

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

10 September 2013

Present:

Councillor P.A. Broom (Chairman)

Councillor D. Patel (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

A. Ayub

A.E. Friday

S.D. Taylor

C.M. Frazer

I.T.E. Harvey

Apologies: Councillors F. Ayers, C.A. Bannister, M. Bushnell, R.D. Dunn, M.J. Madams and M.W. Rough

In attendance - The following Cabinet members attended the meeting and took part in the discussion on those items relevant to their Portfolio:

Councillor P. Forbes-Forsyth, Cabinet member for Community Safety, Young People, Leisure and Culture

Councillor N. Gething, Cabinet member for Economic Development and Fixed Assets and Lead member on Economic Development Task Group

Councillor V. Leighton, Cabinet member for Corporate Development and Lead member on Fixed Assets Task Group

Councillor J. Sexton, Cabinet member for Communications, ICT and Procurement

Councillor S. Webb, Cabinet member for Planning and Housing

Councillor R.L. Watts, Leader

236/13 Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

237/13 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2013 were approved as a correct record.

238/13 Matters Arising

No matters were raised.

239/13 Call in of a Leader, Cabinet or Cabinet Member Decision

No decisions had been called in.

240/13 Capital Monitoring

The Committee received an update on the capital spend against the budget position of the schemes within the capital programme.

The Chief Finance Officer reported that £486k had been spent to date, which represented 25% of the revised budget. The projected outturn showed that there was an anticipated spend of £1.749m which represented 91% of the revised budget.

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The Committee discussed the report with the Senior Accountant and the Chief Finance Officer, who responded to questions from members on particular items.

The Chief Finance Officer reported that the Council may not have sufficient capital funds in future to fully fund anticipated capital programmes. It may have to start either drawing down revenue reserves, making revenue contributions to capital or finding additional funding sources. The Committee noted this was a serious matter and agreed to keep a close eye on this situation.

It was also noted that the Cabinet would be asked to approve:

1. An increase in the Customer Relationship Management project budget of £80,000
2. A reduction in provision for the Laleham project for 2013-14 of £200k and an increase of £200k for 2014-15
3. A reduction in provision for the Virtual Desktop project for 2013-14 of £147k and an increase of £147k for 2014-15

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the report of the Chief Finance Officer outlining the capital spend position for the period April to July 2013 be noted;
- (2) that the Committee continue to receive Capital Monitoring reports to keep a close eye on the funding situation and
- (3) to support the following recommendations to Cabinet:
 1. To allow £80,000 which was originally agreed in 2011/12 to be added to the CRM project budget, now that the project was underway.
 2. That the Capital Programme provision for Laleham be re-phased with 2013-14 provision reduced by £200k and the provision for 2014-15 increased by £200k
 3. The Capital Programme provision for Virtual Desktop be re-phased with 2013-14 provision reduced by £147k and 2014-15 increased by £147k

241/13 Revenue Monitoring

The Committee received an update on the net revenue spend and forecast outturn position at the end of July 2013.

The Chief Finance Officer reported that the forecast outturn at net expenditure level was £12.099m which resulted in a projected favourable variance of £309k, after taking into account the use of carry forwards.

RESOLVED that the report of the Chief Finance Officer outlining the current net revenue spend and forecast position for the period April to July 2013 be noted.

242/13 Leader's Task Groups

The Committee received updates on progress with the work of the three Leader's Task Groups looking at Economic Development, Fixed Assets and Environment and Waste.

The Committee commended the Deputy Head of Planning and Housing Strategy for the work he had done on the Local Economic Assessment and the initial draft of the Economic Development Strategy. It recognised that the Economic Development Task Group had been the catalyst for development of the Strategy and noted the remarkable progress that had been made to produce these documents ready for adoption by Council at the end of the year, in such a short period of time.

RESOLVED to note the work undertaken to date by the Leader's Task Groups.

243/13 Health and Wellbeing Strategy

The Committee received a briefing paper on health and wellbeing in Spelthorne which provided an update on the priorities for the NW Surrey Clinical Commissioning Group and the Surrey Health and Wellbeing Strategy and detailed how the Council is supporting these.

RESOLVED to note the briefing paper on Health and Wellbeing in Spelthorne.

244/13 Planning Enforcement Policy

The Committee received a report setting out the work and performance of the planning enforcement service and the proposed Local Enforcement Plan – the Council's Policy towards dealing with unauthorised development.

The Committee discussed the list of current enforcement cases which had been circulated to members separately, with the Head of Planning and Housing Strategy and asked that it be reviewed to clarify whether the action was still live, who was responsible for each case and where the hold ups were.

RESOLVED:

- (1) to note the report on Planning Enforcement in Spelthorne and the draft Local Enforcement Plan
- (2) that the list of current enforcement cases be reviewed to clarify whether the action was still live, who was responsible for each case and where the hold ups were and then re-circulated to the Committee.

245/13 Social Media Policy

The Committee received a report on the use of Social Media in the Council and how the Council dealt with and responded to messages received through these media.

The Chairman, Councillor Broom, offered to work alongside the Cabinet member for Communications, Councillor Sexton, in developing a Social Media Policy with the officers, for consideration by the Committee at its next meeting.

RESOLVED:

- (1) to note the report on Social Media and
- (2) that the Chairman of the Committee work with the Cabinet member for Communications and officers on developing a Social Media Policy

246/13 Remote Working

The Committee received a presentation and discussed an update report on the Council's remote working pilot, with the Assistant Chief Executive (Lee O'Neil) and Environmental Health Manager.

The Committee agreed to receive an update report at its next meeting when further information would be available on the potential number of Council staff who could work remotely and the likely costs to support this project against the possible rental income.

RESOLVED:

- (1) to note the report on the remote working pilot and
- (2) that a further report on the project be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

247/13 Leisure and Culture Strategy

The Committee received the second draft of the Leisure and Culture Strategy for 2013-2016, which had been amended to incorporate the suggestions of the Committee and the task group, to mention the river Thames and include more on the health and wellbeing and economic benefits of leisure facilities.

The Committee commended the Leisure Services Manager and Councillors Frazer and Friday for their work to transform the draft Strategy.

RESOLVED to note the draft Leisure and Culture Strategy 2013-2016.

248/13 Cabinet Forward Plan

The Committee received the Cabinet Forward Plan.

RESOLVED to note the Forward Plan.

249/13 Work Programme

The Chairman confirmed that she was working with the Vice-Chairman and officers to draw up a work programme from the ideas generated at the last meeting of the Committee.

She asked members to contact her if they had any further thoughts on topics they would like to see included.

RESOLVED to note the arrangements to produce a work programme.

250/13 Any Other Business

No other business reported.