

SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 7 MAY 2024

Present:

Councillor Mick Smith (Chair) (in the Chair)

Councillor Heather Liggett (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Kathy Clegg
Councillor Carol Lacey
Councillor Derrick Skinner

Councillor Michelle Emmens
Councillor Ross Shipman
Councillor Christine Smith

Also Present:

L Hickin	Managing Director - Head of Paid Service
J Redfern	Assistant Director of Streetscene
D Mitchell	Streetscene and Waste Services Manager
A Bashir	Improvement Officer
J Hayden	Senior Scrutiny Officer
T Scott	Governance and Scrutiny Officer

SSC/ Apologies for Absence

44/2

3-24 An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mark Foster.

SSC/ Declarations of Interest

45/2

3-24 No Declarations of Interest were submitted.

SSC/ Minutes of Last Meeting

46/2

3-24 RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Services Scrutiny Committee held on 27 February 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

SSC/ Policy Development

47/2

3-24 The Managing Director presented a report to Members seeking endorsement of the draft People Strategy 2024.

The Committee was informed that a steering group had been established to bring the Strategy forward and help oversee its implementation. The group included senior management, service managers, junior staff, Trade Unions and elected Members.

The Committee was also informed that the four main objectives of the Strategy were to nurture a great culture, to ensure wellbeing, to always improve and to effectively communicate and engage. In addition, an Equality Impact Assessment was being prepared to accompany the Strategy.

Members enquired when there would be visible results from the aims of the Strategy. The Managing Director explained that the Strategy would be supported

by a technical action plan which included a number of areas to measure success, and a People Strategy working group would include Members of this Committee to monitor the progress of the Strategy.

Members referred to parts of the 'areas to work on' section relating to empowerment (including how 40% of women at NEDDC feel less empowered in their roles than men, and how 43% of 60–69-year-old employees feel that their opinion counts at work) and asked if there would be any engagement with these people. The Managing Director explained that the employee survey the information was taken from was completed anonymously, so direct engagement was not possible. However, the Council did perform deep dives on specific subjects that might be troubling employees.

Members referred to the 'effectively communicating and engaging' section which included 'Meet the Leader and MD events', and enquired about what happened at these events. The Managing Director gave details of the events, like how they were for employees to ask questions to the Managing Director and Leader, and were mainly directed towards new starters.

Members referred to a number of areas in the Strategy which mentioned agile working, and asked how it worked in departments on the frontline like street cleansing. The Managing Director explained that all departments had different working practices, but emphasised that agile working was not just working from home, but rather finding more flexible ways of working.

Members asked if any further progress had been made on the subject of 4 day working weeks. The Managing Director told Members that the Government had instructed the issue to be put on hold.

RESOLVED – That the Committee endorsed the draft People Strategy 2024.

SSC/ Talent Pipeline

48/2

3-24

The Managing Director delivered a presentation to Members about the Talent Pipeline Strategy 2023. The aim of the Strategy was a longer term approach to recruitment and development.

The presentation summarised the achievements of the Strategy since its launch, and the methods used to promote and market it.

The Chair asked if the results of the employee survey would be reported to Members. The Managing Director explained that the survey was carried out at least every 2 years, and the report summarising the results would be circulated to the Committee.

RESOLVED – That the presentation was noted.

SSC/ Review of Gully/Drainage Cleaning

49/2

3-24

The Assistant Director of Streetscene and the Streetscene & Waste Services Manager circulated a briefing note to Members explaining how the gully and drainage cleaning system operated.

The briefing note explained that keeping gullies clean and fully operational was the responsibility of Derbyshire County Council, who contracted the clearance works through an agency agreement to the Council and received an annual fee for delivering the service. To support the surface build ups of silt and detritus, the Council operated one HGV road sweeper.

The briefing note also explained that the service had changed in January 2024. The frequency of servicing changed to a risk-based approach where the County Council will monitor silt levels from data provided by the Council to determine the required frequency. This change happened to reduce the risk of roads and properties from flooding.

Members asked how Derbyshire County Council were made aware of silt levels in the District. The Streetscene & Waste Services Manager explained that every time the Council cleans out a gully, they report the information to Derbyshire County Council.

Members enquired what the demands were on the Council staff who operate the service. The Streetscene & Waste Services Manager explained that they were expected to clean out approximately 120-140 gullies a day.

