

PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

20th June, 2013

PRESENT – Councillor Long (in the Chair); Councillors Carson, Cossins, Harman, L. Hughes, Lawton, and E.A. Richmond. (7)

APOLOGIES – Councillors Baldwin, Grundy, Lewis and Wright. (4)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor D.A. Lyonette. (1)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Steve Petch, Head of Strategy and Commissioning, E. Goodchild, Green Economy Officer and Karen Graves, Democratic Officer.

P1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

P2. TIME OF MEETINGS - RESOLVED – That meetings of this Scrutiny Committee be held at 9.30 a.m. for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2013/14.

P3. MINUTES – Submitted - The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 18th April, 2013.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes be approved as a correct record.

P4. SCRUTINY – WORK PROGRAMME 2012/13 – The Director of Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the work programme items scheduled to be considered by this Scrutiny Committee during the current Municipal Year.

The submitted report outlined those areas where this Scrutiny Committee had previously identified it would like to focus its work over the next Municipal Year namely, Civil Parking Strategy, Town Centre Regeneration, Local Development Framework, Carbon Management and Economic Strategy.

It was also emphasised that the work programme was a rolling programme and any Member of this Scrutiny could request an item to be included provided that a Quad of Aims had been submitted to the Scrutiny Committee prior to ensure that it contributed to the strategic aims of the Council.

The submitted report outlined the original Work Programme and requested Members to reconsider the Work Programme to accommodate further issues that need to be included.

Discussion ensued on a workshop arranged for 8th July, 2013 to consider the preferred options document of the Local Plan which was now out for consultation, the forthcoming meeting of the Wheeled Bins Review Group in July to consider the Group's Final Report to Cabinet and the submitted Quad of Aims for the Markets Review Group.

RESOLVED – (a) That the current status of the Work Programme be noted.

(b) That the Work Programme be updated to reflect the decisions of this Scrutiny Committee.

P5. CHALLENGING PERFORMANCE, MAKING A DIFFERENCE – The Head of Strategy and Commissioning gave a presentation on the Council's Performance Management Framework which was adopted in 2012.

Discussion ensued on the role of Members, particularly Scrutiny Members, in challenging performance across service areas within their remits; the key performance measures which had been identified through service and delivery plans; the monitoring and challenge processes already in place and the remedial action taken following that challenge to address underperformance and improve outcomes for customers; the definition of some of the key PI's; their current performance and the role of this Scrutiny Committee in scrutinising areas of concern within its remit.

Discussion ensued on the large number of indicators which came within the remit of this Committee and Members were encouraged to forward any areas they wished Scrutiny Committee to investigate to the Democratic Officer.

RESOLVED – (a) That the thanks of this Scrutiny Committee be extended to the Head of Strategy and Commissioning for his informative presentation and that, where appropriate, any performance information which is available be used to inform any future work programme of this Scrutiny Committee.

(b) That Members forward any areas of concern to the Democratic Officer.

P6. CARBON MANAGEMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE, FUEL POVERTY AND GREEN ECONOMY – The Green Economy Officer gave a presentation on Carbon Management, Climate Change, Fuel Poverty and the Green Economy which highlighted the Council's carbon reduction commitments, rising energy costs, the aims of the Council's Carbon Management Plan (CMP) and the targeted savings which could be achieved. Details were also provided of the future targets and aims of the CMP.

It was stated that 2010 40 per cent of target reductions of CO2 emissions had been achieved although concerns were raised about the contribution of academies to our progress on reaching our carbon management targets. Their independence from the local authority may necessitate their omission from the Council's benchmarking and this needed further discussion.

Particular reference was made to fuel poverty which was a concern with over 10 per cent of household income being spent on fuel to maintain warmth for health and comfort. With 20.7 per cent fuel poor households in the Borough (2010) the most affected were rural areas, older people, children and young people, those on benefits, disabled people and those with long-term illness. Details were also supplied of Warm Up North which is a consortium of six local authorities supported by Energy Saving Trust.

Details were also provided in relation to the growing green economy and what needed to be done to support this sector.

Discussion ensued on the falling costs of solar panels; effect of the current economic climate on climate change; reduction of street lighting by the use of energy efficient means; and residents in fuel poverty areas not having the means to 'switch' energy supplier.

RESOLVED – (a) That the thanks of this Scrutiny Committee be extended to the Green Economy Officer for her informative presentation.

(b) That this Scrutiny Committee continues to scrutinise the Council's Carbon Management Programme.

P7. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN AND BUDGET SAVINGS PROPOSALS –

The Director of Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) together with a report (also previously circulated) which had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 9th April, 2013, in relation to a number of budget savings proposals which would deliver £2.252 million in 2013/14 and £3.337 million of savings, following full implementation.

It was reported that a number of the proposals, which had been approved by Cabinet on 9th April, 2013, related to areas within the remit of this Scrutiny Committee and discussion ensued on whether it wished to undertake any further work at an early stage to identify and scrutinise the potential risks and impacts associated with the proposals or to defer consideration to enable the full impact of the proposals to be assessed at a later date.

RESOLVED – That consideration of this item be deferred to give time for the proposals to be embedded and that any impact be re-assessed at a later date if necessary.
