
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT on Tuesday, 13 January 2015 from 7.00 - 8.10 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Sylvia Bennett, Lloyd Bowen (Vice-Chairman in the Chair), Jackie Constable, John Coulter, Peter Marchington, Ben Stokes and Ghlin Whelan.

OFFICERS PRESENT: David Clifford, Jo Hammond and Bob Pullen.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Andy Booth, Mark Ellen, June Garrad, Mike Henderson and Prescott.

421 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 November 2014 (Minute Nos. 370 – 379) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

422 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

PART ONE - SUBSTANTIVE ITEM

423 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Policy and Performance Manager introduced the quarterly portfolio-based balanced scorecard performance reports for the second quarter (July – September) of 2014/15. He provided an overview of the Corporate Health scorecard and welcomed questions.

A Member asked why the percentage of complaints responded to within 10 working days had fallen and was now below target?

The Policy and Performance Manager advised that the performance target for complaints responded to within 10 working days was 87.5%. He suggested that the decline may be the result of a higher proportion of complex complaints, and undertook to forward the Committee a copy of the quarterly complaints report produced by the Customer Services Centre.

- Policy and Performance Manager

The Chairman referred to the figures for the workforce count and sickness absence and suggested that the Committee keep this under review.

In response to a question from a Member, the Policy and Performance Manager explained that the operational risks pie chart reflected the combined total of all risks identified within individual teams in their service plans and the number within each category (red, amber or green).

With regard to the Community Safety and Health scorecard, the Policy and Performance Manager explained that the increase in complaints received related to the move of the Environment Wardens to the Economy and Community Services team.

Members made the following comments in relation to Housing: what could the Council do to ensure private landlords were maintaining houses to a decent standard?; need to ensure the Council was not placing vulnerable families into sub-standard accommodation; and what progress was being made with the purchase of emergency accommodation in Sittingbourne? The Policy and Performance Officer explained that these issues could form part of the scoping template for the Housing Review.

With regard to the Planning scorecard, the Committee noted with concern that no data was available for the third quarter in succession. Members made the following comments: it was unacceptable to still not have performance data; the Committee needed to be informed of the problems and the solutions being proposed to understand what progress was being made and how effectively the issues were being dealt with; disappointed at lack of progress; and concern that a joint service made it more difficult to monitor service delivery and rectify any problems.

With regard to the Regeneration scorecard, the Policy and Performance Manager advised that the local procurement indicators were being replaced with an indicator monitoring the overall proportion of Council spend retained in the Borough.

Members expressed concern at the lack of progress with regeneration projects, particularly Sittingbourne Town Centre.

The Chairman thanked the Policy and Performance Manager for attending the meeting.

PART TWO - BUSINESS ITEMS

424 REVIEWS AT FOLLOW-UP STAGE AND LOG OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chairman drew Members' attention to the log of recommendations attached to the agenda. The Policy and Performance Officer advised that he would request an update from Heads of Service on the progress of the approved recommendations for consideration at the meeting on 11 February 2015.

- Policy and Performance Officer

425 OTHER REVIEW PROGRESS REPORTS

The Policy and Performance Officer advised that meetings had been scheduled in for 27 January 2015 with the relevant Cabinet Members and officers to progress the Asset Transfers Review and the Contracts and Procurement Review. It was hoped that further updates would be available for the meeting on 11 February 2015 and any draft reports would be submitted to the meeting on 19 March 2015.

The Policy and Performance Officer advised that a joint Overview and Scrutiny meeting was held on 12 January 2015 to consider the report of the joint scrutiny of the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership (MKIP) governance and communications. The recommendations would be presented to each of the three Authorities' Cabinets for consideration and response.

A further joint meeting of the three Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees was being arranged for February 2015 to consider the internal audit report of the MKIP Planning Support Service. Further details of the meeting would be circulated to Members.

426 CABINET FORWARD PLAN

The Committee reviewed the current Forward Plan for March – June 2015 and requested that further information be sought from the Director of Regeneration and circulated to the Committee on the Forum Shopping Centre, Sittingbourne report, due to be considered at Cabinet on 11 March 2015.

- Policy and Performance Officer

427 URGENT BUSINESS REQUESTS

There were no urgent business requests.

428 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered their Work Programme for the remainder of the Civic Year.

In view of the Committee's outstanding reviews and the quarterly reporting cycle, the Chairman suggested the primary health review be deferred to the next Civic Year. This was agreed by the Committee.

The Committee discussed the review of Housing Services and agreed that it was an important issue and should remain a focus for the Committee. It was agreed that the topic would be scoped at a future meeting ready to commence a review in the new Civic Year.

Chairman

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All Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel