played by the Council's Building Control Team.
- The use of bespoke superfast broadband installed in new housing developments in East Wichel, and its installation in new housing developments in Middle Wichel.

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

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

28. Work Programme 2016/17

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services setting out the topics for inclusion in the 2016/17 Scrutiny Work Programme as agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 20th June 2016.

Resolved – That the draft work programme 2016/17 be noted.

29. 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 outstanding issues and member requests for information be noted.