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NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES, GERONON ROAD, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY, SG6 3JF
ON TUESDAY, 18TH JUNE, 2024 AT 7.30 PM

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors: Matt Barnes (Chair), Tom Tyson (Vice-Chair), Jon Clayden, Elizabeth Dennis, Ralph Muncer, Louise Peace, Martin Prescott, Laura Williams, Claire Winchester, Donna Wright, Daniel Wright-Mason and Val Bryant.*

In Attendance: *Ian Couper (Service Director - Resources), Chris Jeffery (Customer Service Manager), Caroline Jenkins (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer), Sarah Kingsley (Service Director - Place), Jeevan Mann (Scrutiny Officer), Louise Randall (Leisure and Active Communities Manager) and Melanie Stimpson (Democratic Services Manager).*

Also Present: *At the commencement of the meeting there were no public in attendance.*

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 1 minute 30 seconds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Tina Bhartwas.

Having given due notice, Councillor Emma Fernandes substituted for Councillor Bhartwas.

2 MINUTES -12 MARCH 2024

Audio Recording – 1 minute 50 seconds

Councillor Matt Barnes proposed and Councillor Ralph Muncer seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 12 March 2024 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

3 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 2 minutes 55 seconds

There was no other business notified.

4 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 2 minutes 58 seconds

(1) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be recorded.

(2) The Chair drew attention to the item on the agenda front pages regarding Declarations of Interest and reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question.

(3) The Chair advised that for the purposes of clarification clause 4.8.23(a) of the Constitution does not apply to this meeting.

(4) The Chair advised a change in the order of the published agenda. Agenda items 15 – 18 would be considered after item 8, followed by items 11 – 14 and finally items 9 and 10.

5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 4 minutes, 10 seconds

There was no public participation at this meeting.

6 URGENT AND GENERAL EXCEPTION ITEMS

Audio recording – 4 minutes 18 seconds

The Chair noted two urgent items in relation to the Leisure Investment Options and Award of the Waste Collection and Street Cleaning Contract.

The Forward Plan of Executive Key Decisions was published on Tuesday 28 May 2024, which listed both matters as being considered as Part 1 and Part 2 reports at the Cabinet meeting on 25 June 2024 and the Cabinet meeting on 9 July, respectively. However, the required 28-day private notices were not published ahead of the decision being taken.

Both matters were commercially sensitive, and the decisions could not practicably be delayed to the next Cabinet meeting in September 2024 as they were time critical.

As per the requirements, the Council obtained the agreement of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the formal notices were published on the Council's website.

7 CALLED-IN ITEMS

Audio recording – 5 minutes, 6 seconds

There were no called-in items.

8 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Audio recording – 5 minutes, 10 seconds

No questions had been submitted by Members.

9 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Audio Recording - 5 minutes 19 seconds

Councillor Matt Barnes proposed and Councillor Tom Tyson seconded and, following at vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act (as amended).

10 **PART 2 MINUTES - 7 NOVEMBER, 5 DECEMBER 2023**

Councillor Matt Barnes proposed and Councillor Tom Tyson seconded, and following at vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Part 2 Minutes of the Meetings of the Committee held on 7 November and 5 December 2023 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

11 **LEISURE INVESTMENT OPTIONS - PART 2**

Councillor Matt Barnes proposed and Councillor Tom Tyson seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET: That the Part 2 report is taken into consideration when reaching the decisions detailed in Part 1.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION: As Part 1 Report.

12 **LEISURE INVESTMENT OPTIONS - PART 1**

Audio recording: 50 minutes and 50 seconds

The Chair introduced the item and reminded Members that confidential questions should have been asked in Part 2 and to be mindful of questions put in this public session. The Executive Member for Environment, Leisure and Green Spaces confirmed he had no further update from the Part 2 presentation.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Ralph Muncer
- Councillor Martin Prescott
- Councillor Daniel Wright – Mason
- Councillor Tom Tyson
- Councillor Jon Clayden
- Councillor Matt Barnes

In response to questions the Service Director - Place advised that:

- There was a very short time window for the decarbonisation scheme application, which required high level information on heat decarbonisation proposals. The plans for the sites were produced but did not include the technical feasibility at the application stage. To have carried out the surveys and feasibility prior to submitting the application would have committed the Council to spending money before confirmation of grant funding. The issues identified in the feasibility studies showed what was optimal for the leisure centres, with practical possibilities, but an increase in costs.
- Initial plans were to insulate the underside of all the roofs in all 3 centres. Condensation prevented this from going ahead, as well as needing to close the pool facilities for up to 8 weeks whilst scaffolding was used.
- Insulation will be on the outside of the roofs. Whilst there may be minor disruptions, this will prevent long closures of the leisure centres.
- An additional cost will be for temporary plant to be introduced whilst heat pumps are installed, to minimize disruption at the centres.
- Everyone Active have a clause in their contract regarding the liability for loss of income being on the council due to any disruption, however it is hoped that the programme proposed will minimize that risk.

