

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: 8 July 2015

Venue: East Northamptonshire House, Cedar Drive, Thrapston

Time: 7.30 pm

Present: Councillors:- **Jake Vowles (Chairman)**
David Jenney (Vice Chairman)

Rosalie Beattie	Janet Pinnock
John Farrar	Roger Powell
Helen Howell	Valerie Raven-Hill
Sylvia Hughes	Geoff Shacklock
Dorothy Maxwell	

40. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2015 were approved.

41. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

42. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were noted.

43. QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.3

There were no questions submitted under Council Procedure Rule 10.3.

44. VOTE OF THANKS TO BARBARA WIGGINS

The Chairman paid tribute to the Clerk to the Committee, Mrs Barbara Wiggins, who would be retiring from her post as Democratic Services Officer and PA to the Chairman of the Council at the end of July after fourteen years service with the Council. Committee members echoed the Chairman's sentiments and wished Mrs Wiggins a long and happy retirement.

45. NOMINATION OF COUNCILLORS RESPONSIBLE FOR FEEDBACK TO COMMITTEE

The Chairman provided a brief résumé of previous arrangements regarding the Committee's ability to review and call-in decisions made by the other Committees within the Council. The Chairman invited members of the Committee to nominate those who would be responsible for the task. Following discussion the following were nominated:

Personnel Sub-Committee
Finance Sub Committee
Policy & Resources Committee
Planning Policy

Councillor Sylvia Hughes
David Jenney
Jake Vowles
Dorothy Maxwell

RESOLVED

That the Councillor nominations noted above be confirmed.

46. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting during discussion on the following item of business because exempt information, as defined under paragraphs 1, 2 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, may be disclosed.

The Executive Director and Head of Resources & Organisational Development left the room whilst the brief discussion was held.

Councillor Sylvia Hughes updated the new members of the Committee on the previous call-in regarding options for S.151 Officer and Monitoring Officer support.

47. RESOURCES & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICE PLAN

The Head of Resources and Organisational Development attended the meeting to present the detail of the service plan for her service area for 2015/16. The committee noted the following key priorities for the service area:

- Source and appoint new Grounds Maintenance Contract
- Lease of the Red Brick Building
- Review of Council Chamber lighting
- Elections 2015 and Councillor Induction/Development
- Review of the Council's printing requirements
- Introduction of a new Committee Management System
- Introduction of a new OD Strategy

The committee welcomed the information provided and noted the challenges that would continue into the next financial year. Members paid tribute to the hard work of officers within the service area on a number of key work areas which had resulted in significant improvements and excellent outcomes for the district.

48. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT – QUARTER 4 2014-15

The Corporate Support Manager presented a report detailing the performance of the Council in respect of agreed indicators and other statistics for the period April 2014 to March 2015, which had been monitored at Performance Clinic meetings held in May-June 2015.

The Committee reviewed the performance report, appended to the covering report, which detailed a summary of performance across the Council, where targets were over or under-performing or within tolerance, any achievements across service area and the budget outturn position.

The committee welcomed the report and noted particularly:

- 97.9% of local supplier invoices had been paid within 10 days and 99.8% of invoice payments had been paid within 30 days
- Over-performance of measures relating to housing benefit within Customer and Community Services

The committee noted that the External Funding Officer (EFO) had been very successful in finalising bids for external funding agencies as well as accessing external funding for East Northamptonshire Council. It was noted that a total of 39 groups had been provided with advice from the EFO.

The committee noted that successful work in the number of homelessness preventions, which demonstrated the effectiveness of partnership working. Note was also made of the excellent performance figures relating to the affordable homes which had been delivered.

The committee discussed various under-performing measures which had been recorded in the Performance Highlights report and noted the figures provided for Residual Household waste sent for treatment/disposal. The Head of Environmental Services would be attending a future meeting to discuss his Service Plan and this subject would be covered more fully at that time.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

49. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16

The Executive Director tabled a report with a view to obtaining Councillors' views on the future work programme for the committee for the year ahead.

In order to take into account the three key roles of the committee, it needed to agree a balanced programme of activity for the following 12-18 months. The forward plan would then allow for appropriate preparations to be made for each meeting to maximise the committee's effectiveness.

The key roles were:

- Wider View – The committee could review any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants. The Corporate Plan priorities could provide a useful framework for this aspect of the Committee's work.
- Monitoring Performance – As well as the quarterly Performance Clinic reports, it was proposed that each Head of Service would present their business plans, with a focus this year on the relationship between service priorities and budget provision.
- Call-in – Call in of decisions was a valued role for Scrutiny, but one for which forward planning is not practical. Any call-in would usually trigger a dedicated Scrutiny

Committee meeting to be held, therefore they cannot be programmed but they take resources which result in a slower pace on other activities.

Following discussion the following topics to take forward were agreed as follows:

- Public Transport (September)
- Planning Enforcement (November)
- Environmental Service Plan (November)
- Town & Parish Councils Update (January)
- Broadband Update (March)
- EMAS Update (March)

It was agreed to move forward with a review of Planning Enforcement and that Councillors David Jenney, Valerie Raven-Hill and Dorothy Maxwell would work together to investigate the issues that had arisen and report back to the November Committee.

It was also agreed to write to the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee at Northamptonshire County Council, following publication of the information about adult education classes in the County, discrepancies within the document relating to the provision of further education and lack of provision for people with disabilities.

Chairman