

ORGANISATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2022

Present:

Councillor Stephen Clough (Chair) (in the Chair)

Councillor Joseph Birkin
Councillor John Funnell
Councillor Pat Kerry

Councillor David Drabble
Councillor Maggie Jones
Councillor Diana Ruff

Also Present:

D Johnson	Assistant Director - Property, Estates and Assets
R Purcell	Assistant Director of Planning
S Gordon	HR & OD Manager
D Stanton	Senior Scrutiny Officer
T Scott	Governance and Scrutiny Officer

OSC/ Apologies for Absence

30/2

2-23 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Emmens and Councillor P Wright.

OSC/ Declarations of Interest

31/2

2-23 Members were requested to declare the existence and nature of any disclosable pecuniary interest and/or other interest, not already on their register of interests, in any item on the agenda and withdraw from the meeting at the appropriate time.

No declarations of interest were declared.

OSC/ Minutes of Last Meeting

32/2

2-23 RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the previous meeting of the Organisation Scrutiny Committee held on 6 September 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

OSC/ Staff Vacancies

33/2

2-23 The HR & OD Manager delivered a presentation on 'New Ways of Working, Employee Turnover & Accommodation Review'. This included details on:

- The Council's COVID recovery
- Progress so far
- Agile Working policy
- Vacancies
- Employee turnover

Members enquired what steps had been taken to ensure Health and Safety when Working from Home. They were informed that HR had carried out risk assessments and reminded all employees of how their home setups should look.

Members enquired how many people were agile working. The HR & OD Manager explained that 67 employees were agile working, and the remainder of the employees were either working on site or hybrid according to service delivery requirements.

Members referred to Compressed Hours and asked exactly how this worked. They were informed that it meant people working for fewer days but with the same amount of hours per week.

RESOLVED – That the update was noted.

OSC/ Working from Home

34/2

2-23

The Assistant Director of Property, Estates and Assets delivered a presentation on the Mill Lane Accommodation Strategy. This included details on:

- Reasons for the Strategy
- Current proposals
- New Council Chamber
- Rykneld Homes Co-Location
- Review of Mill Lane
- Future of Pioneer House

Members discussed some of the plans for Mill Lane. They referred to staff being expected to hot-desk and enquired if managers would be expected to do the same. They were informed that most managers use hybrid or agile arrangements already, so this would not be an issue.

Members had concerns that some staff might not wish to hot-desk, because they might feel better at their own desk and have equipment specified to themselves, like a special chair for an impaired back. The Assistant Director of Property, Estates and Assets explained that the goal was to get everyone into the mindset of hot-desking and most employees had embraced it, but the plan would be monitored for people who could not hot-desk.

Members referred to the New Council Chamber section, and were concerned at the estimate of the AV equipment not being installed until June 2023 because there were Members with hearing and vision impairments. The Assistant Director of Property, Estates and Assets explained that the Council received a quote for a permanent AV solution, but the price was considered too high. The Council was currently discussing other solutions with providers that would utilise a mixture of existing equipment and new equipment.

The Chair explained that a Working Group of Members had been set up to provide guidance on the New Council Chamber, and the Chair was a Member of the Working Group. The Chair explained that the Working Group had received information on the AV quote that the Council had turned down, and this information would be circulated to the Organisation Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED – That the update was noted.

OSC/ Scrutiny Review

35/2

2-23

The Assistant Director of Planning presented a report outlining Planning Enforcement procedures and multi-agency working. Members were informed that Appendix 1 to the report set out the main partners and procedures involved in multi-agency environmental enforcement cases that were initially picked up by Planning or Environmental Health Services.

Members felt that one of the biggest issues for the review remained the lack of response from Derbyshire County Council Highways about the Council's Planning issues. The Assistant Director of Planning explained that this issue was more a planning applications issue rather than a multi-agency enforcement issue, so might not fit within the remit of this review. The Chair felt that to consider Planning Enforcement adequately, Members needed information from all aspects of Planning.

Members enquired how many staff were dedicated towards Planning Enforcement. They were informed that Planning Enforcement had 2.6 FTE staff, but if after this review the Committee thought that this was too many or too few, this would be considered.

Members enquired if there was a database where Planning Enforcement complaints received were inserted. They were informed that there was a database. There was also a Planning Enforcement Policy which set out service expectations.

Members agreed that the Senior Scrutiny Officer should do the following for the next Committee meeting to progress the review:

1. Invite NEDDC Planning Officers to attend to be asked about Derbyshire County Council Highways Authority responses to planning applications
2. Invite Councillor Carolyn Renwick for a Derbyshire County Council perspective (as a County Councillor)
3. Communicate with Derbyshire County Council Highways officers and invite them

Members suggested that one of the questions that could be asked to Planning officers was the exact amount of responses they'd received from Derbyshire County Council Highways. Following on from evidence given at the next meeting, and if the Committee saw fit, Parish Council clerks would be invited to the following meeting to assess how they dealt with planning enforcement issues.

OSC/ Forward Plan of Executive Decisions

36/2

2-23

RESOLVED – That the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions be noted.

OSC/ Work Programme

37/2

2-23

The Senior Scrutiny Officer explained that the interviews requested for the

Planning Enforcement review earlier in the meeting would be added to the Work Programme for the meeting on 24 January 2023.

Members felt that the concerns raised about the New Council Chamber AV system earlier in the meeting needed to be monitored to ensure they were addressed. The Chair stated that as a Member of the Council Chamber Working Group, the concerns of the Committee would be fed back to the Working Group at its next meeting. The Chair added that the date of the Working Group's next meeting would be circulated to the Committee once it was scheduled. The Assistant Director of Property, Estates and Assets would be invited to give progress updates at future meetings until the AV equipment had been installed.

RESOLVED –

(1) That the work programme be noted.

(2) That the interviews for the Planning Enforcement review be inserted into the Work Programme for the meeting on 24 January 2023.

OSC/ Additional Urgent Items

38/2

2-23 There were no additional urgent items.

OSC/ Date of Next Meeting

39/2

2-23 The next meeting of the Organisation Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to take place on Tuesday 24 January 2023 at 10.00 am.