Tuesday, 18th June, 2024

- There will be effective communications with residents about the works, possible disruptions and their options at accessing leisure facilities in the area.
- The Council chose to appoint Willmot Dixon for the initial stages through the scape framework, via the Regional Major Works Construction Framework. There was no requirement for the Council to go outside that, as the scape framework had been fully tested.
- Differences in maintenance costs between heat pumps and gas boilers would be sourced and provided to members.
- It was noted there is a £757,000 penalty clause for this contract. This will decrease over the life of the contract with Centrica, with the agreement up until 2035. This figure will be slightly less as heat pumps will not be installed by March 2025. Attempts were made by the Council to negotiate on the termination costs with Centrica. There was no movement on this.
- Grant conditions were that this needs to be spent by March 2026, with it also being front loaded for spending in 2024/25. This decision was made to make sure of no issues with the delivery of the Air Source Heat pumps and solar PV panels.
- There was no option to have a phased approach with this project outside of the timeline given by Salix, unless it was carried out without the £7.7m grant and funded through the Council own capital.
- The Council can afford this project. It was clear there would need to be a review of the wider capital program as there were priorities to be made. It was for Cabinet to decide whether the learner pool goes ahead at this stage, but not to lose sight of this should it not be agreed.
- If the boilers at all three leisure centres had to be replaced if the project didn't go ahead, the costs would be £200,000 for each site.
- The project provides a co2 reduction of over 60% of total emissions across the three sites. North Herts Leisure Centre gas boilers for the learner pool are too new to qualify for funding.
- The gas boilers at the outdoor pools at Hitchin Swim Centre and Letchworth Lido are too new to qualify for funding. Gas boilers would ultimately need to be replaced with Low carbon alternatives once they reach end of life, if we are to meet the council's net zero carbon goals.
- Other projects will arise, but these will come up when the boilers are end of life and dependent on the Councils priorities at the time.

In response to questions the Service Director - Resources advised that:

- The learner pool at Royston Leisure Centre could remain under review.
- The project could be left in the capital programme.
- The possibility of the learner pool project being deferred to a later date could enable a full tender process and there is a possibility that it could lead to a more competitive price, which could reduce the costs of the project. Interest rates may also come down.
- The council can borrow to fund capital expenditure, but this will come with interest costs. A Minimum Revenue Provision charge also has to be made.

Councillor Matt Barnes proposed and Councillor Tom Tyson seconded.

Councillor Elizabeth Dennis raised an amendment to recommendation 2.3 and the wording:

- It was felt there were serious questions to do with the identification of possible external funding options for the learner pool at Royston, a facility that residents valued.
- The Council had passed a motion to regard health impacts to residents on all decisions. This felt that the Council was missing out on a key health opportunity and also to save and invest for the future.
- It was clear there were significant budget gaps, with the delivery of the learner pool and what the Council can recover.

- The budget line had been agreed for the facility, giving residents false hope for much needed swimming facilities.

Councillor Elizabeth Dennis proposed that recommendation 2.3 be amended to reject the removal of the capital budget for the Royston Learner Pool from the capital programme and an additional recommendation that the Royston Learner Pool be kept under review and to explore other funding options. This was seconded by Councillor Martin Prescott.

