

THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**Monday, 9 September 2019**

Attendance:

Councillors
Brook (Chairperson)Gordon-Smith
Gottlieb
Griffiths
HiscockHorrill
Laming
Lumby
Power
TodOthers in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillors Thompson (Leader and Cabinet Member for Communications and Transformation) and Cutler (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Risk)

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillor Gemmell

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillors Hiscock and Tod declared non pecuniary interests in relation to report SC011, due to their role as County Councillors.

Councillor Griffiths declared a non pecuniary interest in respect of report SC011 due to being a temporary employee of Boomtown Festival Ltd.

Councillor Gottlieb declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in relation to report SC011 in respect of St Clements Surgery. However, he stated that unless specific reference raised during the consideration of this report, he would remain in the room for discussions thereon. In addition, Councillor Gottlieb also declared a non pecuniary interest on this report, due to his wife's involvement in the arrangement of the Winchester Heritage Open Days as referenced in the report.

2. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairperson announced that a briefing had been arranged for Members and Deputies of the Scrutiny Committee to be hosted by the Centre for Public Scrutiny on Tuesday, 8 October 2018 at 6pm to 8pm in the Walton Suite Guildhall. The briefing would explore the work of the Scrutiny Committee and would also support development of a thematic approach moving forward.

Reference was made to the previous discussions at Committee in respect of health being an area to review and the Chairperson advised that she continue to lead on this item, as previously agreed, and that NHS health review be added to the work programme for follow up subsequent to the briefing.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the additional meeting held on 14 August 2019 (less exempt minute) be approved and adopted.

4. **TO NOTE THE SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2019/20 AND THE FORWARD PLAN FOR OCTOBER 2019**

RESOLVED:

That the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2019/20 and the Forward Plan for October 2019 be noted.

5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No comments or questions were made during public participation.

6. **Q1 FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT (SC011)**

Councillor Thompson introduced the Report which summarised the Council's performance and financial position during the first quarter of 2019/20 as at 30 June 2019.

The report gave updates against significant projects, the Council Strategy outcomes and key performance measures. A financial summary set out the detail of the General Fund revenue and capital budgets as well as the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). It was reported that a draft of the new Council Strategy was expected to be brought to the next meeting of the Committee on 27 November 2019 for consideration as part of the wider consultation and engagement on the new priorities, prior to adoption by Council in January 2020.

Members raised a number of detailed questions and sought clarification in a number of areas which were responded to by the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Finance and Risk and the officers accordingly, these included:

- The Guildhall – In respect of the target to achieve savings, the Leader clarified the Guildhall had been running at a loss over a number of years and that changes were currently being progressed in respect of the café arrangements. The Chief Executive stated that this opportunity was out to market via Savills for expressions of interests to be submitted for the running of the café as a standalone option. A report was expected at the future Cabinet. The Committee expressed concern regarding the current building

maintenance costs for the Guildhall and queried if this should be accounted as part of the Guildhall accounts.

- Partnered Home Purchase Scheme – In response to questions regarding the extension of the scheme to ten properties from the pilot of seven properties, the Strategic Director: Services (Interim) advised that this would be incorporated within the new Council Strategy which would given early discussion by the Business and Housing Policy Committee at its meeting on 7 October 2019.
- Comparison of Quarterly Reports – It was noted that due to the report being for quarter one, the quarter two report due for consideration by the Committee on 27 November 2019 would include figures for comparison purposes.
- Digitalisation of Council Services – The Committee requested an update on the financial efficiency savings that would be achieved by adopting a digital approach. An update was given on the progress of making all services available online by the end of 2019.
- Concessions at Car Parks – The Committee sought clarification on the consultation process in respect of offering concessions in the Council's car parks. In response, the Chief Executive stated that proposals to offer potentially car washing or coffee stalls were being considered but it was emphasised that the viability of this option would need to be carefully assessed and tested.
- Replacement Surgery – Councillor Cutler stated that there were no specific delays with the replacement doctor's surgery project and that a timetable to bring this project forward would be circulated to the Committee in due course.

Car Parking Income – It was reported that there had been a significant increase in car parking income with usage of the park and ride sites and the City Centre car parks increasing to over 80% capacity.

- LEADER funding – It was reported that at present the Government had not announced any replacement for LEADER programme funding. Following discussion on this matter, it was considered unlikely that the Council could match the scale of the LEADER funding within its current budget at this stage;
- Strategic Asset Purchase Scheme – The Leader agreed to take forward a proposal that the rural strand be included in this scheme going forward;
- Article 4 Directions – Members expressed concern regarding any further losses of family homes to Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO's). In response, the Leader stated that the Article 4 Directions were continually reviewed.

