

SCRUTINY

MONDAY, 18 JUNE 2018

PRESENT:- Councillors Robert Wright (Chair), Emma Faramarzi (Vice-Chair), Emma Bushell, Brian Mattock, Jane Milner-Barry, Des Moffatt, Maureen Penny, Tim Swinyard, Vera Tomlinson, Chris Watts and Steve Weisinger.

Also in attendance were: Councillor David Renard (Leader of the Council), Councillor Russell Holland (Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance), Councillor Oliver Donachie (Cabinet Member for Economy Prosperity), Councillor Fionuala Foley (Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment), Councillor Brian Ford (Cabinet Member for Adults), Councillor Garry Perkins (Cabinet Member for Town Centre), Councillor Keith Williams (Cabinet Member for Corporate and Customer Services) and Councillor Dale Heenan.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Claire Ellis and James Robbins.

1. 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 of interest were made.

2. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

3. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2018 be confirmed and signed as a correct record, subject to the addition of the missing Cabinet Member title under Item 77. Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session – Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Digitalisation and Lydiard House and Park.

4. Consideration of Cabinet Decisions

The Committee considered a report introducing decisions arising from the Cabinet meeting held on 13th June 2018.

4. Budget Management 2017/2018

Resolved – That Minute 4 of the Cabinet be noted.

5. Capital Monitoring Outturn 2017/2018

Resolved – That Minute 5 of the Cabinet be noted.

6. Treasury Management Performance 2017/2018

Resolved – That Minute 6 of the Cabinet be noted.

7. Motion to Amend Central Residents' Season Ticket

Resolved – That Minute 7 of the Cabinet be noted.

8. Traffic Management Act 2004 – Enforcement Powers

Resolved – (1) That Minute 8 of the Cabinet be noted.

(2) That the following concerns be noted by the Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment:

- That the Council does not currently produce positive messages to residents to encourage more use of garages and reduce on-street parking.
- That planning applications being approved by the Council for the conversion of garages to dwellings further exacerbates the problem of on-street parking.
- That the Council should be more involved in producing alternative proposals for car parking provision in residential areas.

9. Libraries Strategy – Delivery Model

Resolved – (1) That Minute 9 of the Cabinet be noted.

(2) That the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Customer Services be asked to note members' concerns that Parish Councils had not been referenced in the report.

(3) That the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Customer Services be requested to circulate the Libraries Business Plan to members of this Committee for information.

10. Referral from the Scrutiny Committee – Superfast Broadband Extension Programme

Resolved – (1) That Minute 10 of the Cabinet be noted.

(2) That the Cabinet Member for Economic Prosperity be requested to circulate a heat map of UK Broadband consumers in Swindon to members of this Committee.

11. Councillors' Allowances 2019/2020 – Recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel

Resolved – That Minute 11 of the Cabinet be noted.

12. References from other Council bodies – Health and Wellbeing Board

Resolved – That Minute 12 of the Cabinet be noted.

5. Leader of the Council: Annual Report

Councillor David Renard, the Leader of the Council, attended this first meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2018/19, to report to the Committee on (a) the Authority's achievements in 2017/18 and (b) the Administration's challenges and priorities for the 2018/19 Municipal Year.

The Leader, in his report, highlighted achievements during 2017/18 which included:

- *Pledge 14: Build up to 3,500 homes on Wichelstowe.* A joint venture agreement has been signed with Barratt Homes and, following a competitive tender, plans for a new pub and restaurant near Waitrose have been secured.

- *Pledge 22 – to secure the North Star Regional Leisure destination.* The Council now has outline planning permission for the North Star development and is awaiting the final application. This will cover both North Star and the Designer Outlet Village.
- Lydiard House and Park remains open and work has started to improve the historic building. It is now moving towards breaking even, but this does not address how the additional money for investment will be raised to improve the whole site further.
- The Council has continued to reduce the number of delayed discharges of care. Swindon has achieved a reduction of 450 bed days' delays in May 2017 to 30 in March 2018. More elderly people are being supported at home with a reduction in permanent admission to residential and nursing care from 192 in 2016/17 to 165 in 2017/18.

The Leader, in his report, also highlighted the challenges for 2018/19 which included:

- Ensuring that the Council's statutory care services are provided. Swindon, like all similar authorities, faces immense demand-led pressure in children's safeguarding, adult social care, and caring for those with learning difficulties.
- Ensuring that relationships with the police, schools, the hospital, the Clinical Commissioning Group, and the relevant charities and third sector groups are enhanced in order to ensure that all residents are protected.

The Leader responded to a number of questions put by Councillors Emma Faramarzi, Emma Bushell, Vera Tomlinson, Des Moffatt, Maureen Penny, Jane Milner-Barry, Chris Watts and the Chair on the following matters:

- The response to the letter sent by the Leader to Government regarding the local growth fund bid submitted for the Thamesdown Drive development.
- The number of affordable homes built by the Council during the previous year, and the viability of achieving the target of 30% of new build homes being affordable homes in the forthcoming year.
- The amount of funding committed by the Council to assist the foodbank in Swindon, and where the funding will be drawn from.
- The difficulties with recruiting and retaining planning officers, and the need for specialist training to ensure they effectively challenge developers.
- The change in procedures which has led to a reduction in the number of bailiffs being used to re-coup Council Tax and housing rent debts from residents, and any potential resulting increase in costs to the Council.
- The Leader's involvement in the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership, and the positive funding outcome for Swindon residents when compared to Wiltshire residents from the growth fund bids approved by the Partnership.
- The plans for developing a northern bypass road between Cricklade and Wootton Bassett.
- The potential for future residential development in the North Star proposals, and the lack of an eastern villages' consortium which could help to push forward plans for that sector.
- Given the projected rise in population, the plans for working with the Great Western Hospital Trust to extend the hospital, possibly using Section 106 or Community Infrastructure Levy funding.
- The original proposals for the Libraries service within Swindon and how it compares to the final service provision currently in place.

- The two year timeline within which it is expected the local plan will be finalised, and the need for the plan to include more employment sites.
- The capacity of the staff working on the New Eastern Villages development, and plans to increase this.

Resolved – (1) That Councillor Renard, the Leader of the Council, be thanked for his informative presentation of his half-year update report and for his full and open responses to members' questions on the issues raised.

(2) That, upon provision of the first consultation document for the Library service proposals, the Leader be asked to review the final service provision compared to the original proposals.

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

6. Work Programme 2018/2019

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services setting out the topics for inclusion in the 2018/19 Scrutiny Work Programme.

The Chair reminded the Committee of the adopted approach to reviewing the scrutiny programme which allows Members the opportunity to be involved in the oversight and development of matters of interest. Members were encouraged to consider the content of the Scrutiny Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programmes to identify matters that might be of particular relevance.

Following a question submitted by the Chair, the Leader of the Council confirmed that the Cabinet Member Advisory Groups, as agreed at Annual Council in May 2018, will be continuing during the 2018/2019 Municipal Year.

The Chair referred to the following areas that had been included in the draft Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2018/19:

- Inviting the relevant Police Inspector to a future Scrutiny meeting.
- Revisiting and finalising the report of the Averies Task Group.
- Review of the provision of services contracted by the Council to external bodies.

Resolved – (1) That the draft Work Programme for 2018/2019 be noted.

(2) That each Overview and Scrutiny Committee be asked to review the combined Work Programmes to determine where there is overlap or matters missing, and to report any matters to the Chair of this Committee.

7. 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.