The following Members took part in debate on the amendment:

- Councillor Jon Clayden
- Councillor Martin Prescott
- Councillor Ralph Muncer
- Councillor Elizabeth Dennis
- Councillor Matt Barnes
- Councillor Claire Winchester
- Councillor Tom Tyson

Points raised during the debate included:

- If the budget line allocation is left in the capital budget, that will assume the council will spend that capital money, there will then be interest charges associated, spreading the charge over the life of the asset. Leaving cost in the revenue budget, increasing the budget gap, and savings will need to be made to offset this.
- Concerns were over a question of financial viability of the learner pool. This has health and social benefits but equally decisions need to be affordable. At this time, it was felt it would be unaffordable. It was felt not appropriate to keep the 2.5M in the capital program and needs to be re-allocated. In future budgets may be stretched elsewhere and the money would not be available.
- The current business case does not stack up on a financial basis. This should be kept under review and different revenue streams should be sought out. This could be a future project to generate more revenue and income.
- Councillors to consider “more pressured” or “more needy” projects when considering budget lines.
- That following comments by other Members, the amendment made would not be re-amended.
- There is no need to change any increase in spending made by cabinet. The revenue budget will offset the capital spend.
- The revised recommendation will be for Cabinet to decide on and take any impact, amendments or adjustments in other areas.
- The recommendation involves significant costs and some members were not satisfied that all funding opportunities for the learner pool had been explored.
- It was pointed out that this was not the provision of a new facility but an extension of a current facility and childrens swimming lessons will still go ahead in Royston if this project does not go ahead. The learner pool will also be for members of the public with special needs.
- It was felt difficult to make a decision on this, when possible sacrifices to be made in the future were unknown. However, it was hoped that Cabinet would look carefully at ways to fund this.

The amendment was proposed and seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: that agreed amendments to points 3 and 4 should read:

- (3) That Cabinet does not approve the business case for Royston Leisure Centre Learner Pool at this time due to matters identified in the part 2 report.

- (4) That the Project Board keep business case under review and meaningful and legitimate work to explore all funding options is undertaken for Royston learner pool.

The following Members took part in the debate on the substantive motion:

- Councillor Ralph Muncer
- Councillor Matt Barnes
- Councillor Jon Clayden

Points raised during the debate included:

- The increase in capital expenditure of £2.4m into the capital programme for the decarbonisation work should be recommended to Cabinet and hopefully recommended to Council. No guarantee that there will be a future scheme of a similar nature. The Council cannot complete the costs for the decarbonation project without funding to avoid budget cuts and unsustainable levels of borrowing.
- It was normal to have penalty clauses in contracts, however this must be recommended to Cabinet, otherwise this has an implication on the terms of the grant.
- The increase in the capital budget of £250k for the Royston Leisure Centre (RLC) gym extension. There was a clear business case for this to make the Council more revenue.
- Financial implications for the decarbonisation scheme were significant with the risk unable to reduce. It was felt a gamble with future energy prices, but also there would be no future access to funding available now. To enable the Councils target of Net zero by 2030, this was felt the biggest single contribution to provide.
- It was felt not to be an ideal time to be making decisions with significant unknown future risks. It was unsure of future government positions on net zero targets.

Having been proposed and seconded, the substantive motion, as amended, was voted on, following which it was:

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET: That Cabinet takes into account the matters set out in the Part 2 report when reaching the following decisions:

- (1) That Cabinet agree in principle to terminate the Combined Heat and Power Centrica contracts at North Herts Leisure Centre (NHLC) and Hitchin Swimming and Fitness Centre (HSFC) at the appropriate time during the PSDS project and recommend to Council as per 2.6 below regarding the termination fee.
- (2) That Cabinet expresses its profound disappointment at the position taken by Centrica over the cost of the CHP contract termination, given the company's stated position as "Energising a greener, fairer future" and requests that the Council continues to raise, and seek solutions to, the issue of long-term inflexible agreements for gas CHPs with Salix and Government, which will inevitably prevent many public sector organisations from achieving their net zero ambitions.
- (3) That Cabinet does not approve the business case for Royston Leisure Centre Learner Pool at this time due to matters identified in the part 2 report.
- (4) That the Project Board keep business case under review and meaningful and legitimate work to explore all funding options is undertaken for Royston learner pool.

That Cabinet recommends to Council:

- (5) an increase in capital expenditure of £2.4m into the capital programme for the decarbonisation work to the three leisure centres. The overall budget will be profiled across 2024/25 and 2025/26.

- (6) an increase in the capital budget of £250k for the Royston Leisure Centre (RLC) gym extension, to ensure the extension is built to net zero carbon standards.
- (7) approval of revenue expenditure of up to £757k for termination and removal fees of the gas CHPs at North Herts Leisure Centre and Hitchin Fitness and Swimming Centre. This would be funded from General Fund reserves.

