

**Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for Leader,  
Resources and Economic Growth on 13 June 2018  
from 7:00 p.m. to 7.57 p.m.**

**Present:**

Edward Belsey  
Margaret Belsey\*  
Richard Cherry  
Rod Clarke  
Ruth de Mierre

Tony Dorey\*  
Jacqui Landriani  
Andrew Lea\*  
Gordon Marples\*  
Norman Mockford

Geoff Rawlinson\*  
Peter Reed  
Linda Stockwell  
Colin Trumble\*  
Rex Whittaker

\* Absent

**Also present (as nominated substitute):** Cllr Wilkinson, Cllr Holden, Cllr Ellis, Cllr Jones.

**Also present (as Cabinet Member):** Cllr Garry Wall, Cllr Judy Llewellyn-Burke.  
Apologies from Cllr Ash-Edwards.

**1. SUBSTITUTES AT MEETINGS OF COMMITTEE – COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 4**

Councillor Wilkinson substituted for Councillor Trumble. Councillor Holden substituted for Councillor Andrew Lea, Councillor Jones substituted for Councillor Margaret Belsey and Councillor Ellis substituted for Councillor Dorey.

**2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Trumble, Councillor Andrew Lea, Councillor Margaret Belsey, Councillor Dorey, Councillor Marples, Councillor Rawlinson and Councillor Ash-Edwards.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**4. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings held on 7 March 2018 and 9 May 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**5. URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

**6. PERFORMANCE OUTTURN 2017/18**

Neal Barton, Policy & Performance Manager introduced the report, drawing Members attention to the annual total of 67% of indicators on green which is an increase from 64% in 2016/17. In summarising the flagship activities for 2017/18, he noted that the Council had met its target to subscribe an additional 2000 people for green waste bins, there has been progress with town centre development, significant investment in leisure centres and the adoption of an Economic Development Strategy. New

flagship activities for 2018/19 include a kerbside recycling pilot in conjunction with the British Heart Foundation for textiles and small electrical items, new parking payment machines and more electronic car charging points across the District, as well as a pilot involving the Wellbeing team working in GP surgeries.

A number of Members thanked Officers for their excellent work over the past year and welcomed the report which indicated that the Council's overall performance for the year was high.

In response to a Member's query on the new parking payment machines, Simon Hughes, Head of Digital and Customer Service confirmed that payment is on entry to the carparks and if customers pay using the App, which is being provided as an additional service, it can alert people when their parking is about to expire.

The committee discussed the increased membership of leisure centres and of the concessional use of the facilities, including any impact that may have. The Leader of the Council noted that there will be an occasional fluctuation of revenue figures depending on the numbers of concessional visits but this is to be expected, as the Council wishes to encourage everyone to have access to the facilities. The managers of each centre need to schedule classes and activities appropriately to maximise on the times that different groups generally attend. At a Member's request, the Chairman agreed to ensure that a breakdown of membership types is considered in more detail by the Scrutiny Committee for Customer Service and Service Delivery, along with the option for centres to consider offering more activities for younger people.

The committee raised a number of concerns on the subject of homelessness and affordable housing as it was noted that the numbers of people placed in temporary accommodation has increased. A Member queried what housing advice is being provided and how the Council is addressing the disparity between rents charged by private landlords and the Local Housing Allowance. The Policy & Performance Manager acknowledged that as part of the Homelessness Reduction Act, the numbers are expected to increase. In terms of the Council's preparation for this, Members were asked to note that a report on this subject is being presented at a special meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for Community, Housing and Planning on 27 June 2018. The report will seek authority to provide our own temporary accommodation within the district through acquisition and leasing arrangements to reduce the Council's reliance on guest house accommodation.

With regard to Affordable Housing, a Member noted with disappointment that the final number of affordable housing achieved was 97 out of 200. He sought clarity on the Council's position of promoting Council's own land. The Leader noted that this is part of a larger picture encompassing temporary accommodation, funding and investment. There are robust policies in place to ensure the 30% affordable housing element is provided and the Council is working with Registered Providers and Homes England to improve the delivery of affordable housing, including exploring use of the Council's own land.

