

**Minutes of a meeting of Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Deputy
Leader & Housing and Customer Service
held on Wednesday, 9th November, 2022
from 7.00 - 8.05 pm**

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

A Bennett	Andrew Lea	R Whittaker
A Eves	C Phillips	R Clarke
J Henwood	L Stockwell	
R Jackson	C Trumble	

Absent: Councillors H Brunson, P Coote, S Hicks and S Smith

Also Present as Cabinet Members: Councillors J Ash-Edwards, J Belsey and R Cromie

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

Councillor Clarke substituted for Councillor Coote.

2 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies were received from Councillors Coote, Brunson, Hicks and Smith.

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

With regards to item 8, Councillor Andrew Lea declared a Non-Registrable Interest due to his project on greenhouse gas submissions.

4 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2022.

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2022 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 CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING.

Louise Duffield, Director of Resources and Organisational Development, introduced the report acknowledging the progress made across the District, the complex nature of programmes, and that, going forward, the funding will be reprofiled across the years of the projects.

Discussion was held on the investment into projects at the Oaklands Campus and the way that aligned with the current staff usage of the site. The Chief Executive noted that staff remain working in a hybrid way, which is both productive and competitive in the recruitment market and a pilot is due to commence shortly on different ways of utilising office space to support collaborative working.

The Committee discussed the rural connectivity programme and the potential for the main 'motorway of data' to run further north than Ardingly. Simon Hughes, Director of People and Commercial Services, confirmed that the Council is working with providers and digital infrastructure as they are looking to invest and expand in rural areas. The Council is also part of a Government Programme to provide Wi-Fi connectivity in rural areas.

The telephony system replacement was also discussed in detail. Simon Jones, Assistant Director Digital and People Services, noted that phase 1 has been completed which focused on the Customer Services Team and Phase 2 is being reprofiled to link with ongoing work on service redesign and service improvements. Work is ongoing to develop meaningful performance indicators and feedback from the Committee is welcome to help shape this.

Members discussed funding allocation for a number of projects. Clarity was also given on the timeframes for the 6 parks identified for improvement over coming years. A Member also welcomed the fact that the Hill Place Farm Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) is live and operational.

Electric car charging points were discussed by the Committee and it was agreed to provide a response in writing giving an update regarding the current issues with the Cyprus Road charging points. It was also noted that money has been allocated for significant repairs to the Bedelands Gypsy and Traveller site. Negotiations are underway with the residents on site to minimise disruption and it has been agreed to delay the ground works until Spring 2023.

The Chairman took Members to a vote on the recommendation contained in the report which was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

The Scrutiny Committee noted the update.

7 DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN AND BUDGET 2023/24 - CONSULTATION PROCESS.

Louise Duffield, Director of Resources and Organisational Development introduced the report noting that it is an annual process, setting out the dates that the Committee will receive papers and the timescales to respond.

As there were no comments from the Committee, the Chairman took Members to a vote on the recommendations contained in the report which were agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

The Scrutiny Committee agreed the proposed approach.

8 PERFORMANCE MONITORING FOR THE SECOND QUARTER OF 2022/23.

Louise Duffield, Director of Resources and Organisational Development, introduced the report noting that overall performance was generally very strong.

Members discussed the new electric charging point data. Rob Anderton, Assistant Director Commercial Services and Contracts confirmed that discussions were underway with West Sussex County Council and Connected Kerb with regard to data reporting and a more comprehensive picture should be available in 3-6 months' time.

Ground maintenance online surveys were discussed in detail, action taken at particular sites as a result of the feedback, and ways in which the online survey could be promoted to residents in terms of signage and QR codes. Sally Blomfield, Assistant Director Planning and Sustainable Economy confirmed that the Council has commissioned Visitor Insights to provide granular detail on the three shopping centres and five largest villages within the District and footfall and dwell time are increasing healthily. These have been shared with the Parishes involved and it was agreed to share the details again.

The capacity issues with the Green Waste scheme were discussed. Road cleaning was also discussed. The Assistant Director Commercial Services and Contracts confirmed that the effectiveness of the street cleansing operations is regularly assessed by contract monitoring officers.

The Committee discussed the complaints and compliments indicators noting that the number of complaints had increased. The Director of People and Commercial Services noted that the figures vary during the year dependant on the services involved and that a full report will be presented to the Scrutiny Committee in the new year. The Cabinet Member also acknowledged that the volume of work carried out by departments such as Revenues and Benefits should be taken into consideration when reviewing complaint indicators.

Discussion also focused on the number of people who are homeless or in temporary accommodation and those who are listed as High Priority Band A. It was confirmed that there is an Officer in post to assist households into private rental accommodation but that it is very difficult to place people as there are not many properties available within the District. The Director of Resources and Organisational Development agreed to provide details of the percentage of applicants on the housing register who are in the Armed Forces, and the number of Council staff with an Armed Forces connection, in order to assist in promoting the Armed Forces Covenant.

The Committee discussed the income received from the Leisure Centres and how the Council can ensure that the centres remain successful and financially viable against a backdrop of rising energy costs, the impact of the cost of living crisis, and competition from new budget gym facilities opening within the District. A further report on the subject will be presented to the Scrutiny Committee for Leisure and Parking in November.

The target set for Planning Enforcement site visits within 10 days was also discussed and it was noted that although this target has been exceeded in the first two quarters of the year, it does need to be set at a level that is realistically aligned to staff resources.

The Chairman took Members to a vote on the recommendations contained in the report which were agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

The Scrutiny Committee:

- (i) Noted the Council's performance in the second quarter of the year and identified any areas where further reporting or information is required;
- (ii) Advised the Cabinet of any issues that the Committee considers should be given particular consideration at the Cabinet meeting on 21st November 2022.

9 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR LEADER, DEPUTY LEADER AND HOUSING AND CUSTOMER SERVICES WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23.

The Solicitor to the Council introduced the report noting that it details the reports to be considered in the remaining two scheduled meetings.

The Chairman took Members to a vote on the recommendation contained in the report which was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

The Scrutiny Committee agreed the indicative Work Programme as set out at paragraph 5 of the report.

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

None.

The meeting finished at 8.05 pm

Chairman