13 INFORMATION NOTE - FULL YEAR UPDATE ON 3Cs 23/24

Audio Recording: 2 hours 6 minutes and 10 seconds

Councillor Val Bryant, as Executive Member for Community/Partnerships presented the Information note entitled "Full Year Update on 3Cs 23/24" and advised that:

- Members were referred to Page 39 Appendix A regarding the 3cs dashboard, and page 41, the breakdown of service and type, Appendix B.
- The number of compliments and complaints to the Council decreased as compared with 2022/23. Comments received by the Council rose slightly.
- Complaints received by the Council and contractors decreased by 8% compared to 2022/23.
- 53.4% of those complaints received related to services delivered by our key contractors, ie Waste Services and Leisure Centres.
- The percentage of stage 1 complaints resolved in 10 days had increased by 86%. The councils target was 80%.
- The percentage of interactions, collections and visitors resulting in complaints was below 0.5%
- The council received 142 compliments across its services.
- The Council received 29 stage 2 complaints, but only 4 of these were deemed to be justified.
- There were 6 Stage 3 complaints forwarded to the Ombudsman in 2023/24. This was a 54% decrease from 2022/23. Out of these cases, 0 have been upheld and 1 remains open.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Elizabeth Dennis
- Councillor Tom Tyson

In response to questions, the Customer Services Manager stated that:

- The stage 2 complaints were general across various service areas and varied reasons why the complaints were not justified. One query was withdrawn, showing the Council was not at fault, and one was a query on public spending.
- The system did ask for any feedback to be taken or any learning opportunities that can be taken onboard to make improvements.
- It was confirmed that in the 3Cs table, this would now be split to show positive, negative and neutral comments and the Council would work towards a target of 90% of complaints responded to in 10 working days.
- A benchmarking procedure was started in 2023 with other councils across the county. Data had been received from some authorities for 2022/23 and further data had been requested for 2023/24. This was being collated and would be shared with the committee.
- This information note will be published on the Members Information Service.
- The Committee may want to consider this information during the item regarding Key Performance Indicators.

14 REPORT FOLLOWING CALL TO ACCOUNT - HARKNESS COURT

Audio Recording: 2 hours 19 minutes and 4 seconds

Councillor Val Bryant, as Vice Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2023-24, presented the report entitled 'Call to Account - Harkness Court' and advised that:

- A report was requested by this committee in March 2023, regarding the refurbishment of Harkness Court. The inspection took place on 7 November 2023. A report was to come from the previous Chair of the committee on the project and lessons learnt from it. This was not carried out. Councillor Bryant as Vice Chairman had put together this report to the Committee. Members were asked to see Page 47 of the report for the recommendations.
- It was stated that no clear thought was given on the project management. It was thought to be a relatively small project and not in need of much management. It has now been recommended that going forward, each project should have a named project manager.
- There should be clear identification at the beginning of the project scope, risk assessments, knowledge of the project software, building control requirements, financial transparency and monitoring of the timescale of the project.
- Personnel should be trained in managing contracts. Consistent staffing on projects was thought to be very important.

The following members asked questions:

- Councillor Ralph Muncer
- Councillor Elizabeth Dennis

In response to questions, Councillor Bryant stated that:

- Officers were at the starting point of following the recommendations as to the expectations from projects from now on. The Service Director – enterprise felt that progress on this had been made already.

The Service Director – Resources stated that:

- The project management guidance had been updated since the Harkness Court project and made information clearer about sizes of projects.
- There was currently an Internal review of project management being carried out, looking at the recommendations and being clear each year on what projects were being undertaken.
- This will be followed by a review as to how the project was carried out by the Council.

Councillor Matt Barnes proposed and Councillor Tom Tyson seconded.

The following Members took part in debate:

- Councillor Ralph Muncer
- Councillor Matt Barnes

Points raised in debate included:

- There were failures on the early stages of this project.
- The call to account needs to be utilized more, together with the Task and Finish groups to identify any mistakes that may be made during the project process.
- Service Directors should appear before the Committee to provide updates on the relevant projects and this will form part of the working culture of the council.

- The call to account on this project was difficult and too long. Many of the officers that took part in the project were no longer in post. Many of the recommendations had already been implemented.
- The task and finish groups are one tool that can be used to focus on the processes used. It was recommended to strongly consider how the Committee uses them going forward.

Having been proposed and seconded, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED:

The content of the Vice Chair's report, attached as Appendix A, was noted and findings included within were endorsed.

