

**Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
25 November 2014**

Present:

Councillor P.A. Broom (Chairman)
Councillor A.E. Friday (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

F. Ayers	R.D. Dunn	M.W. Rough
M. Bushnell	C.M. Frazer	D. Saliagopoulos
C.A. Davis	D.L. Grant	S. Taylor
	I.T.E. Harvey	

Apologies: Councillors D. Gohil and M.J. Madams.

In Attendance:

Councillor R.L. Watts, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Human Resources

Councillor T.J.M. Evans, Cabinet Member for Finance

Councillor N. Gething, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Fixed Assets

Councillor V.J. Leighton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Corporate Development

Councillor J.M. Pinkerton OBE, Cabinet Member for Housing, Health, Wellbeing and Independent Living

309/14 Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

310/14 Minutes

The minutes of the following meetings were approved as a correct record:

1. Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 8 July 2014

The Committee agreed that due to ongoing questions over the issues related to Kempton Park as noted in Minute 172/14 of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 8 July 2014, the Leader, Councillor R.L. Watts and the Chief Executive be invited to attend a meeting in Sunbury to address residents' concerns. The Leader and the Chief Executive confirmed they were happy to agree to this request.

2. Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee – 9 September 2014

3. Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 9 September 2014

311/14 Matters arising from the minutes

No matters were raised.

312/14 Call in of Cabinet Decisions

No decisions had been called in.

313/14 Capital Monitoring

The Committee received an update on the capital expenditure against the budget position of the schemes within the capital programme for the period April 2014 to September 2014.

The Chief Finance Officer reported that £345k had been spent to date, which represented 28% of the revised budget. The projected outturn showed that there was an anticipated spend of £1.111m which represented 89% of the revised budget.

Resolved that the report of the Chief Finance Officer outlining the current capital spend and forecast position for the period to September 2014 be noted.

314/14 Revenue Monitoring

The Committee received an update on the net revenue spend and forecast outturn position at the end of September 2014.

The Chief Finance Officer reported that the forecast outturn at net expenditure level was £13.074m which resulted in a projected favourable variance of £597k, after taking into account the use of carry forwards. Interest earnings were forecast to exceed the budget by approximately £150k as a result of increased returns from longer term investments.

Resolved that the report of the Chief Finance Officer outlining the current net revenue spend and forecast position for the period April to September 2014 be noted.

315/14 Treasury Management half-yearly report

The Committee received an interim statement of treasury activities, and the associated monitoring and control of risks, for the first six months of the financial year, to the end of September 2014. The Chief Finance Officer highlighted a positive performance with budget predicted to be outperformed for the year by £150k.

Resolved that the half-yearly report on Treasury Management be noted.

316/14 Waste Management - update

The Committee received an update report on the Council's ongoing activities to promote and encourage recycling and waste reduction. The Head of Environment Services reported that funding had been obtained for a recycling study, to commence in November 2014, in Stanwell and Sunbury Common which would trial three methods of encouraging residents to recycle more plastics. She also advised that a proposal had been submitted to Cabinet for an additional collection service of textiles and small waste electrical items which would generate income through Recycling Credit Claims and a resale agreement with the Salvation Army.

Resolved that the update report on waste management be noted.

317/14 Communications - update

The Committee received an update report on progress being made in the Communications Team to use Social Media as a tool for communication with residents.

Resolved that the update report on communications be noted.

318/14 Flooding Recovery - update

The Committee received an update report from the Risk and Resilience Manager on progress with flooding recovery in the Borough. He outlined the work the Council was doing to assist Spelthorne residents to recover from the floods and increase community resilience. He reported on the draft sandbag policy which was currently out to consultation.

Resolved that the update report on flooding recovery be noted.

319/14 Towards a Sustainable Future – a self-funding Council

The Committee received presentations from members of the Cabinet, Management Team and officers on the Towards a Sustainable Future (TASF) programme covering finance, assets and income generation, delivery of services and housing strategy.

The Leader, Councillor Watts and the Chief Executive, Roberto Tambini introduced the item and explained the reason behind the Council introducing this strategy was the need to make savings of approximately £750k per annum for each of the next four years. The TASF programme aimed to set the Council on a path towards being self-funding in response to reducing central government funding. It hoped to achieve this through three elements: income generation, new ways of working and a structural review but the Council would continue to maintain the current standards residents enjoyed and enhance them where it could.

