

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 15 DECEMBER 2014

PRESENT:- Councillors Robert Wright (Chair), John Ballman, Mark Dempsey, Toby Elliott, Colin Lovell, Mary Martin (Vice-Chair), Cindy Matthews, Kevin Parry, Maureen Penny, James Robbins, Vera Tomlinson and Steve Weisinger.

Councillors David Renard, Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet, Brian Mattock, Deputy Leader of the Council, Vice-Chair of Cabinet, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care, Brian Ford, Cabinet Member for Streetsmart, Dale Heenan, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport, Russell Holland, Cabinet Member for Finance, and Garry Perkins, Cabinet Member for the Economy, Regeneration and Skills, were also in attendance.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Stan Pajak.

39. Declarations of Interest

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

40. Public Question Time

Mr Roy Worman of the Haydon View Community Association asked a question about documentation available on the Council's website in support of Agenda Item No. 6 ("Cabinet Member Question and Answer"). Councillor Dale Heenan, the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport, responded to Mr Worman's question.

Mr Richard Symonds asked several questions, relating to highways expenditure, flooding in the vicinity of Mead Way, dog fouling prosecutions and his opinion of the effectiveness of improvements to the Mannington Roundabout and traffic flow in Wootton Bassett Road. Councillor Dale Heenan, the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport, and Councillor Brian Ford, Cabinet Member for Streetsmart, responded to Mr Symonds' questions at the meeting and also agreed to provide written responses where necessary, and as indicated at the meeting.

Mr William King asked questions regarding the Thamesdown Drive to Barnfield Relief Road Appraisal Report and the effect of carcinogenic pollution. Councillor Dale Heenan, the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport, responded to Mr King's questions. Councillor Heenan also advised that a written response had been prepared in respect of Mr. King's questions, which he had despatched prior to the meeting.

41. Minutes

Resolved – (1) That the minutes of the meeting held on 17th November, 2014, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

(2) That the proposed format of the document for monitoring responses to public questions and member requests for information (circulated at the meeting), be noted.

42. Consideration of Cabinet Decisions

The Director of Law and Democratic Services submitted a report introducing decisions arising from the Cabinet meeting held on 10 December 2014.

50. *Budget Management 2014/15 and Draft Budget 2015/16*

Councillors Garry Perkins, the Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration and Skills, Russell Holland, Cabinet Member for Finance, and Brian Ford, Cabinet Member for Streetsmart, responded to questions put by the Chair and Councillors Mary Martin, Vera Tomlinson and Toby Elliott on the following issues:

- Costs of entry and car parking at Lydiard Park and Lydiard House.
 - Options other than flat rate car parking charges.
 - The use of alternative methods of payment for on site car parking.
- Funding available to the Council from the New Homes Bonus.
- The impact of this resource becoming unavailable and the amelioration of consequent revenue pressures.
- The Rural Superfast Broadband project and the allocation of the remaining infrastructure budget.
- The cost to the Council of assisted burials.

Resolved – That Minute 50 of the Cabinet be noted.

51. *Capital Programme Monitoring - Second Quarter and Treasury Management Performance 2014/15*

Resolved – That Minute 51 of the Cabinet be noted.

52. *Recycling - Green Waste Service*

Councillor Brian Ford, Cabinet Member for Streetsmart, supported by the Council's Board Director Service Delivery, responded to questions put by the Chair and Councillors Mark Dempsey, Toby Elliott and Maureen Penny on the following issues:

- The level of savings attributed to the Green Waste collection service and the availability of information relating to the cost of households disposing of green waste via the residual waste collection service.
- The level of member support for the commissioning of a waste categorisation study to be undertaken by SCS.

Resolved – That Minute 52 of the Cabinet be noted.

53. *Motion at Council - Cars Parking on Grass Verges*

Councillors Garry Perkins, Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration and Skills, and Dale Heenan, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport, responded to questions put by the Chair and Councillors Mark Dempsey, Maureen Penny, Vera Tomlinson and Des Moffatt on the following issues:

- The availability of adequate car parking capacity in residential areas and the Council's anticipated response to the particular acute car parking issues in Redhouse Way.
- The need to respond to specific cases where vehicle owners choose to park on grass verges despite off-road car parking being available.
- The prevalence of grass verge parking in the Rodbourne Cheney Ward and the exacerbation of the problem by the overnight parking of commercial vehicles in residential areas.
- The conversion of verges to facilitate car parking and the promotion of the use of "grass-crete" in verged areas.

Resolved – That Minute 53 of the Cabinet be noted.