- New Homes Delivery – The Committee considered it beneficial to hold an All Member Briefing to gain an understanding on the latest position regarding the progress and delivery of the Council’s new housing programme;
- Recycling of Waste – The Committee expressed concerns regarding the volume of waste generated as a result of events such as the Boomtown Festival and made reference to a number of projects that sought to recycle tents and other recyclable products for reuse to reduce landfill. The Leader agreed to explore this matter with the objective of encouraging event organisers to adopt this approach going forward;
- Fly tipping – Councillor Cutler advised that the broader issues associated with fly tipping needed to be addressed and it clarified that the Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety team collated information on flytipping on public and private land and this would be reported in future reports;
- River Park Leisure Centre – The Leader reported the engagement event with respect to North Walls recreation ground had been well received and that a report would be brought forward in respect of River Park along with the engagement approach in due course;
- Central Winchester Regeneration – The Leader reported that short term meanwhile uses for the site would be given further consideration as part of the Central Winchester Regeneration Open Forum that was due to commence on 24 September.
- Glass Collection – The Leader reported that glass collection bins were being distributed to households throughout August with collections due to commence from 1 October. The Chief Executive reported that any outstanding glass bin deliveries would be made a priority. A letter to residents in respect of day changes for collections was being delivered and it was noted that a self check facility had also been placed on the Council’s website for residents to confirm collection dates.
- Local Plan – Members requested further information on the current timetable for the Local Plan. The Strategic Director: Services (Interim) advised that a report on the Local Plan consultation and engagement process was due to be considered at the meeting of the Winchester Town Forum later that week.
- Performance Indicators - With regard to average staff sickness levels and staff turnover, the Chief Executive reported that levels remained consistent with those in neighbouring local authorities which varied between 5.5 and 10 days per employee per year and highlighted the measures the Council had been put in place to

support the health and wellbeing of employees with an increased range of staff benefits and interventions available.

In conclusion, the Chairperson summarised the comments that it wished to raise for the attention of Cabinet, as set out below.

- (i) What are the current building maintenance costs for the Guildhall and should they be accounted for within the Guildhall accounts;
- (ii) A request for an update on the progress of the Council's digitalisation approach to make all services available online by the end of 2019;
- (iii) Request for future Finance and Performance reports to include quarterly financial trend information;
- (iv) An update requested on the timetable and status of the new homes project at Knowle;
- (v) Update to be provided on the status and progression of Article 4 Directions;
- (vi) An all member briefing requested to provide an update on new homes delivery;
- (vii) An update requested covering the timetable for the new Winchester doctor's surgery;
- (viii) Concerns raised as to the reasons for the increase in the number of incidents of begging recorded in Winchester;
- (ix) Proposal made to include a rural strand into the Strategic Asset Purchase Scheme (SAPS);
- (x) An update requested on the current timetable for the Local Plan and when consultation is to be undertaken;
- (xi) Update to be provided on fly-tipping and the inclusion of incidents on public/ private land recorded;
- (xii) An update requested on proposals for meanwhile uses at the Central Winchester site;
- (xiii) An update was requested over the status of the delivery of the glass collection boxes and letter for residents;
- (xiv) An update on the timetable and proposals for the River Park Leisure Centre site after the new Winchester Sport and Leisure Park opens;

(xv) Concerns raised over the level of staff sickness and turnover at the Council; and

(xvi) Request for an analysis of the Freedom of Information (FOI) requests received by the Council

RESOLVED:

That the Leader and other relevant Cabinet Members notes the comments of the Committee, as set out above, but that no items of significance to be drawn to the attention of Cabinet.

7. **ANNUAL REPORT: LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN 2018/19 (SC010)**

In summary, matters were raised regarding the pattern and trends of complaints and how the level of compensation was calculated when a case was upheld by the Ombudsman.

RESOLVED:

That the Report be noted.

8. **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>
9	Exempt Minute of the additional meeting held on 14 August 2019) Information relating to the) financial or business affairs) of any particular person) (including the authority) holding that information).) (Para 3 Schedule 12A refers)
) Information in respect of) which a claim to legal) professional privilege could

-) be maintained in legal
-) proceedings. (Para 5
-) Schedule 12A refers)

9. **EXEMPT MINUTE OF THE ADDITIONAL MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 14 AUGUST 2019**

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minute of the additional meeting held on 14 August 2019 be approved and adopted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 8.10 pm

Chairperson