The portfolio holder for Finance, Councillor T.J.M. Evans and Chief Finance Officer, Terry Collier provided the financial context to the TASF programme illustrating the reducing General Revenue Support Grant and resulting increasing budget gaps for the Council over the next four years, if no action was taken. They set out the medium term financial modelling of measures proposed to close the gap through the TASF streams.

Councillor Evans and Terry Collier reassured the Committee that the risk of not ending up with the bottom line figures was small as a safety margin had been built in to them. They confirmed that other local authorities across Surrey were looking to generate income from assets but that Spelthorne was taking a more mixed approach in finding ways to address the budget gaps.

The portfolio holder for Assets, Councillor N. Gething and the Regeneration Manager, Heather Morgan explained the projects which were underway to release capital value in assets in order to reinvest the income for a greater return and to finance the Council's future. They outlined the current status of

the Bridge Street car park proposals and the relocation and re-development of the Knowle Green site.

The Leader, Councillor Watts, the Chief Executive, Roberto Tambini and the Assistant Chief Executive, Lee O'Neil outlined the options for alternative models to deliver the Council's services whilst maintaining best value. They explained the process that had taken place so far to identify proposals for service delivery in each service area, including consideration of whether some services could be stopped or delivered differently. Information from the recent residents' survey on the most valued services was being fed into the process. The implementation of any service re-design proposals would be subject to Cabinet approval and might affect the council's future structure.

The Leader, Councillor Watts, advised that a democratic review would not be undertaken until there was a better understanding of what the organisation of the Council would look like but that he hoped at that time to realign the Cabinet Portfolios with the revised service structure.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the Council had spent a modest outlay of less than £5k so far in taking 18 service areas through the re-design process and that there was money allotted in the medium term financial strategy to resource the project.

The portfolio holder for housing, Councillor J.M. Pinkerton OBE and the Assistant Chief Executive, Liz Borthwick outlined the vision of the Council's newly adopted Housing Strategy which was comprised of housing, homelessness and private sector strategies. A detailed action plan had been developed for each strategy and the Council was working closely to deliver these with other agencies and particularly the voluntary sector.

The Assistant Chief Executive reassured the Committee that where the Council was lacking expertise to deliver any of the proposed actions in the Strategy, it would bring in specialists through a variety of partnerships.

The Committee wished to recognise the huge amount of work done by the voluntary organisations in supporting residents in the area of housing.

Members of the Committee were concerned about the state of the housing stock with A2D and the provision of more social housing. The Assistant Chief Executive agreed to take on board Committee members' comments and advised that the Council was working with five preferred registered social landlords to provide more housing stock.

Resolved that the Committee:

- (1) recognises that it is the correct approach in this financial climate that Spelthorne Borough Council takes action to plan ahead for a future which will enable it to continue to deliver high quality services for its residents;

- (2) agrees that the sustainable future strategy is based on sound principles and has analysed risk appropriately and
- (3) will monitor the progress of this strategy closely and include it as a standing item on the agenda.

320/14 Project Management – update

The Committee received an update from the Head of Customer Services on Project Management. She reported on the priority and statutory projects of which there were now 32 and the progress with mapping out the three work streams for the Towards a Sustainable Future Programme (TASF). The Corporate Project Team had been expanded to five members to support the existing projects and TASF.

Resolved that the update report on Project Management be noted.

321/14 Leaders 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.

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

322/14 Cabinet Forward Plan

The Committee received the Cabinet Forward Plan.

Resolved to note the Forward Plan.

323/14 Work Programme

The Chairman advised that the main topic for the January 2015 meeting would be the Budget.

She asked members to contact Terry Collier, Assistant Chief Executive, if they had suggestions for any other topics they would like included.

324/14 Any other business

The Chairman reported that a question had been raised by Councillor R. Dunn who asked when the Kempton Park housing development would be coming before the Committee as agreed in previous committee meetings.

The Chairman advised that the Committee had not, in fact, agreed to put this topic on the Work Programme as there was nothing concrete to scrutinize at the moment - but as it was such an important issue then the Committee would keep a watching brief on developments and pull it in as appropriate.

However, in the meantime, as agreed at the start of this meeting the Leader, Councillor R.L. Watts, and Chief Executive would meet with residents in Sunbury to discuss their concerns.