54. Polling Districts and Polling Places Review (Minute for Confirmation)

Councillors David Renard, Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet, and Brian Ford, Cabinet Member for Streetsmart, supported by the Director of Law and Democratic Services, responded to questions put by the Chair and Councillor Mary Martin on the following issues:

- Proposals to resolve the problems of providing suitable polling station facilities in the Alexandra Park area of Wroughton Ward.
- The use of licensed premises for the provision of polling station services.

Resolved – That Minute 54 of the Cabinet be noted.

55. References from Other Council Bodies - Health and Wellbeing Board

Councillors David Renard, Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet, and Brian Mattock, Deputy Leader of the Council, Vice-Chair of Cabinet and Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care, responded to questions put by the Chair and Councillors Mary Martin, Maureen Penny, Vera Tomlinson, James Robbins and John Ballman on the following issues:

- The promotion of the Council's role in relation to the provision of health and adult social care services.
- Dementia care services provided via privately funded facilities and the potential for future pressure being placed on council budgets in relation to its own facilities and services.
- The Government's response to the Local Government Association's open letter in the Observer newspaper, signed by the Leader of the Council.

Resolved – That Minute 55 of the Cabinet be noted.

43. Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session - Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport

Councillor Dale Heenan, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport, was in attendance and presented a detailed report summarising progress and performance in respect of each of the following service areas within his diverse portfolio of responsibility:

- Strategic Spatial Planning and Development Framework Planning
- Neighbourhood Planning
- Sustainability
- Local Land Charges
- Strategic Transport Network
- Public Transport (including Concessionary Fares, Specialist Transport, Council Transport and Fleet Management)
- Traffic and Transport Forward Planning (including Local Transport Plan and Implementation of Local Transport Plan)
- Highways & Maintenance Works (until November 2014)
- Strategic flood and water management
- Libraries (as of November 2014)

At the request of the Chair, Councillor Heenan, in his presentation of the report, commented specifically on those elements within his portfolio that 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 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 Heenan, supported by the Head of Transport and the Head of Planning, responded to members' specific questions and observations on the following issues raised in the presentation and also in the accompanying report:

- The arrangements for the proposed establishment of a cross-party highways working group.
- Regeneration and growth projects and the need for clearer communication and understanding of the long term plans for specific areas, particularly in respect of highways arrangements.
- Opportunities for the Council to encourage more sustainable and "future-proofed" private developments.
- The level of on-going utilities and road works throughout the town at the current time and the co-ordination of works to alleviate traffic congestion and maintain the town's highways' integrity.
- The Council's working relationships with the Statutory Undertakers and co-ordination efforts to minimise disruption caused by scheduled and emergency utilities' works.
- Opposition party support for the need for, and the programming of, ongoing road works across the town at the current time and apparently contradictory statements about that support in the local press.
- The Bruce Street Bridge Renewal works and issues relating to the flood alleviation works in that area, including increased traffic disruption and damage to verges and pavements as a result of those works.
- Issues of staff recruitment and retention in Planning Services
- The availability of the Council's highways planning strategic documents and the submission of the Cross Party Working Group report on road works to the Streetsmart and Highways Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Issues around the topic of the future Thamesdown Drive extension road.

Resolved – That Councillor Heenan, and his support team of officers, be thanked for attending the meeting to present this performance report and for their full and open responses to members' questions and observations on the issues raised.

44. Policy interventions to prevent unfairness and inequality

The Committee received a report from Councillor Keith Williams, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Leisure, responding to a question for debate posed by the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, asking how the Council learns from and includes in its Policies the best interventions to prevent unfairness and inequality. The report considered whether or not due consideration of policy and its development fully takes into account a broad understanding of all the implications of policy and the effect it will have on Swindon residents – especially those in greatest need and at greatest risk. The report invited the Committee to consider Corporate priorities, with a particular view to finding new ways to reduce vulnerability and improve health for all.

In the absence of Councillor Williams, who was unable to attend, Councillor Brian Mattock, Deputy Leader of the Council, Vice-Chair of Cabinet and Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care, supported by the Head of Strategy and Research Commissioning and the Change Manager, Equalities and Diversity Service Delivery, introduced the report, placing it in the context of the Council's overarching priorities to reduce vulnerability and promote health for all and within the legal framework and the administrative framework utilised by the Council in support of its policy and decision making processes and service design.

Resolved – That the Corporate Governance Working Party be asked to consider reviewing the Council's reporting templates with a view to incorporating an assessment of the secondary outcomes of recommended actions, both positive and negative.