

SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2025

Present:

Councillor Mick Smith (Chair) (in the Chair)
Councillor Neil Baker (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Kathy Clegg
Councillor Christine Smith

Councillor Ross Shipman

Also Present:

J Wells	Corporate Finance Manager / Deputy S151 Officer
J Redfern	Assistant Director of Streetscene
A Bashir	Improvement Officer
J Hayden	Senior Scrutiny Officer
D Mitchell	Streetscene and Waste Services Manager
T Fuller	Governance Officer

SSC/ Apologies for Absence

43/2

4-25 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Emmens, M Foster, C Lacey and D Skinner.

SSC/ Declarations of Interest

44/2

4-25 None.

SSC/ Minutes of Last Meeting

45/2

4-25 RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Services Scrutiny Committee held on 19 November 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

SSC/ Performance Management

46/2

4-25 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 December 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.

Committee considered the report. Some Members sought further information in regard to homelessness in the district. It was suggested that more detailed figures could be obtained from the Homelessness Team. It was felt that the team had been working well to reduce homelessness across the district.

Members had questions around the total cost for the renovation of reception and the funding that Rykneld Homes Ltd had provided for the project. The cost was detailed, and it was clarified that funding the project was the Council's responsibility as Landlord.

RESOLVED – That progress against the Council Plan “A great place that cares for the environment” objective was noted.

SSC/ Second Green Bin Collections

47/2

4-25

The Assistant Director of Streetscene presented an overview of the data from the second green bin collections scheme that was introduced last year. This included a breakdown of the costs of the extra bins, where they had been requested across the District, and the expected income as a result of the scheme.

Committee considered the overview. Members discussed the growing season and the 3-month winter suspension, in which green bins aren't collected. Some Members questioned how the growing season dates are dictated. Committee heard that it was a historical arrangement, and the suspension was utilised to train crews and support other services. Committee heard that operating a year-round service was being looked into. In this context, Members discussed the positives and negatives of the winter suspension, and were of the view that a full year service would be more beneficial

Committee considered the upcoming reforms to waste legislation that would update how food waste is collected. Members heard that this was a topic on the radar of Environment Scrutiny Committee and were updated on the conversations, relating to food waste collection, that took place at a recent meeting. Committee discussed the update, some Members felt that frequent updates were needed on the topic going forward i.e. issue of caddies, changes in schedules etc.

Some Members queried how the costs and incomes set out in the report had been calculated, and whether the money could be spent elsewhere. In this context, it was suggested that going back to the system where second green bins were offered for free would provide environmental benefits. The economic impacts of that approach were highlighted, the benefits of the current scheme were discussed, and it was suggested that the incoming waste reforms would lead to environmental targets being met.

Some Members sought clarification as to how green waste is disposed of. Committee were updated on how green waste was composted and the benefits of the different methods of composting. In this context, it was felt that there needed to be higher publicity around how green waste is disposed of. Members discussed the benefits of home composting and considered how the Council could promote home composting to residents across the district.

Some Members questioned why the bulky waste service forms had been removed from the website. Committee heard the changes to the service and the difficulties in scheduling POPs, WEEE and bulky waste collections. Committee heard that the IT team were working with the Streetscene team to resolve this issue. It was shared that this would also lead to administrative efficiencies.

RESOLVED –

That the report was noted.

SSC/ Update on Gully/Drainage Works

48/2

4-25

The Assistant Director of Streetscene presented an update on the Council's gully and drainage works. This included an overview of the new system introduced by DCC to monitor and record performance of the gully cleansing activities.

Committee welcomed the update. It was felt that this was an important issue for residents across the district. Members discussed specific locations where gulleys get blocked and why that is. Members heard that a street cleaning review was taking place which may help in this regard, and that the Council were working with DCC on cleaning frequencies.

Committee discussed the contract between DCC and NEDDC for gully/drainage works. Members heard that the new system had increased collaboration between the two authorities. Members were updated on the terms of the contract and how the schedule of the team that operates the service is managed. Committee discussed concerns around staffing issues within the team. Members heard that resilience was low at the current moment but there was collaboration going on with DCC to address the issue.

RESOLVED –

That the update was noted.

SSC/ Medium Term Financial Plan Budget Monitoring Q3 2024/25

49/2

4-25

The Corporate Finance Manager presented a report that detailed the budget position for the third quarter of 2024/25. This included an update on the General Fund, Financial Reserves, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Investment Programme. The report was set to go to Cabinet at its meeting on 27 February 2025.

Committee considered the report. Some Members sought clarification in regard to Capital Charges Depreciation in the Housing Revenue Account. In this context, it was suggested that a detailed breakdown be provided in future.

RESOLVED –

That the report was noted.

SSC/ Annual Local Government Ombudsman Report

50/2

4-25

Committee received a report that detailed the annual review letter of the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman attached at appendix 1 in the report. This included an overview of complaints received and a breakdown of the complaints upheld.

Committee considered the report. It was felt that the Customer Service Manager should attend a future meeting to provide more detail on the complaints upheld.

RESOLVED –

That the update was noted.

SSC/ Cabinet Business

51/2

4-25

The Senior Scrutiny Officer presented a digest of Cabinet decisions taken since the last Committee meeting on 19 November 2024. The digest set out key information for each decision.

The Senior Scrutiny Officer also presented Members with the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions for the period up to 15 February 2025.

Some Members had questions around the position 'Member Responsible for Complaints' and how it was appointed. It was suggested that an answer would be researched and circulated after the meeting.

RESOLVED –

That the update was noted.

SSC/ Policy Development

52/2

4-25

The Senior Scrutiny Officer informed the Committee that there were no major policies for Members to consider.

RESOLVED – That the update was noted.

SSC/ 'Horizon Scanning'

53/2

4-25

The Senior Scrutiny Officer updated Members on potential significant changes in the Council's operating environment, including changes to national legislation and regulation.

The Senior Scrutiny Officer explained that there was nothing to bring to the attention of Members.

RESOLVED – That the update was noted.

SSC/ Work Programme

54/2

4-25

The Senior Scrutiny Officer presented the draft Work Programme 2024/25 for the

Committee to consider.

Members requested that the Councils complaint system and an update on the system for reporting/tracking missed bins be added to the work programme 2025/26

RESOLVED - That the Work Programme 2024/25 be approved.

SSC/ Additional Urgent Items

55/2

4-25 None.

SSC/ Date of Next Meeting

56/2

4-25 The next meeting of the Services Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to take place on 13 May 2025 at 10.00 am.