

SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

NOTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 11 JULY 2023

Present:

Councillor Mick Smith (Chair) (in the Chair)

Councillor Heather Liggett (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Kathy Clegg
Councillor Ross Shipman

Councillor Carol Lacey
Councillor Christine Smith

Also Present:

L Hickin	Managing Director - Head of Paid Service
J Dethick	Director of Finance and Resources & (Section 151 Officer)
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

SSC/ Apologies for Absence

1/23-

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

SSC/ Declarations of Interest

2/23-

24 There were no Declarations of Interest.

SSC/ Minutes of Former Committee

3/23-

24 RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Organisation Scrutiny Committee held on 18 April 2023 be noted.

SSC/ Remit of the Committee

4/23-

24 Members were informed that this would be an Informal Meeting of the Committee. They would be asked to consider the Services 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 19 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 Services Scrutiny Committee would specifically be asked to focus on the Council Plan goals to: (i) Assist and influence other public partners to improve their services in the District and (ii) Continually improve Council services to deliver excellence and value for money.

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 referred to the mention in the Committee's Terms of Reference of 'checks and balances' and asked what this meant. Members were informed that this included reviews as well as comprehensive coverage and oversight.

Members referred to the mention in the Committee's Terms of Reference of 'influencing partners' and asked what this meant. Members were informed that this referred to County-wide groups and organisations that the Committee could liaise with.

**SSC/
5/23-
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Medium Term Financial Plan

The Director of Finance & Resources and Section 151 Officer presented a report to the Committee on the contents of the attached Financial Outturn 2022/23 report to be presented to Cabinet on 27 July 2023. The report included the 2022/23 outturn position in respect of the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account (HRA), Capital Programme and Treasury Management activities.

Members enquired about the 'talent pipeline' and if recruitment levels were improving. The Director of Finance & Resources and Section 151 Officer responded that recruitment was improving, and flexible working was widening the pool of what the Council could offer.

Members enquired if the Council doing 4 day working weeks was a possibility the Committee could consider. The Managing Director explained that the legality of the suggestion would be investigated.

Members asked if the Clay Cross Town Deal agreement with the Government had also been tried for other areas. The Director of Finance & Resources and Section 151 Officer explained that the Council applied for other areas as part of the Government's 'Levelling Up' scheme, but the applications were refused.

RESOLVED – That the Committee noted the report.

SSC/ Draft Work Programme

**6/23-
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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.

Members referred to the previous discussion about 4 Day Working Weeks and asked if this could be included in the Work Programme. The Assistant Director of Governance explained that it would be included as an issue to consider, but the officer capacity to review it was not yet in place.

RESOLVED – That the Committee approved the draft Work Programme for 2023/24 with the addition of 4 Day Working Weeks.

SSC/ Additional Urgent Items

**7/23-
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None.

SSC/ Date of Next Meeting

**8/23-
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10.00am Tuesday 19 September 2023.