

**Minutes of a meeting of Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Finance  
and Performance  
held on Wednesday, 12th June, 2019  
from 7.00 - 8.13 pm**

**Present:** J Knight (Chair)  
M Pulfer (Vice-Chair)

G Allen  
A Bennett  
H Brunsdon  
R Cartwright  
P Coote

R Cromie  
A Eves  
R Jackson  
Andrew Lea  
C Phillips

L Stockwell  
C Trumble  
E Coe-Gunnell White

**Absent:** Councillor R Whittaker

**Also Present (As Cabinet Member):** Councillors J Ash-Edwards and J Llewellyn-Burke

**Also Present:** Councillors C Laband and N Webster

**1 TO NOTE SUBSTITUTES IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE  
RULE 4 - SUBSTITUTES AT MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES ETC.**

Councillor Coe-Gunnell White substituted for Councillor Whittaker.

**2 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies were received from Councillor Whittaker.

**3 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS IN RESPECT  
OF ANY MATTER ON THE AGENDA.**

In relation to discussion under Item 6, Councillor Andrew Lea and Councillor Brunsdon declared that they are both West Sussex County Councillors.

**4 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE FOR LEADER, RESOURCES AND ECONOMIC GROWTH HELD ON  
12 MARCH 2019.**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**5 TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN AGREES TO TAKE AS  
URGENT BUSINESS.**

None.

## **6 PERFORMANCE OUTTURN 2018/19.**

Neal Barton, Policy and Performance Manager introduced the report, noting the positive performance over the year with 80% of indicators green compared to 67% at the same point last year, and no red performance indicators. He highlighted the improvements in customer service, staff sickness rates and the speed of processing planning applications as well as improvements the Revenues and Benefits service and success with the Council's own temporary accommodation project.

The positive achievement of 80% green indicators was commended by a number of Members and discussion was held on whether the subject focus and metrics to monitor performance going forward was appropriate. It was noted that no significant change is anticipated to affect how performance is monitored, and that the decision to amend targets falls within the remit of the committee later in the year. In terms of the flagship activities for 2019/20 they pro-actively address a number of current topical issues including sustainability and environmental impact.

Performance at 98% of undisputed invoices paid within 10 days was commended by a Member who noted this was an excellent way to support local businesses. Discussion was also held on the amount of Council Tax collected. It was noted that whilst the report provides a snapshot of amounts collected in the past year, the Council also actively promotes the Council Tax Support Scheme to assist residents facing difficulties in this area

It was agreed that a written response would be provided to Members on why there is a downward trend on the return on the tenanted non-residential property portfolio.

The subject of staff turnover was discussed, and it was confirmed that exit interviews take place to establish reasons why staff leave. A written response will be provided on how the Council measures the percentage of full time equivalents that are unoccupied, and any impact this may have. Clarity will also be provided on whether it is appropriate to include Fixed Term Contract numbers in the turnover figures. A Member also suggested that it would be useful to provide in future reports a breakdown of the longevity of legal cases that remain open. The Solicitor to the Council confirmed that most of the open cases relate to SANG and SAMM contributions to the Ashdown Forest.

The topic of recycling and food waste was discussed and the Policy and Performance Manager confirmed that the figures provided for recycling take in to account levels of contamination that results in recycling going to landfill. A Member expressed a wish for the Council to consider the overall environmental impact of waste disposal, including mileage if items are recycled abroad. The Leader provided an update on discussions with West Sussex County Council regarding domestic food waste collection, noting that Mid Sussex District Council has the decision to make as the collection authority once implications on cost and methods of collection have been considered. A business case will be presented for scrutiny later in the year.

The Committee discussed the figures presented on the Early Intervention Family Project with a preference expressed for a qualitative rather than quantitative update.

A Member commended the Council on raising awareness of the disabled facilities grants available and it was confirmed that the Council made use of a discretionary policy as well as the statutory requirement, utilising additional central government funding for more grants.

The Policy and Performance Manager introduced the Flagship Activities update, noting that the September meeting will provide the first quarter update on the 2019/20 Activities. Members discussed the project to deliver full fibre broadband, seeking clarity that rural areas will benefit and seeking approximate time-frames for roll out. A Member requested that the Council measures the benefit of the connectivity to local residents, once it had been instigated. The Leader provided an update on a recent meeting with the Minister for Digital and the Creative Industries to discuss a project working with Parishes to connect the rural communities. He also confirmed that the funds generated by the Business Rates Retention Pilot are now available to enable the full fibre project to move forward and joint working with fibre providers is proceeding as a high priority.

A Member noted the inclusion of additional CCTV being installed in Clair Park and urged that this was acted on as a priority to increase the safety of those who visit the park.

Discussion was held around the Council's asset acquisitions, and the release of Council owned land for housing. It was commended that the Council released land (such as the Bolnore Land Depot and Imberhorne Lane Car Park) in order to deliver a higher percentage of affordable homes than the 30% requirement. The Leader confirmed that any land release or investment is made with scrutiny and due diligence and reported through Cabinet and Council in relation to finance for decision by Members.

The Chairman took Members to the recommendations which were agreed unanimously.

## **RESOLVED**

The Committee:

- (i) noted the Council's performance and progress with flagship activities in 2018/19 and identified any areas where it was required to have further reporting or information and
- (ii) agreed to advise the Cabinet of any issues that should be given particular consideration when it considers the report at its meeting on 8th July 2019.

## **7 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR LEADER, FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE - WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20.**

Tom Clark, Solicitor to the Council introduced the report, and noted the significance of the January meeting for discussing the draft Corporate Plan and Budget for 2020/21.

## **RESOLVED**

The Committee agreed the work programme as set out in paragraph 5 of the report.

## **8 QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10, DUE NOTICE OF WHICH HAS BEEN GIVEN.**

None.

The meeting finished at 8.13 pm

Chairman