15 Q4 COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN UPDATE

Audio recording – 2 hours 29 minutes 59 seconds

The Service Director – Resources presented the report entitled 'Q4 Council Delivery Plan Update' and highlighted:

- That the plan had been refreshed for this Civic Year (2024/25) to reduce the number of reported projects contained within it and would allow for Members to focus on the key projects.
- There were 27 key projects in total on the plan, with details provided on progress made and the performance of that project.
- These reports would be received quarterly by Overview and Scrutiny Committee for regular monitoring and would seek comments from Members for consideration at Cabinet.
- Members could request specific projects to be included in the quarterly updates presented.
- Members could also ask questions on items that were not prioritised on the plan.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Elizabeth Dennis
- Councillor Matt Barnes
- Councillor Ralph Muncer

In response to questions, the Services Director – Resources advised that:

- The waste depot lease needed to be signed. There would be plans around further waste depots, but that was not needed imminently. It would be needed as the population increased further.
- Focus was to be kept on key projects. 27 projects were thought to be too many.
- The delivery plan would be changed over time, together with the prioritisation tool for reviewing items on the plan. It should focus on key projects.
- A full annual review would take place, together with quarterly reports with what was on the plan and whether it was fit for purpose and met the relevant criteria.

In response to questions, the Executive Member for Finance and IT advised that:

- The project for Charnwood may not come via the Overview and Scrutiny Committee before going to cabinet. The Service Director - Enterprise and Service Director - Resources would confirm this and work with the Chair of Scrutiny and the Scrutiny Officer on this.

Councillor Matt Barnes proposed and Councillor Tom Tyson seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Overview and Scrutiny Committee determined any project that they want to receive more detail on as part of the next monitoring report.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET: That Cabinet:

- (1) Notes the progress against Council projects as set out in the Council Delivery Plan (Appendix A) including new milestones and changes to milestone dates.
- (2) Note the completion in Q4 of the projects detailed in paragraph 8.5.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (1) The Council Delivery Plan (CDP) monitoring reports provide Overview and Scrutiny, and Cabinet, with an opportunity to monitor progress against the key Council projects, and understand any new issues, risks, or opportunities.

16 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2024/25

Audio Recording – 2 hours 42 minutes and 27 seconds

The Service Director – Resources presented the report entitled 'Key Performance indicators 2024/25' and advised that:

- This was a further evolution of the reporting of performance indicators, following previous changes which had been made and feedback received on these.
- Key indicators were provided across a wide range of areas to help support the scrutiny committee, and Cabinet, to monitor how the Council was performing and that any issues were able to be picked up at an early stage.
- Targets were measurable and meaningful and were indicated in red, amber and green.
- The proposed indicators were outlined at paragraph 8.3 of the report and these would be reported to the Committee on a quarterly basis, with supplementary detail provided in the 3Cs reports provided on a half-yearly basis.
- Staffing was included as this was an important part of the Council and monitoring of this would relate to both staff wellbeing as employees, as well as the retention and recruitment of staff.
- Two identified risks relating to Financial and Environmental Sustainability had been identified and included within the report for monitoring. More detail on the Financial Sustainability would be provided to the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.
- Key areas of Service Delivery had been identified and included where relevant and meaningful indicators were available.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Donna Wright
- Councillor Jon Clayden
- Councillor Claire Winchester
- Councillor Matt Barnes

In response to questions, the Service Director – Resources advised that:

- Qualitative reporting could be provided in future to add context to some of the areas being monitored, but these would not be as frequently available as the quantitative data provided on a quarterly basis. This would also include any staff surveys which had taken place.
- Benchmarking against other authorities could be introduced, but there were often local issues which impacted on different rates across local authorities.

- Short term sickness leave for staff could be benchmarked, and previously this figure had been around 3.5 days. It was more difficult to benchmark long term absences, as these were usually due to specific illness.
- Providing corporate context to the performance indicators (i.e. what Council priority they impact) could be introduced for future reports.
- Key Performance Indicators monitoring could be provided in the Members Information Service publication and would also be included on the Ideagen platform.
- Many areas were contracted out to third parties, including leisure and waste services, and therefore monitoring was completed by the contract holders. It would need to be discussed with the relevant services areas as to whether further information could be included.

