

SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2023

Present:

Councillor Mick Smith (Chair) (in the Chair)

Councillor Heather Liggett (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Michelle Emmens
Councillor Carol Lacey
Councillor Derrick Skinner

Councillor Mark Foster
Councillor Ross Shipman
Councillor Christine Smith

Also Present:

L Hickin	Managing Director - Head of Paid Service
J Dethick	Director of Finance and Resources & (Section 151 Officer)
A Bashir	Improvement Officer
A Maher	Governance Manager
T Scott	Governance and Scrutiny Officer

SSC/ Apologies for Absence

22/2

3-24 An apology for absence was received from Councillor K Clegg.

SSC/ Declarations of Interest

23/2

3-24 No Declarations of Interest were submitted.

SSC/ Minutes of Last Meeting

24/2

3-24 RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Services Scrutiny Committee held on 19 September 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

SSC/ The Performance Management Framework

25/2

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 30 September 2023.

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 that mentioned "testing taken place

within various departments including for the Residents Survey and Armed Forces community bulletins” and asked how the Residents Survey would be approached. The Director of Finance and Resources explained that officers originally sent out paper copies of the Survey to 2,500 households randomly selected, but this did not generate the targeted number of responses. Officers subsequently sent out e-mails of the Survey to those registered on our e-mail service and this generated a better response, so this would be the approach going forward.

Members stated they would like to see more precise mentions in the Appendix of what strategies had been delivering or tangible investments being made into various areas. The Managing Director responded that these update reports would soon follow a different format which would explicitly set out what the Council Plan objectives want to achieve.

Members referred to the sentence in the Appendix which stated “consultation on 2 play parks in Killamarsh and 1 play park in Clay Cross were undertaken” and asked when the results of the consultation would be made available. The Managing Director agreed to investigate when it would be available with officers.

Members discussed the sentence in the Appendix which stated “new Derbyshire Police Safer Neighbourhood Team Headquarters being progressed on Council owned site at Bridge St Clay Cross” and asked how much was going to be spent on this. The Director of Finance and Resources stated that this would be completely funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Managing Director added that the plan had a number of ambitions and a list of them would be circulated to the Committee.

RESOLVED – That progress against the Council Plan ‘A great place to access good public services’ objective was noted.

SSC/ Revised Budgets

26/2

3-24

The Director of Finance and Resources presented a report with revisions to the 2023/24 budget for the Services Scrutiny Committee to consider.

Members were informed of the revisions, which included moving £170,000 from the Medium Term Financial Plan because of an increase in temporary accommodation fees.

Members considered the budgets of the Council’s leisure facilities, and asked why some had not achieved a budget surplus. The Managing Director explained that the primary reason had been increasing energy costs.

Members were concerned that there appeared to be a large budget variance for Killamarsh Leisure Centre. The Managing Director explained that the soft play area had not been as popular as predicted, because it was often difficult to market a leisure facility without a pool.

Members shared anecdotal evidence of why some residents did not use Killamarsh Leisure Centre, which was due to parking restrictions. The Director of Finance and Resources agreed to investigate if this was the case.

The Committee considered the damp and mould provisions in place for residents. The Director of Finance and Resources explained that Rykneld Homes had a rigorous damp and mould process, and officers in Environmental Health were trying to work with private landlords on the same subject.

RESOLVED – That the Services Scrutiny Committee noted the report concerning the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan - Revised Budgets 2023/24.

SSC/ **The Council's Financial Resilience**

27/2

3-24

The Director of Finance and Resources delivered a presentation to Members about the Council's Financial Resilience, which meant its ability to remain viable, stable and effective over a sustained period, and being able to face pressures and demands and adapt to unforeseen changes.

The presentation went into detail on areas like the current financial climate and the warning signs of not maintaining good financial health. It concluded that the Council showed strong and stable financial health.

RESOLVED – That the update was noted.

SSC/ **The Council's Talent Pipeline Strategy**

28/2

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 aspects of the Strategy such as the Council's workforce profile and how the Strategy would be promoted.

Members asked exactly how much of the Government's Apprenticeship Levy was given to the Council. The Director of Finance and Resources stated that an exact figure would be investigated and circulated to the Committee.

Members discussed the advantages and disadvantages of using volunteers. The Managing Director explained that there were some departments (like Leisure Services) who found using them very helpful depending on circumstance.

Members asked what the Council was doing to encourage work experience applications. Members were informed that Human Resources officers made contact with a number of schools and colleges.

Members felt the steps being taken in the Strategy were very positive.

RESOLVED – That the update was noted.

SSC/ **Cabinet Business**

29/2

3-24

The Governance Manager presented a digest of Cabinet decisions taken since 29 June 2023. The digest set out key information for each decision, including information on how each decision would contribute towards the delivery of the Council Plan.

The Governance Manager notified Members that there had been complaints about reading the .pdf digest file on an iPad, so Governance would seek to find alternative methods of including it in the agenda.

The Governance Manager suggested that future digests could be colour coded to set out the decisions relevant to the Services Scrutiny Committee remit.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

SSC/ Work Programme

30/2

3-24

The Governance Manager suggested that two areas that could be included in the Work Programme were Performance and Policy Development.

Members were advised that suggestions for topics to add to the Work Programme should be directed towards the Vice-Chair and Chair of the Committee.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

SSC/ Additional Urgent Items

31/2

3-24

None.

SSC/ Date of Next Meeting

32/2

3-24

The next meeting of the Services Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to take place on 27 February 2024 at 10.00am.