Members asked why some drainage pots on the A61 did not appear to be cleaned. The Streetscene & Waste Services Manager explained that the A61 became the responsibility of the Council during the January 2024 changes, so it should receive closer attention soon.

Members referred to the mention of a 'Derbyshire Flood Group' in the briefing note and enquired specifically what this was. The Assistant Director of Streetscene explained that the Group was formed in response to Storm Babet, and its aim was to concentrate resources towards specific areas. Additionally, the Group met the week before this meeting, and it included representatives from the Council and County Council.

Members discussed situations where flooding had occurred on the borders of the District, and asked who was responsible for clearing them. The Streetscene & Waste Services Manager explained that in these situations, the Council would refer the instances to Derbyshire County Council.

Members referred to gullies in Tupton that filled up very quickly. The Assistant Director of Streetscene explained that the Council was currently undergoing a Street Cleansing Review, which should address instances like this in specific areas.

Members discussed instances of flooding in certain areas, and specified an incident on Hallfieldgate Lane. The Managing Director explained that he would look into this specific incident, but added that Derbyshire County Council investigated flood events in Derbyshire as per the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

RESOLVED – That the update was noted.

SSC/ Performance Management

50/2

3-24

The Improvement Officer presented a report setting out progress on the strategies underpinning the Council Plan objective ‘A great place to access good public services’ for the period ending 31 March 2024.

Members were updated on progress under the following objective sub-categories in Appendix 1 of the report:

- 1) Assist and influence other public partners to improve their services in the District.
- 2) Continually improve Council services to deliver excellence and value for money.

Members referred to the part of the Appendix which stated “administered Grants of £500 to residents affected by Storm Babet” and enquired where this was distributed to. The Managing Director responded that it went to those severely affected by the Storm, many of which were in the Clay Lane area in Clay Cross..

Some Members felt the document was missing details on specific actions being taken to achieve each objective. The Managing Director emphasised that the document included targets from the Council Plan, and these targets were inward-facing. However, the Managing Director agreed to include more specific actions in future updates.

RESOLVED – That the update was noted.

SSC/ Cabinet Business

51/2

3-24

The Senior Scrutiny Officer presented a digest of Cabinet decisions taken since 29 February 2024. The digest set out key information for each decision.

The Senior Scrutiny Officer explained that the digest was now presented in a new format, so that Members are now only seeing decisions made since the last round of Scrutiny meetings.

Members referred to the decision titled ‘Unlocking The Avenue Southern Access’ and asked what this involved. The Managing Director explained that the decision taken by Cabinet was to approve further officer resource and further investment from the Council to complete the development at The Avenue. In terms of the ‘unlocking’ of The Avenue’s Southern Access, this related to finding the best method to manage access to the South, with roundabouts, signalling systems and T junctions all being considered.

Members discussed the decision titled ‘Report on the Future of the Housing Revenue Account Car Parking Strategy’. The Chair advised that this was an issue more within the remit of Communities Scrutiny Committee, and that Committee may discuss the issue further when they consider the digest.

The Senior Security Officer also presented the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions for the period 15 April 2024 to 15 May 2024. The Managing Director

referred to the decision titled 'Risk Management Strategy' and informed Members that this was endorsed by Audit Committee on 15 April 2024.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

SSC/ Work Programme

52/2

3-24

The Senior Scrutiny Officer presented the draft Work Programme 2023/24 for the Committee to consider. The Work Programme had now come to the end of the municipal year, and the Senior Scrutiny Officer explained that the Committee must confirm the Programme has been completed.

Members were informed that at the end of the Work Programme document, there were a list of suggested topics for the Committee to include in its new Work Programme.

The Chair stated that he would like to see consideration of gully emptying (discussed at this meeting) continue into the next municipal year.

The Managing Director advised that in terms of the People Strategy Action Plan, this would be best placed to review in September 2024. The Chair responded that this would be considered as part of the drafting of the 2024/25 Work Programme.

RESOLVED – That the 2023/24 Services Scrutiny Committee Work Programme be signed off as complete.

SSC/ Additional Urgent Items

53/2

3-24

None.

SSC/ Date of Next Meeting

54/2

3-24

The next meeting of the Services Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to take place in the new Municipal Year.