

**Minutes of a meeting of Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Resources
and Economic Growth
held on Wednesday, 14th November, 2018
from 7.00 pm - 8.29 pm**

Present: L Stockwell (Chairman)
R de Mierre (Vice-Chair)

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| E Belsey | G Marples | G Rawlinson |
| M Belsey | N Mockford | P Reed |
| R Clarke | R Cherry | C Trumble |
| T Dorey | J Landriani | R Whittaker |

Absent: Councillors Andrew Lea

Also Present: Councillors J Ash-Edwards, J Llewellyn-Burke and G Wall

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

Councillor Jones substituted for Councillor Andrew Lea.

2. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies were received from Councillor Andrew Lea.

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

None.

4. TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 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 MONITORING FOR THE SECOND QUARTER OF 2018/19.

Neal Barton, Policy and Performance Manager introduced the report, noting the positive performance for the second quarter with 78% of indicators green, compared to 74% at the same point last year. He also highlighted that the report contained no red indicators, a contributing factor being the improved performance of the Revenues and Benefits service. Following requests from the Scrutiny Committee the report

now contains more information on the reasons for complaints, and more detail has been provided on the work of Legal Services, the use of electric vehicle charging points and progress on purchasing properties to reduce costs associated with temporary accommodation. Flagship activities are also progressing well, with the installation of new parking payment machines in all car parks, and the achievement of a Green Flag award to St John's Park in Burgess Hill already completed.

A number of Members commented on the positive results contained in the report, particularly in relation to the improvements shown by the Revenues and Benefits Service and progress with Universal Credit implementation. Thanks were expressed to the Officers and Members who had contributed in all areas to ensure that performance levels were high.

In response to a Member's query on Parking Services, the Policy and Performance Manager confirmed that the Council's remit covered on-street parking (including double yellow lines). A breakdown of penalty charges specific to this area could be provided in a future report. He also provided the latest figures relating to Universal Credit, indicating that 1,105 Mid Sussex claimants are signed up. The Council is proactively managing the migration through partnerships with the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and through a grant from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to assist those who need financial advice and are less technically able. It was noted that work is still ongoing to reach the most vulnerable in society who would not usually access services such as the CAB. In response to a Member's query, the Head of Corporate Resources confirmed that whilst there are seasonal fluctuations and a narrow margin for performance indicators within the Revenues and Benefits team, the current performance reflected systemic improvements. This was echoed by the Leader who praised the exemplar work carried out by the Business Unit Leader for Revenues and Benefits and the team.

With regards to the CAB, a number of Member expressed a wish for representatives from the service to be invited to the next Scrutiny Committee (subject to availability), to pass comment on how they view the issues being referred to them regarding Universal Credit. It was also requested that more scrutiny be given to the work of the CAB and the advice being provided. The Leader noted that should they not be available to attend in person, a written report could be requested. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Growth confirmed that the CAB is scrutinised significantly at the renewal of funding agreements, with Value for Money and outcomes sought at that time. He noted that this falls under the remit of the Cabinet Member for Community, and the Scrutiny Committee for Community, Housing and Planning could be asked to look at this in more detail at a future meeting.

A number of Members noted that the figure of 9% resolved anti-social behaviour cases seemed low. The Policy and Performance Manager confirmed that this indicator is under review as it demonstrates open cases with multi-agency involvement and does not show one off cases that are resolved by the Anti-Social Behaviour Officer. A Member also called for close partnership between the Early Intervention Team and Councillors to ensure that adequate funding is secured based on accurate numbers of cases reported. It was proposed that the Scrutiny Committee for Community, Housing and Planning look in more detail at the subject of mental health provision within the District.

With regards to the customer satisfaction survey, the Policy and Performance Manager confirmed that 16 people are surveyed per month and the Council is considering the purchase of a new telephone system which will allow for an automatic survey after each call, therefore increasing the number surveyed.

In response to a query on staff sickness and turnover, the Head of Corporate Resources noted that sickness absence does affect small teams and work is being carried out to develop teams where necessary, and to retain staff by providing job progression and development options.

