

MINUTES OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19 JUNE 2023

PRESENT:

Members of the Committee:

Councillors Mistry (Chair), Mrs Brown, Lawrence, Mrs McKenzie, Mrs New, Mrs Parker and Mrs Timms

Officers:

Aftab Razzaq (Chief Officer – Legal and Governance) and Linn Ashmore (Democratic Services Officer)

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 30 January and 18 May 2023 were approved and signed by the Chair.

5. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillor Rabin.

6. REVIEW OF MANAGING ARREARS OF COUNCIL TAX

The item was included on the agenda as ‘to follow’. Following liaison with the Chair on the draft report and recommendations, it was proposed that further work was required in terms of internal engagement particularly with Housing Services to allow the task and finish group to receive additional information to feed into the subsequent recommendations.

During consultation with Housing Services, it was important that significant factors are incorporated to ensure that reasons for the non-payment of council tax serve as a flag to concerns for the welfare of tenants or residents.

It was agreed that the task and finish group would appoint a new Chair due to the fact the appointed councillor was now a member of Cabinet.

RESOLVED THAT – the item be deferred to allow the task and finish group to benefit from further internal liaison with Housing Services that would be incorporated into the final report and subsequent recommendations.

7. SURVEY OF YOUNG PEOPLE

The Committee received a report (Part 1 – agenda item 5) concerning a survey of young people.

This topic originated from a Motion considered by Council and the Committee considered a report on that Motion at its meeting on 30 January 2023.

It was decided that the proposed survey be broken down into two separate age ranges, 11-18 and 18-25 because there was a great difference in the interests and needs of young people between the ages of 11 and 25.

It was important for the review to focus on the core services where the council can influence and add value that will also benefit young people. Some of the factors that could be included were links between education and employment, mental health, and ways of reaching the groups that will gain most from the outcomes.

The initial parameters to be addressed were:

- How do young people want to be engaged?
- What are the issues that young people want to be engaged upon?
- What issues are important to young people?

It was important for the scope of the review to have clear objectives and outcomes which will feed into the upcoming Communications and Engagement Strategy.

RESOLVED THAT –

- (1) a task and finish group be formed of between three and seven councillors; and
- (2) delegated authority be granted to the Chief Officer for Legal and Governance in consultation with members of the Scrutiny Committee to formulate a one-page strategy to detail the objectives of the Task and Finish Group.

8. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received a report and a table listing future work programme topics, items due to be scheduled and outlining the current position of reviews (Part 1 – agenda item 6).

The Committee raised concerns regarding the call answering times for the Contact Centre and it was agreed the Communities, Homes, Digital and Communications Portfolio Holder and the Chief Officer for Digital and Communications should be invited to attend the next meeting. The Committee requested that data on call answering information be provided in advance of the meeting.

The Committee also requested that minutes of the meetings of the Community Safety Partnership be made available.

A report on the Delivery of the Corporate Strategy was due to be considered by Cabinet. It was noted that there was an item to consider annual performance which would coincide with discussions with the Leader and Chief Executive on the Corporate Strategy. The Committee could receive reports and direction for consideration of how it formulates the wider work programme and support the delivery of the Corporate Strategy.

Items for the next meeting due to be held on 11 September were agreed as follows:

1. Annual Review of Crime and Disorder and discussion with the Regulation and Safety Portfolio Holder and the Chief Officer for Regulation and Safety.
2. Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report.
3. Consideration of the one-page strategy for a review relating to a survey of young people.
4. Discussion with the Communities, Homes, Digital and Communications Portfolio Holder and the Chief Officer for Digital and Communications on call answering.

RESOLVED THAT – the future work programme be updated as minuted above.

CHAIR