Two Members commented on staffing issues and sickness levels, particularly the increase in day's sickness in March, and a drop in performance of Building Control in plan checking. The Head of Digital and Customer Service confirmed that peaks in sickness levels are usually associated with peaks in flu and cold outbreaks and are to be expected over the course of a whole year. However, across the year the sickness levels represent positive performance against the target. Regarding the drop of performance in Building Control last summer, the Head of Regulatory Services

confirmed this was due to the unexpected leave taken by one staff member when a family member was unwell.

The performance of the Benefits service was discussed with a Member seeking confirmation on whether the figures for the department are expected to improve, following the move away from CenSus. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance confirmed that the Council will be in charge of its own service, with the emphasis being on accuracy rather than speed of processing in order to provide the best service to benefit claimants and ensure that the Council did not lose Housing Benefit Subsidy.

The Committee discussed the increase in reported crime within the District. The Leader noted that the figures are reported for information but are outside of the Council's control to directly influence. He assured Members that as part of the partnerships the Council has, we receive regular updates from the Police and Crime Commissioner on work carried out to reduce crime. In addition, the Town, Parish and District Councils have had an update on the new policing model. As chairman of the Mid Sussex Partnership he will also ensure the comments of this committee are reported back. In terms of directly influencing, the Leader noted that the work to bring forward the new CCTV arrangements will have an impact on crime and antisocial behaviour, and encouraged Members to play a part by being vigilant within their Ward.

A Member congratulated the Customer Services team for their achievements over the year. She also thanked the Wellbeing team for their interventions, and in particular the bespoke lifestyle session carried out recently in her Ward. She requested that an article be included in Mid Sussex Matters to further promote the positive difference that they make for people

The subject of Universal Credit was discussed, with Members happy to see that the Council has invested in preparation for the roll out and pleased to note the grant money made available for the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). The Head of Corporate Resources confirmed that the Council has a Service Level Agreement with the CAB, and that the Council is now an investor with 'Boom' – formally known as the West Sussex Credit Union. The Leader noted that Universal Credit had seen some difficulty nationally since its roll out but noted that the Council has invested in new staff, including a senior officer with the experience to guide the roll out successfully within the District.

A Member reiterated the need to monitor the performance of the CAB to ensure residents have access to the services they need. She also expressed a need to support young people and their families, including the provision of homes for single young people coming out of care, and ensure the continuation of funding for the Wellbeing Team. The Chairman agreed that this could be referred to the Scrutiny Committee for Community Housing and Planning to review in more detail.

Three Members commented favourably on the new community building at the Keymer Brick and Tile works, which will include a shared space with shops, parking, a community building and Doctor's surgery.

Discussion was held on the increase of residents taking up green waste bins and a Member asked if smaller or shared bins could be provided to encourage smaller households who may not generate a high level of waste.

A Member queried whether the Independent Retailers funding will continue for the next year and what can be done to make independent retailers aware. The Head of Corporate Resources confirmed that funding from the County Council was in place for this year but not guaranteed thereafter. However if it proved to be successful, it is likely to continue.

The Chairman thanked the Policy & Performance Manager for a detailed report, noting the challenges ahead for the flagship activities in the coming year. She took Members to the recommendations which were agreed unanimously.

## **RESOLVED**

The Committee:

- (i) Noted the Council's performance and progress with flagship activities in 2017/18 and identified any areas where it requires further reporting or information;
- (ii) Will advise the Cabinet of any issues that it should be given particular consideration to when it considers the report at its meeting on 9 July 2018; and
- (iii) Noted monitoring arrangements and initial progress with the Council's flagship activities for 2018/19.

## **7. WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19**

Tom Clark, Solicitor to the Council introduced the report and confirmed the addition of two further items to the work programme at the request of the Chairman. A report on the launch of the Economic Development Strategy will be brought to the meeting in October and a further review of progress on the Strategy will be brought to the meeting in March 2019.

Chairman took Members to the recommendation with the addition of the 2 extra reports, which was agreed unanimously.

## **RESOLVED**

The Committee:

- (i) agreed the work programme for 2018/19 as set out in the report and with the addition of two further items.

Chairman.