

**Minutes of a meeting of Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Finance
and Performance
held on Wednesday, 11th November, 2020
from 5.00 - 6.12 pm**

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

A Bennett
R Cartwright
R Cromie
A Eves

S Hicks
R Jackson
Andrew Lea
C Phillips

L Stockwell
C Trumble
R Whittaker

Absent: Councillors H Brunsdon and P Coote

Also Present: Councillors P Chapman, R Clarke, R de Mierre, I Gibson,
S Hatton, J Henwood, S Hillier and A MacNaughton

Also Present Councillors Ash-Edwards, J Llewellyn-Burke
as
Cabinet
Member:

1 ROLL CALL AND VIRTUAL MEETINGS EXPLANATION.

The Chairman carried out a roll call to establish attendance at the meeting. The Solicitor to the Council provided information on the format of the virtual meeting.

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

None.

3 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies were received from Councillor Coote and Councillor Brunsdon.

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

In relation to any item that may cover West Sussex County Council, Councillor Andrew Lea declared that he is also a West Sussex County Councillor.

**5 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 26TH OF
AUGUST 2020.**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 August 2020 were agreed as a correct record and electronically signed by the Chairman.

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

None.

7 CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING.

Peter Stuart, Head of Corporate Resources introduced the report noting that it provides a mid-year oversight of the timeliness of projects, alongside the financial aspects which are provided in the budget management report presented to Cabinet.

Members discussed the format of the report. It was noted that some key items are not yet listed, as they are not yet scheduled to start in the first half of the year. Also, where a decision is imminent to change the budget, the RAG status has been amended to reflect that anticipated change, as shown in the Council Chamber Refurbishment project. It was also noted that some projects were funded out of a revenue budget where it became clear that the outcome of the project should be classified as revenue rather than capital. A Member suggested that a forward-looking report for the year's total commitments may be helpful for the Committee to review.

Clarification was provided on the Burgess Hill Place and Connectivity Programme where £204,000 is the Council's total commitment, with further funding being provided from West Sussex County Council. Regarding the Burgess Hill Library, it was confirmed that after a short delay to secure a hoarding licence, the fencing is now in place and once work is complete the ground will be left as a usable surface, free from rubble. The Head of Corporate Resources also agreed to look into progressing the petanque square at Fairfield Recreation round, Burgess Hill.

Members acknowledged that a large number of projects are progressing well considering the current pandemic which is a compliment to the contractors and officers involved in keeping projects on track.

The Head of Corporate Resources agreed to provide a written response to the Committee regarding the progression of the centre for outdoor sport as a Member queried why design work could not be commissioned due to Covid19, until late 2021/22.

The Chairman took Members to the recommendation contained in the report, which was agreed.

RESOLVED

The Committee noted the content of the report.

8 DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN AND BUDGET 2021-22 CONSULTATION PROCESS.

Emma Sheridan, Business Unit Leader for Community Services, Policy and Performance introduced the report, noting that a 6 week consultation process will run from 18 December to 29 January 2021. The process follows the same format as previous years but as the Council agreed a revised Corporate Plan in September 2020, the 2021/22 Corporate Plan will build on this.

The Chairman took Members to the recommendation contained in the report, which was agreed.

RESOLVED

The Committee agreed the proposed approach.

9 PERFORMANCE MONITORING FOR THE SECOND QUARTER OF 2020-21.

Neal Barton, Policy and Performance Manager introduced the report, noting that the number of indicators at green is 84%, with 9% on amber and 7% red. He acknowledged that the current Covid pandemic has significantly impacted on the delivery of Council services in Quarter 1 and this continues into Quarter 2.

The Committee asked for additional information about the closure of the Early Intervention Project. The Business Unit Leader for Community Services, Policy and Performance explained that the Early Intervention post had been redeployed to work on youth related projects connected to community safety, which had been highlighted as a need in the Strategic Intelligence Assessment. The post is funded by the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Wellbeing service was discussed and likelihood of hitting the revised targets for interventions, given that social distancing had meant that face-to-face sessions were not possible. It was noted that good progress had been made in switching to more telephone and virtual interventions and that reaching the revised annual target was feasible. Public Health remain happy with progress on the service recovery.

The Committee asked about the additional responsibilities of Environmental Health in dealing with the pandemic. The Head of Regulatory Services updated on the service's role in test and trace and pointed to the increase in service requests dealt with by Environmental Health shown in the report. Additional staff resources had been allocated to the service financed by specific Government grants through the County Council.

The Land Charges service was discussed and the increase in demand for searches given the extremely busy property market. The Head of Regulatory Services provided assurances that searches were being completed within 7 days and therefore were not delaying property transactions. Additional income was being received by the Council, which would be reflected in the next budget monitoring report.

The Committee asked about the prosperity of the Orchards Shopping Centre, given the figures for collection of rents and footfall. The Head of Corporate Resources updated on engagement with tenants on rent repayments. There had been some bounce back in shopping at the Orchards, with additional use of click and collect and potential interest in the letting of vacant units.

Progress with the provision of electric vehicle charging points in the District was discussed and concerns about some downtimes for the operation of the existing points. It was noted that the Council had just awarded a contract for the provision of EVCPs in the Council's car parks. The Business Leader for Community Services, Policy and Performance agreed to provide a written response on the usage of charging points at Hazelgrove Road and Chequer Mead.

Members noted that the HR figures remained positive despite the current pandemic, and were pleased to note the number of compliments received.

Discussion was held around the speed of processing revenue and benefit claims, and the percentage of rent being collected, including what deferral options may be available during the pandemic and current lockdown. The funding for temporary housing was discussed and Members also sought future updates on the metrics for car park utilisation levels, composition of litter (in terms of the amount of discarded PPE equipment) and household waste levels.

The Chairman took Members to the recommendations contained in the report, which were agreed.

RESOLVED

The Committee:

(i) Noted the Council's performance and progress with Council Priority Projects in the second 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 considers should be given particular consideration at the Cabinet meeting on 23rd November 2020.

10 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR LEADER FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE WORK PROGRAMME 2020 21.

Tom Clark, Head of Regulatory Services introduced the report, noting that an update on Sustainability will also be presented to the Committee at the meeting in March 2021.

The Chairman took Members to the recommendation contained in the report and addition of the March item, which was agreed.

RESOLVED

The Committee agreed the indicative Work Programme as set out at paragraph 5 of this report, with the inclusion of an item on Sustainability for the meeting in March 2021.

11 QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.2 DUE NOTICE OF WHICH HAS BEEN GIVEN.

None.

The meeting finished at 6.12 pm

Chairman