

## **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY, 24 MARCH 2014**

PRESENT:- Councillors Kevin Small (Chair), Andrew Bennett, John Ballman, Emma Faramarzi, Brian Ford, Mary Friend, Cindy Matthews, Des Moffatt, Maureen Penny, Stan Pajak, Robert Wright, Vera Tomlinson and Steve Weisinger

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Michael Dickinson (Vice-Chair)

### **58. Declarations of Interest**

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. Councillor Maureen Penny declared a personal interest in Minute 62 as there was likely to be a discussion about Children's Centres and Councillor Penny was Chair of the Ladybird Children's Centre, Highworth.

### **59. Public Question Time**

Jane Milner- Barry, on behalf of Kareen Boyd, asked 4 questions about the transfer of the running of the Oasis Leisure Centre to Moirai Capital Investments. At the invitation of the Chair, the Council's Board Director Resources responded to one of the questions with the other three to receive a written answer.

Ms Milner- Barry then asked a further 3 questions, also relating to the Oasis Leisure Centre. The Chair responded to one of the questions and asked for a written response to the other two questions.

### **60. Minutes**

Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2014, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### **61. Consideration of Cabinet Decisions**

The Director of Law and Democratic Services submitted a report introducing decisions arising from the Cabinet meeting held on 19 March 2014.

#### **98. *Wichelstowe Development Update***

Resolved - That Minute 98 of the Cabinet be noted.

#### **99. *Budget Management 2013/14***

The Board Director Resources responded to a question from Councillor Des Moffatt about investment in technology and change management resources to drive further savings from the integrated of services formerly managed by Swindon Commercial Services Ltd with other Council services.

Resolved - That Minute 99 of the Cabinet be noted.

*100. Business Rates Retail Relief Discount*

Resolved - That Minute 100 of the Cabinet be noted.

*101. Capital Programme Monitoring – Third Quarter 2013/14*

Resolved - That Minute 101 of the Cabinet be noted.

*102. School Admission Arrangements and Transport Policy for 2015/16*

In response to questions by Councillors Cindy Matthews and Bob Wright, Councillor David Renard, the Leader of the Council and the Head of Commissioning Economy and Attainment provided an update about the provision of transport for students attending the University Technical College.

Resolved - That Minute 102 of the Cabinet be noted.

*103. Swindon Secondary School Places Planning Strategy (Minute for Confirmation)*

Councillor Fionuala Foley, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, and the Head of Commissioning Economy and Attainment responded to a number of questions from Councillors as follows:

- Councillor Cindy Matthews about Swindon pupils attending Bradon Forest School at Purton and formalising an arrangement with Wiltshire Council to enable the school to become a designated Swindon school for admission and transport purposes
- Councillor Bob Wright about the expansion of Roman Catholic Schools in Swindon
- Councillor John Ballman about the location of a 4-19 years facility proposed by New College in north Swindon from September 2016.

Resolved - That Minute 103 of the Cabinet be noted.

*104. Tadpole Farm Primary School – Temporary Provision*

Councillor Fionuala Foley, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and David Renard, the Leader of the Council responded to a question from Councillor Bob Wright about concerns that the Red House Community Centre would not be constructed in time as a temporary site for a primary school.

Resolved - That Minute 104 of the Cabinet be noted.

*105. Office of Surveillance Commissioners Inspection Report of Swindon Borough Council 2013*

Resolved - That Minute 105 of the Cabinet be noted.

*106. Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership Strategic Economic Plan and Swindon's Future Infrastructure Needs*

The Leader of the Council, Councillor David Renard responded to a question from Councillor Moffatt about his concerns in relation to the Local Enterprise Partnership.

Resolved - That Minute 106 of the Cabinet be noted.

**62. Cabinet Member for Children's Services - Question and Answer Session**

Councillor Fionuala Foley, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, was in attendance and presented a detailed report summarising the success, challenges and future direction of the portfolio.

At the request of the Chair, Councillor Foley, in her presentation of the report, commented specifically on those elements within her portfolio which she 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 she expected to be faced by the Council relation to these service areas in the coming year and beyond.

Following her presentation of the report, Councillor Foley, supported by her officer team, responded to members' specific questions and observations on the following topics:

- The exploitation of young women in society
- Rearrangements in the Community Safety Partnership
- The activities in place or planned to address common issues in areas of multiple occupancy, where siblings were looking after each other as parents were not at home because they were working
- Courses and support available to people wanting to change jobs and train for social care posts
- Concerns about the potential to fail to act in certain situations, the availability of staff to intervene and the need for more cross party working
- The need for Pastoral Care in schools
- The placement of children in care homes and foster homes and the processes and procedures in place to monitor the placements
- The inspection of children's centres by Ofsted and the judgement by Ofsted of the overall effectiveness of the centre
- Tackling drug and alcohol abuse amongst teenagers, higher re-offending rates in Swindon and the need for more resilient communities
- The problems associated with pornography on the internet and the need to support an independent person to deliver personal development classes in schools.
- The use of private foster care as respite care for families with severely disabled children in addition to the use of private residential care services, in particular the services provided by Buttons

Resolved - That Councillor Foley be thanked for attending the meeting and for her full and open responses to members' questions and observations.