

ORGANISATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 24 JANUARY 2023

Present:

Councillor Stephen Clough (Chair) (in the Chair)

Councillor Joseph Birkin
Councillor Maggie Jones
Councillor Diana Ruff

Councillor John Funnell
Councillor Pat Kerry
Councillor Philip Wright

Also Present:

Councillor C Renwick	DCC Cabinet Member – Infrastructure & Environment
J Dethick	Director of Finance and Resources & (Section 151 Officer)
G Cooper	Principal Planning Officer
P Slater	Principal Planning Officer
D Stanton	Senior Scrutiny Officer
T Scott	Governance and Scrutiny Officer
J Proudler	Development Management - Team Leader (DCC)

OSC/ Apologies for Absence

40/2

2-23 An apology for absence was received from Councillor D Hancock.

OSC/ Declarations of Interest

41/2

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

42/2

2-23 Members requested that the Senior Scrutiny Officer add an item to the next meeting agenda (14 March 2023) called 'hotdesking', so Members could receive further clarification on how it operated.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the previous meeting of the Organisation Scrutiny Committee held on 15 November 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

OSC/ Scrutiny Review

43/2

2-23 Members were presented with a draft Project Plan and draft Timetable for the Environmental Enforcement Scrutiny Review.

RESOLVED – That the draft Project Plan and draft Timetable for the Environmental Enforcement Scrutiny Review be approved.

OSC/ Interviews

44/2

2-23

The Chair welcomed the Principal Planning Officers to the Environmental Enforcement service review interviews.

Member's enquired if there had been recruitment issues with their service. The Principal Planning Officer stated that their recruitment problems had primarily been due to difficulty recruiting an additional Principal Planner, as they had recently recruited 2 new Senior Planners.

Members enquired if an Enforcement log was kept by the officers. They confirmed this to be the case.

The Chair enquired if the service's workload was so large that it was leading to failed communication. The Principal Planning Officers stated that this was a question Members should put to the Enforcement team.

Members felt that the team's communication was very good, but there was a backlog they needed to get through which might be holding them back at the moment.

Members asked the Principal Planning Officers what they felt about Derbyshire County Council's communication to the Council in terms of Planning applications. The Principal Planning Officers explained that Derbyshire County Council were a statutory consultee on applications, and the Council had an ongoing dialogue with them regarding applications.

Members asked the Principal Planning Officers if they felt there were disconnects and contradictions between Derbyshire County Council's and the Council in terms of potentially dangerous Planning applications. The Principal Planning Officers explained that if the application included a severe risk to public safety, then Derbyshire County Council would look at the data for every area – and a meeting to discuss a case like this was recently held between Derbyshire County Council, Council Officers and Council Members. The Chair confirmed he had been present at the meeting and would discuss the details with the Senior Scrutiny Officer.

Members believed that the communication between the Council and Derbyshire County Council about Planning applications should continue to be investigated.

The Chair thanked the Principal Planning Officers for attending.

Members felt that an officer directly within Enforcement should be invited to attend the next meeting.

Members also felt that addressing the workload issues in Enforcement would be an important aspect of the final review report, and suggested adding 2 more officers and starting an Apprenticeship scheme for Planning. They also stated that the recruitment issues within Enforcement could be something to ask the HR & OD Manager about.

The Chair welcomed Councillor C Renwick and Justine Proudler (Development Management - Team Leader for Derbyshire County Council) to the Environmental Enforcement service review interviews.

Members discussed issues with existing streets and road in the District. Councillor C Renwick explained that the issues were more within the remit of road maintenance, whereas the remit she had at Derbyshire County Council was placing new roads. She added that the County Council did have a minor roads programme, which she had informed Parish Councils in the District about.

Councillor C Renwick informed Members of recent road work carried out by the County Council, including new road surface technology.

Members asked both interviewees of the difficulties they had found with Enforcement issues. Justine Proudler explained that the range of North East Derbyshire District Planning matters she got involved with was small, and the Planning authority who grants the applications are the ones who would enforce them.

Members enquired if County Council had a large backlog of Enforcement issues. Justine Proudler responded that the COVID pandemic period saw a record number of complaints at County Council.

The Chair thanked Councillor C Renwick and Justine Proudler for attending.

OSC/ AV Equipment

45/2

2-23

Members received a progress update on the procurement and installation of new AV equipment in the Council Chamber by the Director of Finance and Resources.

The Director of Finance and Resources explained that the Member Working Group formed to consider the AV equipment in the new Chamber had concerns about the cost of installing a new AV system, but they were also keen for the issue to be addressed.

Members were informed that according to the new AV providers, the equipment in the old Council Chamber could not simply be transferred because most of the equipment was hard-wired into the walls.

The Director of Finance and Resources explained that with all of this in mind, the short-term solution was to continue with the current temporary solution, and the mid-term solution was to install the new equipment in the Spring. This would mean that the hearing loop solution in the new Chamber would still have to operate by the temporary solution until Spring, which was not ideal, but officers did not have a choice.

Members enquired how much the new Chamber installation would cost. The Director of Finance and Resources provided indicative information based on initial soft market testing but advised that both the AV equipment and furniture

would need to be procured through a formal tender process.

Members asked if the new facilities would consider disability access. The Director of Finance and Resources explained that all disability provisions would be considered, and an Equality Impact Assessment would also be carried out.

Members enquired why the process of sorting the new AV system had taken so long. The Director of Finance and Resources explained that the initial proposal was arrived at before the COVID pandemic, which significantly changed what could be done to complete it.

Members enquired if the new AV system would be transferrable to other places. The Director of Finance and Resources explained that the new system would most likely operate on wireless technology.

Members felt that safety was an issue that the new supplier must realise for the new system. The Director of Finance and Resources explained that the Risk Assessment for the new AV system would be presented to the Committee once it was confirmed.

RESOLVED – That the update was noted.

OSC/ 46/2 **Forward Plan of Executive Decisions**

2-23 RESOLVED – That the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions be noted.

OSC/ 47/2 **Work Programme**

2-23 The Chair requested that based on the Planning Enforcement interviews earlier in the meeting, an officer directly within NED Enforcement should be invited to attend the next meeting.

With the agreement of the Chair and Committee, the 16 May 2023 meeting would be moved to 18 April 2023.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the work programme be noted.
- (2) That an interview of a NED Enforcement officer for the Planning Enforcement review be inserted into the Work Programme for the meeting on 14 March 2023.
- (3) That the meeting scheduled for 16 May 2023 be moved to the 18 April 2023 in the Work Programme.

OSC/ 48/2 **Additional Urgent Items**

2-23 There were no additional urgent items.

OSC/ Date of Next Meeting

49/2

2-23

The next meeting of the Organisation Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to take place on Tuesday 14 March 2023 at 10.00 am.