

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 17 JULY 2023

Present:

Councillor Caroline Smith (Chair) (in the Chair)
Councillor Frank Adlington-Stringer (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Neil Baker
Councillor Richard Beech
Councillor Tony Lacey

Councillor Graham Baxter MBE
Councillor William Jones
Councillor Fran Petersen

Also Present:

L Hickin	Managing Director - Head of Paid Service
S Sternberg	Assistant Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer
T Frost Morris	Chief Accountant
D Stanton	Senior Scrutiny Officer
T Scott	Governance and Scrutiny Officer

1 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3 Remit of the Committee

Members were informed that this would be an Informal Meeting of the Committee. They would be asked to consider the Environment Scrutiny Committee's proposed responsibilities and the specific ways in which it should carry them out.

Following on this Informal discussion, the first formal meeting of the Committee would be held on 11 September 2023.

Committee was reminded that the Council had established new scrutiny arrangements at its Annual Meeting on 22 May 2023. Briefly, there would be four new Committees, each aligned to the relevant aspects of the new Council Plan.

Committee received a presentation from the Managing Director on the new Plan, and how it was based on the goals identified by the new Administration, prior to the local elections. Although further work would be required to develop the suite of performance information that would be required, the proposed Council Plan itself had now been drawn up and would be submitted to Council for approval on 31 July 2023.

As part of the suggested approach, the Environment Scrutiny Committee would specifically be asked to focus on the Council Plan goals to: (i) Reduce pollution

across the District and (ii) Increase biodiversity across the District.

The Committee could use a range of specific powers to help assess progress against the Plan goals and objectives. It could: (i) Use its meetings to consider and question the decisions taken by the Council's Cabinet at its meetings (ii) Scrutinise proposed new policies and (iii) Identify new legislation or forthcoming projects, which might have an important impact on the Council and how it operates.

Members discussed the role of the new Committee and their hope that it should work in an open, transparent and collaborative way. Members asked what the specific timeline would be for the Committee to consider the new Council Plan. The Managing Director explained that the Plan would be approved at Council on 31 July 2023, and after that point, it would be the Committee's role to scrutinise the undertakings that constituted each high-level target in the Plan.

4 EXAMPLE - Medium Term Financial Plan

Committee discussed the ways in which Members could use financial and service information to determine whether key goals and objectives had been achieved. As part of this, Committee received an example report on the Medium Term Financial Plan on how it, and similar information, might be used to help understand a range of services and specific issues.

5 Draft Work Programme

Committee considered an initial draft Work Programme for the year. Members recognised that this would need to be developed further and that some further proposals would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee. Members were encouraged to make suggestions for this programme via the Chair of the Committee.

6 Additional Urgent Items

None.

7 Date of Next Meeting

3.30pm Monday 11 September 2023.