

THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 25 February 2019

Attendance:

Councillors

Learney (Chairman)

Stallard

Clear

Cunningham

Evans

Gemmell

McLean

Thompson

Tod

Weston

Deputy Members:

Councillor Mather (as deputy for Councillor Lumby)

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillors Godfrey (Portfolio Holder for Professional Services) and Miller (Portfolio Holder for Estates).

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor Lumby

1. **DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS**

Councillors Stallard and Tod declared a personal (but not prejudicial interest) in respect of Report OS222 (Annual Emergency Planning Report) due to their role as County Councillors having previously been involved in discussions.

In addition, Councillor Stallard stated that in her role as County Councillor, her portfolio included responsibility for Emergency Planning.

2. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of meeting held 28 January 2019 and the additional meeting held on 4 February 2019 (less exempt minute) be approved and adopted.

3. **TO NOTE THE SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2018/19 AND THE FORWARD PLAN FOR MARCH 2019**

During discussion, a Member raised a request for a watching brief to be in place regarding Brexit matters as and when they arise.

In response, the Chief Executive provided an update of how local authorities were engaged in the current Brexit programme and it was noted that information had been provided from the Government with a checklist, which had since been duly completed by the Council and a National Group formed to work with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) representatives whereby Council's fed into debate and discussion on live issues.

In conclusion, the Chief Executive clarified that the Council's Executive Leadership Board met on a weekly basis with a standing agenda item to review all information in respect of Brexit to respond accordingly.

RESOLVED:

That the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2018/19 and Forward Plan for March 2019, be noted.

4. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No comments or questions were made during public participation.

5. **ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2016/2021**
(Report OS223 refers)

Councillor Miller introduced the Report which had come forward at the request of the Committee in order for the latest progress made with the Asset Management Plan to be reviewed.

The Report provided a review in respect of the Council's assets, the latest progress with the Council's major projects, the refurbishment of the Tourist Information Centre and the Civic Offices, the replacement Surgery proposals and the Bishops Waltham Depot.

The Corporate Head of Asset Management reported that there had been a significant improvement with the Council's commitment to reducing Carbon emissions by 20% by 2020 and that this target had now been achieved by adopting a variety of new energy saving measures including energy efficient lighting at Council buildings, car parks etc. Together with the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Miller, they responded to detailed questions. In summary, the following matters were raised by the Committee:

- (i) An enquiry into what was good practice in terms of property investment between retail and industrial. In response, the Corporate Head of Asset Management advised that the Council's portfolio was reasonably balanced at present.

- (ii) The Committee welcomed the Council's intent to invest in smaller industrial units, particularly in the southern parishes, to enable greater employment opportunity for residents to work where they live in the future;
- (iii) Carbon reduction target – The Corporate Head of Asset Management reported that, although the current target had been achieved, work was on going to introduce energy saving measures wherever possible. Technology was advancing and in the Council's case pay back on PV had reduced and would be installed on the Civic Offices, the Depot, the new car park on the Vaultex site and the Leisure Centre in due course. Furthermore, additional resource had been identified to have a particular focus on environmental matters

The Committee suggested external benchmarking versus good achievable examples from other local authorities as a way forward to progress any future carbon reduction target.
- (iv) The Guildhall – It was noted that the Council had invested heavily in the Guildhall with the installation of a new boiler and lagging to valves. Furthermore, double glazing was to be installed to areas of the West Wing offices which would considerably improve insulation in this area. However, glazing proposals to main areas of the Guildhall had been refused by English Heritage so opportunities for improvements to insulation in these particular areas where single glazing remained present would prove limited;
- (v) Replacement Surgery (Upper Brook Street) – The Corporate Head of Asset Management reported that works had commenced on site in order to make a material start on the development before the planning consent expired at the end of March 2019. Planning officers had confirmed that they were satisfied that the works being undertaken would constitute a material start on the development;
- (vi) Abbey House – Abbey House was a Grade II Listed Building and the Council was responsible for maintaining the structure to comply with listed building obligations. Some essential works would be undertaken in 2019;
- (vii) Review of Public Conveniences (Market Lane) – The Corporate Head of Asset Management advised that the lease on these particular public conveniences was due to cease in approximately six years. At present, a peppercorn rent was paid, however, the owner was seeking significant rental payments for any future lease going forward and this matter would be reviewed further in due course;
- (viii) In response to queries regarding access to the Asset Management List, the Corporate Head of Asset Management confirmed that this list had been retained within the Uniform system. The Committee considered that it would be beneficial for Members to also have access to this list via the Members electronic library; and

- (ix) Asset Management Forum – It was noted that the Council was in regular liaison with other partners including the County Council, Universities, NHS and the Civil Service to establish possible opportunities to purchase, lease or sell property and to keep fully appraised of the situation.

At the conclusion of questions and debate, the Committee thanked officers and commended the report and the Chairman summed up the specific points that had been raised by the Committee, as follows:

- (a) The Committee expressed a desire for the Council to further assess employment opportunities in other areas of the District and encouraged the provision of smaller industrial units;
- (b) In meeting its existing carbon reduction requirements, the Council should now undertake work to investigate potential further reductions to carbon footprint carried out by other local authorities and in the wider area;
- (c) The need to continually monitor and receive regular updates on Brexit timescales;
- (d) That there had been considerable debate regarding possible renovation, repair and refurbishment works to Abbey House;
- (e) The Committee requested that internal signage in the City Council Offices be improved; and
- (f) That a suitably redacted list of property assets be made available in the Members electronic library

RESOLVED:

That the Portfolio Holder note the comments raised by the Committee, as set out above.

6. **ANNUAL EMERGENCY PLANNING REPORT**
(Report OS222 refers)

Councillor Godfrey introduced the Report which set out the significant review of the emergency planning procedure, the changes that had taken place and provided an annual update on the work undertaken by the Council in respect of emergency planning over the past year. In addition, the report also highlighted the review of the work carried out by the Council in meeting its responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA) and an update on flood alleviation works.

Councillor Godfrey, together with officers present, responded to detailed questions in respect of Brexit. It was noted that the annual Member briefing on Emergency Planning was to be arranged for November 2019 and Members were encouraged to attend in order to be briefed on roles and responsibilities should an emergency occur in their Ward.

At the conclusion of questions and debate, the Committee thanked officers and welcomed the reassurance the report provided regarding emergency planning.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and no matters of significance be raised with the Portfolio Holder.

7. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

RESOLVED:

1. That in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

2. That the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business because it is likely that, if members of the public were present, there would be disclosure to them of 'exempt information' as defined by Section 100I and Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

<u>Minute Number</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Description of Exempt Information</u>
8	Exempt Minute of the additional meeting held on 4 February 2019) Information relating to the) financial or business affairs) of any particular person) (including the authority) holding that information). (Para 3 Schedule 12A refers)

8. **EXEMPT MINUTE OF THE ADDITIONAL MEETING HELD ON 4 FEBRUARY 2019**

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minute of the additional meeting held on 4 February 2019, be approved and adopted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 8.00 pm

Chairman