

**Minutes of a meeting of Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Finance
and Performance
held on Wednesday, 4th September, 2019
from 7.00 - 7.57 pm**

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

G Allen	P Cooté	Andrew Lea
A Bennett	R Cromie	L Stockwell
P Budgen	A Eves	R Whittaker
R Cartwright	R Jackson	R Webb

Absent: Councillors H Brunsdon and C Trumble

Also Present (As Cabinet Member): Councillors J Ash-Edwards,, R de Mierre, and J Llewellyn-Burke

Also Present: Councillors P Brown and I Gibson

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

Councillor Webb substituted for Councillor Trumble.

2 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies were received from Councillor Trumble and Councillor Brunsdon.

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

In relation to discussion under Item 7, Councillor Lea declared that he is a West Sussex County Councillor.

**4 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 22 MAY AND 12
JUNE 2019.**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 May and 12 June 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 INTRODUCTION OF A BANDED COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME FOR 2020/21.

Kevin Stewart, Business Unit Leader for Revenues and Benefits, introduced the report noting that the proposed Council Tax Support Banded Income Scheme would simplify Council Tax Support, making it more transparent for customers. He acknowledged that the subject was complex and explained the background of the changes proposed, including the groups which would not be affected by the changes such as older people, vulnerable people, and those with a child under 5 years old. He also explained that these changes would align the Council Tax Support scheme with the housing benefit system. The Business Unit Leader for Revenues and Benefits outlined the potential for making claiming for and receiving Council Tax Support easier, by using the details already collected for Universal Credit by the Department for Work and Pensions.

The Business Unit Leader for Revenues and Benefits explained that the consultation period would begin on Friday 6th September 2019 and would involve key stakeholders, including Citizens Advice, registered social landlords, and people who would be affected. It is proposed that the Council Tax Support Banded Income Scheme, will if approved be introduced in April 2020, with billing to start at the end of February.

The Members discussed the cost to the Council of the new scheme, and enquired about the impact on those affected. A Member enquired about the funds and support that would be available to those who would be affected by the introduction of the Council Tax Support Scheme. The Business Unit Leader for Revenues and Benefits highlighted that part of the consultation would involve speaking to those affected to ensure they would be able to access any help needed, and officers would work to aid individuals by assessing each case and looking to provide hardship funds to those requiring it. He agreed to provide a written response to the committee with the percentages of people affected. He noted that according to current calculations the change would cost the Council and additional £9,000, but did note that this was based on the present needs and may change before April 2020. A Member suggested adding further information in a supplementary information guide to aid understanding of the complex procedures, and the Business Unit Leader for Revenues and Benefits responded that he would try and make the information as accessible to people as possible for the consultation.

The Members discussed the Equality Impact Assessment in Appendix C. One Member asked for clarification on the method used to assess impact across different groups, including lower income households and women and men. The Business Unit Leader for Revenues and Benefits explained that the impact assessment had shown areas in which the Council would need to offer more support, and that the Revenues and Benefits team's aim was to assist people in ensuring they receive the right amount of support, and would take care in collecting and enforcing the council tax in any support case affected.

A Member commented on the work of the Council to ensure the constituents had access to advice and aid, another Member agreed this was very important.

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

RESOLVED

The Committee agreed that the new Council Tax Support Scheme would be put forward for public consultation.

7 PERFORMANCE MONITORING FOR THE FIRST QUARTER 2019/20.

Neal Barton, Policy, Performance and Partnerships Manager, introduced the report noting that the format of the report had changed to make the report clearer, with flagships included in the body of the report. He noted that the traffic light system was being used to show the progress of each area including the flagships, with green indicating the target was met or exceeded, amber indicating the target was within 10% of being met, and red to indicate that the target was not met by more than 10%. The Policy, Performance and Partnerships Manager highlighted that 79% of the performance indicators and 16 out of 21 flagships were green.

Members discussed the targets, beginning with a query on what plans were in place to improve the percentage of plans received by building control and checked within 15 working days for which the indicator was amber.

The Head of Regulatory Services, Tom Clark, explained that the building control admin support team were currently working to meet the target, but that registering the planning applications is a higher priority and that this target has been met. Judy Holmes, Assistant Chief Executive highlighted that paragraph 6 outlines the tolerances of the report and that an amber indicator indicates that a target is very close to being met.

A Member asked for clarification on the number of health and wellbeing interventions delivered. The Assistant Chief Executive explained that this is a demand led service and therefore resources are finely balanced however, as Health and Wellbeing's targets are green apart from the number of health and wellbeing interventions delivered, the resources are allocated in an efficient way. The area missed was due to a vacancy which has now been filled.

The Committee discussed the Customer Service and Communications' target, one Member asked about the Freedom of Information Requests target which was amber. The Head of Regulatory Service explained that these requests were answered slightly outside the timeframe target, which caused the amber indicator, although this indicator is usually on target.

A Member praised the Microbusiness Grants Scheme which is on track to meet all targets.

The Committee discussed the Council's Sustainability targets. A Member commented that the Council should prioritise improving the electric charging points in Burgess Hill at Cyprus road as these are currently experiencing problems. The Deputy Leader, Councillor Llewellyn-Burke, explained that the power supply issues were being addressed and updated the Committee about progress with the plan to implement 26 electric charging points across the District with the aid of a government grant. She also informed the Committee that this Council will have the second highest number of EV charging points in the county once the 26 were installed.

The development strategies for playing pitches, green spaces and community buildings were discussed, with a Member asking for clarification on what stage the

Council is at regarding the strategies. The Assistant Chief Executive explained that the strategies are currently being developed and would be used to inform on the Site Allocations work which is why there has been a slight delay.

Members discussed the Council's food waste collection trials in conjunction with West Sussex County Council, praising the work being done towards the pilots starting in March 2020.

A Member enquired as to the reason for the reduction of the target for the cancellation rate of Penalty Charge Notices. The Policy, Performance and Partnerships Manager explained that the reduction of the target was due to input from West Sussex County Council and the Service Level Agreement for on street parking enforcement.

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 the first quarter of the year and identified areas where further reporting or information is required;
- (ii) Agreed to advise the Cabinet of any issues that the Committee considered should be given particular consideration at the Cabinet meeting on 16th September 2019.

8 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR LEADER, FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE - WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20.

Tom Clark, Head of Regulatory Services introduced the report, noting that in addition to the items listed for the November meeting it will also include an update on the Council Tax Support Scheme.

The Head of Regulatory Services explained the Committee would meet to discuss the budget and corporate plan in January. He also explained that the April committee would focus on Sustainability.

A Member enquired when the Sustainability Panel would meet. The Head of Regulatory Services explained they would be contacted shortly regarding this.

RESOLVED

The committee agreed the Committee's Work Programme as set out at paragraph 5 of the report.

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

None.

The meeting finished at 7.57 pm

Chairman