The following Members took part in debate:

- Councillor Daniel Wright-Mason

Points raised in debate included:

- The recruitment and retention of staff, as well as their wellbeing at work, was important to monitor regularly.

Councillor Matt Barnes proposed that the recommendations be amended to include a request to consider including performance indicators from third party suppliers in future reporting and that the Key Performance Indicators be included in Members Information Service publication, once made available for Cabinet. Following a vote, this amendment was accepted.

Councillor Matt Barnes proposed, as amended, and Councillor Tom Tyson seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET: That Cabinet

- (1) Adopt the performance indicators set out in paragraph 8.3 for 2024/25.
- (2) Consider adding Key Performance Indicators regarding performance a third-party suppliers and staff satisfaction.
- (3) Agree that Key Performance Indicators are published to the Members Information Service when provided to Cabinet.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS: The Council had tried to move towards having indicators that were focused on our key projects. However, it was found that these do not generally give the level of Council oversight that Members would want. Therefore, these performance indicators are proposed to give that view of overall performance.

17 RESOLUTIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Audio Recording: 2 hours 59 minutes and 26 seconds

The Scrutiny Officer presented the Resolutions of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and stated that:

- There was one referral to Cabinet of the update of the Councils delivery plan for 2023/24. This was considered on 19 March 2024. The comments were approved and recommended.
- There were two other resolutions on the report. These were marked as complete and are now closed.
- Ideagen training is available to members on the Growzone, under the Members Training section.

- An alternative resolutions tracker will be used from September 2024, to enable a full record of resolutions to be kept in one place. Open resolutions will continue to be presented at meetings.

There were no questions from Members.

Councillor Matt Barnes proposed the recommendation and Councillor Tom Tyson seconded and following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the report entitled 'Resolutions of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee' was noted.

18 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Audio recording - 3 hours 1 minute and 28 seconds

The Scrutiny Officer presented the Overview and Scrutiny work programme and stated that:

- The current workplan has been compiled. Items currently scheduled include the Safeguarding report, Crime and Disorder Matters and the Draft Annual Report of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2024/25.
- Items yet to be scheduled are Green Spaces, Enterprise Service Area updates and the Implementation of the Leisure Contract.
- Any suggested topics would be welcomed by discussion at this committee meeting, with the Chair or Vice Chair or emailing the Scrutiny Officer.

The Chair of the Committee stated that:

- As part of the Corporate Challenge, the draft Scrutiny Charter had been circulated to Members and thanks were given for their feedback and comments.
- The Enterprise Service Area updates would be scheduled for September 2024
- Work on the Task and Finish Group regarding the Waste Contract would begin in September 2024.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Ralph Muncer
- Councillor Matt Barnes
- Councillor Elizabeth Dennis
- Councillor Tom Tyson
- Councillor Martin Prescott

In response to questions, the Scrutiny Officer stated that:

- Task and Finish groups historically have not gone ahead due to lack of Members interest. Members were asked for more involvement otherwise this would not go ahead.
- A report would initially be put together by the Scrutiny Officer for consideration, followed by 3-4 sessions of work. More guidance can be given to Members.

In response to questions, the Head of Democratic Services stated that:

- It was thought that the timeline would be compromised if to commence the Task and Finish Group at the next meeting, particularly as officers and Members were in the middle of a General Election period. It was also pointed out that meetings are not held during the summer, due to the summer recess.

Tuesday, 18th June, 2024

- The Terms of Reference were to be focussed and set for the group and a timeline of work that could be achievable. This could be set for September 2024 running through to January 2025.

In response to questions, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee stated that:

- Executive Members and Portfolio holders should be asked to attend the committee meetings to identify priorities in their areas and answer questions on their portfolio.
- It was noted that the Waste Contract was shared between North and East Hertfordshire Councils, therefore any scrutiny of this would need to be in collaboration. The project board involves officers and members from both authorities and reports would be identical. Reports should be robust enough to be scrutinised.

Councillor Matt Barnes proposed and Councillor Tom Tyson seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Committee prioritises topics for inclusion in the Work Programme attached as Appendix A and, where appropriate, determines the high-level form and timing of scrutiny input.
- (2) That the Committee, having considered the most recent iteration of the Forward Plan, as attached at Appendix B, suggests a list of items to be considered at its meetings in the coming civic year.
- (3) That the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan as attached at Appendix C be considered.

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for Tuesday 2 July 2024 at 19:30.

The meeting closed at 22:47

Chair

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