

## **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 2012**

**PRESENT:-** Councillors Kevin Small (Chair), John Ballman, Toby Elliott, Claire Ellis, Richard Hurley, Colin Lovell, Des Moffatt, Maureen Penny, James Robbins, Robert Wright, Mary Friend and John Haines

Councillors Roderick Bluh, Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet, David Renard, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Mark Edwards, Cabinet Member for Finance, Fionuala Foley, Cabinet Member for Streetsmart and Corporate Services, Dale Heenan, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Sustainability, Russell Holland, Cabinet Member for One Swindon, Localities and Housing, Brian Mattock, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care, Garry Perkins, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture, Vera Tomlinson, Cabinet Member for a Safer and Stronger Borough, and Keith Williams, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Strategic Transport, were also in attendance.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Peter Heaton-Jones (Vice-Chair) and Brian Ford

### **19. Declarations of Interest**

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

### **20. Public Question Time**

Mrs Kareen Boyd, a resident of Hesketh Crescent, Swindon, asked whether primary school place planning across Swindon should be reviewed and asked the Scrutiny Committee to initiate an assessment of the complete process that resulted in the delivery of the Croft School.

The Chair felt he was not in a position to determine whether there was a requirement for any such review. Instead, he suggested that the matter be referred to the Council's Children and Young People's Overview Committee for consideration. With reference to Mrs Boyd's request for a review of the process leading to the delivery of the Croft School, the Chair advised that an independent review was currently underway and that it was appropriate to await the outcome of that review.

In response to a supplementary question by Mrs Boyd, asking that the terms of reference of the Croft School review might be amended to take account of matters that she felt had only come to light after the terms of reference were set, the Chair advised that this was not appropriate as the review had already commenced. He agreed that the Review Group be asked to note Mrs Boyd's comments regarding the scope of the terms of reference for the review. The Chair agreed that, on this occasion, reference to Mrs Boyd's questions and his answers would be recorded in the minutes.

Mr Brian Cockbill asked a question regarding the Committee's determination of its work programme for 2012/13 and the committee papers provided to members in

support of that decision. The Chair responded to Mr Cockbill's enquiry and agreed that he be provided with a copy of his response and also with a copy of the agreed work programme.

Mr Cockbill then asked a series of questions, directed to the Leader of the Council, on the following issues:

- was any reduction proposed to the Special Responsibility Allowance paid to the Chair of Planning in light of the recent announcement of the temporary removal of the requirement to apply for planning permission for certain types of development.
- had Electoral Services had received any petitions in response to consultation on the Community Governance Review for the creation of any new Parish Councils and, if so, the details of such petitions; and
- in the light of information now provided, would the Leader of the Council "address as soon as possible" the question to the Cabinet meeting on 5 September 2012, regarding his, the Leader's, duty to ensure that officers and Cabinet Members carry out Council decisions and "any undertaking made by them to members of the public" and to take appropriate sanctions when there is a failure to do so.

The Chair, with the assistance of officers, replied to Mr Cockbill's questions and agreed that written answers should be provided in respect of the outstanding matters identified by Mr Cockbill.

## **21. Minutes**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2012 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

## **22. Consideration of Cabinet Decisions**

The Director of Law and Democratic Services submitted a report introducing decisions arising from the Cabinet meeting held on 5 September 2012.

### **33. *Introduction of Deregulatory Planning Measures to Promote Business Growth***

Resolved - That Minute 33 of the Cabinet be noted

### **34. *Neighbourhood Planning Protocol***

Councillor Dale Heenan, the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Sustainability, responded to Councillor Bob Wright's concerns about members', and the public's, understanding of the relationship and connectivity between community, neighbourhood and local plans and his wish that, in order to promote public ownership of the plans, his wish that the agreed Neighbourhood Planning Protocol should clarify both the distinction between these and their links to one another.

Resolved - That Minute 34 of the Cabinet be noted

### **35. *Adoption of the Corporate Strategy 2012/13***

In response to a question put by the Chair, Councillor Rod Bluh, the Leader of the Council, agreed that an item would be placed in the Members' Bulletin confirming the arrangements for engaging with all members in the development of Part Two of the Corporate Strategy.

Resolved – That Minute 35 of the Cabinet be noted.

36. *Military Covenant - Motion at Council (Minute for Confirmation)*

Resolved - That Minute 36 of the Cabinet be noted

37. *Budget Management 2012/13*

In response to comments by Councillor Des Moffatt regarding his view of the “strength” of the Housing Rents Account at present, Councillor Russell Holland, the Cabinet Member for One Swindon, Localities and Housing, offered his own assessment of the financial position of the rents account, in terms of income and expenditure and assets and liabilities. Councillor Holland indicated that work was being done on budgets currently but that he would be happy to receive written suggestions from Councillor Moffatt, or any member, on related matters to see how these might be considered in relation to that on-going work.

Resolved - That Minute 37 of the Cabinet be noted

38. *Capital Programme Monitoring - 1st Quarter 2012/13*

Resolved - That Minute 38 of the Cabinet be noted

39. *Capital Building Projects - Partnership Framework Agreements*

Resolved - That Minute 39 of the Cabinet be noted

40. *Recycling Improvements*

Councillor Fionuala Foley, Cabinet Member for Streetsmart and Corporate Services, responded to members' questions and observations on the topic of non-recycled commercial waste and its impact on the Council's recycling targets and landfill requirements. Councillor Foley also provided the meeting with an update in respect of the Council's response to problems recently encountered in relation to its green waste collection service.

Resolved - That Minute 40 of the Cabinet be noted

41. *Local Sustainable Transport Fund Programme*

Resolved - That Minute 41 of the Cabinet be noted

42. *Proposals for the Permanent Expansion of Haydonleigh and Even Swindon Primary Schools*

Councillor David Renard, the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Children's Services, responded to comments by the Chair regarding matters he had asked to be raised at the Cabinet meeting, regarding his, and residents', concerns over related highways and localised flooding issues, and Cabinet's response that these would be addressed as part of the development planning process. Councillor Renard advised that the report to Cabinet was solely intended to authorise the officers to go to the next stage of consultation and that detailed comment was, perhaps, premature at this time. However, he acknowledged the validity of the points made by the Chair and agreed to raise these with his development control officers.

Resolved - That Minute 42 of the Cabinet be noted

43. *Street Lighting and Traffic Signals Review (Minute for Confirmation)*

Resolved - That Minute 43 of the Cabinet be noted

44. *Stronger Together - Accommodation*

Resolved - That Minute 44 of the Cabinet be noted