The subject of parking charges and plastic recycling was discussed and the Leader confirmed that there are no immediate proposals to move to a 'pay on exit' parking method due to the expense and manpower it entails. He noted the recent changes that have been made in car parks around the district. These have been welcomed by users and had a positive impact on dwell time and revenue. Regarding plastic recycling, he confirmed that there is a system for West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) to repay the District Council recycling credits proportionally in line with how much is recycled. However, this is an area with an anticipated budget pressure in the next year as WSSCC are looking to make cutbacks.

In response to a question on Leisure Centre expansion, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance noted that a survey in conjunction with the Town and Parish Councils is aiming to capture residents' aspirations in this area going forward. Performance at the Leisure Centres is good and the Council may wish to expand in the future to meet the need of the increased number of residents moving to the District.

Discussion was held on the Flagship Activities, particularly focussing on electric car charging points, the Changing Places toilets, the Orchards Shopping Centre and external investment in the area. The Leader noted the welcome addition of the Changing Places toilets being proposed, as the Council aims to have at least one facility in each town within the District. He also noted the increased use of electric car charging points but raised the need for the parking strategy to address parking fees for those using electric vehicle charging spaces.

With regards to attracting external investment in the District, the Deputy Leader highlighted investments secured from the Government for infrastructure developments, such as for the regeneration of Burgess Hill, A2300 corridor improvements and the Gigabit Full Fibre project. He noted that private sector investment is strong, with town centre regeneration proceeding and hotel operators actively looking for premises within the District. He evidenced the direct link between the Council's pro-activity and private sector investment with the success of the MicroBusiness Grant Scheme. Over £72,000 funding is available this year and all require match funding from businesses. The Deputy Leader also confirmed that the investment in developing the Economic Development Team has added significant capacity to the organisation in putting in successful bids to Government and to deliver on projects. The business community has noticed the increased presence and activity by the Council.

The Deputy Leader agreed to respond separately outside of the meeting to a request for the current yield on the Orchards Shopping Centre and time scales for development of a community recreational space at Spring Copse, Stone Quarry.

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

The Chairman also encouraged Members to express an interest in joining a Working Group which will be convened to establish the performance indicators for 2019/20.

RESOLVED

The Committee:

- (i) Noted the Council's performance and progress with flagship activities in the second quarter of the year and identified any 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 14th January 2019.

7. DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN AND BUDGET 2019/20 - CONSULTATION PROCESS

Peter Stuart, Head of Corporate Resources introduced the report which sets out a similar format to the 2018/19 consultation process, which worked well. A draft Corporate Plan and Budget will be circulated to Members on 14 December 2018, marking the start of a 6 week consultation process.

The Chairman took Members to the recommendation which was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

The Committee:

- (i) Agreed the proposed approach.

8. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING

Peter Stuart, Head of Corporate Resources introduced the report which has taken on board the request from Members for a changed layout, and has introduced a RAG system for clarity on how projects are progressing.

Members discussed CCTV installation both at Oaklands and across the District. The Head of Corporate Resources confirmed that the District wide project is not listed in this report as it is managed by the Police. The Business Unit Leader for Community Services, Policy & Performance has visited the control centre at Police Headquarters where the cameras are monitored, is satisfied with the upgrades and is looking to arrange a tour for Members.

The Head of Corporate Resources confirmed that the fire system replacement at Clair Hall is no longer taking place as it was surveyed and deemed fit for purpose.

Discussion was held on the project to modernise the Council Chamber. The Deputy Leader noted that other modernisation work within the Council had made a positive difference and created a modern and professional environment. This needed to be replicated in the Chamber as improvements in this public space are overdue. The challenges in accessibility levels in the Chamber also needed to be addressed.

The Chairman took Members to the recommendation which was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

The Committee:

- (i) Noted the report and its contents.

9. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR LEADER, RESOURCES AND ECONOMIC GROWTH WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

Tom Clark, Solicitor to the Council introduced the report, highlighting that the next meeting in January will focus solely on the Draft Corporate Plan and Budget for 2019/20.

The Chairman took Members to the recommendation which was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

The Committee:

- (i) Agreed the Committee's Work Programme as set out at paragraph 5 of the report.

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

None.

The meeting finished at 8.29 pm

Chairman