SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2025

Present:

Councillor Mick Smith (Chair) (in the Chair)
Councillor Richard Spooner (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Neil Baker
Councillor Ross Shipman
Councillor Kathy Clegg
Councillor Christine Smith

Also Present:

J Dethick	Director of Finance & Resources (S151 Officer)
J Wells	Corporate Finance Manager
A Bashir	Improvement Officer
C Harris	Streetscene Co-ordinator
C Fulton	Streetscene Co-ordinator
D Mitchell	Streetscene and Waste Services Manager
J Hayden	Senior Scrutiny Officer
T Scott	Governance and Scrutiny Officer

SSC/27/25-26 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Lacey, D Skinner and K Tait.

SSC/28/25-26 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

SSC/29/25-26 **Minutes of Last Meeting**

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Services Scrutiny Committee held on 9 September 2025 were approved and signed by the Chair.

SSC/30/25-26 **Performance Management**

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 2025.

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.

The Committee was informed that the Council continued to strengthen public service delivery and partnership working, securing a new five-year lease for the Citizens' Advice Bureau at Clay Cross Active and supporting a range of community initiatives, including grants for mental health and social inclusion projects. Progress was made on key infrastructure, such as enhancements to customer service facilities and the adoption of digital innovations like the FutureFox AI tool for planning consultation analysis and the launch of the 'Just Do More' leisure app. The Council maintained strong fiscal management, generating £233,550 in capital receipts from property sales. All targeted metrics were met or exceeded, with the exception of formal complaints, where 94% were responded to within 15 working days against a target of 98%.

RESOLVED – That Committee noted the report.

SSC/31/25-26 **Medium Term Financial Plan - Revised Budget**

The Corporate Finance Manager presented a report to the Committee detailing the original budget position as approved by Council in January 2025 and the revised position following the in-depth revised budget review. Members were advised that the same report would be presented to Cabinet on 27 November 2025.

Members referred to the section of the report which stated "the need to recruit agency staff to cover some vacancies has created a budget pressure" and asked why this had been required. The Corporate Finance Manager explained that Environmental Health had to use agency staff to continue to provide some of their services.

Members asked whether the Local Government Review was affecting vacancies. The Committee were informed that there were no patterns to suggest that this was an issue but the Council acknowledged that this was a risk and would be monitored.

RESOLVED – That the Committee noted the report concerning the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan – Revised Budgets 2025/26.

SSC/32/25-26 **NEDDC Park Equipment**

The Streetscene Co-ordinator delivered a presentation to Members which provided them with an overview of Council-owned parks and play areas.

The presentation included details on:

- Playground provisions around the District
- Inspections
- Play value and life expectancy
- Improvements
- Renewal Programmes for 2025/26 and for the next 3 years
- Site Review

Members asked what the 'Play Value Score' referred to for each park in the presentation. The Streetscene Co-ordinator explained that this was a score determined by a number of aspects, including features, signs and fences.

The Committee thanked the Streetscene Co-ordinator for her detailed and informative presentation.

RESOLVED – That the Committee noted the presentation.

SSC/33/25-26 **Cabinet Business**

The Senior Scrutiny Officer presented a digest of Cabinet decisions taken since the last Committee meeting in September 2025. The digest set out key information for each decision.

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

RESOLVED – That the update was noted.

SSC/34/25-26 **Policy Development**

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

RESOLVED – That the update was noted.

SSC/35/25-26 **Work Programme**

The Senior Scrutiny Officer presented the draft Work Programme 2025/26 for the Committee to consider.

Members referred to a news story on the Council website about Warm Home Insulations, and asked if the Committee could receive an update on the subject. The Senior Scrutiny Officer explained that this was on the radar of the Environment Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED – That the Work Programme 2025/26 be approved.

SSC/36/25-26 **Additional Urgent Items**

None.

SSC/37/25-26 **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Services Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to take place on 24 February 2026 at 10.00 am.